

Gold Coast 2

A Non-Conforming Submission C4C4



THE FRONT DOOR

Our thinking started with the brief and the Civic Centre Site, but a small amount of thought and research quickly revealed wider and more urgent concerns. We believe current and future threats require immediate and appropriate responses. Any car-based, Pacific coastal city built on a foredune and drained coastal swamps will increasingly feel the impacts of sea level rises, extreme weather events and reduced oil supplies. Much of the research of Griffith University's Centre for Coastal Management confirms this view.

We feel the Project and the Site offer a 'front door' to enter and view the 'Gold Coast 1' as a city under threat and in need of change. To have a viable future the unsustainable way we site, develop and live in cities has to be transcended. 'Gold Coast 2' presents an opportunity to explore sustainable options that, if realized, would cast the City into a position of global leadership. The lessons of 'Gold Coast 1', both good and bad, will not be forgotten, but will remain as fragments to create a field of memories. Not only would visitors will continue to visit the City but its 'magical transformation' and its attractions would dramatically increase numbers.

Reconceptualisation

This submission presents a reconceptualisation of the Gold Coast 2050 – 2450. It does so within the frame of reference of the best and most recent research on sea level rises and climatic changes associate with global warming and geological events. In particular, cognisance has been taken of the relation between expected impacts of sea level rises over the next four centuries, as they will be amplified by extreme weather events, and the atmospheric life of Greenhouse Gases (especially CO₂), which can be over two hundred years. Even if emissions are reduced dramatically in the next few decades climatic stabilisation is a very long way off and subject to currently unforeseen anthropocentric and natural disruption.

Why a Non-Conforming Submission

In view of the circumstances outlined above, combined with the inherent vulnerability of much of the Gold Coast, because the original error of building on a flood plane, we believe it to be more appropriate, responsible and constructive for Gold Coast Council to abandon the focus on redesign of existing precincts, widen their view and direct their efforts to actions to secure a viable future for the region. This competition is an opportunity to make this point and present some related ideas. Foregoing redesigned precincts and buildings will deliver short-term reduced amenity, but the advantages of insightful leadership will deliver gains of an entirely other, higher magnitude.

Why the Gold Coast Council should take the entry seriously and invest in the proposals presented

Unquestionably the Gold Coast will be subject to massive geophysical, climatic and socio-cultural changes in coming decades. It will be impossible for its form to remain as it is. In the face of this situation the council has but two options: the reactive, where it responds to change as they arrives; or the proactive, where it acts to pre-empt the impacts of change to the advantage of the entire community.

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Managing such change is clearly not simply and technical and financial issue. It has enormous social, cultural and psychological consequences. It follows that managing the impacts of

forces of change over which the council has little or no control requires not just a highly refined and creative planning process but equally a major exercise of engagement and communication with the community over an extensive period of time. Effectively the options presented here are a designed move over several decades (this versus action that in the end would add-up to be for huge numbers of people an evacuation strategy).

The need to ‘Think, Design and Act in Time’

The experience of moving cities suggests that it has to be done with due consideration (as opposed to being by violence). It takes time and is an inter-generational exercise. It requires thinking in time in the usual sense of exercising the mind before it is too late to take decisive action, *but* it also means thinking in the medium of time itself.

From the small, but significant amount of existing ‘city move’ experience, a timeframe of twenty to fifty years is realistic if the activities of informing, educating, persuading, planning, designing and destruction/construction are taken seriously. The key is always the creation of the desire for the new – there has to be something to move to that, for the majority, is as good as, or better than, that which already is. At the same time the value, memory and attachment of the old requires full acknowledgement.

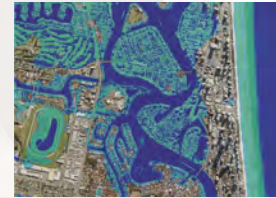
Designing such a transformative process requires a very special group of people from diverse disciplines. It takes a decade or more to do. It requires planning and commitment currently beyond the time horizons of government. To do this means taking a conceptual leap going beyond using the duration of governments and even our own life spans, as a measure.

The Gains from Leadership

To embark upon the kind of process indicated is hard. To adopt it takes insightful and courageous leaders, yet the rewards are high for both the city and its council. The process has the capability of putting the Gold Coast on the world map in a way well beyond its current status, with corresponding positive consequences. In March 2009 the IPCC doubled the estimate of the rate of sea level rises. In doing so they projected that 600 million coastal dwellers would lose their homes over this century and beyond. Any city that substantially leads the way on this issue is going to acquire a lot of interest worldwide. Combined with the right sort of economic and cultural development, the moved city could both flourish and be extremely influential.

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THE ESSENCE OF THE PROPOSAL

The key elements of the proposal, to unfold over time, are:-

1. Drawing a risk line: the generally favoured line is at four metres above the current sea level. This does not assume the sea levels will rise to this high, but it does recognise that a storm surge on a risen sea level could make building and habitation below the four-metre mark untenable.
2. The creation of a satellite city. This city having a link corridor to the residual Gold Coast City. As such it would be both an areas of residential relocation and new industry development. Movement here would be via a coordinated process of destruction of the old to be abandoned and creation of the stages of the new city. Some of the old would be moved to the new, plus it would in part be built with material 'mined' from the old.
3. City reconfiguration: elements of the abandoned areas of the city above the four metre line, as well as some tower blocks, would be able to be transformed, linked by bridges (able to be built upon) and/or services by boat. This form of reconfiguration would also able to be given a strong symbolic dimension wherein the memory and story of the rise and transformation of the Gold Coast could be marked and told. It would also include a major food production component (fish and urban farming).
4. Element four is the creation of a floating suburb associated with the formation of a new industry. This suburb being formed out of clusters of floating homes in shelters spaces in the inner Gold Coast archipelago. These homes being plugged into service conduits (power, water and sewage). This type of dwelling would act as the focus of a major research and development project to underpin the establishment of a new industry. Effectively, in the creation of such a suburb Gold Coast 2 would provide the marketing environment for this potentially worldwide industry (which might be based at the satellite city).

Woven into these four elements would be a number of new 'economic and cultural drivers'. Two kinds of cultural institutions are put forward to illustrate the potential of this kind of development: an Inter-Cultural Resort and a Multiversity.

The Inter-Cultural Resort is aimed at dynamically showing an emergent global post-national culture that would be essential to avoid the conflict that unsettlement from climate change could create. It would do this not in a doomsaying way but by showing cultural futures as pleasurable experience, new knowledge, entertainment and adventure. It would export this content and message locally and to the world.

The Multiversity would generate and trade on all the knowledge developed to make the whole 'city move, new economy, new culture' experience : together with creating the knowledge needed to live, work and survive in a world with a changed climate. As such it would recognise the limitations of universities and their disciplinary structures which greatly limit our ability to understand our environment in a way that facilitates sustainability.

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ACTIONS TO FOLLOW THROUGH

To progress this proposal to a stage where the ideas are fully developed, feasibility is able to be adequately assessed and partners sought, a two year program is proposed consisting of:

The establishment of a modest research, design and planning team to explore and develop the ideas.

The publication of the results of the work of this team (in print and electronically) to enable public communication, consultation and political debate together with the creation of an events program.

The creation of a Gold Coast 2 development program.

In the local scheme of things this proposal looks like a massive undertaking, but from a global perspective it is modest. Finally, the number of jobs it would create would have a major and positive impact on the Queensland economy.