

**WARRNAMBOOL GOLF CLUB INC.**

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27 September 2007

Mr. Richard Willis
The Secretary,
Legislative Council Select Committee on Public Land Development
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
Melbourne
VICTORIA, 3002

Dear Mr. Willis,

Re: Select Committee on Public Land Development

I refer to the above and advise that the Warrnambool Golf Club has been working on the redevelopment of the Warrnambool Golf Course since 1990. The upgrading of the course is considered to be essential for the recreational requirements of local people and as a tourism attraction for the Warrnambool area at the end of the Great Ocean Road.

The redevelopment of the course has been difficult to achieve primarily because of the need to undertake a land swap of Crown land for freehold land. The club has been frustrated by the apparent lack of process for this land swap to be considered and how decisions are made on this process.

The Warrnambool Golf Club suggests that a clear and transparent process be implemented to allow a review of the benefits associated with the exchange of Crown land for freehold land, or the sale of Crown land. In this particular case it is considered that there are significant environmental outcomes that can be achieved through the land exchange while allowing the facilitation of an important and exciting project for the Warrnambool region.

The key issue in this case is that the public land is used for a golf course and has been extensively modified, whereas the private land is part of the Merri River estuary and contains important wetlands.

It appears that the decision making on the land exchange has been driving by the rigorous application of policy rather than the best environmental outcomes. This will not result in the best outcome for the community yet there has been no

opportunity for the Warrnambool Golf Club to test the proposition through a formal process of review.

It appears that individuals within the relevant department have taken a negative view on the proposal and influenced the decision of the Minister without any right of discussion or review by an independent arbitrator. It is the Club's submission that a process similar to the Independent Panel system under the Planning system would at least give the opportunity for these types of proposal to be reviewed and tested.

The Warrnambool Golf Club is continuing to press on with the project and remains committed to achieving a land swap between the least environmentally sensitive areas of the golf club land and the most environmentally sensitive areas of its freehold land.

The Club would welcome an outcome from this Committee that establishes a clear process for the review of land exchange proposals with Victoria and particularly on this site.

Representatives of the Club would be pleased to make a presentation to the committee to outline the project in more detail and to explain the difficulties associated with achieving a resolution of these matters.

Yours faithfully,



Gary Parsons
Club Secretary

Major sponsors of the Warrnambool Golf Club Inc.

