

North Harbour Facts – Dispelling the myths

The Queensland Coordinator-General (COG) has conducted a full review of a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) undertaken by the developers of North Harbour, Northeast Business Park Pty Ltd (NEBP). The decisions of the COG are based on advice from various State and Federal Government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC).

Setting the record straight:

Myth	We say...	The Coordinator-General says...
Environment		
The project requires dredging of up to 9kms of the Caboolture River which will lead to irreparable damage to the local waterway	The proposed dredging area starts approximately 1km east of the mouth of the Caboolture River and extends 6.5km upstream It will be carefully managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan with independent studies showing that the water quality will ultimately improve	I note the existing poor river water quality condition of the Caboolture River estuary I note that some impacts to water quality are expected from the proposed channel dredging, construction activities and marina operations, however I accept that these would be manageable I am satisfied that the net impacts on water quality are likely to lead to an overall improvement in the longer term
Construction will impact on Caboolture River water quality	Water quality will be monitored throughout construction and improved through best practice storm water management	Best practice management of storm water inflow and rehabilitation of riparian zone and wetlands will potentially improve water quality Impacts from dredging, construction and marina operations would be manageable
The impacts of climate change place the site at a high risk of flooding in the future	North Harbour has been planned to withstand the full effects of climate change and will be developed above the 1-in-100 year flood level and almost four metres above the current average sea level - well beyond the anticipated impact of sea level rises and higher than the MBRC's requirement	The project proposal includes significant earthworks and other works to ensure acceptable mitigation of flood and storm tide risks The proposed building pad minimum levels of 4m above AHD correspond to more than 0.5m above the calculated 100 year ARI flood level I am satisfied that the risks of riverine flood can be appropriately managed for the site. I acknowledge the expert advice provided by MBRC on this matter

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Environment		
Increased boat traffic will make river bank erosion worse	Stabilisation works will reduce erosion	I am satisfied that suitable requirements for protecting the river bed and banks can be provided
The project will see the loss of aquatic habitat and disturbance of fauna, shorebirds, marine plants and fish habitat	Revegetation and river rehabilitation will be good for the local ecology Improved water quality will enhance fish habitat	Rehabilitation works, and the funding of the Caboolture River Estuary Management Plan would ensure there was no significant impact on coastal ecological values I am satisfied that the impacts to fish habitat values will be minor and localised and be outweighed by the benefits...of improvements in water quality
The proposal will clear endangered remnant vegetation	Greening Australia has been contracted to rehabilitate a large tract of open space	12.4 hectares of remnant vegetation will be cleared. It will be offset by the provision of 35.84 hectares of endangered vegetation and 4.4 hectares of 'of concern' remnant native vegetation at another location
Community		
North Harbour will lead to traffic congestion in the area	North Harbour has an integrated transport plan	I am satisfied the project will not lead to any significant adverse traffic impacts I note that active transport (pedestrian and cycling) and public passenger transport are proposed
The local community does not support the project	The extensive five-year consultation process engaged with 160,000 people and 90,000 households over the life of the project and representatives of more than 625 local and regional businesses Their feedback has informed the proposed project master plan Strong support for the project has been shown by the local community through the open and inclusive process	The EIS process has provided sufficient information to government and to the community to allow an informed evaluation of potential environmental impacts which could be attributed to the project The proponent is committed to ensuring ongoing community input into the design and management of public open space areas throughout the development

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Community		
<p>The development will cause visual pollution through high rise buildings and industrial clutter in place of the current pristine landscape</p>	<p>North Harbour will unlock the natural surrounds of the site</p> <p>Visual amenity analyses will be done to ensure that building heights do not have a negative impact on the surrounds</p> <p>Vegetation buffer areas will separate the business park from the highway</p>	<p>It is clear that development of employment supporting industry land is highly desirable in this location</p> <p>I am satisfied that the proposed MIBA uses are appropriate and that, taking into account the development controls provided for in the draft NEBP Area Plan, the potential impacts on the future commercial activities of the surrounding region are minimal</p>
<p>The proposed retail and residential mix will impact on existing neighbouring businesses</p>	<p>North Harbour will bring new residents and workers to the area and boost existing businesses</p> <p>It will assist in alleviating the shortage of land for business and industry uses in the local area</p> <p>It will enhance business expansion and increase local employment</p>	<p>I am satisfied the proposed retail and residential uses will have a positive economic and social impact on the surrounding community</p> <p>The development of new employment generating land would provide considerable economic impact and social benefits for the region</p>
<p>The detailed reports from the EIS have been hidden from the public</p>	<p>The five-year community engagement process included a number of reports back to the community</p> <p>The full EIS report can be accessed via the North Harbour website</p>	<p>The EIS process has provided sufficient information to government and to the community to allow an informed evaluation of potential environmental impacts which could be attributed to the project</p> <p>In undertaking my evaluation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), I have considered the EIS, issues raised in submissions, the Supplementary EIS (SEIS), and the advice I have received on a range of key issues from state agencies and the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Heritage, Water and the Arts (DEWHA). I am satisfied that the requirements of the SDPWO Act have been satisfactorily fulfilled...</p>