



27th October 2008

Hon. David Bartlett MHA
Premier for Tasmania,
Parliament House,
HOBART, Tas. 7000

Dear Mr Premier

Re: Launceston City Council's "Silt Study Public Consultation Information Session, Launceston Tram Sheds, Monday 27th & Tuesday 28th October"

This submission is entitled:

"Where are the completed and forecasting Risk Assessments for critically required sedimentation controls?"

As past founder and coordinator of Friends of the Tamar from 1992 to 2006 and as a founding member of the Tamar Estuary Working Group committee and foreseen the sedimentation crisis for the estuaries/rivers North Esk, South Esk and upper reaches of the Tamar extending from St. Marys to the Great Western Tiers.

In addition, the apparent and major risk factors which currently exist with this massive sedimentation crisis build up require consequential assessment.

Major Sedimentation Hazards.

1. What are they and the potential consequences?
2. Have risk assessments been included?
3. Are all the known hazards identified and controls in place?
4. What are the correlating risk factors between the geo technical risks, Invermay flood plains and subsidence leading to more sedimentation contamination movements?
5. What hazards exist and will future trends decrease the capacity of these river/ estuaries ability to flush themselves?

Safe Work Systems

- Respected Competent Workforce
- Customer and Company Safety Integrity
- Productivity and Economic Benefits

Asset Service

- including
- OH&S - RM Control Systems
 - Legal Compliance and Audit Records
 - Tendering Insurance Support

Facilitating insitu Training Services

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Endorsing

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6. Drinking water requirements - will global warming and future population capacities, including water restrictions, pose any additional risk threats?
7. Agriculture and forestry practices combine to cause primary soil and material run offs frequently due to insufficient buffer zones. What are the risks? How can they be corrected?
8. Irrigation quotas and future forecasts – where is the governmental risk assessment evidence of what capacities are allowed to occur and forecast trends?
9. There are of course additional risk factors that can be included in this overall assessment criteria and they include:
 - 9.1. Early settlement and the ability of the Esk's and Tamar Estuaries / rivers to flush themselves
 - 9.2. Man's adverse influences since early settlement
 - 9.3. The effects of these adverse influences. How have they impacted?
 - 9.4. Can they be corrected, and if not, what are the risks and their potential consequences?
 - 9.5. Existing hazards to sedimentation build up in the Launceston River/Estuary precincts – What are they and can they be corrected?

These are but a few basic risk factors which should now be concentrated upon and findings provided in going forward.

10. Research material that is recommended to assist risk research includes the following reports, surveys and findings recommended to provide base line information.
 - 10.1. The late Professor Doug Foster's combined reports
 - 10.2. National Heritage study "The State of the Tamar Estuary – 1997"
 - 10.3. Port of Launceston Authority's hydro graphic survey reports
 - 10.4. The Budge report Tamar Environs approx 1996-1997
 - 10.5. I. Routley/L. Crerar report to Tamar Estuary Working Group 2003 (attached).
 - 10.6. Composite reports and risk assessment studies compiled by UTRIA Upper Tamar River Improvements Authority
 - 10.7. Government maps for geo technical subjects areas and soil types

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10.8. Tasmanian government departments and semi government sectors, including water/irrigation and forestry re: risk forecasts – reports. All of these must be included in the area scope between St. Marys and the Great Western Tiers.

Additional questions for respective consideration and answers include:

- Question 1. Is it not a fact that, up to the mid-19th century, maps showed that ships up to 400 tonnes could anchor at Town Point despite NO dredging having been done in the river for thousands of years?
- Question 2. Since it's NOT from the Tamar Estuary (refer Q1) WHERE is the present silt coming from?
- Question 3. Is it not a fact that, since the Invermay flood plain was built out and the Gorge flow diverted into the tailrace, it is now impossible that the Tamar can ever "return to regime"? (How is the word "regime" defined? Does it mean "choked with silt"? – which was never the case in prehistory, only since man's intervention)
- Question 4. Is it not a fact that the North and South Esk's flow off DIFFERENT soils – see the official government maps – and therefore the origins of the silt can be traced if it was so desired? As could the quantities, if there were adequate gauging stations.
- Question 5. Is it not a fact that river silt can be trapped BEFORE it reaches Launceston, and such methods are standard engineering practice?
- Question 6. The wider catchment with sedimentation influences – How many municipalities are involved that creates sedimentation effects with the Launceston area?
- Question 7. Are there existing and effective governance structures that can deal with the wide spread municipal problem?

Note: All of these basic questions require answers by the investigating and corrective action officers.

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Finally in closing and in the light of the seriousness of this current sedimentation crisis currently presents, I and several experienced committed members of the retired Tamar Estuary Working Group would be willing to assist further with information and baseline reports referred to following your instructions.

I now await your advices and trust that this information will assist your government and its respective commitments to this current sedimentation crisis to assist our estuary and rivers proud communities.

Regards

Lawrence J Crerar
Senior Risk Control Surveyor

Note: It is considered to be unfortunate that the appointment of Dr Bill Woods as GHD Local Convening Consultant for this community exercise and his apparent position to the newly appointed Launceston Flood Protection Authority Board is now commonly seen as a conflict of interests and GHD should have known better.

cc: Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MHA, Minister for the Environment
General Manager, Launceston City Council, Mayor and Alderman
Mr. Kim Evans, Secretary DIPWE
Hon. Sue Napier MHA, Shadow Minister for the Environment
Hon. D. G. Wing MLC
Hon. Kerry Finch MLC
Dr. Owen Ingles, Mr. Ian J. N. Routley & Mr. C. P. P. Green

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