



**Minister for Local Government; Heritage;
Citizenship and Multicultural Interests**

Your ref: Petition 148
Our ref: 38-12271

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

Dear Mr Ellis,

Petition No. 148 – Perth Waterfront Project

I refer to your letter of 13 April 2012 requesting my comments on the terms of the petition and points raised from the principal petitioners which are within my portfolio.

In relation to my Heritage portfolio, I note the points raised in the petitions are:

- Document No 4628 - *the plan destroys the heritage listed and culturally important Esplanade Reserve, much of which will be sold off.*
- Document No 4629 – *the plan does not recognise the cultural heritage values of the important Esplanade Reserve, much of which will be sold off.*

The cultural heritage significance of the *Esplanade Reserve* has been recognised by its entry the State Register of Heritage Places under the *Heritage of Western Act 1990* (the Heritage Act) in 2002. The Register Entry document notes that the place has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

- the 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;
- the place has very high historic value as the site of the Perth city Anzac Day parade and service since 1916, and the nearby Sir Talbot Hobbs Memorial has been the saluting base for these services since 1940;
- the place has very high historic value as the site of the proclamation of self-government for the State in 1890, and is the site of the Allan Green Conservatory which commemorates the State's 150th anniversary of foundation;
- the Perth Exhibition was held at *Esplanade Reserve* in 1881;

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- the place is important historically as a traditional rallying point for public protest marches;
- the place provides a contrasting setting for the backdrop of the city environment and with the adjacent open spaces, stretching between the Narrows Interchange and the Causeway, collectively defines the southern edge of the city;
- the place 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;
- the place is a broad expanse of public open space, enclosed by some mature plantings which frame the view of the place. The Moreton Bay figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) on Barrack and William streets are of particular importance as they represent early avenue plantings;
- by virtue of the names of various structures located within the place and nearby, it is associated with Alf Curlewis, Allan Green, Sir J.J. Talbot Hobbs, and Florence Hummerston;
- the place contributes significantly to the Perth community's sense of place, as it links the river with the city centre; and,
- the aesthetically pleasing kiosk has been situated on the site since 1928, and is of significance to various sections of the community.

The Heritage Council of Western Australia (the Heritage Council) is responsible for establishing and maintaining the State Register of Heritage Places. It also provides statutory advice to decision-making authorities on development proposals that may affect the cultural heritage significance of a registered place.

Recognising this statutory role, the Department of Planning has actively engaged with the Heritage Council throughout the development of the plans for the Perth Waterfront Project. This engagement has included:

- The Heritage Council Chair representing the Heritage Council on the Western Australian Planning Commission's Central Perth Planning Committee.
- The State Heritage Office representing the Heritage Council on the Department of Planning's Perth Waterfront Project Work Group.
- Seeking the Heritage Council's advice on:
 - the development of a Heritage Management Strategy for the Perth Waterfront.
 - the proposed landscape design and interpretation elements to be included in the public realm.

Consistent with the requirements of Section 11 of the Heritage Act, the Department of Planning has also sought the Heritage Council's statutory advice through the formal submission of development proposals on behalf of the decision-making authority, which in this case is the Western Australian Planning Commission.