



MEDIA RELEASE

CLARENCE CITY COUNCIL “ALARM” AT RISKS TO RATEPAYERS IN LAUDERDALE QUAY PROJECT

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“To date, Council’s concerns about a number of aspects of the development have not been allayed and indeed, in some cases they have been compounded.”

Clarence City Council has expressed strong reservations about the Walker Corporation’s proposed canal estate at Lauderdale, in a report sent to the Tasmanian Planning Commission on Tuesday.

“Council expresses alarm at the level of risk which Clarence ratepayers could be exposed to in regard to the cost of maintaining the canal infrastructure... **Hence Council cannot support the Lauderdale Quay project** unless it is satisfied that the community of Clarence is not exposed to unacceptable and/or unquantified risks and any consequential costs.”

Save Ralphs Bay Inc. congratulates Clarence City Council for seeking further information about the problems associated with canal estate developments, during a recent visit to Western Australia. “We have been raising these issues for years,” said SRB spokeswoman Jane MacDonald. “Ratepayers should be grateful to the Council for conducting its own enquiries and warning about the considerable risks posed by the Walker Corporation’s canal estate plan.”

Council is not satisfied that questions relating to management of the canal estate have been addressed. The Council’s report states clearly, “It is of concern that, at this point in time, the most fundamental issue of how the development can and will be managed into the future has not been clearly articulated by Walker Corporation.”

At the conclusion of a section headed, “Risks associated with managing waterways”, the Council report states, “**The proposal as it stands invites a great leap of faith based on the opinions of Walker Corporation’s experts.**”

Council’s serious concerns regarding funding are expressed on page 5, where it is reported that, “**Council does not believe that the funding of maintenance and repair of the development into the future ... will be as straightforward as Walker Corporation’s closing submission ... suggests.**”

The Council report on its WA investigations also reveals that WA is currently reviewing the policy controlling canal estate developments, because it has been

found to be deficient in dealing with the problems which have emerged with canal estates over recent years.

“Included among the suggested options are a moratorium on canal estates and an outright ban on them as Victorian and New South Wales governments have done in recent years.”

Council’s report states that the following problems have been experienced in WA:

- “the failure of developers, authorities and their respective experts to foresee future environmental problems or their magnitude;
- the enormity of undertakings and costs that can be required to remedy environmental problems;
- the fact that many natural processes are still not understood;
- the problems both political and financial of funding works and remediation via rating or the public purse generally;
- even where supposedly clear contractual obligations exist, there is no guarantee that disputes will not arise as to the extent of those obligations which ultimately may only be able to be resolved by recourse to the courts.

Added to this is the obvious consideration that once built, the canal estates exist in perpetuity.”

“Surely it is time for common sense to prevail?” said Jane MacDonald. “Two states have banned canal estates; a third state is looking at banning them now, on the basis of its experiences. Walker’s proposal to destroy a Conservation Area, eradicate critical habitat for resident and migratory shorebirds and turn Lauderdale into a huge construction site until 2028 is unpopular, destructive and un-Tasmanian. Now we have the Council strongly indicating its concerns and stating it cannot support this proposal.

“There is light at the end of the tunnel, for all who would prefer to enjoy Ralphs Bay as a Conservation Area in perpetuity. We look forward to the rejection of the canal estate proposal and we call for a statewide ban on canal estates in Tasmania.”

Save Ralphs Bay Inc.