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### Marina plans scaled back :: ABC Tropical Queensland

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[ABC Tropical Queensland](#) | [Feature Index](#) | Story

#### Marina plans scaled back

Tuesday, 17 October 2006

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**Presenter:** Melissa Maddison, Melinda Howells

A scaled back plan for a marina at Shute Harbour has been released in response to community concerns. Mackay Marina owner Port Binnli has taken over the project and has made a number of changes to the size and scope of the marina planned.

The new proposal includes 733 marina berths, a commercial and tourism precinct up to 5 storeys high, 96 family suites plus a residential complex precinct. Project manager Dave Quinlan says the changes reflect community concerns raised during environmental impact consultations.

Mr Quinlan explains there'll be no development north of the Shute Harbour road, a return of some land to public ownership, no shipyard and no ferry terminal. He adds that the project will contribute to a public boat ramp facility and there will be public access to the foreshore.

Port Binnli purchased a large share of the existing project in March this year from Shute Harbour Developments Pty Ltd and became the major shareholder. The previous developer undertook an EIS in



Picturesque Shute Harbour - gateway to the Whitsundays.



2005 and there was considerable feedback from community during that process. Strong community reaction to a proposed marina development at Shute Harbour has resulted in the project being scaled back.

We believe the changes we've made reflect very positively on the proposal

"We believe the changes we've made reflect very positively on the proposal," says Mr Quinlan. He says it's still a financially viable project despite the changes but the proposal's so different, it needed a whole new EIS project. "The project has merit. There's a lot of work to be done yet with the EIS process. The Queensland Government saw that the changes were so significant that it warranted a [whole] new EIS process." The government's yet to put out a draft terms of reference. "Once that's done, we'll come up with a design and plan that will meet community expectations."

Port Binnli anticipates that construction will start in 2008.

But Environmentalists are concerned the growing number of marina berths being built in the Whitsundays is putting pressure on the Great Barrier Reef. Tony Fontes from reef conservation group, OUCH, says developments like the Shute Harbour Marina bring more boats to the region, which then bring more tourists to fragile areas of the reef. He's called for a user pays system to be considered.

Mr Fontes says their group would be hesitant to back any new marina development. He says firstly, there's an immediate impact on the local environment when removing mangroves and the sedimentation that occurs with it. But what he sees as more important is the impact offshore when you bring another few hundred boats into the area.

"They don't sit in the marina for very long. They like to cruise the islands and the reefs and the management agencies are not able to manage the current number of boats visiting the Whitsundays, never mind increasing that two and three fold."

He says "a marina should take a responsibility not just to protect as it's built, the immediate local environment, by minimising any damage it's done there, but [also] needs to look beyond its walls".

these reefs are taking a beating

"While we welcome people to come up and visit the reefs there's only a finite number of bays and reefs and as the boat numbers increase and people numbers increase these reefs are taking a beating," says Mr Fontes.

Because he says marinas put a lot of pressure on the environment, he'd like to see a management fee or user pays system taken into consideration when the new EIS is released. "They would install moorings in the marine park and install marker buoys and fund to some degree the management of agencies' ability to protect the environment that marinas are putting pressure on."

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Last Updated: 17/10/2006 3:11:00 PM AEST

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