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PPCC Inc. Policy Statement No. 11

Bridges, Tunnels, Pipelines, Cables & Other Engineering Intrusions

SUMMARY:

Despite widespread acceptance that Port Phillip is the greatest natural feature of the Melbourne area, there are frequent proposals to intrude upon its natural character, which is one of the greatest assets of Melbourne and Victoria, and to further erode it for various incremental commercial or developmental aims, some of which are fleeting or unsustainable. Such continual frittering away of the still substantial natural character for such gratuitous proposals as artificial islands or reefs, or causeways or bridges, or underground buildings or car parks, or shoreline structures should not be permitted

DETAIL:

Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc. has since its formation in 1970 opposed many schemes for extending into the natural maritime environment of Port Phillip and its coastal margins the type of development features that dominate much of its immediate hinterland. An early example was its successful opposition to an oil pipeline across part of the Bay. Public opposition to the ethane pipeline from Mordialloc to Altona was unsuccessful.

The principal rationale for opposing proposals for filling in any part of the Bay or erecting in it, or even under it, intrusions not essential for public safety, or legitimate water-based controlled uses such as defence, merchant marine and environmentally acceptable recreation, is the need to conserve for the long term, and to the greatest extent possible, the natural character of Port Phillip. Port Phillip is the greatest natural feature of the Melbourne area, and its gradual decline would irrevocably and substantially harm the quality of life for the whole of the metropolis.

Bridges and Tunnels: Still, in 2001, there have been groups proposing such intrusions as a bridge or tunnel across Corio Bay as a bypass for Geelong traffic. It is obvious why a highly visible structure such as a bridge is destructive of the natural ambience around it, as it is not only dominating in appearance, but introduces unwelcome noise and mechanical movement into an otherwise peaceful, uncluttered marine setting. It is less obvious why a tunnel for the same purpose is also unacceptable, but the reasons also apply to bridges, in that such traffic corridors overcome the natural barriers that protect major areas, such as the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas from unwanted through traffic and too close a connection with the almost entirely artificial urban environment of the centre of the metropolis, which soon spreads to and engulfs the hitherto more remote coastal character. A bridge or tunnel across The Rip would likewise transform both peninsulas from very distinctive, protected environments, of which there are a rapidly decreasing number close to Melbourne, into areas less distinguishable from the bulk of the metropolis and blighted by heavy through traffic between the eastern and western halves of Victoria.

Islands, Pipelines, Cables: There are also regular proposals for the building of islands in Port Phillip. The proponents fail to realize that natural islands are in harmony with the marine environment as a response to its forces and character, whereas an "island" that is imposed on a marine area will immediately change the landscape, and distort the existing dynamics of the marine environment, often with unpredicted and greatly unwanted side effects, such as erosion or accretion of the island or coastline elsewhere, and undesirable changes to marine flora and fauna and water quality and its movement. Pipelines, cables, masts or poles, and other structures should be located on land away from the coast.

ADOPTION:

This PPCC Inc. Policy Statement No. 11 was adopted by a General Meeting of the Port Phillip Conservation Council Inc. on 30th April 2001.
