

Southern Gazette

SOUTH PERTH

Community

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Height of absurdity

Tim Mayne

SWAN MHR Steve Irons has lashed out at what he describes as "unfair, contradictory and illogical planning practices" in his electorate and across WA.

In a speech last week to the House of Representatives, Mr Irons criticised the City of South Perth's planning processes and staff, including the chief executive.

Mr Irons used the proposed 29-storey tower development at 74 Mill Point Road in South Perth as an example, which he said was given "rubber stamp" approval by the Metro Central Joint Develop Assessment Panel (JDAP) on May 25.

Mr Irons said he understood ratepayers' frustration at the decision, particularly when they could not get council planning approval for what he described as relatively minor changes to homes.

Mr Irons declared in his speech that

wife Cheryle Irons was a councillor for the Mill Point ward, where the proposed 29-storey building will be located.

South Perth residents, who had previously stated their objection to the proposed development, were furious at news it had been given approval.

Mill Point Road resident Vicki Redden said she was angry and disillusioned at what she described as ratepayers being misled.

"The public consultation and communications were a farce," Ms Redden said.

"The station precinct plan is a farce and the planning process within the council of office is a farce.

"(CEO) Cliff Frewing and the whole South Perth planning department should resign in shame."

MHR SLAMS SOUTH PERTH OVER PLANNING

The City of South Perth said a ratepayers' meeting in early May was designed to enable residents to express their opinions to council on the Mill Point Road development and area as a whole.

But South Perth resident Greg Benjamin said the community had been duped.

"No consideration was given by JDAP to the outcome of the well-attended public meeting," he said.

"It was too late; the pro-development lobby has exploited loose language in the amended town planning scheme for their own interests."

Many residents said they thought that under the scheme there were strict height restrictions on building in the South Perth region.

An artist's impression of the proposed development at 74 Mill Point Road, South Perth. Picture: City of South Perth

The City of South Perth said while it was incredibly disappointed that the JDAP dismissed community feedback, the ultimate responsibility lay with the State Government.

"The State Government has mandated that Development Assessment Panels replace council in the decision-making process for developments over \$10 million," South Perth Mayor Sue Doherty said.

"Council can only provide their recommendation to the JDAP for consideration, denying council any decision-making capacity."

South Perth MLA John McGrath said unfortunately, with a development of this size, the council had its hands tied.

"Planning law now requires a project of this value to be determined by the JDAP, so council has no decision-making role," he said.