



Lara Giddings, MHA

Minister for Health and Human Services

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Investigation Finds Railyards Suitable for New Royal

The Hobart Railyards has been confirmed as a suitable site for a hospital development.

The Minister for Health and Human Services, Lara Giddings, said a site investigation conducted by local consultants Pitt & Sherry found there were no major constraints that would prevent a hospital facility being built on the Railyards site.

“Following last week’s funding announcement, this is another major step forward in the biggest project ever undertaken by the Tasmanian Government,” Ms Giddings said.

“The site investigation looked at a number of aspects of the site, including geotechnical conditions, contamination remediation, heritage and sea level rise.

“The resulting report identifies aspects of the site that will affect the design and engineering of the development.

“It also outlines the action that will need to be taken before the site is ready for construction.

“This includes further investigation into the site’s heritage, contamination remediation and demolition of the current structures on the site.

“These activities are estimated to cost around \$10.8 million to \$15.7 million.

“The cost estimate is quite broad because it depends on the detailed findings of the heritage investigation and on the extent of the contamination remediation that is needed, and this won’t be fully known until work begins.”

“I look forward to working with the Minister for Infrastructure, Steve Kons, to progress issues around the relocation of the existing services on the site.

Ms Giddings said the Site Assessment Report would inform the Masterplan Study currently being developed to identify what the hospital might look like, the services it would provide and a cost estimate.

“This will in turn contribute to the Business Case that will be provided to the Government by December 2008, which will form the basis for a final decision on where, when and how the hospital will be built,” Ms Giddings said.

The main findings of the report are:

Site conditions and local geology

A large portion of the railyards site is reclaimed land that extends beyond the original shoreline of Sullivans Cove. As part of the site investigation, drilling was conducted across the site to determine the conditions for building foundations. It showed that there is strong dolerite rock at varying depths across the site. Near the original shoreline in the northwest corner of the site the dolerite is around two metres below the surface and extends to a depth of 17 metres in the south-east corner of the site.

This means that conventional foundations could be used where the rock is close to the surface, but other foundation methods, such as driven piles as used in recent major developments in the area, would also need to be used.

Infrastructure and services

Services are readily available to the site. Existing networks in the area, including electrical, telecommunications, water and sewerage, are able to be upgraded to meet the demand of a hospital facility. The main HCC sewer main from the city to the Macquarie Point treatment plant runs across the site and would need to be re-laid around the perimeter.

Sea Level Change

The Railyards site is set back 150 metres from the Derwent River at the south of the site, with a small portion of the site close to the foreshore at the north-east where it is sheltered and elevated. Large port buildings occupy most of the foreshore surrounding the site and shelter the Railyards site.

The site's current height above average sea level varies from 3 metres in the south-east corner to 7.5 metres in the north-west corner.

The mean sea level is not expected to rise by more than 0.9 metres by 2100. Allowing for this potential rise and potential high sea levels during extreme storms, the upper estimate of the maximum sea level by 2100 is 2.8 metres. As an additional safety measure, the report recommends that essential buildings be elevated 0.5 to 1.0 metre above this maximum water level. Buildings in the south-east corner of the site would only need to be elevated several hundred millimetres in order to be more than 1 metre above the highest predicted water level. Basement construction would not be possible across the majority of the site.

Site Contamination and Remediation

After more than a hundred years of industrial use, the Railyards has soil contamination in three main areas of the site. The main contaminants are hydrocarbons (such as diesel fuel) and are concentrated in areas of the site that have previously been used for refuelling. Remediation of these areas will be required for the site to be suitable for a hospital facility.

Heritage

The present buildings on the Railyards site have been updated over time to meet operational needs. This means there are no standing structures that are considered to be of cultural significance. However, Aboriginal and early European artefacts may be encountered below the ground during the redevelopment works. Therefore further physical investigation will take place before redevelopment work begins.

Site Preparation Costs

The direct costs of preparing the site for development are estimated to be between \$10.8 million and \$15.7 million. This includes the cost of a heritage investigations, site contamination remediation and building demolition. The actual cost will depend on the result of the heritage investigation and on the extent of the contamination remediation that is needed, which won't be fully known until work begins.

The report is available at www.newroyal.tas.gov.au

Further information: Andrew Rhodes: 6233 2757 or 0412 821 274