

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strong Support for Working Port

Vital Part of Hobart Waterfront

The working port is a vital aspect of the Hobart waterfront and will always remain so, said Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority Chief Executive Jeff Gilmore today.

Responding to speculation about the impact of the Hobart Railyards redevelopment on the working port, Mr Gilmore refuted a number of inaccurate statements that have appeared in the media recently.

“There is no plan to turn Hobart into Darling Harbour. In fact, we are striving for precisely the opposite – we want to retain our working harbour with a gritty urban edge,” Mr Gilmore said.

“The Authority has repeatedly said this and it is baffling how this message could have been so blatantly misconstrued.

“The same is true for the working port, which is a vital part of the vibrancy and appeal of the Hobart waterfront. It is part and parcel of Sullivans Cove, and will always remain so. To say otherwise is just plain wrong.”

Mr Gilmore said the Authority consults widely with the community about development opportunities on the waterfront and holds regular information sessions and exhibitions that are well attended.

“Urban design issues are complex and inter woven but we have found the community wants to get involved at a higher level, and that’s precisely what we have done,” Mr Gilmore said.

“We provide insights into the urban design process by showing all the possible scenarios and explaining how we work through them to achieve results with widespread community benefits.

"Of course, some parts of the port will change. That is inevitable. But for the first time in the history of the Cove, change is happening on the community's terms and public space is being reclaimed. In the past, our waterfront changed in response to external economic forces and the whims of trading partners, but these days the community is in control of the Cove's destiny and gets to choose the type of waterfront it wants.

"The reality is that while many parts of the Cove work superbly well, other parts are run down and need reinvigorating. The Authority is working to ensure those neglected parts are improved in a way that is harmonious with the rest of the Cove, especially the working port, and we are freely sharing our findings with the community.

"It is disappointing that some observers have chosen to misrepresent this dialogue – robust, hearty and very, very open – as some sort of secret master plan.

"Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, it's vital for the debate to continue, and I'm sure there'll be agreement on this from the thousands of people who have attended our events, visited our exhibitions and come into our office to talk about important urban design issues facing Hobart.

"That's where the real debate should be, not blatant fiction."

Providing an update on the Hobart Railyards project, Mr Gilmore confirmed the strategic planning and urban design work for this site is proceeding on schedule and will go on public exhibition in June 2008.

Consultants undertaking this work on behalf of the Authority are focusing on four main themes: open space, built form, traffic and movement, and land use and activity.

Because of the complexity of the site, the consultants naturally have to look beyond the project area at the potential impact on neighbouring properties. These neighbouring areas include the Queens Domain, Cenotaph, Regatta Grounds, the CBD and the working port.

An important consideration is that the Railyards site has been named by the Tasmanian Government, which is the land owner, as the preferred location for a new public hospital, Mr Gilmore said.

"The Authority believes a major institutional project such as the hospital has the potential to underpin substantial redevelopment of this portion of the Hobart waterfront and allow a new neighbourhood to emerge from this former industrial area," Mr Gilmore said.

"At this stage it is unknown how much of the Railyards site will be required for a hospital, but a realistic assessment is that some space will be available for redevelopment as mixed use, including commercial, retail and residential.

"This could become the largest urban renewal project in Tasmania – an exciting and interesting challenge.

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About the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority

The Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority is the planning authority responsible for protecting, enhancing and developing Sullivans Cove and surrounding areas. The Authority aims to preserve the unique qualities of the Hobart Waterfront, which defines the identity, vitality and image of the Tasmanian people.

Media Enquiries

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