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Council listens to community on waterfront projects

March 20, 2014

Redland City Council has listened to the community and will ask the State Government to amend the plans for the two waterfront development projects in line with community feedback.

Redland City Mayor Karen Williams said the amendments Council would recommend to the State Government included reducing building heights at Toondah Harbour by a third.

"The community has been very clear on a number of key points and Council has listened and will now recommend the State Government amend the Toondah Harbour and Weinam Creek proposed development schemes in line with the wishes of the community," she said.

Key amendments Council will recommend the State Government make to the PDA proposed development schemes include:

- The maximum height at Toondah Harbour being reduced by a third from 15 storeys to 10 storeys, an increase of just three storeys to the seven storeys currently allowed at the site
- The maximum occupancy of any marina at Toondah Harbour being halved from 800 berths to 400 berths
- As originally planned a commitment that public open space will not be reduced as a result of the PDAs, including GJ Walter Park
- A technical working group be formed to ensure key issues will be considered during the planning process, including car parking, development height and density and traffic.

In today's Council meeting Division 9 Councillor Paul Gleeson moved an amendment to the Toondah Harbour motion to cap building heights at ten storeys and protect GJ Walter Park.

"The clear majority of people have told us they want something done at Toondah Harbour but they were concerned about losing public open space. So Council has responded and will recommend to the State Government that GJ Walter Park be protected," he said.

"Another key issue for the community is the height of buildings and I think 10 storeys is a good compromise with it only being three storeys higher than what is currently allowed at Toondah Harbour."

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Cr Williams said today's Council decision was a win for community feedback and showed the public notification process has worked.

"The community has asked for change and Council has listened and responded," Cr Williams said.

"The community told us they don't want 15 storeys at Toondah Harbour – so we have recommended 10.

"They want public space protected at both Weinam Creek and Toondah Harbour, particularly GJ Walter Park, so we have recommended no net loss of public open space as a result of the PDAs

"They don't want an 800 berth marina at Toondah Harbour – so we have recommended a maximum of 400.

"They told us car parking is important, and we agree; so a technical working group will be formed to ensure this is a major consideration in the planning of the project.

"They told us the environment is important, and we agree. We have already undertaken technical studies that will be released to the public to show this will continue to be a major consideration."

Cr Williams said the amendments recommended to the State Government strived for a balance that would allow much-needed community infrastructure to be funded through private enterprises rather than by ratepayers.

"A community survey showed that 90 per cent of respondents agree that something needs to be done at Weinam Creek and Toondah Harbour," she said.

"Respondents also said they want to see infrastructure at the PDA sites funded by developers and not ratepayers and these proposed development schemes make that possible with developers to fund community infrastructure while realising a commercial return.

"For example, approximately \$80 million in community infrastructure is needed at Toondah Harbour, including upgrades to ferry terminals and passenger facilities, better transport interchange and parking, enhancements to parkland and improved pedestrian and cycle links to the bay.

"In order to keep rates low and have investors fund and improve the existing key infrastructure at Toondah Harbour, including establishing a maritime approved navigation channel, we know we need 800 residential and commercial units to pay for it.

"It is important to note that with higher storey buildings, we can retain more parkland as the footprint is smaller. With lower storey buildings a greater area is needed to deliver the same number of units.

"Council is committed to retaining public open space and this plan allows current green space to remain by building up rather than out across the PDA footprint as the case would be if the height limit was lower.

"It is important to remember that there have been plans for redevelopment at Toondah Harbour in particular since the 1960s and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to realise this vision and bring jobs, tourism and economic development to our city."

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