

## Media Statement

19 August 2014

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### Message from the Chairman

The program “*Battle for the Reef*” which aired last night (18 August 2014) on ABC Television’s *Four Corners* highlighted the iconic nature of the Great Barrier Reef.

As the owner and operator of nine ports in North Queensland including the Port of Cairns, Ports North is committed to effective master planning of port facilities and providing opportunities for our community to be part of an informed conversation about the future needs of our ports.

In the context of the issues raised about other Queensland ports by *Four Corners*, it is important to remember that the Port of Cairns is fundamentally different to those ports. Our major product is tourism, not coal. It is not in Ports North’s interest, nor the community interest, to damage our region’s tourism brand or the iconic status of the Great Barrier Reef. That is why Ports North is committed to carefully managing the operation and future development of the Port of Cairns. It is also why we are working closely with scientists and environmental agencies to produce one of the most rigorous project environmental impact statements (EIS) of its type undertaken in Australia.

We have spent more than 18 months investigating options associated with the Cairns Shipping Development Project, including detailed studies on more than 22 different topics such as coastal marine processes and sediment quality.

As we finalise the EIS for submission to government later this year, we are engaging with the community to explain the five on-land and five at-sea placement options for the disposal of dredged material being investigated by scientists as part of the EIS.

Our history is one of successful management of a safe and navigable channel and world-class port facilities for tourism, trade and defence. The last channel widening program undertaken at the Port of Cairns was in 1989, supported by approved annual maintenance dredging and environmental monitoring.

I am confident that the outcome of the EIS process will ensure an informed decision is made about the Cairns Shipping Development Project, taking into full consideration the environmental, social and economic implications for our region, our State and the nation.

Brett Moller

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