

The submission by the Rottnest Society to the Rottnest Island Authority regarding the proposal by the RIA to relocate the barge landing facility from the main jetty to the vicinity of the Army Groyne. This submission was made in early 2024.

The Rottnest Society



The Rottnest Society

PO Box 418 Claremont
Western Australia 6010

ROTTNEST ISLAND AUTHORITY

Email to:

riaconsultation@dbca.wa.gov.au

SOUTH THOMSON BARGE LANDING PROPOSAL

The Rottnest Society recognises that there is a need to restore the Army Groyne and there is some logic to the relocation of the barge operations away from the passenger ferry landing for safety reasons. The advantages of the proposal, however, need to be weighed against the merit of keeping all such activities in one place and avoiding a proliferation of un-Rottnest type activities, particularly in view of the proposals impacting on the “A” Class reserve and Marine Park .

The Society appreciated being provided with a briefing by RIA officers during which it was noted that the proposed development would result in the provision of a landing/storage area four times the current area with provision for temporary ferry mooring, and undercover storage. The impacts would include the loss of 2.39 hectares of seagrass, the widening of Parker Point Road, and the loss of a number of private yacht moorings.

It was noted that the public’s access to the toilet facilities would not be interrupted, those with private yacht moorings would be offered alternatives, the coastal walking trails

traversing the site would be retained and there would be an opportunity to avoid the conflicts arising from the early morning rush of activity by phasing of activity during the day.

It was also noted that a range of studies was being undertaken to assess and minimise impacts and that it was proposed that the details would be presented to the EPA in the hope that an appropriate anticipation of the environmental impacts would forestall the requirement to submit a full environmental assessment. An additional assessment that should be made in the submission to the EPA is a proper evaluation of whether better management of the current barge landing site could effectively reduce conflicts with pedestrians. A proper evaluation of alternatives would be an appropriate component of the EPA submission.

The Society's concerns may well be addressed through the above undertakings and the forthcoming studies, however, it is appropriate to restate what these concerns are:

- Impact of groyne extensions on sand drift and any resulting coastal erosion either side of the groyne;
- The need for actions to compensate for the loss of 0.25 ha of native vegetation and 2.4 ha of seagrass.
- Impact on marine life from construction and on-going barge and ferry activity;
- Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists on Parker Point Road and the additional vehicular traffic;
- Increased water pollution; and
- Minimisation of noise and visual impacts.

While it is noted that .25 hectares of native vegetation will be lost, what is not mentioned is the need for additional planting to provide effective screening to what is basically an industrial use. The large area shown on the Terrestrial Flora and Vegetation map as "South Thomson Barge Landing Onshore Area" could be provided with intensive planting in view of the fact that most of the storage of material would be within the "laydown area" on the east side of the groyne or within the identified Storage Building.

It is noted that the RIA's website page has recently been reformatted resulting in it being more difficult to source detailed information regarding development proposals. Indeed information regarding the two Staff Accommodation proposals (which are understood yet to be determined) has been deleted.

Yours sincerely

Ian MacRae
Chairperson
The Rottneest Society