

SaveRalphsBay.org Media Statement 06.04.04

Tasmanians are confronted with a development proposal which would not happen in Sydney-based Walker Corporation's 'home' state. Its plan to open the Lauderdale canal, and build 800 homes and a substantial marina in Ralphs Bay would be rejected on environmental and economic grounds in New South Wales. It would also be unlikely to get past first base in Queensland.

Canal estate development in coastal areas is prohibited by law in New South Wales because of the profoundly damaging effect it has on the environment. In Queensland, where the development fraternity has taken the biggest bite out of the coastline, the Beattie Government is moving sharply away from canal estates to avoid such consequences as wetland habitat destruction, wildlife mortality, declining fisheries, erosion damage, loss of public access and the list goes on.

In a speech to the Brisbane Institute in April 2000, NSW Premier Bob Carr, said that canal estates are, "...banned under all circumstances. That is because they are terribly damaging."

Save Ralphs Bay believes the State Government should heed the words of a Premier experienced in these matters. It is our mission to ensure Premier Lennon and relevant Ministers listen to the message sent out by more than 500 people at the Lauderdale public meeting (17/3) - and many more who have registered their protest through letters to the Government, the Editor and on talk back radio since. That message is clear: Ralphs Bay, its Conservation Area, its wading bird habitat and its sweeping view of the mountain are not for sale.

We are being offered an 'exciting new lifestyle' which the vast majority simply do not want. It's a lifestyle tailored to the very wealthy from interstate, not the average Tasmanian.

There is also deep concern within the Lauderdale community that the reopened canal will divide both the township and the beach on Frederick Henry Bay, and pollute waters which sustain a thriving aquaculture industry.

We believe Walker Corporation's proposal compromises too many environmental, economic, social and aesthetic principles to be allowed to proceed. *Save Ralphs Bay* is deeply concerned that approval for this proposal would mark the beginning of the end for Tasmania's unspoiled coastline. Experience interstate reminds us of the development industry's appetite for prime seafront land, the enduring monuments to bad taste and unchecked opportunism stretching from one public beach to the next.

The Tasmanian economy reaps the benefits of our island's clean, green image. It is something we can't afford to jeopardise with obsolete, inappropriate developments in coastal areas.

In Tasmania, the State Coastal Policy, the State of the Environment Report and the State of the Derwent Report all in principle support greater - not less - respect for conservation values. *Save Ralphs Bay* believes these instruments also need the weight of specific legislation modelled on the New South Wales system.

We will be actively campaigning for the introduction of anti canal estate development legislation to ensure no Tasmanian community in the future is faced with the distress and division caused by a proposal such as the Walker Corporation's plan for Ralphs Bay.
ENDS - Hobart 6 April '04

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