

Media Release

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Cairns Shipping Development Project **Studies provide facts to inform Government and Reef decisions**

Ports North Chairman, Brett Moller, said the rigorous studies being undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Cairns Shipping Development Project would provide the facts needed to support decisions makers from the State and Federal Governments and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on the potential impacts of the project on the environment, community and local economy.

His comment was in response to concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed project on the Great Barrier Reef and Far North Queensland tourism.

“This is one of the most rigorous EIS of its type ever undertaken in Australia and we are determined to ensure it addresses the comprehensive Terms of Reference as well as meeting the needs of the tourism industry and the community,” Mr Moller said.

“The whole purpose of the EIS is to understand the environmental, economic and social impacts of the project so that an informed decision can then be made by Government and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as to whether such should proceed or not and if it is to proceed what conditions may need to be put in place to manage any identified risks.”

Mr Moller said it was important the outcome of the EIS was not pre-judged before it was completed.

“Certainly Government, the tourism industry and community will not want the project to proceed if there are unacceptable risks of damage to the reef that cannot be managed coming out of the EIS.”

“The regional economic benefit of the project is significant, diversifying the tourism industry and paving the way for further strengthening Cairns and Far North Queensland’s reputation as a premiere world cruise destination. The logical development and promotion of the cruise industry in Cairns would focus on establishing Cairns as a home port thereby connecting and better utilising the port and our international airport both of which have capacity to grow and bring increased economic benefit” commented Mr Moller.

“However the project brings benefits not just to the tourism industry but also for the navy with the improved second swing basin and wharf upgrade as well as improved general cargo access, again better utilising the available capacity we have in the port” said Mr Moller.

Mr Moller said Ports North continued to work closely with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and reef-based tourism operators. This included sponsoring the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators to study and protect the Great Barrier Reef by controlling the Crown of Thorns starfish.

“Like the tourism industry and the community, Ports North takes very seriously the World Heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef and the responsibility we all have to assist in its protection for future generations.”

The Cairns Shipping Development Project EIS is due to be submitted for government consideration later this year. The comprehensive Terms of Reference can be viewed by visiting <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/cairns-shipping-development-project.html>

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