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**Cairns Shipping Development Project on cruise control**

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**Saturday, December 15, 2018**

**Cairns Shipping Development Project on cruise control**

The Palaszczuk Government has approved a business case for the Cairns Shipping Development Project, backing a $127 million jobs bonanza for Far North Queensland.

Member for Cairns Michael Healy said the upgrade to the Port of Cairns would open major economic opportunities across the region.

“This project passed one of the most rigorous environmental reviews in Australia, and now we have looked at the numbers and they also stack up,” Mr Healy said.

“By increasing the size and number of cruise ships and other vessels able to berth in Cairns, the project will provide an estimated $850 million boost for Far North Queensland.

“Passenger spending on shore, port charges and associated supplies and servicing activity will all generate opportunities for the regional economy.”

Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey said the project would accommodate an increase of about 103 cruise ships through the Port of Cairns annually by 2031.

“Based on the numbers in the business case, this project could support up to 800 new jobs during construction and up to 2700 direct and indirect jobs by 2031,” Mr Bailey said.

Mr Bailey said the upgraded channel would also enable future expansion of the HMAS Cairns Navy base, improve access and efficiency for bulk cargo and larger visiting Navy vessels and provide increased resilience for the Port against extreme weather events.

The Cairns Shipping Development Project involves dredging up to one million cubic metres of sediment from the port’s existing navigation channel and placing the material on two land sites, as well as upgrades to the main wharves to continue servicing the larger cruise ships.

Ports North Chairman Russell Beer said he was proud of Ports North’s achievement in providing a workable, sensible compromise to the Cairns Shipping Development Project which has been six years in development.

“The positive impact it will have on the Cairns economy cannot be understated – from creating jobs through to boosting local business across multiple sectors, thousands of locals will reap the benefits of a transformed Cairns Port,” he said.

Mr Bailey said the project aligned well with key Palaszczuk Government objectives for Queensland, including:

* Supporting economic development in North Queensland, particularly through infrastructure, investment and tourism
* Protecting the Great Barrier Reef
* Supporting Queensland economic transition from reliance on the resources sector to tourism-related industries by maximising existing tourism infrastructure and opening up new tourism and business opportunities
* Delivering more resilient state infrastructure and strengthening regionally significant transport infrastructure
* Creating regional jobs
* Growing the Cairns defence and maritime related industries.

Ports North’s Project Team is now working through the detailed planning, design and downstream approvals phase as well as securing specialist consultants and contractors to deliver the works.

Tenders for the contract to dredge material for the Cairns Shipping Development Project are expected to close on 19 December.

Dredging will occur over a 12-week period.

Ports North plans to undertake dredging and wharf upgrade works in 2019 with a final project completion in 2020.

 For more information on the project, visit [www.portsnorth.com.au](http://www.portsnorth.com.au/) (external site) ( http://www.portsnorth.com.au/ )

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