

# Ports thrive after takeovers

THE takeover of several regional ports has paid off for Ports North.

Revenue from regional port activities topped nearly \$10 million.

"This result (\$9.87 million) was above plan due to increased revenue associated with Karumba dredging, offset by lower sugar export volumes through Mourilyan, and reduced coastal cargo imports into Thursday Island," the annual report said.

Ports North is responsible for eight ports on Cape York and in the Torres Strait as well as the port of Cairns which had a slight increase in revenue to \$23.28 million.

During the year Ports North com-



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missioned a review of the concrete structures at the port of Thursday Island and Mourilyan in order to develop long-term maintenance strategies for the assets.

"This review included taking concrete samples from the wharves and sending them to laboratories for specialised testing and analysis," the report said.

It said Karumba experienced major floods last year and as a result considerable siltation occurred.

"Bed levelling and channel realignment was undertaken at the time to allow operations to continue at a declared depth of 3.4m," it said.

In other works, engineers wharf car park at the port of Thursday Island was reconstructed and resealed.

Chairman Ken Chapman said the management of the additional ports as well as the Cityport masterplan were the major focus last year.

"This is a new and exciting time for the organisation which presents

opportunities to further diversify operations and to help grow the regional economy by providing port facilities throughout Far North Queensland," he said.

The report said despite the tough economic conditions the organisation made a net profit of \$5.63 million after a loss of \$2.23 million the year before.

The State Government provided Ports North with \$31 million equity to acknowledge the peppercorn rental to be paid by the Cairns Regional Council for the site of the proposed cultural precinct.

The Government also made a com-

mitment to \$11.2 million for the new cruise ship terminal.

"Reflecting the downturn in the regional economy, a decline in some cargo volumes has been experienced," the report said.

"Declines in fuel imports and coastal cargo volumes, with an offsetting increase in sugar exports and fertiliser imports has seen the overall cargo volumes increased by 1.8 per cent."

Capital works in Cairns included \$8.26 million for the terminal project, the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College and site works at Cityport South.



**Eye-catching:** Kylie-Anne Jones and Matthew Connolly from Expressway Signs have won an award for the Cairns Reef Casino sign.

Picture: JAKE NOWAKOWSKI

## Casino's visually appealing signs clinch award

THE big red casino signs around the Pullman Reef Hotel Casino have won a national award.

Expressway Signs managing director Matthew Connolly said they were awarded a bronze award for the distinctive signs at the bi-annual Australian Sign and Graphics Association awards in Sydney last month.

He said it was a just reward for the six-month, \$200,000 job which involved the signs at the entrances as well as LED signs on the roof of

the building and the vertical pylon signs.

Mr Connolly said the red letters were made of aluminium and were difficult to manufacture.

He said the awards were a highlight of the sign industry and recognised and rewarded sign companies nationally.

"The awards signal the wonderful array of talent of modern, digital and traditional methods in the industry," Mr Connolly said.

"Expressway Signs were nominated as one of five finalists for our Pullman Reef Hotel Casino entry, which we submitted in the fabrication category of the awards.

"The fabrication category included three-dimensional fabricated letters and free-standing plinth signs.

"The Pullman Reef Hotel Casino signage is an icon in the Cairns CBD with tourists daily getting their photo taken in front of the famous "casino" letters day and

night. "The illuminated letters form a focal point for the hotel's visual marketing and every piece of visual media has images of these letters with the large blade sign in the background."

Mr Connolly said all of the design and fabrication was completed in-house, involving designer Kylie-Anne Jones and in-house signmaker Steve Rantall.

"It is an achievement we are very proud of," Mr Connolly said.

## Close look at maritime capacity

NATIONAL and international shipping representatives will be in Cairns tomorrow to have a close look at the city's ship repair services.

Advance Cairns and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation are bringing the delegates to Cairns in a bid to source more business for the marine repair sector.

The visitors will visit the slipways and the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College, view ship repair ancillary services and take a cruise on Trinity Inlet.

The delegates come from a range of companies including PB Seatow New Zealand, PB Towage Australia and MISC Agencies Australia.

Advance Cairns chief executive officer Ross Contarino said the tour was designed to show off the city's maritime capacity.

"Cairns' maritime sector has a turnover of \$670 million a year and employs about 4500 people," he said.

"Our port is the major marine training location for TAFE and the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College.

"We have two commercial fishing bases, a naval base, a super yacht industry and a reef and diving industry.

"The three major ship repair companies, Norship Marine, Cairns Slipways and Tropical Reef Shipyards, are minutes from the CBD and the international airport and they offer competitive and expert servicing, maintenance and repairs on vessels up to 3000 tonnes," he said.

Earlier this year, Norship Marine, Cairns Slipways and Tropical Reef Shipyards decided to work together to promote Cairns' maintenance and repair facilities.

## \$40,000 grant helps put tourism sites literally on the map

ADVANCE Cairns has been awarded \$40,000 to establish a GPS map of the Far North's food tourism sites.

The funding is part of a \$1.8 million State Government strategy designed to boost infrastructure on Queensland's great tourism drives.

The Minor Tourism Infrastructure Grant program assists regional tourism operators and local government authorities to deliver vital infrastruc-

ture for the booming drive market.

Advance Cairns chief executive officer Ross Contarino said the Government had recognised the importance of the food tourism sector.

"This funding will benefit our region as a whole as more people discover what Queenslanders already know: that we have the best tourist attractions in the country," he said.

The map will feature sites such as

coffee plantations, wineries, dairies and orchards on the Great Tropical Drive from Cardwell to Cooktown.

People will be able to access the state-of-the-art map with satellite-navigation technology or by downloading an iPhone application.

Mr Contarino said the project would add value to the work already being done to promote food tourism.

"Advance Cairns' food tourism

project Taste Paradise is working hard to support all the producers, growers and their allied industries in the tropical North," he said.

"The GPS project, which Advance Cairns will work on in collaboration with Tropical Tourism North Queensland, Tourism Queensland and other tourism organisations, will literally put the tropical North's food tourism sites on the map."

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