



MEDIA RELEASE

“LAST MINUTE” CHANGES TO CANAL ESTATE PROPOSAL SIGNIFICANT

September 26th 2009

Save Ralphs Bay Inc. strongly disputes claims made by Walker Corporation yesterday that no last minute changes were made to its canal estate proposal.

“Throughout the course of the public hearing, numerous significant changes were made with little or no notice to the other parties. These changes made it very difficult to determine exactly what was being proposed and what the impacts would be”, said Jessica Feehely, Principal Lawyer with the Environmental Defenders' Office. Ms. Feehely worked with barrister Roland Browne to present the case for SRB in the recent RPDC hearings.

Examples of changes made to the proposed development include:

Governance arrangements

On the final day of the hearing, Walker Corporation announced that it was abandoning the plan to enter into a Part 5 agreement with Clarence City Council for the ongoing management of the canal estate. As noted in Council's recent submission to the Commission, Walker Corporation has consistently failed to provide adequate details of how the canal estate would be managed in the long term.

Traffic

In the fourth week of the hearing, Walker Corporation presented a new traffic layout plan including a third roundabout on the canal estate strip of the South Arm Highway. There was also discussion of restricting right turns from Ringwood Road onto South Arm Road.

The traffic experts for all parties agreed that these changes would require further modelling to assess local and regional traffic impacts.

The new layout was changed again when it was realised that the altered road design would cut through a planned recreation ground.

Construction fence

In the second week of the hearing Walker Corporation's noise expert, Matthew Bryce, recommended that a 3 metre high fence be maintained

around the site during years of construction activity, to provide a noise barrier. The visual impact of such a fence had not been taken into account in any modelling undertaken for the Draft Integrated Impact Statement (DIIS).

Dealing with mercury

On the first day of the hearing, Walker Corporation announced a significantly changed approach to dealing with mercury-contaminated sediments, involving separate dredging of the contaminated sediment, isolation and treatment in a series of secured containment areas and disposal of the treated sediment in specified land masses. No detailed plans of the containment areas or treatment methods have been provided.

Walker Corporation's experts also conceded that more rigorous testing was required to identify the extent of contaminated sediments.

SRB spokeswoman, Jane MacDonald, believes that the continuing changes to the project are futile attempts to fix a proposal that is fundamentally flawed.

She said,

“Given all the known impacts of the canal estate proposal, the ongoing uncertainty about how those impacts will be managed, and the alarm expressed by Clarence City Council this week, we call on the Walker Corporation to abandon its doomed, destructive canal estate proposition.”

Save Ralphs Bay Inc.