



COUNCIL DIGS IN OVER PROJECT

Mayor stands firm on decision

By **MEGAN MACKANDER**

THE final say in the \$628 million marina and business precinct development on the Caboolture River known as North Harbour looks set to lie in the hands of the state government – not the Moreton Bay Regional Council.

During today's council meeting, a letter from infrastructure and planning minister Stirling Hinchliffe will be discussed. It seeks to declare North Harbour a "prescribed project".

The declaration would mean Mr Hinchliffe would appoint the coordinator general as the ultimate decision-maker to override, cancel or amend any council decisions.

The letter from Mr Hinchliffe stated there would be no right of appeal on the coordinator general's decision.

But Moreton Bay mayor Allan Sutherland said he would stand by his council's move to refuse the development of the eastern side of North Harbour.

This included the major marina facility and a residential precinct for up to 5500 residents.

Mr Sutherland said the planning and environment council would have been a more suitable avenue to appeal a council decision, without political intervention and unnecessary court costs.

"I'm confident our decision was the responsible one for the environment and health of Moreton Bay," he said.

"The advice and evidence presented to councillors and myself is something that I believe will stand up to scrutiny by the Planning and Environment Court."

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MR Sutherland said he personally invited the minister to visit the area to sight the council's concerns before making any decision on whether to "call in" the development.

But more than five years since the initial development application was lodged, North Harbour developer Northeast Business Park has yet to lay a single brick and will challenge the council after it lodged appeals this week with the Planning and Environmental Council.

"We are responding to the refusal of the application by Moreton Bay Regional Council after the project had been recommended for approval in full by the Queensland government

coordinator-general," Northeast Business Park CEO Jeff Smith said.

On the company website Mr Smith said the project was an environmentally sustainable development.

Almost half of the master plan has been set aside as open space and environmental buffer zones.

Significant marine works will include the dredging of the navigation channel in the lower reaches of the Caboolture River.

The project would boost the local economy, providing 1500 jobs during construction and a further 13,600 positions within the completed community.

Mr Hinchliffe has called for comments on the proposal to make North Harbour a prescribed project and Commerce

Caboolture chamber of commerce has taken the opportunity to offer its support.

Chamber president Adam Leishman said members would support the intervention of state government in the project.

"I am delighted the minister is looking at stepping in and using his reserved powers to approve this excellent project for our greater region," Mr Leishman said.

Submissions on the proposal to hand over decision-making powers to the state government will close this Friday with the issue number one on the council agenda today.

Let Caboolture News know what you think about the state government take-over as development decision-makers. Call us on 5490 1420.