

Port of Darwin 2022-23 Review

Key Messages:

- PM&C led the Review into the circumstances of the Port of Darwin lease (the Review) in 2022-23.
- The Review was conducted by PM&C in consultation with relevant agencies.
- The Review advised that it was not in the national interest to vary or cancel the lease arrangement at the time.

Handling Note:

- Deputy Secretary, Economy, Industry and Resilience Group, *Nadine Williams*, to lead on Port of Darwin election commitment questions.
- First Assistant Secretary, National Security Division, *Richard Sadleir*, to only lead on the PM&C's *2022-23 Review into the Circumstances of the Port of Darwin Lease*.
- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sports and the Arts (DITRDCA) is the lead agency for Port of Darwin election commitment.
- The Department of Home Affairs is the lead agency for security aspects relating to ports and other critical infrastructure.

Port of Darwin 2022-23 Review

NSIP25-000852

Contact Officer

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sponsoring Officer Assistant Secretary Andrew Rose, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cleared by First Assistant Secretary Richard Sadleir on 23 September 2025

s 33(a)(iii) [Redacted]

- | [Redacted]
- | [Redacted]
- | [Redacted]
- | [Redacted]

Supporting information

Date	Action
April 2025	During the 2025 federal election, both the government and the opposition advocated for discontinuing the lease.
20 October 2023	The findings of the Review were made public (Attachment A).
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
9 August 2023	The Prime Minister agreed to accept the findings and recommendations of the Review.
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
s 33(a)(iii)	[REDACTED]
22 August 2022	The Prime Minister stated that: "I have asked for advice and when we receive it we will make it public".
8 June 2022	The Prime Minister announced there would be a "review of the circumstances of the Port [or Darwin].
December 2021	Media reported that the 2021 Defence review of the Port of Darwin lease had not found sufficient national security grounds to overturn the lease.
December 2020	The <i>Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020</i> passed both Houses of Parliament.
July 2018	Commencement of the <i>Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018</i> .
March 2016	Amendments to the Foreign Investment Review Board process to consider sale of state and territory government assets.
October 2015	Landbridge Group formally wins bid for the lease of Port of Darwin.
May 2015	Commonwealth Deed of Licence agreed with the NT Government.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

- On 3 June 2025, the Department of Finance disclosed 'PM&C talking points' under the FOI Act. The disclosure includes email correspondence between Departments, including PM&C, on a draft of whole-of-government talking points for the Port of Darwin election commitment. This included a draft talking points page and a media summary covering several days of reporting immediately following the Prime Minister's 4 April 2025, announcement.
- **FOI/2025/013:** On 28 January 2025, PM&C received a request for access to documents relating to the Port of Darwin from an ABC Darwin journalist. On 27 February 2025, the application was refused under section 24A(1) of the FOI Act as the requested documents did not exist.
- **FOI/2025/082:** On 23 April 2025, PM&C received a request for access to documents relating to the Port of Darwin from an ABC Darwin journalist. On 27 May 2025, the application was refused under section 24A(1) of the FOI Act as the requested documents did not exist.
- **FOI/2025/085:** On 28 April 2025, PM&C received a request for access to documents relating to the Port of Darwin from [REDACTED] s 47G. On 26 June 2025, the decision refused access in full. On 23 July 2025, PM&C was notified that the applicant had sought internal review of the FOI decision. On 12 September 2025, the refusal decision was upheld.