



Letters Give project a chance

In 1897 the SS Sultan entered Fremantle Harbour. This was an historic event because, before this, the harbour had been closed to shipping by a bar of solid rock.

According to a news item in *The West Australian* on May 7, 1897: "It was the opinion of almost all the engineers who were brought to examine the place that it would be most inadvisable to make a harbour there, and the barrier of stone was left almost untouched. Authority after authority declared in the first place that it would be a work of insurmountable cost to cut through the bar, and next, were it cut through, the entrance would silt up, and, in the case of a north-westerly gale, possibly block in all the ships in the river."

The names of all engineers and the individuals in the various authorities are now long forgotten but, as we now know, they were all wrong. One hundred and eleven years later an audacious \$10 billion

island development has been proposed for Fremantle North Quay. Already Alan Carpenter and Jim McGinty have said they don't like it and it won't happen. Even Kerry Sanderson, the Fremantle Port chief, who would certainly not be where she is today if we had listened to all the naysayers more than a century ago, has said no to the project.

But why not give the project a chance? Mr McGinty and Mr Carpenter, will you be remembered in 100 years?

John J. Leach, Winthrop.



Fremantle island project.



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IN SHORT

The Government turns down an amazing development for Fremantle paid for by private enterprise. Why? Probably it doesn't want to be upstaged and made to look stupid with the circus it has planned for the river, unwanted by many who will pay anyway, and Ferris wheels. Alan Carpenter took only five minutes to declare the idea stupid.

Gwen Moppett, Doubleview.



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The lesson

How appropriate would be this lesson: Build your foundations on rock, for you who build on sand will be washed away and crumble.

Certainly anyone professing to be an engineer and suggesting an ocean-based suburb off Fremantle has never stood on the North Mole in a gentle blow and never ferried to Rottnest in moderate weather. They must be dreaming.

Other than build a six-metre above-water wall, it is not possible to create a residential area adjacent to the port without severely limiting the access to the port and causing untold environmental damage.

Brian Webb, Hamersley.



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What about us?

It seems some of our politicians have surpassed their own arrogance yet again.

How typical to consider this \$10 billion Fremantle North Quay development above the desperate needs of the State at large.

Where does the majority of the wealth come from? It comes from the Pilbara region and very little is reinvested back.

We constantly hear that Canberra is aware of the current situation in the Pilbara — the lack of infrastructure and services. Why aren't they doing something?

In the metropolitan area visiting a doctor or a dentist is a God-given right, up here it is fast becoming a God-given privilege.

How about thinking outside your comfort zone and start putting money where it is genuinely and urgently needed instead of lining some fat cats' purses?

Debbie Becker. Newman.



Letters It will add to social inequality

Are the values and priorities of various socio-economic groups in Perth society on a collision course? Take people's reactions to proposals to develop the CBD foreshore or Subiaco sporting complex and, more spectacularly, the coastal development at Fremantle as classic examples of disparity in public opinion and attitudes.

On the one hand, spiralling fossil fuel prices, global warming, food shortages and terrorism are alarming realities internationally; while on the home front, drought, housing unaffordability, street violence, rising food prices and chronic homelessness impinge harshly on the lives of big sections of WA society.

But in another sector of society, life is plagued with other concerns: it's the scarcity of moorings for the family yacht, finding a decent restaurant and having world-class housing with ocean views that cause endless angst.

Sure, lots of people have worked hard and can claim they deserve the rewards that come with status and wealth. But today that argument is obsolete given the depleting ecological capacity of the planet to sustain extravagant developments such as the Fremantle proposal.

It's not "exciting", it's obscene and grubby: an ambitious grab for

extravagant living by the extremely wealthy beneficiaries of the current boom times. The ordinary working families of WA continue to contend with the hostile environment of the rising costs of living on every front: food, fuel and affordable housing.

Many of the current social problems are the result of economic and social inequality. The perception by some minority groups that they are being disfranchised, disconnected and alienated from sharing in the prosperity of a society such as ours is a reality. What follows is street violence, vandalism and criminal behaviour. The simple answer to dispelling their perception lies in widely available access to better education and better health.

Better schools and hospitals are what will dispel the "Dullsville" tag, not some Dubai-style resort.

Victor Dwyer, Bassendean.



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Let them have it

I don't understand the negativity about the proposed development at Fremantle. Everybody wants to live near water.

What's wrong with giving people what they want? I'm sure it won't cost the taxpayers anything and the sustainability experts seem to like it.

If rising sea levels are a threat, just build it one metre higher than normal.

If that isn't enough and the houses become uninhabitable, a bunch of rich people will need to build new houses. They can afford it.

**Graeme Nicholls,
Hamersley.**