



13th December 2007

Mr Peter Garrett MHR
Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts
Parliament House
Canberra

Dear Peter,

Congratulations on your appointment as the new Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts. We all wish you well.

We all live in the St Kilda area and we all work in artistic and creative fields. We love our unique place and culture. We also love our heritage listed Palais Theatre where you performed with Midnight Oil in sell-out concerts on July 3, 4 and 6, 1992.

We would like to make you aware of our concerns about the proposed development, driven by the City of Port Phillip and by the Victorian State Government, which is to be built next to the Palais on what is known as the St Kilda Triangle site.

The plans are to build a huge shopping mall with at least 150 shops, a supermarket, up to six night clubs and pub/tavern for a capacity of 5000 people, restaurant, bars and more. This is a massive over-development on beautiful Crown Land on St Kilda Beach. Please check the website www.unchainstkilda.org for more information.

The Palais is to be refurbished, but new buildings would be built on three sides. A new building will obliterate the iconic image of Luna Park and the Palais theatre together. It will cease to be the grand stand-alone building as designed.

Part of the reason given to us by the developers and the council for the excessive size of the project is the cost of refurbishment of the Palais Theatre. They claim that \$20 million is needed to restore the theatre to its former glory, and the shops and nightclub precinct are needed to recover the restoration costs.

We are outraged by this project and firmly oppose it. We are not against a development on this site, but we want something both appropriate and smaller (one third the size), where culture and arts are a big part and where there are generous open spaces for all ages.

We are writing to you today hoping that you listen to us as peers, and that you will be able to look at the development as soon as possible because the Council wants to rush the approval through by December 17th.

We believe that the Palais should not be used as ransom for an ambit development claim, and that the Palais should be treated separately. This can occur if State and/or Federal governments pay for the restoration of the theatre.

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It would be great if, as Minister for Environment, Heritage and Arts, you could start your tenure by assisting us to find funds for this beautiful old lady in need of a facelift (see “Frank Thring’s” message on the YouTube message on the unChain St Kilda website!). And therefore the development could be drastically scaled down.

If you were to provide half the funds, perhaps you could persuade your counterpart in the Victorian Government to provide the balance, as owners of the theatre.

The unique culture of St Kilda and this special piece of Crown Land would thus be saved for future generations to enjoy.

With our very best wishes

**Tony Ayres
Jenny Bannister
Chris Beaumont
Jay Bowen
Gavin Brown
Joe Camilleri
Michael Carman
Kate Ceberano
Chris Cheney (The Living End)
Stephen Cummings
Stephen Curry
Adam Elliott
James Freud
Renée Geyer
Pierre Gigliotti (Pseudo Echo)
Andrew Goodone
Paul Grabowski
Anna Griffiths
Rachel Griffiths
Slava Grigoryan
Dave Hughes
Greg Irvine
Asher Keddie**

**Paul Kelly
Sean Kelly
Richard Lowenstein
Greg Macainsh (Skyhooks)
Spencer McLaren
Greg Mclean
Daniel McPherson
Lewis Miller
Alan Mitleman
Mirka Mora
Guy Pearce
Tex Perkins
Anthony Pittorino & Jacob Luppino (J’Aton Couture)
Simon Phillips
Tim Rogers
Mark Seymour
Magda Szubanski
Andrew Taylor
Serge Thomann
Jane Turner
Bobby Valentine
John Wolseley
Dan Willye**