



Media Release Monday 27th February 2006

Steve Gratton, spokesperson for the Save Our Spit Alliance has stated his opinion that the Chief Reporter of the Gold Coast Bulletin is misleading the public on SOSA's position in an article in the weekend paper in relation to the dredging of Broadwater channels.

Whilst Peter Gleeson may find it convenient to label SOSA as a "greenie" organisation, in fact it represents a wide cross section of community organisations, businesses and individuals, many of whom are boaties. SOSA supports and advocates the maintenance dredging of channels in the Broadwater for the safe passage of existing boat users.

Maintenance dredging is very different to gouging out the Seaway to try and impose a harbour for large vessels. The Seaway will go from a thriving marine habitat to a marine wasteland. Cruise ships with their 1,000 HP bow thrusters pressure blasting the sea floor will keep it that way and continual ongoing deep dredging will be a death sentence for marine life in the Seaway.

Reports indicate that millions of dollars of additional damage could occur to residential properties on the Gold Coast during a flood event if construction of a shipping terminal proceeds - refer GCCC Harbour Vision 2020 Project Report No 55 Broadwater Hydraulic Model Investigation Section 5 19/8/2002

The State Government has pocketed millions of dollars from leases from commercial developments on public land on Seaworld Drive for years yet has neglected the needs of boaties and let the Broadwater channels silt up.

Boaties have been getting a raw deal from the Government and it will only get worse if the Government pushes through a shipping terminal:

- loss of the right to traverse the Seaway when ships arrive and leave
- the dangers of returning boats having to hold position outside of the Seaway
- the loss of safe anchorage in Marine Stadium
- poor fishing prospects after the negative impacts on fish breeding cycles and habitats

We have had a number of Master Mariners express to us that there would be no margin for error when attempting to bring a large vessel into the Seaway. There is a very real risk that the Gold Coast could end up with a much larger version of Rainbow Beach's Cherry Venture shipwreck.

Is it any wonder more and more boaties are joining SOSA to help the fight to save The Spit.

Is Gleeson going to denigrate the memory of the late Doug Jennings too because he had the courage to save The Spit in 1987 for all Queenslanders, despite fierce criticism from within his own ranks?

SOSA says that a superyacht berthing south of Seaworld Nara would be great for the Gold Coast and bring genuine economic benefits. We would fully support that option providing the Local Area Plan, which everybody else in the community must abide by, is respected i.e. no high rise!

A rail link or monorail from Nerang to Southport to service the Brisbane Terminal is a much better option than driving residents mad with processions of diesel buses along Seaworld Drive and Marine Parade.

It is worth the public being reminded that the State Member for Surfers Paradise John-Paul Langbroek, the Federal Member for Moncrieff Steven Ciobo and local Councillors Susie Douglas and Dawn Crichlow have all publicly stated that a shipping terminal should not be built on The Spit.

We sent a personal invitation to Premier Peter Beattie this week to meet us at The Spit so we could explain our concerns first hand but he continues to refuse a meeting. Is he afraid of the truth or is a shipping terminal just a way to orchestrate a real estate development on public parkland as some have suggested?

Save our Spit Alliance:- Atlantis Scuba, Bicycle Gold Coast, Devocean Dive, Gecko, Friends of Federation Walk, Gold Coast Dive Centre, Gold Coast Kayaking, Ian Banks Diving, Main Beach Progress Association, Nerang Community Association, Sunfish, Surfers Against Ships, Surfrider Foundation

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