



# PORT OF THURSDAY ISLAND LAND USE PLAN

## STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL



Ports North

## FOREWORD

The Port of Thursday Island Statement of Proposal has been prepared to provide clear guidance on matters that Ports North will consider in the preparation of an updated Land Use Plan for the Port of Thursday Island.

The Statement of Proposal has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 (Qld)* and invites feedback from stakeholders and the broader community on matters to be considered in the updated Land Use Plan.

This Statement of Proposal is available for review and comment until 30 July, 2026. Details on how to make a submission are outlined below and available on our website: [Land Use Plan | Ports North](#).

Your input will help ensure the Port of Thursday Island continues to support the Torres Strait community and regional economy while maintaining strong environmental and community outcomes.



Richard Stevenson  
Chief Executive Officer

## PORTS NORTH

Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited, trading as Ports North, is a Queensland Government Owned Corporation responsible for the development and management of the declared Ports of Cairns, Cape Flattery, Karumba, Mourilyan, Skardon River, Quintell Beach, Thursday Island, Burketown and Cooktown.

Our maritime sector network includes trade, transport, tourism, marine services, and defence.

Ports North's operations and facilities are vital to the economic development of the regional centres they service and the State's tourism and export performance. Our ports handle bulk shipments of sugar, molasses, silica sand, zinc, fuel, fertiliser, log product, and general cargo.

Ports North also has extensive marina and tourism facilities, particularly in Cairns.

Ports North has a range of strategic land holdings, including approximately 283 hectares of freehold and 635 hectares of leasehold Strategic Port Land and properties across its Ports.

### How to Make a Submission

You may make a written submission about the Statement of Proposal during the Consultation Period.

Submissions are to be:

- made in writing
- made to the CEO
- received on or before 30 July 2026
- state the name and contact details (email and/or postal address) of each submitter; and
- sent via email at [LUPsubmissions@portsnorth.com.au](mailto:LUPsubmissions@portsnorth.com.au) or via post at the address below.

If you have queries, please contact Ports North.

#### Contact Us: Ports North

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose of the Statement of Proposal

Ports North has commenced the preparation of a new Land Use Plan for the Port of Thursday Island. This Statement of Proposal is the initial step in that process.

Under s285A(2) of the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* (the Act) a Statement of Proposal must:

- a. identify matters the port authority anticipates the land use plan will address; and
- b. state how the port authority intends to address each relevant aspect of a core matter in the land use plan.

This Statement of Proposal provides context to matters relevant to land use planning and development at the Port of Thursday Island and invites stakeholder and community input to inform the Land Use Plan update.

## 1.2 Statutory Consultation Process

In accordance with the Act, Ports North's statutory consultation process for the Land Use Plan Update process is as follows:

### 1. Public Notification of Statement of Proposal

- Publication of a notice in a locally circulating newspaper, advising that consultation is being undertaken, the details of the consultation, and how to make a submission; and
- Undertake consultation for at least 40 business days (Statutory Consultation Period #1).

### 2. Preparation of Draft Land Use Plan

- Review submissions raised during Statutory Consultation Period #1
- Incorporate on-going community input; and
- Prepare Draft Land Use Plan.

### 3. Public Notification for the Draft Land Use Plan

- Publish a notice in a locally circulating newspaper, advising that consultation is being undertaken, the details of the consultation, and how to make a submission; and
- Undertake consultation for at least 40 business days (Statutory Consultation Period #2).

### 4. Finalisation of Land Use Plan

- Review submissions raised during Statutory Consultation Period #2
- Obtain Ministerial approval; and
- Adopt finalised Land Use Plan.

### 1.3 What is a Land Use Plan?

A Land Use Plan is a statutory planning instrument prepared under the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*. It provides the planning framework for the use and development of Strategic Port Land.

Development on Strategic Port Land is not regulated by the Local Government Planning Scheme. Instead, the Land Use Plan establishes the planning and development assessment framework, including desired environmental outcomes, land use precincts, preferred uses and development assessment provisions.

The Land Use Plan is required to:

- Specify details of the Port Authority's Strategic Port Land
- Coordinate and integrate 'core matters' relevant to the Land Use Plan; and
- Identify Desired Environmental Outcomes of the land and measures that will help to achieve them.

Development made assessable under the Land Use Plan, primarily development requiring State referral or assessment, is assessed under the *Planning Act 2016*, with Ports North acting as Assessment Manager. The Land Use Plan is the 'Assessment Benchmark' under the *Planning Act 2016* and related legislation.

The purpose of a Land Use Plan is to facilitate development that responds to operational needs of the Port of Thursday Island while appropriately addressing environmental, infrastructure, and land use considerations.

### 1.4 Purpose of a Land Use Plan Update

Under the Act, a Port Authority must prepare a Land Use Plan every eight years, for approval by the Minister. Updating a Land Use Plan is necessary so that it remains current with respect to:

- the evolving needs of the Port
- the current environmental context
- updated legislation, regulatory mapping and policies; and
- current best practice.

The Land Use Plan update will also update the Strategic Port Land register and mapping to incorporate any Port Authority land purchased since the previous Land Use Plan update.

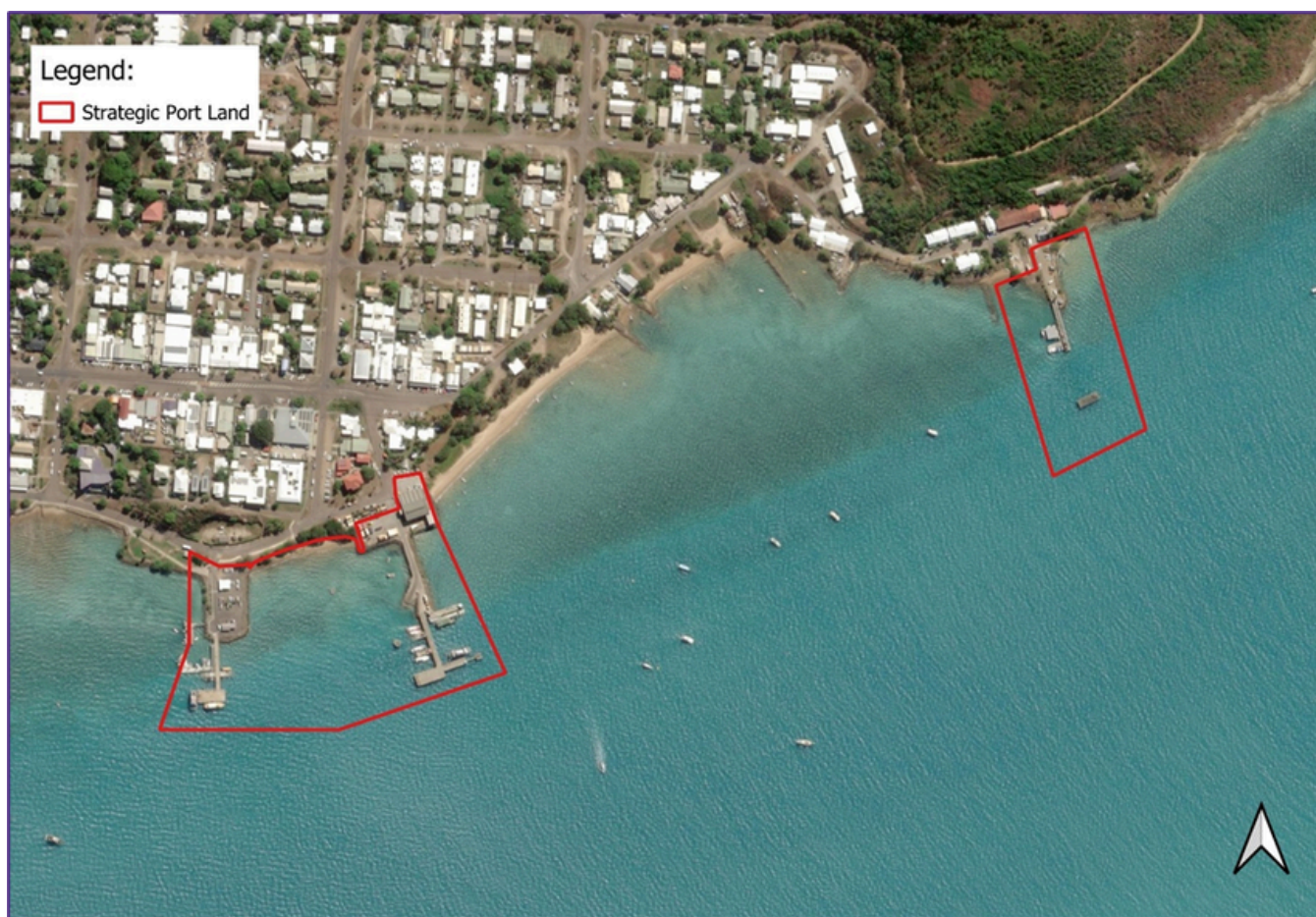
## 2 THE PORT OF THURSDAY ISLAND

### 2.1 About the Port of Thursday Island

The Port of Thursday Island (formally referred to as Port of Port Kennedy) is located approximately 34 kilometres north-west of Cape York within the natural harbour between Thursday Island and Horn Island in the Torres Strait. It is an important regional port servicing the community.

Strategic Port Land is largely limited to the three jetties and associated landside facilities on Thursday Island (refer **Figure 1**) and two similar jetties and landside facilities on Horn Island (refer **Figure 2**). Port limits (refer **Figure 3**) extend between Horn, Hammond, Goods, and Friday Islands, and the waters surrounding Thursday Island.

The Port primarily supports general cargo and freight services for local communities, together with ferry services, commercial and recreational fishing, marine services and tourism activities. The Port's strategic location near the international border supports agencies such as customs, biosecurity and quarantine, fisheries, police, immigration and defence on Thursday Island. Fuel storage and refuelling facilities are located on both islands.



**Figure 1 - Strategic Port Land Thursday Island**



Figure 2 - Strategic Port Land Horn Island

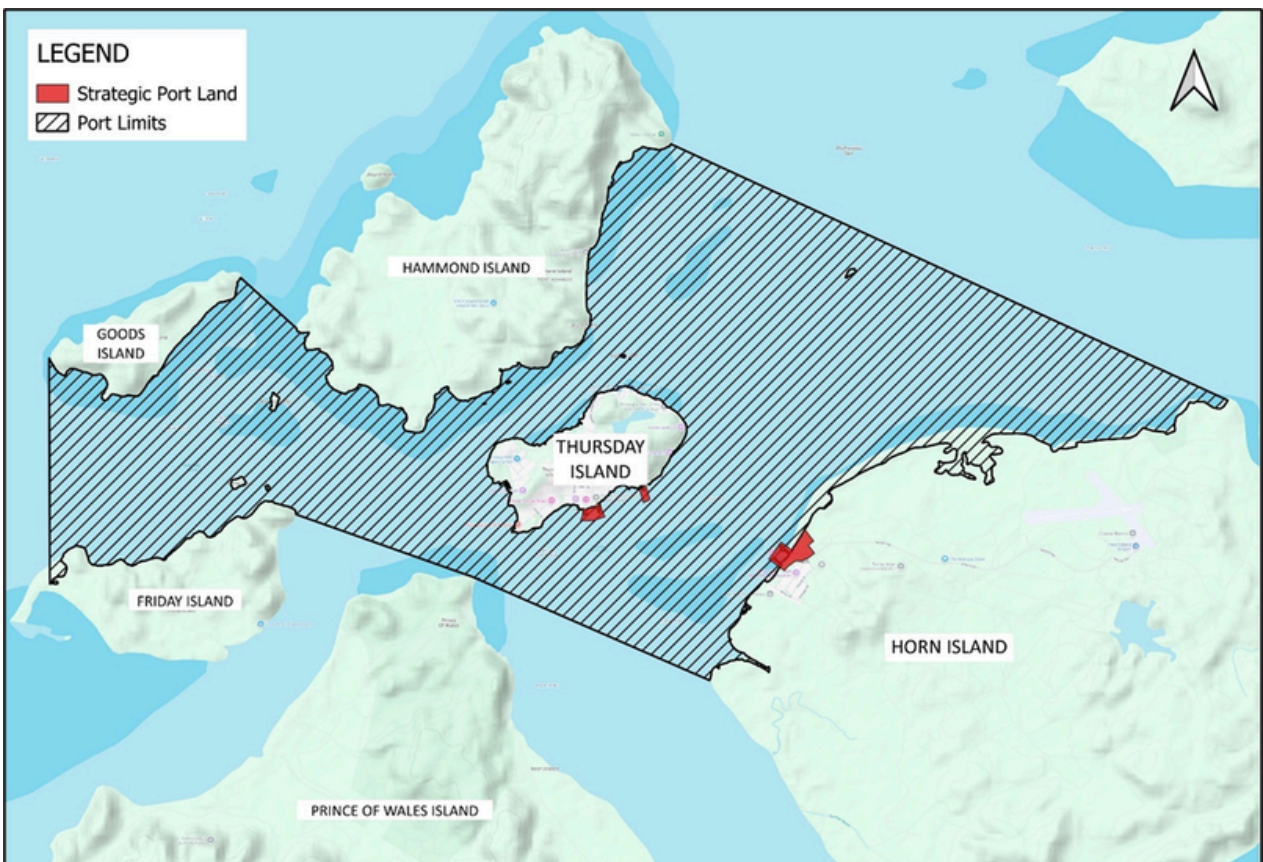


Figure 3 - Strategic Port Land and Port Limits

## 2.2 Local & Regional Context

The Port of Thursday Island is not subject to a statutory regional plan under the Queensland Planning Framework.

The *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009-2029*, prepared by The Torres Strait Regional Authority, the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, the Torres Shire Council, and the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, details the region’s aspirations for matters including economic development and environmental management, but does not incorporate strategic land use planning content relevant for consideration within the updated Land Use Plan.

The Port of Thursday Island is located in the Torres Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA). Port Limits adjoin Hammond Island which forms part of the LGA for the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (in addition to several other islands throughout the Strait) (Refer **Figure 4**).

The *Torres Shire Council Planning Scheme 2022* (Planning Scheme) does not apply to Strategic Port Land, however the updated Land Use Plan will consider adjoining land use controls for compatibility.

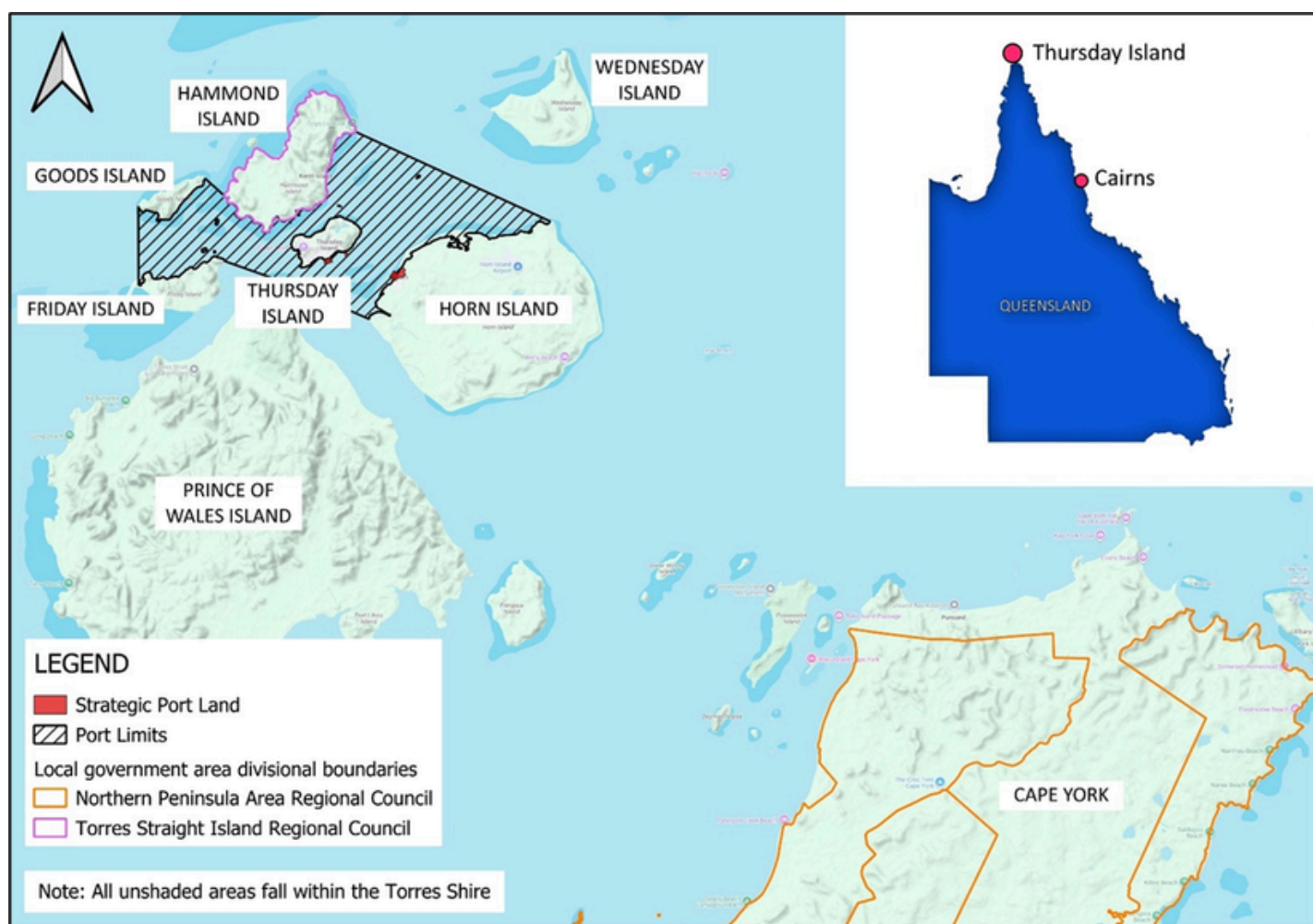


Figure 4 - Location Context

### 3 Core Matters

The Port of Thursday Island Land Use Plan will set out Ports North's planning and development intent for Strategic Port Land and consider how the core matters of land use and development, port facilities and valuable features are addressed.

#### 3.1 Land Use and Development

Land Use and Development include:

- The location of and relationships between land uses
- The current effects of land uses
- The likely effects of any proposed development of the land; and
- The accessibility to the area.

Ports North is the Port Authority responsible for managing land use and development on Strategic Port Land for the Port of Thursday Island. Current Strategic Port Land for the Port of Thursday Island is listed in **Appendix A**.

The updated Land Use Plan will be based on sound planning principles, adopting a Port Vision and 'desired environmental outcomes', as the strategic framework for future development. The updated Land Use Plan is anticipated to utilise a precinct-based approach to ensure development is appropriately located with respect to port infrastructure and assets, whilst considering adjoining land uses and sensitive areas surrounding and within port limits.

The updated Land Use Plan will align with the *State Planning Policy 2017*, reflecting relevant State Interests and will aim to consolidate development within existing unconstrained areas, minimising environmental impact. Preparation of the Land Use Plan will contemplate the suitability of the existing land use precincts, and whether they need adjustment to better reflect the vision for the port.

Current precincts in the Port of Thursday Island Land Use Plan (as shown in **Figures 5 and 6**) include:

- **Waterfront Port Industry Precinct:** core commercial and infrastructure port land requiring waterfront access
- **Harbour Precinct:** accommodates key port infrastructure and facilities located below the high water mark; and
- **Special Management Precinct:** recognises and manages culturally significant areas within the port which are to be protected from inappropriate development.

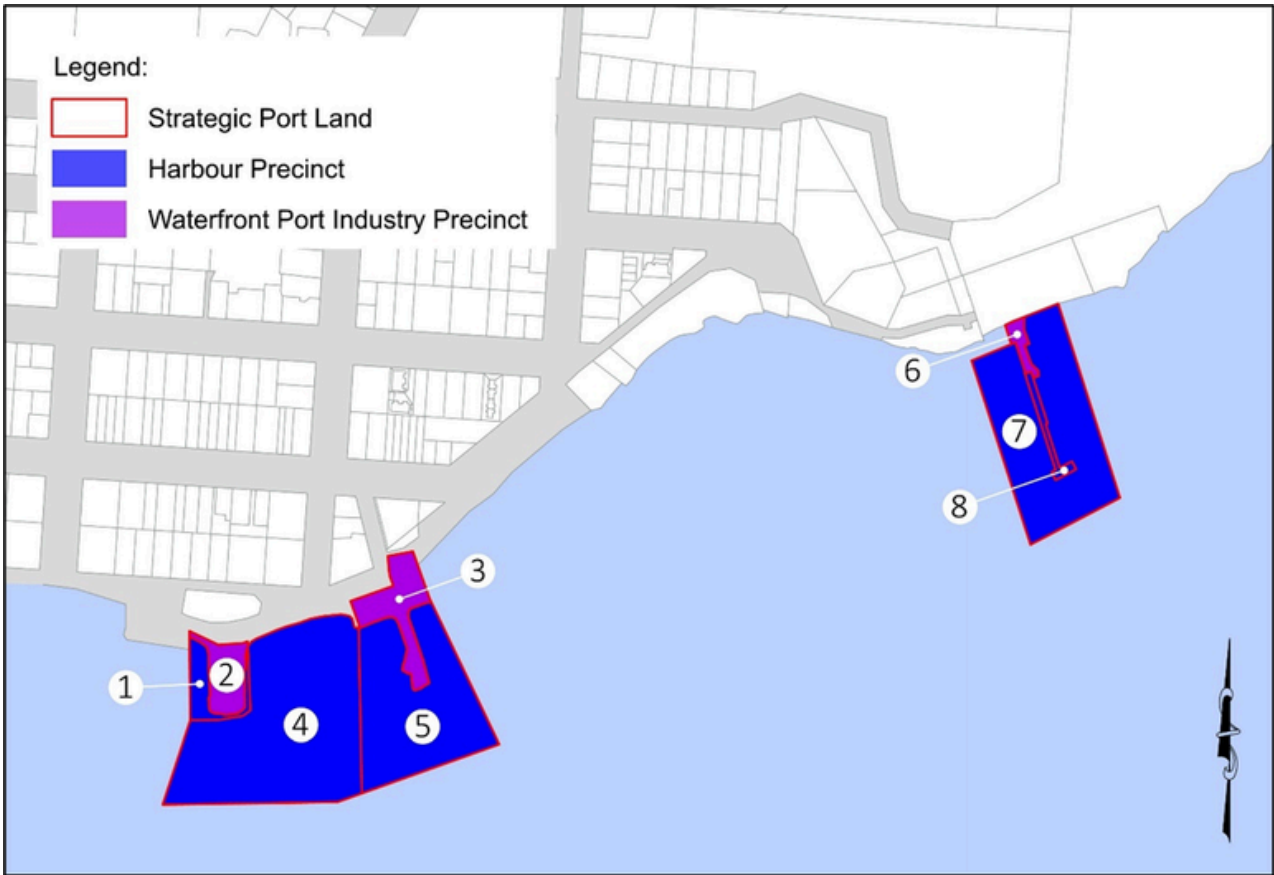


Figure 5 - Existing Precincts on Thursday Island

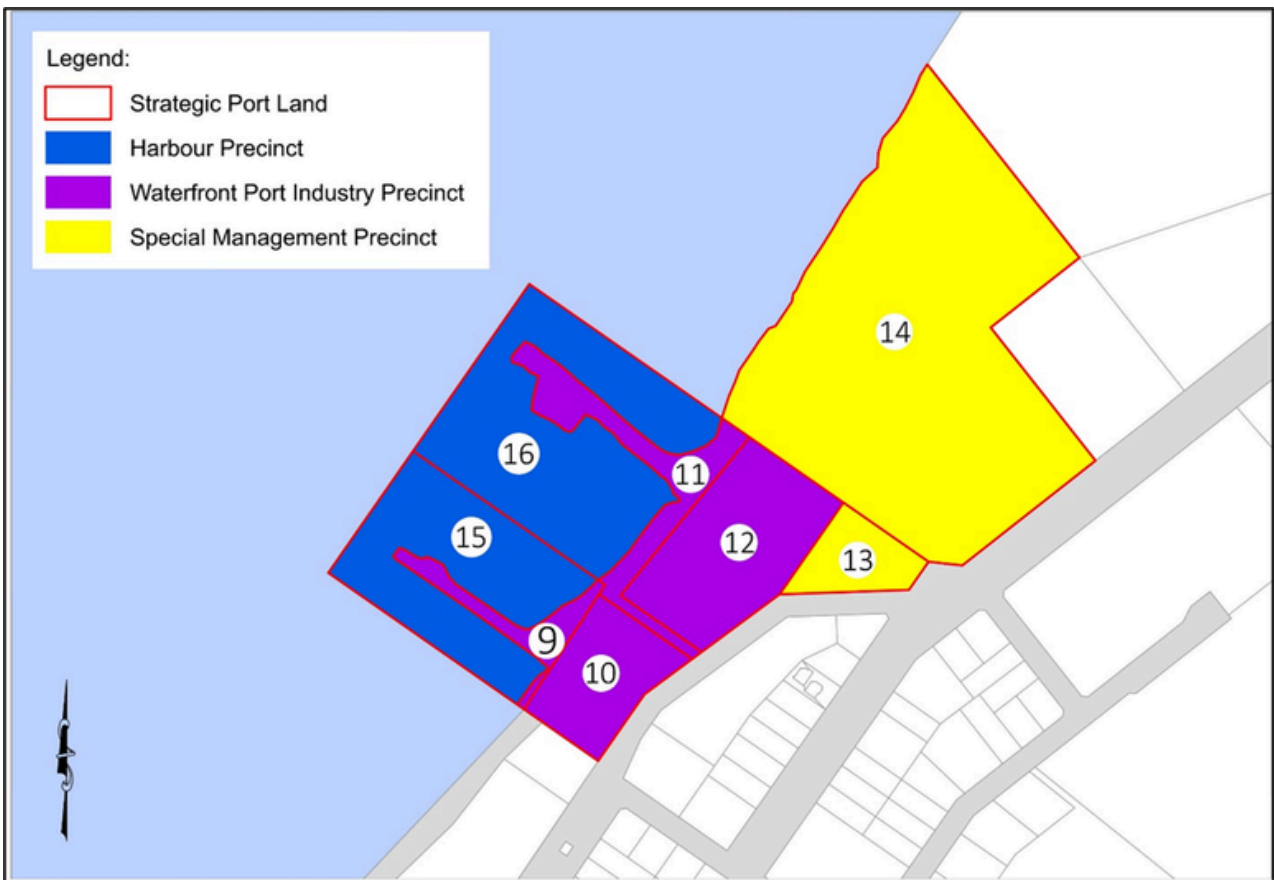


Figure 6 - Existing Precincts on Horn Island

### 3.2 Port Facilities

Port facilities include all facilities and land owned or controlled by Ports North, used in the operation and strategic management of the Port of Thursday Island (Refer **Figure 7 and 8**).

Key port facilities in the Port of Thursday Island include:

- jetties and associated waterfront facilities on Thursday Island
- jetties and associated cargo and barge facilities on Horn Island
- ferry and passenger transfer facilities
- fuel storage and refuelling infrastructure
- marine services supporting fishing, recreational boating and tourism; and
- port access, hardstand, laydown and associated service areas.

The updated Land Use Plan will support retention of existing port facilities, while planning for the potential development of underutilised port land where required to meet operational, community and regional needs.



**Figure 7 - Port Facilities – Horn Island**



Figure 8 - Port Facilities – Thursday Island

### 3.3 Valuable Features

Valuable features include:

- Resources or areas of ecological significance
- Areas contributing significantly to amenity
- Areas or places of cultural heritage significance; and
- Resources or areas of economic value.

The updated Land Use Plan will outline how Ports North will appropriately manage potential impact on valuable features and where relevant, mitigation measures will be included in the development requirements in the updated Land Use Plan.

As required, the updated Land Use Plan will incorporate and reflect matters of State Interest as identified in the *State Planning Policy 2017*.

The updated Land Use Plan will continue to recognise the following valuable features of the Port of Thursday Island and include suitable assessment provisions to appropriately control development.

#### 3.3.1 Resources or areas of Ecological Significance

##### ***Coastal Environment & Vegetation***

Mangroves are present along parts of the coastline within the Port, with more developed mangrove communities on Horn and Hammond Islands and smaller mangrove communities on Thursday Island.

Within Port Limits (outside of Strategic Port Land) between Thursday Island and Horn Island, seagrass meadows, mangrove communities, sandbanks and coral reef communities occur. These habitats support marine organisms, fisheries and species such as dugong and marine turtles. The channel between Thursday and Horn Islands also contains pearl oyster beds, which contribute to the local commercial aquaculture operations.

Mapped vegetation values present on Port land at Horn Island include wildlife habitat and regulated vegetation, however are predominantly isolated to land designated as a Special Management Precinct on Horn Island (refer **Figure 9**).

The updated Land Use Plan will continue to have regard to areas of ecological significance.

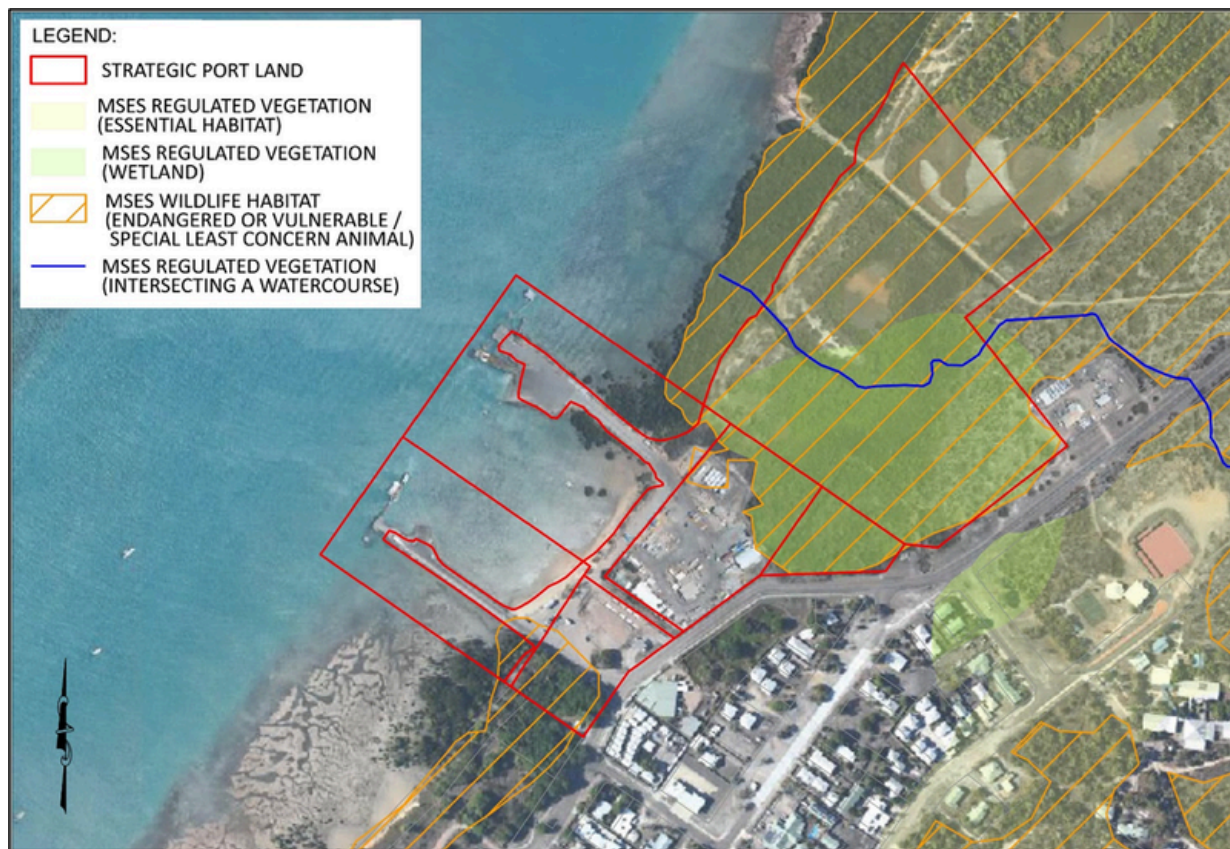


Figure 9 - Matters of State Environmental Significance Mapping - Horn Island

### **Marine Parks and Areas of Significance**

The Port of Thursday Island is outside the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and marine park areas. There are no Ramsar wetland sites or State marine parks within port limits. The federal government has identified a number of endangered species within the area which include birds, turtles, and ocean mammals.

### **Natural Hazard Risk and Resilience**

The updated Land Use Plan will consider flooding, bushfire, erosion hazards and storm tide inundation and include relevant land use and development provisions.

### **3.3.2 Areas contributing significantly to amenity**

#### **High Scenic Value**

The harbour setting between Thursday Island and Horn Island, including natural features such as Holmes Reef and the outlook from Millman Hill, contributes to the port locality's scenic value.

### **3.3.3 Areas of Cultural Heritage Significance**

#### **Local and State Heritage**

No State heritage places are identified on Strategic Port Land or within Port Limits, however a Queensland Heritage Place: Thursday Island Customs House (Place Reference 601527), is located outside of the Port area, opposite the cargo storage area on Thursday Island.

The slipways on the eastern most jetty on Thursday Island are mapped as a Local Non Indigenous Heritage Place under the *Torres Shire Council Planning Scheme* (ID 41).

### ***Indigenous Cultural Heritage***

The Port of Thursday Island is located within the traditional country of the Kaurareg people, whose Sea Country encompasses Thursday Island, Horn Island and the Prince of Wales group of islands.

Non-exclusive Native Title Determination has been declared over the water within Strategic Port Land (Harbour Precinct) surrounding the eastern and western jetties on Thursday Island and both jetties on Horn Island (described as: Lot 142 on Plan SP152630, Lot 1 on Plan SP118062, Lot 156 on Plan SP108485, Lot 4 on Plan SP108474, and Lot 28 on Plan SP108492).

A Local Indigenous heritage place (ID 95) is identified within the Special Management Precinct on Horn Island, described as an 'Open site with shell scatter'.

The two western jetties on Thursday Island and the north eastern jetty on Horn Island are mapped as Indigenous High Risk Area under the *Torres Shire Council Planning Scheme*.

### **3.3.4 Resources or areas of economic value**

The Port provides essential freight, passenger and marine services for Thursday Island, Horn Island and the broader Torres Strait.

#### ***Freight Services***

The Port handles essential freight and general cargo that supports local communities and wider Torres Strait region.

#### ***Fishing and Marine Services***

The Port supports commercial fishing, aquaculture, seafood handling and marine services including refuelling, vessel repair and waste services.

Torres Strait Islanders harvest dugong, sea turtles, reef fish and shell fish (including crayfish) for subsistence purposes under applicable frameworks.

#### ***Tourism and Passenger Movement***

The Port supports tourism and passenger movement, including ferry services, recreational boating and long-distance passenger vessel activity. The Horn Island ferry services support passenger movements to and from the Horn Island Airport.

### 4 SCHEDULE OF STRATEGIC PORT LAND

Strategic Port Land for the Port of Thursday Island is listed in **Appendix A** as shown in **Figure 10** below.

No additional land is identified in this Statement of Proposal as proposed Strategic Port Land.



Figure 10 Map of Current Strategic Port Land

## Appendix A

### Schedule of Strategic Port Land

**Table 1: Current Strategic Port Land**

Ref.	Real Property Description	Area (m2)	Tenure	Precinct
<b>Thursday Island</b>				
1	Lot 156 on SP108485	2,184	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
2	Lot 190 on SP108475	4,838	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
3	Lot 139 on SP108487	840	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
4	Lot 157 on SP108485	3,136	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
5	Lot 1 on SP118062	29,820	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
6	Lot 191 on SP108475	18,650	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
7	Lot 140 on SP108487	889	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
8	Lot 142 on SP152630	21,360	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
<b>Horn Island</b>				
9	Lot 27 on SP108492	4,074	Perpetual Lease	Waterfront Port Industry
10	Lot 26 on SP108474	10,336	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
11	Lot 3 on SP108474	10,180	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
12	Lot 2 on SP108474	18,380	Freehold	Waterfront Port Industry
13	Lot 1 on TS371	5,932	Freehold	Special Management
14	Lot 173 on SP108488	77,760	Perpetual Lease	Special Management
15	Lot 28 on SP108492	13,590	Perpetual Lease	Harbour
16	Lot 4 on SP108474	32,420	Perpetual Lease	Harbour