



Report dredging up past, says CEO

THE developers of the \$628 million North Harbour project have defended serious environmental concerns raised in a recently released state government report, saying the issues had been addressed since it was compiled more than six months ago.

North East Business Park chief executive Jeff Smith said his company had complied with the conditions set out by the coordinator general's evaluation report. He said 6.5km of the Caboolture River would need to be dredged to allow marine traffic through and not 9km as suggested previously.

Mr Smith said the dredging of the existing navigation channel at the mouth of the river would be of great public benefit as a matter of public safety.

State Infrastructure and Planning Minister Stirling Hinchliffe

proposed to declare North Harbour a "prescribed project", which would place the final say in the hands of the state's coordinator general after council refused the residential area and marina precinct.

Mr Hinchliffe met with Mayor Allan Sutherland last Wednesday to talk one-on-one about the project before submissions on the proposal closed on Friday. Mr Hinchliffe handed Cr Sutherland a report dated June 29, 2009, written by the Department of Environmental and Resource Management (DERM), which questioned the value of the project.

But Mr Hinchliffe's pointed out the DERM report was compiled more than six months ago and he provided the *Caboolture News* with the Coordinator General's subsequent response to the re-

port which addressed many of the concerns.

Mr Hinchliffe's office pointed out the DERM report was just one of many submissions for feedback on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Coordinator General's final comments on the EIS were summed up in an evaluation report in October, 2009.

The Coordinator General determined that the project could proceed subject to specific recommendations and conditions. Mr Hinchliffe said the meeting was not a negotiation but an opportunity for council to put forward its views before a decision on the proposal.

Council's decision to refuse the eastern side of North Harbour will be contested by North East Business Park in the Environment and Planning Court.