

Rottnest Island Authority
PO Box 693
Fremantle 6959

Re Mt Herschel hotel development

Type of development

I think that the bitumen catchment area is a good site for some extra accommodation on the island. However, I seriously object to the type of accommodation proposed in the concept plan by Broadwater Resorts.

It is obvious from your own research (TNS survey) and from years of views expressed by the West Australian public that this is not the type of accommodation thought appropriate for Rottnest. Even the Act, which **should** guide your management of the island, states that "in the provision and operation of recreational and holiday facilities on the Island, the Authority – (a) shall have particular regard to the needs of persons usually resident in the state who wish to visit or stay on the Island as a family group". This does not mean conference delegates nor does it mean overseas or interstate tourists. If the RIA, or the Minister for Tourism, thinks this no longer applies then they should try to change the Act, not just ignore or override it.

I would prefer to see a development consisting of simply but nicely appointed one-bedroom studios for singles or couples and two and three-bedroom villas for family groups. The development would provide a higher level of comfort than existing accommodation and would include a café/restaurant, although all units would have self-catering facilities.

Size and design of hotel

The Broadwater plan for 120 rooms is too big, both in physical terms and in the number of people it will hold.

The hotel will hold twice as many people as the current accommodation at Longreach, thus trebling the numbers in the bay. Many people choose to stay at Longreach rather than Thomson's for

the peace and quiet it offers. This valued attribute will be ruined by the proposed hotel.

The proposed hotel physically dominates the bay, spreading over a huge area, rising high above the landscape and overlooking the cycle path, the beach and the boats moored in the bay. Although technically only two storeys high, because it steps up on ever higher dunes, it looks like four storeys from the beach and the water. The rear-most two storey blocks of units are completely unacceptable – without them the hotel would look like a two storey development and would remain under the existing dune skyline (I don't believe it's enough to stay under the tree line and question whether there really are that many trees in the area anyway!). If nothing else, those rear unit blocks must be removed from the plan.

The design of the hotel looks very modern and urban, in no way that I can see reflecting the existing architecture of the island nor its distinctly relaxed, holiday feel. There are no flat roofed buildings elsewhere on the island and most structures are long and low, so why are these flat roofed, upright boxes? I was under the impression that the Sustainability Guidelines were supposed to ensure that new buildings were in sympathy with the surrounding architecture.

In summary, while I would like to see a very different development at Mt Herschel, I doubt that the brief and poorly advertised public comment period will result in major changes to the current plan.

However, the removal of the two rear-most (or Eastern) blocks of units would go a long way to improving the plan, both in terms of reducing its physical dominance and in reducing the number of extra people brought into the area.

Margot Penwarden