

Department of Transport and Main Roads Submission for "Strategic Fleet Taskforce – Discussion Paper"

This submission has been prepared to respond to the questions provided in the Discussion Paper and has been presented in the requested format.

The Queensland Transport and Main Roads Department (TMR) is keen to assist with the evaluation of the possible benefits arising from a Strategic National Fleet and provides these preliminary comments.

Departmental officers would like to discuss with the Taskforce how collectively we could promote opportunities to develop Australian shipping, including focussing attention on employment and skills development opportunities for our maritime workers.

Part One – Nature of business and nature of shipping needs

Questions 1 to 4 are not relevant to the functions of Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ).

5. *Are you another stakeholder? Yes*

MSQ, a branch of TMR, is the government regulator for marine safety and ship-sourced pollution in Queensland.

Part Two – Strategic needs

6. *If there was a major disruption that means shipping ceased for more than a few weeks what would be the financial and non-financial consequences for:*

- *your business*
- *your customers*
- *the economy*
- *the community*

The State of Queensland, with a mainland coastline of over 7,400 kms and a geographically dispersed population, relies on shipping to service central regional and remote communities.

Queensland has an extensive network of 21 ports along its coastline, ranging from small community ports to world-class export terminals and a capital city multi-cargo port. The port system is a major component of Queensland's supply chain and economy.

A major disruption to shipping has the potential to significantly disrupt Queensland's supply chain and economy, including a direct impact on:

- the operations of the Queensland port system
- multi-modal logistic services that move cargo between road/rail and sea
- the daily activity of the public, through the potential inability to access fuel
- the temporary closure of regional industries that facilitate local trade and development and generate the trade of minerals and agriculture

- the viability of regional and remote communities that are reliant on regular coastal shipping services for necessities.

The state is committed to ensuring that regional and remote communities have a reliable supply of fuel and essentials. Disruptions to shipping and trade will have critical adverse outcomes for Queenslanders and the industry, particularly given the geographical challenges that the state faces.

What are the benefits from the fleet during 'business as usual' or other scenarios?

7. Benefits to you or your stakeholders

Queensland's maritime industry is one of the key enablers of the growth of the state's economy.

The sea is our highway to international trade with \$178 billion of trade passing through our ports last year, with 337 million tonnes of cargo passing over our ports.

The Queensland port system last year experienced over 25,500 ship movements with over 11,000 voyages recorded through the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait.

Any disruption to the movement of trade will have a profound effect on the state's economy and a Strategic Fleet may provide some protection. TMR would be interested in assisting with research that may support a sustainable proposal to implement a sustainable Strategic Fleet.

8. Broader benefits

Queensland ports support Australia's national defence and security, and provide a vital lifeline during times of disaster and emergency. MSQ is supportive in-principle of the use of a Strategic Fleet for the purpose of national security and sovereignty.

Part Three – any other information

On 28 September 2020, the Queensland government's Maritime Jobs Taskforce (MJT) delivered a report, making 21 recommendations to strengthen Queensland's maritime workforce, establish a mechanism to address industry-wide issues and foster an environment where freight owners are encouraged to make a modal shift to coastal shipping.

The state government has recognised the importance of supporting this critical workforce by funding a \$21 million grant program with the aim of creating 40 new maritime jobs and helping to grow the maritime sector.

The Backing Queensland Maritime Jobs Initiative grant program is focussed on strengthening our local industry through government, workers and industry working together to target new coastal shipping services, maritime employment, and training opportunities.

MSQ considers that the Strategic Fleet proposal may benefit from leveraging off the Backing Queensland Maritime Jobs Initiative and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with the Strategic Fleet Taskforce as means of progressing this important initiative.

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MSQ provides consent for this submission to be made public for the purpose of the consultation regarding the "Strategic Maritime Fleet – Discussion Paper".