

**From:** Julie Boyd  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 February 2009 10:05 PM  
**To:** RPDC  
**Subject:**

Executive Commissioner  
Resource Planning and Development Commission  
3rd floor, 144 Macquarie Street  
Hobart TAS 7000

Phone: (03) 6233 2795  
Fax: (03) 6233 5400  
Email: [enquiry.rpdc@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:enquiry.rpdc@justice.tas.gov.au)

Dear Sir

As a former long term resident of Tasmania I am deeply disturbed that Tasmania is even considering canal estates. They are banned in NSW and Qld for very good reason- see below.

- The Walker Corporation of NSW proposes to build a canal housing estate on the sandflats of Ralphs Bay, Southern Tasmania.
- This would involve gouging out 150 hectares of the sandflat ecosystem and adjacent shoreline, excavating deep boating channels, building artificial islands in the marine environment and constructing a housing subdivision on top.
- Surveys have shown that up to 73% of residents oppose this proposed development. Little or no vocal support for the development has been expressed in surveys or in the Tasmanian media.
- The proposed development would eradicate 100% of the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area.
- The Ralphs Bay Conservation Area was declared following decades of lobbying by ornithologists, to protect critical breeding habitat for both resident and migratory shorebirds.
- Ralphs Bay currently provides habitat for 7% of the entire population of the Australasian Pied Oystercatcher. Migratory shorebirds travel to Ralphs Bay each year from as far away as Siberia, and also from New Zealand. On arrival, these birds need to rest, recover, feed and put on condition for their return journey.
- The canal estate proposal would entirely remove a vast area of sandflat, which provides critical feeding habitat for the shorebirds.

- It would also involve construction across the existing shoreline and removal of a large vegetated sandspit - these areas provide roosting and breeding habitat for shorebirds
  
- The critically endangered Spotted Handfish, *Brachionichthys hirsutus* has areas of confirmed habitat in Ralphs Bay. Little funding has been given to the implementation of the Recovery Plan for this fish, which is in danger of becoming the world's first extinct marine fish (since the naming of species began). Due to the very limited surveys conducted, it is impossible to tell whether Spotted Handfish live close to the proposed development, or in what numbers.
  
- Resuspension of sediments and increased sedimentation rates are threats to the Spotted Handfish, as are introduced species.
  
- The Derwent estuary is one of the most polluted in Australia and, indeed, the world, due mainly to the presence of a zinc smelter in Hobart's northern suburbs. The heavily polluted sediments of the Derwent and Ralphs Bay are gradually becoming covered by cleaner sediments, as a result of improved environmental management. Disturbing these polluted sediments by building a canal estate is an unacceptable risk to Derwent ecosystems, food chains and aquaculture.
  
- This would be Tasmania's first ever canal housing estate.
  
- Canal estates are banned in NSW and Victoria due to the environmental damage they cause, and also in Tasmania's Kingborough municipality. There is a moratorium on canal estate construction on Queensland's Gold Coast.
  
- Even on the development hungry Tweed Coast, Canal estates were refused because of their impact. If you're not convinced, be aware that bull sharks flourish in canals on the Gold Coast!

Yours sincerely

Julie Boyd

On behalf of the Sustainable Villages Alliance (comprising 22 Residents Groups across the Tweed Shire)