

Dudgeon Point plans allow for giant coal port

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DUDGEON Point, south of Mackay, may be developed into a coal port capable of handling up to 120 million tonnes of coal annually, almost on par with the combined total of both Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal and Hay Point.

The State Government owned North Queensland Bulk Ports corporation (NQBP) wants expressions of interest for the site from private companies, which would wholly fund not only the possibilities for the site, but also the construction and running of the port.

According to NQBP, the 1400ha site could, if pushed to its maximum, cater for coal infrastructure up to 120 million tonnes and said if approvals went quickly, the first stage of the port could be operating in

five years.

NQBP chief executive officer Brad Fish said the first stage would likely allow the port to export 30 million tonnes a year, creating 1000 jobs during construction with up to 200 workers operating the terminal.

He said the land had been "earmarked" for use as a major port, and if no expressions of interests came to NQBP, the process would start again after a few years.

However, he indicated that numerous coal companies had already contacted NQBP about Dudgeon Point, including Hancock Prospecting which is developing a multi-billion dollar coal mine in the Galilee Basin, west of Emerald.

"It's a very valuable site for the whole region," Mr Fish said.

"And we are looking for the industry to fund the whole development with near to no

funding from the State Government."

The official line from the government is that the land could be used for any kind of large port development but the planning to this point has been for a large coal terminal.

"A coal port is definitely a scenario. The work we have done is in planning for coal infrastructure," Mr Fish said.

The call for expressions of interest comes when the State Government is selling off significant infrastructure assets, including the Abbot Point terminal north of Bowen.

Mr Fish said that was why an interested coal company would foot all the costs.

"We are looking for the industry to fund the whole development because the Queensland Government has made it clear that it is divesting this type of asset."