

May 11
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Email: council@cottesloe.wa.gov.au Website: cottesloe.wa.gov.au
Telephone: 9285 5000 Facsimile: 9285 5001

COUNCIL MERGERS

People must speak – by May 25

FINDINGS of the Metropolitan Local Government Review Panel were released on April 27, giving the public only until May 25 to comment.

To comment on the review, go to www.metroreview.dlg.wa.gov.au to see all contact details, or phone (08) 6552 1448 or 6552 1453.

Under the Review proposals it is likely that Cottesloe, along with most western suburbs councils, will be amalgamated.

One possibility is a single council, as in the City of Brisbane. Another is for five councils; and the third is for 10-12 councils. In any future scenario, the size of the City of Perth is likely to be increased.

Among the findings it's suggested that regional functions like waste disposal and treatment, transport and planning 'need to be managed from a metropolitan-wide perspective. A shift in responsibility to the State government may be warranted'.

After meeting to discuss the Robson Report, WESROC leaders said it was set up to find there was a need to enforce mergers and of course that's what it found.

WESROC includes councils of, Claremont, Cottesloe, Mosman Park, Nedlands, Subiaco and Peppermint Grove. Chairman is currently Mayor Jock Barker of Claremont. He said:

"Robson's most moderate proposal is for a maximum of 12 local governments. That means, in 2026, average population

of a local government area will be about 200,000, the size of the present biggest, Stirling.

"That is not local government as people know it," Mayor Barker said.

"Access to local representatives will be a fond memory," Mayor Barker said. "Once people realise what they have lost it will be too late to turn back the clock."

He urged people to register their opinions.

"If you care about what is about to happen this might be your last chance to say so," he said.

"What might make a difference is the opinion of the people who will be most affected, the residents and the ratepayers who pay the bill for this.

"Do you care that your democratic role in local government is about to be taken away?"

News in brief...



AN un-reticulated area of Grant Marine Park, separated off by Hamersley and Hawkstone Streets, will be re-vitalised with low-level native and local plants.



AN updated management plan for the Seaview Golf Club has been received and agreed by Cottesloe Council.

Dogs Local Law

FOLLOWING very minor amendments the new Law is available for public comment until June 11.

Native plants

Cottesloe residents can help conserve the region's natural environment and buy native plants for just \$1.50 each under the Region's annual Native Plants Subsidy scheme which runs until May 26. Visit the not-for-profit APACE nursery in Fremantle and you can buy up to 80 native plants at this special price.

The nursery is at 1, Johannah St, North Fremantle, open 8.30am/4pm, Monday to Friday and 9am/noon Saturdays.

Debacle on the Beachfront

Mayor: State takeover will cause cheap developments, and



HIGH-RISE PROFITS

AFTER delaying Cottesloe's town planning for years, State government has decreed the kind of beachfront it wants.

Commenting on the changes announced by Premier Colin Barnett and Planning Minister John Day, Cottesloe Mayor Kevin Morgan said that some landowners will enjoy windfall profits – but the beachfront will probably inherit cheap developments instead of quality design.

"There is general public disquiet with current planning systems and processes applied by the State – and Cottesloe is now experiencing the problem," he told the Council.

"What have the Premier and his supporters achieved with their Cottesloe Intervention?"

"First – they refused to progress our new planning scheme (LPS3) for SIX years – then blamed us for this lack of progress.

"Now they claim credit for progress, when they eventually do make a decision, six years overdue. By intervening they conjured from thin air the delay now used to justify – or mask – their true reasons for overriding us.

"Their intervention has given us six years of delay – not only on beachfront developments, but across all of Cottesloe.

"This brings handsome windfall profits for the lucky few, and any benefactors no doubt; while the rest of us can gaze in perpetuity at these two or three extra 'bonus' storeys of penthouse enclaves."

Nothing gained for most people

Contrary to what Mr Barnett would have everyone believe, these 2/3-storey bonuses will not result in any more redevelopments, or better building designs, or better public facilities such as bars or cafes, or less anti-social behaviour, than the EbD found would have occurred under its low-rise plan – which he has stalled, and now overridden, to get things moving'.

"Mr Barnett, like others before him, mistakenly believes the height issue can be solved by compromising between two opposing views on numbers of storeys," said Mayor Morgan.

"His approach of compromise does not appreciate that the EbD (Enquiry by Design) outcomes are empirical absolutes, beyond which you risk forever losing ingredients essential to what makes this beach magical for so many people.

"What I said – during the brief 10 minutes we were given to present our case to the Minister's Planning Committee – is that Cottesloe Beach deserved to get the benefit of the doubt, unless they had empirical evidence that their height increases would not have adverse effects."

Extra homes

The EbD found that any extra population would be better accommodated on vacant government land surrounding Cottesloe railway station, linked to the beach by high frequency public transport instead of in extra storeys atop this sun-drenched recreation precinct.

"The Barnett Government's lack of dialogue is most concerning and I will circulate to Councillors my letter to the WAPC chairman on that subject," said the Mayor.

"If the Barnett Government has good reason for their intervention then I'm sure we would have heard it by now. We should not have

to keep threatening FOI requests to find out any reason for their decision.

Higher and higher?

"By ignoring the EbD rationale, and pushing heights above these absolute limits, Mr Barnett may have also have eliminated any grounds for future resistance against these heights being increased even further.

"This means that in coming decades, building heights on Cottesloe Beach can be expected to increase by gradual accretion towards Gold Coast heights.

Central trashing

"Ironically, this single-handed trashing of an iconic beach – one of the world's best – will be a permanent reminder of the dangers inherent in Mr Barnett's unbridled centralisation of the planning powers that he has stripped from grass-root local council democracies who used to share these powers.

Barnett Bonus Storeys

"Mr Barnett accurately predicted years ago that unless his personal preference of five storeys was accepted then the end result would be worse. Sadly, he has fulfilled his own prophecy with his announcement that we get not just 5 storeys – but 6 – and 8 storeys, also.

"In polls, submissions and petitions to date a significant portion of the public has attested to the benefits they derive from Cottesloe Beach's low-rise nature. The reality is that the Barnett Bonus Storeys will rob them. His intervention reduces, not enhances, public benefit.

Ham-fisted

"This ham-fisted takeover by Mr Barnett's new centralised planning regime will homogenise Cottesloe Beach. It will become just another shade of beige.

"We owe it to all future generations of Western Australians to do everything we can to challenge this decision.

"At the very least we must lock in height limits so they can never be exceeded. At best we will have this intervention reversed.

MAYOR THREATENED WITH ARREST



"I apologise for getting in the way of the Premier and his entourage during their media announcement.

I was waiting to be interviewed and the rather heavy-handed way I was treated by the Police and staff from the Local Member's officer was unnecessary.

I was asked to move because it didn't look good for the camera shot of the Premier.

It was made clear that arrest was an option if I did not obey the order.

A member of the Premier's staff also asked me to move.

I had been standing there for sometime before the order was given, and was allowed to remain there but only after a journalist pointed out I was the Mayor of Cottesloe.

High-handed

Sadly, this treatment of me was as high-handed as the Barnett Government's treatment of the Town of Cottesloe."

Corrupted process

"The EbD low-rise plan represents the diversity that Perth desperately needs, despite attempts to paint it as more Dullsville. But the process has been corrupted.

"The Barnett Government gave its verdict to overturn the umpire's EbD decision but without giving any reasons for its decision.

"We didn't even hear the case against us – even though the judge and jury Government also wrote that hidden case against us and we were not allowed to test any empirical evidence they have for their case."

Kevin Morgan applauded members of the public who took part in the whole process, and those who came to the Council meeting to voice their concerns at the decision. He said: "I thank the community, and those of you who attended tonight to express your disappointment, for your patience as we now work through the repercussions of the Minister's decision."

Meetings at Civic Centre

PLEASE NOTE – a Special Council Meeting will be held on MAY 15, Tuesday.

Next Council meeting Monday May 28, at 7pm.

Development Services Monday May 21, 6pm.

Works and Corporate Services Tuesday May 22, 7pm.

Planning applications: For July - lodge by June 4, 2012.

Stirling Highway changes

THERE is an opportunity for the community to tell the State Government what it thinks about possible changes to Stirling Highway.

A summary of the proposals is in minutes of the April Council meeting; and full details can be obtained from the WA planning Commission.