



*Working to conserve and
restore water quality and
wildlife habitat In the
Perth inner city catchments*

Chief Executive Officer
City of Perth
GPO Box C120
Perth WA 6839

13th October 2008.

Dear Mr Edwards,

SUBMISSION ON THE HERRISON ISLAND MASTERPLAN

I am writing to you on behalf of the Claise Brook Catchment Group with our comments on the Herrison Island Masterplan.

The Claise Brook Catchment Group is a community based environmental group working to improve water quality and habitat within Perth city area. Our group is particularly interested in seeing urban developments manage surface and groundwater more sensitively to achieve improved water quality of Swan River. We also consider that remediation of contaminated soil should be undertaken as part of any major redevelopment where former landuses or land modifications may have resulted in contamination or significant disturbance in natural soil distribution. In addition, we are concerned with protecting or enhancing the biodiversity within the City of Perth.

The catchment group has long viewed Herrison Island as a sanctuary for both fauna and humans from the built up environment of the inner city. Any plans to develop the island should be cognisant of the opportunities to enhance this function and balance initiatives to increase use, with measures to protect and further restore natural habitat areas and buffer them from urban influences.

Our members have discussed the Herrison Island Masterplan at our September meeting and although not in favour of much of the infrastructure planned for the island, the group considers that a sculpture park can be consistent with the environmental objectives for the island. For such a proposal, all sculpture pieces can be placed in a natural setting and there is no requirement for exotic vegetation and areas of permanently irrigated vegetation, such as grass, can be limited. The extension of the wetlands and incorporation of native vegetation is supported.

The following are specific comments on the Masterplan the group wishes to be considered:

- Protect all current flora and fauna on site and preserve as much indigenous vegetation as possible. Having soft (sedge) edges to as much of the perimeter of the island as possible – avoid hard walling;
- Protect Swan River waterways by preparing and implementing an Acid Sulphate Soil (ASS) management plan (including required detailed soil investigations prior to disturbance) during the works on site and contain silt and other material on the island;
- The inclusion of a Visitor centre and ferry terminal and associated reshaping of the foreshore is of too massive scale and conflicts with ‘sanctuary’ feel of the island. Limited passive recreation nodes are more appropriate. Commercial development at Point Fraser can accommodate cafes and food outlets as well as the ferry docking area. Pedestrians can access the island by crossing the proposed walk bridge or by car or foot using the existing causeway. A small community eco friendly centre on the northern side of the island near the existing car park, which blends into the island surroundings would be more appropriate;
- Preferably no coffee shops, restaurants or food outlets on the island (already commercial development at Point Fraser) – this prevents litter formation and vermin and gives visitors chance to learn to appreciate and respect nature. If one must be included then it should be of a small scale and placed on the northern side of the island near the existing carpark where the majority of activity already occurs and regular checks of the refuse are conducted;
- The plan mentions reduction in water usage on site yet the irrigated grass areas are extensive and furthermore not in line with the natural environment of the island – avoid irrigated lawn altogether or limit to a couple of small nodes as it requires a lot of water and fertiliser to maintain;
- Preserve southern part of the island as an exclusive biological reserve reflecting the riverine environment. This would provide for educational opportunities in conjunction with Pt Fraser wetland which is a stormwater wetland and also provide for a unique experience of the riverine environment in Perth away from hustle and bustle of commercial development areas – this is the most unique aspect of this place – it’s an island of peace and harmony – a spiritual place for Noongars. A place where one can re-connect with nature but also their inner self, and this should be promoted;
- The northern part of the island already has access to a carpark and may be better suited for a more ‘picnic friendly’ environment with structured garden beds exhibiting plants used for bush tucker for example. A Community Centre/Art gallery space could be built here, possibly associated with a community eco-friendly community centre – this space can be used for school excursions, indigenous guiding for every Noongar season for example, a room for community groups to gather, place for meetings and or activities such as meditation for example. (the centre could work in conjunction with the information booth at Pt Fraser to inform public of what activities are taking place on the island). Naturally all infrastructure is to incorporate

environmentally best practices available to manage water and energy use on site;

- Any sculptures on the island should blend with the island environment not vice versa: ie. avoid linear planting arrangement, sharp corners, and irrigated lawn spaces and reshaping the island to fit the sculptures. A connection with Point Fraser does not mean the same polygonal lines on the island must be followed;
- Pathways, like the landforms of the island, should guide visitor to specific vistas showcasing nature (flora and fauna) of the island. They should be of soft edges and blend in with the surrounding environment. Perhaps a different texture path could be incorporated with a standard path side by side for example where one could do a meditative walk for example over wood, mulch, sand, gravel, native grass, compact clay, limestone etc...

It is very encouraging to see the City of Perth examining investment into this island, which is a unique and valuable reserve. The group hopes the Masterplan can be rethought in consideration of our comments and with the aim of enhancing its existing value as a sanctuary. The current draft Masterplan appear of too large a scale and repeats much of the built environments already established at Point Fraser. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Regards

Rada Tomanovic
Deputy-Chair