

SECTION 15

Social



15.0 Social

15.1 Introduction

Social values relevant to the Project area and surrounds are discussed in Chapter B.13 (Social Environment) of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Port has played a significant role in the economic development of Townsville and a significant role in supporting much of the prosperity in the region by providing product access to larger markets overseas and interstate.

The principal benefits of the Port Expansion Project (PEP) are expected to primarily result from the strengthening of Townsville's job and housing markets through additional direct and indirect employment provided by the PEP. Further indirect social benefits are expected to result from increased trade potential through greater port capacity resulting from the PEP.

This section provides information to address submissions received in response to the PEP EIS relating to social impacts.

Key matters raised from the submission process include:

- Indigenous employment opportunities
- adequacy of public consultation
- social impacts on Magnetic Island
- loss of business and tourism on Magnetic Island
- potential impacts on recreational fishing activities and publicly accessible areas
- impacts of PEP works and ongoing dredging on The Strand.

15.2 Response to Submissions

15.2.1 Indigenous employment opportunities

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs requested clarification on the Indigenous employment figures presented in the EIS. Section B.13.3.1 of the EIS identified the social and cultural areas of influence affecting the Project at the local, district, regional and state levels. The social impact assessment in the EIS was undertaken based on these study areas (refer to Figure 15.1). The Regional Study Area included the local government areas of Townsville, Hinchinbrook, Burdekin, Charters Towers, Palm Island, McKinlay, Richmond, Flinders, Cloncurry and Mount Isa. The District level is represented by the Townsville local government area. The Local Study Area included the Project area, the existing port and surrounding suburbs of South Townsville, parts of Railway Estate and Magnetic Island. The Local Study Area does not include Palm Island; however Palm Island and other suburbs of Townsville were included within the Regional Study Area.

The proportion of the Indigenous population of the District Study Area and Local Study Area is estimated to be approximately 6.1% and 4.9% of the total population (based on Queensland Treasury and Trade, *Queensland Regional Profiles – Townsville City Local Government Area*, February 2015). In comparison, this is higher than the estimated Queensland proportion of 3.6% for the same period. The Indigenous population on Palm Island is estimated at 2,203 persons representing 94.3% of the total population of the island. The figures are based on 2011 ABS Census figures adjusted by additional Queensland Treasury and Trade information.

The ABS 2011 Census Community Profile figures for Townsville shows the estimated available Indigenous labour force for the District Study Area (i.e. Townsville) was approximately 4,333 persons; Townsville labour in comparison estimated approximately 111,737 persons at the time of the Census. Based on the 2011 Census figures, the available Indigenous labour force represents approximately 3.9% of the total Townsville labour force. The Port's ongoing commitment to promote at least 10% Indigenous employment for capital projects is both the statutory requirements and is higher than the comparative proportion of the available Indigenous labour force across Townsville, based on the 2011 Census figures.

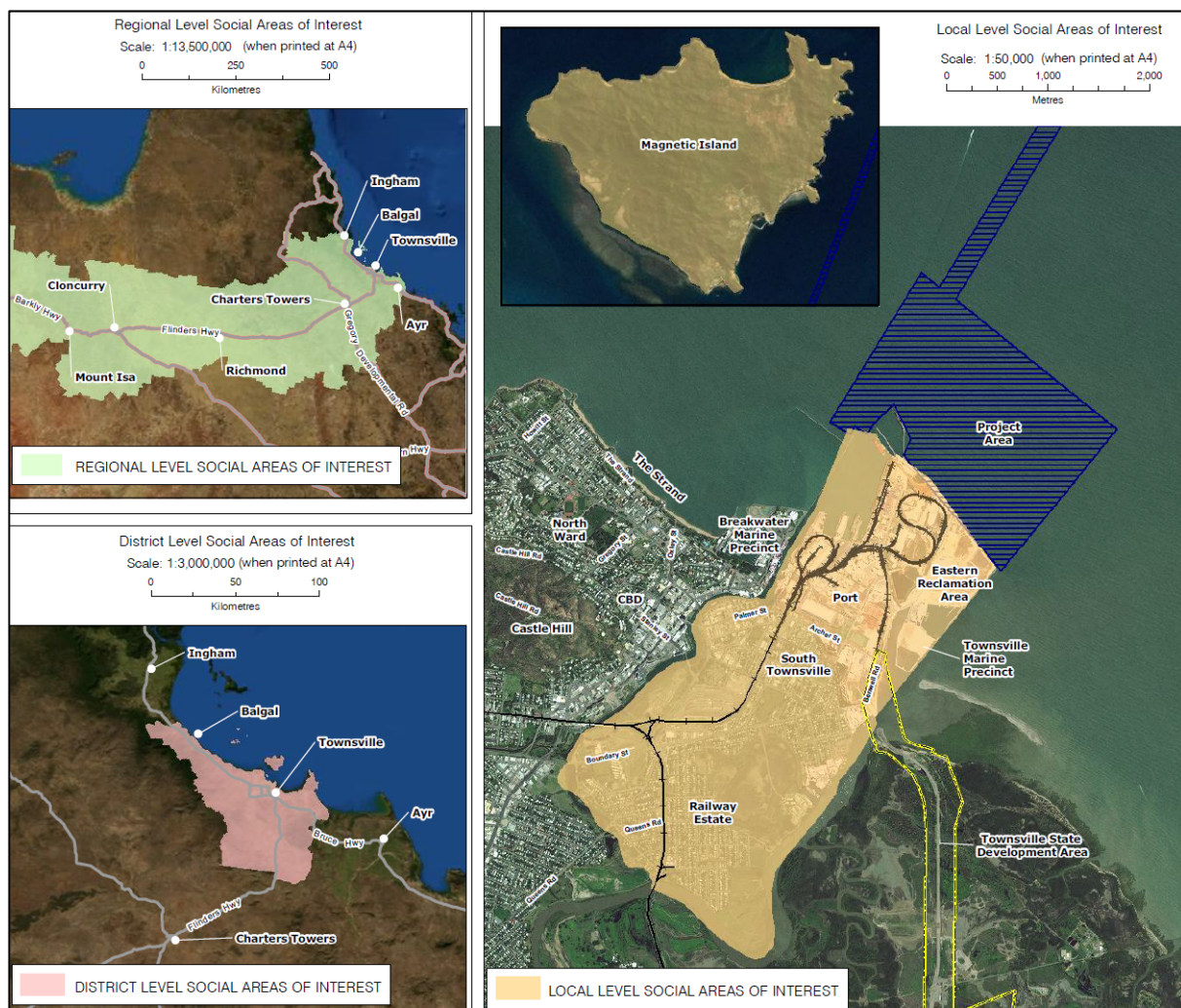


Figure 15.1 Regional, District and Local Study Areas

The Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs also requested further information regarding POTL's Local Industry Participation Plan. The Port has a strong commitment to Traditional Owner engagement and employment for its projects and encourages a similar approach from its contractors. The PEP will be developed in line with Commonwealth and State government requirements for equal opportunity employment.

Apart from statutory obligations and its Local Industry Participation Plan, POTL commits to ensuring that the community will be adequately informed of upcoming employment opportunities associated with the PEP. This is to ensure the Local Industry Participation Plan is implemented and to provide an opportunity for other businesses in the Regional Study Area to leverage opportunities that will arise through the PEP.

A submission by the Townsville City Council (TCC) requested the TCC Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2013 be considered in the assessment. The RAP represents the council's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people within its community. The RAP is a specific operational document that TCC can use to guide actions and interactions within the community and is consistent with other legislative requirements, this plan has been considered and POTL's approach is aligned as outlined below.

The Port has a number of policies and practices (including the POTL Cultural Heritage Management Plan) that are specifically intended to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have access to employment at the Port and are effectively consulted as part of the Port's planning processes. This includes a range of affirmative employment actions under State policies and extends to the PEP. In this regard the framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interaction is aligned and is consistent with the vision of the council's RAP.

15.2.2 Adequacy of public consultation

TCC requested further information regarding the public consultation undertaken for the EIS. Details of the public consultation for the PEP EIS are outlined in Section A.2.5 of the EIS and Section 1.0 of the Additional Information to the Environmental Impact Statement (AEIS). Public consultation was undertaken during and prior to the preparation of the PEP EIS in accordance to requirements of the Commonwealth EIS Guidelines issued under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the Queensland Government Terms of Reference issued under the *State Development and Public Works Organisations Act 1971*. As a part of the public consultation period in conjunction with the release of the EIS, the following was undertaken:

- staffed public information displays on Magnetic Island and in South Townsville
- letter box drop
- soft copies available on websites
- CD's posted on request
- advertising to promote information displays in the local media
- stakeholder and regulator briefings as required
- static displays at Townsville City Council Library/Council Customer Service Centres and Magnetic Island Country Club
- Project hotline, Project email address and reply paid postal address
- communication information on POTL website
- email updates to all registered database stakeholders including elected representatives, primarily stakeholders, special interest groups and the community.

Section A.2.5.1.1 provides a consultation overview. Formal consultation commenced July 2011 and concluded with the release of the Terms of Reference in October 2011. This preliminary consultation was undertaken to inform stakeholders of the Project and identify matters for inclusion in the EIS. The preliminary consultation did not target specific groups (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait people or people with disabilities) but was sufficiently broad and open to any person who wished to participate.

One submission also raised the opportunities for itinerants visiting to the region to participate in the consultation process for the EIS. As identified above, consultation was undertaken in accordance with the requirements and relevant legislation which prescribed the process to provide opportunities for community involvement and awareness. As well as local interest, a number of tourists also participated in the public consultation process, through visiting the staffed public information display at Magnetic Island. As well as meeting statutory obligations, the response from submitters outside of the immediate Townsville area, including submitters from interstate and overseas, illustrates that the public consultation has been far reaching.

15.2.3 Social impacts on Magnetic Island

227 submissions (includes form letter submissions) raised the potential effects of the PEP on the lifestyle, amenity and social character of Magnetic Island. The social characteristics of Magnetic Island were incorporated in the social baseline study referred to in Section B.13.3.1.4 of the EIS which identified Magnetic Island as a part of the Local Study Area as well as the suburbs of South Townsville and Railway Estate.

The social baseline study included an assessment of population and households, labour force, housing and accommodation, socio-economic indices for areas, and population and community profile projections. Specific technical aspects which may also have social effects were further assessed in other chapters. This included land use impacts, visual impacts, noise, traffic, ecological effects and marine based effects.

Specific reference was given to Magnetic Island where potential direct impacts could be identified and where there was sufficient quantitative or qualitative data available to attribute impacts to specific communities on Magnetic Island or other locations. Potential impacts on people travelling to and from Magnetic Island by public ferry were also considered. Community views and expectations were also surveyed and collated as background information to support the preparation of the EIS. This was undertaken during the early phases of the EIS process and included community information sessions with Magnetic Island residents, distribution of survey forms and the establishment of a Project information hotline.

A universal aspect of the form letters was the potential impact of the PEP on lifestyle, amenity and social character of Magnetic Island however no specific action, activity or method of mitigation was suggested in the majority of these submissions. These values were recognised in the EIS and significant work undertaken in the supporting studies to ensure the dredging impacts can be suitably managed and mitigated. The design refinement subsequently undertaken in response to submissions and legislative change further reduces dredging impacts with all material placed in the reclamation and a large proportion of the dredging being undertaken by a mechanical dredge. Whilst this requires substantially longer dredging period, and longer period where a dredge can be viewed, this results in a

significantly smaller turbidity plume and protection for the sensitive environments and embayments around Magnetic Island. The Port is committed to ongoing community engagement with Magnetic Island residents and businesses to facilitate a mutual understanding, and to proactively identify any social impacts as a result of the PEP, should they arise.

These submissions also raised the impact the PEP may have on the lifestyle and amenity of the Magnetic Island community. Section B.13.4 of the EIS assessed different aspects of lifestyle for the Local Study Area. The lifestyle of the surrounding area (including Magnetic Island) is diverse, and is influenced by the natural and built landscape, types of activities that can be accessed (e.g. work, recreation, home-living, education and social) and community perceptions about the values that such lifestyle experiences potentially offer.

Chapter B.10 (Noise and Vibration) and Chapter B.17 (Scenic Amenity) of the EIS addressed noise and light impacts of the PEP. As a result of the revised design these assessments were updated and provided in Section 12.0 and 19.0 of the AEIS respectively. Noise and light impacts associated with the construction and operation of the PEP are not expected to adversely affect Magnetic Island residents. Adverse impacts on community well-being, including community and lifestyle values were identified as being important during the pre-consultation phase of the PEP. After the implementation of mitigation measures, it was determined the residual impact on lifestyle and community wellbeing will remain low. The impact to community wellbeing and lifestyle are not expected to differ from that identified in the EIS.

The Port has been a significant part of the Townsville and Magnetic Island landscape for 150 years. This has included significant periods of development and residential growth around the Port including on Magnetic Island and along the foreshores that have direct views of the Port. Townsville Port is identified as a Priority Port for Queensland and as the northern most of the four priority ports needs to service the North Queensland economy to keep the jobs, developments and goods in our region for our region.

Indirect effects are expected to be beneficial through increased trade capacity at the Port, which in turn is expected to contribute to economic growth within the region. Economic growth may lead to an increase in population, a potential increase in visitors to Magnetic Island and diverse employment opportunities within the region. This latter aspect may provide for greater population stability on Magnetic Island for people dependent on employment opportunities, including opportunities on the mainland. This is expected to increase employment opportunities and the ability to support additional services to the area. Increased economic activity and employment prospects are regarded as being synonymous with improved community prosperity and well-being.

Additional assessments have been undertaken as part of the AEIS and in response to submissions, and to consider the design refinement, including:

- Section 5.0 (Coastal Processes and Hydrodynamics)
- Section 6.0 (Marine Water Quality)
- Section 8.0 (Marine Ecology)
- Section 11.0 (Air Quality)
- Section 12.0 (Noise and Vibration)
- Section 16.0 (Traffic and Transport)
- Section 19.0 (Scenic Amenity)
- Section 21.0 (Economic Development)
- Section 25.0 (Cumulative Impacts)
- Section 26.0 (Outstanding Universal Value).

15.2.4 Loss of business and tourism on Magnetic Island

232 submissions (includes form letter submissions) were received regarding the potential effects of dredging on tourism in the surrounding suburbs, particularly Magnetic Island. More specifically, the impact of dredging was raised, on peak tourism periods, notably as a result from potential increases in water turbidity resulting from dredge activity. It was raised that this may potentially result in adverse economic effects which may further translate into broader adverse social effects on residences and businesses, including potential loss of income and loss of employment opportunity.

The economic and tourism values of the surrounding suburbs and broader Townsville region, and the impacts of the PEP on these values are addressed in Chapter B.19 (Economic Environment) of the EIS and Section 21.0 of the AEIS. The PEP will not limit the operation of existing land uses on the mainland or Magnetic Island. This includes access to public areas which may be used for recreational purposes, with the exception of the immediate proposed dredge operations in keeping with maritime legislation safety requirements.

To consider the potential impacts that the PEP could have on tourism operators on Magnetic Island an assessment was carried out focusing on the tourism operators who utilise the foreshore and fringing reefs as the basis of their operations. In order to translate the projected environmental impacts to Sensitive Environmental Receptors into estimated economic impacts to tourism operators, factors to convert marginal ecological impacts to marginal costs are required. The objective of this calculation is to provide a first-order estimate of the monetised impacts to vessel-based snorkelling and boat tour operators on Magnetic Island.

The assessment estimated a potential monetised impact to tourism operators if tourism operators were to be impacted, and concluded that if such short-term changes in turbidity at the most popular snorkelling and diving operations was identified as being caused by the major capital dredging, then the monetised calculations could form an estimate of financial impacts.

The Port is committed to ongoing community engagement with Magnetic Island residents and businesses to facilitate a mutual understanding, and to proactively identify any social impacts as a result of the PEP, should they arise.

15.2.5 Potential impacts on recreational fishing activities and publicly accessible areas

14 submissions raised potential effects of dredging on marine water quality and marine ecology within Cleveland Bay and the subsequent effects this may have on recreational fishing and public use of foreshore areas. Key areas included the use of Cleveland Bay waters and foreshore areas, including around Magnetic Island. The likely impacts on marine water quality and marine ecology have been the subject of further study which is discussed in Sections 6.0 and 8.0 of this AEIS.

Access to Cleveland Bay and foreshore areas is not expected to vary from the present situation. Historically, the Port has been operating with navigation and security control restrictions within port lands and port infrastructure. Access to Port land is also subject to existing restrictions precluding general public access. The PEP is entirely within the designated Port limits and is generally consistent with the intended use of the designated area under the *Port of Townsville Land Use Plan 2013* (POTL, 2013).

The use of the Cruise Ship Terminal, which opened in October 2013 and is an integral part of the Port's ongoing operations, will not be affected by the PEP other than a potential increase in tourists facilitated through improved channel access allowing more cruise ship visits. Existing public access to foreshore land along Ross Creek is proposed to remain and is not expected to be affected by the PEP. Overall public access to foreshore areas and Cleveland Bay waters is not expected to significantly change as a result of the PEP.

15.2.6 Impact of PEP works and ongoing dredging on The Strand

Seven submitters raised the potential impact of the PEP and maintenance dredging on the social values of The Strand. The PEP includes expansion of the existing Port facilities in keeping with the growth needs of Townsville and the region. Growth has been ongoing since the Port's establishment which has become part of the industrial waterfront development of Townsville and forms a key part of the city's social history and its built landscape character. This includes the views and vistas that are enjoyed from The Strand. Scenic Amenity is discussed in Section 19.0 of the AEIS and while the Port forms a prominent part of the Cleveland Bay landscape, when viewed from The Strand, it only represents a small part of the overall expanse of the view and its proposed expansion has been shown to represent only a minor increase in its prominence, once completed.

The proposed construction of the PEP, including dredging works for the reclamation area and channel improvements is expected to have a gradual impact on the changing landscape of Cleveland Bay. Potential sediment transport impacts on The Strand from dredging operations are discussed in Section 5.0 of the AEIS. Construction works for the PEP is not expected to affect the recreational use or public access of The Strand foreshore or beaches.

15.3 Revised Environmental Impact Assessment

15.3.1 Legislation and policy

There have been no significant changes in the legislation or policy frameworks that directly relate to social considerations of the PEP. The Queensland government has introduced a range of land use planning policies since the PEP EIS. These recognise the Ports positive role in the economic development of the region and the need to keep pace with demand and future development as demonstrated by Townsville being declared a priority port. This is specifically intended to support the social structure of Townsville and North Queensland through the provision of greater employment opportunity, increased access to goods and additional investment into the region.

Social characteristics of Townsville and the region are generally also determined by demographic characteristics as recorded by the ABS census and some State surveys compiled by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (i.e. previously Office of Economics and Statistical Research (OESR)). The PEP EIS largely relied on ABS 2011 Census information supplemented by additional OESR updated predictions projections. Revised OESR information is available for the 2012 information that was used in the compilation of the social impact assessment that formed part of the EIS. A new census will be undertaken in 2016. While revised population projections are expected to reflect continued population growth within Townsville and the region, changes on Magnetic Island and the immediate

suburbs surrounding the Port are expected to be slight and unlikely to affect the PEP or substantially change its impact on those areas.

The EIS made reference to the *TCC City Plan 2005* at the time of its finalisation and formal public consultation stage. The City Plan 2005 was the statutory planning scheme that applied to the Project area at the time the EIS was completed and during the public consultation stage. The council has since adopted a new City Plan. Details regarding the new planning scheme are addressed in Section 3.0 of this AEIS. The PEP is consistent with the preferred planning outcomes in the new City Plan.

15.3.2 Design refinement

The project design has been refined as described in Section 2.0 of the AEIS. The revised design is not anticipated to materially change the impacts on social values described in the Section B.13 of the EIS.

15.3.3 Supporting studies

No additional social impact studies were undertaken.

15.3.4 Revised assessment

15.3.4.1 Impact assessment

The PEP is not expected to result in adverse social impacts during its construction or operation. The social values that characterise the Local, District and Regional Study Areas are not expected to change as a result of the revised design.

Minor impacts are predicted from temporary changes to water quality as a result of the dredge campaign, and land construction. Potential amenity impacts are also discussed in a number of AEIS sections relating to specific amenity aspects, including:

- Section 5.0 (Coastal Processes and Hydrodynamics)
- Section 6.0 (Marine Water Quality)
- Section 8.0 (Marine Ecology)
- Section 11.0 (Air Quality)
- Section 12.0 (Noise and Vibration)
- Section 16.0 (Traffic and Transport)
- Section 19.0 (Scenic Amenity)
- Section 21.0 (Economic Development)
- Section 25.0 (Cumulative Impacts)
- Section 26.0 (Outstanding Universal Value).

Positive social benefits are expected in terms of potential employment during construction and operation, as well as increased access to goods and additional investment into the region as a result of increased trade facilitation through the modernisation and expansion of the Port's facilities. This is highlighted in recent changes to Commonwealth and State policies which recognise the Port of Townsville as a key strategic port asset for the economic development of North Queensland and Northern Australia.

The revised design is consistent with the legislative and policy changes that affect other aspects of the Port's operation and future expansion. Notably, this includes potential influences on the social characteristics of the area, including employment opportunity, incomes and secondary investment and the attraction of other services as a result of economic growth facilitated by the Port's expansion.

15.3.4.2 Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures to reduce the impact on the Project on social and amenity values are outlined in the updated Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix B2) and Operational Environmental Management Plan (Appendix B3) of the AEIS.

15.3.4.3 Summary

Section B.13.4 of the EIS provides a summary of the mitigation measures proposed to reduce potential impacts of the Project on the social environment. The revised design is consistent with the assessment provided in the EIS. Management of community impacts through the development and implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, including the development and implementation of an overarching Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan and continuation of the Port Community Partnership Forum (or similar), will provide a mechanism to identify, monitor and address social impacts as a result of the PEP, should they arise.

15.4 Conclusion

The revised design is consistent with the EIS assessment and consistent with policy frameworks at the Commonwealth and State level. The EIS found that overall the PEP is expected to have a range of positive social benefits at a regional, district and local level; it also identified the potential for temporary impacts on amenity values, mostly related to construction of the Project. This has been reflected in a number of the submissions received through the EIS process.

The positive economic impacts of the PEP are expected to provide a number of secondary benefits to the community, including Magnetic Island. In the short term the PEP will provide opportunities for new trades to utilise the Port, including larger cruise ships which are currently restricted from visiting Townsville. In the longer term the Project continues to support the development Northern Australia as one of Queensland's priority ports.

The Port is committed to ongoing community engagement with Townsville and Magnetic Island residents and businesses to facilitate a mutual understanding, and to proactively identify any social impacts as a result of the PEP, should they arise. Mitigation measures proposed in the EIS remain appropriate, as well as relevant, to current environmental protection requirements and the revised design.

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