

North Bank Proposal

National Trust of Queensland Response

14 March 2007

The National Trust of Queensland is strongly opposed to the North Bank Proposal in its current form. The proposal is grossly over-scaled and further separates the City of Brisbane from its river and its past.

The North Bank proposal is located where the Queen's Wharf was situated during Brisbane's convict period, and this is the point from which the city grew. This location will be decimated by the proposal.

This proposal will also substantially diminish views to and from the highly-significant precinct of early buildings along William and George Streets, which extends from Parliament House through to the Treasury (Casino) Building. Brisbane is a river city, and a very important part of understanding Brisbane's origins and cityscape is the ability to see and tell the stories of this historically significant precinct as a whole, rather than catching occasional glimpses of some of its individual components.

The fundamental principles underpinning this proposal need to be seriously questioned. The Master Plan for the project, which encourages development that extends 90 metres into the Brisbane River from the existing bank and requires it to be of no net cost to government, will deliver a detrimental scheme such as this one. Of further concern is the likelihood that the cost of building in the river will escalate and the heights of the buildings will increase even further to recover costs.

The objective of the project is to improve the North Bank area. This current proposal will only exacerbate the problems of the freeway, rather than mitigate them, by creating a visual barrier between the city on one side, and the river and South Bank on the other. Overall, this project will not improve the North Bank precinct but be detrimental to it.

While this proposal is of no net cost to government, the National Trust believes this project to be an enormous cost to the community, in terms of its impact on the significant historical, architectural and riverside cityscape of Brisbane, with very few gains. The proposed bridge over the freeway with some interpretive panels appears to be a token gesture towards Brisbane's history and heritage.

The National Trust supports innovative and thoughtful development that creates the heritage of our time, while respecting the important historical layers that contribute to the city's character and distinctiveness. This proposal does not exhibit the qualities that the National Trust is prepared to support.

Stewart Armstrong
Executive Director