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29 August, 2019

To The Hon Mark McGowan MLA
Premier, Minister for State Development
5th Floor Dumas House
5 Havelock St
West Perth 6005

Dear Mr McGowan,

Appeal for WA Government to Purchase Point Grey Development.

I am writing to you concerning the approval and future development of Point Grey Marina and land based development in the (Ramsar Listed) Peel-Harvey Estuary and the Shire of Murray.

I believe you and your ministers for planning and the environment have no doubt been presented the scientific case from several sources as to why this development should not proceed, my contacting you is to present in layman's terms why I support this opinion and suggest an option to create a positive result from a potential environmental and financial albatross for the people of WA.

History shows that in WA and throughout other parts of Australia since white settlement, certain well intentioned decisions and approvals have been made / given. This was done with the best of intentions but have resulted in irreversible environmental damage and an ongoing financial burden on the WA and Australian taxpayer. Apart from the obvious disastrous fox and rabbit introduction some other examples of these are: - stocking rates on pastoral leases, the camel tax in South Australia, the introduction of the cane toad into QLD and the introduction of various plant species intentioned as stock pasture. In more recent times the following projects have failed to meet initial expectations after completion. South Yunderup Canals, Port Geographe Busselton, Beadon Creek Onslow, Ettalong Channel NSW, Great Barrier Reef- Gladstone and Abbot Point QLD, Port Hinchinbrook QLD, Toondah Harbour QLD.

The Port Geographe Development at Busselton is a classic example where approval for a development was granted based on computer modelling that has been found to be unreliable when dealing with nature. You would be aware that the WA taxpayer has so far paid out in excess of \$20 million to realign the breakwater and now has to incur ongoing costs of annual dredging maintenance of the entry channel to the marina and canal estate. These costs are in addition to what the City of Busselton ratepayers have had to pay as a result of developers not being able to meet their responsibilities specified in the initial application and approvals process. Given the history of Limited Liability Companies particularly those not based in Australia meeting their responsibilities this should ring warning bells re Point Grey.

The Point Grey proposal for the channel and land based marina is based on similar computer modelling as that used for Port Geographe and as such should have been treated as unreliable and therefore should never have been approved by the then Barnett Government. Given that the project has been approved and that the proponent will appeal the Shire of Murrays blocking of the commencement of the earthworks it would make sense to me that the WA government consider a land swap or purchasing the site from the proponent and convert to a world class nature based tourism site providing opportunities for employment and protecting the asset.

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The Peel-Harvey Estuary is of more value to the people of WA, Australia and the citizens of the world as a healthy vibrant body of water. The Peel region has experienced a 2% increase in tourism while other regions in WA have decreased. WA tourism has been marketing itself to the world as a destination where you can eat quality fresh produce. Seafood, in particular the Blue Manna Crab is very much part of the tourism offer. Local companies are experiencing strong numbers of Asian visitors who enjoy the fresh catch, cook and eat tours on offer in Mandurah. As a result of this growth one local company has been able to provide permanent employment for a number of staff that were once all casual employees.

It is the opinion of the Mandurah Licensed Fisherman's Association that the quantity of crabs, fish and other marine life is less on the Eastern side of the Peel-Harvey Estuary than on the Western side as a direct result of the side casting of dredge spoil from the maintenance of the South Yunderup canals channel and the Murray/Serpentine Rivers mouths back into the estuary. During the recent maintenance dredging of the Yunderup Canal's channel the mobilisation of MBOs (monosulphidic black ooze) and the uncontrollable plume of sediments resulted in all the fish and crabs exiting the areas affected. The remaining spoil banks have been rendered useless as fishing grounds. The scope of management dredging for this channel is minor compared to that which will be required for the proposed Dawesville Point Grey access channel which is located through the most important grounds for breeding female crabs and fish transit in the whole of the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

In summary there are many and varied potential tourism/recreation opportunities that could be considered for the site among these could be world class nature based experiences targeted at Japanese and Chinese visitors, including indigenous tourism and experiences (as per local Elders request as part of the heritage survey) and as mentioned the seafood experience.

Given the cost to the proponent and the taxpayer to go through the appeals and counter appeals process, the potential and undoubted future cost to the environment and the WA taxpayer for the channel maintenance the property could be swapped or purchased at a fair price to allow the proponent to recover their cost and exit with integrity.

I do hope you and the WA Government will take the time to consider this proposal

Yours Sincerely,



Colin Elton

Founding Chairman of Friends of Rivers, Peel

Community Member Peel Inlet Advisory Committee