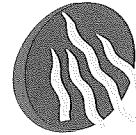




Hon John Mickel MP
Member for Logan



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Transport, Trade,
Employment and Industrial Relations**

Our ref: MC39965

04 FEB 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition number 1176-08 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Jason O'Brien MP, Member for Cook on 2 December 2008 regarding failure to dredge the Endeavour Harbour.

The Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier responded by letter to the Endeavour River Action Committee on these issues on 10 November 2008. The information below is an amplification of the Premier's response.

Due to the small number of commercial vessel movements into the Port of Cooktown, it is categorised as a non trading port by its commercial controller, the Ports Corporation of Queensland. The port therefore does not qualify for commercially funded dredging from the corporation.

Responsibility for dredging the channel leading through the entrance and to the Queensland Transport owned public pontoon rests with Queensland Transport down to a depth of 1.5 metres below Lowest Astronomical Tide datum. Queensland Transport can also maintain an access channel depth of 0.5 metres below Lowest Astronomical Tide upstream as far as the Queensland Transport owned public boat ramp. Responsibility for dredging of the harbour, aside from these access channels, rests with Cook Shire Council. This includes access to the public jetty owned by Cook Shire Council, anchoring and mooring areas in the harbour and any dredging of the entrance channel deeper than 1.5 metres below Lowest Astronomical Tide.

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Queensland Transport carried out maintenance dredging of the Endeavour River entrance channel and parts of the harbour in 1998-99 using one off special funding for commercial user infrastructure. This dredging was done on the understanding that in the future, Cook Shire Council would operate the harbour on a commercial basis.

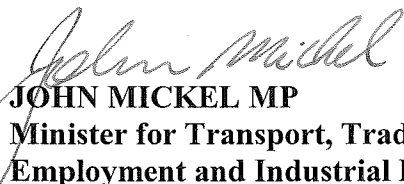
For ports like the one at Cooktown, funding from Queensland Transport's Boating Infrastructure Capital and Maintenance fund is restricted to provision of recreational boating facilities and maintaining selected access channels to them to a depth of 1.5 metres for landings and 0.5 metres for ramps owned by Queensland Transport. 96.7% of recreational boats are motor or speed boats and the vast majority of these have a draught of less than 1.5 metres. The owners of these vessels are those who contribute most to funding sources and the dredging standards reflect this. Recreational sailing boats represent 3.3% of boats and those having a draught of greater than 1.5 metres need to utilise tide height to access landings.

A recent hydrographic survey indicated that the shallowest depth in the Endeavour River entrance channel and the channel leading to the public pontoon was 2.1 metres below Lowest Astronomical Tide. That is, the entrance channel is deeper than the 1.5 metres siltation level required to trigger maintenance dredging from Queensland Transport funding sources. The survey showed that the depth alongside the public pontoon was 2.0 metres minimum, which is also deeper than the 1.5 metres required to trigger access maintenance dredging.

I am advised that vessels requiring an entrance depth of greater than 2.1 metres need to use the standard navigational practice of 'working the tides', which means entering port with a sufficient tide to provide a safe under keel clearance. As mean sea level at Cooktown is 1.5 metres above Lowest Astronomical Tide, there are adequate tides year round to allow the practice of 'working the tides' to enter the Port of Cooktown for vessels of up to about 3.6 meters draught. The recent hydrographic survey indicated that anchorage depths of 4.0 metres are available in the harbour.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely


JOHN MICKEL MP
Minister for Transport, Trade,
Employment and Industrial Relations