

## Media Release

4 April 2014

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### Further studies for Cairns Shipping Development Project

Further collection of water quality baseline data will be carried out during the next four months to deliver a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement on the Cairns Shipping Development Project.

Ports North Chairman Mr Brett Moller today confirmed that additional field studies were being undertaken following consultation with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

Mr Moller said the collection and inclusion of the additional data will contribute to the EIS addressing the requirements of the Terms of Reference for the study that have been set out by both State and Commonwealth Governments.

The EIS is being prepared by Arup, an independent firm of designers, planners, engineers and technical experts, in partnership with BMT WBM who are providing expertise in marine science and engineering.

Mr Moller said: "Our decision to undertake further field work will add a little extra time to the EIS process. It's an important decision and will ensure that this EIS is one of the most rigorous of its type undertaken in Australia."

The EIS has already included more than 16 study topics encompassing extensive studies including assessment of coastal marine processes, marine water quality, marine flora and fauna, sediment quality, dredge material options, cultural heritage and native title and the socio-economic environment.

Mr Moller said: "The Cairns Shipping Development Project is so important to the community and economic development of Far North Queensland and we need to ensure that there is a robust and extensive investigation of options and environmental impacts. The Project will improve access to the Port of Cairns and will see the number of large cruise ships grow by an estimated 61 annual visits by 2025.

"This additional data collection will affect the EIS timeframe, moving our target EIS report submission date from May to September 2014.

"We have and continue to engage with the community and key stakeholders throughout the EIS process and we look forward to completing the report in the second half of this year. It will then be released by the State and Commonwealth Governments for public comment."

Mr Moller encouraged Cairns residents, businesses and community groups to take up the opportunity to provide input on the EIS.

"Ports North is determined to demonstrate the highest standard in managing the environmental impacts that come with operating port activities," Mr Moller said.

He welcomed community discussion about all aspects of the project, including dredging of the Port of Cairns, use of dredge material both at sea and on land and any potential impacts on the marine life of Trinity Inlet.

“Ports North are not prejudging the outcome of the EIS in relation to the relocation of dredge material associated with the Cairns Shipping Development Project,” Mr Moller said. “We take 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.

“We do not undertake any port planning or operations which have not been assessed and approved through a rigorous study and approval process. The EIS on the Cairns Shipping Development Project will be one of the most comprehensive of its type, consistent with Ports North’s unwavering commitment to the process,” Mr Moller said.

**Further information on the Cairns Shipping Development Project, including fact sheets, can be found on the Ports North website [www.portsnorth.com.au](http://www.portsnorth.com.au)**

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