

Elders 'no' to mosque

By Lucy Rickard

THE Nyungah elders have weighed into the debate about the proposed development of a Bosnian Islamic mosque in Caversham, saying it should not be given the green light.

The development application for the mosque on the corner of Benara Road and Smallbrook Retreat has divided the community, with the Swan Valley Progress Association ruling it an inappropriate use of the land and not in keeping with the character of the area.

The Swan Valley Nyungah Community (SVNC) have made a submission to

the City of Swan protesting the site's use for a mosque development.

A letter submitted by Margaret Jeffery on behalf of the traditional owners and Nyungah elders of the Swan River and Swan Coastal Plains said the property is a registered sacred site belonging to the Nyungah people.

It is registered under the Aboriginal Heritage Act WA 1972.

"We object to this mosque being built on this location because the Bosnian-Herzegovian Muslim Society have not respected other peoples' sacred beliefs as well as their own," the elders said in their letter.

"There are some Muslims in our

community and we respect their beliefs."

The SVNC alleges to have tried to set up a meeting with the Bosnian-Islamic Society more than a year ago, and say they are yet to receive a response.

However, Bosnian-Islamic Society of Perth president Sajit Smajic said he responded to a letter received from the group last year but had not had a reply. He said he believed there was support for the mosque in the area.

The SVNC have requested a meeting with the Bosnian-Herzegovian Muslim Society and are said to be negotiating through the Department of Indigenous Affairs Registrar of Sites.

Advocate P 5 18/2/09