

POINT GREY MARINA — DEVELOPMENT

Statement

HON DIANE EVERS (South West) [5.59 pm]: The Point Grey marina development is another development that really should not go ahead, but we will see what we can do about trying to stop it. According to the landowners, Tian An Australia, it is called the jewel in the crown of the Peel region. This is 275 hectares on the peninsula directly across from Dawesville Cut. The people who live near there are very concerned about what will happen if this goes ahead. We are talking about a block of land of \$40 million value. The developers are expecting to put 3 000 homes on there and have 300 berths at the marina. They say that it is all privately funded and will be built for those people.

To get to this new marina, the developers will have to dig a channel of 2.5 kilometres across the Peel–Harvey water body and it will go across some crown land that has not yet been agreed to. At this point, there is no plan for how the developers will manage or dig the channel and what they will do with the soil from there. It is potentially acid sulphate soil and should not be put out on the land anyway. There is no plan for how it will be maintained after this.

This project originally started more than 10 years ago. The first five-year plan had to have approvals from both the state and federal governments. The federal government said that the development could not be started until plans were approved for the channel. For some reason when the developer went to get the plan extended, because it did not do it in the first five years, a small change was made—just a minor one—that said, “That’s okay, you can start the development before you have plans for what you’re going to do, how you’re going to construct the channel, how you’re going to maintain it, who’s going to pay for it, and what will happen with the issues that arise in the environment because of it.” There are not too many options left. The case is going to the State Administrative Tribunal, with a chance for the developer to try to overturn the council’s decision to not allow it to clear some land. It was going to clear just a few hectares and then move the spoil to another place. My concern is whether that will be considered a substantial commencement, because if it is, that five-year limit to how long it can go before it can do this is over and the developer can do it for 50 years or so as long as the developer comes back to it. The problem is if that if it does that without first putting in place the plans for the channel, it can start selling off the blocks of land. What is to say that five or 10 years from now when they have sold off some of the land, maybe the company has gone broke and maybe the land will be sold on to someone else, the channel will still not be built, and all those people have bought expensive blocks of land expecting a marina? Who will then cover the cost of putting in that channel? Will it be the local government or the state government? It is an issue that should be addressed before the developer is allowed to continue with this. I do not know what the chances are of SAT not going along with that, but I will do what I can to stop it.

On the other hand, with the residential development, the plans are in place in the planning guidelines, but it was done 15 years ago—I am not sure of that figure. It is really not the thing that is done these days because a lot has changed in that time. The watertable is dropping, there is concern for the wetland—it is a Ramsar Convention-listed wetland—and Lake McLarty and Lake Mealup are nearby. Lake McLarty is already having difficulties with dropping water levels and acid sulphate soils that might be around the lake. We risk losing the birdlife, such as the wading shorebirds, especially if 3 000 houses are developed there, because members can imagine the amount of fertiliser that would be put on that land. The nitrogen would run right off that soil into the water body, which we are working hard to maintain and to continue to use for its environmental purposes and biodiversity and so many other values that we get from it. If nitrogen runs off into the marine environment, it is a limiting nutrient. All the other nutrients can go in there, but if the nitrogen level goes up, the risk of algal blooms increases. That is another really big issue that we need to address beforehand, rather than trying to cover the cost of this development 10, 20 or 30 years from now after it has caused environmental damage. It makes sense to address it beforehand and make sure that this does not go ahead, if that is likely to be a problem.

The development of 3 000 houses will require a water supply. The nearest Water Corporation line is possibly about 10 kilometres away, which suggests the developers may try to put in bores. If bores are put in in that peninsula, it will lower the watertable of those other lakes I mentioned and destroy the habitat there and all the benefits we get from them.

That is the issue of water in and now I will talk about water out—sewerage. Will sewerage be part of this development or will each home have its own septic tank that has to be cleaned out? The damage caused by septic tanks running over that close to the water body would be another problem.

How will the channel be built? We do not have the plans for it yet. Under the state agreement, the developers must have plans for the channel before the development can be constructed. That might just keep it to the point at which the blocks are separated and sold off. It is uncertain at this point whether this development can be stopped, but I think we should be aware of that and try to figure out what we can do to help. The developer wants to build

a channel that is 2.5 kilometres long and 50 metres wide from the cut across the peninsula. We have a crabbing industry down there. It is uncertain what would happen to the crabbing industry and whether the crabs would be able to get across the channel or whether we would end up with two distinct crab populations. Also, this inlet has a black ooze that naturally forms, to some degree, and it seems to move around on the bottom of the water body. With the channel cut through the middle of it, it is very possible that the black ooze will fill into that channel, potentially making another environmental mess for local governments to deal with. We can bet that if the local government is not able to afford it, it will come to the state and say, “You’ve agreed to this; what are we going to do about it?”

Due to the possible effects on the birdlife, on the environment, the water body, the financial situation of the local governments and the state government, and the fishing industry and the communities that rely on it around there, this is another of those developments that comes to the chamber from time to time that really should not be built. I hope many members are now aware of it and will help me out here, because it should not go ahead.