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***Westernport & Peninsula
Protection Council Inc***



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Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council Inc.

Founded in 1971, the programs of the Council are aimed at preserving and restoring what remains of our precious natural environment in Westernport Bay and its hinterland. An important part of our activities to that end is to ensure that proper planning processes are observed by Government at all three levels and that community consultation is a fundamental component of planning. We have achieved a high reputation for approaching such matters through careful study of principles and attention to detail.

Prompting community awareness of important conservation issues has also been high on our agenda for the past 30 years. We continue to explore ways of informing the public of their natural assets and of the current and ongoing threats opposed to them by inappropriate and destructive developments.

The activities of Council are managed by an executive committee of nine, elected at the annual General Meeting, which is held on a Sunday early in January. Membership is by application and subscription and confers voting rights and a say in the Council's activities. The Committee has the power to co-opt additional members during the year.

Additional help on Committee and in a range of other ways is always welcome. Please indicate on the subscription form if you have any special skills or interests which may be helpful in our campaigns.

For further information about our activities please contact:

Karri Giles (President /editor) 59 832 072 Sheila Kerr (Treasurer) 59 786889 Annabel Richards (Acting Secretary)- 59831294

Other members of Committee are: Liz Sarraillhe, Ruth Marriot, Linda Drewitt, Ted Warden, Kathie Strickland, Meg McMillan.

I would like to support the work of Westernport Peninsula Protection Council Inc.

Subscription: (not tax deductible) - subscriptions fall due 1st Nov each year

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The Westernport Peninsula Protection Council Inc Trust is a gift fund listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations under Section 78(1) (a) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936.

Inc. no: A0015886H

ABN: 98 461014 730

Please return to: Hon Treasurer, WPPC, Box 9, Hastings, Vic 3915

Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council Inc

Incorporated Association Reg. No. A15886H ABN 984 610 14730 PO Box 9 Hastings Vic 3915

Newsletter December 2011



WPPC AGM 10.30am Sunday January 15th 2012



Guest Speaker- Greg Barber MLC

We are honoured this year by having Greens MP Greg Barber to give a twenty minute talk at the beginning of our AGM. The Greens are the only party opposed to The Port of Hastings proposed development. Greg's fellow Greens MP Sue Pennicuk has been consistently asking probing questions of the environment and Port Ministers in both the Brumby and Baillieu governments. She has spoken up for Westernport Bay and against the proposed massive infrastructure project for its predictable effect on the region in both coastal and inland area. Green's Colleen Hartland MP has been to our AGM in the past. Greg has a long history of visionary leadership in the green movement. He is also a very nice chap. We look forward to a good turn out this year. **Balnarring Hall Frankston-Flinders Road Balnarring, (on south side of Road)**

40 years up for bay protectors □ From Western Port News, 8 November 2011

By Mike Hast

WESTERNPORT and Peninsula Protection Council celebrated its 40th anniversary at a combined birthday and seminar late last month at Somers Yacht Club.

One of the oldest environmental associations on the peninsula, it was formed to fight industrial expansion of Western Port in the 1960s and 1970s.

Its genesis came at a meeting on 30 December 1970 when more than 600 people rallied at Balnarring racetrack to protest plans by Ampol-Sleigh for a petroleum refinery at Bittern.

Development of Western Port had already started. The council's first meeting was on 4 January 1971. Its aims were and remain to engage in, support and promote: regional and local planning; conservation of natural resources, including fauna and flora; studies of the effects of pollution of all kinds; and protection of the environment.

Plans for Western Port more than 40 years ago included a nuclear reactor on French Island, proposed by the Victorian government's State Electricity Commission, and heavy industry stretching from Hastings to Stony Point.

Liberal government Premier Henry Bolte wanted to make Western Port the "Ruhr of Victoria", named after the heavily industrialised valley in Germany, and the plans sparked a bitter battle between pro-development forces and conservationists.

The "Battle for Western Port" grabbed the national media spotlight on and off for several years.

It led to the ground-breaking Shapiro Report, published in 1975 after two years of research by teams of scientists.

The report has informed planning decisions in the region since.

Late last month, Flinders federal MP Greg Hunt called for the creation of a "Shapiro Report Mark II" as the state government upped the ante to fast-track expansion of the Port of Hastings to replace Melbourne as the state's prime container port.

In the 1960s, BP built a refinery at Crib Point, which is now abandoned; John Lysaght Pty Ltd built a steel mill near Hastings, now owned by BlueScope Steel; and Esso built a gas refractionation plant near the steel mill, which still operates.

Today, unleaded petrol is transported to a storage and distribution centre in Hastings from Crib Point jetty along a 78-kilometre pipeline connecting Crib Point to Long Island and Melbourne, which was established in 1970. A 180km pipeline takes crude oil and gas from Bass Strait at Longford to the Esso installations at Hastings built in 1968. Pipelines also connect to two refineries in Melbourne and Geelong.

Each year about four million tonnes of petroleum product is handled through the state-owned jetties at Crib Point and Long Island Point.

Former WPPC president Brian Cuming said that in 1987, the protection council was the leading group in the successful campaign against Western Mining Corporation's ammonia and urea plant proposal on the BP site using the Crib Point jetty.

"In 1992 we fought a Shell-Mobil proposal for a major oil import facility at the former BP site," he said.

"Again an angry public put evidence on the table including the Shapiro Report. The plan was shelved indefinitely."

Dr Cuming, now in his 80s, said the protection council and other environmentalists faced a new threat to the important wildlife and tourism qualities of the bay with the state government's proposal to expand the Port of Hastings.

"Western Port is not and has never been the place for industry. It is one of the world's most important wetlands, and has outstanding marine and coastal environmental values.

"More than 350 native plant and 330 native animal species including reptiles, amphibians, mammals, fish and birds live here."

He said even a minor oil spill would have devastation effects on the environment because of tidal movement and shallow areas of the bay.

At Somers, the protection council also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, signed by many governments including Australia in 1971 at the small town of Ramsar in Iran on the coast of the Caspian Sea.

Western Port became a Ramsar site in 1982.

The convention, or treaty, provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Western Port is one of the three most important areas for migratory waders in Victoria. Surveys show it supports about 10,000 waders, about 12 per cent of the state population.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment says Western Port is of national zoological significance as a foraging area and high tide roosting site for migratory waders.

"It is of national botanical significance for its extensive saltmarsh communities and also has a number of sites of national and international geomorphological significance."



Karri, Annabel, Liz, Brian and Sheila

WPPC president Karri Giles said information presented at the seminar showed how an increase in shipping would increase the risk of oil spills.

"This was especially poignant looking at Western Port out of the Somers Yacht Club windows," she said.

"The need for an economic study was outlined, as a few stevedore jobs don't make up for the threat of job losses in the businesses based on having a healthy and beautiful environment.

"The basis of our economy down here is providing recreation for Melbournians.

"Our economic well-being is safer if we phase out shipping in Western Port and try and protect the bay from other threats."

Ms Giles said a CSIRO report found that if Port Phillip eutrophied (goes belly-up or anoxic), the economy of Melbourne would fail and the state government would fall.

"Western Port is also very important to Melbourne's economy.

Watching people sail around happily in crystal-clear water, among playful dolphins, also calls to mind how valuable a clean Western Port is for the health and mental health of families and the health budget."

Marny Bonner was the guest speaker at the seminar at Somers Yacht club organised this year by WPPC. She talked about her experiences as sea-bird rescuer attending the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. She had photos of birds and the precious coastline, covered in oil. Aspects of the coast making cleaning up very difficult, as it would in Westernport Bay. Her photos of oil-spill operations trucks commandeering the public open space on the coastline. The media trucks took up any remaining areas. She also said that before the oil spill the mouth of the Mississippi was a dead-zone due to stormwater pollution.

Marny Bonner from Australian Sea-bird Rescue focussed her attentions on teaching the locals how to clean birds, as every year now for years as they return on their migration, it is expected that they will be oiled by the oil still in the environment.

Gordon Fraser-Quick environmental consultant gave a general address about oil spills, the frequency of oil spills and the myth of "clean up".

Brian Cumming from WPPC presented oil spill modelling for Westernport Bay; and the fact that Westernport Bay is unsuited as an industrial port.

After Lunch, Jenny Warfe from Blue Wedges spoke about the different threats from shipping: including exhaust emissions, disabled ships and spills of chemicals and rubbish.

Catherine Manning introduced Wild about Westernport and campaign ideas including using you-tube clips and an on-line petition.

Matt Ruchel from VNPA discussed campaign ideas and announced the up and coming Going backwards Under Baillieu Rally and the need to raise money for an economic study of The Bay.

Karri Giles from WPPC tabled the report by Dr Jeff Ross which highlights the importance of benthic organisms for de-nitrification, or in other words why we need to prevent an oil spill or turbidity in Westernport Bay to keep the molluscs and crustaceans alive that play a role in cleaning the water.

We celebrated 40 years of Ramsar by showing the official you-tube clip about the importance and beauty of Wetlands around the World.

GOING BACKWARDS UNDER BAILLIEU

JOIN US AT THE BACKWARDS MARCH:
PARLIAMENT HOUSE: SUNDAY 13 NOV, 1-2.30PM.

In just one year Premier Baillieu has taken Victoria backwards on the environment:

- Cattle trampling our national parks
- New wind farms blocked
- CO2 emissions target ignored
- Endangered species habitat logged
- New coal-fired power station approved
- Green Wedges threatened
- Westernport destruction fast-tracked

Premier Baillieu said he would 'fix the problems, and build the future', but when it comes to our environment his government has created new problems and is threatening our future!

His government has no formal environment or climate change policy, and no clear vision for a more sustainable Victoria.

So after 12 disappointing months we're marching backwards to demonstrate the direction the Premier is taking us.

Join hundreds of other concerned Victorians to turn things around for OUR environment AND ASK:

WHERE IS YOUR PLAN PREMIER?

facebook.com/BackwardsMarch

Organised by:

- Australian National Parks Association
- The Wilderness Society
- environment victoria
- Friends of the Earth

Authorised by M Ruchel, Level 3, 60 Leicester St, Carlton, Victoria.

Going Backwards Under Baillieu.

Thank you to the VNPA, Wilderness Society, Environment Victoria and Friends of The Earth for organizing this rally. Westernport Bay was one of the seven issues highlighted for policy change. Thank you to everyone that took part. Catherine Manning gave a great speech at the end of the march and Westernport was well represented. With members of WPPC, Wild about Westernport and Blue Wedges marching at the front of the march, which was at the back, in actual fact.

Blue Wedges has met with the Environmental Defenders Office and they have prepared on their behalf Freedom of information requests to the Dept of Transport for current concept plans and any preliminary studies that have been undertaken. Also to the Federal agency, Australian Maritime safety authority requesting their data on hydrology and oil spill modelling for Westernport. This work has been done by Edo for very minimal cost. We are impressed with and grateful for EDO's assistance. We hope these FOI requests bear fruit.

Introducing a Web site: www.wildaboutwesternport.org

Hands Off Hastings Did you know that the Victorian State Government are planning a massive expansion of The Port Of Hastings in Westernport Bay, including freight and rail transport corridors across the state costing us over ten billion dollars and that's not including the social and environmental costs. The Plan includes 8,750 acre development of Port of Hastings including a 4-6km expansion of the wharf of Westernport Bay for container imports and coal and woodchip exports. Freight rail and transport corridors including the Westernport Highway to take 16x 1.2km freight trains-potentially double stacked and 3500 automated, driverless trucks per day.

Go on line and sign this group's petition and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Hands off Hastings! Protect Western Port (Ramsar) from further port development.

Published by [Catherine Manning](#) on Nov 12, 2011



Background (Preamble):

As the Victorian State Government prepares for a massive expansion of the Port of Hastings in Ramsar listed Western Port (including inland ports, transport corridors and provisions for Latrobe Valley coal/woodchip exports), there is growing community concern about the many impacts this development will have on the environment, including Western Port's Ramsar listed wetlands and endangered species listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*) and Weedy Sea Dragon.

We believe there are other viable shipping alternatives that have not been given due consideration due to vested interests and state by state parochialism. We believe that the science to date suggests that the risks to Western Port and its region far outweigh any possible benefit.

Petition:

We, concerned citizens of Australia, call on the Australian Federal Government to immediately apply the precautionary principle and halt the proposed expansion of the Port of Hastings due to Western Port's environmental sensitivities, our international obligations under the Ramsar Convention, and to protect the various species listed under the Federal Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999.

