



Perth ski park plan hots up

Property: 19-October-06 by Jenelle Carter

Momentum is building in support of Western Australia's first indoor ski park, while the entrepreneurial pair behind the ambitious \$45 million project seeks formal designs and narrows the search for a location.

WA Business News first spoke to West Coast **Snowpark** Pty Ltd joint directors Nick Forster and Steve Pretzel in June as they brought the snowdome concept to public attention.

The company is now consulting with Perth architects Bylund Bylund, which has produced three design concepts to be considered by project engineers.

Depending on the location chosen, either a suspended 10-storey complex on flat ground akin to the Ski Dubai snow park, or a contoured facility on a hillside similar to SnowPlanet New Zealand, could be developed.

Mr Forster said a third option was for a half-in/half-out structure positioned deep in the ground that would reduce the overall height of the complex and take advantage of Perth's sandy soil.

"The half-in/half-out option is very appealing as we could emphasise the visual impact of the building and use the cool convection as a cooling mechanism," Mr Forster told WA Business News.

"Naturally, the hillside option would save us money but would limit our choice of sites."

Three councils have already approached the company with potential locations and a final design and site is expected to be revealed within nine months.

Mr Forster said the company had received more than 6,000 expressions of support from the community since the idea emerged, in addition to support from a network of ski industry consultants.

Most notably, international ski-lift manufacturer Doppelmayr has expressed an interest to provide infrastructure for the project.

"We expect to partner with a developer when the time comes, but have not approached anyone just yet. The concept has always been based on a bigger retail and leisure complex to support the park," Mr Forster said.

A light environmental footprint is an important component of the project, and West Coast **Snowpark** is investigating solar and heat transfer technologies, including the application of nano-materials.

But before ski and snow boarding enthusiasts get too excited, an initial \$2 million capital raising and full financial feasibility are required before the project can go ahead.