



MEDIA RELEASE

Dredging Cairns Port – another Gladstone?

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Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) Marine Programs Coordinator Josh Coates has raised concerns regarding the Cairns Shipping Development Proposal.

“We are deeply concerned that if the Trinity Inlet dredging proposal goes ahead we could see environmental and human health impacts like those that were seen as a result of dredging in the Port of Gladstone.”

“In light of the news that minister Hunt has announced a new inquiry into the dredging and problems with the dredge wall in Gladstone harbour, and the Gladstone fisher’s court case which began yesterday, it is crucial that the public educate themselves on the Cairns dredging proposal.”

“We believe that minister Hunt is heading in the right direction with this latest inquiry in terms of his obligation to assess past mistakes to ensure they do not happen again. We can’t afford to rush into dredging in Cairns Port without the public knowing about the possible consequences”

“In Gladstone Repeated denial of the link between dredging and these impacts, along with failure to inform the public for two years of a major leak in the bund wall has led to accusations of ‘cover ups’ and misinformation. It has come to light that many reports and documents were available but not released to the public and investigators in a timely manner, with some important documents only being released years later.”

CAFNEC has published an article that outlines the environmental problems associated with dredging in Gladstone port and the lack of transparency in the way the Gladstone Ports Corporation handled the events. The article is available at: <http://caf nec.org.au/2014/01/cairns-port-dredging-proposal-another-gladstone/>

“The proposed Cairns Shipping Development Project in Trinity Inlet would require dredging of over 5 million cubic meters of potentially contaminated mud. Options such as dumping the spoil offshore in the Marine Park or dumping onshore are being discussed and all have major risks associated.”

“Supporters of the Cairns project point to economic benefits from larger cruise liners visiting Cairns, but there has been no evidence released to back up the figures they use. Larger cruise liners already visit Cairns and transfer passengers via the soon to be upgraded Yorkeys Knob terminal.”

“If this project goes ahead we risk destroying our already struggling seagrass beds, further muddying our Northern beaches, damaging our coral reefs and ruining our inshore commercial and recreational fishing.”

“Despite a \$40 million election commitment to fund the project, conservative estimates put the projected cost at well over \$80 million. We think that the community should start to ask the hard questions about whether or not this represents a wise use of taxpayers money. Surely there are better



ways to help out our tourism industry without putting at risk the natural environment that attracts tourists here in the first place.”

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