

# Green tick for marina project

Craig Johnstone

A MASSIVE marina and commercial development on the Caboolture River that could create nearly 14,000 jobs has won environmental approval from the Bligh Government five years after it was first proposed.

However, the development still has several environmental and regulatory hurdles to clear.

Co-ordinator-General Colin Jensen yesterday approved the \$630 million Northeast Business Park development, but only if the project met more than 40 strict environmental and other conditions.

The development, which involves dredging 7.5km of the Caboolture River and a section of Deception Bay, has been promoted as "bigger than Sanctuary Cove".

However, it has sparked protests over its environmental impact.

Developers Port Binnli plan to build a riverbank marine precinct covering more than 320ha, including a business park and about 100ha of residential development.

However, despite pressure to approve the project because of its capacity to generate jobs, the State Government has spent 18 months considering its environmental impact before yesterday's decision.

It will now go to federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to decide on the project's impact on environmental values.

State Government agencies will also review aspects of the project.

Northeast Business Park chief executive Jeff Smith said the approval was a "significant mile-

stone in the journey" towards completing the project.

He said his board would now "look at options to move forward" and would likely start with the development of small business lots next year, pending approval from Moreton Bay Regional Council.

"Anyone who goes through these processes probably grows impatient the longer things take," he said.

Moreton Bay Mayor Allan Sutherland said he was not surprised the Co-ordinator-General had conditionally approved the project given its employment prospects.

"I'm comforted by the fact there is a lot more critical analysis to be done by the state and federal governments to reassure council and the public that this project will not jeopardise the biodiversity of the area," he said.