

New big prawn for Ballina

Rebecca Lollback | 6th February 2010

MEET Neville, Ballina's new Big Prawn.

The 12.4m high 'realistic' prawn will cost \$500,000 to build, and is expected to be finished by October next year if approved.

Lennox Head developer Chris Condon wants to build the giant crustacean at his proposed service centre at the Teven Road interchange on the Ballina bypass.

"I've always seen the Big Prawn as an icon of the area," he said.

"It is known, not only locally and throughout Australia but internationally, as being synonymous with Ballina.

"The old one has had its day.

"The new concept has the potential for Neville the Prawn to be around for a lot longer than the old one."

The existing Big Prawn could be demolished any day.

Although Mr Condon is excited about his new project, he admitted that 'not everyone is going to like it'.

"But it will be a vital tourism interface for Ballina," he said.

"People will be able to see the prawn from all directions. Given its final height of just over 12m, you won't be able to miss it.

"And at night there will be lights coming out of the prawn's tentacles, shining on to a pond below."

Water will also flow down from the structure into the pond and there will be a viewing platform.

Lennox Head-based artist Angus McDonald teamed up with Lismore designer Natalie Wilkin to present the concept to Mr Condon last month.

"We tried to do what we thought would be really beautiful for the site," Mr McDonald said.

"It's really exciting.

"We've got the advantage of having access to some really fabulous materials, which they didn't have when the first Prawn was built 20 years ago.

"But there is still a lot of work to do."

Neville the Prawn will be made of polystyrene foam and the exterior will be polyester resin and fibreglass.

The 'high-gloss, wet finish' will be achieved with layers of automotive paint to make it look 'as though it has just surfaced from the ocean'.

But the Prawn will not be accessible to the public because of the added cost and vandalism concerns.

Manufacture of Neville will take about 12 months, and installation a month.

Ballina Council's regulatory services group manager, Rod Willis, said a development application for the new Big Prawn had yet to be lodged.



A supplied concept design of the replacement for the Big Prawn, constructed from hi-tech materials at a cost of some \$500,000.


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