

**Media Release**

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**Cairns Shipping Development Project Revised Draft EIS released for comment**

Ports North welcomed the release today, by the Queensland Coordinator-General, of the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cairns Shipping Development Project for public comment.

Ports North Chairman Russell Beer said public consultation was the next major milestone for the project and he was proud of Ports North's achievement in bringing this region-shaping opportunity a significant step closer to becoming a reality.

"The Revised EIS delivers an important opportunity to generate more than \$848.6 million in benefits to the region boosting tourism and the economy while generating job growth in the order of 800 new direct and indirect jobs during construction and over 2,730 upon completion," he said.

The Cairns Shipping Development Project involves widening and deepening the existing navigation channel to allow larger cruise ships to berth at the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal.

"The Project builds upon the significant existing tourism infrastructure network in Cairns to facilitate increased tourism opportunities in Far North Queensland and supports the overall growth of the cruise ship sector in Queensland," Mr Beer said.

The Project will enable 1 million cubic metres of capital dredge volume to be placed on land (reduced from the original 4 million cubic metres) at a cost of \$120 million and enable cruise ship growth for vessels up to 300 metres with a forecast demand of an additional 70 cruise ships (with homeporting and the Brisbane Cruise terminal) through the Port of Cairns each year by 2031.

"As well as accommodating the larger cruise ships, the deeper and wider channel and relocation of the main swing basin will also enable future expansion of the HMAS Cairns Navy base, improve access and efficiency for bulk cargo and larger visiting Navy vessels, and improve wharf infrastructure while providing increased resilience for the Port of Cairns against extreme weather events."

Mr Beer said the Revised Draft EIS comprised around 6,000 pages and provided a thorough scientific evaluation of social, economic and environmental impacts.

"The Ports North team and our expert consultants have done an outstanding job in preparing a comprehensive Revised Draft EIS," he said. "I am confident that it contains sufficient information for the Commonwealth and State governments to fully understand the project's potential impacts in order to make decisions about the future of the project, with particular regard to the requirement for capital dredged material to be placed on land."

He said the 14 different land placement sites from Yarrabah to the Barron Valley had been considered. Detailed investigations were then carried out on sites in the Barron Delta and East Trinity.

The report identifies that the best environmental outcome would be achieved by placing stiff clay material on Port land at Tingira Street, Portsmith and the soft clay material in the Barron Delta at the site of an existing sand extraction mine.

"Ports North is confident we have a workable solution for expansion of the Port of Cairns that protects the Great Barrier Reef and delivers this future opportunity to Cairns and the region," Mr Beer said.

Advance Cairns Chairman, Trent Twomey, said “Advance Cairns strongly supports the expansion of maritime facilities and the CSDP has been a priority project we have advocated for this region. “North Queensland relies on the Port of Cairns to support not only a significant tourism industry but also as our export and import link to the world.”

Tourism leaders also have welcomed the release of the Revised Draft EIS and the opportunity it presents to deliver a greater share of the lucrative international cruise ship market to Cairns and the region.

TTNQ Chairman, Max Shepherd said “Increased cruise ship visitation will not only deliver substantial economic returns but will further grow and diversify the visitor profile to our region. TTNQ supports the Cairns Shipping Development Project to expand the Port of Cairns shipping channel to accommodate ‘mega class’ cruise ships whilst also considering the health of the Great Barrier Reef”.

P&O Cruises CEO, Ann Sherry, said the Cairns Shipping Development Project was a significant initiative that would help Cairns realise its full potential as a major cruise hub by allowing larger ships to access the Cairns Cruise liner terminal.

“The global cruise market is highly competitive and growing rapidly,” she said. “Cruise continues to be the success story for Australian tourism and this project will ensure Cairns is well placed to secure a share of this success.

“We have always seen Cairns as a cruising hotspot with great potential. This project is key to turning that potential into a reality with all the benefits that the \$4.6 billion Australian cruise tourism industry has to offer Cairns and the region in terms of visitor spending and opportunities for local businesses.”

Ports North encourages the community to provide feedback and comment to the Queensland Coordinator-General during the public consultation period which closes on Friday 25 August at 5pm.

The full Revised Draft EIS, a project fact sheet and submission details are available online via the Ports North website at [www.portsnorth.com.au](http://www.portsnorth.com.au)

Hard copies are available for viewing in Cairns at the Cairns City Library (Abbott Street) and Smithfield Library (Cheviot Street).

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