



Your ref:

Our ref: HBR99\_125522  
Enquiries: S Mulhall

The Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia  
PO BOX 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By Email: [jscna@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscna@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

## **INQUIRY INTO OPPORTUNITIES & METHODS FOR STIMULATING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

### Background

Kimberley Ports Authority (**KPA**) is a government trading enterprise responsible for managing the Port of Broome in North West Australia.

The Port of Broome (**Port**) hosted 13 large cruise ships in the 2016/2017 calendar year and expects to host 17 large cruise ships in the 17/18 calendar year.

Tourism WA has identified cruise ship tourism to be a growth industry with 20 new vessels being christened in 2015. In this regard it should be noted that the Port of Fremantle's cruise ship visits increased from 17 in 2012-2013 to 60 in 2016-2017. These visits are seen to have created 1,198 full time equivalent jobs and had a positive economic impact of \$251.69M on the local economy.

Tourism WA has further estimated that the 16/17 cruise shipping visits to the Port of Broome contributed to the creation of approximately 29 full time equivalent jobs and had a positive economic impact of \$6.71M on the local economy.

As a result of its ongoing engagement with the cruise ship industry, in particular Carnival Australia, KPA has been informed that whilst the Port and Town of Broome are preferred destinations for cruise ship passengers, the experience of some passengers who have visited Broome has been lower than expected.

### Obstacle to Growth

In discussions with Carnival Australia, KPA has identified that one of the contributing factors to the visitor experience to Broome is the restriction associated with berthing times. The reason that berthing times are restricted is that the entrance to the Broome port facility is tidally constrained due to several shoal areas centered around a large rock near the centre of the approach area called "Channel Rock" as identified on the enclosed plan.

Due to the existence of these obstructions vessels such as cruise ships are only able to enter or depart the Port on certain higher tides which effectively dictate the berthing /arrival times of such vessels. This can mean that passengers arrive late at night, very early in the morning, or the middle of the day rather than at the optimum cruising scheduled times, likewise sailing times are affected and the vessels stay in Port may be limited to a few hours. The restricted times alongside can result in cruise ship passengers not being able to access Broome's tourism offerings well. In this regard it should be noted that some of the iconic tourism experiences require visitors to take a small plane or drive out of Broome.

A further consequence of the large tides and the existing infrastructure at the Port of Broome that passenger access and egress to yachts and "white boats" from the existing wharf facility is at times extremely challenging again limiting the opportunities for these vessels to provide an optimum service.

#### Opportunity Identified

The cruise ship industry's clear preference is the carrying out of works to the main shipping channel to allow their vessels to come alongside at all tides. KPA has initiated a study to determine how KPA could respond to this challenge in the most cost effective manner. It is possible that the works will require the removal of Channel Rock and some dredging. KPA would prefer to obtain the results of its studies before it committed to this as the only option.

In relation to small vessels accessing the town of Broome, an association by the name of "The Broome Marina Working Group" has been established and the Western Australian Government is considering options to improve the experience of small vessels wanting to access the town of Broome.

#### Benefits

A broader range of access times to the wharf will allow cruise ship passengers to access a greater range of activities in Broome, many of which are only available in the evening or at night. Examples include:

- the race round;
- night markets;
- stairway to the moon;
- the rodeo;
- Shinju events; and
- flights and tours which require a longer stay time.

Should the removal of Channel Rock and associated channel improvements be identified as the preferred option, then the improvements to the channel would have other benefits including:

- the removal of a navigational hazard which reduces the risk of injury to people, damage to the environment and vessels;
- reduced costs for Port users as they are able to take advantage of KPA's fees and charges structure by berthing in the morning;
- allowing the next generation of cruise ships which could reach 70,000t displacement to access the Port for greater periods of time.

Action being taken to stimulate tourism

In order to ensure that the works are actually required and can be carried out in a responsible manner, KPA is currently seeking funding to carry out a range of studies to determine the best way forward. Items for consideration include:

- range of work which needs to be done to achieve KPA's and the cruise ship's industry's objectives;
- potential costs;
- geotechnical environment; and
- potential environmental impact.

I thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and would welcome any queries to clarify this opportunity to stimulate tourism in Northern Australia.

Yours faithfully

Charles Kleiman  
*ACTING CEO*

*17 FEBRUARY 2017*