



Frankston Beach Association Inc.

Preserving the beach for all to use

April 2010 Newsletter

Contents:

UPDATE ON THE MARINA
RECREATION
CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY
MEMBERSHIP OF THE FBA

FBA Committee:

President - Frank Hart
Vice Presid. - Bob Graham
Secretary - Graeme Lyell
Treasurer - Trevor Paganoni
Committee - Olwen Bawden
Pat Bentley
Margaret Grice
Kath Hassell
David Mumford
Helen Priestley
Andrew Smith
Eve Welch

Contact Details:

FBA Secretary
2A Fenton Cres.
South Frankston, Vic 3199
Tel: 9783 7445 or email to
fbainc2006@hotmail.com.au

For enquiries about voluntary work on the foreshore or in the nursery, please contact the Secretary via the details above.

FBA web site:
www.vicnet.net.au/~fbainc

Reg. No. A0031686R
ABN 68 874 762 644

Update on the Proposed Olivers Hill Marina

Our October 2009 Newsletter stated that we would review the financial and environmental aspects of the proposed marina in this Newsletter. In the meantime, Frankston City Council (FCC) has announced that none of the five tenders submitted prior to 29 January this year, for the construction, maintenance and operation of the proposed marina at Olivers Hill have met FCC's criteria for a financial guarantee. Most tenders sought to increase potential revenues by increasing the approved commercial activities and acquiring the approved public boat ramps (ie. causing the boat ramps to fall under private control). FCC advises that it has now abandoned, for at least 12 to 18 months, its tender process.

Examination of the FCC tender documents reveals that they were deficient in establishing environmental requirements and standards and lacked financial and economic soundness.

No credible financial cost study for this project was conducted by FCC prior to going to tender. Responses to the tender indicated that the actual cost is likely to be 'several hundred million dollars', rather than the cost of \$80 million suggested by FCC. The tender specifications failed to allow a proponent sufficient time to (i) collect the necessary environmental data and/or (ii) undertake the physical and numerical coastal modelling studies, required by the relevant parts of the Frankston Planning Scheme. Environmental data previously obtained which FCC advised was to be used by the successful proponent for the coastal modelling studies has repeatedly been assessed as being flawed and deficient by three Planning Panels and two Planning Ministers.

The attitude of FCC to the above and the failure to undertake any form of risk assessment relating to financial, environmental, structural and social outcomes for this major development can be considered a form of serious negligence.

We ask the question - where to from here?

To effectively utilize the 12 to 18 month lay-period, FBA wrote to the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change and to FCC requesting that during this time the full range of environmental data required for rigorous coastal modelling studies be collected and that the necessary physical and numerical modelling studies be undertaken by competent and experienced physical and numerical coastal modelling engineers, who sit independent of any developer.

It is the opinion of coastal experts that credible studies as described herein must be completed prior to allowing a marina development to commence and that such studies be undertaken for the smallest to the largest proposed marina/boating facility at Frankston.

Information obtained from the model is needed to help manage and maintain the environmental and recreational value of adjacent Frankston Beach to the north and Daveys Bay to the south, to assess the size and strength of marina structures and evaluate design and construction options. Experts advise that collection of the environmental data to be used in the model will take more than twelve months and the actual modelling studies will take a further four months to complete.

Evidence shows that all moneys spent on this work will be more than recouped by

ensuring appropriate planning, construction and maintenance decisions can be made. The cost of this modelling work can subsequently be charged to the successful proponent.

FCC is examining this matter more fully and advises we can expect a response in the near future.

Recreation

The Frankston Beach between Olivers Hill and the pier has been a hive of activity throughout the summer months. Jet ski enthusiasts, together with their beach igloos, have been known to cover most of the southern end of the beach..... and yes, generally the drivers have obeyed the rules (with the odd exception). Police patrols of this area were a little more active in the pre Christmas period but have been noticeably absent in the January to March months. Week-ends have seen the beach crowded and it would appear that the East Link freeway has been a new factor in increasing the beach use over the summer and Easter holiday periods.

Many local sporting clubs have been using the beach for exercise and training routines. This includes local netball, basket ball and football clubs. Dog walkers, especially during the morning and evening periods, are all year around users of the beach and the board walk.

The Pier forecourt, Kananook Creek boat launching ramps and all parking areas south of the Life Saving Club continue to be the most intensely used beach areas, while north of the Life Saving Club, the Long Island beach has seen lighter numbers of beach goers. However, this northern end of Frankston's beach (through to Seaford beach) is becoming a higher use area.

The most noticeable new beach activity over the Summer has been the canoe and kayak paddlers. They have enjoyed the calm flat water over the past few months. It is a recreation which attracts all ages and is a wonderful sustainable use of the bay and beaches, as well as being a very good form of exercise.



The recreational use of the beach by all the above mentioned users is continuing, and further proof that protection of this wonderful asset is of paramount importance to all, whether they be local residents or the

ever expanding population of visitors. It is important for all of us to be vigilant in retaining the beaches and the Kananook Creek area. Appropriately controlled commercial development is welcomed but not at the expense of our natural beach and creek areas so widely used by us all for our recreational activities.

Caring for Our Country Grant

During 2009, the FBA received a Federal Government grant of \$23,304 for revegetation of the foreshore dune. Our work group with the assistance of Frankston City Council officers will plant 12,000 indigenous shrubs and ground covers on the primary dune between the Frankston Yacht Club and the Life Saving Club. The revegetation program will cover two planting seasons (May-August 2010/2011).

To begin our project, thirty three Japanese student volunteers from Monash University will join our work group and Council officers on the 29, 30 April and 7 May to plant 1,500 species, which will protect the toe of the dune from erosion. Hairy Spinifex and Coast Salt Bush have been chosen to halt the erosion problem, supported by Knobby Club Rush, Coast Wattle, Coastal Daisies, Boobialla, Sea berry Saltbush.

During 2010, our work group will also be involved with maintenance of previous projects at Mile Bridge, Fiocchi/Annie Street and either side of the boardwalk south from the Frankston Pier. We will also be involved in planting on a sand dune adjacent/under the Bridge entrance to Kananook Creek.

Our association encourages and supports community volunteers, in particular secondary and tertiary institutions, in our propagation and planting activities. Tuesday is our scheduled day for working on the foreshore and the community nursery - a propagation program once a month at the nursery is also part of our work program. **Time 9.30-11.30am.**

Volunteers are urgently required for all aspects of our activities. Please consider giving two hours fortnightly or monthly. If you can help please contact the Secretary (details on the front page of this newsletter).

Membership of the FBA

Existing FBA membership subscriptions expired on June 30 2009, so if you are an existing member and have not renewed your subscription for 2009/2010, please do so by using the form provided with this newsletter.

New members are also welcome, so if you would like to become involved in supporting the many activities of the FBA, why not join us now. Again, just use the form provided in this newsletter.

Our membership numbers do count when we apply for grants, so please consider renewing your subscription or joining our association.



FBA Membership Application

(July 1 2009 to June 30, 2010)



I/we wish to join, or renew my/our membership, of the FBA for an annual subscription of \$10 per household (concession \$5).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Receipt of payment required? Yes/No

Areas of Interest (eg. propagation, planting out, foreshore maintenance): _____

Hours/days available: _____

I/we wish to assist the Association's activities, and enclose a once-off donation of \$_____

Please detach this application form and send with payment to:

FBA Treasurer
PO Box 924
Frankston South, Vic 3199

Desal approvals flawed: scientist

Biologist hired for project criticises lack of data

By **PETER KER**
WATER AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

ONE of Victoria's top marine biologists has criticised the environmental approvals for the Wonthaggi desalination project, despite being hired to work on the project.

Matt Edmunds, an experienced assessor of projects such as the Gunns pulp mill, dredging in Port Phillip Bay and now desalination, said environmental approvals in Victoria were sometimes manipulated and biased to suit proponents.

He said lower standards of proof and evidence were typically sought for environmental aspects of projects than for engineering or scientific aspects, and there was little scientific knowledge underpinning many of the environmental impact assumptions on the Wonthaggi desalination project.

The comments challenge the state government's claim that the Wonthaggi project was subject to thorough environmental approvals, and come despite Dr Edmunds being hired to conduct further mar-

ine surveys for the project in the wake of the completion of its official environmental effects statement (EES) in 2008.

The desalination plant's major impact on the marine environment will come from the warm brine that it will return to the ocean as waste.

In a written statement, Dr Edmunds said there was "very little knowledge" to support the marine ecology risk assessments made by government over these matters.

"This EES had no proper description of biodiversity, communities, unique or special features," he wrote. "It had to bolster its small amount of field observations with data from surveys elsewhere with an assumption the communities were the same."

Dr Edmunds added that field surveys of flora and fauna were a critical part of environmental approvals, yet in the case of the Wonthaggi project, they were conducted in a " cursory or brief" manner.

He said environmental risk assessments in Victoria were rarely based on full data and evidence, and were instead

based on gut feeling and projection of selected "experts". He said this gave proponents of major projects the ability to influence assessments through their choice of expert.

"Risk assessments can be, and are, very easily manipulated and biased towards more desirable outcomes," Dr Edmunds said.

"From my experiences, there are frequent misapplications of ecological risk assessments, resulting in misrepresentations of hazards, likelihoods and consequences.

"The proponent is free to shop around to maximise the chances of getting the answers they want."

Dr Edmunds's comments are particularly enlightening as his company was hired to fill the "gaps" left in the original EES for the desalination project.

The government has passionately defended the environmental approvals for the Wonthaggi project, with Planning Minister Justin Madden — who approved the EES — describing it as a "robust analysis", which showed the site was suitable.

According to Matt Edmunds, one of Victoria's top marine biologists, environmental risks in Victoria have rarely been based on full data and evidence, and have instead been based on gut feeling and projection of selected "experts".