

Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc.

OYSTER POINT “DANGER: FALLING ROCKS” !!

The breakwater walls under construction at Oyster Point are falling into the deep soft silts of the Hinchinbrook Passage.

The sinking of the breakwalls has used up rock far in excess of the estimate of rock required to build them, and in places has displaced the seabottom to the surface.

These two facts have led to breaches of the Approval conditions.

ASH says that work must stop, wrongs must be corrected, and the Approvals reassessed.

Approval for breakwaters was granted by the Commonwealth Government after refusal by two previous Commonwealth Environment Ministers, Senator John Faulkner and Senator Robert Hill.

The purpose of the breakwaters was to “improve” the entrance to the *privately owned* Port Hinchinbrook Marina and Canal Estate. The Applicant however was the Cardwell Shire Council.

A condition of the Marine Parks permit was that water quality must not be diminished, and that “fines” must not be used.

A Commonwealth condition was that only large clean angular rock be used, sourced only from the local Stony Creek quarry, the existing source of rock for Port Hinchinbrook Marina/canal estate.

The blasting area in the quarry is right at the boundary of State Forest listed as *Essential Habitat* for the *Endangered Mahogany Glider*. Because the quarry was already almost expended, ASH feared that important habitat would be lost by blasting for rock in the adjacent State Forest.

Ms Moorhouse said “It took us months for ASH to get written government assurances that Stony Creek quarry would not be extended into the essential mahogany glider habitat of the adjacent State Forest.”

“In our submissions we had predicted that the breakwalls would sink, and much more rock would be needed than the quarry could supply. Our clearly written explanations were ignored.”

“In the event, the breakwalls were not even a quarter finished when Stony Creek quarry ran out of rock”.

In direct contravention of Approval conditions, fines from Stony Creek quarry and rock from Murray Upper have been dumped onto the sinking walls. Apart from the unlawful dumping of fines, water quality is now at risk from the exposure of the seabed pushed up as the rocks descend.

Ms Moorhouse said “Seabottom silts are like the acid sulphate soils of the development site. They have potential to produce sulphuric acid when exposed to the atmosphere, as noted in the Council’s own Application documents. Sulphuric acid robs the sea of forms of calcium needed for the growth and health of fish and crustaceans”.

“We opposed this project because of its long term effects on the World Heritage listed Hinchinbrook Passage, because an ugly experiment in a World Heritage Area was unacceptable, and because we have no doubt that the breakwalls are not the answer to the Port Hinchinbrook Marina’s long standing and well-known excessive siltation problems”.

“Now the Commonwealth and State Approvals have been flouted. The collapsed walls must be removed” Ms Moorhouse concluded.

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SEE ALSO <http://www.hinchinbrook.info/other/ASH%20contact.php>
and www.hinchinbrook.info