



COMMUNITY TO FIGHT FOR RALPHS BAY IN THE R.P.D.C.

THE CAMPAIGN ENTERS A NEW PHASE

In recent months, Save Ralphs Bay Inc. has been galvanized to stave off Walker Corporation's latest assault on Ralphs Bay. You may be aware the proposal has been given Project of State Significance (PoSS) status and will be assessed by the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC).

As part of its campaign to promote the developer's agenda, the Lennon Government recently tried to shrink the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area at Lauderdale, to roughly a tenth of its current size. Fortunately, SRB Inc had prepared a comprehensive legal argument to demonstrate the Conservation Area definitely includes the sandflats. As a result of our ongoing work with the Environmental Defenders' Office, Duncan Kerr SC MP, solicitor Roland Browne, Birds Tasmania and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, SRB Inc set out the arguments before the fifteen Members of the Legislative Council.

The MLCs looked into the matter and recognised the truth of our argument. With three Labor members also threatening to cross

the floor, the Lennon Government's position became untenable.

The Walker Corporation proposal for Ralphs Bay will therefore be assessed with the Conservation Area extending to low water mark, as it is defined on State and Commonwealth maps, as well as in the RPDC's Background Report on the Bruny Bioregion.

The Commission will be required to examine, and seek advice on, the conservation values of Ralphs Bay as part of its assessment of the Walker PoSS. The amended *Ralphs Bay Conservation Area (Clarification) Bill 2006* allows that, if the RPDC determines the development should proceed, the Commission will have the power to excise the northern sandflats from a larger Conservation Area that only comes into effect after the assessment. If the development is rejected, the expanded Conservation Area will be confirmed in full.

On behalf of the concerned community we represent, Save Ralphs Bay Inc is committed to ensuring the RPDC does NOT approve the development. In the weeks and months ahead, we will be drawing together expert evidence, exploring and detailing the values of Ralphs Bay, and making sure we have the best possible legal and strategic support base.

The first stage of the RPDC process is the release for public comment of draft guidelines for the Walker Integrated Impact Statement (IIS). This is most likely to happen either late this year or early in 2007.

The next critical stage will be the release of the developer's Draft IIS. It is essential that everyone who wants to help save Ralphs Bay takes the opportunity to comment. It could be up to two years before we have an outcome.

SRB Inc. is still determining the exact timeframe and will most definitely keep you posted!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Tackling a billion dollar corporation, which has State Government support, will require significant time and money. Our fundraising efforts must continue if we are to effectively tackle the developer in the RPDC.

So, please don't go ordering your 2007 calendars just yet. With the generous help and support of highly skilled local photographers and a professional designer, we are producing a magic 'Ralphs Bay, Tasmania 2007' calendar.

Its images feature the many moods of Ralphs Bay, highlighting the birdlife for which the area is nationally and internationally renowned. If you too treasure Ralphs Bay, this calendar is one we are sure you will be proud to hang on your wall, or give to a friend.

For a sneak preview and further details, go to:

www.saveralphsbay.org





**INDEPENDENT UMPIRE
RECOMMENDS CANAL
ESTATE BAN BE
ASSESSED**

The Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) has recommended to Planning Minister, Steve Kons, that an assessment should be undertaken into a statewide canal estate ban across local government planning schemes.

Under the *Land Use Planning Approvals Act* (LUPAA) 1993, Save Ralphs Bay Inc. lodged a Draft Planning Directive with the RPDC in August, to prohibit canal estates in Tasmania, consistent with a canal estate ban in the Kingborough Planning Scheme 2000.

LUPAA 1993 requires the RPDC to work towards consistency across Tasmania's local government planning schemes and Save Ralphs Bay Inc argues that the bar now needs to be set higher in order to protect Tasmania's coastal values.

If implemented, this Draft Planning Directive would not affect the Walker PoSS assessment for Tasmania's first canal estate development, in Ralphs Bay, since a PoSS over-rides local government planning schemes. It would, however, set an important benchmark for future coastal management in Tasmania.

SRB Inc Chair, Bill Edmunds, reports the RPDC has written to the group to say a recommendation for assessment of our Draft Planning Directive has gone to the Minister for consideration.

"The RPDC has accepted the legitimacy of our argument and recommended to the Minister that

an assessment should be undertaken. it will be very interesting to see how Mr Kons responds to this advice from the 'independent umpire'.

"It would seem to us, that the Minister has only two choices - to accept, or reject, the independent umpire's recommendation. The RPDC should be allowed to investigate why Kingborough Council has implemented a ban, and why NSW banned canal estate construction in 1998. This would be important fact-finding work in the lead up to assessing the Walker PoSS."

Canal estates were banned in NSW in 1998 (S.E.P.P 50) because they cause damage to fisheries, acid sulphate drainage problems, wetland habitat destruction, loss of rare flora and fauna, coastal erosion, water quality problems, household runoff pollution, regular dredging, mosquito and midge buildups, and loss of public access to the foreshore and coastal waterways.

SRB Inc. communications coordinator, Cassy O'Connor says, "Minister Kons must feel like he's in a bit of a pickle. To accept the RPDC's recommendation is to send a message to Walker Corporation that canal estates are undesirable in Tasmania. To reject the RPDC's recommendation is to send a message to the community that the Tasmanian Government is prepared to ignore the independent umpire when it suits a cynical purpose. This would not instill public faith in the process in the lead up to the Walker PoSS assessment."

SRB Inc. awaits the Minister's decision with great anticipation.

**FEDERAL ENVIRON-
MENT MINISTER
MEETS SRB INC.**

A small delegation from Save Ralphs Bay Inc. flew to Canberra on 7 September to meet Federal Environment Minister, Senator Ian Campbell. We were given an excellent hearing.

Organised at our request by Senator Paul Calvert and his office, the Parliament House meeting was aimed at alerting Senator Campbell to the potential Commonwealth implications of the Walker PoSS.

Under the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1998*, the Federal Environment Minister will have the final say on the development. His task is to ensure the protection of the critically endangered Spotted Handfish colonies in and near Ralphs Bay, as well as the resident and migratory shorebirds protected under international agreements.

The State and Commonwealth Governments are also joint partners in the recovery program for the River Derwent, polluted with heavy metals from decades of industrial pollution. For more detail go to www.saveralphsbay.org