



## Media release

Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport  
The Honourable Curtis Pitt

### Cairns Targets Mega Ship Cruising

Treasurer Curtis Pitt has confirmed that the Cairns Shipping Development Project will now target mega cruise ships up to 300 metres in length, to take advantage of the strong growth forecast for these impressive vessels.

"I'd like to commend Ports North for focusing the project on capturing the strong growth in mid-to-large Mega Ships which means we can achieve a significantly reduced capital dredge volume (down from 4.4 million cubic metres to 1 million) and also reduce the projected cost of the project while opening the Trinity Inlet up to much larger ships," Mr Pitt said.

"Based on the revised forecasts, the project will enable the Port of Cairns to dock around an extra 37 new Mega cruise ships a year by 2026 with this increasing to 59 on the basis of a continuation of home-porting in Cairns and the establishment of the new Brisbane cruise liner terminal.

"While there is still considerable work to be done in the EIS investigation, I'm advised that the total cost will be reduced to around \$120 million.

"That's one-third of the cost of the LNP's original estimate of over \$360 million – so not only are we allowing more ships of a greater size into our Port, we're doing it for a third of the price and we're doing it responsibly to avoid the risk of impact to the Great Barrier Reef.

"I have always advocated an alternative to the LNP's reckless dredge-at-all-cost approach that would provide the greatest economic and benefit for the Tropical North without endangering our natural environment.

"Where we differ with the former government is that their proposal for capital dredging in Trinity Inlet never stacked up on any measure and couldn't proceed. However, while the parameters of the LNP's proposal were profligate, I always supported the Port's efforts to attract more and larger ships to the tropical north."

Ports Minister Mark Bailey said that the Palaszczuk Government recognised the economic importance of the Port of Cairns to the region, which was why special provisions were included in the Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015 to allow capital dredging for the project to proceed, subject to all environmental approvals being obtained.

"Consistent with our Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan commitments and provisions of our legislation, no capital dredge material will be permitted to be placed at sea," Mr Bailey said.

"We are committed to protecting the environment while building a strong diverse

economy to create more jobs for Queenslanders and the revised scope of this project seeks to deliver on both those objectives.

"The next stage of the project will be to review potential beneficial re-use options for the significantly reduced volume of dredge material required for the project, along with impacts and management options associated with land-based disposal should beneficial re-use be unviable."

Ports North chairman Russel Beer said the port is now completing a rigorous EIS for this revised project scope that will consider all environmental issues and impacts so that all the information is available for the regulatory agencies to assess the project.

"The Cairns Shipping Development Project is subject to environmental approvals from both the State and Federal Government Agencies before it can be delivered," Mr Beer said.

"The final EIS report will be submitted for consideration by the Queensland Coordinator-General by 30 June 2017.

"By taking an innovative approach to the new capital dredge material disposal requirements, we have been able to come up with a solution that delivers strong cruise ship growth to Cairns but only requires a quarter of the dredge volume and costs one third of the previous cost estimate.

"We have been working very closely with the global cruise industry and they confirm that Cairns will continue to be an attractive destination for cruise tourism well into the future."

Carnival Australia Executive Chairman Ann Sherry said, "this is a positive initiative for the growth of cruise tourism in far north Queensland and adds to Cairns' potential to become a cruise hub in its own right."

"It offers the prospect of bringing more cruise ships to the heart of the city with all of its accompanying economic benefits and improved passenger experience for our guests," she said.

"Dawn Princess' recent call and our decision to home port Pacific Eden in Cairns later this year, the first time we have based a ship at a regional port, is already an indication of the city's potential."

Ports North will be meeting with tourism, business and local government leaders over the next fortnight to outline the revised project scope and have appointed local consultancy firm Flanagan Consulting Group (FCG) to work with Ports North to deliver the next stage of the Project.

The consultancy team led by FCG Project Leaders, Pat Flanagan and David Finney, will be supported by BMT-WBM, Golder Associates and other specialist consultants.

"The consultancy team have extensive experience with Port related environmental impact assessments and have had previous involvement in the Cairns Shipping Development Project early works components", Mr Beer said.

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