MEDIA RELEASE

MICK PALMER
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR TERRITORY PORTS

Ref: K-0232-00

Date: 3 May, 2000

Darwin’s East Arm Port is being readied to seamlessly link with the Alice Springs to Darwin railway through a $37 million project to commence next financial year.

The $18 million allocated last year will be combined with an additional $19 million allocated in 2000-2001 to begin construction of Stage Two of the facility.

Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Development Mick Palmer said the work was being staged to meet the initial requirements of the $1.2 billion railway project.

“The development of the railway is the major factor in the timetable of further construction at East Arm, with there being little point in constructing expensive railway infrastructure at the port until now,” Mr Palmer said.

The construction program for the $37 million will ensure the port is capable of handling rail-delivered freight by the time the railway commences operation.

Key elements of port development that will commence this financial year include:

- construction of the railway access embankment;
- construction of a dedicated bulk liquids berth near South Shell Island; and
- construction of an intermodel terminal consisting of a 110m multi-purpose wharf and about 4ha container storage and transfer area.

The bulk liquids facility will support the Joint User Fuel facility which, once completed, will enable Darwin’s fuel storage to be relocated from suburban Stuart Park to a dedicated purpose-built facility at East Arm.
When complete, East Arm will also have a sophisticated high-capacity container handling facility able to handle up to 500,000 containers each year.

Mr Palmer said the port would be ready to interface between the railway and ships in 2003, the target date for the railway to become operational.

"By 2003 East Arm Port needs to be, and will be, capable of efficiently handling containerised cargo and swiftly be able to transfer containers from ship to train and vice versa.

"It also needs to be able to handle the breaking down of containers for dispatch to elsewhere in Australia via the road network," Mr Palmer said.

The ultimate development masterplan will include ship repair facilities, oil and gas supply services and bulk ore exports.

Opened in February this year, Stage One of the East Arm Port comprised of 490m of land-backed berth incorporating 10ha of hardstand and a 4000sq m undercover cargo handling facility.

Costing $97 million, Stage One laid the foundations of a port that will be one of the most efficient and diversified in the region.

Mr Palmer said the Territory Government was committed to ensuring Darwin reached its full potential as a natural trade route between Asia and Australia.

"Goods bound for Australian markets can land in Darwin and be sent anywhere interstate while exporters will benefit from utilising a railway through the centre of the country linked to international shipping via an efficient port in Darwin.

"The East Arm Port and the Adelaide to Darwin rail link will complete the infrastructure required for a seamless transport system, linking Australia's southern centres of economic activity with the world's most populated region: Asia," Mr Palmer said.

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