

Statement from Abbot Point Operations

Abbot Point Operations today reconfirmed that flood waters moving across the site last week did not enter the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, however flood water did enter the Caley Valley Wetlands via an authorized release point, as well as from the wetland's broader catchment area.

Flood water entering the wetlands from Abbot Point Operations authorized release point was sent for analysis to an accredited third-party, confirming the 'total suspended solids', or volume of other debris materials (like soil, plant material, dust and other particulate material) within the flood water, was 58 mg/L.

CEO of Abbot Point Operations, Mr Dwayne Freeman, said the flood water was not 'coal-laden sludge'.

"This is a very minor elevation in total suspended solids, following an extraordinary weather event that caused flooding and damage to much of North Queensland including many homes, businesses, and farms," Mr Freeman said.

"These preliminary test results are a testament to the infrastructure upgrade program and the tireless work of our dedicated employees.

"We are confident there will be no environmental impacts to the wetlands area, despite this unprecedented weather event.

"Normally a company would not release its test results, but we recognize there is a high level of public interest in Abbot Point Terminal's operations, and as a result of this, we are releasing these results in an effort to keep the community informed and to demonstrate our commitment to operating transparently and with integrity," he said.

Mr Freeman said that monitoring and inspections on site had given Port officials a better understanding of the reasons for flood waters entering the wetlands.

"The weather has been extreme up here at Abbot Point. Heavy rainfall has seen a significant amount of water accumulating on the Port site and surrounding properties.

"The flood water from our neighbouring properties on Thursday 7 February 2019 could not be contained any longer and exceeded our systems' capacity, resulting in flood water entering the wetlands," Mr Freeman said.

Abbot Point Terminal has received more than 900mm of rain at the Port since December alone.

Since 2017 Abbot Point Operations have been undertaking a three-year major infrastructure upgrade program to improve safety and environmental management.

More than \$15 million in upgrades is the process of final execution in what will be a \$50 million program in total. The works that have been completed to date have greatly assisted in retaining on site the large volume of rainfall that was received.

These upgrades include: increasing the volume of water storage ponds, upgrade of a bund wall, including new piping and pump facilities, as well as our early works program on the redesign of remaining water management infrastructure at other release points.

Further upgrades will be delivered by 2021 and will include: design and construction of an additional water storage pond, upgrades to all other release points, including upgrades to sumps, pumps, and piping.

Mr Freeman said that Abbot Point Operations is working closely with officials from the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science in relation to the flood waters entering the wetlands.

"Once we found the flood waters had moved across the site and into the wetlands, we notified the Department of Environment and Science," Mr Freeman said.

"We have had Department officials onsite last Friday who undertook their own inspections and monitoring," he said.

Due to the extreme weather, operations were suspended at Abbot Point Terminal last week.

"The rain has finally started to subside and conditions at the terminal have improved over the weekend, so we're currently implementing our recovery plan to return to standard operations this week," Mr Freeman said.

ENDS

Note for editors:

- Total Suspended Solids (TSS) are solids in water that can be trapped by a filter. TSS can include a wide variety of material, such as silt, decaying plant and animal matter, industrial wastes, and sewage.
- See attached for aerial images and footage of the Port and surrounds, which were taken on Sunday, 10 February 2019.