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Jensen calls for “miniports” in Far North to shore-up defence and open trade

KATTER'S Australian Party (KAP) candidate for Leichhardt, Rod Jensen, says Australia's neglect of sea and river transport infrastructure is locking up critical resources in the nation's north, and is backing a proposal which envisions a radical re-think of how we move our goods around.

“As our anthem goes, we're a nation 'girt by sea,' so why not use it to get our resources to market?”

Mr Jensen says a proposal to build 27 “miniports” from Cape York to Gladstone, would release products that have previously been stranded in the regions by high logistical and transport costs.

Mr Jensen said this would allow farmers and miners to access global markets, generating jobs and prosperity in regional communities.

“Miniports would relieve congestion and maintenance costs on road and rail networks, and boost Australia's defence and emergency response capabilities.”

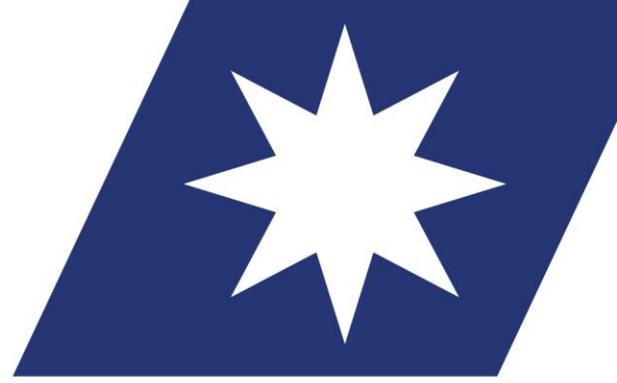
“Accessing the full untapped potential of remote towns in the North is key to getting the regional economy on track and keep it robust into the future.

“The growth of these regions is currently trapped by State Labor government policy which has prioritised the major ports of Gladstone, Townsville, Hay Point/Mackay and Abbot Point in line with the Reef 2050 Plan.”

Currently, Sea Transport Corporation figures show Queensland has only three ports for cape size ships – Abbot Point, Hay Point and Gladstone – and seven other trading ports, equating to 10 trading ports, one for each 700 kms.

Dr Stuart Ballantyne, Chair of Sea Transport, says by contrast in maritime nations there are trading ports every 53 kms (Gujarat, India) and 65kms (UK).

“This a result of policies of preventing any sort of progress for regional communities in Queensland. The whole coastline is enshrined in national parks, sensitive fish habitats, mangrove and other no-go areas.



"This lack of basic port infrastructures also contributes to our lack of defence vessels in the area of highest border incursions, which is the Torres Strait and Cape York.

"Even simple marina infrastructure would be very beneficial in addressing Indigenous youth opportunities as they are keen for opportunities with boats, fishing, diving and tour charters."

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For media inquiries, please call 0456999511.