

From: [REDACTED]
To: [IPCN Enquiries Mailbox](#)
Subject: Proposed West Culburra development
Date: Tuesday, 31 July 2018 1:31:36 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

I attended the public meeting regarding the West Culburra development last Tuesday, July 24, held at the Culburra Beach Bowls Club.

I am a relative newcomer to Culburra Beach, having bought a house in 2016 in which I reside permanently, so I had a relatively open mind when it came to the development. I attended the meeting to gain as much knowledge as possible on the matter before deciding which point of view I agreed with.

Having read the available documentation prior to the meeting, and witnessed the aggressive bully-boy tactics and untruths employed by the pro-development group, I have to say I am now on the side of the anti group.

I am not anti-development generally, but I do not agree with the size of the proposed development. It is an inappropriate size for the area and has the potential to cause irreparable damage. And I would like to know what interaction the developers have had with local Indigenous groups regarding the suitability of the integration of sensitive sites such as middens being incorporated into the plan.

I am at a loss to understand why, after three knockbacks, the developers are still pursuing their plans with no appreciable amendments to address the concerns of the planning authorities and locals who think it inappropriate.

I would especially like to express my dismay at the way in which the meeting was conducted last Tuesday. I question the suitability of the choice of venue. More than a few of the attendees in the rear section adjacent to the children's play area were drinking alcohol (I couldn't see what was happening in the front area in the function room), and I feel that added to the general belligerence displayed by many. I was sitting near people who were anti-development and I witnessed aggressive language and gestures directed at them throughout the afternoon, to the point where some of them felt unsafe. It is a great pity the rear section was not easily observed by those chairing the meeting. There was frequent heckling and abuse directed at the anti-development speakers when they had the floor. No such discourtesy was forthcoming towards the pro-development people. I feel the meeting should have been halted when Brian Muller called for a show of hands (against the rules of the meeting). Instead he was permitted to continue speaking. His call for numbers left those against the proposal vulnerable to more abuse. Also, the meeting was held at a time when people in employment were not easily able to attend, meaning there was a large number of retirees there and younger residents were under-represented.

I would also like to question the motives of several of the pro-development speakers who seem to be spreading a great deal of misinformation, both at the meeting, and locally prior to it. There are frequent references to the closure of the Woolworths supermarket and also the possibility of the pharmacy and service station closing following the failure of the hardware store. A simple email directed to the head office of the Woolworths Group last week elicited the response that they are not planning to close the store if the development does not go ahead. They did not take the proposed development into consideration when opening the store (contrary to local rumour). The store is profitable and they intend to keep trading, as Head Office is happy with the performance of the store. As for the pharmacy, it appears to be a gold mine with so many elderly people in the area. They have a large staff and offer a free delivery service, not likely for a business that is struggling. And there are two service stations in Culburra Beach, both of which appear to do good business. There are many other successful businesses in the area; when I had a bathroom renovation done soon after buying my house, I had to wait for three months for the work to commence as the contractors were so busy. There is a coffee van, several cafes, three hairdressers, a nail salon, three motor mechanics and a beauty spa. Local feedback seems to indicate the hardware store is closing due to poor management and undercapitalisation rather than because the town is dying; the supply of basic items such as bags of cement and star pickets was uncertain as they could not keep the shelves stocked. Other businesses that have closed recently include a clothing store near the coffee van that was not even connected to electricity. Perhaps if prospective business owners did their due diligence before committing themselves fewer shops would be shutting their doors.

I would also offer the theory that there might be more affordable housing in the area if there were fewer greedy absentee owners who buy at high prices and then recoup their funds by renting their properties on web-based short-term accommodation sites such as Airbnb. There are whole streets here that are empty on weeknights. Perhaps Culburra Beach should set an example by banning short-term holiday lets in favour of permanent tenants.

Sincerely,

Maggie Cooper