

Expert Witness Statement: Murtnagurt Lagoon, Barwon Heads, Flora and Fauna Assessment

Project: 09-52

Prepared for:

Save Barwon Heads Alliance



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Greater Geelong Planning Scheme: Amendment C159 Panel Hearing

Expert witness statement by Andrew McMahon

Director

Ecology Australia Pty Ltd

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FAIRFIELD VIC 3078

1. Qualifications and experience

1974 Bachelor of Economics Monash University

1978 Bachelor of Biological Science (Hons) La Trobe University

1879-84 PhD studies in Fire Ecology La Trobe University

23 years in consulting as Director and Principal Ecologist at Ecology Australia

2. Area of expertise to make the report

I have practised as a consulting ecologist for 23 years and have carried out over 500 commissioned reports covering Environmental Effect Statements, development applications and biodiversity management and research projects in most environments throughout south-eastern Australia. My expertise centres on plant ecology but I have wide ranging experience with faunal issues. I routinely manage the assessment of projects of State significance and have provided evidence at many VCAT hearings, planning and EES panels and Commissions of Inquiry. In the context of the present proposal I have a sound knowledge of the study area and the major issues involved.

3. Other significant contributors to the report, and their expertise

Dr Darren Quin, Senior Zoologist Ecology Australia. Dr Quin has 15 years experience as a consulting ecologist, including nine years at Ecology Australia. He has specialist expertise in birds and mammals.

4. Instructions that define the scope of the report

Ecology Australia was commissioned by the Save Barwon Heads Alliance to undertake an overview flora and fauna assessment of Murtnagurt Lagoon and surrounding land as part of a proposal for a residential development and a second proposal to extend a golf course.

The flora and fauna assessment was to address the values of:

- Murtnagurt Lagoon;
- land covered by the development proposals either side of Murtnagurt Lagoon;
- other surrounding land including Thirteenth Beach Residential Estate and Golf Course and Barwon Heads Golf Course.

The purpose of the assessment was to:

- document the values of Murtnagurt Lagoon and surrounding land;
- address existing impacts of adjoining land uses to Murtnagurt Lagoon,
- discuss potential issues at Murtnagurt Lagoon associated with the proposed town boundary extension and development; and
- discuss the potential legislative implications associated with existing and proposed developmental impacts on Murtnagurt Lagoon.

5. Identity of the person who carried out any tests or experiments upon which the expert relied in making the report and the qualifications of that person

Not applicable

6. Report on findings

My findings are set out in the report Murtnagurt Lagoon, Barwon Heads Flora and Fauna Assessment (2009).

I co-authored this report, and in undertaking the assessment I:

- undertook a desktop review of relevant databases, previous reports and aerial photography;
- consulted with local experts and others with a knowledge of Murtnagurt Lagoon;
- carried-out field assessments;
- became familiar with development proposals;
- prepared a report documenting the values, and accessing current conditions and future proposals in the context of likely impacts to Murtnagurt Lagoon.

7. Adopting the Report

I formally adopt the 2009 report as my Witness Statement. I further state that there is no departure from the findings or opinions expressed in the report. I consider the report complete in satisfying our brief and any questions falling outside my expertise are treated as areas requiring further investigation. This applies particularly to aspects of hydrology and hydrogeology.

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

Andrew McMahon.

Andrew McMahon

November 2009