

Caboolture project gets the nod

Michelle Singer

The Queensland government has recommended preliminary approval of a \$628 million marina and business development on the Caboolture River in South-East Queensland, known as North Harbour.

The project operator, Northeast Business Park Pty Ltd, received approval to develop a 769-hectare site on the southern bank of the Caboolture River, north of Brisbane, on Wednesday.

Northeast Business Park, established in 2002, has a number of shareholders including Port Binnli, construction company Laing O'Rourke, and Port Binnli directors and businessmen such as the Sunshine Coast's Neil Morris and Brisbane accountant, Malcolm Hall-Brown.

Port Binnli's chief executive, Jeff Smith, who is project manager of the Northeast Business Park, is a former public servant of 28 years.

A former central Queensland regional services director and acting director-general of the Department of Natural Resources, Mr Smith was appointed CEO in 2006 and is described as "a veteran of Queensland government service".

Mr Smith dealt with Port Binnli during his time as a government official over its application to develop Mackay Marina, but has previously denied any conflict of interest. "My previous role with the state government has been discussed with the media," he said.

"The department has investigated such claims and I have complied with all the relevant codes of conduct and I don't have a case to answer in that regard."



The North Harbour development includes 169 hectares of industrial and 150 hectares of mixed-density residential development.

KEY POINTS

- The site will have a marina and golf course as well as 55 per cent set aside as open space.
- The developer claims 1500 jobs will be created during construction.

Port Binnli is also seeking state government approval for a \$240 million marina, hotel and residential development at Shute Harbour in Queensland's Whitsundays, two hours' drive north of Mackay.

North Harbour has been five years in the planning, and was declared a state significant project

by the Queensland government in 2006.

It includes 169 hectares of industrial and 150 hectares of mixed-density residential development, with a marina, park and golf course. About 55 per cent of the site will be set aside as open space.

The master plan envisages a self-contained community for an estimated 5500 residents with up to 1500 jobs created during construction.

The site, adjacent to the Bruce Highway and eight kilometres upstream from Moreton Bay, has nine kilometres of river frontage.

The board of Northeast Business Park plans to lodge applications

with Moreton Bay Regional Council for construction to start on stage one early in 2010.

The board will meet on November 17 to discuss funding options.

Mr Smith said there was already strong interest from buyers for stage one's small business lots.

"We have a number of local and regional businesses, including boat builders, who have already expressed interest in being among the first to move in," Mr Smith said.

"Interest has been quite strong from a local and regional business point of view. The first stage is likely to comprise 30 or 32 lots ranging from 4000 square metres to 8000 square metres."