



River stoush hits court

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THE developer seeking to build a \$628 million residential, marina and business precinct by dredging Caboolture River has gone to court in a bid to prevent Moreton Bay Regional Council from blocking the project.

Northeast Business Park on Monday lodged appeals with the Planning and Environment Court against decisions by the council to reject the marina and other parts of the project.

The massive project, which could take 15 years to complete, envisages dredging 9km of the environmentally sensitive river feeding into a Moreton Bay green zone.

The council has warned that sediment run-off from dredging would harm marine life and that dredging at the mouth of the river would upset rare bird habitats.

Council experts also concluded sections of the site were flood prone and that bow waves from increased boat traffic would erode the banks.

Jeff Smith, chief executive officer of Northeast Business Park, said yesterday the company's environmental impact statement demonstrated how any environmental harm could be mitigated.

He said the state coordinator-general, Col Jensen, had assessed the EIS favourably.

"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," Mr Smith said.

Uproar has followed the announcement by Planning Minister Stirling Hinchliffe to take the decision out of the council's hands.

Moreton Bay mayor Allan Sutherland has threatened to "go to war" against the Bligh Government if it approves the development against the council's wishes.

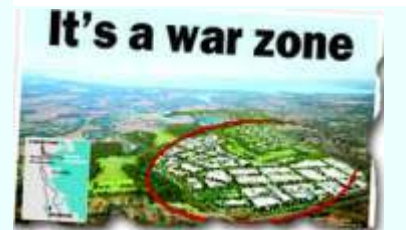
He said he was heartened by the public response to the controversy and said the council had been inundated with callers backing its stand. How-

ever, Mr Smith said residents were in favour of the project.

"There is overwhelming community support for this project documented through five years of community engagement," Mr Smith said.

"The rigorous environmental impact statement process included extensive environmental studies that satisfied the Queensland Government's requirements and addressed the council's conditions."

Mr Smith said he was confident the project would proceed whether the Moreton Bay Regional Council liked it or not.



CONTROVERSY: How *The Courier-Mail* reported the development row.