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Research Director  
Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House  
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### **Sustainable Ports Development Bill 2015 – Submission to the Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources Committee**

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) welcome the opportunity to comment on the Sustainable Port Development Bill particularly in relation to the Trinity Inlet, Cairns port. As the Regional Tourism Organisation, TTNQ is the advocate of the largest industry in the Tropical North region.

The Cairns and Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) region has long been recognised domestically and internationally as the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. An estimated 800,000 visitors gain access to the Great Barrier Reef via commercial tour operations in the financial year 2013/14, as recorded by the Environmental Management Charge collected by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

The commercial reef fleet utilising the Trinity Inlet marina is substantial and a vital economic driver to the broader Tropical North Queensland economy. As the number one industry within TNQ, tourism injects \$3billion into the region's economy annually and is largest direct employer.

The Great Barrier Reef is the drawcard that brings visitors from around Australia and the globe to the Tropical North. Identified as the Hero Experience for the region, it is also the lifeblood for the many and varied commercial operations providing access to this iconic experience.

A program of sustainable dredging of Trinity Inlet is essential to ensure the security of reef operations in the Cairns area and paramount for the economic growth of the region. However, this dredging program must not impact on the health of the Great Barrier Reef as this World Heritage area is critical for the ongoing success of the TNQ region as the world's best destination to engage with nature.

A sustainable program of dredging that does not impact on the Reef also is required for existing cruise ship operations to continue. Boutique cruise operations are well suited to the port of Cairns, especially if they can be attracted to home base in the port.

In summary, TTNQ supports a sustainable program of dredging for Trinity Inlet that would allow existing operations and necessary expansions to occur in the future. This sustainable program needs to ensure the Great Barrier Reef is not in any way harmed by the dredging process or its disposal.

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