

No progressive consultation with the public is a serious problem with Major Projects which are processed as an Expressions of Interest (EOI). This means that big developments progress in secret until a stage when the government thinks individual projects can go ahead, in agreement with a successful tenderer, when the public is still in the dark. When the news is suddenly out, the public naturally urgently feels the need to have its say.

This is where we are today. The community will not tolerate a luxury hotel being built in either Jervois Park, next to the vibrant Deckchair Cinema, or Flagstaff Park, a landmark headland park with natural panorama views of Darwin Harbour, and an important military history.

These parklands, green open spaces, prized by communities everywhere, MUST not be privatised, reduced in size, compromised, or destroyed. Their ownership must be strictly remain in the public domain.

As Darwin grows, parklands are more and more important to our lifestyle, and the happiness, health and wellbeing of the community. For nearly a year we have had a virtual government silence on the 'luxury six star hotel' except for media releases seen perhaps by business and developers, and a few direct recognised 'stakeholders'.

The general public has been outside the loop. At last the cat is out of the bag, and the public, because of government's urgency, is being asked to sacrifice what is theirs, and sacred to them.

The public is reacting strongly now because it was not consulted about possible sites originally, and given a chance then to make it clear about places where a 'luxury hotel' is not acceptable.

Three possible sites which might be acceptable, after consultation with the public are:

1. The Hotel Darwin site on the Esplanade in the CBD and close to Parliament where there is a development approved by the Development Consent years ago as only temporary;
2. The original site for the TOGA HOTEL in the Waterfront Project, with harbour views, on vacant land adjoining the former Iron Ore Wharf location, and
3. The vacant Stokes Hill Powerhouse site, also with harbour views, at the Frances Bay end of the the Waterfront Project.

What do people think of these ideas ?

