

# SOUTH SYDNEY AMATEUR FISHING ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 328, MATRAVILLE NSW 2036



Michael Daly MP  
Member for Maroubra  
Suite 501, Level 5  
806 Anzac Parade, Maroubra  
NSW 2035

14<sup>th</sup> March 2006

## PORT BOTANT EXPANSION

Dear Michael,

Thank you for meeting with John Burgess and myself on Monday. We both appreciate the time you took out from what looked like a hectic and chaotic election campaign that was revolving around your offices.

It seems that at the end of our lengthy discussions you arrived at the same conclusion we had formulated in our negotiations with Sydney Ports Corporation, namely that the problems with the boat ramp facility design were relatively easy to overcome. In fact our meeting last week with Michael Sedwell from the Minister for Ports and Waterways Office culminated in the same conclusion.

We not only had concerns with the design of the boat ramp facility, but offered plausible and practical solutions and alternative funding arrangements that will deliver a boat ramp facility for 2050, not just replace an existing facility built in the 1980's. Sadly these suggestions have fallen on deaf ears at SPC.

Recreational anglers paid \$4.2 million dollars to buy out commercial fishing in Botany Bay in 2000 and stand to lose 57 hectares of statutory fishing rights within the Bay. We also stand to lose another 50 hectares in access due to new berthing exclusions. We are being asked to give up a lot of the Bay without an appropriate compensatory plan from SPC. The recreational anglers will only be getting a replacement ramp, nothing more.

According Dr Rob Fearon of the Coastal Zone, Estuary and Waterway Management, each hectare is worth \$41,000, that's about \$4,000,000. We are losing a boat ramp with 115 car / trailer spaces and 4 lanes and being given back the same facility and nothing else. Basically we are getting a bare minimum boat ramp/ parking facility in a location that is less than desirable from weather and wave perspectives and a location that will place boat users in potential conflict with beach users and general visitors.

Concerns have already been raised about the lack of vision and forward planning by SPC re the adequacy of general parking for users of the ramp and visitors to the area. We are also aware that SPC is denying having said that they intend to make Foreshore Rd no parking, but unfortunately for them, John and I were both in an SPC meeting when it was mentioned and we have both taken them to task over the matter.



Stan Konstantaras  
President  
South Sydney Amateur Fishing Association  
Phone: 9344-0331  
Mobile: 0407 131 714  
Email: [pastelli@netspace.net.au](mailto:pastelli@netspace.net.au)

Visit us at [southsydneyafa.com.au](http://southsydneyafa.com.au)

Their limited vision also provided for the funnelling of all beach users, general visitors and boat ramp users into the same parking facility. Even though SPC have since denied or retracted the “no parking” statement, the fact remains that for much of Foreshore Rd, with the addition of new slip lanes to enter and exit the new Port and new slip lanes to enter and exit the boat ramp (on top of the existing no parking zones for servicing the Orica pumps and potentially a new entrance to Hale St) there will be little scope for parking anyway as there just isn't enough room.

Perhaps this is a very underhanded way for SPC to get their no parking agenda up and still deny that they ever planned it. We all know what we heard and judging by your reaction to John's mention of some of the EIS changes that have recently occurred without prior Council or public consultation, it is conceivable that SPC may not be giving you the whole picture on how the Port will be built. SPC has certainly not addressed the issue of the trailers/ skels that currently park dangerously along Foreshore Rd and where they will park when this space is lost or the compounding impact of increased truck number projections. We have suggested to SPC that they should have dialogue with both the Airport Corporation and Botany Council with a view to securing land adjacent to Foreshore Rd that can be used for off street truck and trailer parking. Regrettably, Botany Council due to its persistent opposition to the Port expansion is not prepared to consider any concessions for SPC which invariably may not be in the best interest of residents or visitors.

Another issue that really concerns us is that the SPC notion that the substantive reduction of beachfront on Foreshore Beach will see a marked reduction in patronage of the area with a consequential parking flow on. If this is so why build the new overhead pedestrian bridge, public amenities block and bicycle/ walking pathways if you don't expect people to visit. This is a contradiction of ideology on SPC's part. While the loss of beach is not on our agenda, SPC should be accountable for the contempt it has shown to the beach users. In fact it could be contended that the covert intention of SPC is to actively discourage public use and visitation of the area by making it unattractive and inaccessible. This appears to be contrary to the conditions attached to the 2004 EIS some of which are stated below

(Extracts from the 2004 Environmental Impact Statement endorsed by SPC and the NSW Government)

- **(2004 EIS) Retention of Foreshore Beach for public recreation activities**

2006 SPC decided that the best way to retain Foreshore Beach was to take  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it away and force the beach users up towards a stormwater overflow that is potentially one of the most polluted drains in Sydney.

- **(2004 EIS) Restoration, protection and enhancement of the existing beach in areas where erosion is occurring**

2006 SPC decided that the best way to restore the eroded areas of Foreshore Beach was to reclaim them for the Port expansion and build a vertical rock wall where the beach once was.

Having heard the same argument from SPC and the Minister for Ports Office, we started monitoring Foreshore Beach and the existing boat ramp in order to determine what impact losing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Foreshore Beach would have:

**11th March 2007 (12.45pm – 1.30pm)**

**Boat Ramp**

65 car and trailer combinations

19 additional cars – people fishing on the sand spit, some swimming and some walking dogs

Western End of Foreshore Rd ( Area of Beach SPC will eventually leave when they finish the retention, restoration, protection and enhancement of Foreshore Beach as outlined in the 2004 EIS)

28 cars with 63 people, many swimming and 9 walking dogs.

Centre of Foreshore Beach (Where new boat ramp facility is located)

11 cars with 23 people, many swimming and 7 walking dogs.

Eastern End of Foreshore Rd

28 cars with 56 people swimming and sunbaking, many swimming and 18 people walking dogs.

Even if we take out the Eastern end of Foreshore Beach, we still had 123 cars belonging to people who launch their boats, fish, swim or use western end of Foreshore Beach. What happens if those other 28 cars from the eastern end of Foreshore Beach decide they still want to swim or walk their dogs, we will have a new boat ramp facility that is at capacity the first weekend it is opened. Somehow computer modelling and highly paid consultants have missed this. Mind you we now have a 40% increase in truck numbers to contend with and a scenario that is played out every weekend at LaPerouse, with visitors travelling from out west to swim at Yarra and Congwong Bay often parking near the cemetery or stopping at Foreshore Beach when LaPerouse becomes jam packed by 11am during summer weekends. The very same roads (M5, M7, M2 and ED) that are often congested with the trucks SPC lures to a choked-up Port Botany every weekday, deliver beach patrons and boat ramp users to Foreshore Beach and Penrhyn Rd Boat Ramp. There is no tribal or local conflict here; recreational anglers are a diverse and multicultural group of anglers who interact very well. All we want to see is parking for all of us, not a select few who arrive at 5am just to get a spot.

During the January holiday period we counted on one Saturday 144 cars and 97 trucks/ trailers parked along Foreshore Rd. In fact there was no parking space left along the Rd. This is not an unusual occurrence on summer weekends.

At the very least SPC should deliver a boat ramp facility for 2050, not replace one from the 1980's. As John mentioned we have yet to see the container port any where near full shipping capacity and yet SPC wants to build an expanded Port based on questionable economic and trade projections. The usage figures for Foreshore Beach and our existing boat ramp are real, not projected, if we were to project what our usage figure would be in 2020, I would be confident that a 300 car/trailer facility would struggle to cope.

We do not currently have a problem with beach users parking within our current ramp car park due to its location, Penrhyn is not a very nice place to swim or fish. However by moving the facility into the middle of Foreshore Beach, the facility will struggle to cope with any increased boat trailer patronage beyond 2007. We see conflict daily at other boat ramps in the area, Sydney Harbour and all ramps across NSW. Cars constantly park in designated car / trailer parking spots. We foresee cars and trailers parking on Foreshore Rd and doing illegal u-turns to get back in to facility to retrieve boats due to lack of appropriate parking.

We have also tried initiate to discussion with SPC about additional fishing platforms / facilities around Botany Bay as part of an appropriate compensatory plan. With disabled anglers, families, the elderly and children not having any safe fishing platforms, we are trying to encourage SPC to contribute to the building of 3 fishing piers in Botany Bay. Locations include Laperouse, Brighton-le-sands and Kurnell. With Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Darwin still having recreational anglers access to piers within their Bays and Estuaries, Sydney Harbour and especially Botany Bay are seriously lacking any suitable facilities for disabled, kids, families and the elderly.

NSW DPI – Fisheries have also met with SPC and mentioned that the Recreational Fishing Trust Fund Expenditure Committee (the committee that oversees our recreational fishing licence funds) could assist in any \$ for \$ enhancements to the facility. Michael Sedwell also mentioned that Waterways struggles to spend its capital works budget for Sydney boating facilities every year and is another option for \$ for \$ funding. Again these ideas are not new - we have mentioned them to SPC on a number of occasions for zero result.

Some solutions that will go part of the way in delivering a better boat ramp facility for the anglers, residents and visitors who use Botany Bay are as follows -

- **Utilising the Tug Berth** area for parking and a full time Coast Guard Station. SPC is capable of moving the proposed Tug Berth onto the new Port. The depth in front of both locations will accommodate the vessels. We would prefer to see a small Coast Guard station commissioned in this area as well. Having seen the Coast Guard operating out of Penrhyn Boat Ramp on card table and 12 volt battery, it is unbelievable that in this day and age our lives and the persons who are responsible for ensuring recreational anglers safety are treated with such contempt by the NSW Government. Utilisation of the tug berth area would alone provide a minimum additional 100 extra car only spaces and a logical location for our Coast Guard. Preliminary discussion with the Coast Guard has indicated that they would welcome a new facility.
- **Appropriate community compensation** back to anglers of NSW. We spoke about the dollar for dollar options available. SPC sent us away to gather information on a boardwalk over the water at the new ramp which was rejected outright by SPC at a subsequent meeting. We were also promised a jetty in the original EIS, however once again this was rejected outright at another meeting. The pontoons for boarding boats are approximately 1 meter wide, barely enough for a wheelchair to go down. The lack of a jetty would see these pontoons used as undesirable defacto fishing platforms by land based anglers. A jetty would remove any potential conflict and allow the elderly, young and disabled to fish safely and out of harms way. The following pictures are from Narooma where a boardwalk is incorporated into the town's boat ramp facility.





We have also been working closely with the “Fishing Has No Boundaries” organisation, [www.fhnbinc.org](http://www.fhnbinc.org), and it was only last year that a new pontoon with a lifting device was opened at Kogarah Bay by Cherie Burton MP. This cost \$162,000 as part of Sailabilities that gives people with disabilities access to the sport of sailing. As a club and association that pride itself on the work we have done for 20 years with the disabled, young, indigenous and non-English speaking anglers of NSW, a jetty would be a great tool for us to utilise and perhaps even try to fund our own lifting device for the disabled anglers of NSW. We are sure that the Coast Guard, if stationed at the Tug Berth would jump at the chance of assisting us in our endeavours.



- **A Curved breakwall** is needed, and we were genuinely encouraged that when you looked over the plans that SPC had put up, you instinctively mentioned that you would hate to launch a boat in a southerly. Our sentiments exactly. However SPC is adamant that 'computer modelling' has indicated that the wall is OK, and what is most concerning is that the SPC advisers asked "How big a wave is acceptable on the new ramp?" NONE we all replied. This model is destined to fail. John and I have over 50 years experience of launching boats in Botany Bay, we know what the end result will be. SPC use terms like there is not enough fetch across the Bay and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Runway to create a problem. Like us, you have probably seen the waves pounding Foreshore Beach in a Southerly and the immense damage suffered by the foreshore and the 3<sup>rd</sup> runway. What will happen in a SW wind when it blows straight up the ramp?
- **Another boat ramp** is an option that SPC needs to consider. Given SPC's philosophy of being a good corporate citizen, here is a great opportunity to coordinate with Sydney water and deliver us an additional boat ramp. John and I met with Sydney Water last week to discuss the Desalination Plant and impacts to recreational anglers, whilst the impacts are unavoidable; Sydney Water was willing to look at community compensation. One point both parties acknowledged is that replanting of sea grass is not and has never been a fool proof way of re establishing the beds. At best Sydney Water mentioned that 50 % of the beds would be saved. At least they had the courage to tell us, unlike SPC who still talk up how good their replanting program is. Sydney Water suggested we consult with them on other forms of community compensation. Things like artificial reefs etc. One thing that caught our attention was the proposed staging jetties for the pipeline at Cooks Park (adjacent to the Cooks River mouth) and Silver Beach ( at Kurnell) and the possibility of taking the structures over once Sydney Water is finished. A breakwall, ramp, car park and access road are all that are missing. Some goodwill from all parties would see an easy and effective solution for all users of the Bay south of the airport. We have also suggested to SPC the desirability of another ramp at Kurnell given the damage that location has suffered as a consequence of wave action due to the port seawall. Also with community / resident pressure to limit access to the existing boat ramp at Kyeemagh we are fast running out of boat launching capacity for Botany Bay

We have heard all the answers that SPC is supplying to our questions, and they are not satisfying us. An ordinary person or a family will not park in the existing Sir Joseph Banks Park car parks and walk to the beach via an overhead bridge - they will take a 12 meter car / trailer spot in the new ramp facility. An ordinary person or a family will not park near the airport or Port and walk to the beach - they also will take a 12 meter car / trailer spot in the new facility. Computer models and highly paid consultants do not have enough local knowledge to determine what will work or fail. Traffic models do not take into account the new link roads that have opened up Sydney and it is quite plain to all that the traffic management plan for road and rail access to and from the Port and the industrial hubs of Sydney is grossly inadequate.

John and I have devoted hundreds, if not thousands of hours to enhancing recreational fishing within the community via fishing clinics for kids, the disabled and non English speaking anglers. Randwick Council has acknowledged our efforts at Australia Day Celebrations; our efforts have been applauded at all levels of Government, both State and Federal levels. Botany Bay and recreational fishing are an integral part of the fabric that binds our local community. Having fished the Bay for 35 of my 38 years it is time we put something back into the Bay, not constantly reclaim land and deny access to all users. We championed the commercial buyout of Botany Bay and stood shoulder to shoulder with the NSW Government; we personally received threats but prevailed and the anglers of NSW borrowed \$4.2 million dollars to enhance recreational fishing in Botany Bay. We hope that we can work with SPC, the NSW Government Randwick and Botany Council to further augment recreational fishing infrastructure and general public amenity in and around Botany Bay.

If we fail to make progress now we will have a lifetime legacy to remind us of our inability to think and plan for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stan Konstantaras  
President SSAFA  
President ANSA NSW

John Burgess  
Public Officer/ Treasurer SSAFA  
Vice President ANSA NSW  
Executive Officer / Director ANSA Ltd