



NEWS RELEASE

Australian planning for gigantic China port city

A master plan prepared by Gold Coast based engineers and planners Burchill Partners Pty Limited, for a new city to serve one of the world's biggest container ports, has been chosen by Chinese authorities.

Yangshan New City is on an island 35 kilometres offshore from Shanghai, beyond the shallows created by the Yangtze River, and will be connected to the mainland by a six lane bridge, already well under way and disappearing over the horizon.

The bridge and the container port at Yangshan are believed to be one of the two largest man-made constructions in the world today. The other is the Three Gorges Dam, also in China.

The massive port undertaking is estimated to cost US\$12 billion over 20 years, with one of the world's longest bridges included in a first stage costing US\$2.4 billion up till 2005.

Burchill Partners, which has a 15 year presence in Asia, was selected by Chinese authorities as one of five firms worthy of addressing the planning and urban form challenges of Yangshan New City. They and three other firms from Japan, Germany, Italy and a major Shanghai planning university, were engaged to prepare competing planning solutions from an original group of 11 planning organisation contenders from around the world.

Burchill Partners' director of overseas projects, Mark Windsor, said the Chinese government authorities had jointly awarded their first choice of planning and urban design solutions to his company, and Tongji University of Shanghai, at a ceremony held this month in China.

Mr Windsor said the win by his company could be expected to lead to further detailed master planning assignments for some of the precincts.

"Importantly also, this announcement has elevated our value as master planners in the fastest growing economy in the world," said Mr Windsor. "Because of the scale of this project, many eyes in Asia were on the Yangshan New City plan contest.

"Considering the calibre of the other contenders, it puts Burchill Partners up there as an internationally capable planning organisation and is expected to ease our path to bigger contracts in coming years."

Burchill Partners' overseas projects currently include the planning and civil works on the huge Amby Valley Sahara Lake City in the mountains outside Mumbai, India, the Putrajaya Lake with its transport, recreational and maintenance facilities in the heart of Malaysia's new capital city, the Sentosa Cove Southern Canals revetments design in Singapore and the initial concept planning and detailed harbour revetments design for the Royal Phuket Marina in Thailand.

In past years, the company has completed a large collection of regional and city planning and engineering assignments for organisation including the Government of Johor, Malaysia, Malaysia's MultiMedia Super Corridor and for the City of Kuala Lumpur.

Current Australian projects include the Sovereign Islands and Ephraim Island in the Gold Coast Broadwater, the Riverlinks project at Coomera, Hope Island Resort, Gainsborough Greens redevelopment, Lakeview at Mermaid, Crystal Tower and Crystelle Cove as well as many residential estate projects.

In their winning plan for Yangshan New City, issues such as a harsh landscape and a long existing Chinese town had to be addressed. The Burchill Partners plan drew on their experience in creating facilities to encourage tourism and recreational boating, both deemed to be essential for the financial stability of a new city at such a remote location.

The plan delivered incentives to encourage visits by sea-going ferries and coach tours across the world's longest bridge. Restoration plans for the old city, with its traditional community watering facilities, temples, stone walls and pathways, were included in the plan. A desolate mountain in the centre of the island is destined to become a significant tourism focal point, with a funicular railway and mass tourism attractions.

The key to the Burchill Partners plan was the creation of a new harbour, with a dramatic, and surprising entry from the open sea through two narrow headlands. Inside, the plan portrays a mix of resort living, commercial waterfront activity, shopping and recreation, with sensations reminiscent of a mix of Sanctuary Cove on the Gold Coast and Sydney Harbour.

There will be business and commercial precincts for international shipping and logistics companies thronging to the new Shanghai Deepwater Port. A fishing harbour, parks and road or pathway linkages add greater substance to the urban design.

“For this Chinese project, we drew on modern presentation technologies. Central to this were our in-house computer generated three-dimensional images and a DVD documentary based on these images and explaining our planning ideas. For this, we teamed once again with our documentary partners, Newton's Pty Ltd, of Southport, who in turned worked with Bond University's Centre for Film and Television to develop the script and narration in Mandarin,” added Mr Windsor.

“In much of our work in Asia, we have included documentary maker Ken Newton on our team, introducing a unique synergy between planning and film making. This relationship gives us an edge in presentation of future concepts and otherwise intangible planning ideas.

“There is no question that our ability to present the Yangshan New City Plan in documentary style on the big screen made significant impact in China,” added Mr Windsor.

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