



Gladstone Conservation Council Inc.

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Bulk material transfers in World Heritage water

GCC have received a response from Andrew Powell, refer to 18883.pdf

It confirms a penalty infringement notice was issued to GPC for the unauthorised release of coal fines in September 2012. The Minister's response does not indicate if the fugitive emissions demonstrated on 11th July 2011, 7th August 2012, 7th August 2013 or 3rd December 2013 were equally penalised or indeed "authorised". Consequently the Minister did not indicate if action will be taken with regard to these specific events.

The photographic evidence of coal emanating from a loading conveyor on 11th July 2011 seems to indicate that the conveyor was running coal out into the harbour. This would not appear to be fugitive emission via unsatisfactory equipment but rather operational in nature. The Minister's response does not adequately deal with this issue.



The Minister indicates that capital works aimed at design and operational issues were "initiated" but not finalised. The nature of these issues was not explained nor was any indication of an estimated time of completion given. It has been nearly two years since the coal spills were reported to the authorities and we still have no end in sight.

The Minister also failed to reflect that he understood the significance of the evidence presented, that of the available photographic snap shots of the harbour, ALL, THAT IS 100% of the data had clear evidence of coal spills. This is strong statistical evidence that we are not dealing with isolated cases but rather with the norm.



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It is clear that the regulator has accepted coal spills from loading facilities for years, indeed there is a culture of “all industry pollutes, anyone who comes to Gladstone knows this and if you don’t like it, you are free to move elsewhere”

The object of the GCC letter to Mr Powell was to express incredulity that coal handling out at sea would be treated any different by the current establishment. Somewhat condescendingly it is pointed out to us that control measures employed can differ greatly from activity to activity. What Mr Powell perhaps does not know is that as a process engineer with more than 30 years’ experience in industry, I have not come across one bulk handling operation that has succeeded in avoiding fugitive emissions. But more pertinently, what Mr Powell may not know is that there is a correlation between capital investments in spill containment proportional to public scrutiny.

Disappointed by another poor response,

Jan Arens

President – Gladstone Conservation Council.