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CAIRNS SHIPPING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Advance Cairns and the Cairns Chamber of Commerce welcome the opportunity to comment on the Cairns Shipping Development Project - Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Advance Cairns is the peak regional economic development and investment promotion organisation for Tropical North Queensland. It plays a key role in advocacy for growth creating projects, investment and development for the region. Advance Cairns facilitates connections between private enterprise, industry, community, government agencies and political representatives to maximise the opportunities for economic and social development for Tropical North Queensland (TNQ), focussing on diversification for economic growth, and improving the lives of the region's residents.

The Cairns Chamber of Commerce is the peak body for business representation in the Cairns region and are now one of the largest Chambers of Commerce in regional Australia. We constructively and collaboratively drive business growth outcomes for members and in the best interests of the Cairns regional business community. We facilitate business success for our members, through the development of a strong and resilient regional economy, the development of a constructive business environment, and by being the voice of business. On behalf of our members, we strategically facilitate the growth of industry, support infrastructure development, and lead changes that drive increased business productivity, employment, trade and investment. The Cairns Chamber works in partnership with

our members, partner stakeholders and all levels of government to constructively create conditions for business success in the Cairns region.

The Cairns Shipping Development project was centred on the expansion of Trinity Inlet and swing basins, and the development of associated port infrastructure to improve access for large cruise ships to the Port of Cairns. The project planned to inject an estimated \$673 million in 2016 dollars (approx. \$27 million per annum) into the regional economy, and create up to 680 extra jobs by 2041, significantly boosting local business, tourism and the economy.

With the implementation of the project, Port efficiencies for general cargo ships would increase, and would also facilitate future growth of the HMAS Cairns Naval Base.

Cairns is a strategic regional hub in Northern Australia for maritime asset bases and maintenance support. The Cairns Port provides flexibility and capacity for growth in positioning Naval and Customs maritime assets close to their areas of operations, without the constraints of major cargo shipping operations.

The Cairns Port provides strategic opportunities for the development of the tourism industry and for the deployment of additional RAN and Customs assets in Far North Queensland. Additionally, the Cairns port is a supply hub for Northern Australia and a key component of logistic support to the Cape and Torres Strait communities. Project cargo to PNG and the South Pacific provides for further capability development for the port.

HMAS Cairns is the second largest Naval facility on the east Australian coast, and facilitates significant naval support capability for Australia's Defence.

Maintenance facilities in the Cairns port provide significant MRO and build capability for a range of vessels to 3000mt and 90m. A variety of complementary facilities exist to provide significant capacity for fleet base expansion and support. World class maritime training further complements the Cairns port as a complete facility for vessel support.

The potential for increased superyacht charters in the region, (which would also provide additional economic value from tourism and marine support) is limited by current regulation. Revision of existing legislation to expand the opportunities for foreign flagged superyachts to charter in Australia, under limited conditions, would provide potential economic benefit to the region of \$12-20m annually.

The Cairns Port is recognised as one of Australia's busiest cruise vessel ports. Our growth capacity is limited however, as cruise vessels increase in size as the market expands. Expansion of the port facilities over time will provide for sustainable development to growth and prosperity of the region, in pace with the market's growth.

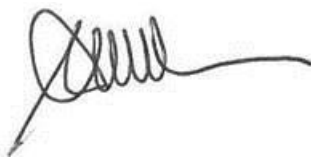
The Qld Ports Strategy 2014 identified Cairns as a multi-purpose regional port that caters for a diverse range of uses including bulk and general cargo, defence, cruise shipping, fishing fleet and reef passenger ferries. The total trade in 2012–13 was 1.06 million tonnes.

The Reef 2050 plan released in March 2015, restricts capital dredging for the development of new or expansion of existing port facilities to within the regulated port limits of the Priority Port Development Areas (PPDA) of Gladstone, Hay Point–Mackay, Abbot Point and Townsville.

As outlined in the Advance Cairns submission to the Queensland Ports Strategy, a mechanism could be considered to allow the Cairns/Mourilyan port combination to become a PPDA in the future, if there is a compelling economic and port development argument supported by appropriate environmental assessment. The current arrangements limit consideration of the development of economic activity in regions outside PPDA. The Cairns Chamber of Commerce also supports this position.

Critical to the development of our region is the expansion of port facilities, supported by economic, community and social infrastructure. The Cairns region has an enviable liveability and is considered as the world's most liveable tropical city, with highly regarded private and public educational institutions, modern health facilities and a full range of services in a tropical setting.

We believe that the Cairns Port will need to continue to incrementally develop the inlet and associated port infrastructure to support the growth of the regional economy. Ports North will need to be able to continue to undertake incremental development projects at existing, new berths or channels to maintain operational efficiencies and/or cater for our region's growth and prosperity.



Mark Matthews
Chief Executive



Deb Hancock
Chief Executive Officer