

National Trust of Queensland response to

North Bank Guidelines

The National Trust of Queensland is strongly opposed to the North Bank development as described in the Government's recently released design guidelines. In short, the Trust and the community feels that these guidelines still offer substantial public pain for Brisbane and its River, with comparatively little public gain.

While the changes generated by the Enquiry by Design show some important improvements, the National Trust is particularly opposed to the construction of buildings in the Brisbane River, whether they are on platforms or reclaimed land. The Trust believes that the construction of tall buildings, as shown on the attached sketch, would have an extremely adverse impact on the landscape and environment of Brisbane. The Trust, therefore, cannot support these guidelines.

The Trust believes that the limitations of the Government's brief have made it almost impossible to arrive at a solution acceptable to the community. In particular, requiring a private developer to fund a substantial amount of public infrastructure from a development site which has little developable land, is forcing a solution that includes tall buildings in the River. Until the brief is substantially amended, the Trust believes it will be difficult to make progress with community support.

The Trust would also like to make the following additional comments:

- North Bank is a very important area with a great deal of potential. The Trust strongly supports improving North Bank.
- Options for the development of North Bank are limited by the constraints of the freeway. The focus should be on creating a quality transitional space, rather than a destination. Creating more public destinations in William and George Streets would be a better way of enlivening the broader North Bank area.
- The Trust believes there are other ways of funding improvements to North Bank, such as publicly-funded small projects over several years or development off-site such as the Margaret Street carpark or railway corridors.
- The Trust is very pleased that the potential of the heritage precinct is now being recognised, but very disappointed that this obvious opportunity to make North Bank a special place was not recognised in the previous scheme.
- The Trust has no objections to relocating the CityCat terminal if needed, or to the provision of a low-rise visitor centre.

- The Trust has some concerns about the scale and location of the proposed signature building, but recognises the design intent of providing commercial development that is not in the River, while trying to minimise the impact on views to the former Treasury Building.
- The Trust is concerned about the impact of removing the mangroves, although they are relatively recent. Mangroves provide an important environmental function and make a substantial contribution to the River's health, as promoted by the nearby mangrove boardwalk. It is our understanding that these mangroves are protected.
- The Trust is also concerned about the impact of flooding. While the modelling suggests the development will have little impact on flood levels, there are many other structures being built in the river, and these will combine to have a cumulative effect on flood levels. Adding an unnecessary intrusion into the River for commercial buildings will not make a positive contribution to flood levels.
- The Trust is also disappointed that the scheme does not recognise local planning requirements such as riparian setbacks. It also fails to consider the impacts of climate change, as recognised in a recent legal precedent interstate.
- The design of any development in the River should consider the impact of flooding on its lower levels. For example, lifting the public plaza area above the flood level would then make it closer to the noise of the expressway. There is no evidence that the impact of flooding on these lower levels has been carefully considered.

The Trust is particularly disappointed by the limited amount of information provided for the consultation process, and felt the need to release its own interpretation of the scheme to generate more informed responses. The Trust is also very disappointed by the very limited time the community has been given to understand this complex set of guidelines and provide an informed response.

North Bank deserves a quality solution and the Trust is very happy to provide whatever assistance it can to achieve this.

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