



# **Media Release**

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**News Release**  
18 June 2009

## **Borough urges Geelong and the State Government to protect Lonsdale Lakes wetlands**

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At its Council Meeting on Wednesday, 17 June 2009 the Borough of Queenscliffe resolved to make representations to the City of Greater Geelong and other authorities that any development of Point Lonsdale's Lonsdale Lakes area should retain the existing waterways with appropriate environmental setbacks.

The recent action by the State Government preventing development in the Barham River floodplain between Marengo and Apollo Bay has urged the Borough to highlight the need for the protection of the Point Lonsdale waterways which have been labelled 'environmentally significant' by the Federal Minister for the Environment, the Hon Peter Garrett.

Mayor Cr Bob Merriman maintained that Council is supportive of residential development if the outcome is in a consistent manner that protects, conserves and adds value to the unique natural, built and heritage values of the Borough.

"Council is committed to working in partnership with the community, stakeholders and the responsible authorities to achieve responsive and high quality planning outcomes" Cr Merriman said.

"These wetlands are in a low lying area and are vulnerable to flooding and rising sea levels and would require an excessive amount of earthworks to make it suitable for residential development. The potential effect on Swan Bay, a dedicated Ramsar wetland, needs finite evaluation."

The Victorian Coastal Strategy launched last year discourages residential development in low lying coastal areas that are vulnerable to significant flooding, sea-level rise, erosion and also the development of projects in such locations involving canals.

"What we are asking Geelong Council and the State Government is to recognise the similarities between the Apollo Bay development and the Point Lonsdale development, together with all the other issues, and to take immediate action to protect this sensitive part of Point Lonsdale" Cr Merriman said.

In early April, the Borough of Queenscliffe wrote to the Federal Minister for Environment, the Hon Peter Garrett urging that approval under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 be withheld until critical environmental concerns have been adequately studied and addressed.

The Borough has requested that adequate safe-guards including plans for the management of nutrients, environmental monitoring and adaptive management strategies for discharge water quality from the proposed canal systems are in place prior to development approval being issued.

Cr Merriman said that Council is yet to receive a definitive position from the Federal Minister regarding these concerns.

"We do support residential development, but it is of great community concern from both residents and community groups that these issues are sorted out."

"Given the outcome at Apollo Bay, the Borough of Queenscliffe is hopeful that a result which ensures the integrity of planning on and around the municipal boundary is achieved" Cr Merriman said.

On 11 June 2009, the State Government announced that it had rejected the proposal for the Great Ocean Green residential and golf course resort development in the Barham River floodplain between Marengo and Apollo Bay.

Planning Minister Justin Madden said in a statement that the State Government was taking action to protect Victoria's environment and tourist attractions.

"I consider the substantial risk of flooding and the excessive scale of engineering works required for a residential development in this sensitive location, outweighs the potential benefits of the proposal" Mr Madden said.

Minister Madden said the decisions on Apollo Bay were informed by a number of Panel Reports, discussions with Council and the Victorian Coastal Strategy.

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