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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 twelve, 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 coopt 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:

David Minton (Acting President) 59838 317

Karri Giles (Secretary/editor) 59 832 072 Sheila Kerr (Treasurer) 59 786889

Other members of Committee are: Annabel Richards; Liz Sarrailhe,

Rosemary Birney. Brian Hitch, Kathie Strickland,

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 May 2010



SAVE
WESTERNPORT



World Environment Day June 5th

At Balnarring Primary School from 2.00 - 4.30pm,

.....then at Balnarring Hall from 4.30 – 10.30pm

You are invited to be part of a Balnarring community celebration of World Environment Day. The afternoon starts at Balnarring Primary School with wetlands and garden tours, The evening session will begin at 4.30 with a short welcome, light snack food will be served followed by a short music performance at 6.00pm. Local environmental and sustainable living community groups including Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council Inc. will have displays in the foyer area during the evening session at the Hall. Stalls can be packed up at 6.30pm prior to the start of the short films screening at 6.45. Please come and say hello, sign a form letter, and show an interest.

Balnarring Village Common Group, The Peninsula Song Rider's Club (Balnarring Muso's Nite), supported by the Mornington Peninsula Shire, will present a program of short films from the International Human Rights Arts and Film Festival 2010

The program also includes guest speaker Rick Coleman from the Southern Cross Permaculture Institute, kid's craft, and live music from Cousin Leonard & other local bands.

This event promises to be a great opportunity to share understandings of the social impacts of climate change, learn more about sustainable living, get to know other groups in the community and celebrate the unique environment we live in.

Environmental justice must be seen

AGE 22/4/10

IT IS good to hear that the new EPA chief is looking at prosecution policy (*The Age*, 19/4).

Another important area for reform is in reporting environmental cases. In Victoria, unlike other states, reasons for decisions and case details for environmental prosecutions are not publicly recorded by the courts.

Few Victorians would know that, in 1999, the New Zealand navy reported a 31-kilometre oil slick off Wilson's Prom. The navy traced the slick to a Mobil Oil tanker. Despite weeks of argument in the Victorian County Court, 24 files of evidence, admission of failures, a successful prosecution and \$100,000 fine, there was virtually no public reporting of the case.

In 2002, Caltex appealed to the County Court against an order that details of a fuel spill at a service station in Hawthorn be publicised. The appeal judge reduced the fine and set aside the publication orders. The reasons for the decisions are not available to the public.

Transparency is important for many reasons of proper process and proper policy.

In the short term, the EPA should set up a public site listing environment cases, with links to related documents. It should include impending cases. In the longer term, environmental cases should be publicly listed and details recorded.

Ann Birrell, co-convenor, Port Phillip Greens, Albert Park

Presidents report. David Minton

Yet another oil spill 'Shen Neng 1' and yet another major oil spill disaster that threatens the sensitive wetlands of the southern coast of America. BP warns the spill could become much worse as it already gushes as much as 60,000 barrels a day, *The Age* Thursday May 6. Hopefully by the time you read this the Shen Neng 1 will be safely afloat and heading to a safe harbour for repairs.

Already there are conflicting issues re response and legal passage/route. Regardless of the blame game this spill again highlights how vulnerable our ocean environment is, particularly, as it has affected our precious Great Barrier Reef: Meaning the anti green populace would bother to take an interest. A plus if it forces shipping and oil companies to accept responsibility for, not only, this type of environmental disaster but also that they act on greatly improving safety standards.

Our ongoing concerns for the protection of Westernport worsen if the port expansion is allowed to go ahead. Increased shipping would increase the threats to the sensitive ecology of the Westernport catchment region.

The WPPC remains steadfast re its opposition to any industrial expansion without appropriate and thorough environmental impact studies. In the mean time, we should not settle for less than a 100 percent guarantee that there will be no shipping accidents.

Remain vigilant and please report to the WPPC via email any environmental issue that is of concern.

Environment Defenders Office's Seminar Coastal Law and Climate Change Seminar by Mary Drost

Geoff Westcott marine and coastal specialist discussed developments in policy and the current system. Geoff referred to dichotomies in the system - mitigation is a federal responsibility but climate change adaptation is a state responsibility. He also discussed the need for greater integration in planning and management. In planning there are 2 Ministers responsible. He suggested rejuvenating the Coastal Management Act as the Marine and Coastal Management Act.

Geoff said that Victoria was unique in that 95% of coastal frontage was publicly owned. [let's keep it that way!]

Nick Wimbush, outlined the role of the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee, to which he is chair, and its main task to look at the existing planning scheme to assess whether the current planning tools are adequate for future coastal planning.

Nick highlighted the sensitivity of the coast and how there was a need to treat all areas equitably, that is, small coastal villages must be treated equitably as any larger city. In the next 5 years it was hoped that the government would get on top of vulnerable issues with coastal hazard overlays which will trigger assessment via the planning permit process. By 2015-2020 there is an aim to have a defined strategy plan for each coastal township. There is currently a call for submissions to the CCCAC Report which will also then go on to open hearings. The final report goes to the Minister in December.

Adrian Finanzio a barrister with experience in the *Marengo Great Ocean Green* case, discussed recent VCAT decisions and future planning considering 2 generic issues: inevitability of climate change impacts and the capacity of the system to manage. He noted there are currently big gaps in the decision making process, the need for closer integration of land use and landscape, and he asked what should the policy response be to climate change.

All speakers highlighted the urgency for coastal climate change policy, and one compared planning for climate change as moving into a brave new world and the difficulty for decision makers in the future. One speaker noted we have known about sea level rise since the 1990s but only in 2008 have decisions been made about it. Comments were made on the sad step away from emissions trading by the federal government and that policy was too often determined at a political level. The marginal coastal seats that were important in this election year were also highlighted.

If climate change decisions are made according to votes, we certainly will be entering a brave new world scenario. Further presentation details can be read on the EDO website:
http://www.edo.org.au/edovic/edo_seminars.html#2010

Port Of Hastings Update

We have been attending the Port of Hastings Community Reference Committee meeting. At present the lack of a need for the proposed Port of Hastings has been in the spotlight. Ralph Kenyan at the meeting said that the Business case was "light on" The fact is container imports are well within the Port of Melbourne's capacity. There are three possibilities for the bulk port, all are controversial. **Brown coal exports** are one suggestion. At present it is impossible to export raw Brown Coal because it has 60% water component it heats up like compost and spontaneously combusts. Therefore it does not only need to be dug up it needs to be processed. It has a very low energy efficiency, less than half that of black coal. CO₂ emissions from brown coal make it a resource best left in the ground for a distant future. There has been talk of building a tunnel to carry La Trobe Valley brown coal to the Port of Hastings. The amount of resources it would take to dry and ship the coal to India, makes this plan highly questionable. Another proposal for Hastings is a **blue gum woodchip export port** for blue gums grown in Gippsland. Japanese woodchip ships have brought in Northern Pacific Star Fish which have been responsible for a fall in fish stocks in Port Phillip Bay by around 25%. These Star fish are not present in Westernport Bay, but bringing these ships up the guts of it would make it likely that larvae from these creatures would establish in Westernport Bay with regrettable economic and environmental consequences. Greg Parry The expert on Marine Pests commented that bringing Japanese woodchip ships into Hastings would be "extremely unwise". At present the only option floated for our significant Plantation Blue Gum resource is export pulp. In fact Blue gums grown in Plantations can be sawn, but they need to be sawn according to the inherent stress in their growth rings. There is a Victorian invention (I have shares in) that uses radial sawing to saw blue gums efficiently and profitably. The third suggestion is for **importing cars** at Hastings, but at present Geelong will fight (in a bipartisan way) to retain the car imports that come through their port. Karri Giles

Green Wedges

Dear Premier Brumby, Ministers Madden and Jennings and State Labour MPs,

We are disappointed to read in The Age that you have done a deal with the Liberals in the Disputes Resolution Committee to approve the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution Legislation which The Age assumes will pave the way for the extension of the Urban Growth Boundary to take 43,600 ha of green wedge land for urban development (recently put to Parliament as Planning Scheme Amendment VC55).

Particularly as we are aware that many of you value green wedges and would like to honour and protect this Bracks Government initiative of green wedge protection as much as we would.

Particularly as the proposal is so blatantly flawed: costs of the proposed suburban sprawl compared with building this many dwellings in the existing UGB vary from the Government's estimate of \$15 billion to independent estimates of \$102 billion (Environment Victoria and Metropolitan Transport Forum), while no-one seems to be calculating the costs in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

Particularly as the Government's close relations with developers have been exposed as central to this proposed green wedge land grab. The Government's cash for access lunches with developers are widely despised and perceived to be corrupting the planning process. The Government is widely seen to be doing favours for developers and to care more for their commercial interests than for the interests and concerns of the green wedge landholders and of the voting public, who mostly value the environmental, agricultural and heritage qualities of the green wedges.

It is a sad irony that ALP MPs with green wedge electorates who were once green wedge supporters are now prepared to betray this cause and to vote for the destruction of green wedges, and to malign our members with whom they once celebrated the announcement of the Bracks Government's green wedge protection program launce in 2002. It is particularly sad that ALP green Wedge MPs have felt they needed to abuse and disparage our members to the point where we have needed to seek a Right of Reply.

Particularly sad for the many of our members who would in the past have voted Labour. Please give this matter some serious second thoughts and email or phone if you would like more information. For now, I will send two brief letters to the editor of The Age (below) which summarise our concerns (the top letter was published on Saturday).

All best Rosemary West Joint coordinator, Green Wedges Coalition 0418 554 799

Letter to AGE published April 5th 2010

We who oppose Port Development in Westernport Bay send our condolences to Queensland. Another oil spill! Time for double hulls or for factoring oil spills into environmental effects statements. Karri Giles

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Locality</u>	<u>Contact Phone</u>
<u>Sat 5th June</u>	<u>2pm -10.30pm</u>	<u>WPPC stall World Environment Day</u>	<u>Balnarring Primary School and Hall</u>	<u>59 832 072</u>
<u>Monday 7th June</u>	<u>7.30</u>	<u>Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association</u>	<u>Rosebud</u>	
<u>Wed 9th June</u>	<u>10am</u>	<u>Peninsula Bird observers club</u>	<u>Cruden Farm Langwarrin</u>	<u>Keith Hindley 0183209523</u>
<u>Sat 19th June</u>	<u>9am</u>	<u>WPPC meeting</u>	<u>Karri's Place</u>	<u>59 832 072</u>