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Reference: 043-19 SJ

6 January 2020

The Hon. Shelley Hancock MP
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Re: Review of proposed cruise ship terminal in Molineaux Point/Yarra Bay

Dear Minister

I write with reference to the proposed cruise ship terminal in Molineaux Point/Yarra Bay, on behalf of member councils of the Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG).

SCCG currently represents nine estuarine and coastal councils in Sydney which collaborate to advance sustainable management of Sydney's urban coastal and estuarine environment. Our goals include our waterways and the foreshore being protected and healthier.

I note that the Port Authority of NSW, in collaboration with Department of Treasury is progressing a Detailed Business Case to investigate cruise capacity, industry demand and assess potential sites for a third cruise terminal between Yarra Bay and Molineux Point in Botany Bay. The Port is currently undertaking community engagement as part of the Detailed Business Case with a view to releasing an Early Consultation Outcomes Report that explains how community and stakeholder feedback has been used to inform the project. Port Authority will also outline the project, including refined site options within the study area and early design concepts.

Member councils resolved at the Annual General Meeting held on 30 November 2019 that I write to you to convey their lack of support for the Yarra Bay Port for reasons of cultural sensitivity, negative impact on ecology and hydromorphology.

Cultural sensitivity

Several concerns have been raised about heritage significance and impacts, particularly on the two conservation areas in the eastern part of Yarra Bay:

- the Botany Bay National Park Heritage Conservation Area which has State level significance
- the locally listed Yarra Bay Heritage Conservation Area.

Both conservation areas cover locations of the earliest contacts between Aboriginal people and Europeans on the east coast of Australia. There are historical records of Joseph Banks' landing in Yarra Bay as part of Captain Cook's expedition in 1778 and of Governor Arthur Phillip, as part of the First Fleet, first setting foot on Australian soil in the vicinity of Yarra Bay, on 18 January 1788, prior to landing in Port Jackson and establishing the colony. The significance of Yarra Bay to the Aboriginal community for fishing and gathering, and the presence of archaeological sites and middens should also be considered.

Negative impact on ecology

Dredging within Botany Bay is likely to cause significant change in the geomorphology of the bay and potentially adversely affect ecologically significant seagrasses and other marine life. There is also concern over the impact of dredging on Towra Point which has Ramsar Wetlands and is internationally recognised as a Ramsar site. Dredging may also result in the disturbance and dispersal of known dormant contaminants on the seabed in Yarra Bay which could have profound impacts on marine species and ecosystems.

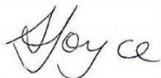
Hydromorphology

Technical studies have shown that Yarra Bay is exposed and affected by wave swells from the south east. Deep channelling and scouring of the seabed in Yarra Bay could alter the tidal flow and currents in and out of Yarra Bay and could also significantly impact the ecology and recreational uses in the Bay. There is also potential impact on local beaches from erosion.

I trust that the information provided above is sufficient grounds for you to consider Molineaux Point/Yarra Bay as an inappropriate location for the cruise terminal.

If you have any queries, please contact me on 02 9976 1502 or by email at executiveofficer@sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Penny Joyce
Executive Officer