

# The Torrens Island 2009-2011 development proposals

A brief summary including *Messenger Press* clippings and research  
by members of the Port of Adelaide Branch of the National Trust of SA  
and the Port Adelaide Residents Environmental Protection Group

*updated 15 November 2011*

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## Current state of the development proposals

Department of Planning and Local Government Electronic Land Division Lodgement website (EDALA) - Application Search " <a href="#">Generation Lessor Corporation</a> "					
Unique Id	Development No.	Date Lodged	Application Status	Owner	Suburb
<a href="#">37660</a>	010/G002/11	15 Mar 2011	Lodged & Distributed (No Decision)	Generation Lessor Corporation	Torrens Island
<a href="#">37603</a>	010/D001/11	08 Mar 2011	Withdrawn	Generation Lessor Corporation	Torrens Island
<a href="#">32454</a>	010/G009/09	27 Oct 2009	Withdrawn	Generation Lessor Corporation	Torrens Island

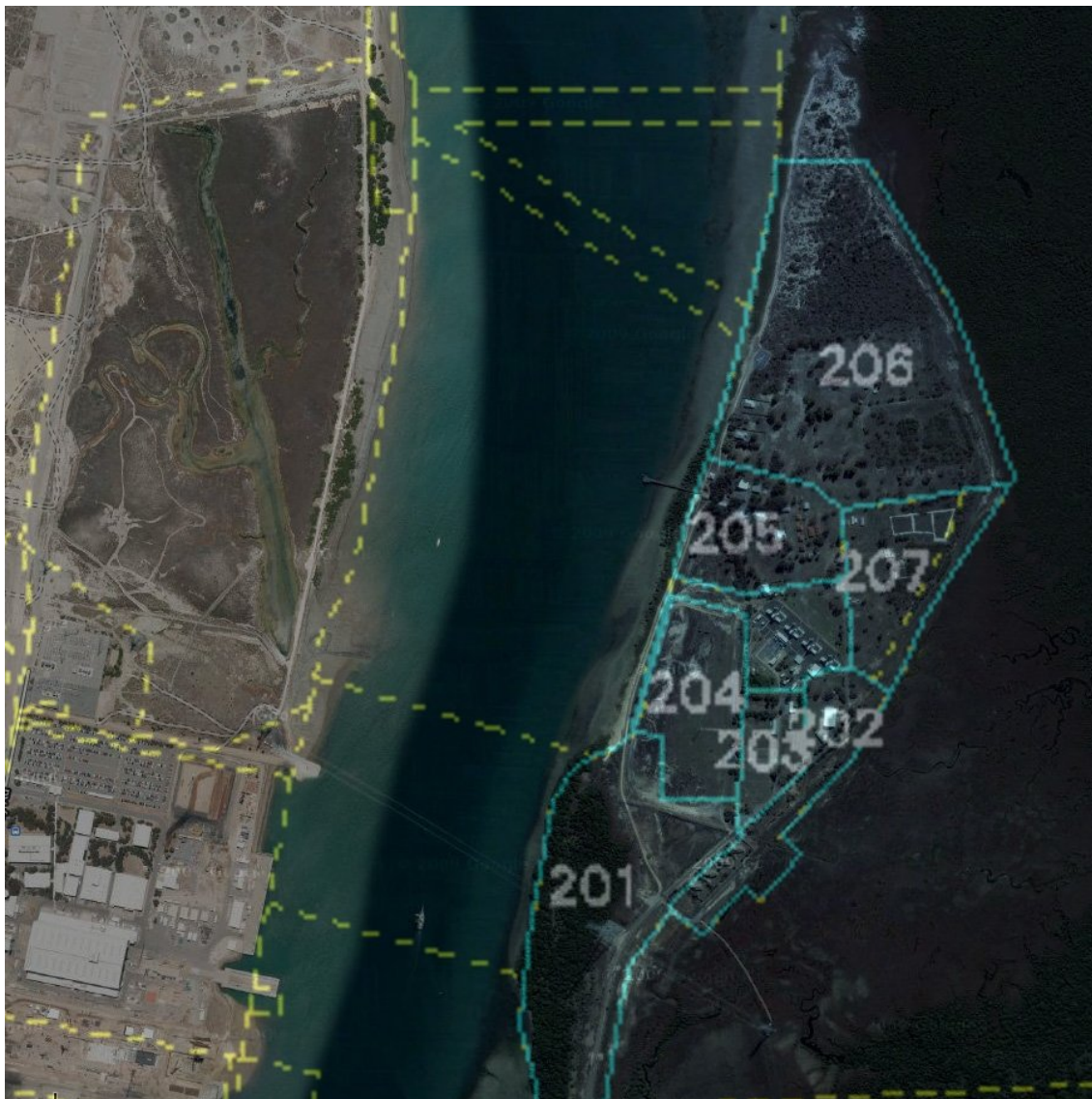
## **1. Map overlay of proposed lot boundaries onto Google map**

Tony Kearney's comments accompanying his map overlay of the 2009 Torrens Island development proposal:

Just thought I'd quickly overlay the boundaries of the proposed subdivision of Torrens Island land onto a Google Map of the area. It might be worth going to Google Maps and typing in Torrens Island to get an Idea of where this area is in relation to the rest of Torrens Island. Mutton Cove and the Sub Corp are directly opposite.

You'll notice that the area marked as 205 is the main built up area of the quarantine station including boiler rooms, shower blocks, doctor's quarters, disinfecting block, living quarters etc and area 206 includes the oval, the three river front cottages, the changing rooms and the morgue.

You will also notice an area of land to the south marked as 201 adjacent to the river which is currently covered by mangroves and that appears is also up for redevelopment.



*NB: The area in the centre without a lot number is the site of Origin Energy's Quarantine Power Station.*

## 2. The proponent for the subdivision

Here is the link that Alison Hastings found to the initial Torrens Island land subdivision application detail (including maps), and her comments:

<https://www.edala.sa.gov.au/edala/EDALAView.aspx?PageMode=ApplicationDisplayView&ApplicationId=32454>

The planning application was prepared on behalf of the State Government Financing Authority, to sub-divide Torrens Is, including the Quarantine Station part of the Island.

The owners of Torrens Is are listed as Origin Energy Power Ltd and Generation Lessor Corporation. Tony Kearney has ascertained from John Strawbridge of the Financing Authority, that the Generation Lessor Corporation is the body for which the Treasurer (and our Local MP) is responsible.

### **FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STRUCTURE**

(From: <http://www.audit.sa.gov.au/99-00/b3/esi-g-generation.htm> )

Generation Lessor Corporation (GLC) was established as a subsidiary of the Treasurer in July 1999 pursuant to the Public Corporations (Generation Lessor Corporation) Regulations 1999.

The functions of GLC include being the lessor under a lease granted in respect of certain prescribed assets transferred to GLC pursuant to the *Electricity Corporations (Restructuring and Disposal) Act 1999*

## 3. Interest in the subdivision has been shown by:

Mr Foley (*The Portside Messenger*, 19 May 2010) said the government had received expressions of interest from the **South Australian Research and Development Institute**, **Origin Energy** and **Maritime Constructions** to take up the proposed allotments.

**Maritime Constructions** Lot 205, the Heritage-listed former Quarantine Station site

(From: <http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/port-dolphin-sanctuary-threat/> )

Maritime's engineering manager Imran Lambay said it had been looking for another waterfront site after the State Government asked it to move from its former base at the Inner Harbor, to make way for the Port waterfront redevelopment, more than two years ago. It is one of the state's largest marine construction and infrastructure firms, employing 108 staff.

*"It is very important as we have five dredges, six barges and various other vessels and we need a place to park as well as maintain and service them."*

### **Origin Energy**

(From: <http://www.originenergy.com.au/2074/Quarantine-Power-Station-expansion>)

#### **Overview**

Origin currently owns and operates the Quarantine Power Station on Torrens Island, just north of the Adelaide CBD in South Australia. The original four turbine gas-fired power station has a capacity of 95MW and is located a few kilometres north of the much larger Torrens Island Power Station.

Origin also has Development Approval to expand the original power station further by adding a steam turbine to generate power using the heat produced by the exhaust from the existing generators. However, this project is yet to be approved by the Origin board. The addition of a steam system and steam turbine would only be appropriate if the power station was expected to run for significant periods of time.

### **South Australian Research and Development Institute** Lot 206

SARDI is planning an expansion of its pilot plant, for the extraction of biofuel (diesel) from algae.

(From: Algae leads way to sustainable biofuel, *The Advertiser*, September 22, 2009

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/business/sa-business-journal/algae-leads-way-to-sustainable-biofuel/story-e6fredel-1225778152739>)

#### **4. Opposition to the proposed development has been publicly expressed by:**

**Aaron Machado**, head of Australian Marine Wildlife Research & Rescue Organisation (*Project Dolphin Safe*)  
**Gary Johanson**, Mayor of Port Adelaide Enfield Council  
**Nature Conservation Society of SA** (Georgina Mollison, the society's conservation ecologist; Annie Bond)  
**National Trust of SA**, (NTSA CEO Eric Heapy, President David Beaumont)  
**Dr Mike Bossley**, director of the Australasian arm of the international Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS) and chair of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary advisory board  
**Chris Mitchell**, Port tourism operator (Port River Dolphin Cruises)  
**Graham Rees**, Port Art Supplies & Ripple Art Studios  
**Rod Sawford**, former Port Adelaide MHR  
**Cr Peter Jamieson**, Port Adelaide Enfield Council  
**Lawrie Shields**, secretary of the Port Adelaide Historical Society  
**Phil Doddridge**, Adventure Kayaking SA (tourism operator)  
**Hon. Ann Bressington**, Independent MLC (see [section 11](#) Hansard extracts)  
**PAREPG** (wrote a letter to Minister Holloway, with copies to other MPs – see [section 7](#))

#### **5. Statement of the NTSA 'Heritage@Risk' status**

*(Short summary for the National Trust's 2010 Heritage@Risk nomination)*

Due to very restricted access Torrens Island has in the past suffered only sporadic and limited development pressure, resulting in the retention of large areas of high biodiversity conservation value. The former Quarantine Station (a State Heritage-listed site), though neglected, remains relatively intact and is of major importance for the history of settlement of South Australia.

The development proposal threatens to destroy these biodiversity and cultural heritage values of the site, through:

- dredging to deepen the area, with the construction of a new wharf to allow the transfer of heavy machinery and equipment;
- the potential loss of nearby protected mangroves, with further impacts on the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary;
- loss of opportunity to redevelop the former Quarantine Station as a tourism destination and a flora and fauna park.

#### **6. Extract from: *Heritage Living*, National Trust of SA, Spring 2010**

##### **TORRENS ISLAND, A FASCINATING RELIC**

**DAVID BEAUMONT & MARCUS BERESFORD**

ABOVE: Torrens Island jetty. Photo: Marcus Beresford

ABOVE: Torrens Island Doctor's premises. Photo: Marcus Beresford

RIGHT: Brisbane immigration depot 1866 Photo: Marcus Beresford

LEFT: Torrens Island staircase. Photo: Marcus Beresford

The former Quarantine Station at Torrens Island, Port Adelaide has recently been identified as Heritage@Risk and research is revealing a range of important reasons why this unique precinct should be subject to a thorough and public Conservation Management Plan process before its proposed subdivision and redevelopment.

A part of an 822ha ecosystem-unit including Torrens Island Conservation Park and tidal sandbanks, the site is near the Dolphin Sanctuary and the Barker Inlet/St Kilda Aquatic Reserve (listed as a wetland of National importance).

The island features grey mangrove and beaded samphire (listed as a nationally vulnerable species),

with drooping sheoak, saltbush and other coastal plants. The local ecosystem includes 187 plant species (28 conservation rated), and 152 animals (with 54 conservation-rated birds, reptiles, the Australian sea lion, and NZ fur seal). The Quarantine Station itself was one of 12 such permanent facilities in Australia, designed to contain immigrants with infectious diseases. The oldest station is at Point Nepean on Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, but others remain at North Head, Sydney and an island in the Brisbane River. Coincidentally, National Trust House in Brisbane is in the former Immigration Depot (1866) where immigrants could reside free for a week until 1887. The SA government established its station in 1855 using tents, but construction did not begin (under architect-in-chief EJ Woods) until 1878 at a cost of some 18,000 pounds. When ships arrived in Port Adelaide their captains had to provide a Bill of Health, and lack of one meant the vessel and passengers were required to go into quarantine.

Small pox was the main problem, infected passengers would be segregated for treatment, the uninfected detained after disinfection, and re-examined before release after a short period. Class segregation was enforced at the station, and single men and women also given segregated accommodation. By 1909 there was a 551 acre station accommodating 224 people. It was established as a Commonwealth precinct from 1911-21.

The oldest remaining building is a wooden hut (1879), an American prefabricated building of Oregon and redwood timber. It has 12-paned sash windows, iron framed beds and 3 rooms. There were originally 30 of these comprising 3 or 4 rooms but after being offered for sale at station closure in 1979, the remainder were burnt. Other colonial period buildings with iron and jarrah facings and matchboard lining, such as a 36 x 50 feet dining room, a 25 feet high watch tower and 6 feet corrugated iron fence (this was after all partly a detention facility), also seem to have disappeared.

Other remaining buildings include a Waiting room (1915) where immigrants had initial assessment, Bathing block (1914) where they had a bath or shower in 23 separate alcoves, Luggage block (1913) where their possessions were disinfected with sulphur and later in a fumigation chamber at 220 degrees (1887 - the first such in Australia), several semi-underground tanks and a Boilerhouse with tall brick chimney (1916) which provided steam for the laundry (earlier immigrants' clothes were dipped in chloride of zinc). Colloquially known as "Mudder Island", in the post WW2 period immigrants who had been through the holocaust are believed to have been unnerved by the look of the bath house and chimney.

An impressive building is the two storey Administration block (1916) of brick and weatherboard, initially the superintendent's house and office, later used as doctors' residence and dispensary. This was located so as to view the whole site, has interesting interior fireplaces and staircase and may have been designed by architect John Smith Murdoch, best known for his inter-war beaux arts or stripped classical designs such as Old Parliament House Canberra (1927) and General Post Office Perth (1930-3).

Also interesting on the site is the red brick linen store (1916), asbestos clad morgue (1912), concrete-block "chalets" like motel units with individual bathrooms (1950s) and the jetty (1879-1923). Archaeological investigations in particularly the cemetery and around the timber cottage could reveal abundant information.

The Point Nepean Station in Victoria is now a significant tourism asset with a management plan, is part of a National Park, and its barracks may be used as a Centre for Marine and Coastal Conservation.

The State Heritage listing of the SA station covers the remaining buildings, but its curtilage does not include the cemetery (two remaining headstones are in storage). The State Heritage registration thus needs to be modified and updated to encompass the whole quarantine station site, and ideally it would extend to the Conservation Park boundary.



The proposed subdivision currently bisects the area of heritage significance in an inappropriate way and possible users include a maritime infrastructure company and bio-diesel facility. Unfortunately a new True Energy power generation facility creates significant background noise to the site. Interested members could contact the Port Adelaide Branch of the National Trust and/or write to the SA Government Treasury whose agency has custody of the site.

## **7. Additional references & external links**

Boland, Marie (1993): *Torrens Island Quarantine Station: collection reconciliation listing and report*. Unpublished report for the National Museum of Australia. (copy with PoANT)

Linda Honey (2006): *Quarantine Stations at Torrens Island and Point Nepean: A Comparison Study* Department of Archaeology, Flinders University, South Australia  
<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/archaeology/departments/publications/PDF%20Theses/Linda%20Honey%202006.pdf> (2.9 Mb)

Lovell Chen (2008): *Former Quarantine Station, Point Nepean. Volume One: Conservation Management Plan*. Prepared for Point Nepean Community Trust, September 2008  
[http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources07/07\\_2482.pdf](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources07/07_2482.pdf) (9.8 Mb)

McDougall and Vines (1988): *Torrens Island Quarantine Station conservation analysis* Report prepared for Australian Construction Services. McDougall & Vines, Norwood, S. Aust.

[Manly Quarantine Station, NSW](#) (Friends of Quarantine Station website)

[A healthy prognosis for Q Station](#) from: *National Trust Magazine (NSW)*, May - July 2011

[The Mawland Group > North Head Quarantine Station](#) (tourism consultants and operators of the site)

[Portsea Quarantine Station, Point Nepean, Victoria](#) (Nepean Historical Society Inc. website)

[Industrialising Torrens Island - they're at it again!](#) (PAREPG website)

[Torrens Island Quarantine Station](#) + [Our blog – Torrens Island](#) (PoANT webpages)

The ABC *Stateline* segment (broadcast 27+28 August 2010) can be viewed on-line at  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/2010/08/27/2995903.htm>

*I think it outlines a lot of the key issues quite well. - Tony Bazeley (PAREPG)*

## **8. PAREPG correspondence with Minister Holloway**

Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group

PO Box 3122

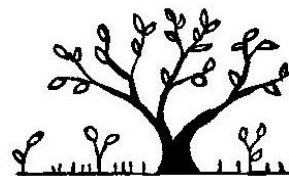
Port Adelaide SA 5015

e: parepg@parepg.org.au

21<sup>st</sup> June 2010

[Hon Paul Holloway](#)

Minister for Urban Development and Planning  
SA Government



### **Protection of Torrens Island from Unspecified Developments**

Dear Minister,

Our Group has represented the need to preserve the unique environmental and cultural heritage retained on Torrens Island for over 20 years. We had believed that the area was becoming increasingly protected by being surrounded by a Conservation Park and a Dolphin Sanctuary.

It appears now, that the Government proposes a number of developments, the environmental impacts of which will not be assessed, South Australian citizens and businesses will not have a right to comment, or be represented in the approval processes that are seen to favour parties with special access to Government decision making. Meanwhile there are a number planning studies still underway regards developments in the Port and on the Peninsula, with an apparent surplus of undeveloped land, suitable for the industrial and maritime purposes. The Island is yet to benefit even from a Management Plan for the Conservation Park as is required under the National Park & Wildlife Services Act, and as also proposed by the *Metropolitan Adelaide and Northern Coastal Action Plan*, [2009, 253-4].

The surveying and subdivisions of Crown land can be approved by the planning body without regard to end uses, because of an amazing calculation that [the surveying of] 48ha of riverside land is worth less than \$4 million.

Our group helped to defend much of the island from being carted away for coastal protection in the late 1980s. We have been heartened by the widespread concern expressed most recently, as the plans for developments have emerged. Groups opposed to the current development strategy include The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, the Nature Conservation Society of SA, the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation, the National Trust of SA, the Port Adelaide Historical Society, as well as Port-Enfield Council Mayor Gary Johanson and Cr Peter Jamieson, Greens MP, Mark Parnell, MLC Ann Bressington and Port tourism operator Chris Mitchell.

Torrens Island is comprised of mangrove habitat for 70% of the island and supported by a smaller area of ancient coastal dunes which have survived due to the island location and specific uses of quarantine station and power station. The Power Station is clearly now a fact of life, but has also helped to maintain the protective restrictive access to the island.

Torrens Island currently hosts one of the few breeding grounds for pelicans in the State, on the adjoining Section Bank, which have been threatened by foxes. Breeding could be further disturbed just by visits from dogs that could accompany poorly considered developments. The island is also said to contain ancient *middens* that remind us of the long history of Aboriginal settlement and prosperity in this region [Heritage Branch advice 1988]. Don't we have to consider the likely impacts of the dredging, construction, and discharges from specific developments, before the land is divided up in ways which can frustrate future management of sensitive ecosystems.

The dunes on the island represent the older dune system that predates the peninsula dunes, and were consistent with those along the now reclaimed Port River [eg the Pinery], which have all gone. The dunes clearly differ also from surrounding plains vegetation [Cleland 1935] and thus are truly unique.

If the land is not now needed for quarantine purposes, and if wider access is considered desirable, there are a number of uses that could take advantage of the unique features of the island, whilst continuing to protect the unique historic and environmental assets located in this special place. Indeed there are now

opportunities to restore some features which have suffered even under the restricted uses that have occurred on the island. Conservation itself is an activity that can include roles for students, researchers, and 'friends of parks' community groups. Such uses can be complimented by eco-tourism approaches. Sympathetic visits by land and water offer attractive commercial tour options, within proper safeguards.

It has been unclear until most recently that the Treasury through the SA Financing Authority is the applicant seeking to have island opened for development. We are concerned that there are insufficient safeguards in having the Development Assessment Commission [DAC] assessing a proposal from Government in a process that does not require public input, opportunities to appeal decisions, or to have regard to an Environmental Impact Assessment. This inadequacy is more critical given the vast majority of SA citizens have no access to the island whatsoever. If the DAC only has to be guided by the existing planning laws, it would appear that the Development Plan Objectives focus on future conservation uses for the whole island, for example providing for 'A zone for education, research and tourist development consistent with sound management and protection of the natural environment' [*Land Not Within a Council Area (Metropolitan) – Development Plan – Development Act 1993*, Consolidated 11th June 2009, p 59]

We have also been informed that this arrangement [assessment without public input] can be justified because the development is valued at less than \$4 million. Valuing the development proposals by the cost of the subdivision appears both evasive and silly. The value of the developments can only be determined by the end uses for which subdivisions are being sought, and the merits of the breaking up of the island can only be assessed in such a light. How could such a vast area of land [48 ha], be deemed to be worth so little [less than \$100,000 / hectare], the largest remaining area of land so close to a capital city, with river frontage, adjoining a busy port, set in a conservation zone, freed from the constraints of historic uses? And how could any value be so determined in a vacuum as to what other proposals would be forthcoming from a more open process?

We would like to see the current proposals be withdrawn until a proper planning study of the whole island and surrounding marine environment is undertaken, which includes the role of the existing power station, and the range of conservation, cultural, and educational uses and ecologically sustainable enterprises the Island could offer. Such a study needs to adopt an open process whereby all stakeholders can contribute to how this island can best serve the long term interests of all South Australians, and would include an assessment of long term environmental impacts upon the animal, bird and marine life, that have fortunately survived to this time.

If this plan to subdivide and develop the island proceeds without such a plan, we seek that the proposals be afforded a category that allows an opportunity to scrutinise specific proposals for development. Public scrutiny will still only occur if reasonable access to the island is made possible, via organised tours of the Island and its remarkable assets.

Tim Walsh  
Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group

Copies to: Mayor Gary Johanson, Port-Enfield Council  
Peter Jamieson, Councillor, Outer Harbour Ward, Port-Enfield Council  
Hon Kevin Foley, Treasurer & Member for Port Adelaide  
Hon Paul Caica, Minister for Environment  
[Hon Paul Holloway](#) Minister for Urban Development and Planning  
[Hon Paul Caica](#) Minister for Environment and Conservation  
[Hon Grace Portolesi](#) Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation  
[Hon John Rau](#), Minister for Tourism  
Hon Mark Parnell, Greens MP  
Hon Ann Bressington, MLC



**The Hon Paul Holloway MLC**  
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



**Government  
of South Australia**

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Minister Assisting the Premier  
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MUDP F2010/000033 - eA131143

Date: 5/8/10

Mr Tim Walsh  
Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group  
PO Box 3122  
PORT ADELAIDE SA 5015

Dear Mr Walsh

Thank you for your letter dated 21 June 2010 concerning the land division proposal by SA Government Financing Authority to create five additional allotments on Torrens Island.

I understand that you are concerned about this subdivision and the potential for it to create the opportunity for undesirable development to occur and potentially resulting in detrimental environmental impacts on Torrens Island. You would like to see this proposal withdrawn until there has been a further planning study undertaken of the Island and the wider marine environment.

I can advise that the Development Assessment Commission (Commission) has received and is considering the land division proposal on Torrens Island (Development Application 010/G009/09). As this is an application by a State Agency under Section 49 of the *Development Act 1993*, I will ultimately make the decision on the proposal (Crown assessment process).

Only the applicant has the ability to withdraw this application from the planning system. My role is to refuse or approve the application.

The Commission has requested that the applicant provide further information on the proposal, and as such, the application is currently on hold pending receipt of this information.

The Commission will make an assessment of the application against the policies in the relevant Development Plan, which in this case is the *Land Not Within a Council Area (Metropolitan) Development Plan* and prepare a report to me with a recommendation on a decision.

For your information, the Commission has referred the land division application to relevant government agencies for their advice. In this instance the application has been referred to: The Coast Protection Board, The Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Native Vegetation Branch, the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation and electricity providers ElectraNet, Epic Energy and ETSA.

Torrens Island is not located within a Council Area, however as it is within 1km of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield Council boundary, the Council is consulted on the application and its advice sought. The Commission must have regard to the Council and agency advice when making a recommendation to me.

As you are aware, as the land division does not have a development cost exceeding 4 million dollars there is no public notification undertaken. Furthermore, there is no statutory power for the Commission to publically notify this application under the *Development Act 1993*.

The Commission has not recently received any land use proposals on the subject site. Any new development, such as a change of use or new structures, would require a separate application, assessment process and decision (which may or may not be under the Crown Assessment Process).

In the case of any future development applications on this land, the process will depend on whether the application is to be treated by a Crown agency or a private body. Under the Crown assessment process, a proposal with a development cost over 4 million dollars is required to be publically notified. Otherwise, applications will be determined under Section 33 of the *Development Act 1993*. The Commission will be the assessing authority for these applications, as the land is located outside a Council boundary. This process may be subject to public notification depending on the nature of any future proposal.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Ms Gabrielle McMahon, Chief Project Officer, at the Department of Planning and Local Government on 8303 0734.

Yours sincerely



**Paul Holloway**

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Minister for Mineral Resources Development  
Minister for Urban Development and Planning  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
Minister Assisting the Premier in Public Sector Management

## Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group

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### Response to the proposal to subdivide land in the Torrens Island Public Purpose (Quarantine Station) zone (9010/G009/09)

21 June 2010

On 20th May 2010 Mr. Foley announced that the government intended to "subdivide and sell" the allotments and had received expressions of interest for industrial purposes, from Origin Energy and Maritime Constructions

The Port Adelaide Resident's Environment Protection Group (PAREPG) believes that Mr. Foley's statement now clearly identifies the purpose of the land division as industrial, and as we will demonstrate below is so seriously at variance with the objectives and principles of the Quarantine Station Zone and the development plan, that the application should be rejected by the Development Assessment Commission.

The application is made on behalf of the South Australian Financing Authority, a division of the the Department of Treasury and Finance, the head of which is the Honourable Kevin Foley.

The intended division is bordered on the landward side by the Torrens Island Conservation Park. The State government recognised the importance of the park in 2005 and extended it's boundaries south to border the AGL power station ~2 km to the south.

Origin Energy currently operates a peaking power station within the subdivision zone and has development approval for expansion which the company claims is likely to be activated only if market conditions prove favourable. (<http://www.originenergy.com.au/2074/Quarantine-Power-Station-expansion>).

Maritime Constructions is the the largest dredging company in South Australia and has interests in relocating servicing operations.

Maritime's engineering manager Imran Lambay said it had been looking for another waterfront site after the State Government asked it to move from its former base at the Inner Harbour, to make way for the Port waterfront redevelopment, more than two years ago.

"It is very important as we have five dredges, six barges and various other vessels and we need a place to park as well as maintain and service them."

*"Port Dolphin Sanctuary threat"* Portside Messenger 10 Mar 2010

PAREPG believe that the application is at serious variance with the development plan because:

#### Zone objectives

The allotments are zoned Public Purpose (Quarantine Station) and the zone objectives are totally inconsistent with industrial uses.

Objective 1: A zone for the continued operation and essential development of the Quarantine Station.

Objective 2: A zone for education, research and tourist development consistent with sound management and protection of the natural environment.

Objective 3: The protection and conservation of heritage items.

These objectives are reinforced by the proposal that "the State Government proposes to carry out

PORT Adelaide MP Kevin Foley says the State Government will push ahead with plans to redevelop vacant Torrens Island land, despite community opposition.

The State Treasurer said Torrens Island already housed the state's largest power station and further development was not incompatible with its existing land use.

"The State Government owns the land surrounding the Torrens Island power station and we intend to sub-divide and sell the allotments," he said. "We have an obligation to taxpayers to make sure we utilise that land."

Mr Foley said the government had received expressions of interest from the South Australian Research and Development Institute, Origin Energy and Maritime Constructions to take up the proposed allotments.

Portside Messenger 20/5/10



a heritage study of the Quarantine Station and, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government, implement measures for the protection and conservation of heritage items and natural environment."

### **Zone Principles of Development Control**

Principles of development control for the zone do not support industrial development. Principles 1 & 2 for example, if consistently applied exclude development of that nature

- 1 Development in the Public Purpose (Quarantine Station) Zone should be for the quarantine of animals, flora and other fauna, and associated breeding and research programmes.
- 2 Development in the form of education, research and tourist facilities should be encouraged in the medium to longer term.

The application is not consistent with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> principles of development control.

- 3 Development should be consistent with sound management and protection of the natural environment and the heritage of the zone.
- 5 Development should provide buffers and limit access to the adjoining MOSS (Conservation) Zone.

The proposed divisions are relatively small (on average 7 Ha) and boundaries, in the main, either adjoin the Torrens Island Conservation Park or the coast. Yet there is no apparent evidence of buffering.

Indeed the extension of lot 202 seems to be primarily to accommodate what appears to be three septic tanks adjacent to the salt water marsh of the Torrens Island Conservation Park. Whether this is the case or not the division does not incorporate a buffer adjacent to the Conservation Park and is not "consistent with sound management and protection of the natural environment"



### **Council wide objectives**

The division is clearly inconsistent with objective 13:

- 13 Industrial development should be located in industrial areas.

The shore of the division is intended to accommodate Maritime Constructions activities, the mooring and servicing of dredge equipment and vessels. Yet a cursory examination indicates that either the shore is either sandy shallows or adjacent to mangroves. Thus land division in this case is contrary to objective 8 below.

- 8 The physical nature of land proposed to be divided should be suitable for the intended use of the land.

Further more the central division which is presumably intended to house the remnants of the quarantine station is not an appropriate division. Linda Honey in her paper "Quarantine Stations at Torrens Island and Point Nepean: A Comparison Study" documents the significance of spatial design in the day-to-day operation of the station.

([http://www.flinders.edu.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file\\_uuid=19E26417-0D79-352D-26F7-77F9E85396A9&siteName=ehlt](http://www.flinders.edu.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=19E26417-0D79-352D-26F7-77F9E85396A9&siteName=ehlt))

PAREPG believes that such a tiny, bounded allotment contradicts these principles and hence land division objective 7:

- 7 Land should be divided in a manner appropriate to the intended use of the land.

Consequently both the coastal and central divisions conflict with PDA 51 where the division "or subsequent development and use" will adversely affect the management of the quarantine station and the ecological integrity of the coast. It is not clear whether the sandy coast or mangrove area is to be occupied by the dredging facility, but we assume that this will be



determined prior to assessment.

PDC 51 Land should only be divided in such a way that:

- (a) it or subsequent development and use of the land will not adversely affect the management of the land, adjoining land or the coast;
- (b) sand dunes, wetlands and remnant vegetation are maintained in single parcels, reserve for access purposes; and
- (c) the number of allotments abutting directly onto the coast or a reserve for conservation purposes is minimised.

The reduction in area and enclosure of the quarantine station block will seriously detract from the value of the amenity and conflict with Objective 8 and principles of development control 60 & 61:

Objective 8: Development which does not detract from or reduce the value of sites of ecological, economic, heritage, cultural, scientific, environmental or educational importance.

PDC 60 Development should not result in the disturbance or the devaluation of sites of heritage, cultural, scientific or educational significance.

PDC 61 Development within coastal areas should be designed and sited in sympathy with the natural and built character of its locality and be complementary in scale, height, bulk, materials and external colours to its surroundings.

### **Coastal Development**

Objectives 5, 6 and 7 below are inconsistent with a land division dependent on a dredging operation for practical operation, particularly if that operation involves the removal of mangrove flats:

Objective 5: Manage development in coastal areas to sustain or enhance the remaining natural coastal environment.

Objective 6: Protect the coast from development that will adversely affect the marine and onshore coastal environment by pollution, erosion, damage or depletion of physical or biological resources, or by interference with natural coastal processes.

Objective 7: Development which does not interfere with environmentally important features of coastal areas, including mangroves, wetlands, dune areas, stands of native vegetation, wildlife habitats and estuarine areas.

And principles of development control 41,42,43,48 and 49:

41 Development should have the minimum effect on natural features, land adjoining water or scenic routes or scenically-attractive areas.

42 Natural vegetation should be preserved wherever possible and replanting should take place, wherever practicable.

43 The natural character of rivers and creeks should be preserved.

48 Development should not be located in areas of delicate or environmentally sensitive coastal features such as sand dunes, wetlands or important remnants of native vegetation.

49 Development should not, nor be likely in the future to, adversely affect the ecology and stability of environmentally -sensitive coastal features.

For tourism purposes preferred public access is by water, with the quarantine station, and Torrens Island Conservation Park forming a destination for Port River tours. Industrialising the waterfront conflicts with:

Objective 10: Development which maintains or enhances public access to coastal areas in keeping with objectives for protection of the environment, heritage and amenity by provision of:

- (a) planned, easy to use public access to and along beaches;
- (b) coastal reserves and lookouts;
- (c) convenient and safe public boating facilities at selected locations;

objectives 41,42,43 and principles of development control 67 and 70:

41 Development should have the minimum effect on natural features, land adjoining water or scenic routes or scenically-attractive areas.

42 Natural vegetation should be preserved wherever possible and replanting should take place, wherever practicable.



43 The natural character of rivers and creeks should be preserved.

44 Development should not impair the character or nature of buildings or sites of architectural, historical or scientific interest or sites of natural beauty.

PDC 67 Development should maintain or improve public access to and along the foreshore except where operational requirements at ports renders this inappropriate.

PDC 70 Development which abuts or includes a coastal reserve for scenic, conservation or recreational purposes should be located and designed in such a way as to have regard to the purpose, management and amenity of the reserve and to prevent illegal incorporation of reserve land into private land.

### **Sea level rise.**

Sea level rise potentially affects the proposed division from all sides. Not only is the site an island, but the eastern borders border an almost flat coastal salt marsh where a very small rise will inundate a significant area. The land division sits on a small raised sand area, extremely vulnerable to erosion which potentially conflicts with PDC's 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89:

81 Land should not be divided for commercial, industrial or residential purposes unless a layout can be achieved whereby roads, parking areas and adequate development sites on each allotment are at least 0.3 metres above the standard sea-flood risk level, unless the land is or can be protected in accordance with principle of development control numbered 84.

84 Development which requires protection measures against coastal erosion, sea or storm water flooding, sand drift, for the management of other coastal processes at the time of development or which may require protection or management measures in the future, should only be undertaken if:

- (a) the measures themselves will not have an adverse effect on coastal ecology, processes, conservation, public access and amenity;
- (b) the measures do not now, or in the future, require community resources, including land;
- (c) the risk of failure of measures such as sand management, levee banks, flood gates, valves or stormwater pumping is appropriate to the degree of the potential impact of a failure; and
- (d) adequate financial guarantees are in place to cover future construction, operation, maintenance and management of protection measures.

85 Development should be set-back a sufficient distance from the coast to provide an erosion buffer which will allow for at least 100 years of coastal retreat for single buildings or small-scale developments, unless:

- (a) the development incorporates private coastal works to protect the development and public reserve from the anticipated erosion, and the private coastal works comply with principle of development control numbered 84; or
- (b) the council is committed to protecting the public reserve and development from the anticipated coastal erosion.

87 The width of an erosion buffer should be based on:

- (a) the susceptibility of the coast to erosion;
- (b) local coastal processes;
- (c) the effect of severe storm events; and
- (d) the effect of a 0.3 metres sea level rise over the next 50 years on coastal processes and storms; and
- (e) the availability of practical measures to protect the development from erosion caused by a further sea level rise of 0.7 metres per 50 years thereafter.

88 Where there is inadequate area to provide the necessary erosion buffer to development on land at risk from long-term coastal erosion, (for example small-scale infill development including land division), such development should not occur unless:

- (a) the council has committed itself to erosion protection measures which may be necessary along this section of the coast;
- (b) a legally binding agreement is included on the freehold certificate(s) of title(s) that protection measures will not be built and that any building will be transportable and will be removed when threatened by erosion or storm surge flooding; or
- (c) a legally binding agreement is included on the freehold certificate(s) of title(s) that

protection measures that comply with principle of development control numbered 61 for coastal development will be built by the land owner(s) when required.

89 Development should not occur where essential services cannot be economically provided and maintained having regard to flood risk and sea level rise or where emergency vehicle access would be prevented by a 100-year average return interval extreme sea level event, adjusted for 100 years of sea level rise.

While still providing the protection required of PDC 58, 47 and 50:

58 Development should not preclude the natural geomorphological and ecological adjustment to changing climate, sea level or other conditions. For example landward migration of coastal wetlands should not be prevented by embankments. Development should be designed to allow for new areas to be colonised by mangroves and wetland species and for removal of existing embankments where practical.

47 Development, including flood, erosion and wave protection measures, should not adversely affect the ecology of coastal areas, the seabed or coastal waters, by pollution, significant loss of habitat or interference with coastal processes or by other means.

50 Development should not be undertaken where it will create or aggravate coastal erosion, or where it will require coast protection works which cause or aggravate coastal erosion.

And ultimately with objective 13:

Objective 13: Development which will not contribute, now or in the future, to public expenditure on protection of the development or the environment.

The narrow nature of some allotments, coupled with the intertidal zones on both sides of the land division is likely to conflict with the effluent disposal requirements of principle of development control 53 .

PDC 53 Effluent disposal systems incorporating soakage trenches or a similar system should be located not less than 100 metres or greater where it is necessary to avoid effluent migration onto the inter-tidal zone, the 100 metres to be measured from the mean high water mark adjusted for any subsidence for the first 50 years of development plus a sea level rise of one metre. Except where health commission standards can be met by a lesser set-back.

The Port Adelaide Enfield development plan specifically accommodates dredging resources in Policy Area 2: Osborne Maritime as the desired character statement indicates:

"development within the Policy Area is intended to be limited to those essential to land based ship building, repair and maintenance operations such as gantry and loading structures, wharf structures, ship lifting and launching facilities and dredging operations."

The siting of the Origin Energy peaking station does not require a coastal location and conflicts with Objective 16 and Principle of development control 92.

Objective 16: Non-residential development of a type or size which does not require a coastal site located in appropriate zones away from the coast.

PDC 92 Development of a kind or scale, for example commercial or large-scale retail, which does not require a coastal location and would not significantly contribute to the community's enjoyment of the coast should not be located in coastal areas.

PAREPG believes that the land division is contrary to objective 14

Objective 14: The protection of the physical and economic resources of the coast from inappropriate development.

And violates the principles of orderly and economic development of the plan:

PDC 1 Development should be orderly and economic.

The conflicts are so widespread and fundamental, that they the planed division is seriously at variance with the Land Not within a Council Area Development Plan.

Yours Sincerely

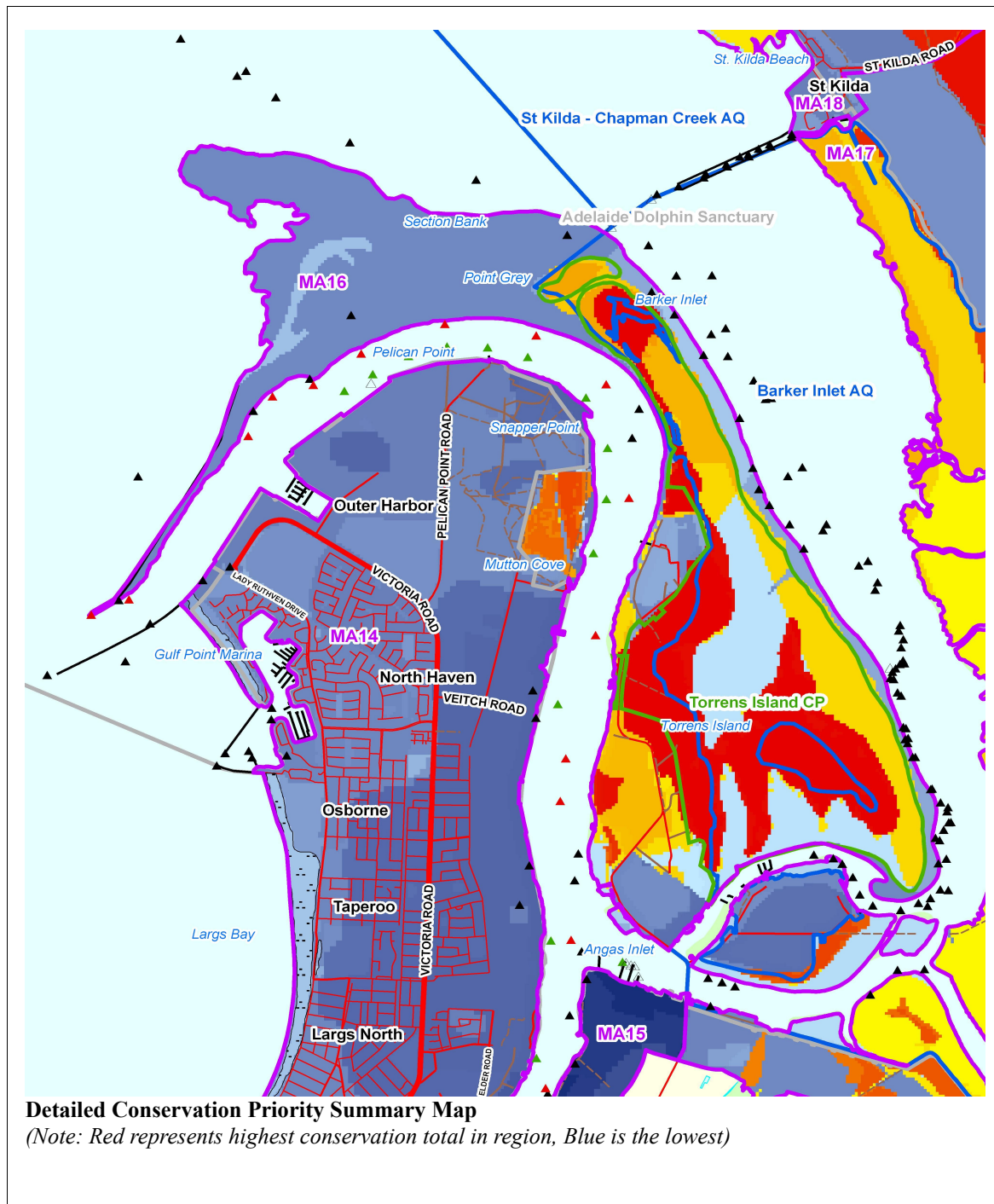


Tony Bazeley

Port Adelaide Resident's Environment Protection Group

## 9. Natural Heritage values of Torrens Island

The natural heritage values of Torrens Island are described in Section 7.3.16 of the *Metropolitan Adelaide and Northern Coastal Action Plan* (AMLR NRM, 2009)



The Quarantine Station site (Lots 205 +206) does contain an impressive stand of mature sheoaks (*Allocasuarina verticillata*); however, most of the QS site's understorey biodiversity values were lost during the 1980s when imported goats were quarantined on the site, and allowed to roam freely and graze amongst the heritage-listed buildings.

### Notes on conservation values of other parts of Torrens Island

The area where mining of relict sand dunes occurred in 1989 (for replenishment of metro beaches) lies to the south of

the area which is the subject of the current subdivision proposal. Revegetation of the mined area was successfully carried out by Doug Fotheringham (Coastal Management Branch), with the aim of recreating a samphire habitat; however, some of the species used were not of strictly local provenance.

Mat Moar, formerly of CVA, has carried out seed collection on the island, and considers the highest biodiversity values to occur in the area immediately north of the Torrens Island Power Station.

Janine Kraehenbuehl (District Ranger of the Northern Lofty Region, which includes Torrens Island Conservation Park) has visited both the heritage-listed Quarantine Station and the Conservation Park, and was impressed by the stand of *Allocasuarinas* and the remnant vegetation to the north of the QS, as well as by the heritage values of the QS itself.

Greg Johnston (Flinders Uni & Royal Adelaide Zoo) has serious concerns regarding breeding colonies of seabirds on the Section Bank to the north of Torrens Island. (With the recent drought affecting the Coorong, the Section Bank hosts the largest breeding colony of Pelicans in SA.) Breeding failure of Pelicans has occurred in some recent years due to predation by foxes, which access the Section Bank via Torrens Island, and there have been difficulties in getting permission from the various land managers to carry out fox-baiting. However, the Section Bank lies at several kilometres distance from the QS and so is unlikely to be affected by any increased activity there.

Brian Caton, lead author of the 2009 MANCAP report cited above, considers that this report is far from complete and lacks a lot of detail.

## **10. Aboriginal heritage**

Doug Fotheringham said that prior to the sand mining in 1989, a stone hand axe and an Aboriginal midden were discovered on the western side of Torrens Island, immediately to the west of the area which was eventually mined. The midden contained artifacts shaped from glass and broken clay tobacco pipes, indicating that occupation of the site continued after European colonisation. Doug considers the site to be very important for the Port Adelaide area.

After the discovery of the midden, a thorough survey of the island was undertaken, but no other artefacts or middens were found elsewhere.

The midden lies to the south of the area which is the subject of the current subdivision proposal.

## 11. Press clippings

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[Preserve history](#) Letter to the Editor, *The Portside Messenger*, 30 March 2011

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## Port dolphin sanctuary threat

WORRIED: Aaron Machado says it would be an act of “environmental vandalism” to hand the Torrens Island site to industry. (PHOTO)

From: *The Portside Messenger*, 10 March 2010, 10:54am

by Heather Kennett

<http://portside-messenger.wherelive.com.au/news/story/port-dolphin-sanctuary-threat/>

THE precious Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary could be threatened if the State Government approves the handover of the heritage-listed former Quarantine Station to industry, an environment group says.

The State Government last week confirmed it was negotiating with Port business Maritime Constructions about locating some of its operations to the disused Torrens Island site, although it said no deal had been signed.

Port Adelaide Enfield mayor Gary Johanson was also critical of the potential development, as he believed it could be redeveloped for tourism.

Aaron Machado, head of Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation, formerly known as Project Dolphin Safe, said the site was “in the heart of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary” and would be an “an act of environmental vandalism” if handed over the industry.

“It’s yet another chunk of pristine environment looking at being destroyed,” he said.

Mr Machado’s key concerns included the dredging of the area to make it deeper, the construction of a new wharf to allow the transfer of heavy machinery and equipment and the potential impact on nearby protected mangroves.

“The mangroves are a federally protected species and dredging would disturb the acid sulphate soils in the area.

“It would result in the destruction of a habitat that the dolphins, seabirds and other wildlife rely on.”

Maritime’s engineering manager Imran Lambay said it had been looking for another waterfront site after the State Government asked it to move from its former base at the Inner Harbor, to make way for the Port waterfront redevelopment, more than two years ago.

It is one of the state’s largest marine construction and infrastructure firms and it employs 108 staff.

“We are looking to find a home for our vessels,” he said.

“It is very important as we have five dredges, six barges and various other vessels and we need a place to park as well as maintain and service them.

“We have no intention to ignore Aaron’s concerns about the sanctuary and the heritage of the site.”

In 2005, the State Government declared 118sq km of the Port River from Port Adelaide to North Haven, through the Barker Inlet and into Gulf St Vincent a sanctuary to protect the local dolphin population from human interference and industrial activity and pollution.

Environment Minister Jay Weatherill said there were protections in place through heritage listing and the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act.

“Any development will need to be considered by the Development Assessment Commission. It will have to take into consideration the State Heritage listing of Quarantine Station and address any potential adverse impacts on the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.”

## Tourism the way forward

PORT Adelaide Enfield Mayor Gary Johanson says the former Quarantine Station is ripe for redevelopment as a tourism destination.

The site, declared an State Heritage site in 1993, included an 1870s prefabricated timber cottage, the only survivor of the original 30 which existed, as well as two jetties, a cemetery and mortuary.

He questioned the merits of the allowing the site to be turned over to industrial redevelopment.

“This is an unique property which can’t be duplicated and it is potentially getting sold off without even hitting the market,” he said.

“You could look at a flora and fauna park for the area and incorporate the heritage elements rather than lumping heavy industry there.”

Mr Johanson said it would be short-sighted of the government to approve development.

“The Quarantine Station is ripe for tourism development and around there you’ve got beautiful mangroves which you would want to protect.”

**Have your say**  
[Comments on this story](#)

**KATHY of port adelaide Posted at 4:21 PM March 12, 2010**

**1 of 4**

Once again the mighty dollar seems to be more important than the people, the dolphins and the river.....I CANNOT BELIEVE WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO OUR LOCAL PORT ADELAIDE.

**Port Fan of Eastern Suburbs Posted at 5:40 PM March 12, 2010**

**Comment 2 of 4**

Why does the Port figure so lowly in the eyes of Government? The main shopping strip has trucks rumbling through it when they could go around. Hart's Mill and the Customs House are iconic buildings that need to be restored and used, the 'City of Adelaide' clipper ship needs to be brought back and restored as does the 'Falie' and 'Nelcebee'. The Newport Quays development is an eyesore. The Port could be a jewel in South Australia's crown. Instead, it is a constant battle against developers after quick money. Why can't we create a Rocks-like precinct (Sydney) or Fremantle-like precinct (Perth)? These areas attract thousands of tourists.

**Candice of Sturt Creek Posted at 7:17 PM March 12, 2010**

**Comment 3 of 4**

The Rann-Foley Government gives the Rann Foley Government takes away. Time to VOTE RANN-FOLEY OUT

**Great Aunty of Woodville Posted at 10:21 AM Today**

**Comment 4 of 4**

This is disgraceful, a jewel in the tourist crown for our beautiful city, unique and precious. Port Adelaide is a disgrace and our local member has abandoned his post. No development please, it should be promoted as a tourist area, I agree with Port Fan of Eastern Suburbs we could attract thousands of tourists.

## **Island land grab**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 17 March 2010, 02:00pm by Heather Kennett  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/island-land-grab/>

ONE of SA's leading environmental groups has condemned the planned redevelopment of the northern tip of Torrens Island and has called for greater transparency in the decision-making process.

Under a State Government plan lodged with the Development Assessment Commission (DAC), the last of the Port's remnant sand dune system is earmarked for development, as part of a government proposal to carve up 48ha of unused Crown land on Torrens Island to create seven new allotments.

The Nature Conservation Society of SA criticised the government's intention to place industry in an environmentally sensitive area.

"This is the last sand dune mangrove area remaining in the Port region which makes it really significant," said Georgina Mollison, the society's conservation ecologist.

"There is very little left of this type of eco-system remaining, particularly in metropolitan Adelaide."

"From an ecological point of view it is a buffer for the Port River and we need to maintain a buffer in that area to minimise the effects of industrial development."

Ms Mollison said the group had last surveyed the area in 2006 and it was "extremely concerned" it had not been consulted about the development plans.

"We have nothing similar of that importance left and yet the public consultation has been nil.

"It's quite disappointing, they've obviously gone a long way through the process and it hasn't even been made public.

"We really want some clarification and a transparent process so we can get hold of the development application so we are able to comment."

The government should do a master planning study of the area before approving any redevelopment, she said.

"I would be saying they need to do a proper planning process ... it really needs a risk assessment done and it should be made public.

“We’d be asking for the top northern section to be kept as a conservation area.”

Last week the Portside Messenger reported the State Heritage-listed former Quarantine Station was part of the planned sub-division, a move described by local environmentalist Aaron Machado as likely to “open the floodgates” to industry and potentially harmful to the adjacent Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.

Environment Minister Jay Weatherill said the DAC’s decision would require an assessment of any impact on “sensitive habitat such as native vegetation and remnant sand dune systems”.

He said any impact on native vegetation would be referred to the Native Vegetation Council.

He said there would be some “community engagement” on any future development of the land.

The development application is expected to be considered by the DAC within a month

### ***Have your say***

#### **Comments on this story**

***michael k of adelaide Posted at 4:09 PM Today***

The area is so polluted as it is... would it make any difference?

***Johnny Of Adelaide of Welland Posted at 3:44 PM Today***

What a great idea. When can I buy one.

## **Heritage at risk**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 24 March 2010, 08:51am by Heather Kennett

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/heritage-at-risk/>

HANDING over the heritage-listed Quarantine Station to industry will damage the state’s cultural heritage and put at risk the region’s unique flora and fauna, the National Trust of SA says.

The Trust has joined with several other environmental and conservation groups in criticising the State Government’s plan to redevelop the former Quarantine Station.

Trust CEO Eric Heapy said allowing heavy industry access to the site would impact “one of the most important and relatively intact estuarine environments” in the Le Fevre Peninsula.

“There are so many valuable heritage elements attached to this site including its unique flora and fauna, the mangroves, dolphins and historically interesting buildings that it must be preserved and protected at all costs,” he said.

“This is a place that not only provides a sanctuary to protect the local dolphin population from human interference and industrial activity and pollution, but also one which represents an important component in the development of our cultural heritage.”

Other protesting groups include the Australian Marine and Wildlife Rescue and Research Organisation and the Nature Conservation Society of SA.

## **Government told to come clean on Torrens Island plans**

Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society director Mike Boseley is worried by Torrens Island plans. *(PHOTO)*

From: *The Portside Messenger* 14 April 2010, 03:00pm by Heather Kennett

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/no-more-secrecy/>

DOLPHIN expert Mike Bossley has called for the cloak of secrecy to be lifted from the State Government’s plan for industrial development in the heart of Adelaide’s Dolphin Sanctuary.

Dr Bossley, director of the Australasian arm of the international Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDACS), is seeking a meeting with new Environment Minister Paul Caica to obtain more details.

He says the proposal to carve up 48ha of unused Crown land on Torrens Island and create seven new allotments for industry only came to his attention from reports published in the Portside Messenger.

“The indications are that it could be a very concerning development but what is also concerning is the apparent secrecy surrounding the whole issue,” he said.

“I urge the government to make public what it is that is going to happen there.”

Dr Bossley helped lobby for the 118sq km sanctuary from Port Adelaide to North Haven, through the Barker Inlet and into Gulf St Vincent which aims to protect the marine habitat of the Port River dolphin pod.

He is also chair of the sanctuary’s advisory board.

“The main issue is the destruction of parts of what are important natural habitats.

“It depends on what part of the island they plan to develop the land away from the shore is not as much of a concern, but if it means changes to the shoreline it becomes a concern to me.

“This would potentially involve the mangroves and they are very important in the ecology of the river and they are an important breeding ground for fish the dolphins feed off.”

He has requested the matter be put on the agenda of the upcoming April 30 meeting of the advisory board to allow the group to investigate and discuss the issue.

The WDCA joins the Nature Conservation Society of SA, the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation, the National Trust of SA, Port tourism operator Chris Mitchell and Port-Enfield mayor Gary Johanson in criticising aspects of the plan.

Last month the government confirmed it had lodged an application with the Development Assessment Commission (DAC) to allow industry to use vacant Torrens Island land, including the State Heritage-listed former Quarantine station.

The development application is expected to be considered by the DAC in May.

Foley to seek public opinion

PORT Adelaide MP and State Treasurer Kevin Foley said he was examining the Torrens Island sub-division proposal and was keen to hear the views of the community.

“I am currently talking to the various agencies involved in this project,” he said in an emailed statement.

“I am happy to listen to the views and valid concerns of interest groups and I look forward to working in the interests of the community.”

To have your say about the Torrens Island plan, write to the Chief Executive, Department of Planning, GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001. Also fill out the feedback box on this page.

## **Anger at Torrens Island land sell-off**

Former Port Adelaide MHR Rod Sawford, right, and Cr Peter Jamieson are opposing the Torrens Island land sell-off. (PHOTO)

From: *The Portside Messenger* 19 May 2010, 10:00am by Heather Kennett  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/anger-at-torrens-sell-off/>

THE CHORUS of opposition to the State Government’s plan to sell-off Torrens Island land to industry continues to grow, with the local council and a history group weighing into the debate.

Former Port Adelaide MHR Rod Sawford has also voiced his disapproval of the plan instead, calling for the island to be declared a National Park to protect its sensitive ecology.

Port-Enfield Council and the Port Adelaide Historical Society will lodge objections to the plan to sub-divide 48 ha of vacant Crown land into seven new allotments, enabling industrial redevelopment on the island.

Both agreed that if the proposal was approved by the Development Assessment Commission (DAC), it would rule out any future tourism redevelopment of the island and the State heritage-listed Quarantine Station, while also placing more pressure on Adelaide’s Dolphin Sanctuary.

Cr Peter Jamieson said the removal of the Port’s heritage was of concern for residents and the council. “The station has significant heritage and once we’ve lost it, it’s gone forever,” he said.

“We have this site which would attract people to come and spend time in the area the government needs to be looking at the island’s tourism potential and not just its industrial potential.”

The Port Adelaide Historical Society (PAHS) said it would write to local MP Kevin Foley over its concern of the “short-sighted” plan to carve up some of the Port’s remaining open space.

“It is an ideal place for recreation purposes and to let that just be taken up by industry is a loss to SA,” Society secretary Lawrie Shields said. “It’s open space which needs to be kept pristine and it’s very short-sighted when you’ve got all that land available at Gillman.”

Mr Shields said that if approved, it would result in industry encroaching on both sides of the Port River.

“It will also take industry further downstream when we should be keeping the river frontage land for the people.”

Mr Sawford said the island featured sections of remnant sand dunes and large areas of mangroves, which should be protected.

“The mangroves are very significant for the dolphins and any further development on the island would affect its biodiversity,” he said.

The council and the PAHS have joined the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, the Nature Conservation Society of SA, the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation and the National Trust of SA in speaking out against the plan.

A DAC spokesman said it had not yet considered the proposal.

### **Plan still on**

PORT Adelaide MP Kevin Foley says the State Government will push ahead with plans to redevelop vacant Torrens Island land, despite community opposition.

The Treasurer said Torrens Island already housed the state’s largest power station and further development was not incompatible with its existing land use.

“The State Government owns the land surrounding the Torrens Island power station and we intend to sub-divide and sell the allotments,” he said.

“We have one of the state’s largest power stations already on Torrens Island and its not inconsistent to further sub-divide the land there.

“It is land we own which is not needed by the power station, so we have an obligation to taxpayers to make sure we utilise that land.”

Mr Foley said the government had received expressions of interest from the South Australian Research and Development Institute, Origin Energy and Maritime Constructions to take up the proposed allotments.

### **Business at risk in island carve up**

CONCERN: Adventure Kayaking SA owner Phil Doddridge. (PHOTO)

From: *The Portside Messenger* 19 May 2010, 10:00am by Heather Kennett

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/business-at-risk-in-carve-up/>

EVEN the slightest damage to Torrens Island’s fragile ecosystem because of industrial development could put at risk a thriving Port tourism business, its owner Phil Doddridge says.

Mr Doddridge said his company Adventure Kayaking SA could be crippled if the State Government goes ahead with its plan to allow industry to move into seven new allotments on the island.

“My business is about taking people to a unique, beautiful and unknown part of Adelaide,” he said.

“It is very closely related to the beauty of the natural environment, the health of the dolphin population and the bird and marine life.” He said any dredging in the main channel would directly impact his livelihood.

“Dredging will release toxins and sediment that will cloud the river, which would also have an unknown impact on the dolphin population and will be unsightly and stinky for tourists.”

He urged the State Government to value tourism as much as other business sectors.

“What we’ve got a Torrens Island is a very unique and valuable environment it shouldn’t be exploited.”



## MLC joins war on Torrens Island land carve-up

From: *The Portside Messenger* 09 June 2010, 02:09pm by Heather Kennett  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/torrens-island-land-sale-action/>

AN ATTEMPT to halt the proposed carve up of Torrens Island for industry is set to go before State Parliament this month.

Independent MLC Ann Bressington intends to introduce a motion into the Upper House when it resumes on June 23, calling on the State Government to reconsider selling off unused land on Torrens Island for industrial redevelopment.

Labelling the proposal a “blatant cash grab”, Ms Bressington called on the government to undertake community consultation before proceeding with the contentious plan.

“It is clear the government has not sufficiently consulted the local community and those who care for the health of the Port River,” she said.

“Port Adelaide is a central part of the state’s tourism industry and the Quarantine Station, which is included in the proposal, has great potential to become one of the main attractions.”

Under a plan lodged with the Development Assessment Commission earlier this year, the government would subdivide 48ha of vacant Crown Land. The land includes the State Heritage-listed former Quarantine Station, to create seven new allotments.

Maritime Constructions, Origin Energy and the SA Research and Development Institute are already earmarked to take up some of the allotments if the application is approved.

The plan has received widespread condemnation from tourism, environment and heritage groups, which fear the redevelopment would impact on the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.

“Land to the north of the Quarantine Station is in pristine condition and relied upon by birds and rare species of flora, including the protected mangroves which (are) a breeding ground for fish stocks,” said Ms Bressington.

“To approve this decision prior to (consultation) would further prove that the State Government is still not reconnecting with the community as it promised.

“(When) Parliament resumes, I will be moving a motion calling upon the government to abandon this blatant cash grab.”

## Historic quarantine station on Foley’s map

Kevin Foley (PHOTO)  
From: *The Portside Messenger* 23 June 2010, 02:01pm by Heather Kennett  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/historic-quarantine-station-on-mp-s-map/>

THE historic Quarantine Station would be spared from industrial redevelopment, under a plan presented to Port MP Kevin Foley by a local tourism operator.

Mr Foley was given a tour of the State Heritage-listed precinct at Torrens Island last month by Port River Dolphin Cruises owner Chris Mitchell, aimed at highlighting the area’s tourism potential and sensitive ecology.

Under a plan lodged with the Development Assessment Commission earlier this year, the government plans to subdivide 48ha of vacant Crown Land for industrial development, including the Quarantine Station site.

It features an 1870s prefabricated timber cottage, the only survivor of the original 30 which existed, as well as two jetties, a cemetery and mortuary.

Mr Mitchell said he hoped the Foley visit might result in the State Government removing the Quarantine Station from the application.

“I do appreciate (Mr Foley) took the time to come out and have a look first-hand ... I think he was pretty receptive,” he said.

“The station is not the sort of thing you can replace or get back once it’s gone it’s gone and we’ve already lost a lot of heritage, we don’t need to lose everything.”

Mr Mitchell said the station was part of an allotment offered to Maritime Constructions, which needs a waterfront site for its vessels and dredging equipment after the company was forced from its former Port base to make way for the waterfront redevelopment more than two years ago.

“If approved, Maritime Constructions will be responsible for the maintenance of these buildings, which is fine but that also means it won’t allow any public access for tourism purposes.”

Mr Mitchell said the government should instead consider allowing the company to take up vacant land at Point Stanvac.

“There seems to be plenty of land down there, there would be no need for dredging or to locate industry among the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.”

Mr Foley said while he enjoyed the visit, the matter was still being considered.

“Chris Mitchell put forward a strong and compelling case but ultimately the decision will be a matter for the State Government,” he said.

## **Deserted island now a heritage risk**

CONCERNED: National Trust of SA president David Beaumont at Torrens Island yesterday.

By: TIM LLOYD

From: *The Advertiser*, 3 July 2010

IT is more than seven square kilometres of mostly vacant seaside land, just 15km from the centre of Adelaide, and is rapidly becoming disputed territory.

The uninhabited Torrens Island on the Port River has been included in the National Trust's 2010 Heritage@Risk list released today.

The National Trust said it was most concerned about the State Heritage-listed quarantine station on the island, but also its pristine natural heritage of mangrove swamps and the dolphin sanctuary in surrounding waters.

National Trust of SA president Mr David Beaumont said yesterday proposals to subdivide and develop the island would conflict with its natural and built heritage.

Heritage@Risk highlights SA heritage places at risk, including the Adelaide Oval scoreboard, Union Hall, Burra Monster Mine Reserve, Murray Bridge wharves and railyards and Glenside Hospital's campus nurses' home.

The River Murray, Lower Lakes and Coorong remain at the top of the Heritage@Risk, as they were in 2009.

## **10 new sites on Trust's risk register**

... at Torrens Island, the state heritage-listed Quarantine Station (pictured below), mangroves and the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary in the surrounding waters have been put onto the Heritage @Risk list because of Treasurer Kevin Foley's plan to subdivide the island as an industrial park.

... Torrens Island is "unincorporated land" that is not in a council area. It is owned by Treasury and the responsibility of Kevin Foley.

## **(Torrens) Isle of the unknown**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 8 September 2010, 12:00pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/isle-of-the-unknown/>

A DECISION on the industrial carve-up of Torrens Island is on hold while the State Government drags its heels in providing information to the Development Assessment Commission.

The DAC has granted a three-month extension until November 18 for the Government to give more details on its plan, which the DAC had expected to assess in April.

Under the plan, 48ha of unused Crown land at the island's northern end would be divided into six new allotments for industrial use.

The proposal has been widely criticised by environmental and heritage groups and tourism operators for threatening the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary, sand dunes and the mangrove ecosystem.

Port River Dolphin Cruises owner Chris Mitchell hoped the delay was because the Government was “having a serious think” about scrapping the plan.

But he suspected it was more about putting one “hot potato” political issue on the backburner while it dealt with others, such as the Port Stanvac desalination plant.

A spokeswoman for Treasurer Kevin Foley, whose department submitted the subdivision application, said the DAC wanted more information on the “proposed future uses of the land”, without specifying.

Aaron Machado, head of the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation, said the Government had been “deceiving and arrogant” from the start by trying to keep the plan under wraps.

“It’s environmental terrorism through and through.”

## **Torrens Island rescue bid knockback**

Wrong priorities ... National Trust of SA president David Beaumont on the Torrens Island quarantine station's jetty.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 22 Sep 10 @ 12:00pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/torrens-island-bid-knockback/>

WHILE Victoria’s historic quarantine station is being transformed into a thriving tourist attraction, the Torrens Island station could soon be swamped by industrial development. A bid by independent MLC Ann Bressington to stop the carve-up was last week rejected by both major parties.

The vote was a blow to tourism operators and heritage and environment groups fighting the State Government’s plan to develop 48ha of Crown Land on the island around the Quarantine Station site.

In contrast, the Victorian Government has incorporated the historic Nepean Point Quarantine Station into a national park, near Portsea on the Mornington Peninsula, opening it to the public last December.

A masterplan including a range of accommodation options for tourists and conferences is being finalised.

Point Nepean National Park marketing officer Belinda Bocson said visitor numbers had risen sharply since park fees were abolished in July, ahead of an expected boom this summer.

“It’ll be a major attraction for the whole peninsula,” she said.

Victorians had fought federal government plans in the early 2000s to sell off the station land for housing, she said.

SA National Trust president David Beaumont said the Torrens Island station also had great tourism potential, but would “lose its context” and appeal if surrounded by industry.

“The quarantine station would end up being a confined little residual relic,” he said.

The heritage-listed station is on a planned allotment understood to have been offered to Maritime Constructions, which needs a new waterfront site for its vessels and dredging equipment.

It has a range of buildings including a bath house, doctor’s house, nurses’ quarters, isolation units, laundry, morgue and cemetery.

In July, the National Trust placed the station on its Heritage At Risk register, saying the planned subdivision could jeopardise public access to the station’s buildings and jetties.

A spokesman for Tourism Minister John Rau said Mr Rau and the SA Tourism Commission were happy to meet with private operators who had plans to develop new ventures.

### ***Have your say***

#### **Comments on this story**

***Elaine Baskett writes:***

***Posted on 23 Sep 10 at 01:40pm***

As a child, born in Pt Adelaide area in 1934, I spent much of my adventurous childhood playing among the marshes and tidal flats along the Port River. Over the river spanned a pipeline which we children used to crawl

across to get over to Torrens Island and swim in the tidal pools where the stingrays bred. What a wonderful childhood it was - It is a great pity that some members of this Labor Stae Govenment do not have such memories to stimulate their imagination. How dull and boring they are to only see cash instead of having vision for the Port of Adelaide.

*Great Aunty writes:*

*Posted on 22 Sep 10 at 05:55pm*

This is history lost forever if it is allowed to be developed for commercial business. We have the jewell in the crown, the Port River dolphins and the proposed Cruickshanks cnr with the Clipper coming from Scotland we should be preserving this and take a leaf out of our Victorian neighbours. The Port is in limbo, needs some injection to boost the tourists. But then our member for Port Adelaide is missing in action, he only thinks about commercial dollars, shame on you Mr Foley

### **Cloud hangs over Torrens Island**

Aaron Machado is concerned Torrens Island will still be developed.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 1 Dec 10 @ 03:10pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/cloud-hangs-over-torrens-island/>

A BID to carve up Torrens Island for industrial development has been withdrawn by the State Government.

But opponents of developing the island say the reprieve may only be temporary, fearing the move is a prelude to the government ramming through its plan without public consultation.

Under the withdrawn plan, the government aimed to subdivide 48ha of unused Crown land into allotments for industrial use, including a biodiesel plant and room for a marine construction company.

According to a copy of the plan, uncovered by Independent MLC Ann Bressington, it would involve the dredging of pristine mangrove habitat, the removal of a heritage-listed jetty and the destruction of marshland across the front of the island's historic quarantine station.

The proposal has been widely criticised by environmental and heritage groups and tourism operators for threatening the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary, the mangrove ecosystem and bird habitats, as well as access to the quarantine station.

The government last month transferred responsibility for the land from Treasury to the Infrastructure Department.

But Ms Bressington said the transfer did not require withdrawing the plan from the Development Assessment Commission.

Ms Bressington suspected the real reason was the government planned to reapply for both subdivision and development approvals on behalf of private operators, in order to deny the community the right to object.

"Because the government is subject to different rules under the Development Act, this will effectively deny those who seek to preserve the natural habitat and heritage of the quarantine station the opportunity to voice their concerns and challenge the decisions made," she said.

Aaron Machado, head of the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation, said he did not believe the government had abandoned its plan and it was seeking ways to avoid public scrutiny for developing the island.

The State Government is not revealing why it withdrew its application to subdivide land for industrial use on Torrens Island.

Nor will it say what it now has planned.

The Development Assessment Commission confirmed the subdivision application had been withdrawn on November 15 and Treasurer Kevin Foley had decided to transfer the land to the Infrastructure Department.

In the Legislative Council last week, Planning Minister Paul Holloway said it was a "historical accident" from the privatisation of electricity in the 1990s that the land was left with Treasury, and it was more appropriately in the hands of Infrastructure Minister Pat Conlon. He said he would seek a response from Mr Conlon "as to what current plans, if any, the government is considering in relation to the future of this land".

A spokesman for Mr Conlon said: "The State Government is presently reviewing governance arrangements for

Torrens Island and no decisions are expected to be made in the short term.”

The DAC had granted a three month extension to the subdivision application until November 18 for the government to give more detail on its plan, which the commission had originally expected to assess in April.

## **Meet the Port's wildlife warrior**

Alan Machado has been recognised for his outstanding service protecting wildlife.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 8 Dec 10 @ 01:30pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/a-life-less-ordinary-1/>

ALMOST a decade ago, Aaron Machado injured himself unplugging a dodgy power cord, leading to a week in hospital and years of excruciating physiotherapy on his right hand.

Yet the injury indirectly led to the expansion and success of his wildlife rescue organisation - ironically with the help of major power companies.

During his rehabilitation, Mr Machado did some voluntary work at a community legal service, where someone asked him why he was there instead of doing paperwork for his own organisation, Project Dolphin Safe (now the Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation).

Mr Machado realised that by recording all the details of his animal rescue work, he would be in a much stronger position to lobby for government grants and corporate sponsors.

“I don’t really like electricity . . . but as much as I hate to say it, that ‘electrocution’ was a stepping stone,” he says.

Then Torrens Island Power Station operator TRUenergy was so impressed with Mr Machado when he approached them for help that it gifted him a building for a rescue centre on the island in 2004, as well as a maintenance job with flexible hours so he could race off to tend to injured wildlife at a moment’s notice.

Current power station owner AGL is a major sponsor of AMWRRO, which rescues hundreds of seabirds, turtles, and seals each year. In recognition of his extraordinary devotion to native wildlife, Mr Machado won the Leadership and Innovation Award in the 2010 Community Achievement Awards, sponsored by Messenger Community News, last month.

The Semaphore resident, 31, is at the rescue centre at 6am each day, back in every break he can grab during his work day at the power station, then rarely out before 10pm.

“Anything under 100 hours a week I can manage,” he says.

“If it gets more than that I get a bit stressed.

“No one else is going to do it and it needs to be done.”

When the Portside Messenger visits the centre last week, Mr Machado is gently pushing a young seal into a pool with a plastic tub to teach him to catch his own fish rather than be fed by hand.

Mr Machado drove all the way to Port Pirie to collect the year-old pup, who was just 5.7kg when he was found on the beach, at least 10kg underweight for his age.

The temptation is to bond with the animals, he says, but he won’t allow himself to because it hinders their chances of survival when released.

Mr Machado is just as devoted to the environment and heritage of the island, recently offering to buy 7ha from the State Government to stop it building a biofuel test plant around an historic graveyard.

## **Tour reveals history under threat**

TWO conclusions stood out from touring the historic Torrens Island quarantine station.

Firstly, that it’s a crucial part of our state’s history worth preserving and opening to the public.

Secondly, that it won’t be too long before it’s beyond saving.

Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation founder Aaron Machado showed the Portside Messenger around the 19th century-built station, where more than 200 immigrants were housed at a time by 1909.

Immigrants reportedly were well treated there, playing tennis, cricket, cards and organising social gatherings.



Wandering through the grand old station master's house, staring up at the enormous boiler tower, or peering into the tiny, bee-infested morgue, it's not hard to conjure images of what life here might have been like.

Yet Mr Machado says the station is being left to decay and, worse, is being damaged by regular police and military exercises, and persistent vandalism.

In the morgue changerooms, a large hole in an asbestos wall has been crudely taped over.

Wooden crosses from the graveyard, repeatedly knocked over by vandals, have to be locked away in the old linen store, while fireplaces have been ripped out of the station's master's house.

The station's heritage brick boat ramp was unwittingly torn up by a group of young offenders doing community service.

"They allow so much to happen to the place without even knowing it's happening," Mr Machado says despairingly, making a plea for the government to commit to a restoration program before it's too late.

## **Kaurna remains laid to rest on island**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 15 Dec 10 @ 11:00am by Tim Williams  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/remains-laid-to-rest/>

THE remains of almost 70 Kaurna people from the Port area have been reburied on Torrens Island, sparking fresh calls to preserve the island from industrial development.

The remains, held by the SA Museum in a warehouse at Netley, were transferred on Saturday, December 11, to a site on conservation land north of the island's heritage quarantine station.

The move came after years of research and lobbying by Kaurna elders.

Elder Jeffrey Newchurch said the remains were from Kaurna burial grounds that stretched from Dry Creek to Royal Park to the Le Fevre Peninsula, and they had been unearthed following white settlement.

Some were hundreds, possibly even thousands, of years old, he said.

"This is a proud moment for the Kaurna people," he said..

"Our ancestors will finally be home again.

"It is wrong that Kaurna remains are held in museums and other places."

He praised the SA Museum and the Department of Environment and Heritage for their co-operation, and Torrens Island Power Station owner AGL for helping fund the reburial.

However, he was concerned at State Government plans for industrial development on the island, including a pilot biofuel plant just south of the new burial ground.

The government last month withdrew its application to the Development Assessment Commission for subdivision of 48ha of land for industrial use.

Heritage and environmental campaigners fear the Government will reapply for both subdivision and development approvals on behalf of private operators in order to bypass public consultation.

## **Preserve history**

Letter to the Editor  
*Portside Messenger*  
30 March 2011

ON Thursday evening on March 17, I joined a group of 40 residents to inspect the remaining facilities at the Torrens Island Quarantine Station arranged by the Port Adelaide Enfield Council on behalf of the Port Adelaide Environment Forum. I have been aware of the facility virtually all my life and that it was a restricted access area to the general public from the early days of the State until approximately 1960, where ships arriving from

overseas with passengers who had taken ill in transit were diverted to the Quarantine Station to receive medical attention and recover before being released.

The facilities were extensive and built to a very high standard and designed to attend specifically to the needs of immigrants requiring medical attention and isolation. To see the condition of the facility today is beyond comprehension.

The Quarantine Station is no longer required due to today's way of moving people and such amazing advances in medical science. However, to let such a significant component of our history be subjected to such an attitude of indifference and a blatant waste at very high cost of taxpayers money appalled everyone in the group.

This facility should be fully restored, re-established and promoted as an important historical tourism feature and an interesting feature of Port Adelaide's tourism highlights.

Land access would not be able due to having to reach the Quarantine Station via the Torrens Island Power Station which is closed to the public. But the ferries could use the jetty at the Quarantine Station to access the site and conduct tours adding further public interest to their river tours.

I would be surprised if there were many Adelaide people who even knew of the existence of the Quarantine Station and the role it played in the, state's early settlement years. We must not stand by and see this facility remain as it is.

Already so much of Port Adelaide's priceless history has been removed and I hope enough of our state general public feel strongly enough about the Quarantine Station to save it.

GRAHAM REES  
Port Adelaide

### **Torrens Island industry go-ahead**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 27 May 11 @ 01:06pm by Tim Williams  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/torrens-island-industry-go-ahead/>

THE State Government will press ahead with its plans for industrial development on Torrens Island.

The government will lease 43.6 ha to industrial users including Origin Energy, to expand its electricity generation plant, administration and control buildings and carpark.

Other proposed lessees are Maritime Constructions, for storing vessels and machinery, and the SA Research and Development Institute.

The decision comes after the government withdrew an application for subdivision of the same land late last year.

At the time, environmental and heritage groups who were concerned about the impact on dolphins, mangroves, and the historic quarantine station feared the government would try another tack to press ahead with its plans.

The government says it has decided to lease the land, rather than subdivide for sale, to retain control over its future use.

Read next week's *Portside Messenger* for full details and community reaction.

### **Torrens Island blockade pledge**

Environmentalism Aaron Machado says Torrens Island is in jeopardy from development.  
From: *The Portside Messenger*, 1 Jun 11 @ 02:26pm by Tim Williams  
<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/torrens-island-blockade-pledge/>

WILDLIFE warrior Aaron Machado is vowing to blockade Torrens Island after the State Government confirmed it will press ahead with plans for industrial development.

The government has applied to the Development Assessment Commission to subdivide more than 43ha of the island to lease to industrial users.

The move, which has renewed concerns about the impact on dolphins, mangroves and the future of the historic quarantine station, comes after the government withdrew an application for subdivision of the same land late last year.

The leasing arrangement would allow marine company Maritime Constructions to store vessels and machinery, and the South Australian Research and Development Institute to go ahead with a pilot biofuel plant.

Origin Energy would extend its present site with new buildings and a carpark, with a view to later expanding its existing power generation plant.

Mr Machado, who runs his wildlife rescue organisation from Torrens Island, said he would blockade the road with concrete blocks beyond AGL's power plant to stop the development.

"What doesn't this government understand?" Mr Machado said.

"You turn this into a little industrial park, then you kill this island.

"This (Port) river is polluted enough.

"The island itself is now in jeopardy.

"There will be protests."

Mr Machado said the development would require the dredging and destruction of mangroves and marshland.

Bolivar would be a more appropriate place for a biofuel plant, which required nutrient-rich water, he said.

Tim Walsh, from the Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group, said community fears the government would re-apply to the DAC had been confirmed.

"We again have a process where there's no public input and there's still no plan for conservation of the island," he said.

Independent MLC Ann Bressington, who has campaigned against industrial development of the island, had previously raised concerns the government would re-apply for both subdivision and development approvals on behalf of industry, bypassing environmental scrutiny.

She was pleased the lessees would have to make their own applications for their proposed uses, including environmental statements.

"At the end of the day this was always going to happen, but they (the government) have made some concessions," she said.

A spokesman for the Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Department said: "Each lease will require lessees to obtain any relevant approvals for proposed uses, including any environmental assessments."

He said the quarantine station would be "retained for tourism purposes" and "any lease will protect the future (tourism) opportunities of the quarantine station".

The Government had decided to keep ownership and lease the land, rather than subdivide it for sale, "to provide greater control over future use of Torrens Island".

In a letter to MLC Ann Bressington, Infrastructure Minister Pat Conlon said the proposed subdivision would be less than 5 per cent of the island "and does not form part of the adjoining Torrens Island Conservation Park".

"The State Government remains committed to protecting the dolphins and the marine life in the Port River Estuary and Barker Inlet," Mr Conlon wrote.

## **Torrens Island history under threat**

CONCERN: Andrew Winkler, of the Port's National Trust branch, fears for the future of Torrens Island.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 8 Jun 11 @ 03:22pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/island-history-under-threat/>

THE increasing popularity of Torrens Island tours underlines the importance of preserving the historic quarantine station and its surrounds, the National Trust says.

Andrew Winkler, a committee member of the Port's National Trust branch, ran a tour in March, as did the Port Adelaide Environment Forum in April and the Maritime Museum last month for History Week.

“I can confirm that there is substantial community interest in the fate of this important state heritage-listed site,” Mr Winkler said.

“Given this level of community interest, it is very disappointing to hear the State Government is continuing with its planned lease of the TIQS (quarantine station) historic precinct to Maritime Constructions, especially as it seems that this is not the company’s preferred site.

“There is existing unused wharf frontage on the peninsula side of the Port River close to the company’s centre of operations on Mersey Rd at Osborne.

“If the site is leased to industry, can the (Infrastructure) Minister’s (Pat Conlon) bland assurances about allowing tourism access and no demolition carry any weight?”

Mr Winkler expressed concern for the future of the station’s historic jetty and its mortuary and cemetery, which are both within land proposed to be leased to the SA Research and Development Institute for a biofuel plant.

He also feared for the area’s mangroves if dredging was done to accommodate Maritime Constructions’ vessels.

“Loss of these features will rob the site of much of its potential for a meaningful visitor experience, and the peaceful ambience is already impacted by noise pollution from the nearby power station,” Mr Winkler said.

“Some of the buildings have been damaged by past use for STAR Force training exercises; and on the PoANT (National Trust) visit we found abundant evidence left by an army exercise involving around 100 soldiers, which had taken place a couple of days before.

“Other buildings have suffered from neglect, and the jetty has been badly damaged by arson which occurred during a juvenile offenders rehabilitation program based at the site.”

## **Substantial Interest**

Letter to the Editor  
*Portside Messenger*  
8 June 2011

Having conducted a tour of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station (TIQS) on April 17 on behalf of the Port of Adelaide Branch of the National Trust, I can confirm that there is substantial community interest in the fate of this important state heritage-listed site.

The PoANT tour followed an earlier tour of the site by the Port Adelaide Environment Forum in March, and more recently the Maritime Museum has run a successful series of tours as part of its History Week activities.

A study into the tourism potential of the Quarantine Station is presently being undertaken through UniSA.

Given this level of community interest, it is very disappointing to hear that the State Government is continuing with its planned lease of the TIQS historic precinct to Maritime Constructions, especially as it seems that this is not the company’s preferred site, as there is existing unused wharf frontage on the Peninsula side of the Port River close to the company’s centre of operations on Mersey Road at Osborne.

A recent letter from Minister Conlon (to whose portfolio the responsibility for TIQS has recently been transferred) states that access to the TIQS buildings will be allowed for tourism purposes, and that they will not be demolished.

No mention is made of the TIQS historic jetty with its hand-cranked crane, which is likely to be removed by Maritime Constructions, or the dredging of the adjacent mangroves, if the company is to moor its vessels along the seawall to load and unload heavy machinery.

The heritage-listed jetty, where the people to be quarantined were disembarked, is an integral part of the history of the site.

Likewise the heritage-listed mortuary and cemetery which lie outside the heritage precinct and in the area to be leased to SARDI for ponds for its algae-to-biodiesel pilot project.

Loss of these features will rob the site of much of its potential for a meaningful visitor experience, and the peaceful ambience is already impacted by noise pollution from the nearby Quarantine Power Station.

Some of the buildings have been damaged by past use for STAR force training exercises; and on the PoANT visit we found abundant evidence left by an Army exercise involving around 100 soldiers, which had taken place a couple of days before.

Other buildings have suffered from neglect, and the jetty has been badly damaged by arson which occurred during a juvenile offenders rehabilitation program based at the site.

If the site is leased to industry, can the Minister's bland assurances about allowing tourism access and no demolition carry any weight?

Andrew Winkler,  
Committee member,  
Port of Adelaide Branch of the National Trust of SA

### **Assessment the key to any development**

From: *The Portside Messenger* 8 Jun 11 @ 01:57pm by Tim Williams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/assessment-the-key-to-any-development/>

ENVIRONMENTAL impact will be considered in assessing any proposed industrial use of Torrens Island, the State Government says.

A spokesman for the Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Department said: "Each lease will require lessees to obtain any relevant approvals for proposed uses, including any environmental assessments."

He said the quarantine station would be "retained for tourism purposes" and "any lease will protect the future (tourism) opportunities of the quarantine station".

The Government had decided to keep ownership and lease the land, rather than subdivide it for sale, "to provide greater control over future use of Torrens Island".

In a letter to MLC Ann Bressington, Infrastructure Minister Pat Conlon said the proposed subdivision would be less than 5 per cent of the island "and does not form part of the adjoining Torrens Island Conservation Park". "The State Government remains committed to protecting the dolphins and the marine life in the Port River Estuary and Barker Inlet," Mr Conlon wrote.

### **Torrens Island centre not worth saving**

Former AVIAN poultry centre manager, Ian White says the Government's plans are unrealistic.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 14 Jul 11 @ 11:00am by Michelle Etheridge

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/torrens-island-centre-not-worth-saving/>

A MAN who lived at the historic Torrens Island quarantine station for 12 years does not believe it is worth saving.

Ian White ran the AVIAN poultry centre - the last quarantine function of the island after the animal centre closed in the mid-'90s - until 2008.

Mr White says the push by environment and heritage campaigners to stop the State Government's plans for industrial development around the station, and turn it into a tourist attraction, is unrealistic.

For starters, he says the station's old jetty is too run down to land tourist boats.

"The jetty's no good, it's too dangerous," Mr White says.

"And I don't think the (AGL) power station would allow busload after busload of people to come through there.



## **Torrens Island keep off call**

HERITAGE: Aaron Machado at Torrens Island.

From: *The Portside Messenger* 31 Aug 11 @ 08:00am by Kara Adams

<http://portside-messenger.whereilive.com.au/news/story/please-keep-off/>

HERITAGE campaigners are angry at the condition of Torrens Island's historic quarantine station, saying police exercises have continued to take place despite assurances they would stop.

Australian Marine Wildlife Research and Rescue Organisation founder Aaron Machado said he had seen police training on the site four times since June.

This was despite the State Government announcing in June the drills would stop after reports of extensive damage to the historical site.

"It's appalling for the government to let this go on," Mr Machado said.

Holes have been kicked in walls and doors, fireplaces ripped out and bullet shells left on the ground, he said.

"It's a big playground for them."

President of National Trust of SA David Beaumont said he was shocked at the claims.

"I cannot understand how the activities are respecting the site's heritage," Mr Beaumont said.

"It's incompatible with the area's heritage value."

Mr Machado said the site resembled a war zone.

"Weeds are overgrown and the buildings are decrepid," he said.

As reported by the Portside Messenger in June, the Treasury Department is handing over the responsibility for the island to the Transport Department.

In June, a Transport Department spokeswoman said that, other than Scout and Department for Families licences on the site, no other exercises would be permitted once control was handed over.

But this week a spokeswoman said the Transport Department still had not taken over responsibility for the island, and could not provide a timeframe for when this would happen.

A government spokesman said four STAR Operations exercises there in the past six weeks were approved by Treasury.

"This training was ... practising the saving of lives while under fire by an offender," he said.

## 12. Extracts from Hansard – debate on Anne Bressington's motion

Legislative Council, 30 June 2010

[http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010\\_06\\_30&c=42](http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010_06_30&c=42)

### TORRENS ISLAND QUARANTINE STATION

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (17:02):** I seek leave to move Notice of Motion: Private Business No. 6 in an amended form.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON:** I move:

That this council calls on—

1. The Minister for Environment and Conservation to—

- (a) conserve the heritage value of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and the remaining pristine environment on the northern end of Torrens Island by taking steps to prevent any further industrial development of the site s ;
- (b) take steps to restore the Torrens Island Quarantine Station building s on the South Australian Heritage Register and ensure sufficient funds are available to do so;
- (c) engage in negotiations with the Treasurer with the objective being for the Department of Environment and Heritage to take control of the northern end of Torrens Island, including the site of the former quarantine station, from the Generation Lessor Corporation;
- (d) take steps to provide tourist access to the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and surrounding historical sites and engage in consultation with all relevant parties with a view to facilitating regulated tourism; and

2. The Treasurer to—

- (a) release details of the application before the Development Assessment Commission and of the proposed commercial uses of the proposed allotments; and
- (b) cease moves to further develop Torrens Island and cease negotiations with commercial parties seeking to do so.

I move this motion today in response to concerns raised by constituents about the proposed development of Torrens Island. As some members may be aware, for some time there have been rumours to open up Torrens Island for industrial development. Understandably, this has led to many constituents and interest groups claiming that the unique heritage value of the former Torrens Island Quarantine Station and the pristine environment at the northern end of the island will be destroyed.

While details of the proposed development are at this stage sketchy, it is my understanding that an application by the South Australian Government Financing Authority (a division of Treasury) is before the Development Assessment Commission to subdivide a large section on the northern end of Torrens Island.

It is my fear, and that of numerous stakeholders such as the National Trust of South Australia, the Port Adelaide Historical Society, the National Conservation Society of South Australia, and others, that this is the first step towards the further development of Torrens Island. It is my understanding that Torrens Island, as it falls outside the boundary of the Port Adelaide Enfield Council, is currently under the control of the Generation Lessor Corporation, an agency of Treasury. This would explain why the Treasurer has been the one negotiating with Maritime Constructions and other commercial parties for access to the land.

I have been able to procure a copy of the proposed plan of division submitted to the Development Assessment Commission which essentially details the allotments to be created if approval is granted. Of concern, it would appear that the two areas of significance—the Torrens Island Quarantine Station, which is to become allotment 205, and the northern end of the island which is largely untouched and in pristine condition—are both going to be victims of the carve up.

As I said, details are sketchy, but apparently allotment 205 is earmarked for Maritime Constructions, a maritime infrastructure contractor currently located at docks 1 and 2 in inner Port Adelaide. If allowed, this will entail the dredging of 150 metres of pristine grey mangrove habitat, the removal of the heritage listed jetty (on which new migrants once disembarked) and the destruction of tidal low and mid-marsh zones across the front of the quarantine station. Although I have been unable to confirm it, looking at maps of the island I also suspect that some of the buildings of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station, which are heritage listed, are also under threat.

While greatly under-appreciated, the Torrens Island Quarantine Station moved to its current location in 1909 and is a significant part of this state's history. Reflecting the widespread fear of smallpox and other infectious diseases, all new arrivals to South Australia were required to disembark and reside on Torrens Island until they had been medically

cleared. While I am sure that new arrivals were keen to begin their new lives as quickly as possible, the necessity of being quarantined was reportedly generally accepted and the new arrivals found relief in the comforts not available at sea, such as laundry and bathing facilities.

As mentioned, the quarantine station is heritage listed and has been since 21 October 1993. For the benefit of members, I will read into *Hansard* the Quarantine Station Statement of Heritage Value found on the South Australian Heritage Register. It states:

Torrens Island has been the site of the continuous practice of animal quarantine since the early 1850s. Animal quarantine was moved to the present site in 1909 from the south end of the island.

The station also represents South Australia's origins as a separate colony and records the development of medical practices in controlling infectious diseases as related to the relevant parliamentary acts for quarantine in South Australia and the commonwealth, which assumed responsibility after Federation.

The site of the first Quarantine Station, now occupied by a power station, was used as an internment camp during the First World War, but there are no obvious remains of those activities.

The complex includes an 1870s prefabricated timber cottage, the only survivor of the original 30, which is quite rare.

The buildings on the site, the bulk of which are still very redeemable, are of extreme importance to our history. Some of the buildings of note in the quarantine station are Refshauge House, which was the home of the station doctor and the administration office. Other buildings on the site include the hospital, linen store, nurses' quarters, morgue and general living quarters.

Constituents are also concerned that the vital section of pristine and ecologically important land on the northern end of Torrens Island, which will become allotment 206, will be lost to development. I have been informed that this fear is well founded, as it is apparently the intention of the Department of Primary Industries and Resources to use this land for a biodiesel prototype.

While again few details have been released publicly, it is my understanding that the biodiesel plant is of a type that has already been trialled and found not to be commercially viable in the United States. However, if the plan is to proceed, I am reliably informed that alternative sites such as Bolívar would be not only suitable but ideal. Considering the pristine environment that would be lost if it were to proceed on Torrens Island, why consideration has not been given to this alternative site is beyond me.

While the environment in the more southern areas of Torrens Island has been significantly impacted on by humans over the years, the northern end of the island has largely remained untouched. As such, it has become a safe haven for many types of local and migratory birds, such as the Pacific gull and sooty shearwater, which use this area during their long journey to and from Japan. It is also a refuge to many species of local birds, seabirds and wildlife varieties because of its isolated position on the island. Many species, such as banded stilts, Australian white ducks, sooty oyster catchers and sandpipers rely on this habitat for foraging and breeding. It is my understanding that 11 of the sea and shore birds that frequent the area are registered under international treaties.

As an intertidal waterway, the area also supports life forms that rely on sand marsh and saltbush colonies, including microorganisms and macroinvertebrates. This section is also one of the very few areas of untouched coastline in the Port River estuary, and supports many rare plant varieties, and it is heavily clad with mangroves, which are of extreme importance for local fish stocks. These in turn support the growing Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin population, which also uses this area as a vital training tool to teach young dolphins how to catch and herd fish for their survival.

This section of the island is also the site of the heritage listed cemetery. We are aware that some of those buried there include Mr Alexander Still, Mr Robert Earnshaw and Mr L. Dickson, who died in the quarantine station between 1892 and 1919. I am also led to believe that a World War I digger is buried there as well. The sheer ecological and historic value of this northern end of Torrens Island alone is reason enough not to develop the area further. There are so many other areas of coastline that could be used for a development of this nature without destroying the flora, fauna and the historical value on offer.

When combined with the fact the heritage value of the quarantine station is also under threat, I hope it becomes clear to all in here, as it did to me, that we simply cannot allow this to happen. I was fortunate enough to visit Torrens Island recently with Mr Aaron Machado, President of the Australian Marine Wildlife Research & Rescue Organisation Inc., and I assure honourable members it is well worth the effort. From the moment one arrives, it is clear that the quarantine station and its surrounds are something special and worth protecting. If there is sufficient interest from members, I am willing to organise a group tour of Torrens Island with Mr Machado, which is likely to be after the public meeting I am hosting on this issue in the Balcony Room on 6 July.

Mr Machado has long campaigned for the protection of the northern end of Torrens Island and has even offered to purchase proposed allotment 206, not for development but to preserve it in its current pristine condition. However, while I was fortunate enough to visit Torrens Island, not all are presently able to enjoy what I have, as access to the public is currently restricted due to having to pass through the power station to gain access to Torrens Island. While this

has in part spared Torrens Island from the illegal dumping, familiar to Garden Island, and the quarantine station from vandalism, it has also denied the public the ability to appreciate the unique heritage and environment on offer.

While restricting access may have helped preserve the land, one of the great tragedies of restricting access to Torrens Island and, in particular, to the quarantine station is that, now, with development on the cards, only but the lucky few who have been able to visit the site are aware of the heritage value under threat. This point was captured in a letter from Tim Walsh, a member of the Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group, to the Chief Executive of the Department of Planning and Local Government and relevant ministers, in which he states:

...such scrutiny [of the proposed development] would require reasonable access to the island, or organised tours that allow for public appreciation as to what is at stake in developing Torrens Island.

The other great tragedy, as I see it, is the failure to explore the tourist potential for Torrens Island, both for ecotourism and for tours of the quarantine station. As mentioned, the northern end of Torrens Island is a pristine habitat for numerous varieties of rare and migratory birds and a rare example of sand dune ecology, which, provided it was done responsibly, could be a major drawcard.

Additionally, the quarantine station with its rich history in the lives of our ancestors could be restored and incorporated into existing tours of the Port River and would be a major drawcard for South Australia and the Port Adelaide region. Interest has been expressed by various tour operators over the years to have this site incorporated into their daily tours of the Port River; however, to date, it is yet to come to fruition.

On the other hand, in Victoria, the Port Nepean quarantine station has been fully restored and protected and is now available for public access. Tours of that site are popular and enable visitors to develop an understanding and connection with the station's historical role and value to the state. The fact that something similar is not available here, and never will be if the Treasurer is allowed to carve up Torrens Island for industry, is indeed a tragedy.

We simply cannot afford for this development to proceed. In the words of Aaron Machado, President of AMWRRO:

the Torrens Island environments that will be affected as a consequence of any development will be nothing short of environmental terrorism that would be allowed to proceed by a money hungry government that has no consideration for local and international environmental concerns.

I would repeat the same for the quarantine station.

I ask members to reflect on the pictures that we have seen on television of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The big concern is that the marshes and the mangroves there are at grave risk of never being able to be restored. We have the largest collection or spread of grey mangroves in the entire world in South Australia and the ecological benefit of those mangroves to our fishing stock and as a breeding ground is not able to be measured in dollar terms. We simply cannot allow this little-known island to be devastated.

I note that we have two press releases from premier Mike Rann today on environmental issues and one, of course, is nuclear waste. In a ministerial statement he said that a nuclear waste dump would jeopardise South Australia's clean green reputation and that we are prepared to fight again in the future if any government tries to put a nuclear waste dump in South Australia because, unlike the members opposite, we will always put the interests of the state above party. I would like to challenge the Premier to state publicly that the history of this state and the ecology of Torrens Island is not in the best interests of this state to be preserved.

We have the other ministerial statement of the war on locusts. A paragraph here states that, if left unchecked, there are wide ranging ramifications beyond the agricultural sector, including damage to football and cricket ovals, bowling greens, golf courses, parks and gardens. Putting this into perspective, if football and cricket ovals, bowling greens, golf courses, parks and gardens require attention and our protection, then I am sure that members here would agree that Torrens Island requires at least that amount of consideration.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins.

**Legislative Council, 21 July 2010**

[http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010\\_07\\_21&c=37](http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010_07_21&c=37)

## **TORRENS ISLAND QUARANTINE STATION**

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. A. Bressington:

That this council calls on—

1. The Minister for Environment and Conservation to—

- (a) conserve the heritage value of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and the remaining pristine environment on the northern end of Torrens Island by taking steps to prevent any further industrial development of these sites;
- (b) take steps to restore the Torrens Island Quarantine Station buildings on the South Australian Heritage Register and ensure sufficient funds are available to do so;
- (c) engage in negotiations with the Treasurer with the objective being for the Department of Environment and Heritage to take control of the northern end of Torrens Island, including the site of the former quarantine station, from the Generation Lessor Corporation;
- (d) take steps to provide tourist access to the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and surrounding historical sites and engage in consultation with all relevant parties with a view to facilitating regulated tourism; and

2. The Treasurer to—

- (a) release details of the application before the Development Assessment Commission and of the proposed commercial uses of the proposed allotments; and
- (b) cease moves to further develop Torrens Island and cease negotiations with commercial parties seeking to do so.

(Continued from 30 June 2010.)

**The Hon. M. PARNELL (20:37):** I rise briefly to support the motion that calls on the Minister for Environment and Conservation to take various steps. At the heart of the motion is a need for a more transparent process that has, as its primary objective, the protection of Torrens Island from inappropriate development.

I acknowledge the Hon. Ann Bressington for bringing this motion to the house and also for the very useful forum that she hosted in Parliament House last week. I am also grateful to members of the National Trust, who facilitated a tour that I took a fortnight ago of Torrens Island. Members would be aware that this issue has been locally controversial and has taken up a great deal of space in the pages of the *Portside Messenger*.

At its heart, the conflict is over the appropriate use of an area that is relatively undisturbed. Members might think it unusual for me to describe Torrens Island as relatively undisturbed because it has a massive power station there, but one of the ironies of sites where access is restricted is that, apart from the footprint of that particular power station, there is very little other visitation of the island and it is relatively undisturbed.

Part of Torrens Island is mangroves and sand dunes and it is in excellent condition. It is in excellent condition because it is behind a locked gate and very few people have access to it, which means that the usual human impacts that have so degraded the coastal environment are largely absent from Torrens Island.

The application that is before the Development Assessment Commission is an application for a subdivision. Subdivisions of themselves do not cause any impact on the environment. A subdivision is an exercise in drawing lines on a map, but the problem is that this is clearly not just an application for a subdivision but that it is effectively the precursor to a debate on what will happen to each of those blocks once they have been subdivided. The big fear is that industrial development, such as developments that have been moved out from the Inner Harbor as a result of the Newport Quays development will be located in amongst the native vegetation and the natural environment of Torrens Island.

The Hon. Ann Bressington's motion refers to the heritage values of the island and, if members have not had the chance to visit the old quarantine station, I suggest that they seek that opportunity, because it is really a remarkable place in South Australian history, a place where many early arrivals disembarked. Most of them got through that process; a number did not, and their graves are still there to be seen.

The government's position, as outlined by the local member, treasurer Foley, and other members of the government seems to be that, because there is a power station on the island, then it is open slather for industrial development. I agree with the Nature Conservation Society that that is not the right approach to take. In fact, the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia is quoted in the local Messenger newspaper as saying:

This is the last sand dune mangrove area remaining in the Port region, which makes it really significant.

That quote is from Georgina Mollison, the society's conservation ecologist. She goes on to say:

There is very little left of this type of ecosystem remaining, particularly in metropolitan Adelaide. From an ecological point of view it is a buffer for the Port River, and we need to maintain a buffer in that area to minimise the effects of industrial development.

Members would also appreciate that Torrens Island is in fact the intertidal area and, particularly, part of the Adelaide dolphin sanctuary. It begs the question: with the amount of development, both industrial and residential, occurring around and in some cases on top of the dolphin sanctuary: what is the point? What is the point of declaring a dolphin sanctuary if anything goes in terms of residential and, in this case, industrial development?



The honourable member's motion calls on the government to publish more details in relation to the proposal, and I would say that it is not good enough for the government to simply allow to be published on the Development Assessment Commission's website the bare bones of a subdivision application when clearly what people have a right to know and are interested in knowing is to which heavy industries the government proposes to sell or lease these blocks, once subdivided, on Torrens Island. We know, for example, that Heritage SA and the Native Vegetation Council have already made comment on the subdivision proposal, yet there is no easy access to their reports. The government should be open and honest with the people—not just of Port Adelaide but also the people of the state—because this heritage is of state significance, and tell us exactly who it has in mind.

It also brings to mind the debate we had here not that long ago over the Searles boatyard. I remember being castigated by the Leader of the Government and other members of the government that we were standing up for old tin sheds and standing up for the old waterfront heritage of Port Adelaide. The point is that those people who were dislocated from those sites now need somewhere to go, and what the government is doing, most inappropriately, is sending them towards Torrens Island. We know there are other locations, other empty waterfront sites and other industrial sites at Gillman, for example, that would be far more appropriate than this area on Torrens Island. To my mind it shows that this government cares very little for protecting open space, and in particular environmentally significant open space.

I expect that the Environment, Resources and Development Committee of parliament will have something to say about this development when we have a look at it, as we looked last year at a similar project whereby the government rezoned a large area of biodiversity park for industrial development, the same area that the environment department had been funding community groups to rehabilitate. The other government departments relating to trade are more than happy to rezone that not quite completely revegetated land for industrial development. So, with those words, the Greens are pleased to be supporting the Hon. Ann Bressington's motion.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. B.V. Finnigan.

## **Legislative Council, 15 September 2010**

[http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010\\_09\\_15&c=39](http://hansard.parliament.sa.gov.au/pages/loaddoc.aspx?e=2&eD=2010_09_15&c=39)

### **TORRENS ISLAND QUARANTINE STATION**

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. A. Bressington:

That this council calls on—

1. the Minister for Environment and Conservation to—

- (a) conserve the heritage value of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and the remaining pristine environment on the northern end of Torrens Island by taking steps to prevent any further industrial development of these sites;
- (b) take steps to restore the Torrens Island Quarantine Station buildings on the South Australian Heritage Register and ensure sufficient funds are available to do so;
- (c) engage in negotiations with the Treasurer with the objective being for the Department of Environment and Heritage to take control of the northern end of Torrens Island, including the site of the former quarantine station, from the Generation Lessor Corporation;
- (d) take steps to provide tourist access to the Torrens Island Quarantine Station and surrounding historical sites and engage in consultation with all relevant parties with a view to facilitating regulated tourism; and

2. the Treasurer to—

- (a) release details of the application before the Development Assessment Commission and of the proposed commercial uses of the proposed allotments; and
- (b) cease moves to further develop Torrens Island and cease negotiations with commercial parties seeking to do so.

(Continued from 21 July 2010.)

**The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (17:08):** I indicate that the government opposes this motion. The government believes that we already have in place, through the legislative requirements of the Development Act 1993 and the Heritage Places Act 1993, a rigorous and thorough statutory process for ensuring that any potential environmental or heritage impacts are considered during the development application process.

I have been advised that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has received a referral for a

land division application from the Development Assessment Commission (the commission) for a portion of Torrens Island. The referral is a statutory requirement of the Development Act 1993. This statutory process provides that the commission must have regard to advice from agencies prescribed under schedule 8 of the Development Regulations 2008 prior to making a recommendation to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning for a decision under section 49 of the act.

DENR has received the referral on behalf of staff as delegates of the Coast Protection Board and as delegates of the minister responsible for the Heritage Places Act 1993, the Minister for Environment and Conservation. The application for subdivision proposes to create five additional allotments on Torrens Island by subdividing the two existing allotments into seven allotments.

I am advised that the area encompasses approximately 47 hectares of land and that it is located on the western side of Torrens Island. The land is partly occupied by Origin Energy, with a gas turbine electricity generating plant, as well as containing state heritage places, and is predominantly cleared of vegetation.

As portions of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station are listed as state heritage places (namely, the central complex of buildings, the mortuary, jetties and the cemetery), DENR has asked the proponents, the Generation Lessor Corporation, for more information prior to considering the heritage impact of the proposal. As a consequence, I understand that the proponents are in the process of preparing a heritage impact statement to submit as part of the application.

It is my understanding that the application relates solely to subdivision and not to any new works proposed for the land. I am advised that, if a development application for physical works is received in the future, DENR staff will consider any potential environmental and heritage impacts relating to the proposed development, as will the Development Assessment Commission. This could include, for example, an assessment of potential impacts on the Barker Inlet and Port River to ensure the protection of the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary environment, as well as assessing any potential impacts on state heritage places. Any development on the island will also need to be assessed for seawater flooding risk, based on the government's Policy on Coast Protection and New Coastal Development 1991.

As I am sure members are aware, the use of Torrens Island as a quarantine station dates from the 1850s and at various times has served as both an animal and a human quarantine station. Under the proposed land subdivision, one of the seven proposed lots (lot 205) contains the majority of the state heritage listed quarantine station buildings, and proposed lot 206 contains the old mortuary and the cemetery. These surviving structures are evidence of the early methods of infectious disease control in South Australia and are important elements of our cultural history. The cemetery contains nine graves, the majority of which date from the influenza epidemic at the end of the First World War. In more recent years, as members would be aware, power stations have been built at the southern end, with the first being commissioned in 1967.

I note Ms Bressington's desire for DENR to take control of the northern end of Torrens Island, including the site of the former quarantine station. However, it is important to recognise that DENR does not need to own the land to protect state heritage places. While the conservation and maintenance of state heritage places is the responsibility of the owner, the Development Act 1993 provides appropriate procedures to ensure that potential impacts on heritage places are taken into consideration and appropriate conditions of development approval are imposed to ensure that sites are adequately protected and conserved.

I am advised that the provisions of the Development Act and regulations will ensure that any development that may be in or proposed near these state heritage places must be referred to DENR staff as delegates of the Minister for Environment and Conservation. Heritage listing protects our cultural assets through requiring a development application referral, which requires comment on the proposal to ensure that impacts on the heritage are minimised or eliminated.

As I said earlier, my understanding is that the current application before the Development Assessment Commission is for subdivision of land only. I am advised that, should there be a proposal in the future to develop or undertake works in or near the state heritage listed places, the application must be referred to DENR, pursuant to the development regulations, to assess any potential impact on that place and provide advice on how to minimise or eliminate any impact, and that the Development Assessment Commission must have regard to that advice. Under the Development Act 1993, conditions can then be placed on any approval given.

The government believes that there are sufficient checks and balances in current legislation to ensure that any heritage or environmental impacts are addressed and considered during the development application process, and we should therefore let this process run its course. The government opposes the motion.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (17:15):** I rise to make some comments in relation to the honourable member's motion, and I would like to commend her for bringing this matter to the attention of the parliament. It is an important conservation and heritage aspect of South Australia that is tucked away and pretty inaccessible to most people, apart from those who work there for various purposes.

The Liberal opposition has gone through a reasonable amount of due process just to sort out what is the existing zoning,

and so forth, of the area and what is proposed, and I am grateful to the many stakeholders who have been very open and transparent and willing to give their time to enable us to do that. So, first and foremost I would like to recognise the honourable member for organising a briefing for all members held at Parliament House in July, as well as a number of speakers she invited to address that briefing. In particular I would like to recognise Mr Aaron Machado of the Australian Marine Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Organisation.

A site visit was organised on 15 July by the honourable member's office, and I attended that along with my colleagues the Hon. David Ridgway, the member for Goyder, Steven Griffiths, and the Hon. John Darley and some of his staff. We were taken up the western side of the island to view the old quarantine station, jetty, burial ground and the northern end, which is a conservation park. There are a number of heritage and non-heritage buildings and the old jetty, which, I think it is fair to say, are in poor condition.

I understand that a non-government youth organisation spends some time there, as do Star Force officers and Australian Service personnel, so the site has been used as a training ground as well as for recreational purposes. I do not think that has assisted the protection of that site at all, nor have maintenance works been performed there, and that is a shame, particularly given the heritage-listed buildings there. I think there ought to be a conservation management plan—something the National Trust is very strong on—to prevent further deterioration and ensure that the structures there are provided with appropriate protection.

My office looked into the issue of the conservation park, which was one of the issues that Mr Machado raised. I was quite surprised to realise that the majority of the island is, in fact, part of what is called the Torrens Island Conservation Park, which most people believe to be just that northern tip. There are also two new parts which were added in 2005, and that is published in the *Gazette* of 3 March 2005. That took in a fairly large slab of the middle section to the east and the lower south-eastern corner as well so, on my rough looking at it, there is maybe 20 per cent that is not actually contained within that conservation park. The western area, which is slated for rezoning, is, of course, not contained within that conservation park, and honourable members have outlined the process that is being undergone there.

The area in question, in fact, the whole island, is located within the boundaries of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield and is therefore exempt from council jurisdiction. The area for rezoning is under the control of the Generation Lessor Corporation, so the usual requirements for development approval are based entirely on the recommendation of the Development Assessment Panel to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. I think this process in itself probably leads to some of the consternation that people have, and perhaps to some of the misinformation that does not assist when these matters are before the community. Silence and lack of public information can actually lead to people becoming concerned about matters that are not necessarily as bad as they may appear.

As part of the due process, in terms of visiting that site and having a look, sharing the concerns of Mr Machado, the Liberal opposition also contacted two of the three companies which are seeking to gain parcels of land on that side. One of them is Origin Energy and I think it is fairly obvious that that is at the southernmost part and close to the locality of the existing energy-producing facilities there. That is for peaking power plants.

The middle section is for Maritime Constructions who would like to have coast and harbor access provided following their relocation from the Inner Harbor of Port Adelaide. I have some sympathy for Maritime Constructions which was relocated from the Inner Harbor. Snowdon's Beach, on the other side of the Port River, was supposed to be provided for all of those operations which were originally displaced from the Inner Harbor. The Land Management Corporation, in its usual manner, has denied a number of those operators and so they have been searching for some particular site which would suit their needs, and have perhaps have found something which may suit.

Indeed, I had a recent conversation with the Mayor of Port Adelaide Enfield council Mr Gary Johanson—and I am sure he will not mind me placing this on the public record—and he has obviously taken a keen interest in this issue. He has been seeking to have a site provided on the western side of the Port River, if that is possible. I understand from our discussions that they are ongoing negotiations so that may well eventuate. The meeting with Maritime Constructions last month was very constructive. I understand they are being granted the right to purchase that piece of land (which is known as No. 205) because all their other potential options—such as Flinders Ports and Defence SA sites—at that stage, as they relayed it to us, have been exhausted.

All heavy infrastructure will remain on their land at the Mersey Road site. I believe they were very transparent in their briefing to us and advised that they would undertake extensive efforts to preserve the conservation values of the site. They intend to actually restore the heritage jetty, which I think the National Trust has listed as a structure at risk. They would like to offer greater protection for the heritage listed buildings at the quarantine station and their intention, in terms of the coast, is to undertake minimal dredging of some 4.5 metres adjacent to the river access site, which they intend to offset with a riverfront site on the Osborne side of the Port River so that they can provide mangroves with the right conditions to germinate. They have engaged Bruce Harry and Delta Enviro as their heritage and environment consultants respectively and they have also sought advice from the Coast Protection Board on how best to minimise their impact.

I have also been provided with a briefing from SARDI. It is seeking to gain No. 206 for an aquaculture or algal biofuel pilot plant. It is obviously quite keen to enter into that research area which may hold some great hope for future industry which will be much more environmentally friendly, both in terms of its carbon emissions and in providing cleaner fuels for cars and the like. That is a joint venture with the CSIRO and Flinders University.

Their advice is that their pilot plant would not have a high impact on the environment due to the fact that it would actually improve the water quality in the Port River as high nutrients (which are mostly nitrogen and CO<sub>2</sub> which exist because of the Penrice plant) are removed from the Port River as water is brought into the plant via an intake pipe and returned via an out-take pipe. Also, the on-land infrastructure consists of shallow ponds with plastic linings and some transportable buildings. In my view, they are not high impact.

In relation to those two operations, at least, I do not believe that their actions will have a significant impact on the environmental and heritage values. In fact, those sections of the honourable member's motion which seek to halt development I do not believe should be supported. I would also be sceptical that that old quarantine station has sufficient tourism interest to justify funding in a tight budgetary situation. Honourable members may have heard me this afternoon lament the demise of Union Hall. There are a number of other heritage issues in South Australia which I think this government is neglecting and which have high priority. Maritime Constructions have indicated that they would be more than happy to manage those particular areas themselves. From what I understand, the government has said 'Yippee!' because they are off the hook on that front.

I would also be concerned about additional human activity which may be in conflict with those pristine sections of the conservation park and adjacent coastline: that is quite evident from visiting the conservation park at the northern end. There are a lot of mangroves to the east of the top part of Torrens Island and extending further south. They are clearly in very good condition along the coast there. I am not convinced that having a lot of people traipsing around in that part of the world would actually be good for the environment.

However, I must say that I am very sympathetic with the criticisms that have been made about the lack of consultation with stakeholders. While it may not be a statutory requirement for this matter to go through the usual processes where there are obligatory requirements to consult with various community groups and other organisations, I think that would have helped to waylay a lot of concerns and actually got groups together so that they could try to find a mutually beneficial outcome. There are a couple of clauses in the honourable member's motion which I do have sympathy for but, overall, I am not convinced that they are actually going to be of any assistance in the desired outcome and, therefore, the Liberal Party will not be supporting the motion.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (17:27):** I rise only to speak briefly on the motion and, in doing so, I wanted to indicate that it was only recently that I saw some current affairs programming in relation to this issue and also some news feature coverage highlighting protesters. In particular, the aspects I wanted to talk about involving the protests related to the health and safety of the dolphins in the region and also the health of the mangroves.

The reason that I wanted to speak was that approximately 12 or 13 years ago, when I heard very similar concerns being expressed by very similar protesters. I was the minister responsible for the decision, together with the government of the day, for the building of the last big baseline power station at Pelican Point. The current Premier, the current Treasurer, all and sundry in the Labor Party and fellow travellers organised mass protests about the destruction that was going to be wrought upon this part of the coastline by a power station. I remember at the time my children saying to me, 'Why are you going to burn dolphins alive, dad?' because the protesters had coffins on the steps—

**The Hon. B.V. Finnigan:** What did you say—'Because I want to sell the power industry later'?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We were in the process of selling the power industry at the time, so the Hon. Mr Finnigan's historical knowledge is perhaps not as much as his other knowledge. The protesters had mass demonstrations at Parliament House. I remember attending a protest meeting down at the Port, where some 400 or 500 people were loudly protesting and roundly condemning me for a variety of things. In particular, what I wanted to highlight was the claims that were being made that this power station was going to destroy the mangroves and it was also going to boil the dolphins alive. It was threatening the health and welfare of the dolphins in the Port.

As I said, at the protests at Parliament House, I well remember protesters delivering coffins to Parliament House portraying the death of the dolphins as part of the protest. That was all because supposedly the power station was going to raise the temperature of the water in the area so significantly that it was going to destroy the habitat for the dolphins. I can happily report that some 13 years later the mangroves are still there and the dolphins are still there. Any concerns that there are about the health and welfare of the dolphins have more to do with fishers and others in the region, I suspect.

The power station is a most important part of the state's infrastructure. It is the last major baseload power station that has been built in South Australia and, if the decision had not been taken, the electricity industry would be in a parlous state in South Australia, but that is a different debate. As I said, the mangroves remain, the dolphins remain and I just recognise some fellow travellers who, 13 years ago, were protesting about the health and welfare of the dolphins and the

mangroves and were making almost the same claims in relation to this development. I hasten to say that I am not entering into the debate about heritage and all the other issues which I know are part of this motion and, indeed, I acknowledge that the terms of the motion themselves do not specifically refer to the health and welfare of the dolphins.

**The Hon. J.M.A. Lensink:** But you care.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I care about the dolphins, and always have cared about the dolphins and never would consciously or unconsciously or subconsciously take a decision to boil dolphins alive. I put that on the public record. I hasten to say that the Hon. Ms Bressington does not include that in her resolution, and it includes many other issues which I do not propose to debate, but I did notice, on the news service and one of the current affairs shows, some of the protesters raising these similar concerns to try to beat up concerns about the developments down there.

As I said, I recognise some of them. I certainly recognise the claims and, for those reasons, I want to place on the public record that people should at least discount that part of the concerns that have been raised by protesters in relation to developments down in this area. It is possible, and I will leave that to the judgment of others, to have developments in the area which can leave the mangroves and also the health and welfare of the dolphins. I will leave it for others to make the judgment. I certainly support the position that has been put by my colleague the Hon. Ms Lensink.

**The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (17:33):** I thank honourable members for their contributions on this motion. At least now the concerns about the environment and heritage issues are on the record and, as the Hon. Michelle Lensink said, this island and those particular heritage interests are tucked away there for very few to see—out of sight, out of mind, really.

It is a shame that the motion is not supported, but I would just like to pick up on a couple of things that came to mind while I was listening. We talk about concern for heritage issues, and it was mentioned that the quarantine station is currently used for Army exercises and there are buildings there with the doors smashed in and empty shells left lying everywhere.

This place could actually have some value for tourism. Interest was expressed by the owner of the dolphin tours in Port Adelaide to assist with that and build up knowledge that this place actually exists, and that has been quite successful in Victoria with its quarantine station.

The one thing about this particular motion that presses on me the heaviest is where maritime construction will have its port, or whatever it is called, and that it is going to require—as the Hon. Ms Lensink said—a dredging of that river back some 50 metres, I think, which is going to flood part of the mangroves and flood the graveyards.

As has been indicated to me, there are now issues with the Indigenous community. This is a sacred burial ground to them and, prior to the knowledge of these projects going ahead, it was suggested to people in the Indigenous community that this area would be used to bury the bones of some of their ancestors or relatives who had been found elsewhere, that they would be relocated to Torrens Island. It was actually the mayor of Port Adelaide who brought that to my attention. If that is the case, perhaps the government may like to enter into some discussions with the Indigenous people involved and explain why this proposed burial ground is going to be exposed to industry and perhaps even flooding of that area.

I acknowledge the Hon. Rob Lucas's comments that this is an old issue. The same thing was touted 13 years ago about the dolphins and the mangroves. That, in fact, was not the intention of the *Stateline* program that the Hon. Mark Parnell and I did together regarding this matter. However, we all know that the dolphins are a good hook and that everybody loves dolphins. It was a way of getting people to pay attention to this issue, because we can only muck around with this river system and with the mangroves so many times before there is an impact on the dolphins and the fish breeding ground in those mangroves.

We need to understand that the fish bred in those mangroves are what the dolphins use to train their pups in how to shepherd and catch fish. So, we have a whole system that is gradually—bit by bit—being reclaimed, if you like, by we humans. Although the impact might not be right here, right now, we have no guarantee that these ecological systems are not going to be disrupted to the point where we will lose a very important system in the future.

I am not going to rave on forever. As I said, I thank honourable members. I am sure that the media interest in this particular issue will continue, and I intend to make sure that it does, and that these projects, these subdivisions, are watched very carefully and very closely.

Motion negatived.