

Ref: 160714 MRP_COB

Att: Justin Biggar – Planning Officer

38 Peel Terrace
Busselton
WA 6280

Dear Justin,

RE: MARGARET RIVER PRIVATE – DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION – ADVERTISING OBJECTIONS AND RESPONSE

As requested, please find below our responses to the major objections that were received in response to the Development Application for Margaret River Private, 48 Roy Road, Metricup, to include in your report.

1. The safety and security of the nearby residents will be under threat. How will this be mitigated?

There is no threat to the safety and security of nearby residents as Margaret River Private clients will be drug and alcohol free. People in recovery have recognised that they have a problem and are seeking treatment to solve the problem. Clients are being cared for throughout their stay 24/7 by medical staff and therapists and have a busy program from 7am to 10pm every day.

By contrast, many members of our local community have a drug or alcohol problem, but are unwilling to get treatment. These people are far more likely to cause harm, to both themselves and the community.

On the hospital grounds, client movements outside each building are monitored by CCTV 24/7. Clients are not permitted to leave the facility unless accompanied by a staff member. Client vehicles are forbidden and so they do not have access to personal transport. Client recovery is closely monitored through regular drug and alcohol testing. Relapse is identified quickly, and if drug seeking/using behaviour does not change, clients are discharged into the care of their support person or another health care facility.

Margaret River Private will not have a contract with the State Government to accept clients subject to court orders. As a small private hospital, our clients will need to have sufficient personal finances to pay private health care, or to self-fund their stay. The up-front payment requirement for treatment is an incentive to 'keep with the program'.

2. The site is too far away from police and medical facilities, what will happen in the event of an emergency?

In terms of licencing, Margaret River Private is required to meet stringent WA Health Department requirements for staffing 24/7. Nursing staff, medical doctors and allied health professionals have expertise to respond appropriately to every situation.

It is a condition of all licensed private hospitals that they be able to respond to medical emergencies, including suitable trained staff being on duty at all times, with a fully-equipped resuscitation trolley, and access for a St John's Ambulance vehicle. A further condition is that an Accident and Emergency Agreement (A&E) must be in place with a local hospital emergency department, in our case Busselton Hospital.

WA Police provide coverage for Metricup as part of the South West policing plan. We expect the police will be occupied with call-outs in response to people using drugs in private homes and other community settings compared to a drug-free facility such as Margaret River Private.

3. What happens in the event of a relapse when a patient becomes desperate?

Our facility will be drug and alcohol free. Clients are closely monitored through regular, random drug and alcohol testing. Clients who relapse or seek to use drugs will be discharged. The hospital staff will help arrange their transport home, eg by private vehicle (friends, family, taxi) or in the facility mini-bus.

4. The development will impact on the environmental value of the land

The core principal behind the re-development of the site is to preserve the beautiful natural environment. The site was selected specifically because of the therapeutic value associated with a pristine environment, and the abundant natural forest and bushland will attract patients and assist in their recovery. Consequently, the preservation of the natural environment is a core design principal, and sustainable farming, building, and maintenance practices will be utilised to limit waste and reduce costs.

None of the arable land will be utilised for development, and it is envisaged to rejuvenate the productive potential of the farm which has been allowed to lie fallow for some time.

The existing forest will be preserved entirely, and used to screen the new proposed structures which are small scale, low-key structures that are dwarfed by the size of the existing Manor House. New proposed structures include a Reception pavilion, a Utility building housing the kitchen, gym, and ambulance parking, and a small steel shed will be built to accommodate farm vehicles and tools. The existing Manor House and Maintenance Workshop will be renovated and upgraded to accommodate the requirements of a private hospital licence. The Chalets will remain as short stay residential accommodation.

5. The proposal will drive away tourists from nearby accommodation and wineries.

The future success of MRP depends on absolute discretion for privately funded Clients seeking rehabilitation. The location will not be advertised, and there will be minimal signage to identify the facility. People from outside the area will have no idea the facility exists, unless they stop outside the entrance on Roy Road and read an unobtrusive sign.

The new low scale low key Reception Pavilion, Utility Wing, and Farm Shed, is screened from view by the forest and bushland from neighbouring properties, and will be barely visible from the road.

Similar hospitals exist in locations all around Australia that are also close to tourism facilities. Visiting family members often take advantage of this by staying in nearby tourism accommodation, thus boosting their occupancy rates.

6. Land and house prices in the area will be effected by a rehabilitation centre

We will be upgrading the property at 48 Roy Road, including the farm. We expect this to have the effect of raising house and land prices in the area. The property is currently quite neglected and it has been on the market for some time. Its sale and development is expected to boost the local economy.

7. Drug dealers will try to contact former clients, creating a safety risk for nearby residents.

To help their recovery, Margaret River Private clients can only make contact with approved family and support people while they are in residence. All electronic devices (including mobile phones) are banned and visitors are only allowed on site by prior arrangement. The hospital's rural location and distance from Perth (from where a number of our clients will come) makes it unlikely drug dealers will find it financially viable to make personal contact with their former clients.

8. The proposal will be viewable from Bussell Highway, which is a major tourist route.

The proposed development is a discreet, confidential facility whose location will not be advertised or promoted. Only local community members will know the new use of the buildings which can currently be seen from Bussell Highway. New buildings on the site are low key, low scale and nestled among the trees so as to be barely visible from Bussell Highway. Additional landscape works proposed will further screen the existing and new buildings from Bussell Highway.

9. A 24 hour clinic will generate noise, traffic and light beyond what currently exists in the immediate area, impacting on the peace and quiet of the area

Margaret River Hospital is a private facility rather than a clinic, i.e. it can only be accessed by people who have doctor's referral and an appointment. In order to provide a therapeutic environment for the clients, the hospital will be quiet; it will have very little traffic (partly because client vehicles are banned); and any light visible from a distance (the proposal is only visible from Bussell Highway) will be extinguished by 10pm each night, due to our strict "lights out" policy.

10. Fencing query.

There is an existing electric boundary fence on the eastern boundary only (the note on our site plan is pointing to the incorrect fence) and its purpose is to keep foxes and feral cats out of the neighbour's wildlife sanctuary. We do not plan to install any further electric fence, existing fences will remain and repaired if necessary and a new wire fence to match the other non-electric fences (approx. 1.2m high) will be erected between the front entrance off Roy Road and north eastern boundary, where there is currently no fence.

If you have any further questions or would like us to update the site plan fence note and reissue, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,



Kathleen Hume

Director

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