

Media Release

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe

Tuesday 30 November, 2010

ULDA approves RNA Showgrounds Masterplan

The RNA's new vision for the Ekka showgrounds will see much of the site open to the public all year round, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Stirling Hinchliffe announced today.

Mr Hinchliffe said the Urban Land Development Authority (ULDA) today approved the RNA's Master Plan to allow the redevelopment of existing buildings and new development on site.

He said the \$2.9 billion redevelopment would ensure the financial future of the Ekka and create a year round vibrant commercial, residential and retail precinct. He said the RNA had applied to redevelop under a quarter of the site, generally around the boundary, to fund much needed improvements to ageing facilities.

"Sadly some of the cattle sheds and other buildings on site are unfit for use even during the 10-day show," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"The RNA would like to see some of the site redeveloped to fund a general upgrade of the Ekka showgrounds and to ensure the show goes well into the future.

"The Ekka is a Queensland tradition and the RNA has advised the government this development will allow for much needed improvements and the continued presence of Ekka favourites such as the Wood Chop arena, Side Show Alley and both the larger and smaller Show Rings.

"It's important to remember maintaining these facilities for the annual show costs money.

"We do not want to go down the same path as other cities that have moved their shows from the centre of the city to outer areas.

"I'm pleased the RNA, working with Lend Lease and the ULDA, have found a way to keep the Ekka at Bowen Hills and make use of this valuable site for more than just the ten days of the Ekka show."

He said the RNA's development application included 20,000m² of retail space and 340,000m² of commercial and residential space. The approved application will include a large fresh food market and homes for an estimated 3000 residents.

"The redevelopment includes a proposed fresh food market, similar to the extremely popular Melbourne and Adelaide markets which will be open throughout the year," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"There will a fantastic new public realm focussed on the proposed Ekka Plaza which will provide access to the site and a great outdoor area for people to enjoy.

"I am also pleased to see that the master plan has been undertaken in such a way as to acknowledge and retain where possible the historical nature of the site through the retention of buildings such as the John Reid Pavilion and the gate house.

“The RNA Showgrounds will be further enhanced by the proposed new Cross River Rail Ekka station to be located within the showgrounds, which will provide transport for people not only attending the Ekka, but for who live and work nearby.

“These will include future residents in the new residential development proposed for the showground site and the nearby Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital.”

RNA Chief Executive Jonathan Tunny said the regeneration of the show buildings also ensure their longevity.

“All Queenslanders treasure the historical significance of the Ekka and the RNA Showgrounds which has been home to the iconic Royal Queensland Show since it was first held in since 1876,” Mr Tunny said.

“The RNA is committed to keeping the historic feel and relevance of the show and believes this regeneration will not just enhance and energise the Ekka but guarantee it remains at its rightful birthplace – the RNA Showgrounds - for future generations to enjoy.

“Importantly, this essential regeneration means long overdue upgrades will be made to our main animal facilities such as the horse and cattle pavilions. “These exciting upgrades will provide state of the art facilities specifically designed to cater for animal safety and hygiene.

“Key historical buildings such as the Industrial Pavilion and John Reid Pavilion will be retained and upgraded so they can be used not just during the Ekka but for other events held at the RNA Showgrounds throughout the year.

“This is vital for the Ekka to remain relevant and ensure its long term financial survival. This is also why it is so important that the existing buildings are upgraded so they are of a standard which will service successive shows for years to come.”

“The RNA is honoured to run the Ekka on behalf of the community and we are committed to building a wonderful legacy for future generations to enjoy – this regeneration is essential to ensuring the RNA achieves this.”

ULDA CEO Paul Eagles said the redevelopment was a 15 to 25 year project with the first step the \$40 - \$60 million Industrial Pavillion redevelopment.

“The ULDA is working with the RNA on more detailed aspects of the site, with the Industrial Pavilion the first site to be redeveloped. This will retain the street facades to keep the historical nature of the site, but redevelop the main part of the building into a convention centre which will be utilised throughout the year,” Mr Eagles said.

“The ULDA will also work with Lend Lease on the new private residential, commercial and retail development which will need to be in line with the approved Bowen Hills Urban Development Area (UDA) Development Scheme.

“The development scheme details a range of development requirements including the permissible heights of buildings within the precinct, ranging from five up to 30 storeys, as well affordable housing provisions.

“One of the key roles of the ULDA is the delivery of affordable housing and Lend Lease will be required to deliver at least five percent of all residential dwellings at a price which is affordable to residents on the median household income from Brisbane City local government area.”

The Government has assisted to resolve financing arrangements for the project through the Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC). The \$65 million loan from QTC will facilitate the redevelopment of the industrial pavilion.

<http://www.ulda.qld.gov.au/dad/devappdetails.aspx?ACTION=&x=bBe2muUtGsc%3d>

Media contact: 0417 815 223