

Douglas Shire Sustainability Group (DSSG)

Criteria For Sustainable Redevelopment – Port Douglas Waterfront

DSSG surveyed its' members in August/September 2006 on the Port Douglas Waterfront Redevelopment, asking for a “wish list” or top 5 priorities. All respondents had similar requests/concerns, which included (but were not limited to):

- A preference for minimal or no new commercial or residential development
- Retaining park and open areas as is, or enhancing their natural assets, i.e. native landscaping etc.
- Public access to entire waterfront
- That any new development (buildings) be of the highest standard of sustainable building design and construction.
- Retaining mangroves
- Retaining “iconic” buildings, e.g. St. Mary’s, Sugar Wharf, etc.

With this in mind DSSG has formulated a “philosophy” for the Port Douglas Waterfront Redevelopment, as opposed to a definitive plan. However, a draft plan has been drawn up which is the basis or starting point for DSSG’s input into the community consultation process. We would like to state at the outset that, whilst it has its’ merits, we reject the plan drafted by the State Govt.

DSSG would therefore recommend and will pursue the following outcomes:

- Minimising any new development, in particular commercial and residential.
- That any new development be within boundaries of the new Town plan. We understand that much of the land is under State Govt. control and therefore our Town Plan does not apply, but we would expect a level of compliance from the State on this issue.
- Ensure public access to the entire waterfront.
- Retain all existing parkland and sporting venues.
- Retain all iconic and historical buildings in current locations.
- Retain Magazine Island as a natural asset, free of any development.
- Retain all mangrove species in Dickson Inlet.

In addition to this DSSG would recommend that any new development (including water features) be built to the highest standards of sustainable building design and construction. We refer to the “Green Star” accreditation system as a benchmark for sustainable

building practices. This should include renewable energy sources and independent water collection.

The impact of increased traffic flow needs to be addressed.

The impact of any new development on **existing natural assets (flora & fauna); water quality – Dickson Inlet; visual amenity** must have a beneficial impact.

Any new landscaping should showcase endemic native vegetation and possibly to include tropical fruit trees & indigenous “bush tucker”.

In summary, DSSG believes the redevelopment of the Port Douglas Waterfront provides this community with a wonderful opportunity to pursue sustainable design and building standards that could become a national and even international showpiece. This Shire prides itself on its’ achievements so far in sustainable town planning, promoting sustainable industries and practices and protecting its’ natural assets. We think this philosophy should be applied to the Waterfront redevelopment. With climate change now recognised as one of the most serious threats to humankind, our obligations to sustainability and reducing the “ carbon footprint” is all too important.

The Douglas Shire, State Govt. stakeholders and community should take this opportunity to lead the way and aim to redevelop this naturally stunning area to the highest standards of sustainability.

Could we be so bold as to suggest that the whole redevelopment could be “carbon neutral”?

Now there is an exciting and timely challenge!