



Planning & Protection Council

5 Second Avenue JANNALI NSW 2226 Phone: 9589 3069 OR (02) 4441 1107

The Director

27th January 2004

Standing Committee on State Development

Legislative Council

Parliament House

SYDNEY NSW 2000

PROPOSED PORT BOTANY EXPANSION ALTERNATIVE.

A 100 years old port waiting for business.

- * No Costly Dredging or permanent damage to marine ecosystems.
- * no release of toxic acid sulphate and other chemical residues.
- * no loss of public amenity
- * no traffic jams.
- * no breach of international bird Agreements with China and Japan.
- * extensive freight rail in place.

The ready made port of course is Newcastle's port on the Hunter River. It has adequate water depth, shore infrastructure could readily supply the skilled labour force required. The closure of BHP Steelworks left Newcastle with a big unemployment gap. From Patrick's (the proponent's) viewpoint Newcastle would probably be sub-optimal commercially but certainly environmentally and socially superior to Port Botany, and is that not what the environmental and planning legislation is all about - to ensure a proper balance between these sometimes competing factors.

PORT BOTANY EXPANSION

A traffic nightmare awaits an expansion of Port Botany. Envisage traffic jams

from a "100% increase in container trucks" - "3.000 to 5.000 extra trucks a day" moving through south Sydney suburbs to major highways, competing with airport and commuter traffic at intersections that already often become gridlocked. Large trucks slow down traffic flows, are slowly away at traffic lights, turning corners and a big increase in exhaust emission. A nightmare waiting to happen. Hardly a vote winner!

HABITAT LOSS

The newsletters published by Sydney Ports advising on benefits of Port Botany expansion contains considerable false premise and unresearched material.

A claim to transplant 8ha of seagrass to replace loss of the last intact seagrass community northside of the bay is to claim the impossible.

Compensatory seagrass transplantation between the parallel runways failed. "There has been no successful large scale operation to transplant seagrasses overseas". The report discusses some short term successes however, "There has been no long term success reported". THE ECOLOGY LAB 12 Dec. 1997. NSW FISHERIES highlights the value of the bay's northern seagrass community. "Along the north-western shore off Botany, are the most important nursery area for juvenile fish yet found in NSW". 30.9.1990.

MIGRATORY WADER FEEDING HABITAT - PENHRYN ESTUARY.

Sydney Ports are obliged to produce data showing examples of where shorebirds have been encouraged to feed in a man made habitat. Our research shows attempts to successfully seed marine fauna in an artificial habitat has been unsuccessful.

The muddy sand intertidal sediments of the site represents a unique geological feature in Botany Bay in that they were formed as a marginal shoal of the Cooks River in the early Holocene period. The deltaic sand deposits support a rich assemblage of invertebrate life with a polychaete dominated infauna.

The most significant element of the site is the composition of the avifauna present. Studies have shown this northern wetland has been used by over 6.000 migratory waders a year, 1.000 more than the southern foreshores. More waders roost and feed around the Penhryn estuary than Towra Peninsula and is arguably the most important wader site in Botany Bay.

Records show a count of 8.622 waders on the northern foreshore against 5.458

on the southern shores for one season. Substantial loss of southern foreshore habitat is due to past bay dredging.

Australian governments are obliged to honour International Agreements to "... preserve and enhance the environment of birds protected under the provisions of this Agreement. In particular, it shall : a) seek means to prevent damage to such birds and their environment :....." Migratory Bird Agreements, China (1986) Japan (1981).

ACID SULPHATE & CHEMICAL RESIDUE.

Studies have shown the groundwater along the foreshore in the locality where the expansion is proposed to be of a highly acid nature.

It is very hard to visualise how large scale deep dredging could be carried out in the vicinity without releasing large quantities of acid sulphate groundwater flows into Botany Bay.

If this occurred the effect on marine life would be highly damaging. That would be bad enough, but another factor that makes the situation even touchier is that recreational fishermen are forced to pay licence fees, dedicated largely to buying out commercial fishing licenses to allow Botany Bay fish stocks to recover. The large amateur fishing community in the region would be rightly outraged if the Government allowed a development that negated that aim

PREVIOUS DREDGING APPLICATION REFUSED DUE TO CADMIUM.

Is the government going to permit dredging of an area where it had already refused permission to dredge due to high Cadmium levels. Government records of tests carried out at the proposed new port area show sediments contained Cadmium levels exceeding 28 mg/kg - far in excess of World Health Organisation's threshold of 2 mg/kg.

In the same government report the toxic chemicals listed included copper, zinc and mercury.

During dredging for the Third Runway there was concern over high levels of zinc in the dredged material. I was asked by management if I knew the source.

Medical science has produced evidence of a strong link between high zinc levels and Alzheimers disease.

BALLAST WATER - TBT

Should a second port proceed, ballast water discharge will double the present volume of more than 400,000 tonnes annually. So the risk of discharge of dangerous foreign organisms also doubles.

There is an increasing concern among Australian quarantine, environmental and fishing authorities over the introduction of harmful organisms via the discharge of ballast water and sediment from shipping entering Australian ports from overseas.

Tasmanian shellfish industry was closed down on a number of occasions due to the introduction of toxic dinoflagellates discharged from ship's ballast water

American and Canadian Governments are spending millions of dollars in an attempt to eradicate the fast growing imported Zebra mussel. Darwin officials panicked when it appeared in their harbour a few years ago.

Propellor Polishing in Botany Bay, that has occurred over many years, should cease unconditionally. Allowing foreign algy and crustaceans to descend to the sea floor is against Australian quarantine policy.

TRI-BUTYL TIN OXIDE (TBT)

Ships plying the bay's water are pushing a bow wave of toxic TBT, a hull anti-foul agent.

There is a total ban on the use of TBT on vessels under 25 metres in N.S.W. The ban does not apply to ships entering Botany Bay with a paint surface area 10 times that of recreational vessels.

Paradoxical, when you consider the aim of the ban is to safeguard marine organisms from certain death from this toxic cocktail.

France and Britain has banned or controlled the use of TBT. A University of London biologist, DR MARK SIMMONDS says a replacement for TBT is urgently needed.

DR KEN BROWN, senior lecturer in applied biology said TBT was one of the most toxic chemical in the marine environment.

TBT causes deformities in bivalves and kills prawns, crab and lobsters in the larval stage plus other macro organisms.

If the government is serious about revitalising fish stocks in Botany Bay it should take steps to reduce toxicity levels of this deadly organo-tin

compound, not doubling it by allowing twice the number of ships into the bay.

LOSS OF AMENITY.

Botany Bay once a haven for bathers, water sports and fishing is now dangerous and restricted. Lost amenities include an olympic size sailing course, restricted fishing and recreational boating due to port traffic restrictions and banned zones.

Where once young children safely waded in the shallows, drop off and deep holes have occurred due to erosion caused by increased wave height from extensive seabed dredging.

Foreshore Beach will become awash with oil and grease from shipping and tug movements. Construction of a container terminal and tug berths opposite and parallel to the third runway will create a canal of dead water. Not the place to take children for a paddle. Another loss of productive fishing waters for recreational fishers, an area greater than the size of a hundred football ovals.

PORT BOTANY EXTENSION - WHO BENEFITS - WHO PAYS.

Commercial benefits versus total loss of a public amenity. Hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions in some cases, spent on reports to convince the public how, stealing their beaches and waterways will benefit them, a public amenity that would be lost to them and future generations. How do you equate that in dollars and cents.

Botany Bay can be saved from the aforementioned by considering first the community's interests by locating the proposed port facility to where there will be no impact on the environment or the community, Newcastle.

Isn't it time governments put a price tag on our waterways as a recreational asset.

Bernie Clarke

BERNIE CLARKE OAM.