



**CAIRNS PORT  
DEVELOPMENT INC**  
**OUR PORT - OUR FUTURE**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **12 DECEMBER 2018**

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### **Cairns Port - Naval Gazing**

The public of the Cairns region is being subjected to misinformation about legislation potentially affecting Cairns sea port. The truth is, currently, State and Commonwealth government legislation provides no surety that the Cairns sea port can expand to meet the needs of all facets of the port's operation now and into the future, to harness the potential the port can offer to grow our economy.

Cairns port has been designated strategic port land since the Qld Transport Infrastructure Act nomination in 1994. The 2016 state planning policy for strategic ports is a guide for local governments land use planning around ports, not, as Mr. Entsch puts it, "a sudden quiet announcement by the Queensland government" about a strategic port designation. There are 15 strategic ports in Qld and four of those ports have been upgraded to priority port status for long-term planning purposes, leaving Cairns port out. Mr. Entsch indicates that because of strategic port status, Cairns could not have priority port status, but again this can't be true, because Townsville port has both strategic and priority port status.

The statements by Mr. Entsch that he and Advance Cairns have brought about the 2018 Security of Critical Infrastructure Act to advance the development of Cairns sea port are not correct. Cairns was included because it is also controlled by the Maritime & Offshore Facilities Security Act since 2003. The northern Australian ports of Townsville, Cairns, Darwin and Broome are all listed along with a dozen other ports along with electricity, water, gas and other infrastructure assets. There is no publicly known direction by the Home Affairs Minister that will cause the current downsized Cairns Shipping Development project to be expanded or override the Reef 2050 plan BAN on future expansion of Cairns sea port.

The new Commonwealth July 2018 Security of Critical Infrastructure Act requires the port owners to report any changes to the port, to the Commonwealth's Secretary for Home Affairs, where the Minister may cause the port owners to act if there is a risk to national security. The Act may help secure some HMAS Cairns expansion and maintenance, but it is not certain. The navy will do what the navy needs, but this alone will not cause expansion of the shipping channel to maximize earnings from cruise shipping and other port activities.

Cairns Port Development Inc. President Ron crew OAM, thanks the retired Lieutenant General John Grey who represents Advance Cairns, for their work to escalate the Australian Governments understanding of the capacity of Cairns port to act as a maintenance hub for an increasing presence by the Australian and US Navy at Manus Island in PNG, which is set to become Australia's most northern navy base.

In the fullness of time, increasing activity at Manus Island may develop, but for now there is no certainty that the activity will convert into the type of business that the Cairns shipyard companies need, to underpin their expansion. We would appreciate confirmation from the Defence and Home Affairs Ministers, and greater detail around the role that the port of Cairns and HMAS Cairns may play.

Critically, no Commonwealth funding for the Cairns Shipping Development project has been promised, as the Commonwealth has done for the Townsville port project.

The real issue for Cairns port is the Reef 2050 plan. The plan unnecessarily forces marine sediment to come on land, instead of being re-located in the harbour area, that does not harm the reef. Bringing the marine sediment on land massively increases the cost.

The Reef 2050 plan also bans any future capital expansion of the shipping channel, a travesty especially now the current project has been cut to one-quarter of the original size by Ports North. Even the Voyager Class cruise ship, which will be the most dominant cruise ship in Australian waters within seven years, will not be able to come into the port. Not allowing the Voyager class, at 310 metres long, means we are effectively cutting off our noses to spite our face, because the downscaled project only caters for ships that are 300 metres long.

We ask that Mr. Entsch provide evidence that the Minister for the Environment will amend the Reef 2050 plan, so that Cairns port can expand for cruise shipping and other shipping as the city grows.

ENDS

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*Cairns Port Development Inc. (CPD Inc.) is not-for-profit and community based.*

*We live and work beside the Great Barrier Reef, applying world's best standards to protect it.*

*The organisation was incorporated in 2015 in reaction to the Reef 2050 Plan and Sustainable Ports Development Act that forces an economic cap on regional growth. Our 'Nationbuilder' campaign platform has over 11,400 active followers. Further information can be downloaded from this link: <http://www.cairnsp.org.au>*