



*Cairns Marine Director, Lyle Squire Jnr, with a Humphead Maori Wrasse at the Cairns Marine operations. The business will be able to continue operating with the help of a COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan.*

# **+ COVID-19 Loan allows North Queensland marine specialists to maintain commitment to industry**

**A Cairns business specialising in marine life collection for display in aquaria will be able to continue operating as the nation's largest and most prominent of its kind with a COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan.**

Cairns Marine is Australia's largest collector and supplier of marine life for display in aquaria, servicing domestic retail outlets and wholesalers worldwide, specialising in sharks, rays and well known for the enigmatic Hammer Head sharks, Humpheaded Moari Wrasse along with an array of smaller fish and invertebrates.

Up to 80 positions will be maintained, as well as business operators' commitment to the industry, throughout COVID-19 with a COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan.

The loan scheme administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA), provides finance of up to \$250,000 for businesses and non-profit organisations impacted by COVID-19 to assist with carry-on expenses such as employee wages, rent and rates and other expenditure.

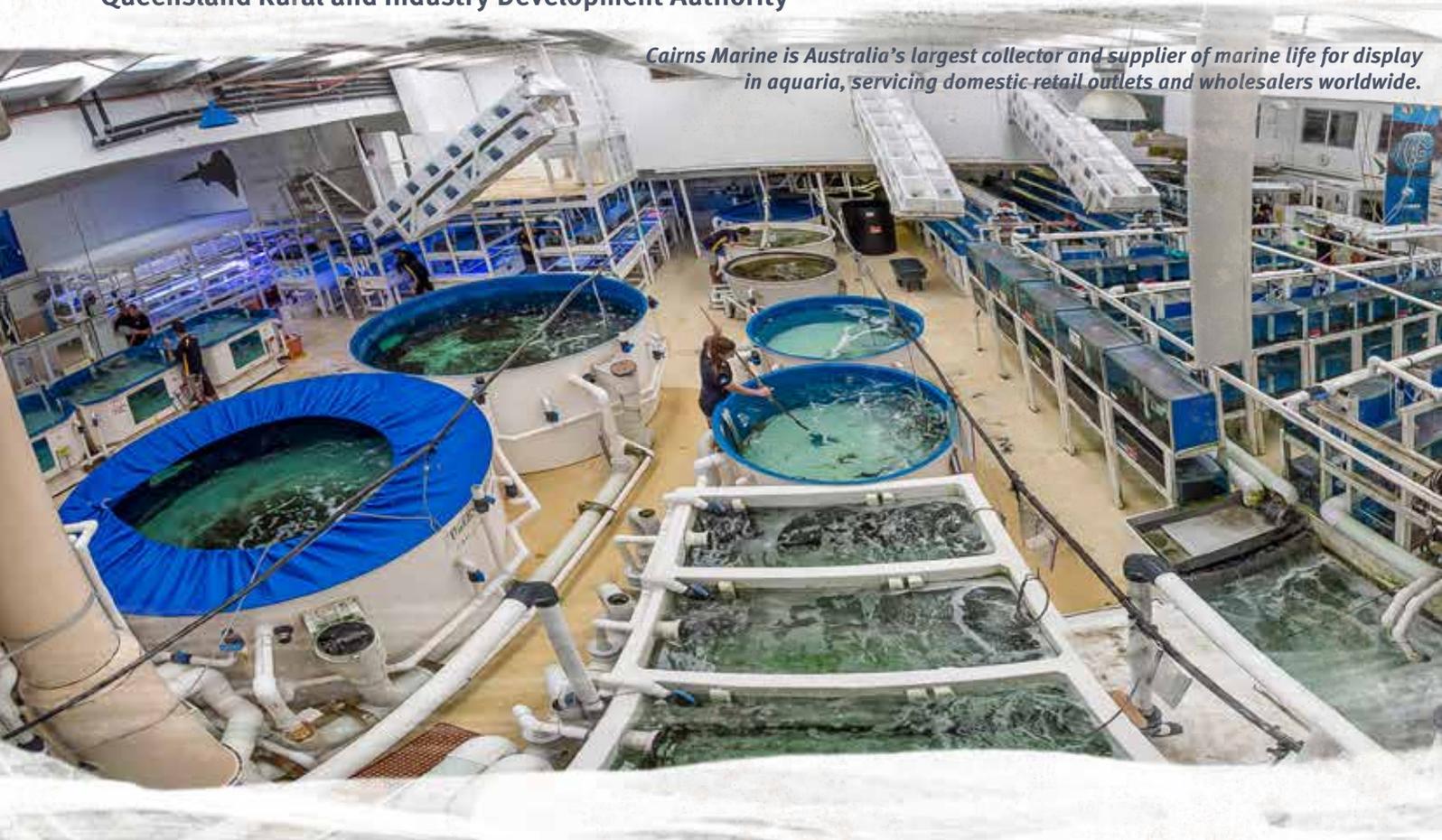
Director Lyle Squire Jnr said Cairns Marine had a number of departments and teams that specialised in everything from animal husbandry, water quality and collection of marine life from the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea.

**“The loan assisted with carry-on expenses such as rent, rates and other expenditure along with employee wages.”**

“Cairns Marine has utilised the COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan to keep engaged our existing workforce of approximately 80 staff which allows us to maintain our commitments to customers,” he said.

“The loan assisted with carry-on expenses such as rent, rates and other expenditure along with employee wages.

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“I was pleased with the quick response from QRIDA on our application process and the phone call received from the department advising it was approved, whilst it came as a surprise it allowed me have confidence in the business capacity to move forward in difficult times.”

Mr Squire said the COVID-19 travel restrictions significantly impacted plans to expand the business, which included building a new facility in Mackay.

“The additional facility is to provide greater product variation to our customers and to keep up with our demand; previously our demand was greater than what we could supply,” he said.

“We were also embarking on stocking four new large public aquaria in America. The lack of aircraft and available air freight has significantly damaged the opportunity to fulfil our goals.

“We have had to adapt our operations to suit the current environment and give us the agility to maintain trading and providing product to our customers.

“We utilise whatever freight options we can this means we are using shipping routes that we have never previously considered, we have had to modify our packing to allow for longer shipping durations.”

**“We have had to adapt our current operations to suit the current environment and give us the agility to maintain trading...”**

Mr Squire said the loan allowed the business to not only continue trading but maintain their position in the marketplace.

“Cairns Marine has established a global benchmark for collection, husbandry and transport of marine life around the world,” he said.

“We guarantee our public aquarium customers a completely ethical and sustainable chain of custody solution. We are only one of four companies around the world that specialise in providing animals to public aquaria.”

For more information see [www.qrida.qld.gov.au/covid19jobssupportloans](http://www.qrida.qld.gov.au/covid19jobssupportloans) or **Freecall 1800 623 946**.

*QRIDA is delivering the \$1 billion COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan Scheme on behalf of the Queensland Government.*