



5 April 2012

Dr Linley Lutton

Petition No 148 – Perth Waterfront Project

Att: Hon Brian Ellis, Chairman, Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Dear Sir

Further to your letter dated 8 March 2012 I hereby submit supporting comments with respect to the issues raised in Petition No 148. I confirm that I have not taken a complaint to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations.

Issue 1: Cutting Riverside Drive and Traffic Impacts

Traffic impacts associated with the cutting of Riverside Drive have not been fully studied and assessed. Any studies that do exist have not been released for proper scrutiny. Traffic predictions on the MRA website are not supported by full data associated with traffic volumes on the streets immediately surrounding the site.

The impacts of cutting Riverside Drive have a flow-on effect to surrounding suburbs such as South Perth, Victoria Park, Mt Lawley and Subiaco where traffic levels will increase as people attempt to find some alternative to the direct run currently provided by Riverside Drive.

The traffic impacts on the CBD not only result from cutting Riverside Drive. There is also a major cumulative impact associated with the additional cars being generated by the Waterfront project as well as the Northbridge Link and Riverside projects, all being development simultaneously.

The total additional office space resulting from these three developments, plus the area of office space being completed at present in the CBD will add 645,000m² of office space to the CBD. At 15m² per full-time employee this equates to an additional 43,000 people all needing transport. This will have a major impact on current traffic flows to and from the city.

Issue 2: Destruction of heritage-listed Esplanade Reserve

The Esplanade Reserve has a permanent entry on the Register of Heritage Places in Western Australia. The site is the entire area bounded by The Esplanade, Barrack Street, Riverside Drive and William Street.

This place has considerable historic value as part of major reclamation work commenced in the 1880s along the Swan River foreshore to create a network of public open spaces and river amenities aimed at integrating the city environment with the river. It also has very high historic value as the site of the Perth city Anzac Day parade and service since 1916 and very high historic value as the site of the proclamation of self-government for the State in 1890.

The Reserve also is recognised in heritage terms for providing a contrasting setting for the backdrop of the city environment and is very highly valued for continuing social and cultural associations, as a venue for sporting activities, special events, performance and memorial services, as well as for its function as a public forum.

Furthermore it is recognised for its significant contribution to the Perth community's sense of place, as it links the river with the city centre.

It can be seen from the above that the site itself carries heritage significance, not simply buildings on the site. It is a major failure of due process for the people of Perth not to have had a properly organised opportunity to understand that the entire Esplanade Reserve will be consumed for private development.

Issue 3: Impact on Business and tourism

Improvement Plan No 35, Perth Waterfront, section 14 requires the project to be a highly recognised WA tourist destination and provide a range of local and international tourist opportunities through the creation of gathering spaces and place activation.

The Minister for Planning has stated that the project will attract 9million people per year. Tourism data indicates that around 6million tourists visit WA annually. His predictions seem to be well beyond the bounds of possibility.

There is little to attract tourists to an enclave of offices and apartment buildings and the MRA has now decided not to develop the Indigenous Cultural Centre.

Issue 4: Impact on Swan River

In 2004 an environmental study was commissioned by the City of Perth to determine the environmental impacts associated with developing foreshore land between Barrack Street and the Kwinana Freeway. The report prepared by Maunsell, now AECOM, concluded that any foreshore proposal by the City of Perth should avoid the use of inlets due to the potential problems with siltation and flushing.

A later report carried out for the WAPC in 2011 by Asia Pacific Applied Science Associates suggests that flushing of the proposed inlet is within acceptable parameters. The issue of regular siltation is not clear in the report. Given that the local ferry operators have major ongoing problems with water siltation around their jetties it would be prudent to determine the regularity of dredging work required to keep the proposed inlet operational.

If this project were being carried out by private developers, protection of the environment particularly due to creation of an inlet would require the proponent to write a full Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which would then be submitted to the government for approval. This process usually takes some time because private developers tend to pressure their consultant's to write reports which are biased in their favour. In this case the government is the developer and a third party review should be undertaken.

Issue 5: Budget priorities and economics

The government has budgeted \$440 million to carry out the Waterfront Development. It is now becoming recognised that several major road upgrades will be required to offset the impact of cutting Riverside Drive. These works will have to include changes to roads in the Perth CBD, and along Graham Farmer Freeway, Thomas Street and Mitchell Freeway. The costs of developing the Waterfront project should include a comprehensive budget for the project including associated necessary infrastructure works.

Government information on income from the Waterfront Development states that income from land sales will be \$170 million. The land area for the ten major development sites is 34,600m². At \$170million this equates to \$4,913 per square metre which is significantly less than waterfront land is worth in the CBD.

I trust the above assist the Committee in its preliminary investigations.

Yours sincerely



Dr Linley Lutton