



A Co-operative venture of the municipalities of:
Cockburn, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Kwinana, Melville & Rockingham

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Contact: Mick McCarthy (08) 9364 0631

Reference: Murdoch Eastern Precinct Concept Plan Submission

Karen Schmidt
Director of Commercial Services
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Dear Karen

**SOUTH WEST GROUP SUBMISSION ON THE MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
EASTERN PRECINCT URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

The South West Group, formed in November 1983, is a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). It comprises the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle, Melville, and Rockingham, and the Towns of East Fremantle and Kwinana. The South West Group is managed by a Board consisting of the Mayors and CEOs of its member local governments.

The South West Group seeks to work with these six local governments and through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government to capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.

The South West Group has been a member of the Murdoch Precinct Strategic Group since its inception and has a keen interest on the future planning and development of the Murdoch Activity Centre (MAC).

The development of the Eastern Precinct of Murdoch University has regional significance due to its pivotal location within the MAC. The MAC is currently classified as a Specialised Centre under Directions 2031 and will benefit from a well integrated and connected centre with a wider range of land uses including commercial and medium density residential.

The location of the Murdoch University Eastern Precinct adjacent to the key arterial Murdoch Drive means that the design framework should facilitate active transport, encourage public transport, limit vehicular traffic using Murdoch Drive and encourage access to the site from Farrington Road and South Street.

Regional Significance of MAC

The diversification of cultural and economic activity within the MAC is crucial to the long term regional goal of creating greater employment self-sufficiency. Murdoch is planned to become one of the largest employment centres outside of the Perth CBD building on the investment of over \$2 billion in the development of the Fiona Stanley Hospital and the St John of God Murdoch Hospital. The creation of over 35,000 jobs at Murdoch will rely on the creation of high amenity and functionality within the MAC and the creation of a high quality, well linked pedestrian precinct.

The mix of commercial, civic, cultural, education, recreation and research activities is important to developing the unique character right across the MAC. The scale of the Murdoch Eastern Precinct site is similar to the combined St John of God Murdoch Hospital, Fiona Stanley Hospital, State Rehabilitation Centre and Challenger Institute of Technology sites. An estimated 10,000 jobs could be created by the development.

Key regional facilities such as a hotel, conference facilities and a performing arts centre could be part of the development.

South West Group Position

The South West Group strongly supports the Urban Design Framework for the Murdoch University Eastern Precinct as being consistent with the broader development of the MAC and structure planning of MAC Part B to be a unique destination within the Perth Metropolitan Area. The South West Group also supports this work as establishing a framework to guide development of this area to 2038.

Key Issues Requiring Further Consideration

Access - Murdoch Drive

The Urban Design Framework needs to be explicit about the linkages across Murdoch Drive both for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The statement on Page 4 that "*The transit spine will require excellent crossing facilities at Murdoch Drive*" needs more elaboration. This area has been recognised as being problematic for pedestrian access and safety due to high vehicle traffic. It is expected that grade separation will be required for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Murdoch Drive within ten years and therefore the planning for the area needs to take this into account. For example, the eastern edge of Murdoch Square should incorporate elevated walkways so that pedestrians and cyclists are already at a level to allow for grade separated crossing of Murdoch Drive.

Landmark Building – Potential Constraint on Grade Separated Interchange at Murdoch Drive and South Street

The location of a landmark building at the corner of South Street and Murdoch Drive should be reviewed, as this may limit the functionality of a grade separated road crossing at that location. The South West Group has been an advocate for the grade separated interchange at Murdoch Drive and South Street and the landmark building should not compromise this function.

Performing Arts Centre Opportunities

The region has limited high quality performance spaces, which are important venues for the public to gain cultural experiences and diversity in performing arts industry.

Murdoch Square represents a great opportunity for a regional scale performing arts centre with multifunction use as conference facilities. These facilities need specialised design for movement of people, displays and equipment. Whilst not commercial in themselves, they encourage the development of commercial activities that will give Murdoch Square character and evening activation. The concept on Page 9 does not appear to cater for cultural activities around Murdoch Square.

Traffic Congestion – Murdoch Drive and at South Street/Murdoch Drive Intersection

The successful development of the MAC is threatened by the ability to be able to handle the anticipated levels of traffic on South Street and Murdoch Drive. The Murdoch University Eastern Precinct must be designed to minimise traffic through the South Street/Murdoch Drive intersection and along Murdoch Drive.

The long term development plan shown on Page 10 shows the development of a number of nodes along Farrington Street. The middle node located between the “Banksia Woodland” and “Melaleuca Swamp” should have a transit corridor linking Murdoch Square directly with Farrington Road and providing a new road access to the university. This access would limit the number of vehicles accessing the site from the south having to travel on Murdoch Drive.

In regards to the long term development plan and access onto Farrington Road, the impact of additional traffic on Farrington Road as a result of future development at Murdoch University requires further investigation. Murdoch University will need to discuss the potential traffic impacts with the relevant local governments (Cities of Melville and Cockburn), with a view of determining any road upgrade requirements and developer contributions.

Landscaping Constraints along Murdoch Drive

The opportunity for Boulevard Landscaping as shown on Page 12 is compromised by the scale of the existing road formation and the transformer switchyard. The transformer switchyard is unlikely to be reduced in footprint due the high level of recent investment. The development of landscaping for Murdoch Drive may therefore require a greater set back on the Murdoch University site.

Light Rail and Sustainable Transport

The South West Group has been a strong supporter for light rail and contributed toward a joint study with The Greens undertaken by UWA student (Michael Crocker) on a light rail corridor study: Murdoch to Fremantle (refer to copy of the report enclosed). The geometry of the Transit Corridor should be designed to accommodate light rail in the future.

The South West Group commends Murdoch University for taking a pro-active approach to the planning for the eastern precinct and looks forward to further developments on its progress following consideration by the University Senate later in 2012.

Yours sincerely



Mick McCarthy
Director South West Group

Attachment - Southwest Light Rail Transit Corridor Study – Murdoch to Fremantle