

3 July 2009

Resource Planning and Development Commission GPO Box 1691 Hobart TAS 7001

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed Development at Ralphs Bay

I wish to expand on my concerns regarding the proposed development by Walker Corporation at Ralphs Bay.

I have further reviewed a large portion of Walker Corporation's Draft Integrated Impact Statement and again find it to be lacking in substance with substantial duplication. These same documents are being presented by Walker Corporation as 'the facts'. I am unclear how a corporation with a vested interest in an outcome is capable of determining the facts.

As an example is the opinion of the supposed independent consultant with respect to medical services in the area. I am a Doctor working at the Lauderdale Doctors Surgery. Our practice services Lauderdale Cremorne, South Arm, Seven Mile Beach, Oakdowns, Rokeby and Acton Park. When consulted by the AEC Group acting consultants for Walker Group with respect to their Socio-economic Impact Assessment of the Ralphs Bay Development I made the following comments. It is difficult to find GPs to work in Tasmania. Doctors are retiring quicker than they are being trained. We are 50 GPs short Tasmania wide. We are notoriously a conservative environmentally focused group who do not want to work in the middle of a building site. The extended construction time and destruction of natural habitat will only make it more difficult for the area to attract Doctors.

So what did Walker Corporation say in their executive summary on this issue? They said and I quote "inclusion of an office/shop front suitable for doctors rooms should be considered in the commercial section of the development." What an incredibly stupid response to our Local State and Federal shortage of General Practitioners. If this is an example of the Walker Corporations ability to solve a major problem what other information has been manipulated or ignored?

Further review of the Social Impact Assessment showed some reference to my statements of December 2008 again supposedly to be magically fixed with an advertising campaign to attract Doctors highlighted by the very much disputed wonders of the development. The Queensland consultants obviously think they know something we don't know.

I notice with interest Clarence falls behind the rest of the State in FTEs of GPs per 10000 at 61 compared with 73.4 for the State average. This is bound to be under pressure if Walker Group is allowed to continue. I do not have the backing of Cardno Consultancy Group but of the 14 Doctors at our 2 Surgeries at Lauderdale and Bellerive none are in favor of the proposal. Of the Medical Fraternity that presented submissions to the RPDC against Walker Group that I know of there were 7 GPs 2 Chemists 1 Professor of Microbiology 2 Specialists 1 Physiotherapist 1 Psychologist 1 Medical Student and 2 Parents of Doctors. No Doctors to my knowledge on the Eastern Shore of Hobart have shown any support for this project. And Walkers Consultants think that offices in 2014 and a marketing campaign will fix this.

With interest I read the 10 or so pages of Health Infrastructure in the Socio-economic Assessment. The North West General Hospital 3 hours away got a mention I have no idea why as did the Clarence Plains Community Health Centre which closed for GP Services 5 years ago. Doctor ratios got a mention in the Central Highlands as did a child care centre in Lower Sandy Bay that is 5 km away by water but 40 minutes away by road. In fact of all the health information presented only 10 to 20 % of it had any relevance and the rest is padding. If the same could be said for the rest of the DIIS then at least it could be shortened from 10000 odd pages to 2000 or so.

I have many other concerns that affect my family and I as property owners living in Lauderdale. As individuals with limited resources we are unable to produce glossy brochures and employ consultants however I do know that we will experience considerable loss of amenity. The following are just some of the issues:

Loss of a significant and valued Ralphs Bay Conservation Area.

Loss of visual amenity across Ralphs Bay, as a result of construction of buildings across the bay, on top of artificial landforms built up above the current high tide mark.

Loss of wide, flat, uninterrupted views from the South Arm Highway across Ralphs Bay towards Mount Wellington, with reflections, in the shallow waters of the bay, of the sky conditions, especially sunsets and sunrises.

Loss of the sight of the numerous wader birds, both resident and migratory, that locals have come to look out for and appreciate, as they feed along the water's edge.

Construction will be taking place for a very long time. There will be noise and dust for residents living close to the site, Lauderdale school children and their teachers to endure. I have considerable concerns with regards to increased dust and air borne pollution with in the areas around the construction site. Our practice is situated downwind of the proposed construction area. It will not be good for patients with asthma and emphysema to be exposed to this especially as they are presenting to our premises for treatment of such ailments.

I again notice with interest 60 pages of information in the DIIS on Air Quality and Odor. The Meteorological Modeling is based on the use of weather reports at Hobart City, Hobart Airport and Mount Wellington. Everyone who uses South Arm Road to drive to work each day knows that these three areas are not representative of Ralph's Bay especially when the Westerly's are funneling through over the Lauderdale neck. The clever diagrams of the Calmet computer programming are a misrepresentation of true local events. I was most interested in the Spatially Varying Surface Flows generated by Calmet which on page 26 of this document appears to show a light SE sea breeze not the excellent windsurfing strong to gale force Westerlies that are so common. Particle Matter monitoring on Page 31 again refers to Hobart only which of course is considerably different to Lauderdale. Thus I have grave concerns as to the accuracy of this Meteorological Modeling and hence also the dust and wind borne pollution levels. With this project it is likely that garbage in equal's garbage out. This is probably an easy mistake to make if you live in Queensland rather than Lauderdale.

Unpleasant sulfurous (“rotten egg”) smells resulting from excavating the sandflat / mudflat ecosystem. These smells would mainly result from the exposure of bacteria naturally present in the lower, black layers, and also from the death and decomposition of the myriad molluscs, worms, crabs, phytoplankton, protozoa, bacteria etc. in the sediments.

I am surprised to note no reference to Insect Borne Diseases in the Walker Documentation. I like other local Doctors have concerns with respect to the increased risk of Ross River Virus as a result of water pooling with such a prolonged construction phase and also when completed. As per the Submission by Professor of Microbiology John Goldshmid this extremely debilitating condition will only be more prevalent with the increased mosquito activity associated with such a project as proposed by Walker.

Traffic delays, due to large numbers of heavy vehicles on the roads during the construction phase, and extra cars on the roads from the canal estate residents. These delays would be experienced all the way from Lauderdale to the Tasman Bridge. Traffic delays will also impact on the ability of our patients to attend the surgery for treatment. In an emergency situation the consequences could be quite severe.

Noise from heavy trucks, excavators and other vehicles and plant associated with excavation of two million cubic metres of material from across a large swathe of Ralphs Bay; the importation of rock and sand to form artificial landforms in the bay, and construction of buildings on top of these landforms.

I note with interest the Walker Documentation throughout quotes 10 trucks per hour using the site. On further dissection on page 37 of the Traffic Impact Assessment there is likely to be 80 movements in and 80 movements out per day or 20 truck movements per hour for an 8 hour day. This is a considerable amount of truck activity which should not be watered down with clever rhetoric.

With respect to noise pollution an increase of 10 to 20 db above back ground noise is proposed. This may be acceptable under NSW guidelines in which this report has considerable focus and may not cause hearing loss as per WHO Guidelines. However in Tasmania that it is total unacceptable. The current traffic noise is at the limit of our comfort levels. Any more will obviously degrade our environment. Wind may dissipate some of this noise but this is natural and does not disturb our sense of place where as construction does.

Loss (by excavation) of much of one of the State's best sailboarding areas, which is shallow enough to be safe and easy for beginners, yet exciting due to the high winds prevalent in the area.

Threats to safe, shallow areas currently used for kayaking, canoeing and floundering in Ralphs Bay.

The influx of the occupants of almost 500 new homes would be a massive impact on this small beachside community, and would in no way compare to the gradual integration of new residents as homes in existing Lauderdale streets are sold and bought, or small subdivisions occur within the existing village community. It is inevitable that the quiet, relaxed atmosphere of Lauderdale will change.

In general my concerns with respect to the environmental impact of such a project are consistent with many local residents and other Tasmanians. With respect to my medical concerns these are also shared by a large number of my colleagues both in Lauderdale, the Eastern Shore, Greater Hobart and at a State and Federal Level.

I trust that my comments will be considered and independent and Objective analysis will be made on all of the issues raised.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Sincerely,

Dr John Saul Ba Med Sci MBBS  
GP Lauderdale 19 years