

Surfrider Foundation Australia Media Release

## "Surfers warn of Westernport Wipeout"

Surfrider Foundation Australia today joined the growing tide of opposition to the development of Westernport as Victoria's next big container port.

**"Surfrider Foundation have placed Westernport Bay on its Australian list of 'Endangered Waves'.** This is due to the coastline erosion threats posed by the port channel dredging and the risk of oil spills from the 30-fold increase in shipping that will navigate this hazardous tidal channel," said Dr Rex Campbell, Chairman of Surfrider Foundation.

We support the call by the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and the Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council for "an independent assessment using the full force of national environmental laws before any further work or money is spent on expanding the port".

"I live on the Peninsula, surf both Westernport and Phillip Island and am very concerned. Look at the erosion of Portsea from the Port Phillip Bay dredging and Westernport is a much more exposed bay."

**"We are asking Federal and State Governments to add 'Surf Quality' as an environmental impact criteria for this and all future coastal development projects."**

Westernport has around 8 storm-swell surf spots plus the famous Phillip Island Cat bay area that surfers flock to in a south-easter. Surfing and clean beaches attracts thousands of tourists and locals year round to Westernport and Phillip Island.

**"In a public meeting this week I called on Greg Hunt, as the local Member for the area and the current Coalition Shadow Minister for the Environment, to take heed of the risks by promising to conduct the highest level of Federal environment impact assessment available."**

"Mr Hunt replied to me that "the assessment would be as thorough as has ever been done at the Federal level",” Dr Campbell confirmed.

If Mr Hunt is elected and ends up a Federal Cabinet Minister this promise will be critical to Westernport, as the State impact assessment of Port Phillip Bay dredging was clearly faulty.

Westernport is a fragile tidal bay system with Ramsar listed wetlands. It is a recreational haven for Victorian surfers, sailors and fisherman due to its protection from storms.

More Information/Media queries:

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