

**From:** Hawkins, Robert  
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**To:** RPDC  
**Subject:** 24/02/09: Ralphs Bay

To the RPDC

The Sydney-based Walker Corporation's plan to build Tasmania's first canal housing estate inside the footprint of the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area - an internationally significant bird and marine habitat - represents an unacceptable threat to the state's wild coastline, and to our economically vital clean, natural brand.

The proposal is unnecessary: there is no shortage of land available to suit current market needs; and there are more than enough other tacky coastal strips interstate to satisfy real estate buyers looking for an artificial waterfront lifestyle.

Ralphs Bay at Lauderdale is a Conservation Area that - according to the Commonwealth and State funded Derwent Estuary Program - is critical to the health of the slowly recovering River Derwent.

Resident and migratory shorebirds that feed, rest and breed at Ralphs Bay are protected under State and Commonwealth law, as well as international agreements with Japan, China and South Korea.

The critically endangered Spotted Handfish is a resident of Ralphs Bay, inhabiting the sandy bottom in deeper waters. The Tasmanian and Commonwealth Spotted Handfish Recovery Plan says that disturbance of sediments is a key threat to its survival as a species. A projected 7-10 year construction period digging out 150 hectares of tidal flat in the near vicinity represents an unacceptable risk to the Spotted Handfish.

The proposal to privatise and destroy the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area has no "social licence", ie, it does not have the support of a significant percentage of the South Arm peninsula community or the wider population, as demonstrated in three credible community surveys and continued bad press for the proponent.

The Bartlett Government's recent decision to change State Coastal Policy to allow development on mobile coastal landforms can only be regarded as political interference in the RPDC assessment process. It represents a repeat of the Lennon Government's form on the Gunns' pulp mill.

The Commission must adhere to the core Precautionary Principle of the State Coastal Policy and reject the Walker Corporation proposal.

Bob Hawkins