



North Queensland



Conservation Council

**Save Our
Foreshores
(Airlie Beach)**



SUNSHINE COAST ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL
Our Environment • Our Lifestyle • Our Choices



MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland Government Condemning our Coasts

Broken Promises allow more Coastal Destruction

Tuesday, March 17

An alliance of Queensland's conservation and community groups today voiced their increasing frustration at the continuing rapid destruction of our coastal environments under this government and are calling on all parties to commit to real action to stop the destruction of our greatest asset by canal, harbour and other developments.

In spite of the 1998 election commitment by former Premier Peter Beattie to protect our coasts and ban canal estates, marina and other inappropriate coastal developments, these continue to be approved at an alarming rate. This damage to Queensland's coastal areas under the ALP continues unabated on a scale that rivals the worst under past Liberal-National Party Governments.

"Far North Queensland has seen this Government overrule its own legislation to allow the Bluewater Canal Estate in Cairns and have again thrown out the rule book in approving Innisfail's Sea Haven Canal development. EPA memos, obtained under FOI, state that the Sea Haven approval sets a precedent likely to have opened the floodgates to Canal Developments in Queensland." said Steve Ryan, Campaign Director for the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre. "Meanwhile, large approved developments like Port Hinchinbrook and False Cape point to the catastrophic failure of existing planning laws in mitigating serious environmental impacts on our coastal lands and waters".

Spokesperson for Whitsunday's grass roots community group Save Our Foreshore Inc. Suzette Pelt says they have provided all the evidence needed for the Bligh Government to refuse an expired but backdated and re-issued 1980's lease on public foreshore and seabed in World Heritage Shute Harbour. This "suburb on the seabed" proposal will cause untold damage to the social, scenic and environmental values of Shute's World Heritage area. With several marinas already under way or approved in the region including Port of Airlie in Muddy Bay and Bowen, SOF says there simply is no need. Concerns over Port of Airlie, its slow progress and the environmental impacts are mounting in the community. SOF has collected over 2600 petition signatures against the Shute Harbour marina proposal in a short period of time.

“The current Queensland ALP government supports development any cost, and often the cost of canal estates and other major coastal developments is the environment and public safety”, said James Mc Lellan, Coordinator, North Queensland Conservation Council. “The coastal environment of North Queensland is under siege by huge unsustainable development proposals. These include the canal estate attached to the Townsville Ocean Terminal which experts have warned could cause the localised extinction of snubfin dolphins and two heavy and toxic industry development sites totalling 21 000 hectares of land in wetland areas adjacent to the coast. All of these developments have one thing in common, they are all protected by special state development legislation that exempts them from normal state planning and environmental regulations and removes the right of public appeal. It is disturbing that under the ALP Queensland has become a totalitarian development state.

“The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) calls for the urgent protection of coastal areas from destructive and inappropriate coastal development. The Sunshine Coast region is scarred by a legacy of disastrous coastal planning decisions and threatened by more if it not prohibited. From the Noosa Sound development built on levelled mangroves to Caloundra in the south, these developments have destroyed critical coastal ecosystems, increased climate change impacts and fragmented biodiversity corridors”, said Narelle McCarthy, Manager, SCEC.

“Development in the Gold Coast continues unabated, with another 137,500 dwellings to be built by 2031 under the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan, which overrides the local government’s planning scheme and entrenches past poor planning. 80,000 of these dwellings will be infill development, crowding already crowded coastal suburbs. The other 57,500 will be in Greenfield sites including coastal koala habitat and that of other threatened species in this high biodiversity area. There will be new canal estates and an industrial marina in acid sulfate soils and adjacent to Ramsar wetlands at Steigletz. Sand mining continues unabated and a “marine highway” from the Gold Coast to Brisbane dredging inland waterways is proposed under this Plan’, said Sheila Davis of Gecko.

Patricia Julien, coordinator for Mackay Conservation Group said "Implementation of State government legislation and policies now allow harbour infill housing developments in the guise of marina resorts. These and other foreshore integrated resort developments place many unsuspecting home owners and businesses in areas of high natural hazard risks of cyclonic storm surge, wind and flood damage, and rising sea levels which insurance companies will not cover. Legislative reform is urgently needed."

After 10 years in government, approvals, in some instances dating back decades remain active and continue to threaten our coastal areas by failing to consider current environmental standards. This continuing failure to act on the ghosts of past development excesses has been a major ongoing disappointment for coastal communities that have been fighting a losing battle to protect their coastline. These outmoded development approvals could have a use-by date put on them tomorrow. We ask all parties what they are going to do to stop the destruction of the Queensland coast.

For Further Comment and information:

Steve Ryan, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre	0425 344 746
Suzette Pelt, Save Our Foreshore Inc	0419 768 195
James Mc Lellan, North Queensland Conservation Council	0408 308 031
Narelle McCarthy, Sunshine Coast Environment Council	0424 465 487
Sheila Davis, Gold Coast & Hinterland Environment Council (Gecko)	0423 305 478
Patricia Julien, Coordinator, Mackay Conservation Group	07 4966 8025

Protecting our Coasts, Queensland Style:

Below are a selection of the many examples of inappropriate developments located along the Queensland Coast. Are none of our coastal icons safe from this type of development?

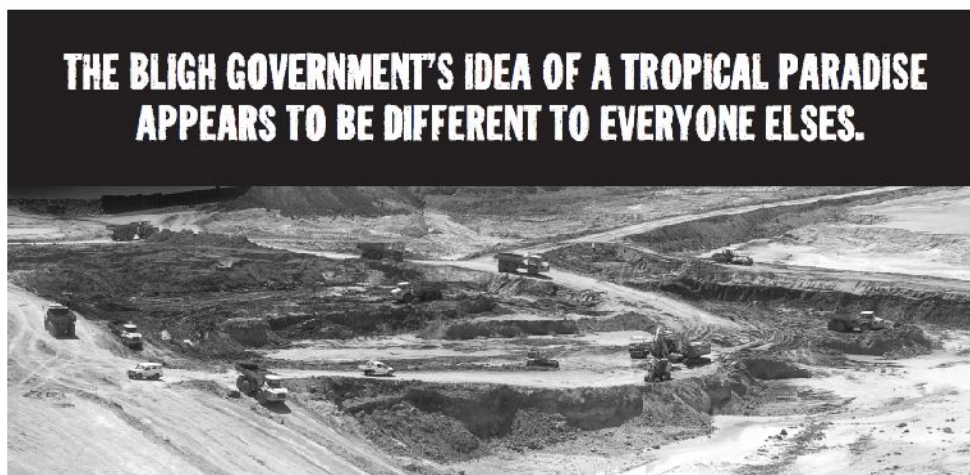
Peter Beattie's 1998 election commitments to put an end to canal developments and to protect our coasts have clearly not been upheld.

Sea Haven, Innisfail



The Sea Haven Canal Development was approved despite EPA assessments recommending refusal of the application as it contravened regulations and it could not be guaranteed that future dredging of the creek would not be required. Documents obtained under FOI show that EPA Director Clive Cook advised against the approval, suggesting that several other developers were watching this approval and that any approval would set a dangerous precedent and open the floodgates on this type of developments.

Airlie Beach



No this is not an open cut mine in the Pilbara. It's what was the public foreshore in the Whitsunday town of Airlie Beach on Queensland's Great Barrier Reef. It's been a private

marina and residential construction site for over two years and will be for at least another five. And the picture encompasses only half the site! Now there's another one just like it planned, this time over public seabed, just down the road at World Heritage Shute Harbour (pictured Below).



Figure showing the extent of the proposed Shute Harbour Development near Airlie Beach.

Sunshine Coast



Parrearra and Warana



Maroochy River Mouth following storm event. Image courtesy of T. Schlacher, SC University

Not only do canal developments desecrate inherent ecological values, the construction and resulting urbanisation create compounding negative impacts.

Projected unsustainable population growth for the Sunshine Coast that is not supported by carrying capacity assessment will put greater pressure on these significant and dynamic systems.

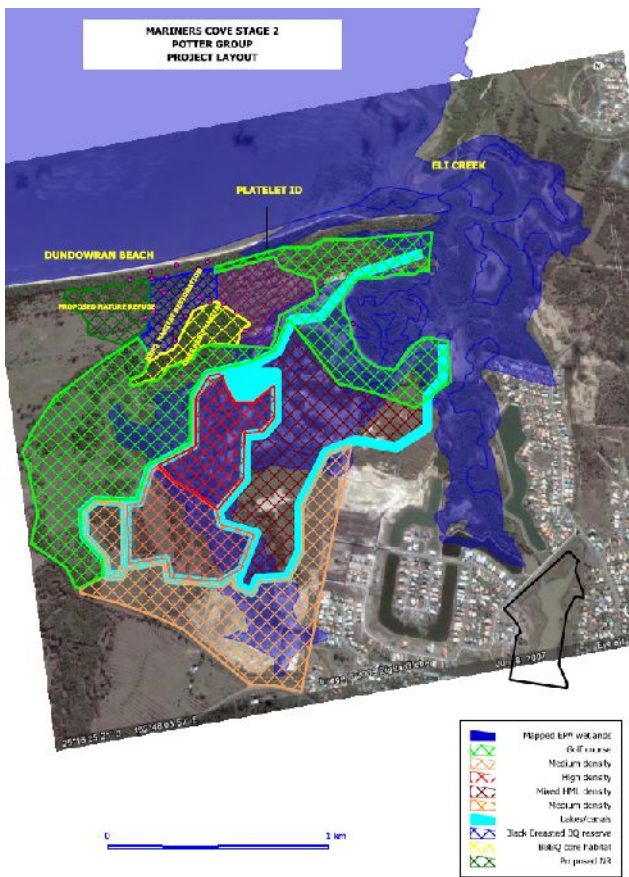


'Fraser Straits Marina development' – this is just the proposal for Stage 1 with yet another marina planned in another section of Tin Can Bay at Carlo Point.

Marinas, along with canal developments, are notoriously incompatible with sustaining marine ecosystems. The Tin Can Inlet is a beautiful natural waterway of international environmental significance. A proposed marina involving huge dredging and reclamation in the Snapper Creek Boat Harbour at Tin Can Bay is immediately adjacent to the RAMSAR Wetland of the Tin Can Inlet and the Great Sandy Marine Park – Northern section. The Great Sandy Straits are also listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, and have been deemed to meet all six criteria; any of which is sufficient to justify listing as a nationally important wetland

The unabated urban encroachment of inappropriate development onto floodplains, critical wetlands and coastal zones demonstrates the underlying weakness in coastal lowlands protection legislation and planning and perilous disregard for accelerating climate change impacts.

Hervey Bay – Mariners Cove Stage II Canal Estate



If approved, this development will destroy precious coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat despite Labor commitments to their protection from this type of development.

Townsville,

Highlighted areas show critical Snubfin Dolphin habitat to be filled in for development at the mouth of Ross Creek Townsville. The Snubfin is Australia's only native dolphin and is usually found in shallow waters within 20km of river and creek mouths in northern Australia.

The Townsville state development area for heavy and toxic industry is larger than the developed area of north Queensland's largest city.

