

SCARBOROUGH BEACH REDEVELOPMENT

Statement by Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

MS A.J. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure) [9.12 am]: Proposals for the redevelopment of the Scarborough Beach precinct have been the subject of considerable controversy. The City of Stirling has proposed a town planning scheme amendment to permit redevelopment. Ultimately, I will need to make the final decision on the amendment.

Although the views of experts and lobby groups had been well aired, it was not clear what the views and values of the broader community were. Since the amendments proposed will significantly change a beach precinct that is recognised as being of regional importance, we wanted to make sure we had listened to the broader community as well as those who live locally. To do this, we undertook a deliberative survey, which uses innovative consultation methodology. The deliberative survey was conducted in two parts. The first was the community survey. The major stakeholder groups approved the questionnaire as being fair and comprehensive. Four hundred and fifty three people, recruited at random from three concentric bands around the Scarborough Beach precinct, completed the survey. The second part was a deliberative survey forum. One hundred and one people who completed the survey also attended this full-day deliberative workshop to listen to all points of view, discuss the issues and, finally, complete the questionnaire a second time. The sample was representative of the main sample, and allowed any major changes in opinions after the workshop to be identified.

Colmar Brunton, an independent consultancy company, has now completed its analysis of both surveys. There was very strong community support for the need to improve the Scarborough Beach precinct. This included the need for higher density living options that may involve substantial development within the precinct. However, at the same time, it was clear that change should not compromise the natural coastal environment. Participation in the forum resulted in increased support for attracting more tourists and locating more residents in the precinct. Although many respondents preferred to keep the skyline as it is, most were prepared to support the development of some four to eight-storey buildings. There was very little support for developments of nine storeys or more. Participation in the forum resulted in decreased support for buildings above eight storeys. There was a very strong view that, in the area, shorter, wider buildings were preferable to taller, slimmer buildings - this fits in with a strong view that the pulse of the area should be casual and relaxed.

It is obvious that we will not see the necessary redevelopment of Scarborough Beach without some upzoning. However, I judge the balance of community opinion to be opposition to high rise in this area. Therefore, I am prepared to support the development of four to eight-storey buildings, provided the development is limited and judiciously placed and design guidelines assure a quality streetscape. Hence, the amendments proposed by the City of Stirling will need to be considerably altered to incorporate buildings of four to eight storeys rather than the 16 storeys planned. I thank all those who have participated in this important exercise.