

Investment Opportunity Brief

Cairns Marine Precinct Common User Facility

STRATEGICALLY PLACED. MARKET ALIGNED. INVESTMENT READY.



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Message from the CEO

The Cairns Marine Precinct is entering a defining new chapter, with an opportunity that is both significant and timely. The Common User Facility (CUF) will transform the precinct enabling substantial growth supported by strong government investment to unlock increased capacity and capability for commercial, Defence, and other emerging maritime sectors.

This opportunity comes at a crucial moment for Australia. Maritime capability is accelerating, and the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly central to security, trade, and industry development. Cairns is well positioned to lead this shift. Its strategic location, established marine industries, and skilled workforce place it at the heart of regional maritime activity and gives the precinct a competitive advantage few ports can match. These strengths now anchor the next phase of expansion.

With more than \$300 million already committed across state and federal governments, the CUF provides a strong foundation for private sector participation. This public investment creates the platform for a capable partner to bring capital, delivery expertise, operational capability and commercial discipline to the project, expanding the precinct's ability to maintain, repair and overhaul Australia's growing and diverse Defence fleet, commercial vessels and the superyacht sector.

Ports North is committed to working with a partner that can contribute to the precinct's capability, capacity and long-term success. The preferred partner will

bring the expertise and investment needed to help shape the CUF through to delivery and operation, while working closely with marine service providers, industry leaders and government stakeholders to accelerate the development and commercialisation of new maritime capabilities.

The vision for the Cairns Marine Precinct is clear: accelerate commercial growth, develop high-value capability and capacity, and deliver long-term returns through a strategically positioned maritime asset. For the right partner, the CUF offers scale, strong demand fundamentals and a compelling long-term tenure and growth trajectory. It presents a rare opportunity to co-invest in, design, build and operate critical maritime infrastructure in Northern Australia and the Asia-Pacific.



RICHARD STEVENSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



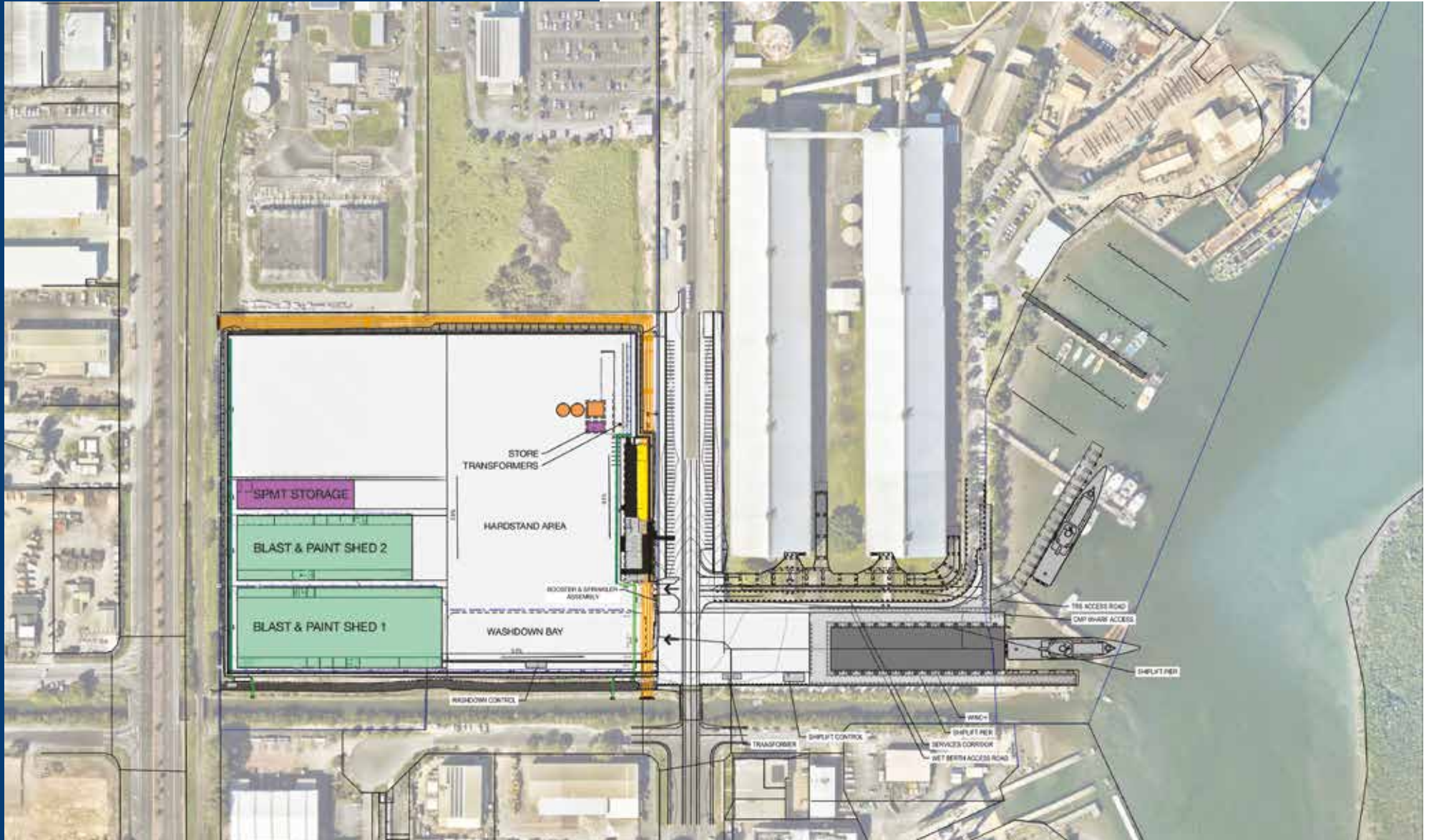


Investment Characteristics

The key characteristics of the investment opportunity are:

Available Public Funds:	In the order of \$300M.
Operating Lease term:	Multi-decade, negotiated to reflect the scale of investment committed by the proponent and to support sustainable returns on that investment.
Port Land:	~67,000m ² greenfield and brownfield land centrally located in the Cairns Marine Precinct has been made available as a potential location for the CUF. Ports North is open to considering alternative and innovative solutions and locations within the Cairns Marine Precinct.
Preliminary Project Approvals:	Preliminary environmental and developmental planning progress based on the reference project is available for the market to consider. This includes early-stage design maturity, geotechnical analysis and other derisking activities.
Development Phasing:	Flexibility in the phased development of the CUF can be accommodated to support the long-term success of the facility.

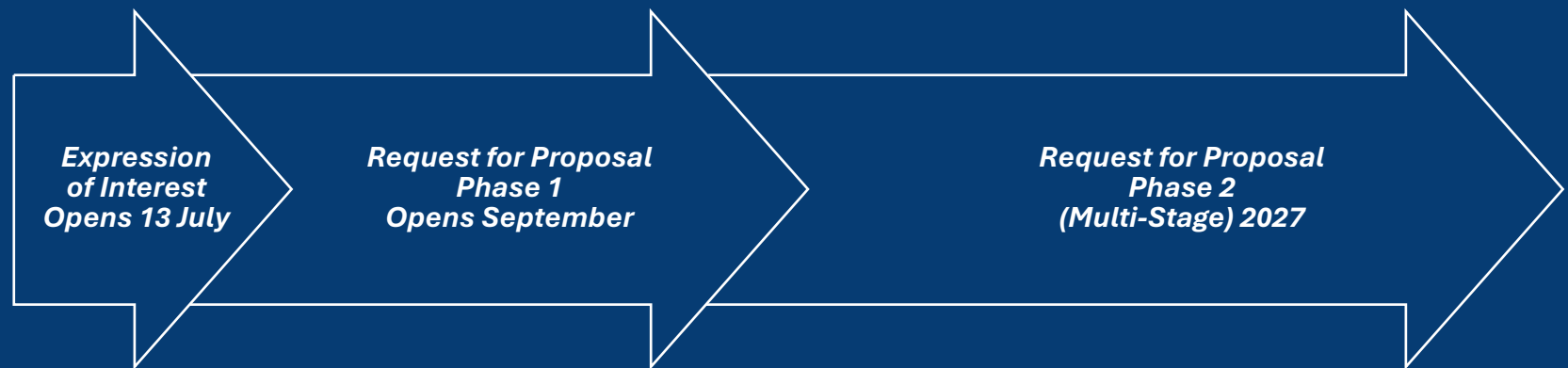
Scope of the fully developed Common User Facility



CMP-CUF Procurement Process Overview

The CMP-CUF procurement process invites proponents to submit proposals to deliver the CUF through an FDBOM delivery model. This includes Finance (co-funding), Design, Build, Operation and Maintenance.

To maximise market participation in the delivery of the CMP-CUF, Ports North has designed the process to encourage the formation of consortiums or other commercial arrangements.



Expression of Interest (EOI) Phase

Submissions should include:

- Capability statements;
- Case studies showing involvement in similar infrastructure delivery projects; and
- CVs for key personnel with relevant infrastructure delivery experience.

Organisations that submit an EOI may opt-in to having their contact details, areas of specialisation and capabilities made available to all participants in the RFP phase to facilitate the market formation process.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Phase

Phase 1

- Submissions from participants on how they will deliver the FDBOM project delivery method for the CMP-CUF.
- Suitable proponents are assessed and shortlisted.

Phase 2 (Multi-stage)

- Further detail required on how participants will deliver the full FDBOM project delivery method.
- Submissions will be assessed and shortlisted to approximately two participants.
- Shortlisted participants will be invited to progress to final submissions.
- Final submissions will be evaluated and the preferred proponent announced.



Core Principles

1. Strategic Positioning

Located in Northern Australia's primary maritime gateway, the facility provides direct access to Asia-Pacific commercial and Defence markets, positioning investors within established and growing demand corridors.

2. Integrated Delivery Model covering Finance (co-funding), Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (F,D,B,OM)

A co-funding model aligning public sector land, governance, and capital with private sector capital and expertise to design, deliver, and operate the facility under a defined commercial framework.

3. Long-Term Commercial Tenure

Structured around a long-term lease arrangement, providing investors with secure tenure, operational control, and direct exposure to asset performance, while Ports North retains land ownership and strategic oversight.



6. Sustainable Long-Term Value

A strategic infrastructure asset designed to deliver sustainable economic returns, support regional capability and workforce development, and align with long-term environmental and industry resilience objectives.

5. Operational and Commercial Flexibility

A defined development framework with flexibility for investors to influence design, operating models, service offerings, and staged expansion, ensuring responsiveness to market demand and evolving industry requirements.

4. Integrated Marine Capability

Co-location of complementary marine services within a single precinct to reduce operational friction, improve utilisation of shared infrastructure, and support complex, multi-user marine activity.

A large white yacht is positioned inside a massive industrial shipyard. The yacht is centered in the frame, facing the viewer. Above it, several large yellow overhead cranes span the width of the facility. The shipyard's interior is characterized by high ceilings and steel structural elements. The floor is a smooth, light-colored concrete. The background shows the open bay doors of the shipyard, revealing a glimpse of the outside world.

**A next-generation
marine hub,
strategically
positioned and
delivered through
a development
model, providing
long-term
commercial
tenure, integrated
capability,
and efficient,
high-performance
operations across the
precinct.**

Project background

Global and regional demand for marine precincts with modern ship-lifting and handling capability is growing, driven by expanding Defence construction and sustainment programs, increased border protection activity, and larger, more complex commercial fleets. Growing demand for maritime services is driving the need for facilities capable of servicing a broader range of vessels and supporting future industry demand.

Ports North has identified the development of a Common User Facility (CUF) as a cornerstone of its long-term strategy for the Port of Cairns. The CUF is a key initiative under the *30 Year Two-Port Master Plan*, aimed at establishing Cairns as a leading centre for maritime maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO). The facility is designed to provide shared, scalable infrastructure that can be accessed by multiple operators, supporting collaboration, industry development, and efficient use of capital investment.

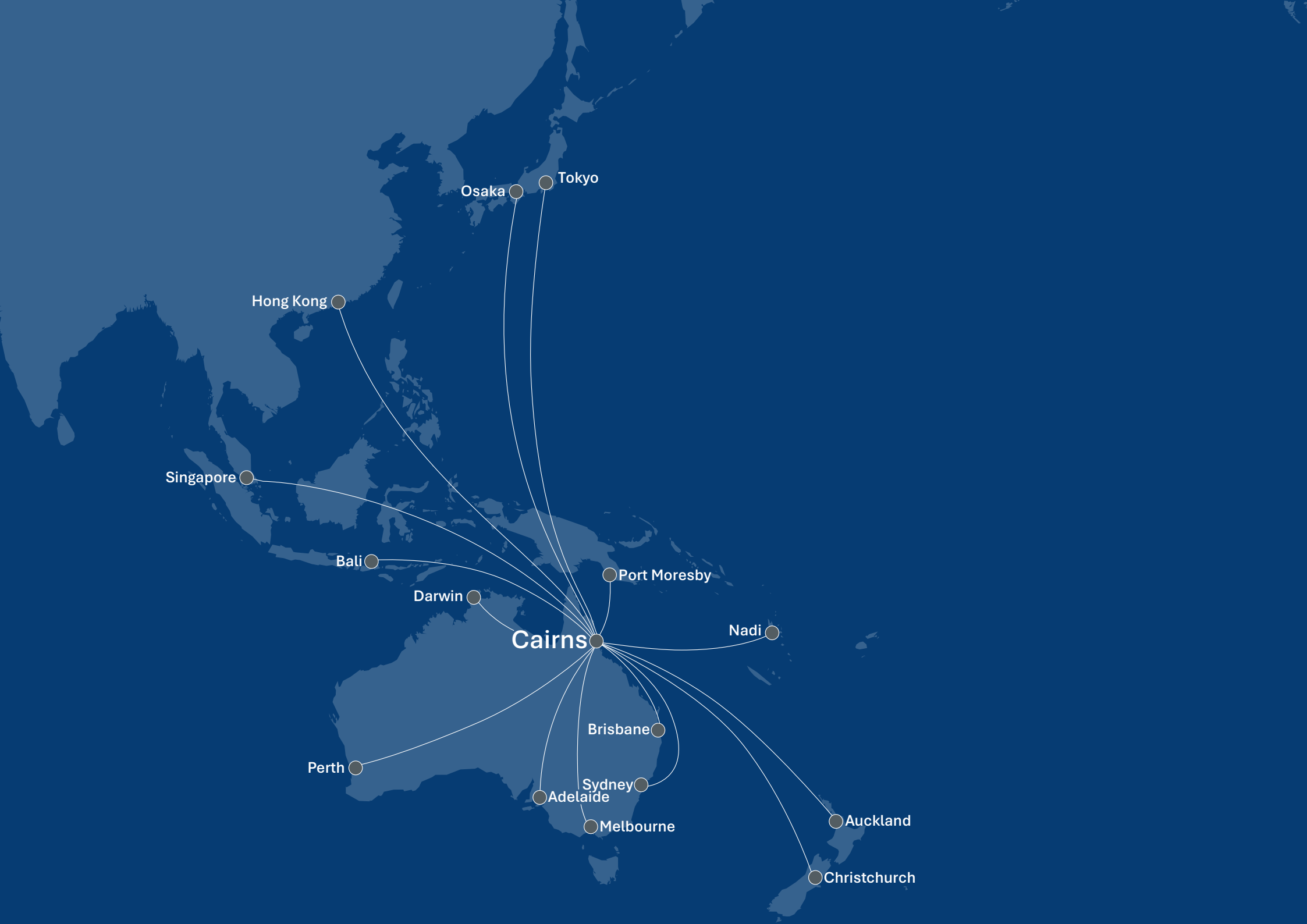
The CUF is envisaged to significantly expand the capability and capacity of the Cairns Marine Precinct to meet future demand from commercial operators, Defence programs, and emerging maritime industries. Supported by government funding, this will deliver a substantial uplift in infrastructure, including a 5,000 tonne ship lift, expanded hardstand areas, climate-controlled blasting and painting facilities, and increased wet berth capacity.

These improvements will strengthen Cairns' ability to service vessels of varying size and complexity, while reinforcing its established role as home to HMAS Cairns, the Royal Australian Navy's Regional Maintenance Centre North-East and a large and diverse commercial fleet. Together, the CUF and supporting precinct infrastructure will underpin a resilient marine services hub capable of supporting long-term industry growth, skilled employment, and regional economic development.





Image courtesy of the Australian Department of Defence/Luersen Australia



Why Cairns?

Australia's Northern Maritime Gateway

Cairns combines strategic location, established capability, and a skilled maritime workforce, positioning the region as a natural hub for Northern Australia's marine, Defence, and commercial activity.



Strategic Asia-Pacific location

Positioned on major Defence, commercial shipping, cruise, and superyacht routes linking the Western Pacific, South East Asia, and North America.



A leading maritime, maintenance, repair and sustainment hub for Northern Australia

A year round, established, maritime workforce of more than 4,600 people across approximately 270 organisations, servicing Defence, border protection, commercial shipping, tourism, and superyacht operations.



Home to HMAS Cairns

The Royal Australian Navy's northern base and a key element of Australia's Asia-Pacific maritime posture and sustainment capability.



Established and diverse supply chain

A mature ecosystem of engineering, manufacturing, logistics, and technical service providers developed over decades of marine industry demand.



Dedicated training and workforce development

Supported by the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College, delivering specialised maritime training and skills pathways aligned to industry needs.



High growth marine economy

Strong and diversified demand across Defence, commercial, and tourism sectors, reinforced by significant government backed expansion of the Cairns Marine Precinct.



Strong aviation and transport connectivity

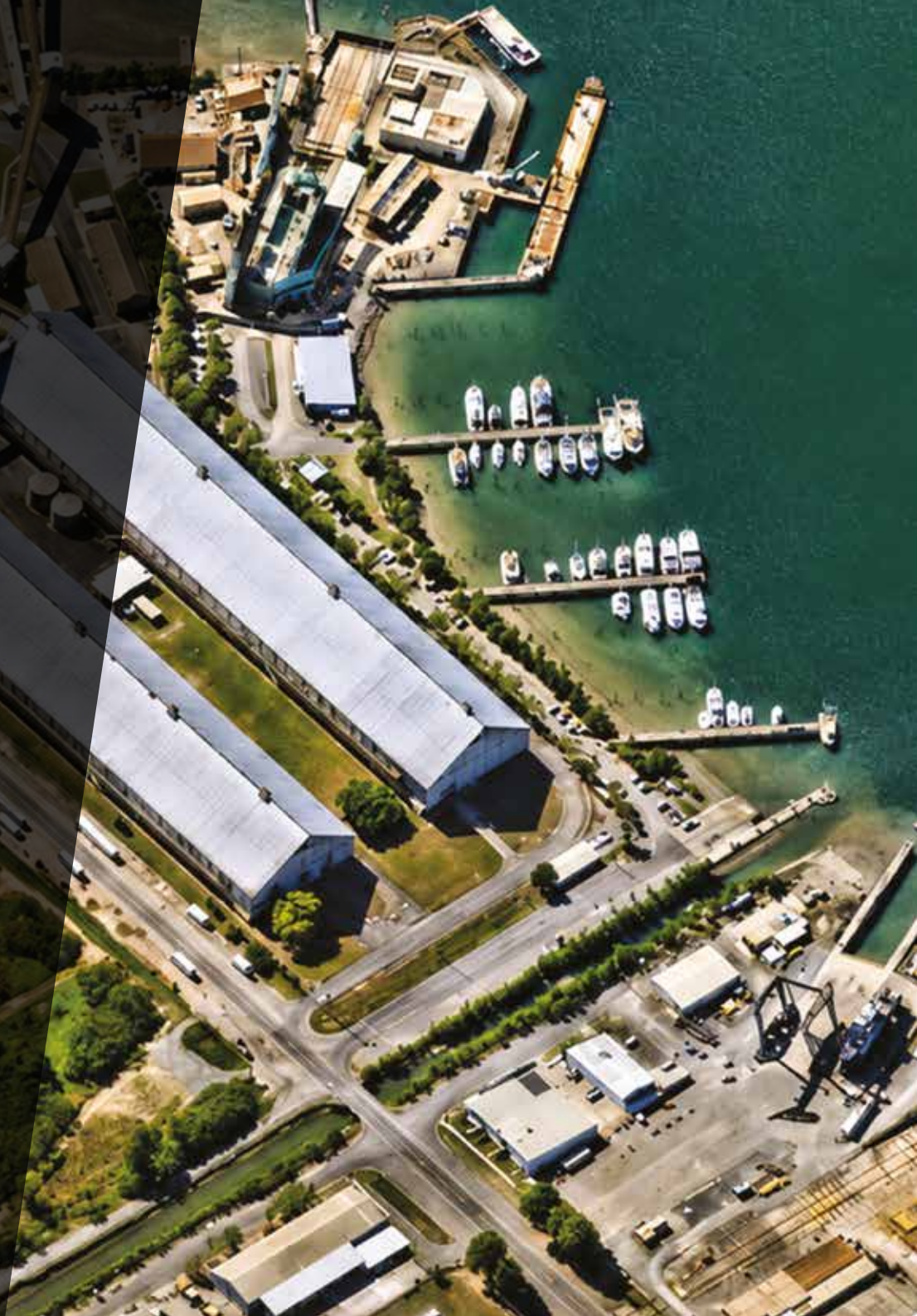
National and international air links that support tourism, marine services, workforce mobility, and trade, reinforcing Cairns' role as a strategic regional hub.

Precinct Overview

The Cairns Marine Precinct is an established and strategically significant maritime hub, supporting commercial, Defence, and tourism vessel operations across Northern Australia and the broader Asia-Pacific region. With decades of continuous development, the precinct has evolved into a fully integrated marine services ecosystem, bringing together shipyards, specialist contractors, supply chain providers, and maritime support industries within a single, highly accessible location.

The new Common User Facility (CUF) builds on this mature industrial base, expanding the precinct's capacity and enabling larger scale and more complex vessel maintenance activities. The full project scope includes delivery of a ship lift and the full development of approximately 40,000 m² of hardstand, 2 blast and paint sheds, supported by wet berth capacity, self-propelled modular transporter (SPMT) vessel transport, and dedicated, environmentally compliant wash down infrastructure. These capabilities will service unmet demand across cargo, towage, commercial fishing, charter, workboat, and high value tourism sectors, while also providing critical sustainment infrastructure for Defence, Border Force, and allied partner vessels.

Collectively, the CUF and the broader precinct position Cairns as a high-performance, multisector marine hub capable of supporting commercial and government fleets and underpinning long-term regional growth, sovereign capability, and industry resilience.



About the location

The Precinct occupies a highly strategic position within Cairns' established marine and port environment and is less than fifteen minutes from Cairns International Airport. Its proximity to key seaport operations places the precinct at the centre of the city's core marine logistics and services network.

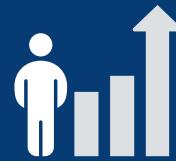
This colocation delivers clear commercial advantages, providing immediate access to critical supply chain partners, technical services, and port infrastructure. Direct land and water access enables efficient vessel

movements, reduces turnaround times, and supports reliable, cost-effective operations for a wide range of commercial and government users.

The site's connectivity, operational efficiency, and integration with existing port activities enhances its attractiveness within the marine precinct. Its location supports scalable operations, long-term asset utilisation, and streamlined service delivery. These are key attributes for investors seeking stable, infrastructure backed growth opportunities.



170,000+
POPULATION



1-2%
ANNUAL
POPULATION
GROWTH



2,400 +
VESSEL
MOVEMENTS
PER YEAR



1.19M
TONNES
OF CARGO
PER YEAR



This project is about far more than infrastructure. It is about materially increasing capability and capacity across the region, strengthening sovereign maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services, and enabling local industry to scale with confidence. It will drive long-term economic opportunity, deepen supply chains, and deliver enduring benefits for Far North Queensland.



BENJAMIN KIDSTON
CHAIR PORTS NORTH

Precinct Benefits

The benefits of the Cairns Marine Precinct stem from its ability to meet both the **current** and **future** needs of Australia's rapidly expanding marine, Defence, commercial, and superyacht sectors. By providing increased capacity and capability to service vessels operating across Australasia and around the world, the precinct unlocks new markets for maintenance, refit, and sustainment while strengthening the region's long-term economic and strategic position.



Enhanced capability, capacity and competitiveness

The Common User Facility (CUF) will directly strengthen Cairns Marine Precinct's ability to remain a leading maritime centre in Northern Australia, addressing infrastructure constraints and enabling the region to attract future contracts and major marine industry opportunities.



Growth in Maritime Operations

The precinct will expand high value marine, defence, and manufacturing activity, and play a significant role in supporting long-term growth of maritime operations in Far North Queensland.



Major job creation and workforce development

More than 5,000 local jobs will be supported across the marine industry and supply chains, with over 400 construction jobs created during CUF development and more than 1,000 flow on jobs across the local economy.



Platform for long-term Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul growth

The Common User Facility (CUF) is a large, shared maritime infrastructure project designed to support maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) work for vessels in the Cairns Marine Precinct.



Attraction of domestic and international investment

Improved infrastructure along with expanded capacity and capability to position Cairns to secure new defence, commercial, and superyacht contracts, driving reinvestment in downstream industries and strengthening the region's global competitiveness.



Support for Defence and national security

The precinct underpins current and future Defence capability plans, enabling the Federal Government to meet national security obligations through increased in water sustainment and expanded MRO capacity.



Alignment with state and 2026 National Defence Strategy

The Common User Facility will support delivery of the Queensland Defence Industries 10-Year Roadmap and the Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018–2028, while aligning with national priorities to recapitalise the surface fleet and develop the Army's littoral manoeuvre capability – positioning Cairns as a critical northern gateway for maritime operations and Asia-Pacific engagement.

The Common User Facility

With Far North Queensland MRO providers already operating at or near capacity, the Common User Facility will provide the scalable infrastructure needed to capture future demand from Defence, commercial operators and superyachts across the Indo-Pacific region.



Defence, Border Force & Allied Forces

Home to HMAS Cairns and RMC North-East, the CUF will provide critical maintenance capability for Australian Defence, Border Force, and allied partner vessels.



Commercial Shipping

The CUF will unlock demand from cargo, towage, fishing, charter and for vessel maintenance.



Tourism

The CUF will provide an opportunity for increased maintenance activities on a wide array of high value tourism vessels, including superyachts, capturing an increased market that is currently constrained by capacity.



Ship Lift

Increased vessel lift capability for Defence and commercial vessels.



SPMT

Modular transporter for precision vessel movement.



Wet Berth

Alongside berth for vessel in-water maintenance.



2 Blast and Paint Sheds

Enclosed all-weather blast and paint sheds



Multi Use Hardstand

Capacity for simultaneous multi-vessel out-of-water maintenance operations across the precinct.





The vision for the Cairns Marine Precinct is clear:
accelerate commercial growth and opportunities, develop high value capability and capacity, and deliver long-term returns through a strategically positioned maritime asset. The precinct offers scale, strong demand fundamentals, and a compelling long-term growth trajectory, presenting a rare opportunity for investors and operators seeking to establish a durable presence in Northern Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

Image courtesy of the Australian Department of Defence/Luersen Australia



Development Opportunities

The Common User Facility (CUF) provides a structured pathway for proponents to co-fund, develop, and operate a long-term strategic asset within the Cairns Marine Precinct. Guided by an established development framework, the CUF supports coordinated precinct growth while allowing for considered input into future growth.

A defined precinct plan provides investment confidence, supported by a coordinated approach to infrastructure, services, and long-term planning. Within this framework, proponents can align their capabilities with emerging demand across Defence, commercial marine, and broader Asia-Pacific activity.

The development model enables participation in a strategically located asset at the centre of northern Australia's expanding marine economy. It supports collaboration across the precinct, strengthens utilisation of shared infrastructure, and ensures the facility can adapt over time to changing requirements and industry conditions.



Strategic advantages of collocated capability

Consolidated expertise across the precinct

Bringing operators, service providers, and technical specialists together in a coordinated environment strengthens the overall capability of the Cairns Marine Precinct. This concentration of skills supports more complex projects, reduces fragmentation, and enhances competitiveness in national and international markets.

Proximity and operational efficiency

Locating complementary services in close proximity will reduce vessel movement, turnaround times, and logistical overheads. This improves coordination between operators, increases scheduling reliability, and supports stronger utilisation of shared infrastructure.

A unified development vision with commercial flexibility

The CUF framework provides clear direction for precinct growth while preserving flexibility for proponents to influence how the facility evolves. Investors can shape design outcomes, operational models, and service offerings, ensuring the facility remains responsive to operational requirements and future industry trends.

Innovation and future growth potential

The CUF will support innovation through the adoption of advanced marine engineering, digital systems, and sustainable operational practices. This positions the precinct to attract new markets, support emerging capabilities, and remain competitive as global marine and Defence requirements evolve.

Innovation Opportunities for the Cairns Marine Precinct

The Common User Facility (CUF) creates a strong platform for ongoing innovation across marine, Defence, and commercial sectors. Its design, location, and development model enable the development and scaling of new technologies, advanced service approaches, and future-focused capabilities.

Key opportunities include:

Marine technology and digital systems:

Integration of tools such as digital twins, predictive maintenance, remote diagnostics, and asset management platforms to lift efficiency and service quality.

Advanced manufacturing and repair:

Adoption of automation, robotics, composite materials, and precision engineering to support more complex, higher value marine projects.

Sustainable operations:

Testing and deployment of low-emission fuels, energy-efficient systems, waste-reduction technologies, and green infrastructure to meet evolving environmental expectations.

Workforce and skills development:

Shared training, simulation-based learning, and specialist skills programs to build a strong regional talent pipeline.

Collaborative research and partnerships:

Joint industry-government initiatives to accelerate innovation in vessel design, maintenance technologies, and emerging marine capabilities.

Flexible Infrastructure for future needs:

The precinct's development model allows for modular expansion, adaptable layouts, and the integration of new service offerings as market demands evolve. This ensures the CUF remains relevant, competitive, and capable of supporting future marine and Defence requirements.



Contact us



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More information: www.portsnorth.com.au/ports-north-projects/cairns-marine-precinct/



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