

Blinded by light of visionary short sight

REPORTS of the sudden death of the Arafura Harbour development plan have been greatly exaggerated.

Stand by for Plan B, probably leaving East Point reserve intact and using Ludmilla Creek as an entry point to a slightly less grand, less "visionary" proposal than the \$1 billion original.

Or at least that appears to be what government insiders are expecting.

What a cracker of a few days it has been since Chief Minister Paul Henderson announced the NT Government would not be supporting the current plan.

In doing so, Henderson seemed to be implying that the whole issue was done and dusted.

In his dreams.

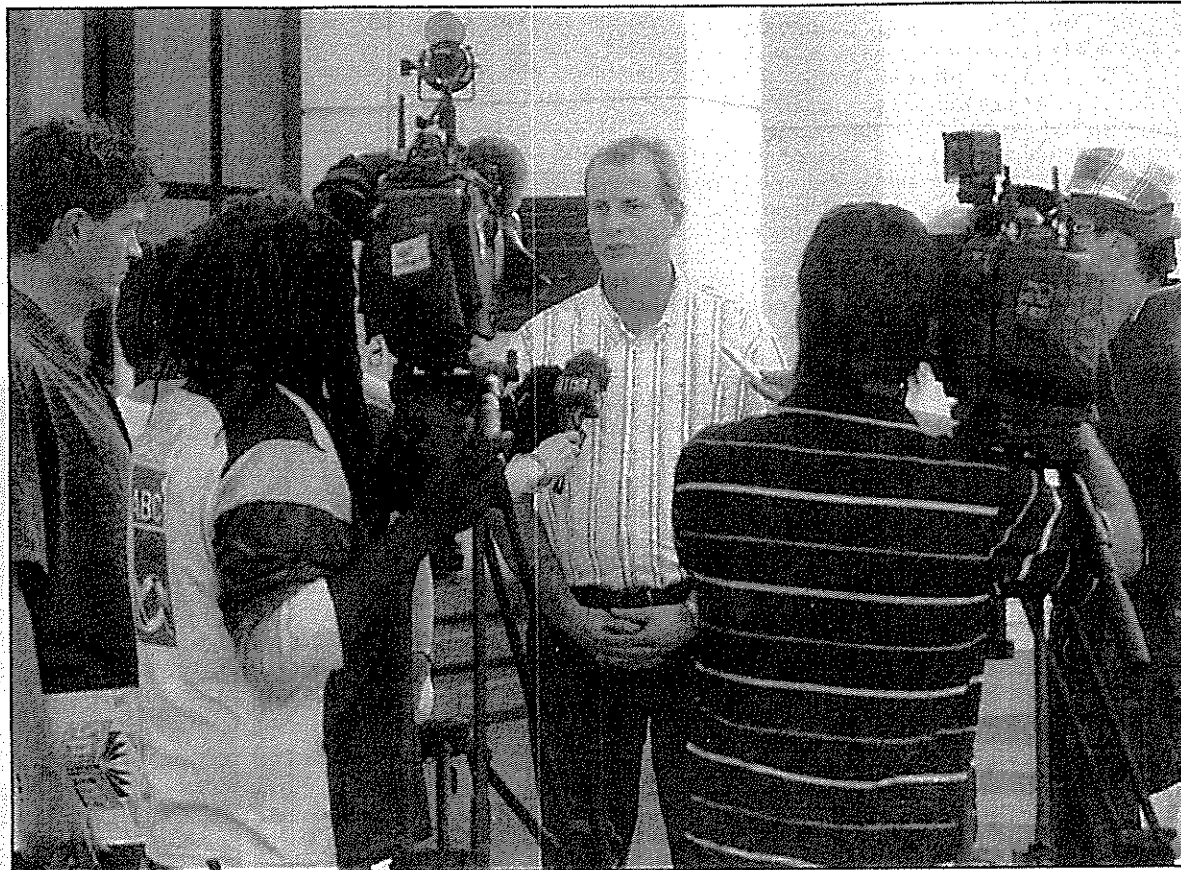
The current plan may have taken a serious flesh wound but planner Hans Voss and developer Even Lynne are refusing to back off.

As the battle heats up, the war of words continues to pose more questions than provide answers.

For instance, Henderson said the Government would not release land to the developers and the sewage treatment plant in the area would not be moved.

Strange. I could have sworn one of our master plans in the making has provision for the moving of the poo factory as well as the extension or relocation of the poo-shooter pipe down Larrakeyah way.

Are those pencilled-in changes victims of tighter economic times or



'IT'S NOT ABOUT POLITICS': Chief Minister Paul Henderson puts a squirrel grip on Arafura Harbour plans

did someone forget to remind the Chief about them?

In the early rounds of what could turn out to be a marathon stoush, some of the claims and counter-claims have been worth noting.

Henderson: "If this had been allowed to continue, there would have been a fault-line in this city."

Boy, did he get that right.

But, as has been shown in the *Northern Territory News* this week, just as many people seem to favour the plan as oppose it — a great divide.

Darwin Lord Mayor Graeme Sawyer on news of the Government's stand: "I was a bit stunned, to be honest. I thought we had made some

progress on planning in this town, where we could actually get to some of the issues and work through some of the processes that are supposed to happen around planning."

Sawyer added: "we're still very much playing some political game called planning, rather than a planning process".

Three weeks earlier, Sawyer had used his casting vote on the Darwin City Council to reject a call for more information on the Arafura Harbour development proposal.

At the time, he said there was no urgent need because, "the proposal won't be coming back to us, we don't

expect, for at least 15 to 18 months". Oops. Wrong.

Then came the reaction of Hans Voss to Hendo's king-hit.

"So much for a government with fresh ideas and real action," Voss said, adding Cullen Bay would never have happened if the then government had acted similarly 20 years ago. And people using Cullen Bay "would not be enjoying that unique lifestyle right now".

Whoa, mate. Even you have been known to concede that Cullen Bay hasn't turned out exactly as you expected it would.

And don't forget the subsidence problems there that were the subject



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of successful legal actions, including quite a big one by a little-known mob called Paspaley.

Henderson says the rejection decision is not based on politics.

Sure, and the development proposal is not based on money.

Let the games roll on.

At this stage, the land owned by the Gwalwa Daraniki Association appears still to be in play and the developers are paying money to keep it that way.

Stay tuned for the next dramatic episode of Arafura Revisited.