

Superliners set to start steaming to Cairns as inlet dredging finishes

By Renee Cluff, Tropic Now, 26 September 2019

Four bookings have been taken for superliners at the Port of Cairns, as a dredging project to widen and deepen Trinity Inlet comes to a close.

The work, which began in July, allows vessels up to 300 metres in length to now access the port.

“Isn’t it wonderful we’re seeing larger vessels already using this new opportunity,” Cairns MP Michael Healy told *Tropic Now*.

Cairns MP Michael Healy onboard dredging ship Balder R with staff who worked on the project.

“The fact that our port now has a greater capacity puts it in a different category of larger and deeper vessels.”

The first of the cruise ships that previously couldn’t enter the channel arrives next month.

Explorer Dream, formerly based in Hong Kong, will be in Cairns on October the 23rd and return again in March next year, carrying up to 2800 passengers at a time as it sails between Sydney and New Zealand.

She’ll be followed by the 293 metre-long *Radiance of the Seas* in November 2020 and the 294-metre long *Carnival Spirit* in December.

The dredging works were delayed for years over concerns about the dumping of dredge spoil. Eventually, [a land-based solution](#) was found. *[Editor’s note: these ‘concerns’ and delays were solely the result of a few Greens/Labor extremists forcing their ideological agenda’s onto kowtowing politicians, resulting in a very sub-optimal result that went against CSIRO recommendations and delaying the clear benefits by many years.]*

“Ports North has worked tirelessly over many years to find the balance between protecting the environment and the Great Barrier Reef, and ensuring our Port can facilitate economic growth for the region,” said Ports North Chairman Russell Beer.

“I am very proud of our team.”

Also included in the \$127 million Cairns Shipping Development was the construction of a new swing basin at Smith’s Creek to enable future expansion of HMAS Cairns Navy base.

The third and final stage, a \$20 million wharves makeover, is now underway and is scheduled for completion in April.

Over the next 22 years, the development is expected to provide for a forecast demand of up to 150 cruise ships through the Port of Cairns.

The State Government predicts such an industry expansion will create 2,700 jobs over the same period.