



March 9th 2023

Westernport Group expresses outrage at Hydrogen Export Announcement.

Community group Westernport Peninsula Protection Council Inc, now in its 52nd year, was outraged at the announcement of the Hydrogen Export plan for Hastings. 'We are outraged that this project is said to be going ahead despite the risk it poses to Westernport from dredging and marine pests, its colossal inefficiency, use of too much water, as well as being a new fossil fuel plan. It is hard to overstate how stupid this project is. Victoria shouldn't allow oil companies - (political donors) and foreign countries to force us into such a project. The Latrobe Valley deserved better, longer term jobs for the government expenditure.'

WPPC secretary Karri Giles said.

Hastings is a shallow bay most of it being less than 5 metres deep. It has a narrow channel that currently accommodates small ships. Hastings was rejected by Infrastructure Victoria for a container port because it found that the necessary dredging would be of an absolutely massive scale that would totally ruin Westernport:

'This means the total dredge volume for the Hastings concept is about 47 million cubic metres, made up of 24 million cubic metres for the channels and port area, 5 million cubic metres for the reclamation footprint and 18 million cubic metres for the sand dredged from Bass Strait to build the reclamation. these dredging volumes are to accommodate an 18500 TEU ship. About 45 million cubic metres of dredging would be required to accommodate a 14,000 TEU ship.'

Reference Infrastructure Victoria [Advice on Securing Victoria's Port Capacity](#).

The PR work by the Port of Hastings Development Authority has spun the myth that Hastings is a 'natural deep-water port', This is untrue. Japan made a small hydrogen ship for their trial presumably so they would fit up as far as The BlueScope Jetty.

Hydrogen is 20 times as explosive as petrol, makes metal brittle, and is difficult to transport. The trial used a top-heavy ship that sailed through the tropics in cyclone season. It had to keep its hydrogen under -253 degrees Celsius, pressurised to a far greater degree than LNP. How much fuel did they use in the month-long journey to keep the hydrogen cool and power the ship? How much would a huge ship take to power it for a month? There was an incident with a flaming at a valve on board too at Hastings. Not unsurprisingly it only completed one of the three planned trial journeys.

‘We are asking the government to learn lessons from the past. It is widely recognised that Japanese woodchip ships brought in Northern Pacific Seastar and Japanese kelp in the 1980s into Port Phillip Bay and Tasmania.’ Karri said ‘Our waters are a similar temperature to Japan, and we lack the natural enemies of these pests, so we are asking The Government to back away from instituting a stream of ships up into Westernport from Japan, in order to protect Westernport from being carpeted by these pests and to protect our fish stocks.’

[The Westernport Site Management Plan \(2017\)](https://www.water.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/66270/Western-Port-Ramsar-Site-Management-Plan_revised.pdf) lists marine pest infestation as fourth among 17 of its top priority threats to the Westernport Ramsar site. https://www.water.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/66270/Western-Port-Ramsar-Site-Management-Plan_revised.pdf

In 2019 WPPC and Save Westernport successfully applied through the Commonwealth Stronger Communities Environmental Grant program, and the local Member for Flinders, Mr Greg Hunt MP, for funding to allow underwater surveys for invasive Marine pest species to be carried out under BlueScope pier because we were concerned that Kawasaki was due to begin its pilot exporting hydrogen in Westernport Bay, without addressing the risk of introducing invasive marine pests.

WPPC initiated a letter to Kawasaki Heavy Industries, endorsed by eight local environmental groups, requesting the urgent monitoring for marine pests at the project site at BlueScope Hastings pier. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12knec8EN4-v8xrMycrgrUU7m1TIsZ0cM/view?usp=drivesdk>

Because early detection and removal are the only effective means of preventing infestations, when Kawasaki declined our request, we decided to develop our own project.

Several years ago, BlueScope stopped sending Marine scientist Jan Watson under their pier to monitor for toxicity, she kept a look out for other species. The Port of Hastings Development Authority does not require or carry out its own regular assessment of marine pests from commercial shipping.

When BlueScope refused access to our professional divers from Fathom Pacific, we had to change our project location.

Westernport's Stony Point jetty and Yaringa Harbour were assessed for invasive species Northern Pacific Seastar (*Asterias amurens*) and Japanese Kelp (*Undaria pinnatifida*) by our professional divers and remote cameras. Professor Adrian Flynn from Fathom Pacific produced a report of their findings. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qqbdp9DhQadZK5h90gX1lM2c-kdmXkYQ/view?usp=drivesdk>

Recent government surveys found no signs of the species at San Remo and Hastings Marina, and during their EES surveys, AGL recorded neither species at Crib Point jetty, nor a large area in lower North Arm. Parks Vic have worked on both The Cowes Jetty and Flinders Jetty recently with neither of these species found.

This suggests that Westernport's marine environment remains free from the two most damaging invasive pest species.

After writing to Kawasaki and meeting with them, and answering questions about our project, in 2021 we welcomed news from Kawasaki confirming their decision to assess the BlueScope jetty for signs of marine species before, during and after the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain pilot, or shipping trial.

Letter from Kawasaki

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fSnLi0cV1zbFyAhsaVX0aINfluPhEEFz/view?usp=drivesdk>

This was carried out in 2022. 'The marine-pest survey The Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain conducted under BlueScope pier was next to useless because it omitted one of the two key species: northern pacific seastar.' Karri said. 'We want to know if marine pests came in with the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Pilot Vessel Suiso Frontier, so they can be cleaned up. San Remo, Cowes, Yaringa, Hastings, Crib Pt, Stony Pt and some of Flinders pier have been surveyed lately and these two key species were not present. Are they under BlueScope? Why did their survey and leave out Northern Pacific Seastar? If These species are not present, we demand an environmental bond be paid by Japan before this project proceeds. The cost of monitoring and cleaning-up inevitable infestations should not be met by the Australian public. Better yet scrap this project.'

Ships coming in from the Temperate waters of the Japanese area hold a special risk because the larvae and spores finds themselves in water of a suitable temperature and can take hold. The infestations in Tasmania and Port Phillip

Bay have shocked marine users and scientists with the speed of their spread and the disappearance of native flora and fauna, including fish.

WPPC suspect some of the 80 million dollars given to the Port of Hastings Development Authority during the Baillieu/ Napthine Governments was spent on public relations firms to aid in the suppression of studies, such as the link between fish stocks and northern Pacific seastar.

WPPC remain opposed to Kawasaki's hydrogen export trial. We believe the dangers associated with the project can be neither managed, nor justified. In addition to the terrible threat of marine pests, the project prolongs the use of the most polluting form of lignite brown coal to produce hydrogen for the benefit of the Japanese market, while sustainable Green hydrogen sources abound. 'We demand that every stage of this project is included in the projected carbon and water use accounting. The pipes or transport to take carbon dioxide from The Latrobe Valley to the Bass Strait oil field would take a ridiculous amount of energy and water. We want all resources used, in every stage of this planned project, calculated and made public. It is only then that its true inefficiency can be seen. The energy industry has labelled it 'stupid'' .
Karri

'We demand that the ruling by past Minister Wynne that it is was an 'essential project' for Victoria, exempting it from the scrutiny of an Environment Effects Statement be revoked as it is isn't good for Victoria. It doesn't supply us with energy, and it threatens the health of Westernport that is crucial for the economy of the region. It uses an enormous amount of our precious water, and is another dangerous fossil fuel project endangering lives through climate change.'

"Gippsland deserves jobs in a worthwhile 21 century industries such as community power, conversions of petrol to EV/hybrids, upcycling solar panels, a radial- sawing pine mill for construction timber. Regional Development boards have plenty of options for investment." Said Karri

[Powering new jobs in new industries for Gippsland - Regional Development Victoria \(rdv.vic.gov.au\)-](https://rdv.vic.gov.au/)

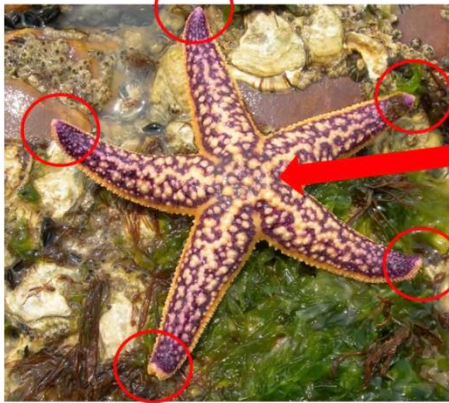
Westernport Peninsula Protection Council (WPPC),

Website: <https://www.wppcinc.org/>

[Karri Giles 0425 707 448](tel:0425707448)

ID Picture thanks to Pt Phillip Bay Ecocentre:

Northern Pacific Seastar ID



5 distinct arms (not 8, not 11)

Arms connect at central disk

Pointy, upturned tips

Some photos supplied by Fathom Pacific



Figure 4 Diver at Stony Pt

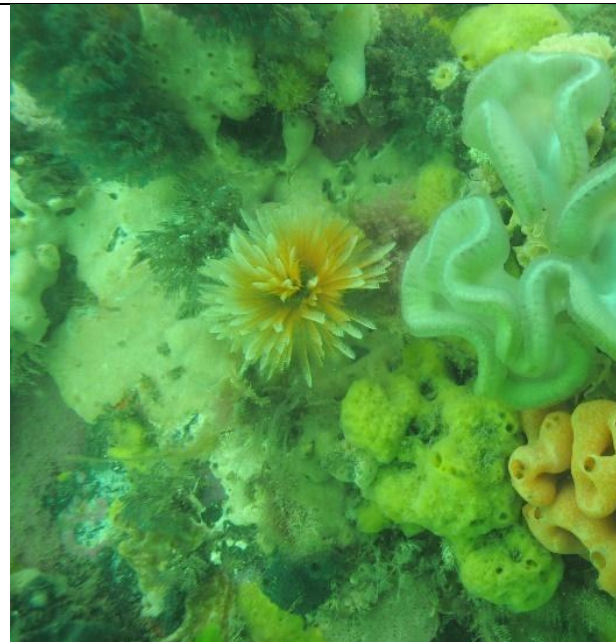


Figure 5 Sponges at Stony Pt

A 2019 Article on the threat of Marine Pests in the Bayside News

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkOjDtObO6mZHw3w_qNVVns6N5vog3yf/view?usp=drive_sdk

2021 Article about our project

<https://www.mpnews.com.au/2021/12/20/pest-fears-over-hydrogen-exports/>