

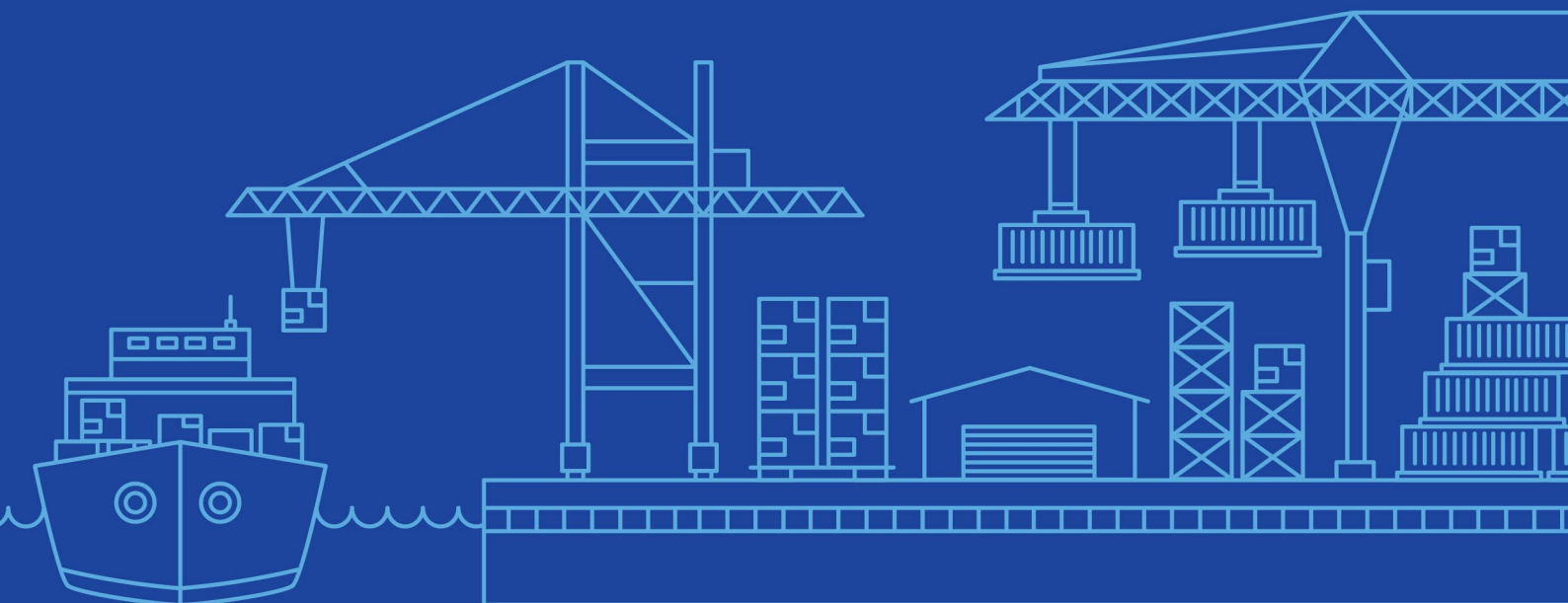


Ports Australia

Inquiry into Preparing for Emerging Industries across Northern Australia

**Ports Australia Response to Questions On Notice
from the Joint Standing Committee on Northern
Australia**

March 2026





Preparing for Emerging Industries Across Northern Australia

Response to questions by the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia during a public hearing on Friday 6 March 2026 at which Hon. Michael Gallacher, Chief Executive Officer, and Suzanne Fosbery, Director Industry Policy, from Ports Australia appeared.

Question on Page 12 of the Draft Transcript:

Senator McDonald: Do you have to hand the cost of containers at various northern Australian ports?

Response

As indicated at the hearing, Ports Australia does not centrally compile individual port prices. In general the individual websites of port authorities and port corporations provide information related to fees and charges for the reference of customers, however, the information detailed depends upon the port structure, including how many ports they operate and the commodities moving through each port. The variations between port services does not lend itself to a simple compilation document. In addition, fees and charges will change over time.

Ports Australia members have on their public website fees and charges for their respective ports:

Ports North has separate fees and charges for the ports they operate at the Port of Cairns, Cape Flattery, Karumba, Mourilyan, Skardon River, Quintell Beach, Thursday Island, Burketown and Cooktown.

North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation has separate fees and charges for their ports at Weipa, Abbot Point, Mackay and Hay Point.

Gladstone Ports Corporation has separate port charges listed for Gladstone, Rockhampton and Bundaberg.

Port of Townsville on their website has a breakdown of port charges for Townsville port.

Darwin Port on their website has tariff schedules for Darwin Port.

Pilbara Ports Authority has schedules of fees and charges for the ports of Ashburton, Dampier, Port Hedland and Varanus Island on their website.

Kimberley Ports Authority has a schedule of fees and charges on their website for the Port of Broome.

For the reference of the Committee Ports Australia asked economists to review import supply chain costs which once broken down by the below parts showed in early 2024 overall Port Charges (access to port and its infrastructure – wharf, channels, berths, etc) made up less than 5% of the import supply chain costs of importing a container from China (a significant proportion of our containers have China as the most recent country of origin) to the 5 largest Australian capital cities (Fremantle, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane). The work did not include Northern Australia ports which have a smaller share of container movements.

Blue water (ocean transport) charges made up just over 49% of the costs; with the remainder of the costs being a combination of port and land charges in China, and then once in Australia - local landside charges such as moving the container from the port to destination, quarantine and customs brokerage, as well as pilotage, towage and container terminal access.



Question on Page 12 of the Draft Transcript:

Senator McDonald: What my question was really getting to was how we encourage or incentivise shipping lines to stop at ports in Townsville, Darwin or, in the case of Mr Jackson's new project, Exmouth? What does Australia have to do to encourage that? Is it about cabotage? Is it subsidies? What would it be?

Response

As part of nationally significant land transport hubs supporting freight supply chains, Ports Australia supports incentivising Northern Australia investment through Commonwealth and state/territory government funding support, all governments lowering barriers to entry on investment decisions, government working with industry to support locally accessible skilled workers, training and tertiary education; as well as government led improved transport, water and digital connectivity.

As Ports Australia's written submission noted the thirty or so ports and terminals in Northern Australia already have and will continue to undertake significant infrastructure expansion projects, aimed at boosting throughput and in turn supporting the Australian economy.

Northern Australia ports and their investment partners, which include Federal, State and Northern Territory Governments, continue to invest substantial funds to develop maritime and associated landside infrastructure. Recent infrastructure projects include:

Gladstone Container Terminal - Gladstone Ports Corporation closed Registrations of Interest in March 2026 for a new container terminal.

Port of Mackay – construction of a new container depot has commenced.

East Arm Wharf, Darwin - A new container yard.

Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct, Darwin – A new precinct, including a wharf, offloading facility, and shipping channel dredging, aimed at renewable energy and advanced manufacturing.

Port of Dampier Cargo Wharf Projects - a new bridge to connect Dampier Cargo Wharf to Bulk Handling Facility, boosting direct shipping services. Includes two multi-user facilities - Dampier Bulk Handling Facility, Dampier Link Bridge, and major refurbishment of the existing Cargo Wharf.

Lumsden Point, Pilbara - New multi-user facilities and berths including two wharfs, a causeway and logistics hub.

Kimberley Marine Support Base - Floating wharf, dual causeway and bridge purpose-built to support mining, tourism, cargo, agriculture, and emerging shipping and vessels, including cruise ships, RoRo cargo vessels, container ships, and general cargo carriers.

Port of Townsville Channel Upgrade to widen the shipping channel and reclaim land for future Port development.

Bowen Wharf - A new jetty and public facilities.

Ports Australia is keen to see as part of the Federal Government's commitment to the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, the anticipated Freight Infrastructure Investment Framework and National Freight Resilience Plan in their delivery complement *Future Made in Australia*, *Northern Australia Action Plan 2024-2029*, the Regional Investment Framework and Infrastructure Policy Statement objectives to support supply chain infrastructure delivery across regional areas.