



MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN
BA LLB BJuris JP MLA

15 MAY 2007

Our Ref: 02-025040

Mr N Pratt
Clerk Assistant (House)
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Pratt

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN RELATION TO A PETITION INTO THE PROPOSED MARINA AT POINT PERON

I refer to your letter to the Premier dated 13 December 2006, requesting a response to Recommendations 3 and 4 of the above report. The Premier has asked me to respond.

Representatives from the Department of Defence and the Navy sit on the Cape Peron Tourist Precinct Project Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Mayor of the City of Rockingham. A number of meetings have also been held between the project team and Defence and Navy personnel. A close level of liaison has developed between the project team and the Commonwealth at officer level.

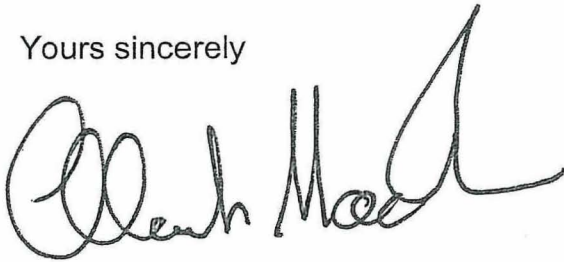
In addition, I am aware that the Mayor has met with the Minister for Defence. The Minister for Defence has been informed of the project and its proposal to realign the causeway at its connection to Cape Peron and extend the length of the existing trestle bridge section of the causeway from the current 300 metres to 600 metres.

The Commonwealth, both at staff and Ministerial level, has consistently indicated it does not have any plans, independent from those that form part of the marina proposal, to modify the Garden Island causeway structure.

The Commonwealth has also advised that there are potential benefits for it from the project's proposals. The Commonwealth has agreed to continue discussions aimed at ensuring these benefits are realised before it will agree to the causeway modifications being proposed.

In recognition of the importance of this matter, I have written to the Minister for Defence. A copy of my letter is attached.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alannah MacTiernan', with a stylized, flowing script.

ALANNAH MacTIERNAN MLA
MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE



COPY

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Hon Brendan Nelson MP
Minister for Defence
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

GARDEN ISLAND CAUSEWAY

The Commonwealth, Western Australian Government and Local Governments have jointly funded investigations into the feasibility of a marina-based tourist precinct in the Mangles Bay area of Cape Peron. The Cape Peron Tourist Precinct Project (the Project) has been managed by a Steering Committee under the auspices of the Premier's Rockingham Planning and Development Taskforce.

The outcome is a concept plan comprising an inland marina with capacity for over 500 public and private boat pens. Two key features of the concept plan are a proposed realignment of part of the southern section of the Garden Island Causeway to a new connection point with Cape Peron and a proposed increase in the length of the trestle bridge section of the causeway from its current 300 metres to 600 metres.

The Project investigations highlighted the ongoing issue of poor water quality and poor flushing of Mangles Bay. Mangles Bay is naturally sheltered but water exchange in the area has been further restricted by the construction of the Garden Island Causeway. Water quality monitoring shows that this area has levels of chlorophyll (a measure of algae in the water column indicating elevated nutrient levels) that frequently exceed the environmental quality guidelines for the area established by the State Environmental (Cockburn Sound) Policy.

Preliminary modelling of water flows in this area undertaken for the Project indicate that doubling the length of the southern causeway opening from 300 metres to 600 metres would be expected to improve the water quality in Mangles Bay and adjacent waters. The option of increasing the opening of the causeway also received wide community support during consultation for the project.

Another benefit of lengthening the southern causeway trestle bridge opening would be to decrease the flow rates through the opening thereby reducing scour of the seabed which has previously lead to the loss of seagrass.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has examined the feasibility and potential environmental acceptability of the project at a strategic level based on preliminary concept plans. The EPA advised that significant investigations would be required as part of a formal environmental impact assessment process if the project was to proceed.

In addition to the potential environmental benefits, benefits for the Department of Defence have been identified, these include:

- The opportunity to improve security at the checkpoint at the start of the causeway.
- Cost savings through the provision of a new section of causeway built to Defence specifications to replace an aging asset in need of maintenance.
- A new major access road through Cape Peron to the start of the causeway.
- Reduced traffic congestion problems because of the new road and the new checkpoint layout.
- The community perceive the doubling of the causeway opening from 300 metres to 600 metres as an environmental benefit for Cockburn Sound.

The Parliament of Western Australia's Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs has recently considered a petition regarding the Project and has recommended that the State Government liaise with the Commonwealth Government regarding its plans for the Garden Island Causeway to improve flushing between the southern end of Cockburn Sound and the adjoining ocean, regardless of whether or not any developments proceed. The Committee also recommended that possible funding arrangements and timing for any planned modifications to the causeway be discussed.

I would welcome the opportunity to further explore the Project proposals and other opportunities to achieve an improvement in water quality at the southern end of Cockburn Sound.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alannah MacTiernan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ALANNAH MacTIERNAN MLA
MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE