

PUBLIC

OUR RIVER NEEDS
MOORE FRIENDS

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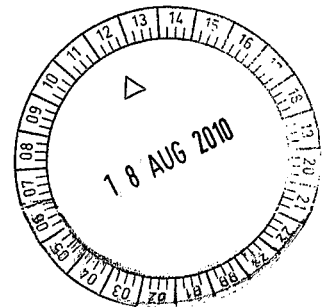
Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment
and Public Affairs
Legislative Council
Parliament House PERTH WA 6000

5th August 2010

Dear Mr. Ellis,

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Re. Petition # 49 – Moore River Development



Thank you for your response to our petition.

Our committee is dismayed that your committee has seen fit to finalise this petition on June 23rd 2010.

The Minister's response to your committee is most unsatisfactory. By reducing the size of the planned development, the Moore River Company might placate the government, but not the thousands of citizens who have worked to protect the Moore River and its surrounding bushland for over sixteen years.

This is a matter of public importance, not one of a few private individuals. Its protection has inspired dedicated work, from people who live in the immediate vicinity, people from all around the state, the nation and indeed internationally.

Moore River is a treasure, a large parcel of land *with a river*, close to our capital city. Moore River is not a foreshore; it is an estuarine ecosystem that includes land in the area to its south. Modified to some extent yes, this land remains beautiful and diverse and if managed in the correct way, is well able to be rehabilitated.

Surely we must avoid the hazards of real estate ambition and preserve the entire estuary for future generations.

The Moore River Company's revised Outline Development Plan is not yet publicly available, so we feel that it is entirely pre-emptive for your committee to abandon our concerns by precluding further investigations into this contentious matter.

We respectfully request that your committee re-considers our petition and takes action to investigate this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

J Johnson (Acting Convener FOMRE)

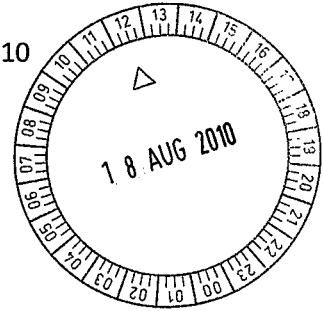
Attachment:

FOMRE's response to the Minister for Planning to Petition No. 49.

Hon John Day
Minister for Planning
Culture and the Arts
Government of Western Australia
2 Havelock St,
WEST PERTH WA 6005

August 5th 2010

PUBLIC



Dear Mr Day,

RE: Petition No. 49 – Moore River Development

Thank you for your response to Mr. Brian Ellis (MLC) (June 2010) Chair of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs on the above petition. The Friends of Moore River Estuary (FOMRE) are pleased to see that *Gingin Coast Structure Plan* (Feb. 2006) was referenced in your response.

We agree that this document is a conscientious précis of the current and future needs of the Gingin Shire coast.

We are however, alarmed by the statement you made to the above committee. Namely:

"Recognition of the existing 'Urban development' zoning by the government was based on the scale of the proposed development being reduced by approximately sixty percent. This equates to approximately 2,000 dwellings for the land and a likely end population of 6,000 people. This population range for Guilderton is consistent with what is envisaged by the Gingin Coast Structure Plan and is substantially less than that proposed in the matter before the State Administrative Council."

Page 63 of Gingin Coast Structure Plan states:

'Guilderton has been designated as a village and over the next 25 years, it is forecast that the town site will have a permanent and tourist population ranging from 2000 to 5000 during the summer peak period, excluding the recreation and tourist node south of the Moore River.'

Thus the total population for the area is 2000 with a non permanent population of approximately 3000 summer visitors.

Furthermore the area on the south side of the river is designated as 'Recreation and tourist node' (Figure One, page 61). Table 4.1 (Indicative settlement hierarchy – Gingin Coast) cites this settlement type to possess an indicative population threshold and status of

'Not more than 500 tourists only (permanent population only to serve tourists).'

We believe this supports our position that there should not be an urban development on the south side of the Moore River at all.

Further to the concerns outlined in our petition FOMRE still has serious concerns with your interpretation of some facts. Firstly we are heartened to see:

"... that the land south of the Moore River is not at risk of metropolitan encroachment."

However, We strongly disagree with:

"The suggestion that the land, if left intact, could link with the proposed Wilbinga nature reserve is not supported, as the subject land is substantially cleared, having been used for farming purposes."

While a proportion of the land is degraded through clearing and grazing but an assessment of the aerial photograph overlain with the proposed development envelope, indicates approximately two thirds of the land is in good condition. The land surrounding the proposed development area is cleared extensively yet we believe with judicious land management measures, linkages to good bush and surrounding reserves can be made.

We still strongly assert that:

‘Left intact, this area would link with the proposed Wilbinga Reserve to provide a substantial coastal corridor to enhance the ability of local flora and fauna to survive as representative of a unique coastal heathland.’ ... *That includes a river* (our emphasis).

We are also pleased to see that

‘...in this instance, the costs of all investigations, connections and infrastructure to service the site will be borne by the developer.

While we accept that ‘... unemployment rates in the district are lower than the Australian average’, it also a fact this area is rural and unlikely to provide employment for up to another 6000 people. (See page 41, Gingin Coast Structure Plan).

We are also pleased with:

‘... the developer’s intention to provide a buffer of approximately 1 km from the river, the proposed development south of Moore River should not impact on eco-tourism on the river.’

We still submit that a development of this size would be so destructive to the river environment that eco-tourism would become unviable.

We accept that there may be short term tenure issues to development occurring on the north of the existing Guilderton township. These issues are however, not intractable and must be the preferred development option for Guilderton and the advancement of the area. Land suitable for development occurs within the Guilderton precinct. Release of this would enable developers to acquire it through appropriate market processes to then create their development/s. Sound principles should determine development, not just developer-landowners.

We submit that a cul-de-sac development as proposed to the south of Moore River would not be easily accessed by residents from Guilderton or surrounding settlements. The already-required amenities and services needs to be easily reached by all members of the surrounding townships. We accept that a connecting bridge would be a local planning issue but still feel that development here is severely misplaced.

FOMRE has been intimately involved in the public consultation processes associated with the development of Moore River estuary, Guilderton and its environs since 1993. We were pleased with the collaborative process in the development of the Gingin Coast Structure Plan and subsequent adoption by the Western Australian Planning Commission in October 2005. We are now dismayed at the reversal of this consultative process involved in establishing your recommendations for Gingin Coast’s future.

Mr. Day, FOMRE recommends the protection of the land south of the Mouth of Moore River as an issue of public importance. Yes we are dealing with a modified landscape but this is the case in most places today. Pristine seldom exists. The value of the estuary of Moore River fortunately still includes considerable beauty, biodiversity and is a large parcel of land *with a river*. It is not simply a functional belt of foreshore reserve. Let us all take an ecosystem based approach, avoid the trap of real estate ambitions and embrace the entire area of the estuary as significant for Western Australians. Please.

We reiterate our invitation to visit Guilderton and urge you to rethink your government’s stand on the development of the south side of Moore River.

Yours sincerely,



Linda Johnson (Acting Convenor FOMRE)

PS: It may be of interest that in 1996 the then Chairman of the EPA said about the decision (the rezoning from rural to urban) –

“Looking back at the records it was not formally assessed, on the grounds that the area was not of environmental significance. But I have to say that looking back and hearing all this additional information; with the wisdom of hindsight one might have taken a different view. If I had all this information now I probably would have gone the other way.” C Amalfi West Australian 5 February 1996

CC: Mr Brian Ellis MLC
Ms Giz Watson MLC
MS Lisa Baker MLA
Mr Chris Tallentire MLA
Dr Sally Talbot MLC