

# Cairns Shipping Development Project

## Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Fact Sheet July 2017



## AT A GLANCE

- > An additional 70 cruise ships into Port of Cairns each year by 2031
- > Project design for port access by mega cruise ships up to 300 metres
- > A workable and environmentally sound land-based solution for relocation of the capital dredged material
- > No sea disposal of capital dredged material
- > Cost \$120 million
- > Significant economic benefits delivering more than \$848.6 million to the region
- > Potential for 800 new direct and indirect jobs during construction and more than 2,730 on completion

The Cairns Shipping Development Project has reached the next major milestone with the release of the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the Queensland Coordinator-General for public comment.

The Revised Draft EIS has been submitted by Ports North on behalf of the Queensland Government and in response to support from industry and business in Far North Queensland.

Ports North's aim throughout the Project development process has been to secure this opportunity to enhance tourism and increase employment for Cairns and the region. Ports North is confident the Revised Draft EIS offers a workable solution for expansion of the Port of Cairns that protects the Great Barrier Reef and delivers the future opportunity to Cairns and the region.

### About the Project

The Cairns Shipping Development Project involves widening and deepening the existing navigation channel to allow larger cruise ships up to 300 metres in length to berth at the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal to accommodate the forecast demand for 70 additional cruise ships through the Port of Cairns each year by 2031 with homeporting, Bunkering and the Brisbane Cruise Terminal.

The Project builds upon the significant existing tourism infrastructure network in Cairns to facilitate increased tourism opportunities in Far North Queensland and supports the overall growth of the cruise ship sector in Queensland.

Channel expansion will require 1 million cubic metres of uncontaminated material to be dredged from the existing channel and placed on land. Historically, the channel has been expanded several times (most recently 27 years ago) to cater for the growth of the Cairns economy and changes in shipping.

The Project will provide a significant stimulus to Cairns and Far North Queensland creating local jobs, increasing the competitiveness of the region and strengthening the economic resilience of the local economy.

While the main purpose of the Project is to take advantage of cruise shipping opportunities, there are also significant other benefits including:

- enabling future expansion of the HMAS Cairns Base by relocating the existing cargo swing basin.
- allowing improved channel access for the existing Royal Australian Navy vessels allowing larger visiting overseas Navy vessels (in particular US Navy carriers) to enter the Port for rest and relaxation visits.
- reduced tidal and loading restrictions on bulk cargo ships accessing the Port of Cairns, improving Port efficiency.
- increased resilience for the Port of Cairns against an extreme weather event which can result in the loss of depth and reduced ability for cargo ships to safely navigate the channel.

## Project Description

The Project assessed by the Revised Draft EIS involves dredging a wider and deeper entrance channel and cruise ship swing basin to allow Port access for larger cruise ships, upgrade of the wharf infrastructure within Trinity Inlet to cater for the larger vessels and the relocation of the cargo ship swing basin to allow future Navy base expansion. Approximately 4 km of the 13 km channel is proposed to be widened between 10-20 metres with some additional localised widening of the channel bend and transits to maintain safe navigation of ships. The channel's declared depth will be increased by 0.5 metres from - 8.3 to - 8.8 metres.

The dredging operations involve the removal of uncontaminated sediment from within and adjacent to the existing channel and placing that material on land. There is no sea disposal of the dredged material.

Dredging will take about 12 weeks and will occur during the dry season.

Dredging will involve the removal of a mixture of soft and stiff clays. The soft clays, which comprise most of the material to be dredged, have poor engineering qualities with no beneficial reuse potential. The stiff clays have better engineering qualities and some reuse potential as fill for land development.

A detailed assessment process was undertaken to identify suitable land-based sites where the dredged material could be placed. The Revised Draft EIS considered 14 different land based sites from Yarrabah to the Barron Valley for the placement of the dredged material.

**Two sites were identified as providing the best environmental outcomes; Port land at Tingira Street, Portsmouth for the stiff clay material and the Barron Delta for the placement of soft clay material.**

The use of Port land at Tingira Street for the stiff clays will allow this material to be beneficially reused as surcharge material on the land and ultimately incorporated into future land development. The stiff clay will be dredged using a backhoe dredge. The dredged material will be delivered by barges to that site.

The soft clays will be dredged by a Trailer Suction Hopper Dredge and then pumped to the Barron Delta site by the dredge when moored at a temporary facility 3 km offshore from the mouth of Richters Creek. A temporary delivery pipeline will transport the material from the dredge pump-out facility to the placement site (mostly through cane lands) with excess water being returned to the Barron River at the Captain Cook Highway bridge via a temporary pipe.

The Barron Delta site is an existing sand extraction mine which has low environmental value and is located in an area primarily used for sugar cane farming. It has existing approvals for the disposal of construction material and potential acid sulphate soils and a pit that requires filling at the end of the existing sand mining operation.

To prepare this site for receipt of the dredged material, the existing sand mine will be expanded and a temporary flood protection bund wall erected around the placement area for the duration of the dredging and material consolidation period. This temporary flood protection bund wall will be removed at the end of the project and the existing sand mining and recycling operations will continue.

## Protecting the Environment

Ports North approached the preparation of the Revised Draft EIS with a firm commitment to understanding the existing environment within Trinity Bay and to minimise any potential adverse environmental, social and economic impacts of the project, while maximising potential economic benefits. The goal was to develop a workable solution for the Port of Cairns that protects the Great Barrier Reef and delivers this opportunity to Cairns and the region.

The Project has been designed to be consistent with the Queensland Government's key plans and strategies adopted to protect the Great Barrier Reef such as the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan and the Queensland Ports Strategy (2014).

The Revised Draft EIS includes extensive base line studies and impact assessment studies across a wide range of areas as defined by the EIS's Terms of Reference. The study areas include land, natural conservation areas, coastal marine processes, marine sediment quality, marine water and ground water quality, water resources, marine ecology, terrestrial ecology, social impacts, economics, noise and vibration, air quality, landscape and visual amenity, transport, waste, climate change, green house gas emissions, hazard and risk, cumulative impacts and environmental protection.

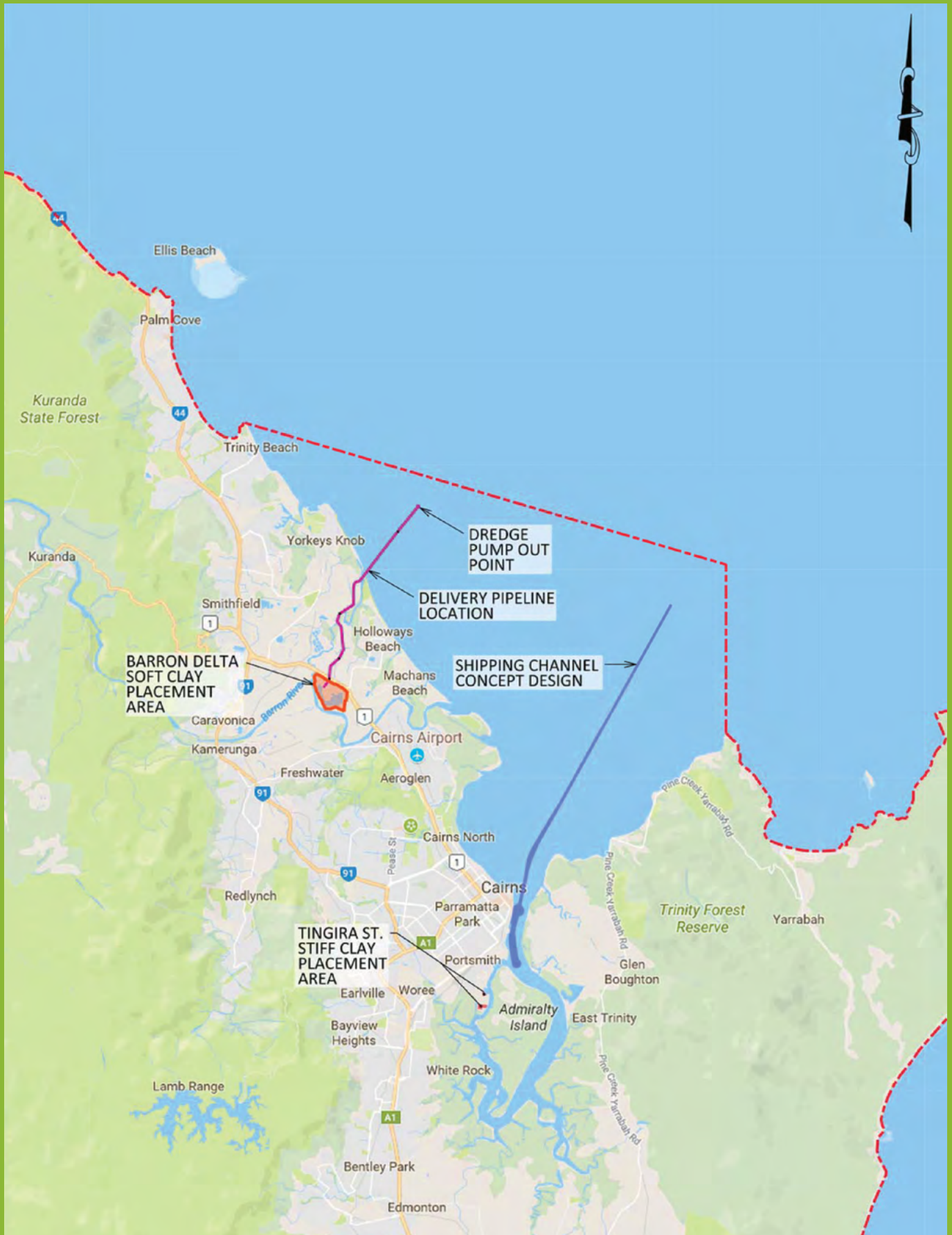
Ports North placed considerable emphasis on examining all options to minimise the amount of dredging required. After completing extensive marine studies of currents and winds in Trinity Inlet, Ports North used leading edge cruise simulation technology in collaboration with the cruise ship companies and the Cairns Regional Harbour Master to make the most effective use of the channel design while providing additional access for cruise ships up to 300 metres.

Through these studies, extensive field data has been collected from across Trinity Inlet to ensure the EIS is based on a detailed understanding of the environment that may be influenced by the Project. State-of-the-art water quality and sediment transport computer modelling has been undertaken to consider a range of potential impact scenarios from best to worst case. A conservative approach has been adopted to ensure that Project risks are comprehensively identified and appropriate strategies developed so that potential impacts can be effectively managed, minimised and mitigated.

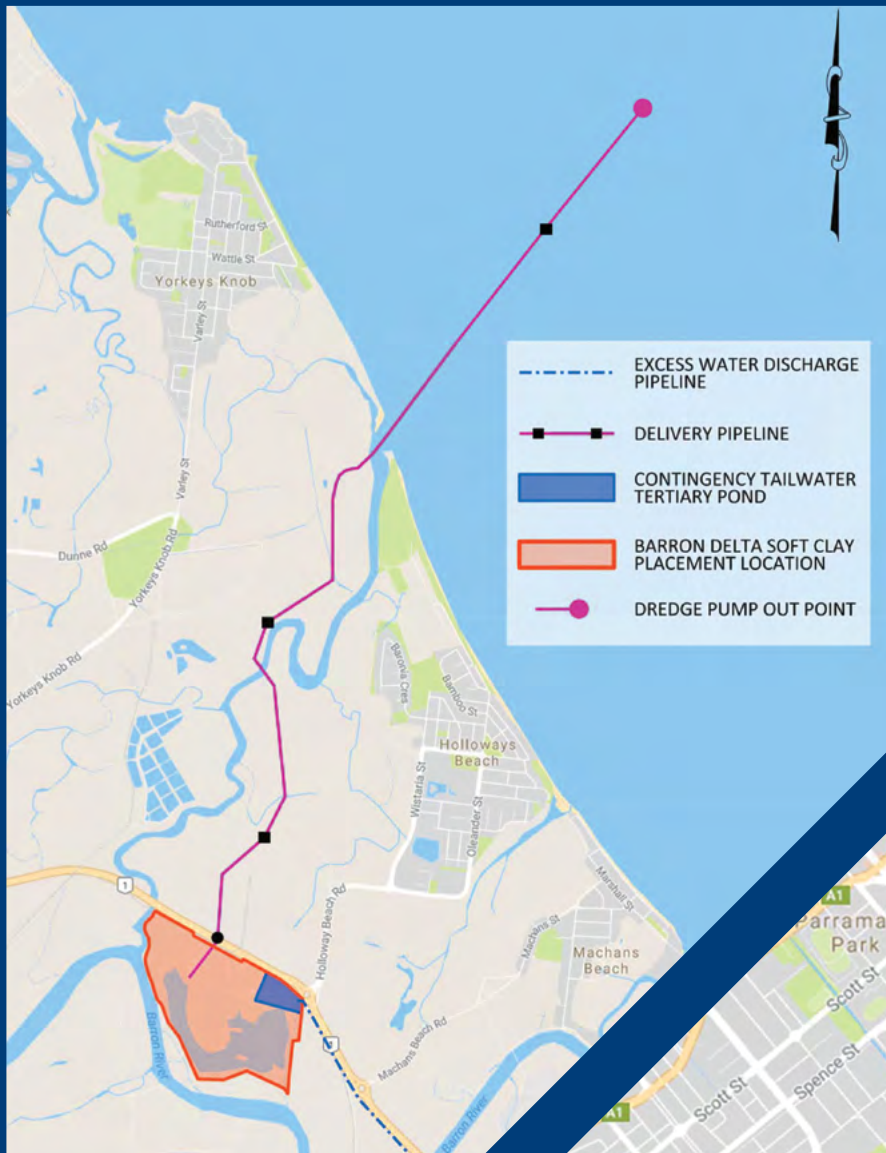
The EIS includes significant mitigation strategies and environmental management which will be refined as part of the detailed design process in conjunction with regulators to ensure unacceptable impacts do not occur.



Project Location



**Barron Delta Soft Clay and Pipeline Location**



**Tingira Street Stiff Clay Location**



## Consultation

The Cairns Shipping Development Project is a coordinated project under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 thereby requiring an EIS addressing the Terms of Reference for the project (contained in Appendix A of the Revised Draft EIS) to be evaluated by the Coordinator-General.

The project is also a controlled action under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999 requiring assessment and approval of an EIS addressing the Commonwealth Guidelines for the project (contained in Appendix B of the Revised Draft EIS), by the Commonwealth Environment Minister.

Ports North has engaged with a range of stakeholders and community members during the preparation of the Revised Draft EIS to discuss the project and better understand potential impacts on stakeholder interests.

The Revised EIS includes around 6,000 pages and provides a thorough evaluation of social, economic and environmental impacts allowing Governments to make informed decisions on the project.

Ports North encourages people to read through the document and provide feedback and comments during the consultation period.

The revised EIS can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.portsnorth.com.au/>

Hard copies are also available at the Queensland State Library (South Brisbane), Cairns City Library (Abbott Street) and Smithfield Library (Cheviot Street).

The Queensland Government Office of the Coordinator General has released the EIS for public information and comment. Written submissions on the Revised Draft EIS in relation to the Queensland Government's Terms of Reference may be made to the Queensland Coordinator-General at the following address:

### The Coordinator-General

C/- EIS Project Manager  
Cairns Shipping Development Project  
Coordinated Project Delivery  
Office of the Coordinator-General  
PO Box 15517  
City East Qld 4002 Australia

For submissions made to the Queensland Coordinator-General, a properly made submission must:

- Be made to the Coordinator-General in writing.
- Be received on or before the last day of the submission period.
- Be signed by each person who made the submission.
- Provide the name and address of each person who has made the submission.

### Submissions must be made to the Coordinator-General by 5pm on 25 August 2017.

Submissions received during the submission period will be collated by the Office of the Coordinator-General and provided to the proponent, Ports North.

The Commonwealth Government is currently reviewing the EIS prior to issuing a notice for release and public comment under the EPBC Act. Once notified written submissions on the Revised Draft EIS in relation to the Commonwealth Guidelines may be made directly to Ports North at the following address:

### The Executive Assistant

PO Box 594  
Cairns QLD 4870

E-mail submissions may be made to:  
[enquiries@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:enquiries@portsnorth.com.au)

The opening and closing date for submissions in relation to the Commonwealth Guidelines will be advertised in newspapers with regional, state and national coverage and posted on Ports North's website.

All submissions and any additional relevant information required to address public submissions will be provided by Ports North to the relevant government agencies for consideration in their determinations.

