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NON-CENTS

The \$500,000 mystery marine study

ALMOST five years ago the Bligh Government began one of the biggest marine environment studies ever undertaken – to determine the future of the Broadwater.

More than 30 stakeholders during August 2008 would spend up to four hours at forums to offer their views on key issues in southern Moreton Bay like dredging, protection of mangroves and boat safety.

And the cost to you, the taxpayer?

The study was budgeted at \$500,000.

Engineering company KBR was employed to create a 20-year master plan for the "most environmentally and economically suitable locations" for future marine infrastructure from our doorstep to north of Logan River.

What happened to the study?

A Right To Information request led to an officer tracking down the report, but access was refused because it had been created for a committee of the Cabinet.

"It was to go out for public consultation . . . but due to the change in government it was never released," the officer wrote.

Would the Newman Government consider releasing it?

A spokesman for Acting Premier Jeff Seeney replied: "There are no plans to release this document.

There will be no risk and no cost to the Queensland Government for the Broadwater Marine Project."

An examination of State Budget papers show no expense is planned for the Broadwater Marine Project for the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for the next 12 months.

Nor is any costing listed for any of the forward planning estimates through to 2016-17.

The previous Labor governments spent about \$150,000 on commissioning the Sta Cruises Ship

Simulator in 2004, according to cruise ship terminal critics.

Larger amounts would have been outlaid for an initial advice statement and the draft terms of reference for an environmental impact statement, they add.

Abandoned by Labor and revived by Mayor Tom Tate as a "game-changing project", his council officers estimated \$595,000 was required during 2012-13 to fund economic analysis and more navigation simulation reports.

An officer's report shows

"consultation and community activities" has cost \$92,704 and \$41,883 was spent on a much criticised community survey.

About \$63,000 funded advertising and website updates along with "social media monitoring".

For the next 12 months, council Budget papers list the project along with the cultural precinct and light rail for a \$2,583,531 spend.

Yet council insiders suggest that after spending \$291,768 so far, any additional funding will require the approval of councillors and depend

on the outcome of the Government's tender process for a proponent.

Finally, what about the cost for community protest groups from organising rallies, building websites and funding advertising?

"I wouldn't be surprised if it is well over \$1 million between 2003-2013," a volunteer said.

Do the maths and discover a multi-million dollar spend on a project which many LNP MPs privately believe will sink for the second time because the Seaway is too small for today's big ships.

