



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 16 April 2008

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### NORTH BANK

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.44 am): The Bligh government does not know the difference between icon and eyesore. There is a gathering storm of opposition to the atrocious North Bank proposal, which not only will be a blight on the Brisbane CBD but has the potential to be a significant flood hazard. On 30 November 2007, the Premier issued a press release giving the green light to the design—a design which includes a 70-metre extension into the river and a platform covering about four hectares of river with extensive pier structures and other levels of walkways and incursions into the floodways beneath the platform. It is a substantial structure to place in a river which in flood time is a mighty force.

The government talks of giving the river back to the people under its North Bank proposal—which ironically it will do if people are flooded. I think people prefer to see water in their rivers, not in their homes and businesses. They want buildings constructed to enhance their beautiful Brisbane city, not hide its heritage buildings and create canyons of concrete.

Critics lining up against the North Bank proposal are numerous and credible, including the National Trust. Former Brisbane City Council engineer John Fairweather has said that anything to reduce the width of the river is 'absolutely stupid', as demonstrated by damage in the 1974 flood. In a *Courier-Mail* article on 5 April 2008, former principal of the engineering firm Cardno and Davies, Dick Laws, said that the project would reduce the flow of the Brisbane River. He said, 'It's not just stupid; it's dangerous. Large parts of Brisbane upstream will be flooded if the river flow is impeded.' Opposition has also come from former coordinator-general, Sir Syd Schubert, and from academic Peter Skinner, who is a former architect and head of UQ. In an article titled 'The Premier who mistook a river for a vacant lot', he outlined a number of concerns about the proposal.

We need to see this proposal canned and the people consulted about the best way forward. The government needs to listen to the engineers about the flooding impact and overturn this proposal, which would potentially have an impact of disastrous proportions on the landscape and flooding in Brisbane into the future.