

Saving Point Nepean

E-letter No. 8

In this e-letter you will find:

Time to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding Point Nepean

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Time to lift the veil of secrecy surrounding Point Nepean

Under the veil of 'tender process' and 'commercial confidentiality', the Commonwealth Government is preventing public scrutiny of the consortium bid for Point Nepean led by Queensland property developer FKP Limited.

This is contrary to the spirit and conduct of proper coastal planning processes.

Both bids for Point Nepean, the FKP Limited bid, and the State Government bid, should be released immediately by the Commonwealth Government so that the Victorian community, not the Defence Department, can be the judge.

Better still, the FKP Limited-led consortium should withdraw its bid and Victorians should be allowed to get on with the job of protecting Point Nepean in an integrated, unified and genuine national park.

Reported comments from the Consortium Head

The head of the Consortium making the 'preferred' bid is Mr Simon McKeon. He is also an Executive Director of Macquarie Bank Limited, the bank associated with brokering the funding for the bid, as well as being the President of the Takeovers Panel, a Commonwealth Government panel established to consider corporate takeovers.

In the Herald Sun on 22 October Mr McKeon was reported as saying with regard to the FKP Limited fines for illegal tree clearing in Croydon (reported to you in *Saving Point Nepean e-letter No. 7*):

'I think the intelligent person is going to say that property development groups occasionally will contravene by-laws'.

It would be most disturbing, should they gain the lease of Point Nepean, for FKP to contravene the lease conditions that the Commonwealth Government claims will protect the heritage of this national treasure.

Mr McKeon was also reported in the Sunday Herald Sun of 19 October as saying that 'More services, including hotels could be added ... if there was demand'.

Such incremental development and the contravening of leasing conditions are unacceptable for Point Nepean.

**In this final week before the lease is signed we need to
send clear phone, fax and email messages to
Mr McKeon, Macquarie Bank and FKP Limited**

Here's how to make contact. In all cases where you are unable to speak directly with the people listed below, please leave a message (with reception or their voicemails) about your concerns and ask for them to call you back.

Phone calls and faxes

FKP Limited

Ph: (07) 3223 3888 (Reception)

Fax: (07) 3319 3697

email: Inquiry@fkp.com.au

website: fkp.com.au

Ask for Peter Brown, Managing Director and CEO, or Tom Forrester, Group Manager - Construction.

Mr Simon McKeon

Head of the Consortium and an Executive Director of Macquarie Bank

Ph: (03) 9635 8100 (Direct)

Fax: (03) 9635 9144

Mob: 0417 249 102

email: simon.mckeon@macquarie.com

Macquarie Bank Limited

Ph: (03) 9635 8000 (Reception)

Fax: (03) 9635 8050

No emails available

website: macquarie.com.au

Ask for David Clarke, Executive Chairman, or Allan Moss, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer

Email messages

1. Copy the message below and paste it into a new email message:

Dear Mr McKeon and FKP Limited

Re: FKP Limited-led Consortium bid for Point Nepean

I am appalled at the reports of FKP Limited's fines for tree felling in Croydon, Victoria, and its clearing of rare coastal bushland in the Shire of Maroochy in Queensland.

This is unacceptable behaviour from a company to which the Commonwealth Government is considering leasing the precious heritage of Point Nepean on 1 November. In my opinion FKP Limited would be an unsuitable tenant for this national treasure.

I request that you cut through the Commonwealth Government's veil of secrecy surrounding the leasing process by providing full public disclosure of your bid and subjecting it to the normal and proper coastal planning processes in Victoria.

Better still, please withdraw your bid for the lease of Point Nepean and allow Victorians to get on with the job of protecting all of it in an integrated, unified and genuine national park. That is what they want and that is what they, and I, will continue to fight for.

Yours sincerely,

Name and address

2. Copy the following email addresses into the 'To' box of a blank email message. Type in the subject box 'Please withdraw your bid for Point Nepean'. Then send.

Addresses to send the message to:

simon.mckeon@macquarie.com, Inquiry@fkp.com.au

3. Forward this message on to friends and colleagues. Our aim is to have hundreds of emails sent within days.

Members of Parliament you could also send a message to

We've already given these to you in a previous e-letter, but here for your convenience are their details again:

John Howard: Prime Minister; Ph: Canberra 02 6277 7700; howardj@aph.gov.au

Peter Costello, Treasurer; Ph: Canberra 02 6277 7340; Victorian Electorate:
9822 4422; costello@aph.gov.au

Senator the Hon. Robert Hill: Minister for Defence; Ph: Canberra 02 6277

7800; hillr@aph.gov.au

Dr David Kemp, Minister for Environment and Heritage; Ph: Canberra 02 6277

7640; Victorian Electorate: 9557 4644; D.Kemp.MP@aph.gov.au

Fran Bailey, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence; Ph: Canberra 02 6277

4433 (Victorian Electorate 5962 1255); Fran.Bailey.MP@aph.gov.au

Steve Bracks, Premier of Victoria; Ph: 9651 5000; steve.bracks@parliament.vic.gov.au

John Thwaites; Minister for Environment; Ph: 9651 1222;

john.thwaites@parliament.vic.gov.au

Simon Crean, Federal Leader of the Opposition, Ph: Canberra 02 6277 4022; Victorian

Electorate: 9545 6211; S.Crean.MP@aph.gov.au

Kelvin Thomson, Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, Ph: Canberra 02 6277

4633; Victorian Electorate: 9350 5777; Kelvin.Thomson.MP@aph.gov.au

FKP Limited's clearing in Queensland

FKP Limited has two adjoining parcels of land that it is developing in the Shire of Maroochy on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The two parcels are in a corridor of significant vegetation communities and are part of the Maroochy wallum corridor. The corridor is regarded as an ecological epicentre with a mix of communities including wetlands and mixed eucalypt forests. It is also the last viable koala corridor in the Maroochy Shire.

One parcel of land is called Peregian Springs, 300 hectares with a golf course and residential allotments. Less than one-third will escape clearing. The second parcel is Coolum Ridges, 175 hectares being developed for a town centre and residential allotments. Less than one-quarter will remain uncleared.

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council, the Queensland Greens and other environment groups have been campaigning against the proposals for some time but have struggled to match the resources of FKP Limited.

Lindsay Holt, campaigner with the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, is quoted on Peregian Springs in this extract from an article by Brendan O'Malley in the Brisbane Courier Mail of 29 July 2003:

"It's a 300ha site and only 80ha will go to conservation", environment council campaigner Lindsay Holt said.

"There are powerful owls, ground parrots and other endangered animals on that site which are going to be affected," Mr Holt said.

"Ground parrots were thought to be extinct until a few years ago and it is really important to preserve a number of habitats in case a fire or some other catastrophe wipes out one area."

Mr Holt said the corridor, the second largest tract of wallum scrub outside the Cooloola wilderness area, could become an important recreation resource for the community if it was developed for walking tracks.

It could also become an ideal outdoor laboratory for the Sunshine Coast University. But if nothing was done to protect it, urban development would "march across the canelands and remaining bush" as far as Eumundi, west of Noosa.'

MEDIA RELEASE

Commonwealth Government's secretive process chooses profit not protection at Point Nepean

19 October 2003

The Victorian National Parks Association and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) have condemned the Commonwealth Government's decision to lease Point Nepean to a consortium involving one of Queensland's largest property developers.

Mr Stephen Hare, CEO of the National Trust, said that the Commonwealth's decision threatened Point Nepean's Quarantine Station and coastal moonah woodland.

'The Victorian community's vision of an integrated, unified and genuine national park covering all of Point Nepean has been ignored, the Commonwealth Government preferring to disintegrate ownership and management and thus threaten the integrity of Point Nepean's very special heritage.'

'The partners in this consortium are unlikely to have the necessary experience and expertise to manage such important natural and cultural heritage and, as we know, the leasing documents provide for changes to leasing conditions simply with the consent of the tenant and landlord and again in secret without public input.'

'There are no guarantees of protection for Point Nepean, and what we see in the disturbing initial stages of development an hotel, convention centre, bars, restaurants, maritime college campus and new buildings could be changed, expanded and intensified in the future. Indeed, the head of the consortium has already indicated in today's *Sunday Herald Sun* that more hotels are a possibility.'

Mr Michael Fendley, Director of the VNPA, said that the Commonwealth Government, by choosing profit over protection, was throwing proper coastal planning out the window at Point Nepean.

'The lease of Point Nepean to the consortium involving a Queensland property developer is set to begin on 1 November. That's less than a fortnight away, and still the Victorian community has been denied the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals of the preferred tenderer. This is the height of arrogance from a Government that has been more concerned with secrecy than the accountability, transparency and sound public land policy and planning required in such a process. The Expression of Interest and Tender

Process has been appalling from Day One and should be subjected to further investigation.'

'Point Nepean's natural and cultural heritage is far too important to be decided behind the scenes by the Defence Department. Its future should be as a national park, with clear objectives set before appropriate uses are determined. This is the right and proper way to proceed, not as the Commonwealth is doing, putting use ahead of protection and profit ahead of a park of world-class standard.'

'The appropriate owners and managers of Point Nepean are the Victorian community, the Victorian Government and Parks Victoria within a national park management process outlined by the Victorian Government in its Concept Plan.'

MEDIA RELEASE

Commonwealth and State proposals for Point Nepean like chalk and cheese

22 October 2003

The Victorian National Parks Association and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) today rejected Commonwealth Government claims that its proposal for Point Nepean was the same as that of the State Government.

Mr Michael Fendley, Director of the VNPA, said that the Commonwealth's claims could not be taken seriously and that the differences between the Commonwealth and State proposals are stark.

'The **State Government** proposes an integrated, unified and genuine national park for all at Point Nepean. This proposal is modelled on the VNPA/National Trust-facilitated Victorian Community Expression of Interest that rightly puts protection ahead of use. The State Government's proposal is open, transparent and is subject to public consultation to determine the objectives of the national park and the appropriate uses within it. It does not involve the construction of new buildings and will retain the sense of place and spatial association of the Quarantine Station's heritage buildings', said Mr Fendley.

'By way of contrast the **Commonwealth Government's** proposal embeds fragmented management, ownership and control of Point Nepean. It is secretive and denies the public the opportunity for input. Separate owners, managers and management plans, with decisions made behind closed doors between the tenderer and the Defence Department, is contrary to how coastal planning and public land management should be conducted.'

'In summary', Mr Fendley said, 'the Commonwealth Government has rejected the overwhelming wish of the Victorian community, reflected within the Community Master Plan, of **one park managed as a whole.**'

'The **Commonwealth Government** proposal puts use ahead of protection with new buildings and the strong likelihood of expanding tourist development. There are no guarantees, with future decisions made solely between the tenant and the Defence Department.'

Mr Stephen Hare, CEO of the National Trust, said that Point Nepean continues to be endangered.

'Reports of an hotel, convention centre, bars, restaurants, maritime college campus and new buildings from the preferred tender proposal are extremely disturbing. More disturbing still are reports of future development.'

'It is tragic that Victorians will be unable to comment on the lease conditions for Point Nepean constrained as they are by commercial confidentiality', said Mr Hare.

'The appropriate owners and managers of Point Nepean are the Victorian community, the Victorian Government and Parks Victoria within a national park management process outlined by the Victorian Government in its Concept Plan. A national park for all of Point Nepean has been endorsed by 175 community groups and organisations, reflecting the widespread community support for it and the widespread community opposition to the Commonwealth Government's process and proposal', said Mr Hare.'

Please forward this email message on to your friends, relatives and colleagues