

COURT CALLS



"It's time all three tiers of government came together"

MAYOR TOM TATE



"It would be a vote of confidence in the CBD and I'm excited about it."

ROB MOLHOEK



"I support Southport as a CBD including ... a federal court."

ANGIE BELL



"This is exactly what we need and the benefits are enormous."

IAN KENNEDY

Council unveils plan for 'towers of power'



An artist's impression of a proposed "towers of power" government precinct.

ANDREW POTTS

PLANS for a giant, two-tower justice and government hub will be unveiled on Wednesday – and all council wants in return is for the state and federal governments to sign on as tenants.

The "towers of power" planned for Southport's Mal Burke car park have been mooted as the solution to the Gold Coast's stretched court system and revitalisation of the central business district.

Mayor Tom Tate said private enterprise would build the "long overdue" high-rises.

"Our city has grown to the extent that we deserve our own Federal and Supreme Court annexes," he said.

"We are not asking the state or federal governments to build a facility ... just sign on as head tenants."

"Private enterprise would build it and council's commitment would be through a joint venture arrangement. We could offer up Mal Burke car park as the land, providing the number of affordable public parking spaces was maintained."

The towers would have room for government departments, barrister chambers, courts and civic offices for the council's CEO and staff.

The height and ultimate cost of the project would be determined by the market, but \$380m was floated in 2018 when the idea was first proposed.

There was little political will from the state government back then.

Cr Tate said council would consider relocating its chambers from Evandale back to Southport where it was based until 1976.

"Justice delayed is justice denied and it is entirely unfair on the victims to have to make their way to Brisbane's Supreme, or Federal, courts, often waiting at that facility for hours on end, only to see further adjournments or delays," he said.

"I am all about the victim and they deserve a lot better than what is occurring today."

"It's time all three tiers of government came together as doing nothing will be generational."

"Let private enterprise solve this bottleneck that is stalling our court systems and causing more harm and pain for the victims."

A Bulletin report in early April revealed there were no new trial dates left in the Southport District Court for the rest of the calendar year.

Those pleading guilty will have to wait four or five months for a sentence date.

The lack of available dates has been blamed on a perfect storm of huge workloads, COVID delays and more alleged offenders wanting to defend charges.

The proposal has been welcomed by business and political leaders who have vowed to get behind the bid.

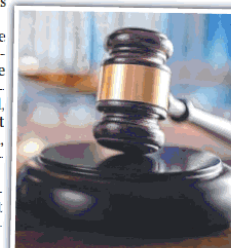
Federal MP Angie Bell said planning for the city's future was critical.

"I support Southport as a CBD, including the relocation of a department from any level of government or a federal court," she said.

Southport MP Rob Molhoek said the proposal was a significant vote of confidence in the suburb, while Southport Chamber of Commerce president Ian Kennedy said the project was "exactly what we need."

"There is no doubt the Gold Coast needs a strong and identifiable CBD and this could be the model for how the rest of the city can grow," he said.

"We need to plan for the future rather than be stuck in the past and it will give us serious credibility."



WRONGFUL BITE

A MEMBER of the public was bitten by a police dog while it was tracking a group of juveniles who fled from a vehicle.

The man, 56, was bitten while sitting in his backyard on Railway Pde, Mudgeeraba, about 6.45pm on Sunday. Acting Chief Superintendent Geoff Sheldon said:

"As we were looking for further (offenders) a member of the public was sitting in his own backyard in his chair and the dog put two and two together, got five, and bit him."

The dog, on a longer tracking lead, bit him on the forearm, he said. The man was taken hospital with no serious injury.



Ian Mayer

Revved up prices in crazy car market

DAVID MCCOWEN

OPPORTUNISTS are capitalising on the feverish demand for new cars in the face of stock shortages by selling their newly purchased vehicles at a huge mark-up.

Industry insiders say the appetite for some models is "out of control" to the point where buyers are making five-figure profits by selling new

cars days after taking delivery. Sought-after models with long waiting lists, such as Toyota's LandCruiser, RAV4 hybrid or GR Yaris are changing hands for more than their new price as impatient motorists try to jump the queue.

Ross Booth, managing director of the car valuation website redbook.com.au, said: "The market is crazy. Normally cars go down in price

when a buyer takes possession. At the moment some cars are going up in price – some substantially. The LandCruiser is a really good example." The LandCruiser is in run-out mode ahead of a 2022 facelift.

Dennis Johnson bought a top-spec model for \$136,000 before he "saw an opportunity". "I listed mine for \$160,000 thinking I wouldn't

get any bites, but the phone went silly with enquiries ... I've had people nearly crying on the phone with me, pleading to buy it. It's abnormal."

Ian Mayer, managing director of Chatswood Toyota, said his dealership had bought back LandCruisers from customers for more than the new price. "I have seen nothing like it. It's phenomenal," he said.