

# Colin Barnett's Residents' Newsletter

Member for Cottesloe

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## Leighton Beach - Planning Before Development

**Leighton Beach is, without doubt, the most significant issue I have faced as your Local Member.**

Public beaches are an Australian icon. Any threat to access and enjoyment is bound to raise emotions – and rightly so.

Leighton Beach is more than simply a local beach. It is a safe beach for families and the elderly and serves a wide part of the metropolitan area including suburbs south of the river.

The highest value of Leighton Beach is its recreational value.

At the same time, the disused Westrail marshalling yard is a degraded wasteland in need of rehabilitation and rejuvenation. It is an area that has been closed to public access for some 80 years.

Within the 17 hectare site there is scope for an area of appropriate development. The question is how much and where?

From the outset (last January) I have stressed the need to resolve key planning issues including public open space, road layout, residential density, ocean setback, parking and beach access.

Growing community concern reflects the obvious in that planning should precede development. The perception is, with some justification, that the whole process is back to front.

While statutory planning and environmental

processes must apply, under any scenario, there is a clear need for public confidence to be restored. Even the developers find themselves in somewhat of a policy vacuum.

The Fremantle Regional Study (1994) did identify the marshalling yard site as suitable for redevelopment, with the provision of open space through access corridors. A Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment (1995) subsequently rezoned 15 hectares of land from 'railways' to 'urban'. A new road reserve was also created alongside the railway line for the purpose of taking heaving traffic away from the beach front – something I strongly support.

These processes were, however, 'broadbrush' in nature. They did not address the detail necessary for a development brief on such a sensitive site.

A key issue is the amount of setback from the ocean. Independent advice suggests that an ecologically sustainable dune system requires 60 to 80 metres reservation. The inclusion of planning guidelines and public access indicates an actual setback of some 100 metres from the first line of vegetation as being necessary.

Both planning and environmental issues need to be properly resolved in a fully public and accountable process. This needs to happen now and should occur under the auspices of the

Western Australian Planning Commission.

The public interest issues are of such importance that it is not reasonable to expect the developer to have to deal with them. The proper role for the developer is to concentrate on that portion of land that is deemed available for development.

The resolution of these issues must precede development. A pause now to the development timetable will save time in the longer term and ensure that the right balance between public space and private property is achieved.

My own expectation is that development can occur in the southern and possibly northern end of the site with the more narrow central area remaining as public open space.

In practical terms this would translate to an extended parkland (with ample parking) of some 800 to 900 metres in length with the spectacular views from Stirling Highway and the rail system remaining uninterrupted. The parkland would vary in width between 100 and 200 metres, and could be incorporated within the Vlamingh Parklands concept.

I thank the many community members who have contacted me on this issue and welcome your response to the position I have outlined. I will continue to work closely with local councils and residents and at a government level to achieve the proper result.



*The highest value of Leighton Beach is its recreational value.*

**For residents in Claremont, Mosman Park, Cottesloe, South City Beach, Swanbourne, North Fremantle, Floreat, Karrakatta, Mount Claremont, Peppermint Grove, Shenton Park.**

# New Life for Claremont Art Buildings

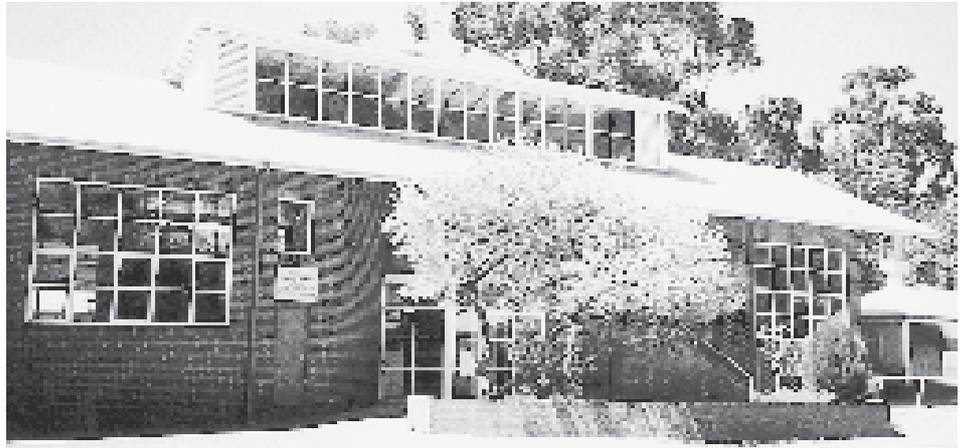
**Nostalgia, tinged with sadness, marked the final curtain for the Claremont School of Art. The decision by TAFE to concentrate its art programmes at the Central Metropolitan College in Northbridge has left the Claremont buildings vacant – at least for the moment.**

Plans are afoot to utilise the site in what will be a unique partnership between Claremont Primary School and the local community.

It may not be widely known that the land and buildings are the property of the Education Department. The original building, constructed in 1904, was used as an infants' school for much of its history.

The first priority will be the needs of Claremont Primary School. With some 180 students, the school currently occupies only 0.9 of a hectare. This is well below the standard for new schools.

The School will be able to expand in area and take over the original brick building for a dedicated pre-primary centre and for specific art, craft and music areas. The school library will be re-located into what was the gallery, with an opportunity for the Claremont Town Library to



*Gallery Buildings*

be co-located with a sharing of resources.

Other buildings, such as the sculpture building and the old weatherboard classroom, will be available for shared community use. More recent, and less appealing buildings will be removed.

The site and buildings will all be vested in Claremont Primary School, with a proposed management group (which will include the Town of Claremont Cultural Committee) to oversee the redevelopment and use of the facilities. A number of community groups are already involved.

An added bonus is to adapt the already

budgeted-for covered assembly area for the school so that it may take more of an amphitheatre form and be suitable for performances and events.

To fund the refurbishment and re-position some of the buildings it may be necessary to sell a small part of the site for residential use.

At this point the Education Department has appointed a consultant architect to develop an overall site plan. Comments and suggestions from residents and community groups are very welcome.

## Freshwater Bay Plan



*Freshwater Bay*

**I had to declare a vested interest when asked to launch the Freshwater Bay Management Plan.**

As a regular morning walker (with Jess, the family Labrador) the idea of a continuous pathway around Freshwater Bay has lots of appeal.

The Swan River Trust and the Town of Claremont have come up with an imaginative proposal to further improve the community enjoyment of the beautiful Freshwater Bay.

The Freshwater Bay Heritage Trail will initially connect from Claremont Museum to Claremont Yacht Club and then, hopefully, continue right through to the Peppermint Grove foreshore. It is intended as a soft surface (crushed limestone) and to be consistent with a rehabilitation

programme to eradicate weeds and replant with native species.

Heritage interpretation along the trail will cover both pre and post-European settlement. The Aboriginal word "Karrakatta" was the name used for the sandbar in the bay. Claremont Museum was originally the Freshwater Bay School, while the old Osborne Hotel Steps mark both a corroboree site as well as that of the former hotel, the last remnants of which were demolished in the mid 1980's.

The Claremont Heritage Trust Advisory Committee will assist with public consultation on the plan.

## Banksia Farm

**The Friends of Banksia Farm have led a determined campaign to ensure this small area of bushland is preserved – and it will be.**

The existence of a Trust over the land was not widely recognised when negotiations were undertaken with the Town of Cambridge over the expansion of Bold Park.

In essence, the arrangement was for \$6.5 million to be paid to the Town of Cambridge, \$5 million to be given to the Kings Park Board for use on Bold Park and for any surplus resulting from agreed land sales to be split between the Town of Cambridge and the Kings Park Board.

It is my judgement that there will be sufficient surplus funds from the sale of lots in Fortview Road and adjacent to Banksia Farm for the area of bushland to remain essentially intact, with some logical straightening of the bushland boundaries.

# Secondary Education In The Western Suburbs About To Be Transformed

**Work on the new Shenton College is under way. Earthworks have been completed with construction now starting. The \$23 million project will be ready for the start of the 2001 school year.**

An innovative middle school, focussing on pastoral care of students, will comprise years eight and nine. It will be based on four learning communities. Years 10, 11 and 12 will make up the senior school, with year 10 as the transition year. Special links will be established with the University of Western Australia in the areas of community service, student enrichment, educational research, school management and professional development.

The Lemnos heritage buildings, currently occupied by the Health Department, will become part of the

Shenton College site in October 2001.

Work is nearing completion on the revamping of **Churchlands Senior High School**, after the devastating fire of 1997. The two stage project, at a total cost of \$10.4 million, will be completed for the start of next year. This will bring Churchlands up to new school standard with facilities being well in excess of the original buildings.

Also from next year, John Curtin Senior High School will become **John Curtin College of the Arts**. The College will attract students from across the State with particular talent in the performing arts. It is likely that a portion of unused land will be sold to fund a performing arts complex on the school site in Fremantle.

**City Beach High School**, catering for years 8 to 10, provides an alternative approach through a more personalised education for the early

years of secondary education in a small school environment. Programs offered allow for a seamless progression to years 11 and 12 at Shenton College (once opened) with the option of attending Churchlands.

Negotiations have begun on the collocation of an **International School** campus on the City Beach High School site. The school will cater for the children of expatriates working in Australia and the region. An international school will bring a new dimension to WA's education system and provide both overseas and local students with opportunities to achieve an International Baccalaureate (the widely recognised entrance certificate into universities throughout the world).

As Education Minister, I have been pleased to work with local school communities on these exciting projects.

## Underground Power Supported

**As Energy Minister I have copped a fair bit of criticism because of the State Underground Power Programme being concentrated in the western suburbs. Such is life!**

The reality is that this area has a combination of an ageing overhead power system, a susceptibility to storm damage, enthusiastic councils and a community willing to pay a share. That is why local suburbs have done well in the independent selection process overseen by the Office of Energy and Western Power Corporation.

The pilot projects (1996) and round one funding (1998) will have seen a total of 4,339 properties connected to underground power in the suburbs of Cottesloe, Claremont, Swanbourne and Peppermint Grove by the end of this year.

The removal of unsightly power poles and the erection of new streetlights along Stirling Highway is an added bonus from the programme.

Proposals for round two funding have been received from Claremont, Mosman Park, Nedlands and Cambridge (South City Beach and Floreat) councils. These will be assessed by the steering committee, with a decision likely before the end of the year.



*Work on Stirling Highway.*

# John Curtin's Home Preserved



*Prime Minister John Howard and Colin Barnett at John Curtin's home.*

## **The residence of wartime Prime Minister, John Curtin, will remain on-site in Jarrad Street Cottesloe.**

After several months of discussion, the house was purchased from the Curtin family in a joint arrangement between the State and Commonwealth governments. The strong heritage advice was that the house should be preserved at its original location

A heritage conservation plan is now

underway. It is intended that the Curtin Centre (at Curtin University) will help maintain the property and assist with interpretive and exhibition material. The house will be open to the public at set times during the year, with the involvement of local historical groups very welcome.

## Surf Reef "Works"

### **Yes, it's official, the Cables Station Artificial Surf Reef does work.**

The \$1.35 million reef was built from granite 250 metres offshore at the boundary of Cottesloe and Mosman Park councils.

Before the reef was built 'surfable' days, based on data over five years, was predicted at five to eight breaks per year.

Once the artificial reef was completed, it was predicted that Cables would break between 50 and 70 times per year. The experience so far has exceeded these predictions.

In the six months since completion the following has been recorded: 71 surfable days (May to August), 95 breaking days

(May to August). Surfable days are when people are seen in the water, breaking days are when a surfable wave actually breaks.

The data for September to October has not yet been analysed, but similar breaking days to those recorded in the previous two months are expected, adding another 56 days.

With some minor extensions and the filling in of 'low spots', the wave should improve further.

Sea grass, schools of fish and a variety of marine life have already colonised the reef.

## Over \$6m For Community Grants

**The Cottesloe Marine Protection Group with its outstanding plan to establish a fish habitat protection area along the Cottesloe reef system, is just one of the local groups assisted by State Government grants totalling over \$6 million awarded in the Cottesloe Electorate.**

Other projects assisted include the Independent Living Centre in Selby Street, a mobile hoist to help people with a disability at the Claremont Aquatic Centre, extensions for The Aged Persons

Support Service in Cottesloe, the skateboard facility in Mosman Park, and renovations at Wanslea to provide short term accommodation for country cancer patients.

### **Electorate Office**

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## Ask Nina . . .

### **CHANGE TO SCHOOL STARTING AGE**

The school starting age will change from 2001 for children turning four years old in that year.

The new cut-off date will be mid year.

Children turning four in the first half of the year will commence kindergarten at the beginning of 2001. Children turning four in the second half of 2001 will commence kindergarten at the beginning of 2002.

These changes will then progressively extend, year by year, through the pre-primary, primary and secondary years of schooling.

### **FREE SUNDAY TRAVEL FOR SENIORS**

The new Seniors Ticket entitles Seniors Card holders to travel free on Sundays and public holidays from October this year.

The ticket may be used as many times as you like on these days. Remember to carry both your Seniors Card and your Seniors Ticket with you.

### **HEALTH SERVICES GUIDE**

The Western Australian Health Services Guide provides essential information and contact numbers in metropolitan and regional areas for hospitals, community health services, alcohol and drug services, child health and dental services.

The Guide covers all State Government funded health services in an easy to use booklet. All households should have received a copy of the guide by now. If not, call Nina!

### **LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

Our office keeps contact details for more than 300 community organisations spread throughout the electorate.

Recreational, sporting, arts, youth, historical, church, service and many other groups make up this data bank.

If you are interested in joining a group, or want to make sure your organisation is on the list, then just 'Ask Nina'.