



## Media Release

### CRUISE TERMINALLY FINALLY OPEN TO REAL SCRUTINY

While some might consider that Save Our Spit and Gecko Environment Council would be dismayed to hear that the Government Coordinator General has designated the Mayor's cruise ship terminal proposal on The Spit as a 'coordinated project', they would be wrong.

Various cruise ship proposals on The Spit has been around for years, but the details of the current proposal have been kept hidden from ratepayers with closed door meetings and redacted reports. Now that it is a 'coordinated project' the Mayor will be forced to reveal the true state of reports paid for by ratepayers, despite the Mayor's earlier claim that this project would not cost the ratepayers a cent. Estimates of the cost to ratepayers from 2012 to 2019 are around \$12 million for various reports to Council and Government as well as towards council officers' salaries. It appears the preparation of the Initial Advice Statement and staff costs for those seconded to work on this project will cost an additional \$1.2 million.

Gecko Environment Council spokesperson Lois Levy, said "Residents have the right to know who is going to pay for all the costs of the preparation of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)? How many more millions of dollars will be wasted on this doubtful project? 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. "

If in the unlikely scenario that the terminal is approved in about 2 years the question then arises as to who will pay for the development this project.

Steve Gration, President of Save Our Spit Alliance cited the unlikely scenario of private enterprise being interested in this project taken directly from the Price Waterhouse Cooper (PwC) 'Oceanside Cruise Terminal Business Case' which stated "*Since the high profile failure of multiple toll roads domestically due to lower than expected patronage there is very little appetite for private investors to take patronage risk on large scale infrastructure. 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+ years) it is unlikely that private finance will be available.*"

Steve added "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?"

Over the 2 year, period that the EIA is undertaken, the Brisbane Port Cruise Terminal will have been completed and will be in direct competition with the Gold Coast proposal. SOSA and Gecko hope that local businesses will use that time to develop tourism visitor packages for passengers coming for the day or embarking or disembarking. These are opportunities with none of the financial or navigational risks associated with a Gold Coast terminal.

SOSA and Gecko and other groups opposed to the Oceanside cruise terminal will be watching closely that all due diligence, transparency and honesty is followed in this process. We will be making detailed and substantial submissions to both the Terms of Reference and the final Environmental Impact Assessment.

Contact:

Steve Gration, President Save Our Spit Alliance, 0403788 175

Lois Levy, Campaign Coordinator, Gecko Environment Council, 0412 724 222