

## **‘20191120 Gold Coast cruise ship terminal: ‘It seems that it will be ratepayers footing the bill for CST studies’**

**Public consultation on the proposed cruise ship terminal has been given the green light, with increasing calls for council to put a dollar mark on how much it’s spending’.**

Paul Weston, Gold Coast Bulletin

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COMMUNITY groups are calling on Gold Coast City Council to detail how much ratepayers will be spending on the proposed cruise ship terminal after Queensland’s independent Co-Ordinator General gave the green light to public consultation.

The Bulletin [announced yesterday the Co-ordinator General agreed to “co-ordinated status for the project”](#), which means a draft terms of reference will go out for community comment.

Council will launch public consultation on the oceanside CST with the \$650 million jetty to face rigorous assessment by the State Government.



Examples of a cruise ship terminal in The Spit master plan.

### **[GOLD COAST CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL LABELLED ‘MUST HAVE’ BY DEVELOPER](#)**

Both the Gecko Environment Council and Save Our Spit have welcomed the move, saying rather than the proposal being kept hidden behind closed door council meetings and redacted reports “the true state of reports paid for by ratepayers” must be made public.

The groups estimate that the cost to ratepayers from 2012 to 2019 had been about \$12 million for various reports to council and government and council officers' salaries.

Gecko Environment Council spokesman Lois Levy told the Bulletin: "Residents have the right to know who is going to pay for all the costs of the preparation of the environment impact assessment."

"How many more millions of dollars will be wasted on this doubtful project?"



Gecko's Lois Levy at a Save Our Spit rally. Picture: JERAD WILLIAMS.

"It seems that it will be ratepayers footing the bill for the preparation of the environment impact assessment since council, not private enterprise, is the proponent.

"So far essential information about costs, initial market sounding, discussions with local businesses, possible revenues and navigational safety have been withheld from public scrutiny. "I doubt that residents signed up for this at the last council election."

Ms Levy believes it is unlikely the terminal will be approved in two years, but if it got the tick from the Government she wants to know who will pay to develop the project.

Save Our Spit Alliance president Steve Gration said the Price Waterhouse Cooper 'Oceanside Cruise Terminal Business Case' to council concluded there was "very little appetite for private investors to take patronage risk on large scale infrastructure".

The report said: "Unless cruise companies are prepared to sign up to long-term agreements to guarantee usage of the facility over an extended period of time (15-plus years) it is unlikely that private finance will be available."

Mr Gration told the Bulletin: "If private funding is unlikely, are the Gold Coast residents expected to foot the \$500-\$650 million bill for this project from the \$700 million held in council financial cash reserves?"

“Is this an ethical use of ratepayer funds, when the north of our city lacks basic infrastructure.”

During the two years when the EIA was being completed, the Brisbane Port Cruise Terminal would have been finished and become a direct competitor to the Gold Coast proposal.

SOSA and Gecko believe local businesses can use that time to develop tourism visitor packages for passengers coming for the day or embarking or disembarking — opportunities with none of the financial or navigational risks associated with a Coast terminal.

SOSA and Gecko say they will make “detailed and substantial submissions” to both the Terms of Reference and the final environmental impact assessment.

### **THE INSIDE REPORT ON THE SIZE OF CTS ON THE SPIT**



The Spit master plan – showing a potential cruise ship terminal.

The council budget in July provided funding of \$1.25 million for further studies on the proposed offshore cruise ship terminal. Councillors Glenn Tozer, Peter Young and Daphne McDonald voted against it.

Mayor Tom Tate, after delivering the budget, said the Cruise Ship Terminal (CST) at its site in Philip Park was “put on pause” for the Spit master plan.

“Now what we want is a terms of reference similar to the Port of Brisbane. Why should it be any different, so give us that,” he said, after the Budget.

“We will be doing a business case. The next bit is an environmental impact study. That is what the funding is for.



The Spit master plan with a cruise ship terminal.

“We tick those two boxes then it will go to the State Government for the tick. The people on the Gold Coast want it, whether it happens in a year or two it doesn’t really matter, as long as we get it for the city.”

If an environmental impact report flagged problems, the Mayor said he would be “the first person to vote it down”.

<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/council/gold-coast-cruise-ship-terminal-it-seems-that-it-will-be-ratepayers-footing-the-bill-for-cst-studies/news-story/b11f1abfcdd4e859b40e632c1149a0e>