



Greg Hunt MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FLINDERS

SHADOW MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN WATER



Flinders Community News

*Working for
our Community*

Autumn 2008

Recycling Not Desalination the Best Option for Our Water Supply

In December I visited **Kilcunda** to meet with the *Your Water Your Say* group and other local residents to hear their concerns about the proposed desalination plant.

I am absolutely convinced that the priority should be water recycling before desalination.

Water recycling would not only free up the same amount of fresh water that the desalination plant is tipped to produce, but would bring to an end the practice of dumping partially-treated sewage into the sea off **Gunnamatta**.

I have spoken in Parliament on this issue and written to the Victorian Government as well



▲ with members of *Your Water Your Say* at the site of the proposed desalination plant

as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Environment Minister Peter Garrett and Water Minister Penny Wong. All have reacted with scant regard for the local community.

Thank you for re-electing me – Electorate Priorities

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Flinders electorate again.

It is an immense privilege to be able to act for the communities of the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port, Bass Coast and Phillip Island. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly.

I will continue to work hard to:

- ✓ close the **Gunnamatta** sewage outfall
- ✓ secure aquatic centres for **Phillip Island** and **Rosebud**
- ✓ campaign for 24-hour police stations at **Somerville** and **Phillip Island**
- ✓ protect the **Mornington Peninsula** from inappropriate development
- ✓ secure Years 11 and 12 at **Somerville** (Mt Erin) Secondary College
- ✓ keep bitumen trucks off the streets of **Crib Point** and **Hastings** and stop freight trains running through **Pearcedale**, **Devon Meadows**, **Clyde** and **Cardinia**
- ✓ secure **Koo Wee Rup** and **Lang Lang** truck bypasses to make our streets safer
- ✓ protect **Mt Martha** beach
- ✓ secure a commitment to replace hospital services on **Phillip Island**

What's Inside...

Community Water Grants:

50 local schools and community organisations benefit pg 8



with Cowes P.S. ▲

Green Corps on the march at Baxter

*Green Corps launch at
Sages Cottage pg 6*



▲ *lending a hand at the Green Corps launch at Sages Cottage*

Plus -

- tackling crime in **Somerville** and **Tyabb** pg 4-5
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No Toxic Dumping in Port Phillip

heraldsun.com.au



Summer daze: but what will happen on Melbourne's bayside beaches when the Yarra sediment is shifted?

Toxic shocker

HAVING grown up on the Mornington Peninsula, places such as Fisherman's Beach, Mt Martha beach, Cameron's Bight and Safety Beach are of almost sacred standing in my memory.

Now, as the father of a two-year-old daughter, Poppy, one of the great joys of my life is to swim and paddle together in the shallows of Mt Martha beach.

Like all parents who live around the bay, there is a sense of deep personal responsibility to make sure that we protect the bay's great heritage.

Our task is simple. Protect the waters of Port Phillip so our children will in turn be able to swim in one of the world's cleanest bays near a major city.

But this vision of a clean aquatic playground is under threat. The proposal to dump two million tonnes of toxic sediment from the mouth of the Yarra into the middle of the bay is simply wrong.

Materials to be dredged from the Yarra and dumped in the bay include heavy metals such as zinc, mercury, and lead. There are also remnant toxins such as DDT and dieldrin.

These toxic materials are the result of more than a century of industrial activity on the banks of the lower Yarra. Sewage, oil refining, gas production, paint production and smelting have all contributed to the toxic cocktail that has settled at the bottom of the Yarra.

Yet the Brumby Government's proposal is to dredge two million tonnes of this toxic waste, dump it in the bay, and then leave it at the whim of tidal movements and weather for almost five months. That's right — 150 years of toxic waste will be dredged and dumped in the bay and left uncovered for almost five months.

Only then will this most toxic of cocktails be capped.

GREG HUNT



Why will this process take five months?

Because the Premier, John Brumby, and his government have determined that 140 days need be allowed for the suspended particles to settle. In the meantime the dredge material, including toxins and other sediments, will be in various states of suspension.

The natural system of the bay will, of course, wash the suspended material around. Two other questions explain why this plan to dump heavy metals in our bay is just plain wrong.

First, why is it that virtually no one swims in the lower Yarra?

Answer: Irrespective of any shipping problems, we all know the mouth of the Yarra is polluted.

Would a private company be allowed to dump sediment contaminated by zinc, lead and mercury in the bay?

Answer: Absolutely not.

The short-term answer is clear: the state must demand and develop a plan to not only clean up the spoil and safely store it, but also clean up the effects of more than 100 years of industry on the Yarra. There should be a once-in-a-century clean-up.

Instead of creating a toxic legacy for our children in the middle of the bay, we can use this opportunity to clean up the Yarra for them and for our grandchildren. At the same time, we can protect the bay by not using it as a site for toxic spoil.

The state should be letting a tender to clean up the silt and store it in safe, lined landfill rather than in free suspension for the next five months.

In case the Premier says otherwise, remember that the old gasworks in South Melbourne was cleaned out, cleaned up and turned into a wonderful urban park, the spoil stored safely and appropriately on land.

The long-term answer is also clear. Over the next 50 years, Victoria's port infrastructure will be moved progressively from Melbourne to Western Port, and more probably the coastal deep-water harbour at Portland.

Melbourne will inevitably be subject to the global trend to move from river ports to deep-water coastal ports.

This is happening for three reasons. Firstly, there are depth constraints on river ports. The very trend to deep-draught shipping, which is driving the current dredging, will ultimately limit the Yarra's future as a shipping port.

Secondly, as we are seeing with the Docklands development, there is a global trend to residential and open-space redevelopment of inner-city port land.

Thirdly, as Lindsay Fox suggests, there are long-term traffic congestion problems for the cities of the future.

We must begin the task of planning for a Victorian shipping solution that looks out over a half century or more and acknowledges the realities to come.

In the meantime, the Premier has a once-in-a-century chance to either clean up the Yarra and end the dumping of toxins in our public waters, or to repeat the mistakes of the past 150 years.

These great generational choices are the reasons we elect leaders, and I deeply hope the Premier takes this opportunity to be a leader for the next century rather than of the last century.

Greg Hunt is Opposition spokesman for Climate Change and the Environment and Federal MP for Flinders

No Toxic Dumping in Port Phillip

What Greg said in Parliament About Protecting Local Businesses



▲ speaking in Parliament

"Already we have reports from people, such as Jason Salter, who is a dive operator on the **Mornington Peninsula**, that the quality of the water—and the diving—has been greatly affected.

The position of the Port of Melbourne Corporation is that people can simply dive elsewhere. In reality that will mean that the impact on local businesses will be profound.

They have essentially been treated in a way which is not only arguably unconstitutional but also improper and immoral. I say that because their businesses will be cut to the quick without any compensation...

In effect, it is transferring wealth from small business owners to an enormous state-owned corporation and to the great shipping companies and stevedoring companies. This is the transfer of the hard-earned family earnings of small business operators to big business."

(Hansard, 14/02/08)

The Fight Against Toxic Waste in our Bay

The Victorian Government's plan to dredge two million tonnes of toxic sludge from the mouth of the Yarra and dump it in the middle of Port Phillip Bay is dangerous and unacceptable.

Also unacceptable is the fact that there will be no compensation for those small businesses such as dive operators whose livelihoods are adversely affected by the channel deepening project.

There are many in the community who feel the same way. I recently had the pleasure of meeting with a group of Year 6 students from Toorak College who were visiting Parliament House in Canberra.

One of the students, 11-year-old Matilda Davis of **Mt Martha**, handed me a petition about channel deepening. Matilda had been so concerned about the effects of the project that she had organised the petition and collected the signatures herself.

I have written to the Prime Minister on Matilda's behalf.



▲ receiving the channel deepening petition from Matilda Davis

Fighting Local Crime

Fact:

Many residents and traders have said they no longer report minor crimes to the police. It is important that all crimes are reported and I urge everyone to contact their local police station if they become aware that a crime has been committed.

Crime Forum Highlights Need for a Somerville Police Station

Late last year I helped chair a community crime forum at **Somerville** and gathered first-hand evidence of the town's crime problem.

Close to 100 people attending the forum heard an impassioned plea from residents, small business owners and a former local police officer for a **new police station to serve the Somerville community**.

Local police do a fantastic job but the nearest police station at **Hastings** is too far away from the town to provide an emergency response within an acceptable time frame.

The forum also heard from Federal MP Bronwyn Bishop, who chaired a recent Federal Parliament Inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families.

► with Hastings MP Neale Burgess, **Somerville & District Chamber of Commerce** President Jeff Kremer and Federal MP Bronwyn Bishop at the **Somerville** community crime forum.



Efforts to Tackle Hoons at Somerville

I met recently with a group of **Somerville** residents who live close to the Barber Reserve.

Local residents are suffering because of the thoughtless actions of hoons who use the unmade car park next to the reserve to do burnouts.

Not only is this behaviour a nuisance – causing huge clouds of dust to drift into nearby houses – it is dangerous.





▲ with *Somerville residents at the Barber Reserve*

Local school children use the reserve as a short cut on their way home from school and residents fear a child could be killed or injured.

I am working with residents and the **Mornington Peninsula** Shire Council on a plan to protect **Somerville** residents from hooners.

In the meantime, I am asking residents to contact both the police and my office to report any incidents of hoonish behaviour at the reserve.

National Community Crime Prevention Program Grants

The National Community Crime Prevention Program allows communities to buy equipment and undertake projects that directly assist in crime prevention.

Three local organisations were successful in the latest round of grants:

- ✓ **Rye Yacht Club** - \$888 for security lighting and safety equipment
- ✓ **Parish of Panagia Kamariani, Red Hill** - \$4750 to install security cameras at the church and parish hall
- ✓ **Neighbourhood Watch Mornington Peninsula** - \$4001 for a crime prevention program and the purchase of low-cost boat and trailer locks



▲ with *Tyabb Newsagency owner Peter Bernardi*

Urgent Need for More Police Officers on the Mornington Peninsula

A public meeting called by the Police Association earlier this year highlighted growing concern about the shortage of police officers on the **Mornington Peninsula**.

Police members have said police stations at **Hastings**, **Rosebud** and **Mornington** are permanently short staffed.

As a result, residents and local traders such as **Tyabb** newsagency operator Peter Bernardi say petty crime is becoming rampant.

I have approached the State Government repeatedly on this issue, calling for more resources and a **new 24-hour police station at Somerville**. Despite many letters and petitions, nothing has been done about this situation.

My office is currently collecting signatures for another petition to the State Government, calling for more police officers and a 24-hour police station at **Somerville**.

I urge every concerned local resident to drop into my office and sign this petition.

24-hour police station needed for Phillip Island

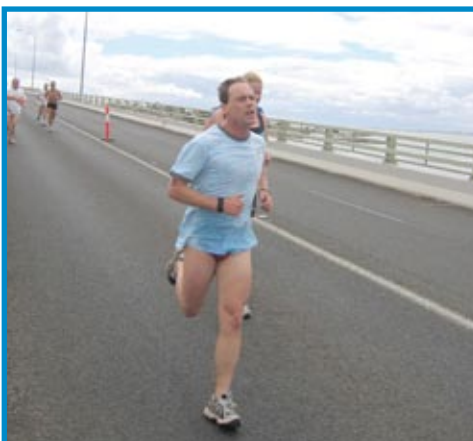
I am also working on tackling the shortage of police on **Phillip Island**. **The Island needs a 24-hour police station**; particularly in light of the growing problem of anti-social and hoonish behaviour during peak holiday periods.

Out and About in Flinders



▲ lending a hand at the launch of the latest Green Corps project at Sages Cottage, **Baxter**.

- ✓ Met with representatives of **Koo Wee Rup** Hospital to discuss ways to keep the hospital's respite centre open.
- ✓ Opened **Sorrento** Croquet Club's new clubroom at **Pt Nepean**.
- ✓ Spoke at the inaugural Peninsula Speaks meeting about inappropriate development on the **Mornington Peninsula** and developing a long term vision for the region.
- ✓ Met with **Phillip Island** Nature Park to discuss plans to upgrade facilities.
- ✓ Opened the new Grossard Court Aged Care Facility at **Cowes**.
- ✓ Met with representatives of Boral to present the case against a bitumen plant at **Crib Point**.
- ✓ Officially opened Marina Diagnostic Group's new radiology clinic at **Somerville**.



▲ approaching the finish line at **San Remo**.

- ✓ Met with representatives of the Western Port Oberon Association to discuss plans for the Otama submarine museum at **Crib Point**.
- ✓ Delivered a keynote speech on the future of business on the **Mornington Peninsula** at a business briefing at Mornington Yacht Club.
- ✓ Presented Australian Defence Force Medals to former members of the Australian Defence Force at **Hastings**.
- ✓ Presented an award for academic excellence at **Koo Wee Rup** P.S.
- ✓ Met with representatives of the Blue Wedges Coalition at **Mt Martha** to discuss strategies for stopping the dumping of toxic spoil in **Port Phillip**.



▲ helping with the washing up after a busy lunchtime session at **Rosebud's** Vinnie's Kitchen.

- ✓ Attended a board meeting to discuss the future of Warley Hospital on **Phillip Island**.
- ✓ Attended the **Red Hill** Pre-School 50th anniversary celebration.
- ✓ Met with **San Remo** Fisherman's Co-Operative to discuss plans for the \$1.2 million redevelopment of the co-operative site.
- ✓ Welcomed Year 11 **City of Casey** students to Parliament House.
- ✓ Presented an Older Australian Recognition Award to Bill Hopkins for his community fundraising work at **Cowes**.
- ✓ Opened the new **Rosebud West** Wellness Centre.



▲ clearing rubbish from Unthanks Reserve at **Somerville** on Clean Up Australia Day.

- ✓ Presented a flag at the opening of the 47th sailing season at **McCrae** Yacht Club.
- ✓ Cut the ribbon at the official opening of the new **Tooradin** Pharmacy.
- ✓ Unveiled a new basketball court at **Balnarring** P.S. financed by the Federal Government's *Investing In Our Schools Program*.
- ✓ Attended an afternoon tea at the Country Club Lodge aged care facility at **Safety Beach**.
- ✓ Visited Disability Opportunities Victoria headquarters at **Rosebud** with Senator Kay Patterson.
- ✓ Spoke at the launch of the **Rye** Historical Society's new book "Amongst the Old Folks" at **Rye P.S.**
- ✓ Worked to restore the Balcombe estuary reserve at **Mt Martha** with members of the Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group.



▲ pushing three-year-old Poppy along High St, **Hastings**, during the Western Port Festival.

Out and About: Spotlight on issues



▲ training with the Western Port Warriors Football Club at Hastings

Training with The Western Port Warriors

I recently joined the Western Port Warriors Football Club for a training session at Hastings.

The Warriors team is made up of players who have experienced hardship in one form or another - but that hasn't stopped them from becoming a great local success story.

Other local sporting events in which I have competed recently include:

- ✓ the Lord Somers Camp cross country race
- ✓ the Cowes Classic
- ✓ the San Remo Channel Challenge
- ✓ the Mt Martha Life Saving Club swim
- ✓ the Dromana Life Saving Club swim

Sunrise Spot

Earlier this year I was asked to appear as a regular guest on Channel 7's breakfast television program, Sunrise.

Every Friday I join Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek for the show's *Big Guns of Politics* segment.

The weekly debates with Tanya, Mel and Kogie are great fun and give me the chance to bring local issues such as Warley Hospital to the national stage.

For those interested in tuning in, the segment appears each Friday just after the 7am news.



▲ cooking up a storm for the Sunrise crew

The Fight To Save Warley Hospital

heraldsun.com.au

Losing patients

GREG HUNT



LATER today, Warley Hospital on Phillip Island will close its doors for the last time.

The last patient has already left. The last nurse will sign off for the final time. The doors of the hospital will be locked forever.

There will be no more births or recoveries. No more palliative care for residents wishing to spend their final days close to their homes and their families.

There will be no more hospital-based accident and emergency service for parents of toddlers or seniors with urgent conditions.

After 84 years, Phillip Island will cease to have a hospital. The not-for-profit bush nursing hospital will simply die.

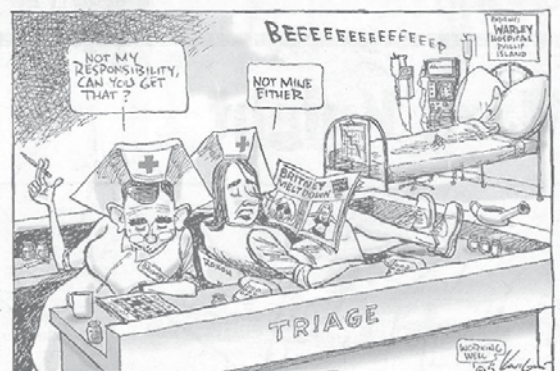
This closure was not inevitable. It was not necessary and, above all else, it was easily avoidable.

Warley Hospital is the first victim of the Rudd Government's monstrous sham on health.

The new Government inherited a promised lifeline of \$2.5 million from the former government to keep Warley alive and to provide one of Victoria's premier tourist destinations with a hospital for the future.

Yet, despite the public rhetoric of concerns about health, they refused to honour the Howard government's funding promise and condemned Warley Hospital to closure.

There are three conclusions to be drawn from this. First, the cosy compact between Kevin Rudd and the states over health is simply a cover for inaction. Warley was driven to distress after the Brumby Government refused to provide four public beds to sustain the hospital and to serve the people of Phillip Island.



Heal thyself: how Mark Knight saw the crisis at Warley Hospital.

Once the state said no, the board turned to the Federal Government for help and the then prime minister John Howard approved \$2.5 million as an urgent lifeline for Warley.

After the election, John Brumby said it was a federal responsibility but federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon said it was not her problem. It is hard to imagine a worse example of the blame game because this time a real hospital will close and the heart of a small community will be broken.

Second, the reality is that the new Government has shown indifference to both Victoria and to rural Australia. The \$2.5 million promised by the previous government was 1/6000th of the federal surplus. There would have been bipartisan support for action because we had already pledged our own financial support.

But because state and federal Labor governments were silent on each others' failings, the pressure was never there to support rural Australia.

Third, the decision shows contempt for a local community. Two months after I approached Nicola Roxon on behalf of the people of Phillip Island, the minister has still not replied to letters, still not returned calls and has failed to acknowledge a heartfelt letter from the hospital board asking her to face the people of Phillip Island.

It is one thing to do soft public appearances, but it takes courage to honestly face a community and outline why you are abandoning them.

Ultimately, Warley Hospital has been a genuine hospital of the people. Locals born there are named after it. Its wards have seen people brought into this world and leave this world with love and care.

All of that will now end. And for that, the new Prime Minister and his Health Minister should be ashamed.

Greg Hunt is the federal member for Flinders



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Environment News

Working for
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Autumn 2008

50 Schools and Community Groups Receive More Than \$1.7 million for Water Saving Projects

Late last year I had the pleasure of informing 50 local community groups that they had been successful in securing Federal funding for a range of water-saving projects.

Collectively, these projects will save close to 64 million litres of fresh drinking water each year.



▲ Cowes P.S. received around \$49,000 to install new water tanks

Mornington Peninsula:

- ✓ \$45,483 Peninsula Special Developmental School, **Dromana**
- ✓ \$50,000 **Flinders** Golf Club
- ✓ \$49,600 Fusion Australia, **Mt Martha**
- ✓ \$30,700 Capel Sound Foreshore Committee of Management, **Rosebud West**
- ✓ \$49,811 **Main Ridge** Bowls Club
- ✓ \$23,462 **Dromana** Secondary College
- ✓ \$50,000 **Mt Martha** P.S.
- ✓ \$48,468 Osborne P.S., **Mt Martha**
- ✓ \$49,209 **Rosebud** P.S.
- ✓ \$17,398 Our Lady of Fatima P.S., **Rosebud**
- ✓ \$23,229 Eastbourne P.S., **Rosebud West**
- ✓ \$50,000 **Mt Martha** Bowls Club
- ✓ \$47,131 The Bays Hospital Group, **Hastings & Mornington**
- ✓ \$15,900 **Safety Beach** Sailing Club
- ✓ \$49,300 **Merricks** Lodge

Hastings & Somerville region:

- ✓ \$11,122 **Balnarring** & District Pre-School Association
- ✓ \$49,918 **Somerville** Rise P.S.
- ✓ \$45,997 St Mary's Catholic P.S., **Hastings**
- ✓ \$23,170 **Hastings** P.S.
- ✓ \$49,700 **Somerville** Volunteer Fire Brigade

- ✓ \$30,950 Somercare Aged Care Home, **Somerville**
- ✓ \$4276 **Baxter** Pre-School
- ✓ \$19,205 **Tyabb** Railway Station P.S.
- ✓ \$32,760 **Tyabb** P.S.
- ✓ \$48,010 **Crib Point** P.S.
- ✓ \$42,538 **Moorooduc** P.S.
- ✓ \$42,194 **Somerville** P.S.
- ✓ \$35,951 St Joseph's Catholic P.S., **Crib Point**
- ✓ \$47,282 **Bittern** P.S.
- ✓ \$49,870 **Flinders** Christian Community College
- ✓ \$49,500 **Hastings** Bowling Club
- ✓ \$46,000 **Balnarring** Bowls and Social Club
- ✓ \$32,081 **Crib Point** Community Garden Inc
- ✓ \$43,088 Western Port Yacht Club, **Balnarring**

Pearcedale to Koo Wee Rup / Lang Lang:

- ✓ \$16,000 Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens **Cranbourne** Inc
- ✓ \$49,082 **Devon Meadows** P.S.
- ✓ \$49,765 **Koo Wee Rup** P.S.
- ✓ \$48,914 **Cranbourne South** P.S.
- ✓ \$4120 **Pearcedale** Fire Brigade
- ✓ \$44,620 **Lang Lang** P.S.
- ✓ \$49,805 **Tooradin** P.S.

Bass Coast & Phillip Island:

- ✓ \$39,200 Uniting Church Conference Centre, **Grantville**
- ✓ \$48,850 Christian Youth Camps Ltd's **Phillip Island** Adventure Resort
- ✓ \$14,400 **Newhaven** College
- ✓ \$21,918 CJ, SL and WJ Berry, **Glen Alvie**
- ✓ \$31,100 Country Fresh Herbs, **Phillip Island**
- ✓ \$15,029 **Bass Coast** Community Health Service
- ✓ \$3400 Barb Martin Bush Bank, **Phillip Island**
- ✓ \$48,800 **Cowes** P.S.
- ✓ \$9895 **Bass Valley** Land Care Group

Shadow Ministry Appointment

In December I was appointed Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Urban Water - a role that brings together the great interests of my time in Parliament.

It is a chance to tackle the many environmental challenges currently facing both the Flinders community and Australia more generally.