

Ipswich set to take off

Region gets council nod to develop aviation hub

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IPSWICH could become "the Seattle of the southern hemisphere" after winning support for a plan to make the city a national aerospace and aviation hub.

A \$150 million proposal by the State Government has been granted planning

approval by the local city council, Infrastructure and Planning Minister Stirling Hinchliffe announced.

The project is expected to bring in billions in investment to the region and create up to 3500 jobs in one of the state's fastest-growing areas.

The 183ha Aerospace and Defence Support Centre would be strategically located next to

the RAAF Amberley base west of Ipswich.

Mr Hinchliffe said the co-location positioned Ipswich to become "an economic powerhouse with the ability to provide maintenance, repair, overhaul and engineering support and businesses".

Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale went further, saying the city could be "the Seattle of the

southern hemisphere". Seattle in the US state of Washington is the northwestern capital of the US aerospace and aviation industry.

The State Government is putting \$30.5 million into developing the infrastructure for the hub.

Private investment will be sought for the remainder of the cost and Mr Hinchliffe said

there was plenty of industry interest.

Construction was expected to begin in 2012 while the first employees could be working there within a year.

Mr Hinchliffe said the vision was to create "a hub for national defence, aviation and aerospace industries".

"Queensland companies are already involved in major de-

fence force projects for the delivery of the Tiger and MRH90 helicopters, Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft and air-to-air refuelling planes," he said. "The centre is expected to become a base for firms seeking contracts to service and maintain RAAF aircraft including the \$6 billion new fleet of F/A-18F Super Hornets."