



Lise Summers, PhD

Hon. Brian Ellis MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council Western Australia

Dear sir,

Re Petition 148 – Perth Waterfront Development

Thank you for your invitation to add a submission to the already substantial documentation that you have in support of the over 16,000 people that are now represented by the signatures on the petition before you. In providing this submission, I wish to address the implications of the current development on heritage legislation and protection in this state, and to provide you with some background on the strong sense of loss, frustration, even betrayal, that these signatures document.

I have over thirty years experience in the area of cultural heritage management, working as an archivist, local studies librarian, and as an historian preparing the documentary evidence for heritage assessments. I have a PhD, examining the history of the development of designed public open space in the City of Perth, including the Esplanade, and I am currently President of the History Council of Western Australia. As an urban historian, with an interest in parks and gardens, I hear two things constantly:

Perth has no history

Perth has no central park.

In fact, it has both. And rather than taking the opportunity to showcase this, the proposed Waterfront Development will obliterate the Esplanade reserve, which is permanently registered on the State Heritage register. It has provided active open space for the city for 130 years. Rather than incorporating this heritage into the site, the development will now ensure that no trace is left, other than on signage.

I, like many others, had previously responded to the 2008 consultation process. I attended two public meetings, along with colleagues, and at the first, noted that the area of the Esplanade was incorrectly identified, and some of the historic detail was incorrect. These errors, though noted at the first meeting, appeared at the second. Public consultation included a website, calling for responses, and a number of people made written submissions. Sadly, no report from the Waterfront Taskforce appears to survive, providing the details of the consultative process. The National Trust of WA nominated the Esplanade to the Australian Register of sites at risk that year.

When the 2011 plan appeared, we were bemused that the consultation process had resulted in something which was so radically at odds with the premise of the first plan (the 2011 proposal being substantially different from the previous design, incorporating the whole of the Esplanade, and removing Riverside Drive as a continuous road) other than

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through the maximisation of commercial opportunity and the significantly bulkier high rise development.

With respect to the 2011 plan, as the WA Planning Commission itself noted, of the 56 submissions on the first Metropolitan Region Scheme amendment, 46 submitters either expressed concern or objected to the proposal, which was presented as the MRS amendment and the design. Looking more closely at the submissions - 26 commented on the amendment only, while 40 took the opportunity to comment on the design, the WA Planning Commission providing that opportunity in recognition of the fact that no other consultation process had been made available for the plan. Of those 40, only two supported the design – the Accommodation Association of Australia, and architect Ian Molyneux, who proposed a far more extensive development, taking in the Parliamentary precinct. Curiously, the Heritage Council opted to make a 'no objection' comment on the amendment and made no comment on the plan at all. By way of contrast, the Swan River Trust, Department of Sport, Department of Transport and a number of other government bodies made substantial comment, expressing concern or providing substantial provisos on the project. 29 comments reflected concerns about the removal of Riverside Drive, and the implications for public transport. 23 comments about the loss of both the tangible and intangible heritage elements of the Esplanade and associated sites, were 'noted'. The retention of the trees and of the kiosk was recommended by, amongst others, the City of Perth, Committee for Perth and the History Council.

In November 2011, the City of Perth staff, responding to a Development Application from the WA Planning Commission, through the Central Perth Planning Committee, again identified that the retention of the kiosk was a preferred option, along with the retention of a major fig tree. The planning staff of the City could see no reason why these elements could not be retained. Examination of the drainage plan on the MRA site supports this recommendation, as the plan on page 68 shows the old drain passing near but not under the canopy of the tree, and the new drain being constructed upstream of the tree, on the William St border. Why retention of the kiosk and the tree were not deemed prudent and feasible has not been fully explained (see Appendix 1).

A second round of submissions closed on 5th June, 2012. The destruction of the tree and demolition of the kiosk began a week later. It seems unlikely that any of the recommendations made in the submissions for those consultations will be anything other than 'noted', and it will not halt the demolitions. That the demolitions commenced in the week that the International Committee on Monuments and Sites celebrated 40 years of the protection of world heritage seems remarkably ironic.

So that due process is seen to be followed, and the consultation is, in fact, truly consultative, the work on the Esplanade should be put on hold until the results of this second round of submissions has been completed and reviewed by an independent body.

The Heritage Minister and the Planning Minister have advised that the Esplanade will continue to be represented on the State Heritage Register, but registration is just the beginning of the process. Once identified, a site that is registered is supposed to be protected and conserved. As Professor Peter Spearitt identified in his essay on the recent Australian Heritage review:

Leading heritage advocates, most notably James Semple Kerr, developed the notion of conservation management plans, which when combined with the regularly reviewed Burra Charter, gave consultants a sound basis for preparing such plans. Most major heritage sites in Australia now have such plans, which also address issues of interpretation and public

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access. These plans all analyse the 'curtilage' of a site – its landscape setting, whether built or natural – and whether proposed new developments will compromise the curtilage as to distract from the heritage importance of the site.

No such plan has been published for the Esplanade. We know that one has been developed, albeit with some flaws and errors, repeating some of those of 2008, and introducing new ones, because of the November 2011 City of Perth report. A heritage interpretation strategy, finalised in April this year, has just been made available on the MRA site. It was not available during the recent consultation period and, like the conservation plan discussed by the City of Perth, contains a number of significant errors about the construction and development of the Esplanade.

Most recently, a small archaeological investigation was undertaken on the Esplanade. It took place during Archaeology Week, and could have provided an ideal opportunity to promote the project and invite the community to participate. Instead, the site remains hidden behind the large black fence and attempts to engage in discussion or debate about the development are derided as being either too late or irrelevant.

Rather than identifying heritage in order to protect or conserve it, the present development appears to identify heritage elements so they can remove them, including the intangible heritage elements of the aesthetic value of the Esplanade as a frame for the city. Even the mantra, 'The river. The City. Together again', is designed to over-write the 130 years of the Esplanade as the meeting place and interface of the city.

Should the development continue as planned, heritage registration and a suitable scattering of signs will, apparently, be all that is required, and the Heritage Council can become a large planning library of things that once were. Prudent and feasible alternatives, including the 'do nothing' option, will be over-ridden by potential commercial returns, while demolition of sites, because the earlier construction represented a major change in the use of the area indicates a history of change, will be commonplace. The Esplanade development demonstrates how easily the protections, which should be in place, can be set aside.

Heritage preservation will always involve contestation – whether it is competing land uses, redevelopment proposals, or restoration after mining. Even Bryon Bay cannot hide the terrible devastation caused by sand mining there, whereas on the Gold Coast the evidence is hidden under apartments, shopping centres and casinos. But the Gold Coast is now seeking its past in an impressive local history collection at the Southport Library and attempting to create a museum of coastal development. Contestation may also be generational. Members of National Parks and National Trust organisations tend to be older, often retired, and hark back to less complex, more predictable environments. The reason that so many of these organizations take their public and educational roles so seriously is that they are concerned to instill in coming generations an appreciation of our landscapes and the sense of place that goes with them. (Peter Spearitt)

Over the past six months I have privileged to meet with many of those who have attended the City Gatekeepers rallies and events. I have been addressed by friends, colleagues and random acquaintances, who all ask just one question, "How can they let this happen?" I have seen people in tears at the loss of the trees, and at the sense of frustration that they experience. These people are suffering from grief and are in mourning, yet there has been no effort to communicate with or consult with this community, to 'bring it on board' as part of the development. I append a summary of comments that have been sent to me via an online petition, to illustrate this point (Appendix 2)

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I ask that the Committee consider this submission as expeditiously as possible. To summarise:

As identified in the petition, the Waterfront plan does not recognise the cultural and heritage values of the Esplanade;
Rather than incorporating this heritage into the site, the development will now ensure that no trace is left, other than on signage;
Work on the Esplanade should be put on hold until the results of this second round of submissions has been completed and reviewed by an independent body; and,
Consideration should be given to rebuilding the kiosk in situ as part of any development.

Lise Summers

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Appendix 1 – Prudent and feasible alternatives



(Newcastle St, Northbridge. Unattributed photo, downloaded from Twitter)

The Minister for Planning, through the Central Perth Planning Committee, has determined that there are no prudent and feasible alternatives to deconstruction and storage of the Esplanade kiosk. This cottage, which does not appear to be on the Heritage Register, has been required to be retained as part of a local government authority's development approval process. It provides an example of the measures against which the claim of prudent and feasible alternatives might be tested.

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Appendix 2

Petition comments

City	Comment
North Perth Cottesloe MT LAWLEY	This is about future generations enjoying the legacy that previous generations created for them. The Perth Waterfront, from Perth's strong suite is the outdoors, not the indoors. Let's hope we wake up to the unique opportunities we have before we the negative impact on the river and the cultural heritage of the city which has lost so much. What is wrong with an open The government plans to sell off the Esplanade, an A class reserve owned by the people, to developers to fund the Waterfront Project. The present plan shows 23 to 36 storey buildings around the pond (aka inlet) that will be created on the Esplanade. The area will be overshadowed and will trap the prevailing SW winds - for much of the year it will be cold and windy place surrounded by high rise towers.
North Fremantle	The present plan ignores the cultural heritage values of the place. It's the site of the proclamation of self government in 1890 — the birthplace of Western Australia — as well as a gathering place for many thousands of Perth people for celebration (Australia Day Skyworks, CHOGM Barbeque, America's Cup win) and protest (rallying point in the Great Once developed, this precinct will be changed forever. There is no guarantee that the high rise, commercial and corporate orientated result will improve the amenity and protect the heritage of our city and river. We have witnessed too many
Bassendean	Having seen the development plans, I consider them totally inappropriate. The design appears to interfere with the use of
Bayswater	the Esplanade and the waterfront by ordinary Perth citizens, in favour of the very wealthy who can afford to keep boats in a I believe that the current design will deliver a stagnant, overshadowed pond rather than a grand vision linking the city to the river. A development along the river with a more human scale, say up to a max of 3 to 5 storeys would be far more
West Perth	The current plans, if they go ahead, make me despair for the lost opportunity to create an outstanding waterfront development that truly represents what we want - a place that is accessible, builds upon the existing history and heritage of the location, is environmentally appropriate, and has the potential for future development and change as needed. Current
Toodyay	I am concerned about; the selling off of an A class reserve for new high rise buildings ruining the heritage open space, the disruption to the river flow which could end up a smelly backwater, the lack of feeling for the heritage of the area, the disruption to the traffic which will become a nightmare and the aesthetics of the type of building which may be built. Recent
Cottesloe, East Perth	Poorly thought out, totally inappropriate for the area, makes a mockery of our "Heritage" listing and will cause traffic gridlock
Duncraig	I think the proposed development is hideous, it will ruin the area forever. Surely there should have been more debate on the
Mt Helena	The Native Title Holders of the Swan River have not been fully and properly consulted - all of their objections have been
Subiaco	There is no reason why low-rise development should not still make money for developers. Greed is driving this plan. Also,
North Coogee WA	High-rise excessive; engineering and river flushing problems highly probable and expensive; loss of city open space.
Como	A hideous white elephant! Why not organic performance/ meeting spaces, low-level, tasteful, buildings, public art, public
SWANBOURNE	Present Plan ruins one of Perth's main assets-the beautiful open aspect of Swan River
Karrinyup	Destroys the natural beauty of the area. Low key development for public use is preferable. There are huge negative traffic
Perth	This proposal represents a significant loss of long-established public access to the river and its front. It is a retrograde
Mount Claremont	Serious questions relating to traffic flow and the health of the Swan River appear to have been glossed over in the plans for
North Melbourne	Do seek to destroy the Esplanade, one of the key features of Perth's beauty in this way is an act of urban vandalism that will

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North Perth Attadale Jamison Centre Nedlands	<p>It is an overscaled, retrograde design, is privatising public space, is climatically inappropriate and is destroying a significant Our waterfront precinct is SO precious, let's do any development very carefully.</p> <p>Perth needs public land close to the city centre and very high buildings need to be kept away from the river edge.</p> <p>This plan is a disaster. It must be stopped.</p>
Toodyay	<p>This plan is disregarding Western Australia's heritage. We have already lost so much to development in what was once a beautiful city. To use taxpayers money to cater for the privileged (as the ordinary person off the street will not be able to</p> <p>Following on from Professor Jenny Gregory's valid comments I would add that Perth is indeed unique for its lack of waterside development. It is an idyllic setting unlike Melbourne, Sydney or the London waterside area; all of which are over-developed, ugly, grey and repel people. The WA plan is an example of Government chasing the 'development dollar' at the expense of community, social and cultural development.</p>
Parkerville	<p>Furthermore, the view from the Causeway and Riverside Drive up to King's Park (one of Perth's greatest assets) and across the Narrows will be lost forever and that will be tragic. It makes the Perth Government look like 'try-hards', attempting to copy other large cities on the basis of a 'Sleepy Hollow' tag which will not be solved by further building development, but by cultural development - and there is a great deal of that going on now as Perth becomes renowned for its musical, literary,</p> <p>The planned 're-development' of the Perth city waterfront is appalling—bad design and an insensitive and greedy appropriation of public land and amenity in the interests of developers, their wealthy clients and the Perth City Council.</p>
North Perth Mandurah Craigie	<p>There is already a long history here of poor development (just look at the truly awful Convention Centre), and the</p> <p>It is a waste of money</p>
Perth Bassendean Toodyay	<p>With the that terrible convention centre looking like a concrete air raid bunker, the loss of another opportunity to do I believe the openness and vistas of the Swan River will be spoilt. Opportunities for people to enjoy the river through walking, cycling and fishing will be lost in favour of high rise and coffee strips. Consideration of the importance of the river</p> <p>The plans pay no attention to history, culture or even common amenity let alone the science on the deleterious impact on</p>
Perth PERTH	<p>The current Perth Waterfront is open, accessible and beautiful. Small scale beautification is OK. Tall buildings on the</p> <p>Because I think the river is of greaster significance to the people than increasing waterfront development that appears</p> <p>I love the openness of the river, the access and the overall vista. The level of change proposed is going to seriously</p> <p>Scale of the buildings is too large as blocks off rest of the City and appears to form a "wall". It is not integrated with the rest of the City in any way as far as I can see. Height is being confused with vibrancy and adding interest to the area to draw visitors. Buildings of such height are alienating not welcoming. Faces south and therefore will block northern winter sun making it cold and will be very windy summer and winter due to orientation. Building heights should be staggered back from the proposed location so as not to block off rest of City from views and to create a feeling of this being part of and not separate from the rest of the City. Huge traffic problems will result. This development is not innovative in any way. It just follows the model in other cities. What is unique to Perth it its "front lawn". This huge expanse of grass cools the City and</p>
Perth Perth	<p>We need to plant more beautiful deciduous trees now forget doing everything else. Perth needs more trees for future</p>

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The proposed plan runs counter to the look and spirit of Perth — its wide skies and its unique expanses of the Swan River estuary. The plan, as set out, would destroy this spirit; and remove easy access to the city foreshore by any and everyone who wishes to use and enjoy it.

For those who like to be hemmed in, snug, vogueish — there's the Terrace, Northbridge, any number of other places.

Perth

I don't agree with any high rise development. What is wrong with having a lovely piazza area with markets on the weekend.

Bayswater

The Tourists need something to do in their leisure time and Perth does not have any decent markets any more. Although

Parkerville

The river is our best asset. We don't want to obscure it with buildings. Flooding occurs on Riverside Drive every year.

Dalkeith

Fundamentally because people were not consulted at the pre-design stage but instead were presented by both governments

Toodyay WA

The design seems to aim at being 'futuristic' but the preponderance of high rise buildings should make one compare it with

The plan is totally inappropriate and unnecessary. The Esplanade belongs to the ordinary people of Perth and should remain so. The Barnett government plans I'm sure to sell it off cheaply to developers who will create a playground for the wealthy, making it a place for them to house their boats and reside in luxury waterfront apartments.

scarborough

Please scrap the whole idea.

Muenster

As a German, but with an Australian partner who has already spent considerable time in Perth, is going to live there permanently and loves the place, especially the very unique location the heritage listed Esplanade is, I agree that the Waterfront Redevelopment Plans in their current form are flawed and absolutely harmful to the cityscape as well as to the

Applecross

The effects on traffic in the city will be disastrous. In addition, the sale of public space to private developers smacks of

Victoria Park

This is a completely inappropriate development for the Swan River foreshore.

I oppose the selling off of public lands for private profit.

Perth

I wish to see the Swan River Foreshore used as an ecological corridor - extend Kings Park all along both sides of the River to the Scarp!

Inglewood WA

If we are going to 'take' from the past, we need to be mindful of what we are 'giving' to the future. The new Convention Centre is unbelievably drab and the Perth Arena is an eyesore. And now the proposed high rise buildings along the foreshore that are so out of character with the rest of the city. Where's the vision? This beautiful open space is intrinsic to

bullcreek

I just find the waterfront development totally inappropriate for Perth. Once again profit for the few and not caring about the

Queens Park

I'm opposed to further turning public space into a commodity for sale to the highest bidder. What next? Will the people who are only here to profit from our natural resources propose the commodification and sale of King's Park? Face it folks,

Crawley

The Perth Waterfront is an opportunity for an elegant solution to bring the city and the river together - if we mess it up we

Perth

This land isn't theirs. They have no right to carve it up and exploit and degrade it. Human Rights before rotten capitalist

Mt Barker

I am signing because the government keeps selling of Australian land to off shore investors without the consultation and

karrinyup

surely we can find something more imaginative for this important site than just more high rise development for offices and

EAST VIC PARK

Tall buildings, wind tunnels, poor collaboration with the people of Perth result in politically driven ideals which do not reflect

a well thought out and considered plan for Perth. Low rise, eco-friendly planning of the area for the future is required, with

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Perth

One only has to look at the developmental destruction of Subiaco in recent years and conduct a study on how this has why would anyone spend so much money to have something look so cheap and tacky? Perth isn't Queensland or Dubai!

Perth

Just exactly why do we need this anyway. Start funding the Arts properly if there is money to spare!!

Perth is one of the most beautiful cities in Australia. The current development has not been thought through very well. Yes, I agree that we could do a lot more with the waterfront but it should be for the people of Perth and should fit in with what is already there. My husband and I wrote the book on Main Roads in Western Australia and the current plan appears to have forgotten about infrastructure

and keeping the beauty of Perth one for residents and tourists. I am not against tall buildings but they need to be located elsewhere

Ballarat Vic 3350

where they are needed, We had to sell up prior to the mining boom and half the buildings in the city were empty. Now we

Warner, Mark

From: Council
Sent: Friday, 6 July 2012 2:36 PM
To: Warner, Mark; Gillingham, Amanda
Subject: FW: Attention Mark Warner: Petition 148 - submission from Lise Summers
Attachments: Parliament.doc; Petition 148 - appendix 2.xls

Rachel Wells | Parliamentary Officer | Legislative Council | Parliament House, Perth, Western Australia 6000
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From: Lise Summers [mailto:lise.summers@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, 5 July 2012 6:04 PM
To: Council
Subject: Attention Mark Warner: Petition 148 - submission from Lise Summers

Dear Mr Warner

attach an electronic version of my submission on the matter of Petition 148 - Perth Waterfront, for consideration by the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

Lise Summers, PhD
212 Charles St
North Perth 6006