

Bridge club refuses to be dealt bad hand by tower developer

By Harry Clarke • A Current Affair Producer
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Members of a historic bridge club in Surfers Paradise fear a proposed tower development on a neighbouring block of land would jeopardise the club's future.

The Gold Coast Bridge Club will lose substantial parking space, membership and revenue if an application to build an apartment block next door is approved, members say.

President Phillip Roberts said the club was not notified of the proposal by the developer, Grocon, and only found out about the plans within days of public submissions closing.

He said the excessive noise expected during the years-long construction phase would drive bridge players away from the club.



“Bridge is a game of great concentration and extraneous noise is one of the worst distractions,” Mr Roberts said.

“Because we have such a high level of bridge at our club, our members mostly likely will want to go elsewhere to play bridge during the construction period, which again is lots and lots of income.”

The block of land is owned by Telstra, which struck a deal with Grocon to build the 30-storey tower.

Both companies declined to comment on the proposal other to say the development, including the public submissions process, would be carried out within the law. Their full statements are below.

“At this stage, we haven't heard from either Telstra or Grocon with any suggestions as to how to compromise the situation,” Mr Roberts said.

The club was founded in 1962 and since 1974 has been situated on prime real estate it purchased on the Gold Coast Highway at the southern end of Surfers Paradise.

An agreement with Telstra has allowed the club's 400-plus members to park on the neighbouring land, which is vacant aside from one building housing telecommunications infrastructure.

Mr Roberts said the parking space was a significant drawcard for the club, and that players would “go elsewhere” if the convenience of sufficient parking disappeared because of the development.

“The club could remain with its restricted parking, but then that shrinks the club and shrinks its contribution to the community,” Mr Roberts said.



Australian bridge representative Jessica Brake, 26.

“I think we need to think (the proposal) through - think through the community benefits, whether a high tower there is of more benefit to the Gold Coast community than a flourishing bridge club.”

One of the club’s youngest members and brightest stars – 26-year-old Australian bridge representative Jessica Brake, said the impact of the neighbouring development is “definitely a concern.”

“This has been my club since I was 14-year-old. I know everyone here really well. 34 They’re a really warm and friendly club,” she said.

“We really appreciate the facilities we have here. It’s such a great club, and if we had to change that, I think it would definitely ruin it a little bit.”