

# On the waterfront: Group floats development ideas

Tracy Neal

tracyn@nelsonmail.co.nz

A floating stage for events, a purpose-designed playground, an aquarium or a fishing museum have emerged as possibilities for public space to be developed on the Nelson waterfront.

A 28-strong group of architects, landscape architects, designers and artists plus planners from the Nelson and Tasman councils got together last weekend for a day-long exercise on developing ideas for how city council-owned waterfront land and surrounding areas could be developed for public use.

The city council recently spent \$2.4 million on two sites in Haven Rd with the aim of being able to use it to extend its city-to-the-sea project.

The land bought from Port Nelson was previously occupied by Reliance Engineering and the Four Seasons store.

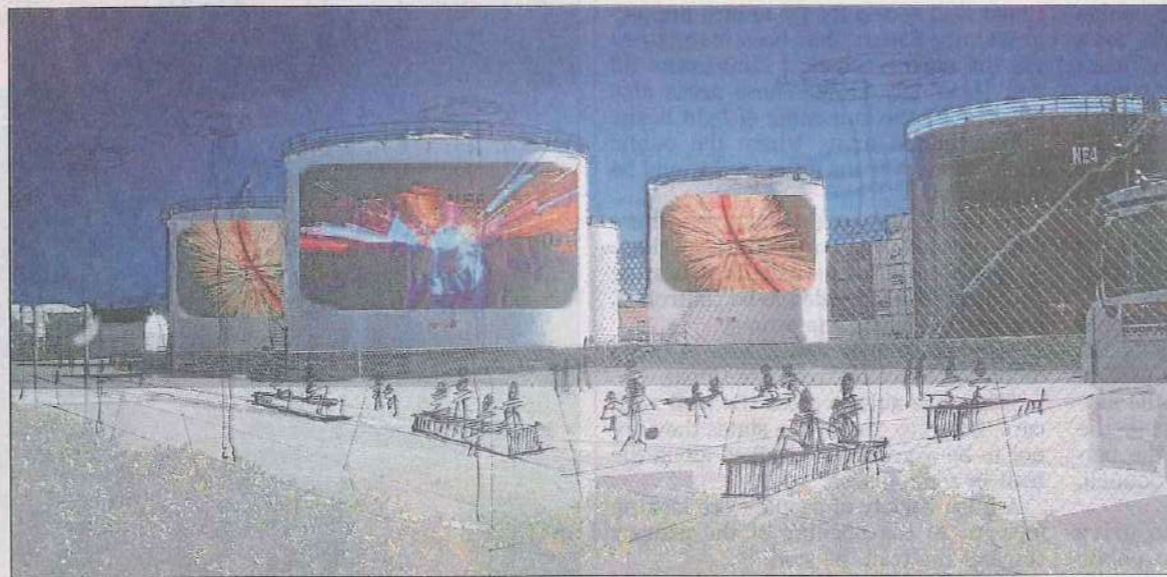
Seven teams of professionals at the workshop, who gave their time freely, were given an open brief to

explore ideas for the site at the event organised by the Nelson-Marlborough branch of the Institute of Architects.

Nelson architects David Wallace, Marc Barron, and Andrew Irving led the workshop, and were joined by Wellington architect and urban designer Graeme McIndoe, who is part of the Nelson urban design panel and who has expertise in waterfront design.

The workshop leaders said the general theme that emerged was a desire to create an area that generated increased activity on the waterfront. Councillor Pete Rainey said the 2933 square metres of prime land had been bought as part of the council's strategy to connect the city with the sea.

The council was already under way with plans for the first stage of the city-to-sea link as part of the Heart of Nelson strategy, which will take in staged development of Rutherford Park, the Trafalgar Centre upgrade, and the Maitai walkway through to the Nelson marina.



**Theatre space:** An illustration of the tank farm from the Nelson waterfront design workshop.

Mr Wallace said there was consensus the headland site on the waterfront is a "really important site" and that it was also important to retain the two heritage buildings in the area.

There was a suggestion to restore the Anchor building as a fish and produce market.

He was encouraged by the port company's willingness to be involved by softening boundaries be-

tween the port and the community.

Mr Barron said Port Nelson's Shed 3 on the wharf near Guyton Fisheries, used last year as a temporary art gallery space, was uni-

versally supported as a site for a range of attractions, including possibly a restaurant because of its location near the water that offered wide views of the harbour.

The proposed "tank farm" was a whimsical idea in which images would be projected on to the fuel storage tanks around the waterfront as a changing theatre space, mainly at night.

Mr Barron was encouraged by the strong turnout at the workshop, and the attendance by council planners.

"These ideas are just a launching pad for what is a very interesting site. It's a key turning point in the city to the sea link and it's encouraging that the council is asking the right questions, and the right people," Mr Barron said.

Other ideas included adapting the former Reliance building as a hub for start-up businesses, including possibly an arts hub, or building a new large building for a major city attraction.

Another was to create outposts on the waterfront of celebrated institutions like the Cawthron Insti-

tute or Suter Art Gallery annexed that might also provide corporate hospitality.

Mr Wallace said one team suggested expanding the theme to incorporate future maritime transport, including cruise ships and ferries.

All teams included a version of strong city to waterfront links via Haven Rd or through Wildman Ave, connecting with the marina and the enhanced Maitai walkway.

Mr Wallace said public transport was discussed at the workshop with solar powered rickshaws suggested as a means of access along an extended promenade route.

"This possible entrepreneurial opportunity would establish a fun means of transport and a point of difference for Nelson."

Mr Rainey said it was in the hands of the architects institute as to how it might present the ideas to the council.

■ The range of ideas will be presented at the Nelson Arts Festival event Pechakucha on October 16.