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11 Banksia Tce
South Yunderup 6208

Friends of Rivers, Peel Inc

26 June, 2011

Chairman
Environmental Protection Authority
Locked Bag 33
Cloisters Square
WA 6850

Submission to

To Environmental Protection Authority re proposed Marina and Entrance channel at Point Grey in the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

My Name is Colin Elton and I am the Chairperson of a community group known as Friends of Rivers, Peel Inc or For, Peel. We are a community organisation that was established to address the continuing degradation of the Peel Rivers System.

My address is 11 Banksia Tce South Yunderup 6208; email at colmagselton@westnet.com.au, phone no 95377809 or 0407426513.

Our submission to the Environmental Protection Authority is to object to the proposed 2.5 km channel in the Peel-Harvey Estuary (RAMSAR LISTED) and 9.8 hectare Marina at Point Grey in the Shire of Murray.

Our objections are based on the following points:-

Dredge Spoil:-Whilst the initial dredge spoil from the creation of the channel will be brought ashore and used as infill all future maintenance dredge spoil will be side cast into the estuary. This has to happen as it is current DOW policy and conditional on the granting of the dredging permit.

At a presentation on the 30th of March 2011 the proponent's consultants stated that they estimated the channel will require maintenance dredging every 5-10 years. In the PER it reads every five years, so do they or anyone else really know how often this proposed channel will have to be dredged and side cast into the Peel-Harvey Estuary. We are of the opinion that it will be more like 3-5 years based on current dredging maintenance within the Peel-Harvey system on existing man made channels and river mouths. We are of the opinion that the proponents will be unable to sustain the ongoing costs of the maintenance of this channel and marina and eventually the cost will fall back to the taxpayer or the ratepayers of the Shire of Murray.

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The impact of this side casting action will be:-

Killing of sea grasses: - examples of this can be seen at existing sites Boundary Island, Brindley Scholl (Coodanup) and the mouth of the South Yunderup channel.

Anecdotal evidence shows that the side casting of dredge spoil from the South Yunderup canal channel has had impact on the marine stocks in the Peel-Harvey Estuary. (Eliminated King George Whiting from local area (evidence from professional fisherman Bruce Tatham OAM)

Other man made channels have shown that the creation of this channel will inevitably lead to the creation of the notorious black ooze from rotting marine vegetation within the channel this area is a major fish/crab recruitment zone for the Peel-Harvey Estuary

Boat Traffic:-The proposed channel will also introduce larger, heavier additional boats that have been proved to damage the benthic habitat as they navigate the Peel-Harvey Estuary. The additional boats and people will have a major impact on this fish/crab recruitment zone. The land and shore zone of the proposed development is a recognised native and migratory bird feeding and breeding area. The introduction of urban development and the marina will damage and reduce the area of habitat available to these birds.

Water Modelling:-The proponent's water modelling re the impact of this development on the subterranean water can only be described as questionable. Studies by eminent scientist Vic Semenyuk (Wet lands Research Association) outline that there are too many variables with subterranean water to give the proponents computer modelling any credibility

Navigation lights: - what effect if any will the channel navigation lights have on fish/crab recruitment. This is unknown.

Precedent:-if this project is approved it will then be difficult to refuse any future applications for similar developments around an internationally listed waterway that is already under pressure from urban development.

Nutrient Migration: - Significant tax payer funds are being invested to reduce the amount of nutrients that are currently entering the Peel-Harvey system additional urban development from this proposal and any future proposal will add to the significant nutrient loads that are already damaging the system.

Global Warming/Climate Change:-recent release of Commonwealth Government maps (see attached) show that this area will be prone to inundation as sea levels rise this will impact on the proposed urban development for this project.

Proponents Credibility: - Can the EPA guarantee that the proponent is financially viable to meet its commitments for the life of the project.

If this project is approved and proceeds then our organisation seeks a guarantee from the Government of Western Australia that they will in the event of the proponent closing down or onselling the development that they the government will then be liable to meet the costs of the ongoing maintenance of the channel and marina.

A question to the EPA is, are the best interests of the public being served if this proposal is approved?

Thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.

Yours sincerely

Colin Elton
Chairperson Friends of Rivers, Peel