

## PORT OF AIRLIE MARINA DEVELOPMENT

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Project

This Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) presents the Port of Airlie Development.

The Port of Airlie Development consists of an integrated marina, commercial, tourism, residential and recreational facility at the heart of Airlie Beach. The proposed development is located in Boathaven Bay (**Figure 1-1**) immediately east of the main tourist/commercial/retail precinct of Airlie Beach. Key components of the Port of Airlie Development include:

- ❑ 240 berth marina for private and commercial vessels up to 30m in length
- ❑ Passenger ferry terminal for inter-island ferries and tourist charters
- ❑ Bus terminal for long distance buses integrated with ferry, pedestrian, taxi and minibus modes of transport
- ❑ Maritime training academy
- ❑ 2 lane public boat ramp with initial parking for 45 cars
- ❑ Public and private carparks for 1200 cars;
- ❑ A pedestrian mall/village square linking the harbour and other facilities to the existing commercial and tourist area of Airlie Beach;
- ❑ Public open space including landscaped parklands, a beach, harbour promenades and boardwalks around the marina foreshore;
- ❑ A footpath/cycleway through the development linking the existing village centre with the sports park and Police Community Youth Centre;
- ❑ 4,400m<sup>2</sup> of marina retail and commercial space;
- ❑ 170 bed apartment hotel;
- ❑ 150 serviced tourist apartments;
- ❑ 74 residential apartments;
- ❑ 16 villas and 7 detached residences;
- ❑ A 3ha reclaimed area for disposal of spoil from the entrance channel dredging and soft surface mud from the excavation of the marina basin. This area is intended for future use
- ❑ A 1.5ha area for disposal of dredged spoil for maintenance dredging operations.

A more detailed description of the proposal is provided in **Section 2**.

## 1.2 Identification of Proponents

The Proponents of the Port of Airlie Development are the Whitsunday Sailing Club, and Windward AB Pty Ltd Limited. Major shareholders in Windward AB Pty Ltd are Transtate and Meridien Developments. Both shareholders have significant experience in development of large integrated commercial/residential/leisure developments including many waterfront developments. On the basis of this experience, Transtate was originally invited to join the Whitsunday Sailing Club in a joint venture to develop the project and subsequently formed Windward AB.

Windward AB is the development manager and will be responsible for undertaking the necessary works to obtain all environmental and development approvals.



# Legend

- A Landmark Hotel
- B Harbour Serviced Apartments
- C Sea Terminal
- D Public Carpark & Bus Transit Facility
- E Harbour Front Mixed Use
- F Harbour Front Mixed Use
- G Harbour front Mixed Used & Public Carpark
- H Harbour Front Residential
- J Marine Facilities
- K Spit Public Boat Ramp
- L Seaview Residential Tower
- M Seaview Residential Villas
- N Seaview Residential Lots
- O Marine Academy
- P Marina Access
- Q Dredge Disposal Area



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Windward AB's address is:  
Level 10  
10 Felix Street  
Brisbane 4001

### 1.3 History of the Proposal

On 4 January 1996 the Whitsunday Sailing Club was granted a Permit to Occupy over 130 Ha of Boathaven Bay at Airlie Beach to investigate the development of a marina and associated commercial and residential facilities. The Conditions of the Permit to Occupy required that a full Impact Assessment Study (IAS) be carried out to the satisfaction of the then Department of Environment and Heritage.

The Whitsunday Sailing Club then employed consulting engineers, Burchill Partners P/L, to undertake the investigations and studies required under the Permit to Occupy and to formulate a revised development proposal (Burchill 1998). This is discussed in more detail in **Section 4.2.1**.

The IAS, detailed a larger scale development concept (**Figure 1-2**) and was completed in December 1998. After the period of public review the Environmental Protection Agency, in March 1999, notified the Whitsunday Sailing Club of further investigations and studies required for further consideration. Further meetings between the Whitsunday Sailing Club and the Department were held in August 1999 to clarify the further studies and investigations needed before submitting a Supplementary EIS. No further action was taken until November 1999 when the Whitsunday Sailing Club invited Transtate to assist in developing the project.

The Proponent has now prepared a new development proposal for the project as shown on **Figure 1-2**. The revised proposal is the result of a critical technical, financial and environmental evaluation of the original proposal shown in the Draft Impact Assessment Study and responds to comments made by agencies and the community.

The Department of State Development considered that the significant proposed changes to the plan of development required that new Terms of Reference be formulated for the Supplementary EIS with input from key Queensland referral agencies, Environment Australia and GBRMPA. The Terms of Reference have been agreed by all parties and are given in **Appendix A**. The Queensland Government also required that the Supplementary EIS be advertised for public comment, before being submitted for consideration by the Coordinator-General.



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### **1.4 Project Objectives**

Objectives of the project include:

- ❑ To develop an integrated marina facility in the tidal area of Boathaven Bay at the eastern end of the main tourist and commercial/retail precinct of Airlie Beach.
- ❑ To provide a gateway to Whitsunday Islands and the designated tourism areas of the Whitsunday section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park from Airlie Beach with a state of the art ferry terminal
- ❑ To provide an integrated transport hub for Airlie Beach, interconnecting land and sea transportation modes at a location convenient for visitors staying in tourist accommodation at Airlie Beach
- ❑ To meet existing demands for secure protected berths for both commercial and private boats
- ❑ To provide a controlled environment for the berthing, maintenance and repair commercial and private vessels with facilities for control of waste disposal, sewage disposal and boat repairs in an environmentally responsible manner
- ❑ To enhance the tourist, commercial and retail area of Airlie Beach
- ❑ To provide a range of tourist, holiday and residential accommodation.
- ❑ To expand the Airlie Beach waterfront environs with development of waterfront promenades, parklands, beach and viewpoints
- ❑ To create a financially viable and commercially successful development
- ❑ To provide commercial and employment opportunities to the local population
- ❑ To provide a high quality maritime training academy offering courses in commercial and recreational boating

### **1.5 Development Principles**

The following development principles underlie the proposal:

- ❑ The development must be integrated into the existing town such that it complements, enhances and uplifts existing tourist, commercial and recreational aspects of Airlie Beach.
- ❑ A key feature of the development is the harbour with a focus on marine based activities including a safe and secure harbour (with cyclone refuge) and an integrated transport interchange between land based and sea based transportation.
- ❑ The development is based on a balanced and integrated mix of maritime, leisure, commercial, retail and residential facilities.

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- ❑ There will be an emphasis on public open space areas and a focus on pedestrian and disabled access and circulation with public access to the majority of waterfront areas.
- ❑ The influences of climate, water, steep surrounding hillsides and vistas to and from the sea and land will dictate the scale, shape and appearance of the built environment.
- ❑ Structures will be low to medium rise in keeping with the existing atmosphere and character of Airlie Beach.
- ❑ The development has been carefully planned and located to minimise intrusion into the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and maximise social and economic benefits while minimising impacts on the environment.
- ❑ Landscaping of the development will be in accordance with the Vision Airlie Masterplan and will ensure seamless integration of the development with the existing Airlie Beach township.
- ❑ The development will be staged to ensure commercially viable growth and to meet market demand without adversely affecting real estate values in Airlie Beach.

### **1.6 Rationale**

The Airlie Beach tourism precinct has limited capacity for development of the water front given the restricted terrain and suitable land

The retail commercial developments will enhance the current precinct and will add to rather than compete with the facilities already in place. The retail/commercial developments will be focussed on tourism, marine and water related activities with strong support being indicated from the operators of commercial tour boats already received.

There is a recognised need for improved marine facilities in the Whitsundays. Existing coastal marinas are operating at peak capacity and the projections are for continuing growth in the demand for safe, secure berths for both commercial and pleasure craft. The development will provide a protected mainland base for commercial and pleasure boats in the Whitsundays.

With the increasing prominence of the Whitsundays as a destination for both domestic and international tourists the development will provide a significant benefit to the local, state and national economies. The development will assist in concentrating boating and tourism retail and commercial activities into the core tourist area of Airlie Beach and will provide facilities that are currently not available in the area

The proposed state of the art ferry terminal will provide the stepping off point for tourists to the Islands and the reef. The location of the ferry terminal and commercial charter operations will increase pedestrian access and decrease the need to transport passengers by car and bus to their embarkation point.

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The majority of the mainland tourist accommodation facilities are within a kilometre of the proposed development, providing ease of access to the ferries and charter boats

A more detailed project justification and analysis of alternatives is provided in **Section 3**.

### **1.7 Overall Schedule**

It is intended to commence construction in 2003. Initial excavation and land reclamation activities, together with creation of the access channel are expected to take up to 9 months. A further 6-8 months is expected for installation of civil services (power, water, wastewater, roads, other surfaces and landscaping) as well as installation of the marina and public boat ramp.

It is then expected that construction of the buildings and other facilities will take place over a five year period.

### **1.8 Stage 2**

While it is intended that the development presented in **Section 2** be a stand alone development, the proponent intends to seek approvals for a second stage of the development consisting of additional marina berths and residential and commercial development in a few years time.

The exact location and master plan for such a development has not been identified to date and will be subject to a separate and independent environmental assessment and approvals process. It is likely that an Environmental Impact Statement would be required to be prepared for the Stage 2 proposal

It should be noted that the public boat ramp and marina facilities area planned for the current proposal would be relocated in a Stage 2 proposal to move these further away from any residential development, should the next stage proceed.

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