

## **Calls for protection of portside land**

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Cairns Mayor Bob Manning has joined with one of the region's largest marine operations in calling for vital waterfront land to be protected from development associated with the planned expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre.

Cr Manning said while the expansion project is of critical importance to the region, he would seek assurances from the State Government and Ports North that strategic port land would remain intact.

"Concerns have been raised that the expansion of the Convention Centre may encroach on to waterfront land currently used as a cargo area for the port," Cr Manning said.

"The Convention Centre expansion is vitally important for the people of Cairns, but it must be done in a way that doesn't impede other long-term economic planning for our city," Cr Manning said.

Fred White, Managing Director of Sea Swift, said any intrusion into the Cairns Port area, south of Wharf Street, would negatively impact on future working port operations.

"To lose this land would erode opportunities to grow the coastal sea trade into and out of the port and would be a blow to any port expansion plans," he said.

"While expansion to the north and east would allow for the welcomed growth of the Convention Centre, any extension to the south would pose a commercial risk to all marine-based operations in the Port of Cairns," Mr White said.

Mr White said he held specific concern for an area of portside land that is currently used by Sea Swift for loading of essential service cargo and growing cruise ship provisioning services.

Mayor Manning said he would seek clarity around the Queensland Government's plans for expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre.

"Cairns Regional Council has engaged with the State Government on options for the Convention Centre to expand north or east from the current configuration," Cr Manning said. "If there is any inclination to deviate from these plans, then this will not be well received by port users and the business community in general.

"The population of Cairns is forecast to double in the next thirty years. It would be short sighted to the extreme to limit the future growth of the seaport."

Ends