



MEDIA RELEASE

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WALKER PLAN STILL UNACCEPTABLE FOR TASMANIAN COASTLINE AND COMMUNITY

The new, 'modified' Walker proposal is no more acceptable than the first ambit claim put in by the developer in March last year, Save Ralphs Bay Inc said today.

SRB Inc spokesperson, Cassy O'Connor, said despite its lesser scale, the Lauderdale Quay development proposal is environmentally and economically reckless and should be rejected in the interests of democracy and responsible government.

"No-one should be fooled into believing this is an example of the developer listening to the community. It is standard modus operandi for big developers to present a proposal – which was never Plan A – to provoke a huge response, then go back to what they basically planned for all along and pretend to have taken on board concerns.

"If Walker Corporation had really listened to what Tasmanians are saying about what they want for their future, it would understand we don't want or need the Gold Coast spoiling our coastline.

"If it was prepared to listen, Walker Corporation might have read, and taken on board, the results of the resident surveys conducted by Franklin MHR, Harry Quick, and Liberal Senator, Paul Calvert, which found 67% and 73% against respectively.

"It might have thought 2500 letters and personal comments - delivered to the Environment Minister with the SRB Inc submission in September last year - represented community rejection of the Walker 'vision'.

"If the Lennon Government would listen to its own experts who wrote '*The State of The Derwent Report*' it might have said 'No' to Walker on the basis that the health of the river itself will suffer if the Ralphs Bay mudflats become the construction site for a massive development. It might even have pointed to the protective principles of its own *State Coastal Policy* to steer Walker Corporation away from the bay.

"If the Lennon Government recognises its duty of care to the Tasmanian environment, and those who will depend on it in the future, it will not approve the developer's bid for Project of State Significance status.

"A P.O.S.S. should demonstrably be to the benefit of all Tasmanians. The Lauderdale Quay proposal would be to the benefit of the very, very few. The biggest windfall is set to go to billionaire, Lang Walker.

“Long after he has unleashed this obnoxious proposal upon our coastline and community and moved on to bigger things, we, the Tasmanian people, will be living with the consequences,” Ms O’Connor said.

Save Ralphs Bay Inc says the Lennon Government should make itself aware of contemporary, cutting edge environmental economics. It is now possible to place a dollar value on the critical natural services provided by mudflats. Estuarine ecosystems are recognised by the United Nations for their vital importance to human wellbeing. They function as the kidneys and the nurseries of the coast – filtering water from the land, providing breeding grounds for fish and sustaining a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

The Australian Coastal Zone Cooperative Research Centre places a conservative dollar estimate on the services provided by estuarine areas like Ralphs Bay, of \$41 000 per hectare per annum. This figure factors in the cost of replacing those natural services should they cease to function, or exist.

In September 2003, Walker Corporation wrote to the Lennon Government offering a \$500 000 ‘pre-development’ price for the Crown Land mudflats inside Ralphs Bay and sections of the foreshore. The area of land in question at the time was 120 hectares. Environment Minister Judy Jackson says a price has not been determined, but reassured the developer that the necessary Crown Land would be made available should the developer meet all the planning specifications.

Save Ralphs Bay Inc warns that the Lennon Government will be held accountable if it continues to refuse to take the ethically, environmentally and economically responsible path and reject the devastation of Ralphs Bay.

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