

Keppel And Fitzroy Delta Alliance (KAFDA)

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Dredging for Coal Ports in the Fitzroy Delta will remove 5million cubic metres of material – way too risky to approve

A company seeking to build coal terminals in the Fitzroy River delta has revealed that a massive dredging program will be required for bulk carriers to access proposed wharfs along Balaclava Island.

Given the current catastrophic situation in Gladstone Harbour where fish are diseased and dying and the water quality in the harbour is being questioned, KAFDA cannot see how dredging massive quantities of material from the mouth of the second biggest river catchment in Australia could be considered safe.

Kim Martin, one of the members of KAFDA, said the risk associated with disturbing sediments that has lain dormant for centuries is just too great. He said proponent company documents admitted that acid sulphate was present in the sediments to be dredged.

“The plan, apparently, is to dredge the entrance for the bulk carriers, and deposit the spoil a bit further out to sea in the southern part of Keppel Bay,” Mr Martin said.

“How can we be sure that the south-north current in the bay will not just spread it all across Keppel Bay and the beaches of the Capricorn Coast?” asked Mr Martin. “This would be totally unacceptable.”

“It was planned to remove 5 million cubic metres of material. If that were dumped along the Bruce Highway at a width of 10 metres, and depth of 5 metres (twice the height of the average house), it would stretch all the way from Rockhampton to Gladstone” Mr Martin explained.

“There is lot more to these proposals than just the dredging and I’m sure the communities of Rockhampton and Capricorn Coast will have no part of them once they realise what they entail,” Mr Martin said. “The last thing anyone wants is another Gladstone Harbour disaster in Keppel Bay.”

KAFDA urges the community to attend the public information meeting it is organising in Yeppoon on Tuesday 18th October at the Town Hall from 6pm to find out the full plans and implications associated with the proposed coal terminal developments in the Fitzroy River Delta. KAFDA believes the only chance there is to halt this environmental destruction is for the community to stand as one and send the strongest possible message to government that our river delta and coast are off limits to such huge industrialisation.
