



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

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Cairns Port Demands Commonwealth Support

Cairns Port Development Inc. (CPDI), an organisation of concerned citizens working towards the long over-due modernisation of Cairns Sea Port, has urged the Commonwealth Government to accept that it must play a positive role by committing at least \$100m to the Cairns Shipping Development Project and partnering with the State to deliver the project.

Prospects of the Cairns Shipping Development project proceeding are heavily impacted by the Commonwealth Governments Reef 2050 Plan ban on offshore placement. In effect, cost of onshore placement, while potentially being recovered in the long term, will at least double the immediate cost of the project.

Minister for the Environment, Hon. Greg Hunt has stated in correspondence to CPDI that the Reef 2050 Plan does not prevent the Project proceeding. CPDI. has responded by demanding the Commonwealth funds at least \$100m to ensure the project proceeds or the Ministers statement appears plainly false and misleading.

A spokesperson for CPDI makes the following points:

1. If the Commonwealth Government does not provide this funding, there is a moral responsibility to compensate the Far North Queensland region for major loss of future income that will amount to billions of dollars.
2. The Commonwealth Government, despite scientific evidence that the offshore placement involved would not affect the Great Barrier Reef near Cairns, made the critical decision to ban offshore placement. Subsequently it must accept the severe consequences for the development of

the Port of Cairns by becoming a partner with the Queensland Government and provide part funding the Port's upgrade.

3. The Cairns Seaport also plays a critical role in the wider regional economy. Respected regional business economist Bill Cummings said that "Although reef tourism is an important part of the Cairns' economy, it is not threatened by the deepening of the port". "There is a need to take into account the interests of the 80% plus of employment in the region not related to tourism".
4. Apart from the benefits to the Cairns economy of a more efficient Port for cruise and cargo vessels, making a contribution to the upgrading of Cairns Seaport is very consistent with the objectives of the Defence White Paper adopted by the Government that is reported to provide for further investment in the Port of Cairns as Australia's strategic north eastern naval defence operations centre, estimated to be \$2bn over time and involving the location of 3,000 personnel.
5. The broader public know how important this project is to the regional economy. Recent professional surveying indicates that there is overwhelming support for upgrading the Seaport with 82% 'for' the project.
6. The recently re-elected Mayor of Cairns, with 66% of the popular vote, supports the Cairns Seaport project as it affects the vital interests of the region.
7. Upgrading the Cairns Seaport will be a very big issue in the forthcoming federal election.
8. Cairns Port Development Inc., purposefully established in 2015 when the project began to stall, delivered a petition to the Queensland Parliament, raising over 6000 signatures in three weeks. It now has over 10,000 supporters who will in turn support federal election candidates that can fully commit to the long over-due upgrade of Cairns Seaport as an urgent matter.

Cairns Port Development Inc are calling for certainty and a direct investment rather than funding from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. The organisation is also requesting support for an independent review of the Cairns Shipping Development Project Environmental Impact Study being produced by the proponent, Ports North a Queensland Government owned corporation.

Ends

For further interview opportunities, contact: E: admin@cairnsport.org.au
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