

# Ralphs Bay RPDC hearings shades of David and Goliath

## \$\$ A matter of money \$\$

Thank you to all our supporters who have donated to the cause. The response was excellent.

However we still have bills to pay. Please visit our web site to find out how to make a donation or buy a photograph or other merchandise.

## Will a canal estate ban come soon enough?

The writing is on the wall. First we hear that the State Architect considers canal estates to be out of place in Tasmania, a place of natural beauty.

Then our poll of aspirants for the Legislative Council seat of Pembroke indicates that 6 of the 8 candidates would support a Legislative Council committee to look into the merits of a canal estate ban.

Will Tasmania join NSW and Victoria in banning canal estates, or do we have to learn from bitter experience, as they did?

## How the media heard it

What price our tidal flats & view?  
"Lia Morris told the RPDC Walker believed the \$600,000 price was fair and reasonable for the 98ha of tidal flats at Lauderdale." (the Mercury 08/07/09)

Windsurfer Anthony Houston "predicted windsurfers would not use a launching pad Walker was proposing to build because they would soon hit a bridge or land." (From the ABC 09/07/09)

Follow debates online at the media web sites.

**Public meetings:** We offer you an opportunity to hear and speak with experts who represented us at the hearings, ask questions and voice concerns.

### Lauderdale Hall

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August  
7.30pm

### Calverton Hall, South Arm

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August  
3.00pm

Throughout the five weeks of the RPDC hearings, Walker Corporation presented evidence from a wide range of interstate experts & made numerous amendments to their proposal, including the last minute plan to construct 3 roundabouts on the canal estate strip and prohibit right turns out of Ringwood Road. Despite the huge difference in our available resources, Save Ralphs Bay presented evidence from credible, experienced expert witnesses who identified many holes in Walker Corporation's proposal.

## Local residents and business people aired their concerns at the hearings

**We heard from windsurfers, bird enthusiasts, doctors, scientists, parents, local lovers of the environment and those who have seen it all before.**

Jim Orpe, local resident: "The concept of custodianship guides us to avoid causing changes to our resources and environment that future generations may find difficult to reverse."

Dr John Saul : "I like other local Doctors have concerns with respect to the increased risk of Ross River Virus as a result of water pooling with such a prolonged construction phase and also when completed."

Dr David Law: "Low-volume but persistent unwanted sounds can have significant cumulative impact on mental health and stress levels" ... "The psychological harm suffered by those who feel dispossessed of their environmental values will translate into poorer health outcomes for the community."

Sue Wragge's underwater photographs showed us the Spotted Handfish and other marine creatures in the underwater world of Ralphs Bay.

Scott Leitch: "There is too much to be lost and very little to be gained in allowing this environmentally destructive, socially divisive and irresponsible scheme to go ahead."

**Visit the RPDC website for more**

## SRB Spring Fair 13<sup>th</sup> Sept

SRB Spring Fair – Celebrate the return of the migratory Red-Necked Stints to the Bay for another Tasmanian summer. Enter our amateur photographic competition – Bird(s) of the Bay. Max size A4. Bring printout on the day. Details will be advertised via email and in local stores.



## From the lips of Walker Corp.'s lawyers

in their Closing Submission to the RPDC Hearings...

- *"Once you get all the islands constructed, the issue of adverse environmental consequences disappears."*
- *"There are no environmental risks which invoke the Precautionary Principle in this case."*
- *"It is a dangerous path to look too closely at localised impacts [on birds] to decide whether or not a project should proceed."*
- *"It is difficult to conceive that the loss of 1% of a population of 325 000 [Red-Necked Stints] would constitute a significant impact on the species as a whole."*
- *"They [the stints] may, in fact, be quite happy to live alongside a dredge."*
- *"If we start looking at individual species, only around the development footprint, no development would be allowed to proceed". (They said it!)*

**Membership subscriptions for 2009 – 2010 are now due. Please ignore if you joined/rejoined within the past three months. Visit the SRB web site for a membership form.**

## Clarence City Council input

Council representatives pointed out that the municipal boundary of Clarence does not presently extend below the low water mark in Ralphs Bay or to constructed islands. This raises a fundamental concern about ongoing governance of the proposed canal estate.

Council representatives were concerned that the rate paying community should be protected from responsibility for ongoing maintenance, including dredging of canals and remediating unforeseen adverse outcomes.

## Congratulations and thanks to the SRB expert witnesses and legal team

The SRB submission was extremely comprehensive thanks largely to the contributions made by all our experts and the efforts of 'Ralphies' burning the midnight oil to bring it all together. The experts prepared detailed proofs of evidence to support the submission and articulate their concerns about the proposed development.

Congratulations and thanks to our expert witnesses, Matthew, Ruth, Danny, Rob, Evan, Patricia, Milan, Iain, Steve and Robert, who prepared their evidence so well and stood steadfastly in the face of a barrage of, often personal, criticism from the opposing legal team.

We were superbly represented in the hearings by our barrister, Roland Browne. Jess Feehely, Principal Lawyer with the Environmental Defenders Office, coordinated all the experts and worked with Roland to keep track of every detail.

## Where to now?

- The RPDC Panel prepares a Draft Integrated Assessment Report (DIAR).
- We expect the DIAR to be out in late September or early October.
- The DIAR will be open for Public Exhibition with a minimum period of 28 days given for Public Comment.
- The RPDC **may** then hold hearings.
- Walker Corp.'s Final Integrated Impact Statement comes next, and then the RPDC's final Integrated Assessment Report, containing its recommendation.
- Whatever the RPDC recommends, the State Government makes the final decision, so keep writing those lobbying letters to the Premier!

## View point

The long fight to save the bay and the hearings in particular have caused us to look more closely at the place we live in. For some, focus is drawn back to poignant reminders of the indigenous people who once inhabited these shores and more recent traces of the lives of early white settlers.



Photo: courtesy Wolfgang Glowacki. This and other photos are available for sale on our web site.

Take a wander around Ralphs Bay and you will encounter middens, ancient fish traps, deposits of shell left by the early lime burners seeking lime for cement and relics of the many small jetties used by settlers when travel to and from Hobart was predominantly by water.

## How you can help

- Come to the SRB Public Meetings.
- Make a submission when the DIAR comes out.
- Come to the Spring Fair.
- Sign up to our email list on [www.saveralphsbay.org](http://www.saveralphsbay.org).
- Lobby politicians.
- Visit our website to:
  - download a membership form and join Save Ralphs Bay Inc.
  - donate or get involved in fund raisers.
  - monitor events as they unfold.