



## Eco group sounds warning:

# Harbour plan 'will ruin river'

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ASSISTANT EDITOR

THE Wildlife Preservation Society believes a developer has underestimated the ecological damage that would be caused by a \$628 million marina, residential and business precinct on the environmentally sensitive Caboolture River feeding into a Moreton Bay green zone.

The society's Bayside branch said the environmental study by Northeast Business Park was seriously flawed and it wanted the State Government to stop the project, which requires the dredging of 9km of the river.

In the 100-page report, the society's secretary Simon Baltais warns of the destruction of fish, bird and koala habitats, and paints a gloomy prediction of the pollution of Moreton Bay from chemical and acidic run-off.

The Government has signalled it will approve the North Harbour plan.

But the Opposition joined the controversy yesterday saying it regretted the approval process being taken out of the hands of Moreton council.

Opposition Leader John-Paul Langbroek also called for an investigation into the impact study, which he said was compiled with the help of a former high-ranking public servant.

He said: "(Infrastructure) Minister (Stirling) Hinchliffe has over-ruled objections from Moreton council and supposedly handed the decision to co-

ordinator general Col Jensen who's given it the OK. This is about accountability and due process.

"It is a massive project with huge environmental concerns that are being brushed aside. There is also a large question mark over what information Jeff Smith may have had and his role in pushing the company's environmental impact statement."

Mr Smith, the CEO of Northeast Business Park, is a veteran of several state government departments.

But he denied any impropriety and said he did not seek or receive any favours from the Government.

Mr Langbroek attacked Government secrecy surrounding the project.

"Premier (Anna) Bligh promised better accountability, but where is it?" he said. "Why are the Premier and her ministers rushing to approve this massive project and why is the Government refusing to release its advice from the EPA?"

"The Government's own scientific experts say the Caboolture River is already in trouble, but it won't release the environmental advice from its own experts on this project."

Mr Baltais said the Government was legally bound to protect the habitat of migratory birds. Moreton council rate-payers faced an undue financial burden for ongoing dredging of the bay and for connecting water and sewerage. And he argued the North Harbour project did not comply with the town plan.