

# Supership port plan

## DOCKLANDS

Hamish Heard

MASSIVE cruise ships and the *Spirit of Tasmania* could be regular sights at Docklands under an ambitious plan to move Station Pier operations to a site beneath the Bolte Bridge.

Melbourne councillor Peter Clarke said he had speaking to the State Government for a year about developing the south bank of the Yarra River near Docklands to cope with large passenger ships.

"It would bring nearly a million more visitors into Docklands every year," Cr Clarke said.

The project had gained the support of millionaire developer Sam Tarascio, chairman of Salta Property Group, who was interested in financing and building the project.

Cr Clarke said the project had also been mooted as a home for Melbourne's wholesale fish market, set

to close in May when Melbourne Council is due to finalise an agreement to sell the site to Victrack.

The development would improve the visual outlook and traffic conditions for Port Melbourne residents living in the Station Pier precinct, Cr Clarke said.

It would also provide a more vibrant welcome for cruise passengers setting foot in Melbourne for the first time.

Cr Clarke called on the Government to seize the opportunity to use private-sector money to get the project running to stimulate the state's economy.

"That's why I raised it with (Roads and Ports Minister) Tim Pallas three weeks ago and that's why I'm going to be raising it again in the next few weeks," he said. The Government had shown interest when he first raised the proposal with then-Industry and Trade Minister Theo Theophanous a year ago.

"I raised this with Theo 12 months ago who undertook to come back with a whole-of-government approach but the Government seems to have gone to sleep on industry policy," Mr Clarke said.

Cr Clarke said the proposal would need support from the Port of Melbourne Corporation, the organisation that has managed Station Pier since 2005 and controls ship movements in the Yarra River.

But Peter Harry, head of corporate affairs for Port of Melbourne Corporation, said the organisation had heard nothing of the proposal.

"Station Pier is basically gearing up for a record season of 57 cruise ship visits and has recently benefitted from a \$15 million investment by the Victorian Government," Mr Harry said.

Both Mr Tarascio and the Government did not return the *Leader's* phonecalls for comment.



**SPIRIT OF TASMANIA:** it and massive cruise ships could dock at Docklands in a mooted private-state development.