

Background to the Legislative Council Petition No 34 –Geraldton Foreshore-Proposed Redevelopment

Historically, the redevelopment of the Geraldton Foreshore was overseen by FRAC which was chaired by Shane Hill former MLA for Geraldton . FRAC's role was to facilitate the development of the Geraldton Foreshore and ensure it was along agreed lines and to ensure Public Input into the proposal. It also controlled the allocation of money etc.

During this time it made a number of changes and shaped the future development. Widespread public information dissemination was part of this .

The new Liberal Government decided not to continue with FRAC, as it was advised by the other parties that it was largely finished and consequently the local member Ian Blayney handed over the stewardship of the FRAC group to the MWDC.

The Council at about this time, decided to change the Commercial Development aspect quite radically from small discreet kiosk style developments of typically less than 100m2 to much larger 1000m2 commercial developments.

At no stage did it make this common knowledge and even today if you look at the maps of the development on its website you will see no mention of Dome on the site map . Check the document off the COGG website www.cgg.wa.gov.au and download the most recent Project Update no 7 Jan 2009- which I have included. You have to look at the fine print on the other side of the brochure in the section called Future Works Stage 8 (proposed 2009/2010) to see any mention of Dome.

By any measure, this change from small kiosk style developments to 1000m2 developments was a major change that should have caused the Council to consult with the ratepayers in a meaningful way to garner support for the development. This never happened. Along the way no doubt have conformed to the Local Government Act, but in process only, not intent.

For instance there has never been any signage at the proposed site indicating a proposed development. Conversely in the case of any private developer almost without exception there are signs indicating a proposed development and on occasions in recent times where signage has been deemed to be inappropriately placed, the developer has been forced to go back and re-do the advertising phase with the signage in a more obvious place by the COGG.

The COGG Council advertising of the changed proposal was held over the Xmas new Year period therefore seriously negating any response.

The COGG council called a Public Meeting in January 2009 and invited the public to the Chamber to discuss the proposal. The opening statement by the CEO was to the effect

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that he had heard rumours of backhanders being paid to him wrt Dome and if he heard any names he would be taking legal action. This pretty much set the tone for the meeting. The Council, essentially put the proposal forward as a done deal. There was considerable opposition to the proposal at the meeting. There would appear to have been no intent by the Council to measure support for the proposal they were simply going through the motions.

This “arrogance” was reinforced a short while later when we called a Special Electors meeting to raise the issue with Council. A series of motions were raised which in essence requested the Council reconsider its Development proposal . At the next council meeting which followed the Special Electors meeting these motions were rejected out of hand with no discussion and under the privilege of no reply the Mayor pilloried us for wasting Councils time.

There is little doubt to those studying this that the COGG has got an agenda which is fixed, and it has no intention of deviating from this. It has not been inclusive at any stage in the process with ratepayers . I don’t doubt it has followed “due process” and conformed to the LGA, but has it fulfilled the “intent “ of the act-I think not.

The Council has also “aided and abetted” its agenda by deliberately trying to deceive the Ratepayers of Geraldton throughout this very short process .

I draw your attention to the FAQ which the Council has put out and which appear on its website. A number of these obfuscate the truth.

Q Is the building right on the beach itself?

A. The Dome cafe ,as proposed is set back substantially from the beach water and is located on Foreshore Drive itself rather than the beach. Etc

Now this is interesting as the lease abuts the pedestrian walkway that delineates the beach. It is the closest structure to the beach bar none.

Another goes as follows:

Q. Why didn’t the Dome Café appear on the Foreshore Redevelopment Plan?

A. The proposal for Dome has been a public process since the first time the original expressions of interest were sought. The foreshore project has featured multiple sites for Commercial purposes as part of the staging of the project.

This Question and Answer set is not that useful it dodges questions and generally obfuscates the truth.

To this date, Save Our Foreshore, have with small effort, obtained some 2200 signatures on 2 petitions against the proposal and has a secure poll (1 computer 1 vote only) which is showing 85% against the proposal. The Council on the other hand has no hard data suggesting it has Ratepayer support for the proposal and has never attempted to quantify support for the proposal.

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We believe it should not be able to hide behind the LGA and say it has followed due process. **It has failed to comply with the Intent of the act.**

We believe there is a significant opposition to the proposal and that the Council needs to hold a plebiscite to demonstrate it has support for the proposal.

Regards Gerry Gould Chairman Save Our Foreshore 6/7/09

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gerry Gould', written over the typed name in the previous block.

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