



WA tourism chiefs back Fremantle development

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The State's top tourism organisation has thrown its support behind the \$10 billion Fremantle North Port Quay development, calling it an exciting and visionary concept.

Tourism Council WA chief executive Graham Moss said yesterday the project offered an environmentally friendly opportunity to develop a world-first facility that would boost tourism and community spirits.

"I'm probably a little bit surprised at the initial reaction — this concept has been developed over the past five years and it deserves now to go through the due process, which is a lengthy public consultation, before dismissing it out of hand," he said.

His comments came as frustrated boat-owner Richard Zandvliet lashed out at Alan Carpenter for the Premier's refusal to consider the island development, saying the 2200 new pens developers had promised to the State as part of the proposal were desperately needed.

Mr Zandvliet, who saved for years to buy his 36-foot yacht currently languishing on the hard stand at the Two Rocks Marina after he failed to secure a pen near his Hillarys home, said the pens would make a huge difference to the industry.

Mr Carpenter has already indicated he will not support the proposal, which included a marina, as it would be a quasi-Dubai.

"It's nothing to do with Dubai — it's progress," Mr Zandvliet said. "If (Mr Carpenter) had his way, we'd still be driving a horse and cart. This is a private consortium which is just saying 'here we go, here's the land and the ocean, it's completely degraded, lets do something with it' — has (the Government) got something better?"

Mr Zandvliet, who requires a special floating pen to accommodate his disabled daughter, said he had given up trying to secure one of the 65 newly released boat pens at Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour because of the prohibitive cost.

"I got the paperwork for it, but

it's a 15m pen and they want top dollar rent for it; it works out to about \$180 a week rent and you have to pay \$45,000 up in advance if you were lucky enough to get one," he said.

The number of registered boat-owners in WA has leapt 25 per cent over the past five years and a chronic shortage of up to 3000 pens is worsening, with many yacht clubs closing their doors to new applications due to waiting lists of up to 10 years.

Marine broker Brendon Grieve said if the development did not go ahead, the impact on an industry already crippled by a shortage of facilities would be severe.

"We have thousands more boats today than when the last boat ramps were built on the metropolitan coastline more than 20 years ago. If you own a boat and you want to sell it, and your pen is not transferable into someone else's name, you can't sell it," he said.



High and dry: Frustrated boat owners Richard and Rhonda Zandvliet cannot find a pen for their yacht kept on a hard stand at Two Rocks Marina. Picture: Sandra Jackson