

Global search for Barangaroo designers

Tracy Ong

Designers have until June 1 to submit entries to design stage one of Sydney's \$2.5 billion Barangaroo redevelopment.

The first four blocks of the eight-precinct site, comprising 83 per cent of the space, have been put out to tender in an international campaign running in New York, London, the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong.

Plans to build a park at the northern end of the site comprising 50 per cent of Barangaroo will be brought forward to 2009, with the

KEY POINTS

- The first four blocks of the eight-precinct site are out to tender.
- Some criticise Barangaroo's integration of residential, commercial and park land.

government to stump up \$150 million for which "we will get compensation down the track", NSW Premier Morris Iemma said.

He dismissed claims by Danish urban planner Jan Gehl that the site would be a wasteland during the

night and at weekends because it was too isolated.

The proposed \$12 billion north-west metro — due for completion in 2012 — will link Wynyard to the site by pedestrian bridge, while the government is considering locating a second ferry hub, as recommended by the Walker special commission of inquiry, at the southern end of the site.

Under consideration also is a proposal from the operator of Sydney Light Rail about running a service from the inner west direct to Barangaroo, which Mr Iemma indicated he was now more open to.

The Urban Taskforce cautiously backed Mr Gehl's warnings, saying the site could better integrate recreational, commercial and residential areas.

"The design of the site would be improved by more evenly distributing the parkland and new homes and workplaces," chief executive Aaron Gadiel said.

But the Property Council estimated that Barangaroo would only provide an additional three years of office space and said any tweaking of the design to more evenly distribute parkland throughout the site should not compromise commercial space.

Barangaroo is expected to accommodate an additional 15,000 workers, adding 332,300 square metres of office space to the central business district, with the government planning to make the Hungry Mile site a financial services hub.

Buildings will have large floorplates (between 2500 and 4000 sq m) "attractive to financial services companies".

"The planning for this site is very deliberately tailored towards the needs of financial services," Mr Iemma said. "Who wouldn't want to have their corporate headquarters there?"