



14 February 2019

Attn: Committee Secretary
Transport and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By email: tpwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Weipa Town Authority – Submission - Inquiry into a Sustainable Queensland Intrastate Shipping Industry

Weipa Town Authority (WTA) welcomes the opportunity to provide the following information for the committee to consider as part of the inquiry into a sustainable Queensland intrastate shipping industry.

The Port of Weipa has played a vital role in the development of Weipa mining operations and enables the shipping of millions of tonnes of Bauxite to the refinery at Gladstone.

Weipa's port is integral to the supply of goods, services and support for the community of Weipa. In a remote area of Queensland that is isolated for long periods during the wet season, shipping is the only means of resupply at times for the township of Weipa and the broader Cape York community including the neighbouring Indigenous communities of Napranum and Mapoon.

The view of the WTA is that an expansion of the intrastate shipping industry will safeguard the long term viability of the Weipa Port and provide long term economic development benefits for Weipa, and the greater Cape York Area.

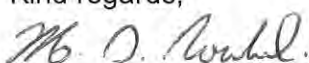
Some of the opportunities for increased shipping through the Weipa Port are –

- The cost and the reliability of road and air freight make it non-viable for many industries to start up. Having a transport hub based at Weipa where product and produce can be received, stored and transported out by sea at an affordable cost would open the gates for investment into the region. Opportunities in industries like aquaculture, agriculture, forestry, and bio-fuel production could all become viable in the Weipa area if multiple (reliable and cost effective) transport and supply options in place.
- There is an opportunity to further develop Weipa as the main Cape York transport hub, with connections to major cities and also transport 'spokes' in the smaller coastal communities which cannot be accessed by large shipping. The development of 'shipping highways' around the northern coast line where all remote coastal communities can benefit from a link to other parts of Australia will also encourage greater opportunities for these communities to develop new and expanded business and industries, which are currently not considered viable.

- The growth of tourism across Cape York presents huge opportunity for intrastate shipping coming into Weipa for both freight and passenger shipping. Passenger shipping could link various northern locations, for example Cairns, Weipa, Darwin and Gove and facilitate the growth of eco, cultural and adventure tourism. Catering for cruise ships, marina developments and marine industry expansion would all be very possible in Weipa.
- With increased shipping comes the opportunity for marine related industries to be considered, whether it is resupply, repairs and maintenance or major works requiring haul out. Crew transfers and the opportunity for shore leave is also possible. Weipa is currently undertaking work to expand the amount of available industrial land. There are real opportunities in Weipa for marine support industries to grow, as intrastate shipping grows.
- Lifestyle improvements, job opportunities, and reducing the isolation caused by distance would all be positively impacted by increased shipping access. Communities across Cape York become isolated during the wet season (up to 5 months of the year) and can also be further limited due to tidal restrictions. Having infrastructure in place that supports more shipping to access these communities all year round would have a huge impact on them.
- With more shipping being able to access coastal communities it would be hoped that increased competition would also flow to more competitive pricing for goods and services. For example, communities across Cape York rely heavily on fuel being bulk transported by road. An expansion to fuel shipping should help to provide fuel at lower prices.
- Increased intrastate shipping will also have a flow on effect for the interstate and international shipping industry. Weipa has a harbour that has played a significant part in the economy of this State and as the only deep water western facing harbour it offers the opportunity for shipping products to other States and new overseas locations. This harbour does not have the limitations or the restrictions that shipping encounters by having to traverse the Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef, such incredibly significant environmental areas.
- With increased shipping around the coast line and the increased strategic importance of the region, it is anticipated that an increase to border protection and possibly defence would occur. An increase to federal and defence infrastructure spending flowing into the region will undoubtedly create huge long term economic and labour market benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this vitally important subject.

Kind regards,



Michael Rowland
Chair
Weipa Town Authority