

9 August 2007

Premier Peter Beattie
Chair - Smart State Council
Department of the Premier & Cabinet
PO Box 611
Brisbane Albert Street Qld 4002

Dear Premier,

The South Bank Business Association (SBBA) is pleased to offer its comments on the **Smart Cities – Rethinking the City Centre** report as part of the State Government's public feedback process.

The SBBA is an independent body formed in 1999 and represents the interests of key businesses in the South Bank precinct. The South Bank precinct covers the area from the Mater Hospital, as far as Musgrave Park and along the river's edge to the William Jolly Bridge. The South Bank area is Brisbane's prime leisure, recreation, entertainment, arts and culture and educational precinct.

A map outlining our precinct boundaries is attached.

Report Overview

- SBBA commends the Government in its commissioning of this report. It has long been recognised that Brisbane's topographic features, plus its problematic planning process, has resulted in a disjointed inner city with poor linkages between its various components.
- SBBA supports the over-riding theme of the report that suggests broadening the definition of a 'city centre' to include key precincts encircling the 'traditional' CBD and establishing linkages between these key precincts.
- Additionally, SBBA supports the establishment of a joint authority that will provide more uniformed planning and development outcomes.

Report Details:

Pedestrian and cyclists

- SBBA supports the Pedestrian Spine strategy. South Bank's large pedestrian and cyclist population is testimony that Brisbane will support and use infrastructure that enables them to avoid using car based transport. The construction of additional cross-river bridges is paramount and inevitable to Brisbane's continued growth.

Branding Brisbane

- The branding of Brisbane as one of the world's great walking and cycling cities is relevant given the world's focus on sustainable issues and a branding that SBBA would support.

Mass Transportation

- SBBA supports the investigation of the viability of light rail to interconnect the 'city centre', but suggests the investigation is not limited to solely light rail but rather all forms of mass transportation.
- We understand that the Brisbane City Council is currently undertaking a similar investigation and assume the findings will be used in the Smart Cities planning process.
- SBBA concurs that the reduction of private car usage is essential in establishing a 'smart city'.
- Consideration also needs to be given to how transport from areas outside of the 'city centre' enter and integrate with the 'city centre's' transport network.

Omission from the report

- Although it was difficult to read the small numbering system allocated to the 'Knowledge Corridor' diagram on page (vi), it seems that Griffith University's Conservatorium of Music has been left off the diagram. The South Bank precinct has 4 tertiary facilities within its boundaries.
 - Griffith University Conservatorium of Music
 - South Bank Institute
 - Griffith University College of Arts
 - Griffith University Film School
- Page 9 of the report has omitted to include the proposed South Bank TOD planned around the South Bank railway station.

Sustainable City

- SBBA supports the development of sustainable strategies using the super-precinct model. Interestingly, the report identifies some 400 hectares of redevelopable land, which provides an ideal opportunity to implement these sustainable strategies.

Brisbane as a 'connected' city

- We note that the report touches on Brisbane as a 'connected city' and the predominant theme of this 'connection' is cross river bridges, however SBBA would like the Smart State Council to consider the 'connection' of city streets in its future planning.
- In particular, SBBA, West End Traders Association (WETA) and Woolloongabba Business Association (GBA) commissioned its own report into Vulture Street and found that the form and function of this 5 km street,

which crosses the three suburbs of West End, South Brisbane and East Brisbane, currently falls short of creating an urban environment which supports the density of planned development. This report is being presented to Brisbane City Council for its attention. We would be pleased to provide you with a copy at your request.

- Additionally, the street lacks continuity of identity along its length, with many footpaths and pedestrian facilities being sub-standard and providing limited on-street cycle facilities.
- This type of street does not complement the vision for a 'connected city'.

Melbourne Street Bus Station

- SBBA concurs with the reports comments in relation to the Melbourne Street Bus Station. The bus station not only creates a major divider between QPAC and the Millennium Arts Precinct, but pedestrian access around the station is extremely difficult and dangerous. This particular infrastructure seems to be contrary to the report's over-riding theme of linkages. SBBA would support an investigation to place the Melbourne Street Bus Station underground.

Joint taskforce

- SBBA supports the creation of a joint taskforce to ensure integrated and concurrent planning and development.
- This taskforce should also be charged with communicating information to interested parties. SBBA has found that with so many developments taking place in the South Bank precinct, there seems to be no one entity that is able to provide simple information such as project outline, timing of construction, timing of completion, on each of the projects. SBBA would be pleased to provide a representative on this taskforce.

Cultural Tourism Gateway

- SBBA notes the report's comments in relation to a 'cultural tourism gateway' facility at North Bank, and recommends that, should this proceed, strong and obvious connections back to the South Bank precinct be implemented.

Super-precincts

- SBBA supports the strategy of super-precincts, as long the individuality of each precinct is nurtured and maintained.
- SBBA has also recognised the necessity of joining forces with aligning areas and, in 2006, formed an alliance with WETA and GBA to represent its members in areas of common interest including, but not limited to, projects that relate to;
 - Planning, Access & Mobility
 - Safety & Security
 - Social & Community interests
 - Business Growth – current & future
 - Economic Sustainable Developments

Brisbane River

- The report underplays the role of the river, and although SBBA agrees with the comments that the river has in the past divided the city into north and south, the river offers many opportunities to a 'smart' city, including:
 - improving and increasing its use as a transport thoroughfare;
 - increasing the available private moorings (creating a more interesting city);
 - improving the linkages between South Bank Parklands to the Kangaroo Point cliffs with a walkway in front of the Queensland Maritime Museum.

Conclusion

In summary SBBA supports

- The view that the 'city centre' should be broader than just the CBD
- There should be direct relationships between the precincts of the 'city centre' (without diluting the individual 'personality' of each precinct)
- The establishment of a joint authority to oversee the planning and development of the 'city centre'

This report marks a significant step forward, from the isolated one-off project thinking to a whole of 'city' planning process. SBBA endorses the Smart State Council's report as a promising beginning positioning Brisbane as a 'smart city' and its suggested objectives.

We recognise that an extensive amount of further investigation and planning is required and welcome the opportunity to provide supplementary comments on this future work. Additionally, SBBA would be pleased to represent the South Bank precinct on any future planning committees that may be established.

Yours sincerely,



BARTON GREEN
Chair