

# Young 'stack' Vic Quay day

by JENNY D'ANGER

A FORUM to decide the fate of the multi-million dollar Victoria Quay development today (Saturday November 25) has been stacked, local academic and Freo Society member Ron Davidson claims.

People who hadn't been mailed an invite were rung and asked if they wanted to attend, but only if they were under 39 years old, he told the *Herald*. "They were ringing people before the submission [to attend the forum] date was up."

The mailed invitation asks people to tick a box to indicate which age group they are in.

Two people who hadn't received an invite told the *Herald* they were phoned a week before the submission cutoff of November 20.

"A woman asked if I'd like to attend and said 'are you between 18-39'," 51-year-old Ari Antonovsky said, adding. "They don't want old fogies over 39."

South Fremantle's Nicolas Gurr - another key member of the Fremantle Society - had the same experience. "A woman called and said did I want to participate in an evaluation in an exciting new retail development at Victoria Quay. I said yes and she said it's open to people between 18 to 39," the 60-year-old said.

Both believe Fremantle Ports is trying to stack the forum with young people more likely to sup-

port the mall-like shops and cafes planned for the harbour.

Fremantle Ports PR bugle Ainslie de Vos scoffed at the claim, telling the *Herald* the survey and questionnaire, put together by Murdoch University, were designed to get a cross-section of the population.

"We have a lot of people in the 50+ category - we aim to get a representation of the community to sample different age groups and get their views," she said.

Around 5000 invitations to the forum were sent out randomly to Fremantle residents and a few to outer suburbs, translating to around 200 at the all-day forum who will be paid \$50 for attending.

Mr Davidson, who taught social measurement at UWA for years, says it's hardly random if people are phoned, based on a set age.

"It's got nothing to do with a random sample [of the population] a random sample has a very specific meaning," he said.

He was also critical of the process that would see people at the forum choosing from proposals put forward by developer ING and Fremantle Ports.

"It's a very controlling technique. There are hundreds of alternatives for the site and I'll bet dollars to doughnuts the group will see only a couple of them."

The word on the street is today's forum will be shown plans for a five-storey development, in line with WA planning minister Alannah MacTiernan's preference.