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## STOCKLAND DEVELOPMENT – LONSDALE LAKES

### “JUNE 2004 Newsletter no.39”

The following appeared in our newsletter in 2004. The issues remain the same (despite some concessions by Stockland, e.g. fewer houses) but the threat of sea level rise has added an alarming new area of concern.

#### **Stockland Development affecting Lonsdale Lakes and Swan Bay**

*Concerns have been raised over a proposed development by property giant Stockland on the edge of Point Lonsdale.*

*A former sand and shell grit mine, the 195 acre site is part of the wetland water course between Lake Victoria and Swan Bay.*

*While many people may not be able to appreciate the value of this site in terms of its environmental values, Stockland certainly appreciates the value of the land in terms of housing. They are planning for an 18-hole golf course and 1000 dwellings. Their catch cry of “ti-tree not palm tree” is not very comforting when it is in conjunction with “a network of waterside parks” that will drain into Swan Bay.*

*There are a number of features of this development over which the Swan Bay Environment Association and a number of other community groups have raised concerns:*

- *A self-contained, on-site sewerage treatment system that will be used to irrigate the golf course*
- *A system of lakes that will take run off from the golf course (fertilisers and weed control) back into Swan Bay via a filtration system*
- *The introduction of 1000 properties onto a site that is influential on Swan Bay, a listed world-heritage site*

- *The introduction of 1000 property’s people, cars, cats, dogs and environmental weeds onto a vulnerable site*
  - *The loss of a natural wetland site (although degraded, still has indigenous vegetation and is part of the wetland system) to housing and golf course, and “waterside parks”.*
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### NOVEMBER 2009 Update

The following is an update on Lonsdale Lakes written by the Geelong Environment Council (reprinted with permission).

#### **LONSDALE LAKES PROPOSAL AND RAMSAR NOMINATION**

On February 2nd, World Wetlands Day, the Victorian Government Environment Minister, Gavin Jennings announced that the Stockland development on and in the Lonsdale Lakes wetlands will go ahead. Some conditions are to be applied. The conglomerate of small lakes of varying salinity and freshness are recognised as forming a valuable link between the Ramsar\* listed Swan Bay and Lake Victoria. The nominated areas have been assessed by Ecology Australia as being significant for both flora and fauna, both singly and as a total system, the lakes are an important habitat area for important migratory fauna as well as resident species and the Orange-bellied parrot.

It is urged that the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) planning scheme be amended to make the Environmental Management Strategy referral documents for all planning decisions. The fact that the Council submission was able to discount these strategies was detrimental to the Planning Panel decision.

The Lonsdale Lakes contain 12 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) five of which are endangered, including 42 avifauna species recorded in the EPBC Act (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act) and also the endangered Orange-bellied parrot. We cannot help but wonder what flora and fauna values are needed before an area which has the potential for development is fully protected.

While Minister Garrett has recognised the Ramsar values of the nominated lakes, he refrained from accepting the increased protected area due to the nomination not being supported by the State Government. Minister Garrett has now given a permit for a very limited part of the proposal at the eastern end of the site to proceed. He has required Stockland to carry out very extensive water quality tests during the coming 13 months and to make all the results publicly available. No intrusion into the wetlands and lakes or the removal of the ancient dune system can take place during this period.

Geelong Environment Council continues to believe that apart from the area which currently has a permit to be developed the best use of the remainder of the land would be as a "Wetland Botanic Park" and be linked to Mafri and the Marine Discovery Centre. An environmental education centre of immense value could be created. With the possibility of sea level rise and subsequent flooding of existing coastal wetlands it will be imperative for more inland areas to be available for wetland and wader-bird habitat in the future. A consultancy has been let to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to identify opportunities to expand and increase Orange-bellied parrot habitat in Geelong and Queenscliffe.

(\*Ramsar refers to the Convention on Wetlands held at Ramsar in Iran in 1971, where an important international treaty was signed to conserve wetlands around the world.)

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The Swan Bay Association continues to work with other local groups, including the Point Lonsdale Coastal Spaces Group, in opposing the Stockland development. A submission emphasizing the dangers of sea level rise has recently been forwarded to the Minister for Planning.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE**

Councils with low lying coastal land are facing many challenges, with management of the coast, protection of existing facilities and tough planning decisions all presenting problems. The Borough of Queenscliffe is congratulated on its initiative to consult with and refer planning issues to the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) and to make decisions on the future use of low lying land in the Borough on the expert advice and extensive modelling of the coast by the CCMA. The State Government is reviewing coastal planning schemes to ascertain the most efficient way to manage the threats of flooding and storm surges.

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**THE BOROUGH OF QUEENSLIFFE** is seeking community feedback on the "Interim Local Floodplain Development Plan" that is designed to guide Council's decision making on planning applications in areas that are identified as prone to flood risk due to sea level rise.

The files are available for download on the Council's website:

<http://www.queenscliffe.vic.gov.au>

under:

"IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE IN THE BOQ"

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Before getting too despondent about the issues facing the world, have another look at our last Newsletter (No. 53, July 2009) to read about the positive environmental work being done in our community, much of it by volunteers.

The Swan Bay Environment Association wishes members a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful summer in our beautiful coastal surroundings.

Thanks to all of you who have helped promote the Association's aims in 2009.

Our AGM will be held next February.

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*Working bees at Nursery, 79 Nelson Rd, 10am-12pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month and mid-week on different days. If interested contact Jill Warneke 5258 1716 or [jwarneke@vtown.com.au](mailto:jwarneke@vtown.com.au)*

*Mid-week times are also posted on the Nursery fence and on our website [home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~sbea)*