



**TITLE: An exploratory study on risk governance and public engagement in Gladstone harbour**

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The notion of governance implies the structures and processes for collective decision-making that involves a multitude of actors, both state and non-state, during which everyone involved has a chance of transforming the opinions of the other parties. When the definitions and interpretations of governance are transferred to the context of 'risk' and risk-related decision-making, it is often called 'risk governance'.

However, this 'ideal definition' of (risk) governance is often not adequately accommodated in regulatory practice due to the different interests and perceptions of the actors involved. Within this context, this paper is a first step to explore risk governance in relation to public engagement. A case study of industrial development in Gladstone harbour has been chosen in order to assess the risk governance process for the proposals and decisions that have been put forward and the existing, potential and perceived risks this brings to the local environment and the local community. The extent to which public engagement has been used in this process will be critically examined in order to give recommendations on how risk governance can possibly be improved through public engagement. Methodologically, this will be investigated through Critical Theory.

Key words: risk governance, public engagement, sustainability, critical theory, Gladstone harbour