

Expert against Coast for CST

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BRISBANE is a better option as a future cruise ship terminal with the Gold Coast taking a gamble in developing Wavebreak Island, warns an international shipping researcher.

Professor Ross Klein, a Canadian sociologist and author from the University of Newfoundland in St Johns, after visiting and checking both locations favours the River City.

The Coast's terminal being moved from the Seaway to Wavebreak will not reduce dredging or environmental challenges and is of no value "if passengers never leave the ship or the island".

Carnival Australia last month outlined an ambitious campaign to position Brisbane as the Florida of the market with a new port developed at the mouth of the river leading to talks with the local council and the State Government.

Meanwhile, the ASF consortium is finalising more details on its proposed \$7.5 billion international resort and terminal in the Broadwater.

Professor Klein, who has been invited by community groups to speak at the Wake Up to Wavebreak breakfast at the Labrador's Grand Hotel on Friday, said it was important to understand that the Coast would only be a "port of call".

Newfoundland had a similar narrow entrance to its harbour like the Coast and only one third to a half of the larger cruise ships could gain access during a "typical" year.

"Brisbane is without a doubt a superior option, if for no other reason than that there is an international airport there with sufficient seats for in-bound cruise passengers, as-

suming it is a homeport," Professor Klein said.

"A key issue here is whether a port is a homeport, which Coast will not be, or simply a port of call. Brisbane can play either role and this versatility is a positive to cruise lines.

"The Coast can only serve as a port of call, which limits income and makes the port vulnerable to weather conditions, economic conditions, and much more if cruise tourism is to be successful."

Asked if both terminals could operate successfully, Professor Klein said ships stopping in Brisbane would not drop by at the Coast.

"The Coast may be able to steal some of the business away from Newcastle on itineraries from Sydney to the South Pacific, but that is doubtful given Newcastle is a well-established deep water port that is accessible in most weather conditions. It is also known by the industry and has proven to be reliable," he said.

The biggest risks for the Coast was whether it was put on cruise itineraries, what the size of those ships were and whether they would dock or choose in weather conditions, like on the Sunshine Coast recently, to pass by.

"The simple answer to the question - I think Brisbane has a reasonable chance of having a profitable cruise terminal," Professor Klein said.

"I think it is a crap shoot for Gold Coast - as they say, "pay your money and take your chances". But let's keep in mind that the reason behind the development on Wavebreak Island really has little to do with the cruise terminal.

"The cruise terminal is the incentive for getting permission for huge development that otherwise would not be permitted."