



Peel Preservation Group Inc.

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PPG is a non-profit organisation devoted to the conservation of the natural environment in the Peel Region of Western Australia

Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC
Minister for the Environment
2 Havelock Street
West Perth WA 6005

18 July 2017

Dear Minister

RE: POINT GREY MARINA

I am writing on behalf of the Peel Preservation Group which has been vehemently opposed to the development of a marina at Point Grey, on the eastern side of the Peel-Harvey estuary, since the initial approval by the State Government. Our group, which has been recognised and endorsed by a recent grant from the State Government, represents a chorus of voices who are very concerned about any major works that may have a deleterious impact on our estuary system. We are aware that State government environmental approval for the Point Grey Marina will expire on 1st August 2017, and urge that any application for extension of time in regard to the implementation of this project be refused.

There are a number of very serious environmental concerns associated with the proposed development at Point Grey. We have been advised by several key environmental scientists that the required dredging for this project is likely to release a potentially unpredictable and dangerous mix of chemicals imbedded in the estuary floor, such as stored phosphorus and heavy metals. As well as chemical toxicity, the increase in released nutrients is likely to affect oxygenation levels of the water and lead to increased algae blooms, which can have devastating effects on fish stocks.

As regularly reported in our local Mandurah media, there has been at least three major "fish kills" (in the order of some 30,000 fish) so far this year in the Peel Inlet and adjoining Murray and Serpentine River systems, which has been proven to be connected to poor water quality at the time. Given the current precarious state of the Peel-Harvey estuary system, the proposed Point Grey development may have a detrimental effect on a very complex and finely tuned estuarine environment, which is part of the Ramsar listed Peel-Yalgorup system.

As a descendent of a local fishing family I am very well aware of the historical stories of the gradual decline of what was once a pristine estuary system. It was Mandurah's professional fishermen, through their newly formed Professional Fishermen's Association, who first reported to the State Government in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the never-seen-before algae blooms that were having a devastating effect on local fisheries. The local fishermen correctly identified the problem as being caused by over-development in the catchment area, especially due to the run off of fertilizers and associated chemicals.

Hence, a very relevant anecdotal story comes from those same professional fishermen whose livelihood depended on the Peel-Harvey inlet last century. These local experts tell us that the first canal development on the estuary at South Yunderup in the 1970s almost led to the demise of the colloquially called Murray River Prawn (Western school prawn) due to substantial dredging around and near the Murray River mouth, which apparently caused a major disruption to the prime locale and likely breeding site of this prawn. Fishing stocks were suddenly depleted and it took well over a decade for the prawn to be seen again in any significant numbers, let alone to be commercially viable again.

Many tourists from Perth and beyond visit Mandurah and the Peel region in ever increasing numbers to enjoy recreational fishing and crabbing, and this has a very substantial positive impact on the local economy. History tells us that major works impacting on the estuary bed may have a deleterious effect on prized fisheries.

Gambling on this asset would be irresponsible.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn J. Tuckey

Committee member

Peel Preservation Group (Inc)

cc. David Templeman MLA, Member for Mandurah

Zak Kirkup MLA, Member for Dawesville

Robyn Clarke MLA, Member for Murray/ Wellington