



Surging response to six-island plan

by ANDREW SMITH

THERE was a swift and thunderous response to last week's lead story on the massive housing marina proposed for Rous Head in North Fremantle. (*Storm rages over islands*, Herald 31/5/08).

First cab off the rank was David Christison, PR face for the developers of North Port Quay. And last, following some gentle Herald prodding, was WA planning minister Alannah MacTiernan, while in between was a host of letters for and against - see letters' pages.

Mr Christison rejected one of the Herald's references to international sustainability expert and local resident professor Peter Newman as "... inaccurate and poses a threat to [his] reputation." He requested "... clarification with similar prominence to the original article." With his comments were statements from professor Newman and project leader Chris Carman. Both statements can

been seen in full on page 3.

Ms MacTiernan, who had been in China when the story broke and did not comment for last week's story, took a philosophical stance which is published in full: "I know it is entirely fruitless to attempt to introduce any inconvenient truth that may undermine Herald hysteria.

"My advice to the proponents of the North Quay project some years ago was that I thought they would have difficulty garnering community support - but they were welcome to test my judgement. I did say I thought the project was far too big and if they were to have any chance it must be more modestly sized. I have not given any in-principle support. However, we live in a democracy - and we let a hundred flowers bloom."

(Herald comment: the Chookhouse's Chinese historian was intrigued by the planning minister's gentle reference to 'one hundred flowers'.

It was Chairman Mao's 1950s move to give students more

freedom for a "flowering of ideas".

The 'blooming flowers' were quickly lopped when the surge of ideas threatened the Communist overlords: Mao stood accused of using the 'flowers' to lull the thinking citizens into revealing the strength of opposition to the communist ideology - not that we are suggesting for one minute the minister is doing this to the 'revolting' folk of Freo!)