

**CITY BEAT** WITH ANTHONY MARX

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**THIRD TIME LUCKY**

THE gang at Australia's biggest privately-owned development firm must be hoping it will be third time lucky for their stalled mega-project in Brisbane.

Rich Lister Lang Walker and his Walker Group Holdings have just released a revised – and allegedly more environmentally friendly – design proposal this week for their controversial \$1.4 billion waterfront makeover at Cleveland.

It's the third time Walker has tweaked the plans for the ambitious Toondah Harbour scheme since winning selection as preferred developer of the 67ha project back in 2014.

The company still hopes to build as many as 3600 new homes, a ferry terminal, a marina for up to 400 vessels and a retail precinct in stages over 20 years despite ferocious opposition from quite a few locals.

But Walker's Queensland development manager, Peter Saba (illustrated), says the latest version of the plan is greener – even though it still involves dredging and reclamation of mudflats used by threatened migratory shorebirds.

The previous reclamation footprint of 43.5ha has now been trimmed by more than 12ha.

There is also a 3.5ha conservation area, a South Bank-style foreshore parkland, enhanced buffer areas

and “a more organic and natural system of waterways and marina coves,” Saba says.

**STILL APPALLED**

NOT surprisingly, critics are still outraged and claim the amendments are little more than cosmetic window dressing aimed at placating detractors.

They maintain there should be no building on internationally protected wetlands, which act as a feeding ground for the critically endangered Eastern curlew and other wildlife. There are also fears

for the dwindling koala population.

“The fundamentals haven't really changed,” said Chris Walker (no relation), secretary of community group Redlands2030.

“They've cleverly tried to make it look better but a lot of this is more marketing to try to convince the community. It's like giving a child sweets.”

Opponents, who lodged almost 1500 submissions against the last scheme, now have a narrow window of just 10 business days to file a similar protest about the latest version.

Redlands2030 spokesman Steve MacDonald told City Beat yesterday that the group will be encouraging members to submit a fresh protest vote despite the hassle.

MacDonald, who is a developer himself, has been the target of a whispered smear campaign that he secretly wants to take over the Toondah project. He says that's ludicrous.

Others allege it's hypocritical of MacDonald to fight the Toondah scheme, which has local and state government backing, when he has previously complained about the knock-back of one his projects in NSW.

MacDonald maintains that's a bogus comparison, since he says his NSW housing estate is in an urban release area while Toondah is inconsistent with both local and state planning schemes.

“They can't discredit our argument so they try to discredit the person,” he told us.

“That's classic stuff. It's done to intimidate people.”

**LEGENDARY MIX**

BRISBANE property guru Warren Ebert and a bunch of his top lieutenants mixed recently with members of some of America's most legendary families.

The Sentinel Property Group gang hung out with Justin Rockefeller in New York during a two-week real estate and retail reconnaissance mission across the US.

They also rubbed shoulders in Boston with Stephen Kennedy Smith, whose uncle was JFK.

The trip had a bit of drama too.

A daylong investment session 60 floors up in the Empire State Building culminated in a terrifying storm cell rolling across the city that nearly blew out a window in their office.

