

SEX AND THE CITY Brothel owner screwed by council sues for lost earnings Brothel owner sues council over delays

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A CAIRNS brothel is suing the city council for hundreds of thousands of dollars in alleged lost revenue and legal fees. Northern Belle owner Aart Brons says the Cairns City Council's mishandling of his brothel's development application was "fraudulent, deceitful and costly".

"I've been rolled over and screwed by council," Mr Brons said.

He has previously called for the Crime and Misconduct Commission to investigate the council's assessment of his application, which he claims delayed the opening of the brothel by more than five years.

Mr Brons said he would meet lawyers from Bottoms English today to launch legal action in a bid to recoup \$200,000 in legal fees and up to \$200,000 annually over five years in lost revenue.

Northern Belle celebrated its first anniversary this week after it opened for business on January 12 last year as the city's first legal brothel.

Mr Brons said his legal case against council was "solid as a rock".

"I'm taking them to court because I want to know why certain documents related to my development were withheld from councillors and not included in the planning report," Mr Brons said.

"It would've made it much easier for councillors to vote on the application if this certain document was included.

"There is a broader issue at stake here about how developments are handled by the council.

"If they left this important document out of my application when councillors were assessing it, how many other projects have been stopped because of similar handling of applications by council?"

A council spokeswoman said similar concerns had previously been raised by Mr Brons and presented to council, with its officers making a "professional judgment" on a case-by-case basis to decide which documents were included and presented to councillors.

"It is Mr Brons's right to take legal action if he chooses to do so, and the council will

respond accordingly," the spokeswoman said.

Mr Brons said business at Northern Belle had been flat in recent months.

"We haven't made a profit in the first year, which is normal for any business, but our staffing levels are holding up," he said.

TAG: Details of Mr Brons case are on his website at www.aarttheardvark.com