



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

STRONG SUPPORT FOR COASTAL PROTECTION AMONG SOUTHERN COUNCIL ELECTION CANDIDATES

October 13th 2009

Strongly worded opposition to the Walker Corporation's proposed canal estate in Ralphs Bay dominates responses to the first question in a survey of Clarence, Hobart and Kingborough council candidates. The survey was carried out over the weekend by Save Ralphs Bay, Birds Tasmania and Environment Tasmania. Just 1 candidate out of the 27 who have responded to the survey so far has indicated support for the canal estate development, and 2 were uncertain.

Doug Chipman, Clarence candidate for council and for the position of Deputy Mayor, said,

"I oppose this development while there are unquantified environmental and management risks that could impose a significant burden on Clarence rate-payers."

Hobart City Council candidate Leo Foley explained,

"I oppose the Ralphs Bay development because it takes public space, public access and public rights away. Public space, and the amenity it provides, is too important to be sold off. Public space is not inviolable, but its loss must be for some very valid reasons – and clearly in the public interest."

Kingborough candidate Steve Wass included community opposition among his reasons for opposing the canal estate:

*"Do not support for a number of reasons including;
-environmental damage to area
-climate change implications / liability issues for future
-local opposition"*

The candidates in all three municipalities showed strong support for a comprehensive, adequate and representative network of Marine Protected Areas in Tasmania to protect marine biodiversity. Only 1 candidate out of 27 did not support the creation of marine protected areas; 22 were in favour and 3 indicated uncertainty or gave qualified responses. Michele Higgins, running for Deputy Mayor in Kingborough said,

"Tasmania is unique with the number of species in the bioregion from Maria Island down to and including Bruny Island compared to the rest of Australia. These areas are critical for the survival of species and must be protected. Research also shows that by reducing overfishing and protecting critical areas, it not only supports the fishing industry in restocking but also can keep out devastating, feral pests."

Candidates were generally supportive of canal estate bans, with 18 in favour of a canal estate ban as part of their municipality's Planning Scheme, 6 unsure on this question and only 3 against the idea. Some

Kingborough Council candidates were pleased and relieved that their municipality had already brought in a canal estate ban, back in 2000.

James Walker (no relation!) wrote in support of a canal estate ban for Clarence, saying,

"Yes, I support a canal estate ban. Clarence has 191kms of Coastline, not one metre of which I consider appropriate for a canal estate."

Helen Burnet, Hobart candidate for council and Deputy Mayor, joined 14 other candidates in supporting a statewide canal estate ban:

"Yes, I would support state legislation to ban canal-style developments in Tasmania, and find the current state government recalcitrant, and at the same time focussed on destroying the coastline in order to make money through this type of exploitation of natural beauty of our state. Not a very clever way of going about things."

The Tasmanian state government was also the target for candidates' comments on matters such as its failure to declare the Bruny Bioregion marine reserves recommended by the RPDC and its 2004 secret deal to sell the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area to the Walker Corporation.

Clarence candidate Tony Mulder made pointed comparisons between the standards expected of councils and the way the Labor government has conducted business in the state.

"On matters of sale of public assets, conflicts of interest and secret deals, the Government should apply the rules it has imposed on Councils. These rules require public consultation and advertising and sale through normal market processes, not secret back room deals! Labor has been happy to apply a different set of rules to state government whilst imposing strict (and appropriate) rules on council regarding ethical conduct, conflicts of interest and sale of public assets."

Other questions in the survey related to candidates' knowledge of the national and international significance of southeast Tasmania for resident and migratory shorebirds; actions needed to protect coastal habitats and wildlife; the Derwent Estuary Program's Water Quality Improvement Plan for heavy metals and preparations for climate change and sea level rise.

Most candidates indicated interest in and some knowledge of these topics, but many said they would learn more if elected. Several Clarence City Council candidates pointed to the major climate change study already carried out by their municipality.

"Clarence was the only Tasmanian council involved in one of six national projects through the Australian Government Department of Climate Change's National Climate Change Adaptation Program. Clarence has several low lying areas that are particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. With regards to planning Council must be particularly careful and take a long term approach." (James Walker).

The full survey and candidates' responses can be viewed at www.saveralphsbay.org More responses are expected over the coming days and the website will be updated accordingly.

Supporters of Save Ralphs Bay, Birds Tasmania and Environment Tasmania will be alerted to the survey results by email.

Voting in the local council elections starts today and continues until October 27th.

Save Ralphs Bay Inc., Birds Tasmanis and Environment Tasmania