

5 January 2026



Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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

Dear Committee Secretary,

**RE: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works Inquiry – Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority—Great Barrier Reef Aquarium Redevelopment project, Townsville, Queensland**

I am writing on behalf of the Port of Townsville Limited (POTL) to express our support for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's (GBRMPA or Reef Authority) proposed redevelopment of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium which involves modernising the facility and extending its life cycle for another 30 years. As the trustee for the land on which the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium is proposed to be located, the Port seeks to express its continued support for this catalytic project and requests its submission be considered as part of the Inquiry by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

The Port of Townsville was founded in 1864, and for over 160 years has been, and will always be, a key collaborator, contributor and facilitator of change for the city of Townsville.

Sustainability is central to how we do business operating out of a unique and sensitive environmental setting alongside the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Our vision is to be Australia's Port for the Future, with a mission of "delivering sustainable prosperity". This is directly aligned with the mission of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in attracting sustainable tourism, education, research, and development opportunities.

Given Townsville's status as the home of the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), James Cook University (JCU), and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, we believe it is essential to reopen a showcase facility that reflects the city's position as the global epicentre of reef education, research, and protection. The proposed Great Barrier Reef Aquarium Redevelopment project is pivotal in achieving this goal, transforming it into one of the world's premier research, education and tourism attractions – a lifelong learning centre.

The economic benefits of the redeveloped Great Barrier Reef Aquarium for Townsville and Northern Australia are vast. It is projected to generate 1,388 jobs (387 jobs per annum), contribute \$564.1 million in economic activity, and welcome more than 165,000 visitors from its first year of opening. We understand that the project's scale of positive economic impacts, enhanced international recognition, and sustainable educational tourism opportunities is unparalleled.

We believe the redeveloped aquarium facility will not only provide more immersive, state-of-the-art, high-demand experiences but also set in motion the much-needed "domino-effect" of urban revitalization, private sector investment and economic uplift this part of the city centre and Waterfront Priority Development Area is primed for. We believe that the Reef Authority's proposal will deliver far more than just an Aquarium. It



will be a product that the city, state and country deserves in homage and service to one of the seven natural wonders of the world located right at our very doorstep. It is in this pursuit of delivering place-based outcomes for our communities (residents and visitors alike) that, as trustee for the land, we have been working closely and actively with the Reef Authority and Townsville City Council.

The Port of Townsville's support for the Reef Authority's Aquarium presence within Townsville is also reflected by our long-standing in-kind and financial contributions to its operations involving:

- Since the original Aquarium construction in 1986, the Port has provided a long-term lease to the Reef Authority over the Port's prime waterfront land at a peppercorn rate (current foregone market value rent of approximately \$188,122.50/annum – calculated at 9% of the land value being a 4645m<sup>2</sup> site and a moderate vacant land rate of \$450/m<sup>2</sup>) – with this arrangement to extend for decades ahead; and
- Payment of land tax outgoings of \$52,250 per annum for the site.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Australian Government's continued commitment for the delivery of the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium Redevelopment is a strong investment in the future of Townsville and Northern Australia. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our endorsement of this critical project to this Parliamentary Inquiry and look forward to hearing of the project's continued delivery efforts in 2026.

Should you have any further questions in relation to the Port's submission, please do not hesitate to contact me via phone [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,



**Drew Penny**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Port of Townsville Limited