

TOWNSVILLE OCEAN TERMINAL

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SUBMISSION RESPONSE

RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

August 2008

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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Note: This submission response document has been prepared by means of duplicating the individual submission received and inserting response clauses where relevant.

1.1 CURRENT HOUSING CONTEXT IN THE TOWNSVILLE REGION

Departmental officers have reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement and concur with its assessment of the current housing context in the Townsville Region. While it is recognised that the housing and property market is tight and that sustained population growth will cause this situation to continue, the department has concerns that the Townsville Ocean Terminal Project will serve to exacerbate this situation given the potential influx of workers, particularly during the construction period.

Given this context, the department recommends that the proponent monitors housing availability and affordability in response to demand associated with the timing of the Townsville Ocean Terminal and other major projects in the Townsville area, and provides assistance for workers to secure short-term and permanent accommodation. Regular review of the housing situation is also recommended.

RESPONSE

A detailed examination of the impact of the project's workforce on the local accommodation market is presented in the Transpac Consulting Report - Impact of Project Construction Workforce on Accommodation at Appendix A26 in Volume 2. This assessment concludes that while the private rental market is tight, and is expected to remain tight into the foreseeable future, there is sufficient short-term tourist-related accommodation within the region (such as motels, caravan parks etc.) to meet the anticipated peak demands of project construction.

Notwithstanding this, it should be recognised that accommodation pressures arising from rapid population growth in the region is a reflection of the robust and dynamic economic circumstances of the past 5-10 years. These conditions have made the region attractive to investors and workers. In this regard, the Ocean Terminal project is a reflection of continued investor confidence in the region; and while economic growth poses challenges in areas such as economic and social infrastructure provisioning, it is economic growth that also underpins the improvements in economic welfare and the quality of life of the residents of Townsville and the North Queensland region in general.

The Proponent agrees that ongoing monitoring of housing availability and affordability may be useful and undertakes to work with the Department to establish an appropriate monitoring regime.