

Article X. COMPETITION POLICY

1) Alternative solutions.

- a) Towards the end of the 54 page document the first mention of innovative or alternative options solution occurs:

However if no reticulated sewerage is to be installed then further development within the town will need to be managed more effectively through improved Waste disposal systems”⁸²

2) Alternative systems in use.

- 3) In the U.S.A 35% of waste water is decentralised. Stinson Beach County Water District has a management system in place and is similar in its structure to Venus Bay.⁸³ In Australia the figure is 5%.

- 4) There are a number of alternative systems being used in Venus Bay currently. The ongoing use of these provides an ideal sample and setting to test the efficacy of these systems. The following are some of these systems with Victorian EPA approval: Dowmus Biolytic Filter Effluent; reuse/disposal passively aerated (no pumps) aerobic system use of worms: Envirosep SP 2000; aeration method. Ozzi Kleen: uses chemicals and oxygen and the aerobic method i.e keeping the bacteria alive to do their job, it is also able to run on Solar energy.⁸⁴ Rota-Loo; aerobic method which does not need water - a dry method. Grey water is separately managed by Rota-Loo grey water systems for 2,3 &4 bedroom or public facilities.

- 5) Lack of analyses or comparative discussion. We examined the Settlement Paper and found that there was no attempt to offer analyses of alternative solutions. On page 40 the authors have the view that “ground water is polluted”. “That square metre is 5 to 10 times greater than what was previously required” and on page 41 use a vague reference to “studies have shown”.

1. **BIOLYTIX** - a non chemical 21st century solution which does not require continuous power to function.

- a) **Biolytix** appeared on the ABC Inventors program in July 2004. It appeared this system was the ideal answer to our on-site waste water management and ongoing protection of the groundwater. It uses worms as a method of breaking down matter; double membrane produces irrigation quality water and will not stop functioning with electrical outages.

⁸²loc. cit. P 49

⁸³ <http://www.stinson-beach-cwd.dst.ca.us/wastehome.html>

⁸⁴ Appendix V i

- b) **Maintenance** is provided by the company with phone contact by computer to the agent at an estimated cost of \$350.00 per year reducible to between \$180-200 depending on the number of connections. Capital outlay ranges from an estimated \$10,000 - \$12,000 reducible depending on the number of connections. This system has the advantage of costing half the capital cost of Commonwealth Government Sewerage [CGSA] infrastructure, 1/3rd saving on the whole of life cost allows for incremental infrastructure installation and greater benefits in difficult terrain.
- c) We are making a discrete reference here to Biolytix because in early January 2005 Ken and I came to know this system very well. We made an unsuccessful application to implement a pilot study of this system to provide information on the efficiency of these alternative systems in protecting the ground water. This system has an additional membrane which filters effluent to a high quality grade. Recent modification of a second membrane produces high quality water from grey water suitable for irrigation. A Biolytix presentation was given by the Victorian representative at a briefing session to South Gippsland Shire on 15th September 2004. In July 2004 EPA approval was given for Victoria and modified in December 2005 to require only annual maintenance and allow installation throughout Victoria. The system has also been approved in all other states.
- d) The advantage of this system we considered was that chemicals are not used in the process and its size ideal for small block and the irrigation system suits difficult terrain. Biolytix has been successfully used for individual and larger groups including McLeay Island, near Brisbane, Queensland. See Flyer⁸⁵. or go to the link on www.venusbaywetlands.com⁸⁶
- e) There are many other on-site waste water sewage management systems. Requesting South Gippsland Water to estimate costs of reticulation without considering other systems contravenes the competition policy. Given that some of these alternative systems have been already installed here since the year 2000 access to financial estimates ought to be relatively easy.

⁸⁵ **Appendix V.ii**

⁸⁶ Visit www.venusbaywetlands.com and click on Biolytix link



© Biolytix

This Biolytix system is being installed in Victoria and has been successfully used for single and multiple unit installation in most other States. The filter system turns effluent into an asset. The Australian community is increasingly unwilling to accept the dumping of sewage effluent in to the sea, rivers lakes or water courses⁸⁷

Most of us do not drink the bore water as we have tank water and we would boil bore water if we run out of rainwater.

BENEFITS OF IMPROVED DECENTRALISED WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

- Protection of public health and local water resources by ensuring pollutants are adequately treated and dispersed into the environment
- Protection of homeowner's investment property and the ability to build home equity
- Protection of the community's image
- Elimination of the need to use a community's tax base to finance community wide wastewater infrastructure
- Cost savings over the life of a system alleviating the need for premature system replacement
- Elimination of the potential for major impact due to system malfunctions and reduction in the vulnerability to system upsets

The Venus Bay Community has sunk almost \$15,000 in to the equity of their home through the cost of a water tank, septic system and ongoing maintenance. Currently there is no capital outlay for the homeowner. Most retirees do not want to invest life savings in a further investment of capital outlay in what they already possess. At the moment storm water drains of roofs into our water tanks. Rainfall and run off disappears in the sand. The water here does not run to Anderson Inlet.

⁸⁷ CSIRO Land and Water 2000 *Research Project information from CSIRO Communication Group*

The cost of reticulation does not just involve reticulation connection. Accompanying this connection is alteration to the dwelling, established gardens and road making with its companion storm water drains. An estimated cost of \$30,000 per household.

STRATPLAN 2005 Report Question 17 and 18 As already cited on page 36 “**A greater number (58%) favoured alternative systems**, as defined in the questionnaire, with 21% of respondents favouring reticulated water and sewerage. A slight majority (34%) would accept reticulated systems if they believed the alternatives had been fully investigated and proved unsuitable; 38% would not accept them.

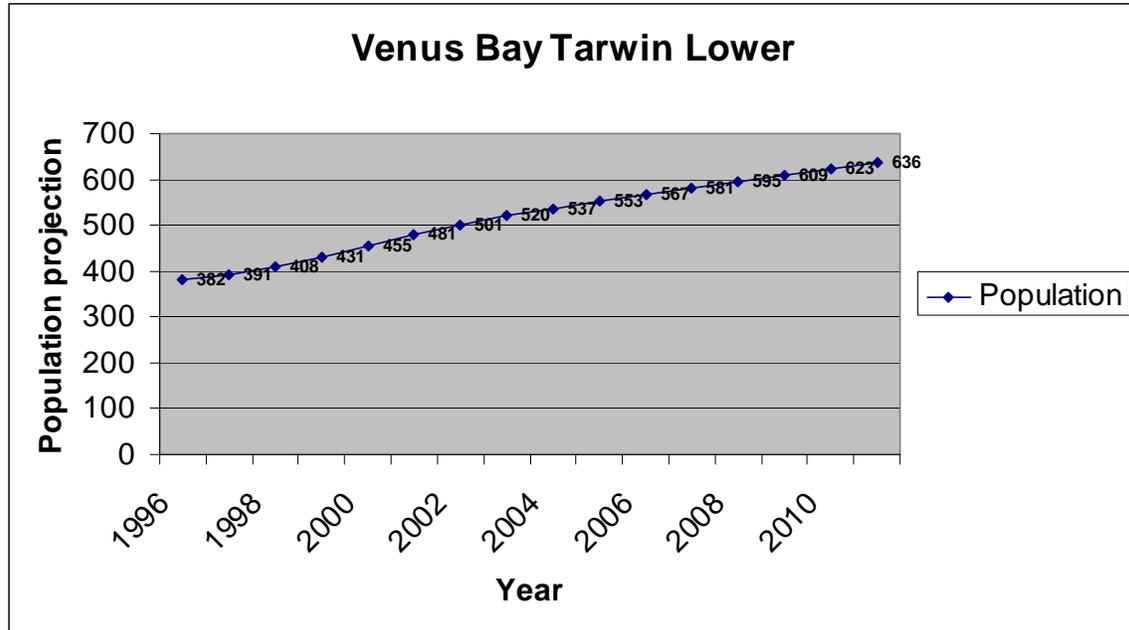
• RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ South Gippsland Shire Council ought to set aside funds for investigating the actual extent of bore contamination across the shire coastal regions.
- ✓ Investigate why alternative innovative systems have been installed in other states and examine the results
- ✓ Set up a management team to prepare a plan for the best way to manage on site waste water and sewerage systems.
- ✓ Produce a management plan for identifying and upgrading problem septic systems
- ✓ Implement a Management Plan for self regulation of waste water management by communities
- ✓ Employ sufficient staff to regulate and monitor by sighting evidence of maintenance of all systems. These could be attached or submitted yearly with Rate Payments. A levy could be added to rates if failure to comply.

Article XI.

1) POPULATION

NOTE The following graph represents population projections which are detailed in the Gippsland Integrated Coastal Planning Project: Technical Papers (GCB 2000 a). The statistics are based on 1996 census data which were collected during the winter period. The data is based on “collector districts” which do not always correspond with township boundaries.⁸⁸



Actual household estimates for the year 2006 are **350***

- 1) The number and variety of referrals to population growth scenarios in the settlement paper seem confused as there has been a general slowing of population due to people leaving the area. Real estate turnover has paused as evidenced by two Estate agents closing for business in Venus Bay. The Coastal Spaces Inception Report⁸⁹ states that the largest concentration of declining towns were in the South Gippsland area.
- 2) Quoting from the Settlement Paper the 2001 census figure was **claimed to be two different figures**. That is on page 18 (441) and (405) on page 45 with Tarwin Lower being 139 (Total 580 or 539). The figure for 2001 census is **441** according to the Coastal Spaces Inception Report.⁹⁰ The 2006 figure for Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay permanent households combined is 350*.
- 3) In the 1970's and 1980's there were according to local lore, nearly 800 permanent residents. The population trend according to a quote in the Settlement paper on page

⁸⁸ Gippsland Coastal Board. 2000 *Integrated Planning for Gippsland Coastal Action Plan* Appendix 2:

⁸⁹ Demographic research team May 2005 *Coastal Spaces Inception Report* Page 9

⁹⁰ loc. cit.

5⁹¹ “the future overall population growth rate in Victoria is declining” ... “Regional areas will continue to grow but at slower rate.”

- 4) Venus Bay currently appears to be matching that prediction as some people have left the area due to various reasons stated as : “the rise in rates; lack of elderly supported accommodation, children in the city worried about parents’ isolation, suburbanization due to fear of recent development proposal” parents of young children “nothing to do” to quote a few.⁹² The early and late adolescent population seems to have little entertainment provided for in this document.
- 5) Some people appear to be building bigger houses which could be in anticipation of either retirement or investment. Currently sales have fallen with a noticeable lack of movement which could be related to the nearly 3 hours it takes to reach here from some Melbourne homes. Not everyone has an ‘E tag’. The rise in petrol could also be a limiting factor. Venus Bay is 169 kilometres from Melbourne central.
- 6) According to demographic data the increase in coastal towns has been the over 60’s age group.⁹³ A lot of emphasis is given to the baby boomers – mostly born in the 1940’s to 1950’s also known as the Post World War II baby boom. Future strategic planning ought to cater for the increasing needs of an ageing population with an emphasis on the care of the elderly.⁹⁴ The increasing second home ownership means that the most likely increase in populations in Venus Bay will continue to be transient occurring mostly in holiday periods and at weekends.
- 7) The question is why does Venus Bay need to expand when there are 900 available allotments yet to be filled. Of the 191 applications with permits to build 51% have not been given a Building Occupancy certificate. *[In Venus Bay the proportion of dwelling approvals that have had Building Occupancy permits since 2002 are 51%. So the number of approvals 191 does not equal numbers of houses in situ.⁹⁵ The majority of these have been holiday homes.]*

STRAT PLAN 2005 Human Services (Welfare) (Q. 37 to 40)

The highest ‘positive’ ratings were Venus Bay Community Centre (74%) and the Tarwin Lower Medical Centre (55%) while largest *poor* ratings were for **Youth Services (28%) and Aged Care (25%)**.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ✓ Survey the youth to find out what it is they want for entertainment and activity

⁹¹ DSE 2004 Victoria in Future 2004 Victorian State Government

⁹² Personal communication

⁹³ Demographic Research Team Spatial Information and Research 2005 *Coastal Space Inception Report*

⁹⁴ *ibid*

⁹⁵ UDF Settlement Paper January 2006 p31 SGSC Database 2003,2005

- ✓ Maintain the atmosphere of peace and tranquility to match reasons for living here.
- ✓ Arrange the development of supported residential accommodation for an ageing population who want to stay here
- ✓ Install funds for a regular bus for the coastal towns to enable the frail and elderly to shop and enjoy visits to the nearby towns without time limits.
- ✓ Supply bus to connect with bus to Melbourne on at least a twice weekly basis.

Article XII. FLORA AND FAUNA

1) LIMITED AND MISTAKEN CATEGORISATION OF ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES

On page 28 of the South Gippsland Coastal UDF's Settlement Background Paper second paragraph (using the reference of South Gippsland Shire Council as a secondary source) there is mistake in the status it gives to the list of indigenous scrub mosaic marsh and woodland. For the purposes of such an important document the primary source ought to be used. Mangroves ought to be included as EVC's.

2) THE ECOLOGICAL VEGETATION CLASSES (EVC'S) AROUND VENUS BAY INCLUDE:

Below I have specifically highlighted the EVC Conservation Status in **Green bold to differentiate** them from the way these have been loosely listed and described as of "least concern" and vulnerable.⁹⁶

	EVC Conservation Status	
Weedy Coastal Banksia Woodland Coastal Saltmarsh;	E	Endangered
Coastal Banksia	V	Vulnerable
Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic	LC	Listed FFG ACT
 IN ADDITION		
Mangrove Shrubland/ Estuarine Flats Grass Mosaic	LE	Listed FFG Act
	LE	Endangered and Protected

The settlement paper refers to Appendix A for EVC Map. I have included a map in the appendices which enlarges the area. The black striped area indicates Coastal Saltmarsh (9) and the blue striped area mangrove shrubland (140).⁹⁷ These can be viewed at the Inlet, with the naked eye. The best option would be to use information provided by those who actually go to the site.

⁹⁶ DSE 2003 Biodiversity Action Planning Landscape Plan for the Tarwin-Powlett Landscape Zone in the Gippsland Plain Bioregion Appendix 2 Details of Ecological Vegetation Classes [EVC] in the Gippsland Plain bioregion.

⁹⁷ Appendix VI i & ii http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DPI/Vro/maps.nsf/pages/wg_wonthaggi...

An EVC map shows *Avicennia marina Australasica* at the mouth of the Tarwin River and along the Evergreen property and on the islands nearby. According to Strickland (2003)⁹⁸ these white mangroves are limited to this part of Victoria. They grow in Westernport and are at their southern limit in Corner Inlet. They are found littorally I.e. on tidally inundated flats adjacent to the sea. These mangroves provide shelter for the saltmarsh and turn salt water in to fresh www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/1148897
Quoting obscurely from the Settlement Papers the authors state *that the status of the majority of the EVC's are classified as of "least concern". There are some small areas classified as vulnerable.* More specific naming of the species which are considered vulnerable and evidence of inspection of the site would give more credence to these values and referencing from an original source would give accurate status grading.

Orange Bellied Parrot [OBP] April 2006 made the news stopping the Bald Hills Wind Farm⁹⁹
STATUS EPBC ACT endangered Australia: Critically Endangered Victoria FFG Act



⁹⁸ Strickland K & p2003 Foothills to Foreshore A Field Guide to Selected Indigenous Plants Karreebah Vic.

⁹⁹ <http://www.deh.gov.au/minister/env/2006/mr05apr206.html> Media Release

BEADED GLASSWORT Beaded Glasswort is one of the foods of this parrot.



3) THE FRIENDS OF VENUS BAY PENINSULA INC.

This group is studying the indigenous plants of the Peninsula. This rapidly growing strong group in its twelve month history is working towards identifying and listing our unique and abundant indigenous grasses and Ecological Vegetation Classes. Working teams who will work with Government Agencies in the slow process of clearing the known noxious weeds from the Peninsula. Another plan is to limit the damage by feral animals. The program for 2006 can be accessed on the www.venusbaywetlands.com website.

4) QUESTION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES No 159¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹¹⁰²

Questions put to the Government on February 16 2005 on our behalf by Kelvin Thompson's replacement Jennie George. The answer from the Minister for Environment and Heritage provided the answers READ BY Senator Warren Truss on 17 March 2005.

QUESTION 1 (of 7) Are there any species of flora and fauna located and listed at Venus Bay and Anderson Inlet under the EPBC Act 1999

Answer Yes

¹⁰⁰ Appendix III.i Letter from Ms Jennie George MP Appendix III iii

¹⁰¹ Appendix III ii Clerk of the House

¹⁰² Appendix III iii Minister for the Environment and Heritage House of Representatives Questions No 597 re Flora and Fauna and Acid Sulfate Soil 2005 February

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Encourage the community to join Friends of Venus Bay to learn about the preservation of our precious flora and fauna
- ✓ See more details on the Venus Bay Wetland Project website. www.venusbaywetlands.com

CONCLUSION

We believe we have given ample evidence from various sources which will help the authors of the final document to align Government Policy with planning decisions.

One of the issues with which we had grave concern was the extension of town borders without community endorsement. In our investigations we found that these ideas have not been strategically justified in terms of the ability of these areas to sustain any additional development. We have produced from our literature search evidence that this sand isthmus ought never have been built on in the first place. This evidence is reflected in the opening quote cited from page 45 of the Settlement Paper. Minister McCutcheon's decision in 1991 to reject a proposal to build 34 houses on the sand dunes is reinforced by current Government policy. Why then was idea of building on these sand dunes raised again in 2006 for development? (See Figure 5 in the UDF Document)

For these same strategic reasons we reject the attempt to impose reticulated sewerage and water in to this sensitive coastal hamlet. We advance the reason, based on the many referrals in this document, that this attempt is being made to facilitate development. Further to that we believe that this imposition is in direct conflict with the Municipal Association of Victoria's own policy that states "compulsory sewerage schemes cannot be justified in order to facilitate development". We have developed a more positive argument for innovative and alternative systems which we believe meets many current Federal and State objectives to improve our water table, manage our own effluent on site and reduce water consumption.

We have also produced a positive outcome for the previously postulated use of the Evergreen property, which is to repair and restore the area in response to the Government initiated incentive measures for conserving wetlands. We have discussed the constraints at length about flooding, storm surge and disturbing coastal acid sulfate soils. The conclusions lead us to reiterate; 'we came here for peace and tranquility' and that is the way the majority of ratepayers and residents of Venus Bay want it to stay.

Discussion about population rises and declines within the paper are controversial. Population figures have waxed and waned over centuries whether by immigration or compulsory acquisition (convicts and abduction). Population figure projections change

depending on bonuses, contraception, war and post war booms, poverty, affluence and ageing. According to our reading of the slowing market, combined with permanent people leaving the area the actual population here has declined since the 2001 census.

The paucity of any plans for social infrastructure such as the needs of the young and the ageing needs addressing more than we have in our submission, The lack of focus on the environment in the document contrasts with the high profile it was given in the workshops and our Venus Bay Wetlands website. The recent formation of an incorporated group Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula bears witness to the importance this community places on the environment. The lack of weight given to the 10 pages of Data from the two workshops was a very strong indication to us of the token nature of community consultation in this settlement paper.

STRATPLAN 2005

Question 28

How important is the surrounding environment to the future prosperity and sustainability of Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay?

VERY IMPORTANT 95% Undecided 4% Not important 2% No response 1%

On the draft Landscape Significance Map Part 1 for Management of Significant Landscapes in the Gippsland Coastal Region when describing Venus Bay the following description is:

- Noted in site survey for wild and windswept coast and high dunes providing a scenic backdrop to hinterland areas.
- Valued by respondents to the community questionnaire for coastal and marine parks and the visual beauty of a rugged coastline with sand beaches.
- Recognised for extensive and significant Aboriginal heritage values.¹⁰³

In the Strategic Framework Municipal Strategic Statement Clause 21.04 of the South Gippsland Planning Scheme 16.12.1999¹⁰⁴ in an area drawn around Wilson's Prom, Corner Inlet and surrounding Point Smythe the entire area was described as:

Sensitive Coastal Areas- Protect and promote the coastal environment for its environmental, recreational, heritage values

¹⁰³ Appendix VII Victorian Government 2005 Planisphere 160 Johnston Street Fitzroy

¹⁰⁴ Appendix II



© K Walker Sunset on Tarwin River leaving Lower Tarwin for Venus Bay

APPENDICES FOLLOW

Appendix 1	Peat fire Email	10.4.02
Appendix II	Strategic Framework Plan	
Appendix III i	Jennie George MP	4 4 05
ii	Clerk of the House Q597	
iii	House of Reps	17. 3 05
iv	Peter McGauran MP	22. 6 04
Appendix IV	State Water Laboratory	
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Appendix VI i	EVC Expanded	
ii	EVC Legend	
Appendix VII	Draft Landscape Significance Map	