

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Save Ralphs Bay Inc.

14 September 2004

### F.O.I. LETTER REVEALS 'IN-PRINCIPLE' COMMITMENT TO SELL RALPHS BAY CROWN LAND TO WALKER CORPORATION

Save Ralphs Bay Inc is extremely disappointed the State Government was not more up-front with the peninsula community about what steps had already been taken to progress the Walker proposal. Correspondence released this week under F.O.I. reflects poorly on the transparency of the process, and raises questions over whether the government has dug itself into a big, potentially costly, pit over Ralphs Bay

On March 4 2004, Judy Jackson informed Walker Corporation that the Tasmanian Government would be prepared to **"... make available the necessary Crown land at a price reflecting 'pre-development' market value."** The letter continues, **"...this 'in-principle' commitment is, of course, only relevant if the proposal successfully achieves all planning and environmental approvals from all jurisdictions."**

Spokesperson, Cassy O'Connor, said, 'While the tone is encouraging to the developer, the letter would appear not to signify a 'done deal', We are prepared to take the government at face value on its repeated assurances that there is no formal agreement. We are however troubled by what has already been agreed, particularly given the Walker Corporation's fondness for using ruthless legal strategies to achieve a lucrative outcome.'

On July 9 this year, the NSW Land and Environment Court ordered the Carr Government to pay Walker Corporation \$60 million compensation for a failed development on harbourside land it had never owned.

'The State Government's 'in-principle' commitment to Walker Corporation to sell 120 hectares of Crown Land - including the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area – also reveals a profound lack of knowledge about damage caused by canal estates interstate, and the Walker Corporation's modus operandi,' Ms O'Connor said.

SRB Inc. believes many Tasmanians will be disturbed by the contents of a letter from the Environment Minister to Walker Corporation, which was released this week under F.O.I.

'Our concern is that this 'in-principle' commitment in writing may have locked the government into enabling an unpopular, and hugely environmentally harmful plan for Tasmania's first canal estate to bypass the normal planning system as a Project of State Significance. This would be both undemocratic, and unfair on a community group already stretched for time and resources, up against a multi-millionaire developer.

'It is SRB Inc's very firm position that the community has made its view oxygen-clear, and that this proposal must be stopped BEFORE it enters the planning system. What we are seeking is a commitment from the Lennon Government to value coastal protection over massive corporate profit for the very few. And a commitment to honour its word to residents that their response to the consultation process would be a significant factor in the decision,' Ms O'Connor said.

In a letter to residents dated 15 March 2004, (then) Acting Premier Paul Lennon said, "**The Government will review both the project description and the outcome of the public consultation program before it makes any decision on whether to agree to the proposal going through the formal planning approval process**".

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