The Perth Waterfront Development (Elizabeth Quay) Project:

Summary Report of Submissions by Invited Experts and
Conclusions and Recommendations by CityVision

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CityVision
Elizabeth Quay Project: Report of Submissions by Invited Experts
Summary Report and Conclusions

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Section 1: Introduction and Context

Background
CityVision has been concerned with designs and issues surrounding the Perth waterfront since our inception in 1987. Our first plan, in 1988 was instrumental in the government and City Council holding an international Design Competition in 1991, which failed to proceed further. CityVision has continued to advocate high quality development of the foreshore since that time.

The Elizabeth Quay project has evolved from a relatively recent series of proposals, initially by the City of Perth for the area between Barrack Square and The Narrows. This plan formed the basis of a plan prepared under the then Labour government by Landcorp, in 2007, - the Mounts Bay Project.

That plan was subject of a Peer Design Review in 2007, involving experts from interstate and WA. The Review recommended that development be focussed on the foreshore between William Street and Barrack Square; and could extend into The Esplanade.

The appointed consultants produced a plan widely criticised by experts and the public.

Change of Plan, and Public response
Subsequently, under public pressure and a change of government, the plan was scrapped. Inexplicably, the architects were re-appointed. A second master plan - by the same design team - was published, accompanied by a massive marketing campaign to sell the project. The most notable changes were to delete development west of William Street, to replace a circular inlet with a rectangular one and to close Riverside Drive between Barrack and William Streets. (This option had never been publicly debated. but received a mixed reception from the outset. This plan is the subject of our current enquiry

As the plan came under closer scrutiny, its shortcomings became more obvious and opposition grew strongly. This led to a number of well-informed submissions, public meetings, a well-attended rally, and a petition with over 15,000 signatures.

None of this seems to have impacted on the Premier’s determination to proceed. Although there had been a nominal process of public consultation, major and well-supported and argued criticisms have received either curt dismissal or no response. There has been, in fact no real public debate on what is one of the most significant developments in the history of our capital city.

Its significance is not confined to a consideration of how best to develop this particular site: with the closure of Riverside Drive, especially, it affects the future of the whole City, and the Metropolitan Region; and it calls into question the very effectiveness – in terms of serving the public interest – of the way in which we plan and decide on major public, civic projects.

This Enquiry
Consequently, CityVision has seen that, even at this late stage, the public interest would best be served by a broad public enquiry. However, CityVision, lacks the resources for such an enquiry. An alternative approach was adopted, inviting a number of independent experts to provide
reports on the project from their different disciplines, subject to relevant terms of reference and under the scrutiny of a panel of eminent persons, to ensure the integrity of the enquiry.

**The panel and the Contributing Experts**
The panel or committee overseeing the enquiry comprises:
- The Hon Robert Nicholson AO, retired judge of the Supreme Court of Western Australia;
- Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO, historian; and
- David Standen AM, Retired Associate Professor of Architecture

The twelve invited contributing experts and their relevant disciplines are:
- Ken Adam, architect and town planner
- Tony Brand, architect
- Peter Bruechle, engineer
- Ken Eastwood AM, accountant
- Professor Jenny Gregory AM, historian
- Robert J Hart, landscape architect
- Dr Linley Lutton, architect and urban planner
- Gerard Siero, ecological architect
- Ralph Stanton, architect, (ret) urban planner and artist
- Dr Lise Summers, archivist and historian
- John Syme, specialist in property economics, planning and development
- Chris Wiggins, engineer and banker

**Terms of Reference**
The Terms of Reference given to the contributing experts asked them to highlight both positive attributes of the Elizabeth Quay and concerns regarding its efficacy, with specific regard to:
- The Planning Process
- Heritage
- Urban design/Landscape
- Transport and Traffic
- Economics
- Environment
- Any Other Concerns

**The full report and this report**
The detailed submissions received have been compiled by the panel in the full report without editing other than to organise the material under the relevant term of reference, in a single document, in order that all submissions are open to examination.

This summary report has been compiled by CityVision itself, and comprises three sections. **The first section** comprises the conclusions drawn by CityVision, with recommendations for action by government and others. **The second section** provides factual background to the Elizabeth Quay project and the Enquiry. **The third section** comprises a summary of the main statements of fact and opinion contained in the submissions. These relate to the Terms of Reference, with an additional preceding
subsection to deal with the project as a whole. The subsection headings have been slightly amended in some cases for clarity. Section 2 makes no comment on the submissions, but attempts to summarise them accurately and make a clear narrative. In this report, in general, the term “scheme” is used to incorporate both the project as an enterprise of the government and its design, as expressed in the published images and reports.

Section 2: Summary of the Experts’ Submissions

This section organises the summary under these headings:
1. Overview of the Project, Scheme and Design
2. The Planning and Design Process
3. Heritage
4. Urban Design and Landscape
5. Traffic
6. Economics
7. Environment
8. Other Aspects

2.1 Overview of the Project and Design

Support in principle for a foreshore development project, but not this one......
Contributors expressed either explicit support for, or no strong objection to, the concept of an appropriate redevelopment of the foreshore between Barrack Square and William Street.
Bruechle expressed a view reflected by most others: “I am not against the development of the Perth Waterfront. I am, however, against extending the commercial CBD onto The Esplanade Public Reserve as the present plan proposes.”
Brand expressed a slightly more restrictive, view: “At the outset I wish to stress I am not against the redevelopment of the Perth Waterfront on the proviso that any development is on the water’s edge and Swan River foreshore”.
Most of the submissions state or imply a wary acceptance that some part of The Esplanade could be included in the development, and in the main the idea of a significant water element but none wished this to be at the cost of any of the heritage elements of The Esplanade, or of its valued civic and recreational roles.
Some objected to an inlet and would prefer a shallow lake.
No contributor expressed conviction that the project would effectively “bring the City and River together”, either visually or in terms of pedestrian access, and several expressly reject the proposition. Syme presented arguments to show it as a myth. Lutton stated that “The most misleading aspect of the government’s narrative ...is the slogan ‘connecting the city to the river again’.”
Adam stated his endorsement of four aspects of the scheme: extending the city grid and development towards the foreshore, with the main focus on the area between Barrack and William Streets; creating an interesting and socially active environment at the foreshore itself;
creating a significant body of water within The Esplanade area, either as a lake or, preferably, as an inlet from the river itself; and creating a site at the foot of William street for a major civic or cultural development.” But he qualified this, setting out 11 principles, including retaining both the heritage elements of The Esplanade Reserve and sufficient grassed area to provide for future active and passive recreational needs, and for public events, such as the Anzac Day Parades.

**The project is considered to be driven by the wrong values**

Bruechle expressed a view that was either explicit or implicit in virtually all contributions: “Planning and urban design of the public domain is much more than a commercial or technical undertaking. It is, or should be, a moral and civic enterprise”. Lutton commented that: “With the exception of an Aboriginal Interpretive Centre, which the government has put on hold, there is nothing of any civic value” The consensus was that the project failed to meet this fundamental principle.

Bruechle stated that “This area of the city is unique and its development must be carried out with the same long term ends in view that bequeathed us King’s Park…”

Bruechle also: “I am concerned that the driving forces behind the ... development might well be immediately political and not thoughtful considerations by a large cross-section of our society…” and Wiggins shared this view: “Elizabeth Quay appears to be a project driven by political considerations rather than meeting human needs”

Both Brand and Adam noted that the massive amount of commercial and high value residential floor space in the scheme raises the inference that financial considerations – to profit from land sales – are significant drivers of the project and certainly of its design.

**Serious objections to the scheme and its design**

In addition to errors in aspects, all contributors, regarded the scheme overall as having serious shortcomings, with comments ranging from “the latest in a string of planning disasters” (Hart) to “scheme has grave flaws in both conceptualisation and design” (Lutton).

Each outlined a number of serious flaws in the scheme and its design. Although offering different perspectives, there is a great deal of common ground and, remarkably, virtually no disagreement. (The only disagreement was over the proposed inlet: several objected to it altogether, some preferred a lake, most thought it too big, one commented that it was too small for the river to successfully flush it, although he objected to it, per se).

**Taken collectively, the major objections reported were:**

- The process of planning and design of the development was seriously defective in several ways;
- The closure of Riverside Drive would be a fundamentally serious error, for traffic and other reasons, including consequences for the City centre and Metropolitan Region;
- Destruction of the heritage elements of The Esplanade and of its traditional and recreational roles is completely unacceptable;
- Placing tall buildings in the foreshore area would be extremely damaging in environmental, visual and social terms;
- The commercial content of the proposed development is inappropriate and damaging
to both the public enjoyment of the foreshore and the city centre as a whole;
- Essential technical and other studies were either not carried out or were carried out
only after the government was committed to the scheme;
- Much of the information which is relevant to the scheme has been shown to be
inaccurate, misapplied or ignored;
- The proposed development would be excessively and unnecessarily costly and
damaging to State finances and to city centre land values;
- There is no significant civic content to the scheme; and
- The scheme misconceives relevant precedents.

There were no dissenting voices to any of these points.

Syme summed up many of these objections in a substantial submission, categorising major
propositions on which the scheme was founded and debunking them as a series of myths, as
follows:

- Myth: the traffic consequences resulting from the diversion of Riverside Drive are
inconsequential and can be resolved;
- Myth: the waterfront plan will bring the city to the river;
- Myth: bicycle amenity and safety will be improved;
- Myth: heritage values are preserved;
- Myth: substantial development is consistent with Transit-Oriented Design;
- Myth: Melbourne Southbank is a model for the Perth waterfront;
- Myth: high-rise density development is required to activate the foreshore; and
- Myth: height is required to pay for the project.

Syme states: “The Elizabeth Quay project is apparently planned with one narrow objective in
mind, namely to increase the engagement of a relatively small part of the city with the river.
However, by ignoring its regional and metropolitan context, there will be a number of
unintended consequences”. He gives these as:

- The need for additional east-west traffic capacity in future, at great expense, as a
consequence of closure of Riverside Drive;
- The general loss of efficiency in the city and the high economic costs of congestion,
resulting from the closure of Riverside Drive; and
- The over-concentration of employment in the Perth inner area, making a resolution of
transport issues almost impossible.

In his major submission Lutton notes that: Redevelopment of the Perth waterfront is an issue
for the entire city” and goes on to cite detrimental impacts at sub-regional (metropolitan), city
centre and precinct levels.

He poses a number of key objections, which can be summarised as:

- Destruction of the heritage of The Esplanade;
- Diversion of Riverside Drive;
- Failure to be open and accountable to the public/community;
- Lack of financial viability;
- Lack of environmental sustainability;
- Inappropriate and detrimental land use;
- Lack of civic and community value;
- Insensitivity to micro-climatic conditions of the location
- Misappropriation/privatisation of land created and reserved for public use in perpetuity;
- Detrimental impacts on the city foreshore;
- Detrimental impacts on the city centre;
- Failure to understand and cater for tourist needs.

Dr Summers is critical of the “very narrow” focus of the scheme “with no reference to City of Perth in its entirety”

Wiggins states that: “Imposing the current plan on the populace will have long lasting negative impact on both the city and the scheme’s proponents” and cites “four self evident problems with the Elizabeth Quay project”:
- traffic congestion and cost;
- unattractive building form;
- bad environmental design, with exposure to prevailing winds and overshadowing; and
- very limited public amenity;

to which he adds: “an unacceptable return financially and socially” and that: “there has been no proper scrutiny of the project”. He concludes that “I do not think that the project as currently conceived is a wise use of either taxpayer monies or prime waterfront public land”.

He also quotes the Public Accounts Committee report of 12 December 2012:
“This is a large and complex project making major changes to the structure and working of the Perth CBD. If we get it wrong, in any one of several significant aspects, then the benefits to the city, its liveability and efficient functioning could be severely impaired.”

Brand’s concerns are summarised by him as:
- eradication of The Esplanade as a public open space, to the benefit of private developers;
- lack of adequately advertised public hearings;
- questionable extension of the City to the peripheral south when the city core has the infrastructure to accept development over the next 30 to 40 years;
- the development is architecturally mediocre and ordinary in its concept;
- the development will be an environmental disaster;
- closing Riverside Drive, contrary to the independent traffic study and other expert opinion will incur major traffic ramifications; and
- the cost of the development infrastructure and modification to the road system will be excessive.

Relevant precedents or models for the scheme
Some contributors referred to precedents, both those cited by proponents for the scheme and others that may be relevant.

On Melbourne’s Southbank: Syme sets out reasons why it is not an appropriate precedent and outlines “crucial differences which make it not a good model for Perth”. He goes on to say: “An unfortunate Melbourne precedent is the Docklands development, which is exposed to blustery winds, has very tall buildings right on the waterfront and has very low activity at the pedestrian level”.

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He states, further, that: “There are many famous examples worldwide of activated waterfronts which are relatively low scale and focus on ground floor activation, rather than upper floor density: Barcelona’s Vila Olimpica Marina village; Bilbao’s waterfront projects around the Guggenheim Museum and the San Francisco Fishermen’s Wharf are prominent examples”. Lutton also addresses this issue, saying that “this development’s greatest single planning flaw is its failure to address the actual river’s edge” and citing Brisbane’s Southbank as a successful example, “developed along the bank of the Brisbane River, not around an unnatural and introverted inlet”. Further, he points out that “South Bank, Docklands and Darling Harbour were all run down underutilised areas....By contrast, Perth is taking its one and only heritage-protected riverside parkland, the dress circle of our city, digging it up and creating an over-intensive development, all to supposedly ‘activate’ the city”.

**Need to halt the project and review the design**
Without exception, all contributors called for the project to be halted immediately and the design reviewed. Syme added that “on the basis that there is only a flimsy planning need for it and no economic justification, it could be abandoned, even at this late stage and left for another day”. No other contributor explicitly suggested abandoning the project, although it is implicit in some that abandonment would not be unwelcome.

### 2.2 The Planning Process
**Adequacy and Integrity of the process generally**
Ten of the experts were critical of the process. None expressed satisfaction. Lutton devoted seven pages to this, and others ranged up to five pages, detailing shortcomings, key objections being lack of transparency and accountability, in a variety of aspects.

General objections to the process can be summarised as follows:

- “There has been no proper scrutiny of the project”
- “..departments involved have misled both the public and parliament”
- Three submissions quoted the 12 December report of the Public Accounts Committee: “The lack of transparency and engagement with the community does not give confidence that the planning is to the standard required by the SAMF process”
- “The process has and continues to lack accountability”
- “The public has been overridden and systematically disempowered and the government has failed to be open and accountable”
- “The Premier has shown great haste to start this project; in so doing providing a textbook example of how a democratically elected government can suppress and disempower the community ..”
- The master plan was adopted prematurely: “The state government put the cart before the horse when Premier Barnett announced the project...”
- “...the thinking and negotiations appear to have been carried out by a limited number of people and with a minimum of input from those whose opinions might run counter to those involved, and from the public in general”
“I have grave reservations about the integrity of the process of public consultation. In short I believe, with others, that the process has been marked more by tokenism than a genuine desire to listen

- The Premier, when in Opposition, stated that the project would be scrapped (see Sunday Times report of 3 September 2008 “Barnett to axe foreshore plan”) but in government adopted a very similar scheme.

**Public Consultation and Opinion**

Many submissions deal with the issue of community consultation and are critical of the way in which it has been dealt with. A summary follows:

- Lutton states that the Premier “claims, or wishes, that 80% of the community want this project” but the polls show that in fact a narrow majority oppose the project and that the community is divided. Those who are “strongly opposed” (17%) outnumber those who “strongly support” the project (14%). Much of the support comes from people believing government “propaganda”, that is, they support the intent of the project, without full information or knowledge of the technical details. “Regular public meetings reveal the community knows little about the waterfront project”

- Lutton points out that there has been very strong and vocal public opposition to the scheme, shown at the well-attended public rally on The Esplanade Reserve on 26 February 2012, and by a petition with more than 13,000 signatures, from people from all over Perth, submitted in March 2012.

- The public participation for the MRS amendment was not adequately advertised, resulting in a limited response

- The WAPC response to the submissions received was dismissive: comments were noted but objections were not given the courtesy of a considered response

- Wiggins states that: “The project as currently proposed is opposed by a great majority of WA citizens”

- The government ...maintains that ...there is no need for further review. There has in fact never been a public review”

- “The illusion of public consultation orchestrated by the WAPC clearly can be seen in its report on public submissions not released until October 2011. The report contains self-serving and incorrect statements...” and every objection was summarily dismissed.

**Selection of Consultants and others involved in the process**

Hart expressed the view that “This project, considering its size, cost and ill-conceived location, should be the subject of a competition.”

Bruechle gave the opinions that “how the process that selected the designers was conducted should also be made public to ensure it was a sound selection process and that the public endorses those selected. For instance it should be made clear that the architects for the proposed scheme are the architects who designed the Perth Arena that finished so badly over budget and over time”; and that “there has been no publicity as to why those selected for their various roles were selected for this most important area of the city, how they were selected and by whom”
WAPC and HCWA decision making failed the community

Submissions contained significant and detailed criticisms of the involvement of the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), the Heritage Council of Western Australia (HCWA) and the City of Perth in the decisions to support the scheme. The essence of these is the claim that all three failed to act as independent authorities upholding the wider public interest.

Gregory states: “During the planning process ...decisions by the WAPC, the City of Perth and the Heritage Council of WA were crucial to its approval...Public documents reveal that the decision making process was flawed.”

The submissions claim that decision-making was flawed in the following ways:

- Conflicts of interest among the decision-makers or advisers within the WAPC and the HCWA;
- serious errors and omissions in the information on which the scheme was, or should properly have been, based; and
- failure to properly consider submissions that were either made to the authority concerned or that should have been brought to their attention.

Several groups and individuals, many highly qualified professionally to provide advice and comment, including CityVision and others, made submissions on the scheme at various stages. During the public comment period, required by the legislation for the amendment to the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS) necessary to close Riverside Drive some 56 submissions were received. Bruechle claims that many more objections would have been received had the amendment been more widely advertised. Stanton makes the point that this was the sole formal period during which public comment was required to be considered.

The submissions were categorised by the WAPC as 26 supporting the scheme (albeit with conditions), 20 objecting, and 10 neutral. Gregory shows that, on examination, the WAPC categorisation was incorrect, that in fact there were 22 objections and 25 submissions that expressed significant concerns about aspects of the project, the latter incorrectly recorded as supporting the amendment. Many respondents who support a waterfront project in principle would not do so if the problems they perceived were not corrected.

Lutton pointed out that “members of the public who requested a personal presentation of their objections to the MRS Amendment found themselves sitting before a committee of three: The Chairman of the WAPC; A member of the Central Perth Planning Committee and past chairman of the Perth Waterfront Taskforce.; and One planner. This was hardly an objective, unbiased panel.” Stanton, who also appeared at a hearing, commented in similar terms.

Lutton reports that: “Every objection in this report was dismissed and no modifications to the master plan were made” and the grounds for dismissal were that “the issues have been, and will continue to be considered...in future detailed planning stages”

Gregory states that “the concerns regarding the heritage listing of the Esplanade and the Florence Hummerston site were dismissed by spurious and inconsistent arguments based on insufficient or incorrect evidence”. (These are covered in more detail in the next section of this summary, dealing with heritage aspects.)

Lutton and others express concern at conflict of interest within the HCWA as well as the WAPC in relation to decisions supporting the scheme. Lutton states: “The Heritage Council of western Australia, whose role it is to advise the Minister for Heritage, provides an example of how government agencies manipulate due process to achieve certain outcomes. Three members of
the Council are from: 1) The Committee for Perth; 2) The WAPC; and 3) The City of Perth. These three organisations are the primary drivers of the waterfront project”. Another submission states: “Heritage Councillors include a member of the WAPC, an employee of the City of Perth, which supports the development, and others who receive regular government contracts” and also pointed out that the Chairperson of the HCWA is both the CEO of the Committee for Perth, which “strongly supports the development of Perth’s waterfront” and a member of the Central Perth Planning Committee, which had delegated power to deal with the MRS Amendment on behalf of the WAPC. In response to a question in the Parliament it was stated that “4 members of the Heritage Council declared conflict of interest over the Waterfront. However, all were done as ‘impartiality perception’, thus allowing themselves to vote despite the declaration, and thus enabling a quorum to be present”. (WA Legislative Assembly Estimates Committee Hearing May 2012).

**Flawed information base**

Several contributors noted serious defects in the information on which the scheme has been approved and promoted by the government, its agencies and the City of Perth. Some of these are noted in more detail in the following sections of this report, where they relate to specific Terms of Reference. In summary, the main aspects noted were:

- Failure to ensure that the full ramifications of the closure of Riverside Drive were accurately known (by obtaining independent expert advice) before adopting the scheme;
- Failure to fully investigate and report the planning and economic impacts on the City Centre and Metropolitan Region of the proposed commercial development;
- Uncritical acceptance of advice that was clearly not supported by facts or research, for example the implied claim that the scheme would meet “the changing needs and aspirations of the Western Australian community” (WAPC Report on Submissions);
- Failure to take into account previous studies and advice, for example in the reports by Jan Gehl;
- Seriously and obviously erroneous claims, for example that The Esplanade Reserve “generates only sporadic use” (WAPC Report on Submissions); and
- Errors, inconsistencies and misleading information in the heritage assessments and advice;
- Environmental and other studies (for example wind and flooding) either not carried out, carried out after the plan had been adopted, not accurate, misleading, or not open to public scrutiny;
- Use of misleading or irrelevant images

### 2.3 Heritage

Eight submissions addressed the subject of heritage. Two, from the highly regarded historians and heritage experts, Gregory and Summers, comprise very substantial submissions that focus on The Esplanade Reserve. Because they focus on The Esplanade, this section deals also with
other aspects of the area, notably its use for recreation and its importance to the landscape setting of the city.

**The Esplanade Reserve: historic background**
The history of The Esplanade Reserve, vital to understanding its heritage significance, is traced in several submissions, notably those of Gregory and Summers. Significant aspects of its history are noted, with correction of errors in the HCWA and Elizabeth Quay documentation; summarised as follows:

- The reserve, originally called the New Recreation reserve, was created by reclamation, commencing in 1868 contrary to the HCWA heritage assessment, which gives the date 1870, and largely completed by 1880;
- Contrary to the MRA Draft Design Guidelines, the reserve was created following public demand, first reported in the press in 1870, for a more central active recreation area than what is now Wellington Square, not as a result of Perth Port becoming redundant with the construction of the central railway station. The railway station construction commenced in 1880, the Fremantle-Perth-Midland line was opened in 1881, and buildings associated with Perth Port (boat-building and warehousing) remained in use for decades, buildings remaining until the 1950s.
- **In March 1880 the Crown granted the Recreation Ground “to the Council and Burgesses of the City of Perth, their successors and assigns on trust for the purposes as a place of public recreation for the inhabitants of the said city forever”**;
- The Esplanade has a long history as the place for major events and activities in the life of the City and the State, both celebration and protest, including: the landmark Perth International Exhibition in 1881; the first swimming baths in 1884; the Jubilee celebrations of 1887; the proclamation of self-government in 1890, (attended by 6,000 persons - 80% of the city’s population); Regatta Days and Foundation Day athletic carnivals; celebration of Federation in 1901; Anzac Day Parades since 1916; Armistice Day 1918; the 1930s Depression rallies; the Secession rallies of the 1930s; scores of trade union meetings; the visit of the Apollo 11 astronauts in 1968; anti-nuclear rallies of the 1980s; the Americas Cup win celebration in 1983 (with 100,000 people); the 2012 CHOGM barbecue for the Queen (attended by 120,000); the Australia Day Skyshow since 1985; the Red Bull air races; and innumerable other rallies and meetings over more than 130 years of existence;

The foreshore also has significance for Aboriginal people: in pre-colonial times it provided both physical and spiritual sustenance for the Wadjuk tribe of the Noongar people; The Esplanade has been the site of post-colonial corroborees; and it had been a particular focus of the ban on Aboriginal people entering the city;

The Esplanade has remained a popular ground in daily use for active recreation (including organised corporate sports) and as a much-loved lunch-time place for city office workers. It continued (until fenced off for Elizabeth Quay siteworks) to be regularly booked for a variety of events, the City reporting in 2011 that it was booked at capacity in the summer months and between 30% and 60% for the remainder of the year. It hosted twelve major events in 2012. Despite this record of activity the WAPC report on Submissions on the MRS amendment discounted the historic and current use of The Esplanade, arguing that “the space currently
generates only sporadic use and conveys little of its history in its current form”, a patently untrue statement.
Brand also points out that The Esplanade is the only major space with a visual connection to the Kings Park War Memorial, significant for the traditional Anzac Day events.

Riverside Drive
Riverside Drive has heritage significance, although not registered as such. It has, since its construction in 1937, following the 1930 Report of the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, been an iconic and highly valued parkway route, along which virtually all visitors to the city are taken.
The MRA Draft Design Guidelines incorrectly claim, without offering any evidence in support, that since the early 20th century “Riverside Drive has come to be seen as a barrier that separates the city from the Swan River.” Such concerns were not voiced until the 1980s, along with concerns over the separation of the city from the river. Notably, not one of the contributors argued that this was an issue.

Statutory status
The Swan River and its immediate foreshore is a designated Aboriginal Heritage site. The Esplanade was permanently listed on the State Heritage Register in 2003. Barrack Square was placed on the Interim Register in 1999.
Gregory notes some key reasons cited for the 2003 permanent registration of The Esplanade, including that it was the site of the proclamation of self-government in 1890, of the 1881 Perth International Exhibition, of the Anzac Day Parades, and of large gatherings for both celebration and protest; and that it has been integral to Perth’s sense of place for more than a century.
Summers notes that under the Heritage of Western Australia Act State government agencies are required to ensure that heritage listed places are conserved (which includes “to enable the heritage significance of that place to be retained”) and the Minister is required to ensure that no action is taken “which will, or be likely to, adversely affect a registered place unless the Minister is satisfied that there is no feasible and prudent alternative...”

Destruction of heritage elements and values
All eight contributors who commented on this aspect criticized the loss of heritage resulting from the scheme.
The scheme results in complete destruction of the physical elements of the heritage of the development site, as noted in the submissions:
- destruction of the Moreton Bay fig trees (despite the initial claim that these would be retained):
- almost total loss of The Esplanade open space, rendering impossible its recreational and social roles, including loss of the ability to contain numbers of people, contrary to the opinion expressed by the WAPC;
- deconstruction of the Florence Hummerston Kiosk;
- removal of the JJ Talbot Hobbs memorial, the constant focus of the Anzac Day march past salute, contrary to WAPC claims;
- loss of the open space setting for the city, which is integral to the city’s sense of place;
- loss of the visual connection between The Esplanade and other heritage places, notably the Weld Club and Lawson Apartments; and
- loss of continuity of Riverside Drive as a parkway.

Adam allowed that some development could occur on The Esplanade, but not at the cost of the heritage values or of its function as a gathering place for Anzac Day parades and other public gatherings, and as a city recreation area.

Brand noted, supported by a plan, that any building higher than 14 storeys on The Esplanade would block the rising sun from view from the War Memorial in Kings Park, with great significance for the dawn service on Anzac Day.

**Inadequate heritage documentation**

Gregory in particular noted several significant errors in the documentation, referred to earlier in this report. Her conclusion is worth repeating:

“The decision-making process and the documentation relating to the history and heritage of The Esplanade Reserve and associated sites has been seriously compromised and flawed. Until thorough historical research and analysis is undertaken, we will continue to be at the mercy of shallow, repetitive, incomplete and skewed accounts of The Esplanade’s history”

### 2.4 Urban Design

Urban design, by its very nature, is a multi-faceted and integrating activity. Consequently, it cuts across all other aspects of the development of Elizabeth Quay, without exception. For the sake of clarity an attempt has been made to minimise repetition. Nine submissions raise issues relating in some degree specifically to urban design.

**Landscape Setting and Urban Form Generally**

No submission endorsed the basic approach taken by the scheme, that is, to eliminate The Esplanade and substitute a large inlet ringed by very tall buildings, with a high intensity of commercial (office) development. All submissions actively opposed this approach.

Stanton identified two significant features that are “important aspects of Perth’s unique urban design character”:

- “the continuous greensward comprising Langley Park, Supreme Court Gardens and The Esplanade Reserve”; and
- “the city parkway route of Riverside Drive which ....offers constant passing views of and across the Swan River...”

Lutton made the same point: “this project destroys one of the most beautiful and distinctive characteristics of Perth. Together with the view from Kings Park and the wide expanse of the Swan River, the continuous green edge between the CBD and the river defines the unique visual character of our city centre”; and he adds that the scheme also “Breaks iconic view corridors along Riverside Drive”.

Lutton: the ‘Dubai on Swan’ concept – reflecting none of Perth’s unique sense of place”

Lutton noted also that:
the development is introverted and “turns its back on the Supreme Court Gardens...” and

Urban planning principles developed for the area at the request of the City of Perth by regular visiting international expert Prof Jan Gehl were ignored”

Wiggins states that “Failure by the architects and planners to take account of aspect, wind and shadow is unacceptable”

Summers noted that the scheme “will block views from established locations such as Kings Park and the Parliamentary Precinct’. Lutton makes the same point, putting it the other way around: the scheme “blocks internal views from The Esplanade Reserve to King’s Park.”

**Inappropriate Land Use and Intensity**

No submissions supported either the use of the foreshore land for commercial development (other than to serve the recreational purpose) or its proposed intensity.

Lutton criticizes the scale of development, saying “Development sites are far too large and out of scale with other sites in the adjacent areas” and development “Lacks diversity of scale and form and is too intense”

Most submissions expressly or implicitly objected to any part of The Esplanade being alienated for commercial development. It was implicit, also, that the objection was on several grounds – not only functional, visual, social and environmental - and more strongly felt in relation to land adjacent to the foreshore.

Adam noted that there would undoubtedly be a demand for permanent residential and office development on or adjacent to the foreshore, but that “this would be detrimental to public enjoyment of the foreshore itself. Apart from the obvious conflicts of added traffic and parking demand, there is the well known negative attitude of permanent residents to intensive public use and recreational/social enjoyment of adjoining land”. He pointed to the potential availability of land closer to the Esplanade road and St Georges Terrace. Seemingly at odds with Adam’s opinion, Lutton states that the development “Lacks a significant residential component...” However, Adam’s comment is restricted to the foreshore land itself and Lutton’s is more general.

Wiggins pointed out “how little of the site is available to the public. Very little park or playground area. No public theatre or entertainment” and “only two public amenities included in the project”, aside from “the nebulous Indigenous Centre and a cable car maybe...” states: “

**Building Height and Form**

All submissions objected to tall buildings within the foreshore area, on a variety of grounds. Environmental grounds – overshadowing and wind effects – are dealt with separately in this report, as are economic, traffic and other reasons. All of these, of course, must be considered in the urban design of a project. The consensus of the submissions amounted to a judgement that the attachment to tall buildings in the scheme was badly misconceived, and showed little understanding of either the setting, of human needs, or what might work practically and economically.

Adam, Lutton, Stanton and others provide a number of reasons why tall buildings should not be allowed on the foreshore itself. These may be summarised as follows:
- They would be detrimental to enjoyment and functioning of the public spaces, for several reasons, particularly overshadowing; uses above the first two or three floors, would be irrelevant to public enjoyment, by increasing vehicular movement and parking;
- Their visual prominence would destroy the iconic view of the city from Kings Park;
- They would be detrimental to the powerful natural landscape/landform setting of the city foreshore, by disrupting the continuous, low sweeping line of the foreshore;
- It is observable that international, national, and indeed Western Australian examples of successful waterfront developments (eg Fishermen’s Wharf in San Francisco, Barcelona, Bilbao, Copenhagen, Darling Harbour and Hillarys) are all low rise and an unsuccessful high-rise example is Melbourne’s Docklands.

The reason advanced in the scheme for high-rise buildings – notably that foundation conditions require expensive piling and hence a tall building is required to justify the cost – is rejected as spurious, given that buildings up to at least three storeys in height can be constructed far more economically, on low-cost foundations.

Brand and Lutton point out that tall buildings on the foreshore also prevent Langley Park from being used by light aircraft, eliminating an historic and occasionally contemporary use, including the Red Bull air races, a major attraction for the city.

Wiggins demonstrates that the concept of 4-6 storey podiums with tall towers above, contrary to attractive (but strongly misleading) aerial and other artists’ impressions, will be unattractive at ground level.

**The Inlet**

*It is either explicit or implicit in all submissions that the proposed inlet should either be greatly reduced in size, possibly as a lake instead of an inlet, or eliminated altogether.* This is the natural inference of the objections to the loss of The Esplanade and its heritage. It is either explicit or implicit in all submissions that The Esplanade should either be retained *in toto* or at least sufficiently to fulfil its traditional roles.

Apparently contrary to this, Lutton criticized the inlet as being too small, but this was in the context of its workability for natural flushing. His response was to eliminate it, not to make it bigger.

Adam stated: “The inlet is too large: it is overscaled, both visually, in proportion to its surroundings, and in terms of public use and interaction, and this has come at the further cost to The Esplanade Reserve…”

Wiggins had this to say: “The inlet connecting to the river is undesirable and unnecessary. The connection....provides little benefit to the public.....It will make virtually no difference to the visual aspect if replaced with a large, shallow fresh water feature”.

No submission saw value in the inlet as providing visual or other attraction to the public from the appearance of ferries or boats in the inlet.

**Riverside Drive**

As noted elsewhere, retention of Riverside Drive as a continuous route is essential for traffic reasons, and for its social amenity as a parkway alongside the river. Its continuity is also valued...
by contributors for urban design reasons, as an essential component of the foreshore’s sweeping vistas.

2.5 Traffic: the Riverside Drive story
Most submissions regard the closure of Riverside Drive between William and Barrack Streets as the most single damaging aspect of the scheme. No submission supported the scheme on this aspect. More than 12 pages of submissions focussed essentially on Riverside Drive and the impacts of the proposed closure. Syme sums up the official position as Myth: The traffic consequences resulting from the diversion of Riverside Drive are inconsequential and can be resolved.

Roles played by Riverside Drive
Submissions identified several roles played by Riverside Drive:
- It is one of only two east-west bypass routes for the city centre, the other being the Graham Farmer Freeway;
- it is the only southern access/distributor road serving the city centre;
- it is a highly valued parkway scenic route; and
- it operates in conjunction with cycle and pedestrian routes along the foreshore.
Submissions stated that all four functions are adversely affected by the proposed closure.

The Veitch Lister Traffic Study April 2012: late, incomplete, but damning
Submissions noted that the decision to proceed with the scheme, and specifically with the closure of Riverside Drive, preceded any serious traffic study. The WAPC, the City of Perth, the Department of Planning, the Waterfront Taskforce, the Minister for Planning, the Premier, the government as a whole and its Parliamentary majority had all decided that the impacts of closure of Riverside Drive would be acceptable, without knowing what the impacts were likely to be. The only publicly available and independent professional traffic study of the scheme, the Veitch Lister report, was not commissioned until March 2012, and published in April 2012. The WAPC had already dismissed the numerous submissions opposing the closure, (made in response to the planning amendment to pave the way legally for the closure), in July 2011, It is still the case that the authorities and the public do not realise the full impacts. This is because, as noted in submissions, Veitch Lister were instructed to use 2009 traffic figures based on the then population of the City and Metropolitan Region (rather than the current or projected population) and they were instructed to take no account of the (substantial) likely impacts of the development itself.
Brand states that he was advised that an independent report from Worley Parsons International recommended to Main Roads not to close Riverside Drive or re-route traffic through the tunnel. This report has not been made available to the public.

Impacts of the Closure
Submissions note that there is great public concern about existing and increasing traffic congestion and that there will be immediate added congestion resulting from the closure. This
will be alleviated to some extent by the increase in capacity of the Farmer freeway tunnel. This involves converting the safety/breakdown lanes to traffic lanes, an increase in capacity that was always planned, at some time in the future but, as the VLR suggests, these works are required now.

Adam notes the ironic timing of this closure: at the very time when traffic congestion is emerging as a major public concern, and the City of Perth is deliberately reducing road capacity in the city centre.

Stanton estimates that, based on the figures provided by the Minister, the scheme would add some 13,000 office workers and 1400 permanent residents to the area, with consequent traffic impacts, none of which have been allowed for.

Syme and Brand note shortcomings of the tunnel solution:
- while it will provide short-term capacity, within the medium term the situation will revert to the current;
- it ignores the real congestion points at either end of the tunnel, particularly the Thomas Street/Loftus Street on- and off-ramps; most tellingly, it places all the emphasis on a single route, making it highly vulnerable to full or part closure, with gridlock across the whole of the inner city areas in the event of a major closure at a peak time;
- the increase in lanes is achieved at a reduction in lane width, from a more normal 3.6m to 3.4m, representing an increased level of hazard, especially for speeds up to 80kph in an artificially lit tunnel.
- most tellingly, it places all the emphasis on a single route, making it highly vulnerable to full or part closure, with gridlock across the whole of the inner city areas in the event of a major closure at a peak time;

Closing Riverside Drive will increase rat-running through less direct routes, as identified in the VLR, especially through South Perth, in Manning Road and Mill Point Road, and north of the city centre, notably in Charles and Walcott Streets; but also within city centre streets;

Syme and the VLR both emphasise the critical strategic role of Riverside Drive and the adverse impacts of its closure on traffic movement and travel times. The VLR estimates, without the added impact from the development itself or from future growth, that peak travel times will increase by 6-10 minutes on both routes. There is a high economic cost that goes with congestion, commented on below.

Syme and Stanton both provide diagrams that clearly illustrate the strategic importance of Riverside Drive and the limited routes available to accommodate east-west by-passing traffic. Closure of Riverside Drive significantly diminishes options for the future. Syme and others note that the most likely – perhaps only effective – option would be a long tunnel under the river, parallel to Riverside Drive, much as recently built in Melbourne at enormous cost.

Such a solution would not allow access to the city centre, as Riverside Drive does, and the tunnel entry points would be highly intrusive, destructive of the visual amenity of the City.

Wiggins reports former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Alannah McTiernan, as saying that a second tunnel was ‘inevitable’ but with “potentially large, ugly area where the on- and off- ramps would be located”.

Closure of Riverside Drive will impact very severely on its function to provide access to the city from the west. The tunnel solution will do nothing to alleviate this.
Closure of Riverside Drive will also impact adversely on its role as a parkway, by disrupting the otherwise smooth continuity of its river foreshore location and alignment. Closure of Riverside Drive will have a similar disruptive impact on the smooth continuity and alignment of the pedestrian and cycle routes that follow the foreshore.

2.6 Economic and Financial Aspects

Public Cost and Investment
Wiggins spoke for all eight contributors who addressed economic aspects when he said this of the scheme: “It represents an unacceptable return financially on the use of prime waterfront land and cost of development...I do not believe that the project as currently conceived is a wise use of either taxpayer monies or prime waterfront public land.”

Bruechle notes that no detailed cost/benefit plan for the project seems to have been made public, and questions why.

Eastwood analyses the figures provided by the government, noting that the project should not be seen in isolation from other major projects, such as the Perth City Link, that compete in the market for commercial development.

Eastwood concludes that the total infrastructure and other cost estimates are likely to be significantly exceeded and that the revenues (from land sales) are likely to fall well short of market value.

He notes significant cost blowouts on major government projects, e.g. the Perth City Link project, with a shortfall of $128.1 M, and about which the Public Accounts Committee Report states that the works “were probably not ready for consideration for funding when submitted to Infrastructure Australia’. Eastwood questions “whether a repeat of this same enthusiasm to ‘get on with it’ might result in the same level of under-costings” for Elizabeth Quay. He cites, too, “the Perth Arena project where costs blew out from $160m to more than $460m”.

At p46 of its report the Committee notes that “As with the Perth Waterfront Development the land development aspects of the Perth City Link carry with them the risk that the land will fail to sell due to lack of demand or that the sale price of the land will fail to meet expectations”. Clearly, the reverse is equally true. They are competing projects both for government funding and in the property market.

Eastwood concludes that on top of the 2009 estimated $440 million for infrastructure the project is likely to demand an additional approximately $544 million to allow for upgrading the Farmer Freeway tunnel, its entries and exits, Thomas Street and the William Street-Narrows upgrade. Eastwood has “little confidence in the rubbery figures surrounding these developments”.

Commercial Viability and impact on the City’s Development
Lutton and others question the financial viability of the project, starting with the government’s development claims of 200,000m² of commercial (office)floor space, 25,000m² of retail floor space, 800 apartments and 800 hotel rooms. Lutton states “There is no evidence available....that any proper study has been done”. He notes that “Warnings have also been
sounded by the State’s Under-Treasurer and property experts that the simultaneous development in the Perth CBD of the Northbridge Link, Riverside and the Waterfront are not workable due to oversupply. These three projects add a massive 645,000 m2 of office floor space to the existing 1,100,000 m2. This is confirmed by the industry: the CEO of the Property Council was reported in the West Australian in 2009 as saying that the Waterfront vision, to be built by the private sector, could not happen at the same time as the Northbridge Link project and the 40 hectare Riverside project because “the market will not be able to absorb it”. Syme also questions the real demand for development in the city centre and the resulting distortion of the market: “...overdevelopment on the foreshore would take demand away from other areas of the city where land is available and with greater need for regeneration”. “It contributes in a substantial way to an over-concentration of metro employment in the inner city- concerns expressed also by Adam.

Eastwood, Syme and Lutton comment on the government’s projections for the sale of the land in large parcels. Eastwood comments that the nine blocks “are to be sold at bargain basement prices of average $19 million each (about one third their true value)”.

Lutton comments: “Many developers prefer ...lot sizes no larger than say... 2,500 m2, which are small enough to enable purchasers to arrange funding while ... being large enough to provide a reasonable yield. The waterfront development with its focus upon intense development on very large lots is problematic”.

Lutton notes that the proposed number of apartments has been almost halved, from 1700 to 800, while increasing office floor space by a third, from 150,000 m2 to 200,000 m2. He comments that “this is curious, because the main rationale for the WAPC taking The Esplanade in the first place was to provide a large number of apartments” and that “The government does not show an understanding of the current apartment market”.

Lutton criticizes the government’s failure to understand tourism requirements: “Elizabeth Quay offers no unique experiences...no galleries or museums, no celebration of our unique culture” He criticizes the claim, based on figures for Brisbane’s Southbank, that it will draw 4 million tourists a year (compared with 6.5 million for the whole State). He describes the comparison with Southbank as “ludicrous”.

Lutton examines the figures for expected land sales: the predicted return of $170m for 34,595 m2 of land, “which equates to $4,914 per sq m, well below comparable land values along Terrace Road and The Esplanade. The government is therefore placing the land on the market for a subsidised rate”.

Development Costs on the Foreshore
Several contributors commented on the fact that development costs on the foreshore land are extremely high for buildings higher than two or three storeys, due to the need for deep pile foundations. This fact has been given as a reason for promoting high rise buildings, in order to spread the high costs over a larger floor space. This is putting the cart before the horse. By contrast, low buildings can “float” on the soft, unstable soil, at moderate cost.
**The Costs of Congestion**

In his critique of the traffic problems Syme notes: “There is an economic cost to increased congestion” and notes that “Congestion costs can be quantified by measuring its various elements, including hours of passenger delay, additional fuel consumption, reduced business accessibility, accident costs and pollution.” The Bureau of Transport Economics estimated (1995) costs at 9.5 cents per kilometre for each road user. “Applied to the Elizabeth Quay project this will result in annual congestion costs in the millions.”

**2.7 Environment**

Several submissions referred to impacts of or on the natural environment. These included, principally, the commonly expressed effects of wind and overshadowing on public spaces in the development. Other significant concerns expressed relate to the potential impacts of the proposed inlet and of flooding of the area. Breuchle referred also, at the range of studies that had or should have been carried out into these impacts – he instanced flooding, wind funnelling, overshadowing, pollution from traffic congestion, dredging effects and flushing of the proposed inlet – and whether studies had been independently verified.

**Wind Funnelling**

Several submissions referred to the exposure of the scheme’s public spaces to the prevailing S-W winds that sweep across the bare expanse of Perth Water, and questioned whether the scheme’s designers understood this aspect of the micro-climate of Perth.

Submissions also expressed objection to tall buildings and substantial podium blocks on the grounds of their propensity to exacerbate the funnelling of winds.

**Overshadowing**

Virtually all submissions commented on the issue of overshadowing. Wiggins presents detailed analyses — including photographs and diagrams to show the effect of the proposed buildings, especially the tower buildings, on overshadowing of the public spaces. He notes also the misleading information presented by the scheme’s proponents — “The aerial view of Elizabeth Quay development shown on the MRA website...is based on suggests the shadowing when the sun is directly overhead in mid-summer. In fact, because of the high rise buildings, the development will be also in shadow for most of the year”.

Wiggins attaches an annotated plan view of the proposed development accompanied by the statement: “Looking at the plan...one can only conclude that the planners and architects have ignored wind and overshadowing impacts when designing Elizabeth Quay”.

No submission supported high rise buildings at the foreshore.

**The Inlet**

Concerns were raised about the impacts of dredging contaminated material on the quality of water in the inlet and the river and whether this could be properly managed during construction.
More submissions expressed concern about ongoing pollution of the inlet, from a failure of natural flushing and from watercraft using the inlet. Lutton described the inlet as “unworkable” and noted that previous engineering advice to the City of Perth had “warned against inlets in this part of the river because water movement is too slow and continuous smooth river edges are essential.” He noted research carried out by the Water Research Centre “shows, at Elizabeth Quay, that water remains around the Quay for an average 75-80 days.” Wiggins and Siero, with others, proposed that, instead of the inlet, a perched freshwater lake be considered. This would resolve several problems.

**Flooding**
The comment was made in more than one submission that the potential for flooding, a regular occurrence at Riverside Drive, and likely to be exacerbated by rising sea levels, appeared to have been ignored in the design of the scheme.

**Sense of Place and the Swan River**
In his submission Siero referred to the importance of maintaining Perth’s “sense of place” a theme echoed in other submissions, relating particularly to the urban design of the scheme, and the perceived failure of the design to respond positively to it. He described the Swan River environs as an “ecological corridor” and expressed the adverse impact of the scheme on this aspect of the environment.

### 2.8 Other Important Issues

**No Compelling Need**
Several contributors have stated that here is no compelling need to hasten with this project. There is no shortage of land for city centre development and no compelling need to develop the waterfront for any reasons other than that there is now public acceptance of the idea of developing the foreshore, a degree of impatience at the protracted process; and there is political capital to be gained by doing something. There is no case for developing the area as a transit-oriented development: the rail system and Esplanade Station do not need further patronage at this point.
The consistent view of contributors is that there is a need to halt and review the project with a view to achieving a better outcome. No-one was concerned at the delay this would necessarily entail. No opinion contrary to this was expressed.

**Impacts on City-wide Planning and Development**
Several contributors have pointed to impacts of the proposed development that transcend the immediate development area and impact on the city centre and even the Metropolitan Region as a whole. These have all been discussed in earlier sections of the report, but are worth recapitulating here. They can be summarised briefly as follows:
the stand-out issue is the extremely adverse impact of the closure of Riverside Drive on vehicular traffic by-passing and accessing the city centre; this will create congestion and rat-running in the short term and either chaos or an extraordinarily disruptive and expensive – and less than satisfactory – solution in the longer term;
- the loss of effectiveness of the city centre and the costs to the whole community of congestion as a result of the closure;
- the over-concentration of employment in the city centre, contrary to government policy and with flow-on effects for traffic and transport and the loss of the city amenity resulting from the scale of commercial development proposed;
- the adverse reduction in desirable regeneration of more favourably located areas in the central city resulting from the scale of commercial development proposed;
- the distortion in market value of more favourably located central city land as a result of oversupplying the market with easily available and price-subsidised land in Elizabeth Quay.

Towards a Better Outcome: Process, Objectives and Principles

It would be true to state that a better outcome would result if all objections to the scheme were met, but in fact most contributors took a positive attitude to the development, and suggested better ways to move forward.

In summary, these were some of the objectives and principles advanced to guide a substantial review of the scheme:
- ensure that Riverside Drive remains as a continuous road;
- carry Riverside Drive over the face of the inlet (if there is one) on a bridge of outstanding design, allowing for free pedestrian movement below it;
- consider the option of a perched lake as an alternative to the inlet
- ensure continuity and safety for pedestrian and cycle route alongside the foreshore;
- ensure that the heritage features of The Esplanade are retained, including returning the Florence Hummerston Kiosk to its original setting, and replacing the destroyed Moreton Bay fig trees with suitable plantings, reflecting the heritage and history of the City and the State;
- ensure that the residual area of The Esplanade will be sufficient to cater for its recreational and other functions, including as a large scale public gathering place and the Anzac Day March assembly place;
- ensure that development on the foreshore itself is low, maintaining the scale and sweep of the foreshore and the essence of the iconic views from Kings Park, etc;
- ensure that the public spaces are protected, as far as possible, from wind funnelling and overshadowing;
- ensure that commercial development on the foreshore and immediately adjacent to it is confined to uses that serve public enjoyment of the foreshore;
- provide a range of civic and entertainment uses, such as the Indigenous Cultural centre, museums, art galleries, childrens’ play areas, water playground, and other attractions for both residents and visitors;
- consider providing a safe beach for children;
- provide safe and easy access for pedestrians and cyclists between the city centre and the foreshore;
- carry out comprehensive research on the history and heritage aspects of the place and implement a soundly-based and high quality program of interpretation;
- maintain the ability for light aircraft to land on Langley Park;
- maintain the visual connection between The Esplanade and the Kings Park War Memorial;
- adopt an honest, open and accountable process of public involvement planning and design of the project, putting forward genuine alternatives for public discussion and debate before committing to a solution;
- investigate successful waterfronts elsewhere with a view to learning from them;
- spend money on the process of explaining and developing alternatives, getting it right, rather than on selling a plan that pre-empts public opinion;

**Alienation of Public Land**
Several contributors objected to the sale of public land to private developers, arguing that it should be kept as a public asset in perpetuity. Removal from public use of land that had been granted “forever” for public recreation was considered particularly objectionable.

**Section 3: Conclusions and Recommendations by CityVision**

The preceding Section has been a straightforward summary of what the invited experts said in their submissions, without further comment.

This final section draws conclusions from what they have said, and makes consequential recommendations for immediate and ongoing action.

The order in which these are placed differs from that preceding

**Overriding Conclusion: the Elizabeth Quay Project is fundamentally flawed and should not proceed in its present form**

The clear consensus of the experts is that the project and the scheme contain many flaws, including several that are so significant that they cannot be remedied by adjusting the current scheme and design. Two of these have major significance for the planning and development of the Metropolitan Region as a whole and run directly counter to long-established and bipartisan planning policy. These are the closure of Riverside Drive and the decision to open the area up to massive commercial (office) development. Aside from several objections on other grounds, neither of these is sustainable in terms of serving the vehicular and public transport needs of the City Centre and Metropolitan Region.

It is also the clear consensus that the project can be much better and much less expensive, providing a much better social and financial return.
**Recommendation 1: Halt the project immediately and carry out a full and proper review**

This is neither such a bold step nor as costly as might be thought. Firstly, much – probably most – of the construction work carried out to date will still be required under any likely alternative scheme. It would, of course, be necessary to renegotiate contracts and either vary them or compensate the contractors. Any money thrown away will be very small compared with either the damage that will come with pushing ahead, or the savings to be made with a better project. Secondly, there is no compelling reason, other than a desire to “get on with it”, for proceeding in haste. There is nothing to be lost, and everything to be gained, by putting the scheme on hold until there is confidence that it will be the best that it can be.

**Conclusion 2: The closure of Riverside Drive is highly detrimental to the scheme, the City Centre and the Metropolitan Region**

The closure of Riverside Drive has emerged as the most immediately compelling public issue arising out of the Elizabeth Quay proposals. At the very time when traffic congestion has become a major issue of public concern, and we are planning for a rapid and large metropolitan population increase, this project proposes to reduce the traffic capacity of this major east-west by-pass route and city access road, one of only two by-pass routes and for which there is no city access substitute. At the same time the foreshore development itself will generate significantly increased traffic, while the City of Perth is also actively reducing the capacity of streets within the city centre.

The government’s own consultant’s report – commissioned long after the decision was made to close Riverside Drive - is clear about the detrimental effects of the scheme, even based on 2009 data and ignoring both future population growth and the traffic generated by the development itself. There will be immediate traffic congestion, alleviated in the short term by increasing the capacity of the Farmer Freeway tunnel, by utilising the safety lanes, itself not without traffic safety and congestion problems, and upgrading its connections. Remedying the longer term consequences of congestion on both the public transport and vehicular networks will be an extraordinarily expensive and difficult exercise, as other cities have discovered. Closure of Riverside Drive also seriously disrupts pedestrian and cycle movement along the foreshore.

Closure of Riverside Drive is also detrimental to it valued function as a parkway, part of Perth’s heritage.

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that Riverside Drive remains as a continuous by-pass, city access and parkway route**

Under any feasible and viable plan for the foreshore area, Riverside Drive must remain as a continuous route. If there will be an inlet, then Riverside Drive should be carried across the inlet on a bridge of the highest design quality. As with most inner city bridges all round the world, this should be an attraction in its own right, not an obstruction to be tolerated reluctantly.
If there is to be a perched lake the road can continued more or less on its present alignment, or on a causeway. The elevation of the road can be such as, whether bridge or causeway, to allow free pedestrian and cycle access beneath, connecting the city centre to the foreshore. In any event the road can be controlled to reduce speed and allow safe access across it, especially on the critical stretch between Barrack and William Streets.

**Conclusion 3: The scheme has significant negative impacts on the planning and development of the City Centre and the Metropolitan Region**

The scheme appears to have been conceived in a planning vacuum, without serious regard to its external impacts, except to the extent that they require treatment to support the scheme. This is, to put it mildly, putting the cart before the horse. These have been dealt with earlier in this report. The two principal serious defects are, as noted:
- the proposed closure of Riverside Drive; and
- the proposed concentration of commercial office development, that is, of city office workers, in the project area.

The negative impacts have also been spelled out elsewhere. Briefly:
- serious congestion, and at times gridlock in the system, due to inadequate provision for traffic to by-pass the city centre, as a result of closure of Riverside Drive;
- reduction in accessibility to the city centre as a result of the closure;
- loss of the continuity of Riverside Drive as a parkway and for pedestrian and cycle traffic;
- consequent increase in travel times and other costs of congestion; and
- aside from the Riverside Drive issue, the significant increase in city centre workforce, contrary to government policy, causing additional stress on a public transport system almost at capacity now, as well as increased congestion on the road network.

**Recommendation 3: Retain a continuous Riverside Drive, and remove the commercial content of the scheme**

A revised scheme must retain a continuous Riverside Drive and delete the commercial office content of the scheme.

**Conclusion 4: The scheme is a bad investment of public money**

The scheme has been costed at $440 million, and the return from land sales at $170 million. Serious doubts are expressed about both these figures. The former does not take into account the high cost of the roadworks necessary to support the scheme or alleviate the traffic problems it will cause elsewhere. The latter is susceptible to the likelihood of the land, in a softened market caused by the competing government projects of the City Link and Riverside projects, to being difficult to sell, even at the subsidised prices expected. The expected sales prices appear to be below market values for comparable land. The commercial viability of the scheme is in serious doubt.
At the same time the scheme, as noted elsewhere, fails to deliver the social return that it should, so a high price is being paid for a less than satisfactory scheme. The scheme should be viewed as a civic enterprise, not a commercial one.

**Recommendation 4: Review the scheme and its costs and benefits**

A revised scheme, with the exception of a bridge to carry Riverside Drive, which would be an attraction in its own right, can be carried out on a less elaborate basis, with a more modestly scaled inlet or perched lake, at significantly less public cost, and for greater public benefit. Full benefit/cost studies should be a part of the scheme, and the evaluation of alternatives.

**Conclusion 5: The process followed has been badly flawed, resulting in a flawed scheme and design**

The consensus of the experts was that the planning process followed failed badly to be effective, open or accountable. It was flawed badly in terms of:

- flawed information base: either missing, inaccurate or provided too late;
- failure to properly consult the community or respond properly to submissions made, including by independent experts in relevant fields;
- losing sight of the true objectives of the project;
- failure to consider alternative possibilities and allow these to be debated publically;
- doubts on the integrity of decision-making by government agencies;
- premature adoption of the scheme and design, prior to receiving vital information and professional opinion;
- focussing on ‘selling’ the adopted scheme rather than using resources to seek improvement to it.

**Recommendation 5: Carry out the review using a better process**

The basic concept – that of a waterfront development that makes a better connection between the city centre and its foreshore, and provides for maximum enjoyment of the foreshore by the public – has been widely welcomed, and the considered views of both proponents of and objectors to the current scheme, especially the latter, are known, so the review does not need to start completely from scratch. The elements of a better, more effective, process should follow these guidelines:

- invite public submissions and comment at the outset and at key points in the ongoing process of design;
- obtain and provide public access to all relevant and up to date research, including making good to deficiencies identified in transport and heritage information and advice;
- provide prompt, honest, full and accurate responses to public questions and comment; and
- invite public comment on any alternatives being considered, at an early stage and as preliminary plans, not pre-empting public opinion.
Conclusion 6: The heritage of The Esplanade would be destroyed by the scheme
This is well understood fact. The very special Moreton Bay Fig trees have already been destroyed; the Florence Hummerston Kiosk has been dismantled, with no promise for its future; the scheme destroys The Esplanade; other elements, or their settings, would be destroyed; visual relationships with Kings Park and the city have been ignored; the heritage value of Riverside Drive has not been understood; the research into heritage has been flawed; and the proposals for interpretation are questionable, at best.

Recommendation 6: Protect the heritage of The Esplanade
The revised scheme and design should ensure that:
- the lost Moreton Bay Figs should be replaced by species that reflect the history of The Esplanade;
- sufficient area of The Esplanade is retained to ensure that its traditional and recreational roles can continue;
- the Florence Hummerston Kiosk should be replaced in its original setting;
- the Talbot memorial should be appropriately relocated;
- sightlines between the key parts of The Esplanade and the Kings Park War Memorial should be guaranteed; and
- the continuity of Riverside Drive should be retained.

Conclusion 7: The urban design of the scheme is badly misconceived
The proposed scheme and design are badly misconceived, in several ways:
- failure to recognise and respond positively to the landscape, landform and other elements of its setting that define Perth’s well-loved ‘sense of place’ and the iconic view of the city and river from King Park;
- the proposed mix and density of uses at the foreshore that would be inimical to its public amenity and enjoyment;
- the concentration and volume of commercial use in the project area will generate an excessively large increment in the central city workforce, which will be highly detrimental to the future provision of public and vehicular transport in the Metropolitan Region, and directly contrary to government planning policy;
- the very large extent of commercial development in this location precludes the development of better located within the central city that is in need of regeneration;
- the proposed building form and, in particular, height, of buildings at and near the foreshore are detrimental in the extreme to both the enjoyment of the public spaces (due to overshadowing, wind funnelling and loss of human scale) and the visual setting of the city centre;
- the proposed inlet is too large, to the extreme detriment of The Esplanade area, and out of scale with its immediate surroundings, properly conceived and a perched lake should be considered in its place;
- there is an almost total lack of civic and other uses and buildings to attract visitors;
- pedestrian and cycle access to and along the foreshore is badly provided for; and
- Riverside Drive is proposed to be closed, with and the substitution of an island and bridges that are out of keeping with the sense of place of the foreshore.

**Recommendation 7: Redesign the scheme to correct basic shortcomings and optimise the outcome**

The redesign should allow for these key aspects, among others referred to in this report.
- retention of the continuity of Riverside Drive;
- retention of sufficient area of The Esplanade to enable its continued civic and recreational roles;
- only low (probably 2-3 storey) buildings at the foreshore itself, with the possibility of taller buildings closer to St Georges Terrace, to achieve the right scale and human comfort;
- a range of civic and entertainment uses that will attract visitors, (like the proposed indigenous cultural centre, museums, galleries, play facilities, etc);
- delete all uses at the foreshore that do not directly contribute to visitor amenity and enjoyment;
- delete all commercial office development that would not serve the recreational function of the foreshore;
- allow for residential apartments, but not above or too close to areas for public enjoyment of the foreshore;
- allow for hotel development at or close to the foreshore, but not in excess of low building heights;
- consider a perched lake in lieu of an inlet;
- continuity of pedestrian and cycle access along the foreshore, close to the water’s edge; and
- safe, grade-separated if possible, access between the city centre and the foreshore for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Conclusion 8: The scheme performs poorly environmentally**

The scheme shows little understanding of the micro-climate of the city and the site, and performs badly on these environmental aspects:
- the scheme layout leaves it excessively exposed to the prevailing winds, throughout most of the year;
- the public spaces will be excessively overshadowed by the tall buildings throughout the year, except in high summer, when shade is desirable;
- the public spaces are likely to be subject to wind funnelling as a consequence of the excessive height of buildings; and
- there is no assurance that the inlet will flush properly.
**Recommendation 8: Ensure that a revised scheme minimises negative environmental aspects**
This recommendation hardly requires elaboration. It should be a given that the scheme provides for public spaces to be protected from wind, open to penetration of sun in winter and the in-between seasons, and shaded in summer, to the maximum extent feasible. These should be firm principles followed in a revised scheme.

**Conclusion 9: It is not in the public interest to sell off the land**
As a matter of principle public land, and especially land that had been granted to the people of the city in perpetuity for recreational purposes, should not be sold. It should remain in public ownership.

**Recommendation 9: Retain all public land in the scheme area in public ownership**
Where it is desirable to develop it for privately owned commercial development, to serve the best interests of the public, it can be leased.