

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS TO THE RIA RE THE DRAFT ROTTNEST ISLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (2009-2014)

INITIATIVE 5

We understand that the RIA has initiated a two-year research project which started in December 2008 with collection of baseline data on visitor use and impacts on specific environments in the Rottnest Island Reserve outside The Settlement Area over the peak summer period’.

1. Will the RIA advise the public of the criteria for this research?
2. Will the RIA advise the public who is carrying out the research?
3. Is it proposed that this research will have any connection the ‘Rottnest Island Research Strategy’ proposed under Initiative 20?

MT HERSCHEL HOTEL

Further to our previous questions relating to a hotel at Mt Herschel we note that the Society (and the wider public) has received very little indication how concerns raised during the public comment process in early 2007 were addressed in the negotiations with Broadwater. Given that that the RIA is committed to finding a new proponent and proceeding with a hotel on this site during the life of the RIMP 2009-2014 will the RIA respond to the concerns outlined below:

The proposed hotel is too big with 120 rooms and 350 beds – there are only 170 beds in Longreach villas. Together with conference facilities and restaurant the potential associated noise from the pool/café deck likely to affect the amenity for Longreach villa users and boaters in the Bay.

4. Will the RIA explain how they propose to limit the likely adverse effect on the amenity of those staying in the Longreach villas and on boats in the Bay?

The hotel will bring between 60,000-90,000 extra overnight visitors annually (based on 70% occupancy for 240 or 350 beds).

5. Will the RIA advise whether the Sustainable Tourism Research (Initiative 5) is being applied to this site and adjacent beach, headlands, dunes and built facilities and to the traffic between the settlement area and the hotel site?
6. Will the RIA advise how they propose to limit the likely effect on the already severely degraded nearby dunes and headlands?

The length of the lease for a private investment of \$50-\$60 million is likely to be much longer than the 30-year leases we believe have been given to both operators of the Hotel Rottnest and the new Dome café (could it be a 99-year lease?). Successive RIA boards and managements have had problems with managing long leases where property has been allowed to run down, staff numbers have been inadequate, operating hours compromised, and inadequate service been available.

7. Will the RIA advise the likely length of the lease for such an investment?

8. Will the RIA explain how they could ensure that similar situations do not develop over the long life of this lease?

The footprint appeared to be too big and was not confined to the present bitumen area. This may have required clearing of some native vegetation which may be a problem on an “A” Class Reserve.

9. Was this so and if so how was this to be overcome?

Originally there were no height limitations in terms of AHD (effectively above sea level) and encouragement was given to re-contour dunes for extra height so that the hotel would appear as four stories from the Bay and was likely to dominate Longreach Bay and beach, Longreach villas and the golf course. We believe that height limitations may have been introduced.

10. Will the RIA advise what, if any, height limitations apply to building on this site?

The high energy and water use model with air conditioning, swimming pool and spa baths not appropriate design for an island short of power and water – not sustainable building.

11. Will the RIA advise what if any of these amenities will be permissible in any future hotel on this site?

Traffic increase on Geordie/Thomson’s road is likely to be substantial with between 240 and 350 visitors every 2-3 days and their baggage in, and a similar number out, as well as service and supply vehicles.

12. Will the RIA explain how it plans to limit traffic on this road?

The Target market was wealthy singles, couples and conference visitors, which apparently contravened the Act by specifically leaving out families.

13. Will any future hotel be able to actively discourage, or even not accept, families?

Development is intended to become a ‘world class tourist destination’ which appears to contravene the Act, which calls only for ‘holiday and recreational facilities’ and requires that particular regard is paid to the needs of persons normally resident in the state.

14. Will the RIA explain how this does not contravene the Act?

It is not clear to the public which major work on the utilities as outlined in the Norman Disney Young report’s Conclusions is required and how it will be funded.

15. Will the RIA explain what utilities are insufficient to meet the needs of any future hotel on this site, what is required and who will pay to meet the needs?

We doubt that the development will be able to overcome sufficiently the natural barrier of severe winter weather to boost winter numbers substantially and we are therefore concerned about its long-term viability.

16. Will the RIA advise how it is proposed to overcome the winter weather to ensure the viability of such a hotel?

This accommodation model is not that recommended by the Rottneest Island Taskforce and it was easily the least preferred model in the TNS social research survey quoted by Minister and RIA.

17. Will the RIA explain why this model was chosen ahead of the others in the TNS survey?

A question under the miscellaneous department

18. Will the RIA explain what potential financial value to the RIA's bottom line there is in a person who stays in a privately operated 4-4.5 star establishment on the island as compared to a person who stays in a medium-priced RIA operated villa or unit?