

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 24 October 2006

EPA advice for Cape Peron welcomed

The Cape Peron Tourist Precinct Project Steering Committee and City of Rockingham have welcomed the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) advice that the development of a tourist-based marina in Mangles Bay has the potential to be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner.

City of Rockingham Mayor and Chairman of the Cape Peron Tourist Precinct Project Steering Committee, Barry Sammels, said he hoped that the EPA advice would clear the way for the project to go on to the next phase.

"The EPA's advice importantly indicated no new issues had been raised and confirmed the key environmental issues we need to address. They were all previously identified during the initial community consultation and Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) meetings," Mayor Sammels said.

This advice follows a comprehensive Strategic Environmental Review of the initial concepts for the project which allowed the EPA to provide advice to State Government on potential environmental impacts at the project's initial planning stage.

Mayor Sammels said now the EPA had provided its advice, the next step would be for the State Government to make a decision as to whether the project should proceed to the next phase.

"This would entail a much more comprehensive range of environmental studies.

"The Steering committee is now looking forward to clearly demonstrating that the project can be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner," Mayor Sammels said.

Of the three concepts developed during the initial community consultation process, the EPA's advice indicated option 2.4 was the most environmentally acceptable and this would now form the basis for future refinement of the project.

Mayor Sammels said phase two activities would include detailed site-specific, environmental and geotechnical investigations, such as gathering comprehensive groundwater data allowing precise modelling of groundwater flows.

"This would ensure the final plan for the precinct would not pose any threat to Lake Richmond," Mayor Sammels said. "If further studies indicate there is the potential the current concept could have a harmful impact, modifications will be made until it could be clearly demonstrated that Lake Richmond would be fully protected."

Further detailed flushing modeling would also be undertaken in phase two to ensure the water quality in the marina remained high. If this modelling indicated further refinements were required, the concept would be modified.

MEDIA RELEASE

In line with the Steering Committee's commitment to improving the marine environment in Mangles Bay, a seagrass rehabilitation trial would be initiated in Mangles Bay and nearby areas of Cockburn Sound.

This would be the first seagrass trial in the immediate area and provide vital data to assist in the design of a full seagrass rehabilitation program in Mangles Bay.

To support rehabilitation of the seagrass beds in Mangles Bay, consideration would also be given to offering a subsidy to mooring owners to install only those moorings which were seagrass friendly.

Mayor Sammels said the Steering Committee was also looking forward to working closely with the community on a trial vegetation rehabilitation program in the Cape Peron area, as part of the next phase.

"A community liaison officer would be specifically employed to work with interested local community groups on the seagrass and vegetation rehabilitation activities," Mayor Sammels said.

The Steering Committee would also continue to work closely with key stakeholders such as the Navy regarding the alignment and opening up of the causeway - a key component of the strategy to improve water quality within Mangles Bay.

Mayor Sammels said the EPA's comments were also in line with those made by the community during a recent telephone poll. The poll indicated majority support of the development – provided it met all the required environmental guidelines.

"The Steering Committee is confident it can address the environmental concerns identified by the EPA, and a final concept plan can be developed that meets all the EPA's requirements whilst providing the best social and economic outcomes for the City of Rockingham and the community."

More information on the project can be viewed by clicking on the Cape Peron link at www.rdo.wa.gov.au.

The EPA's advice regarding the Cape Peron Tourist Precinct Project can be viewed at www.epa.wa.gov.au

- ENDS -

Media enquiries

Jelena Stojanovic, City of Rockingham – (08) 9528 0333