

Labor's jetty pledge

... but Nationals claiming credit

RAPID BAY - A Labor government would fund the restoration and reopening of the Rapid Bay Jetty.

This was the assurance given to the National Party's Karlene Maywald by Labor Minister for Infrastructure Patrick Conlon.

Mrs Maywald joined Nationals candidate for Finnis, Kym McHugh, last week at Rapid Bay to make the announcement.

"The jetty's current condition is the result of many years of neglect and I am pleased to have secured this commitment," Mrs Maywald said.

She said the environmental impact assessment of the jetty, together with an engineering report, had provided a number of restoration options.

However, neither Mrs Maywald or Mr McHugh elaborated on the options.

"The work will be funded

by a number of different state government departments each making a contribution," Mrs Maywald said.

"Consultation with key interest groups will now be undertaken to select the right restoration option."

She said groups such as the Friends of Rapid Bay Jetty, as well as local business people, divers, recreational fishers, environmental groups and the council would have the opportunity for input.

Mr McHugh praised the efforts of the local community in lobbying for the restoration.

He described the jetty as "an important asset for the South Coast's tourism industry".

"It is important that the plans to restore the jetty are finalised and the funding provided as soon as possible so the jetty's reopening can be expedited," Mr McHugh said.

However, he said the fight



JETTY PLEDGE ... The National Party's Karlene Maywald and Kym McHugh travelled to Rapid Bay Jetty last week to announce that the ALP had pledged to fund its restoration and reopening if re-elected on March 18.

wasn't over, even if Labor is re-elected to government.

"While it is great that we have had this first win in the fight to have Rapid Bay Jetty reopened, our efforts will clearly need to continue until plans are finalised and restoration works begun," Mr McHugh said.

When *The Times* contacted Mr Conlon's office, his spokesman confirmed the pledge and, as for why it was

announced by a National candidate and not the Labor candidate, Mary-Lou Corcoran, the spokesman said Mr Conlon had reported the pledge to Mrs Maywald in her capacity as Minister for Regional Development.

Yesterday morning Ms Corcoran delivered a release to *The Times* welcoming the announcement and congratulating those involved in lobbying.

The
Times

Thursday, March 2, 2006

What does it all mean?

So a Labor government after March 18 would restore the Rapid Bay jetty, but what does this commitment really mean?

Candidates from all parties in the seat of Finnis indicated they were supportive of a restoration and reopening of the jetty. However, now the Labor government, using Nationals candidate Kym McHugh and not Labor candidate Mary-Lou Corcoran to deliver the message, have made a commitment from a position of "authority" but won't reveal any details.

Environmental Impact Assessments and engineering reports have been used to highlight a number of options that will supposedly be put to the "stakeholders" if Labor is returned. However, why won't the Minister for Infrastructure, Patrick Conlon, or the Nationals' representatives reveal what these options are? 'We don't want to pre-empt the outcome' is the response from the Minister's office. However, proper consultation won't be carried out unless all stakeholders, not just those who the government of the day wants to talk to, are privy to all of the options and the financial and environmental implications of each.

The Rapid Bay and Yankalilla communities should beware of politicians bearing gifts on the eve of an election.

The jetty fight can be compared to the fight for a relocated wastewater treatment plant at Victor Harbor. A promise on the eve of a state election by Liberal candidate Dean Brown in October 1997 that the plant would be upgraded and moved took eight-and-a-half years to be delivered. And, this delivery was only after the promise looked like being reneged on when community consultation was undertaken in a bid to try to stall and change the decision for relocation.

The community of Victor Harbor remained steadfast in its commitment to having it relocated and upgraded and it is indeed a celebration of this tenacity that the new plant was officially commissioned this week.

It is positive to see that the Labor Party, who are tipped to return to government with a clear majority, has indicated a commitment to restoring and reopening the jetty.

However, the promise is shallow unless the entire community can get to see all of the options that are available.

Praise for Friends of Rapid Bay Jetty

I would like to sincerely thank the Friends of Rapid Bay jetty as I feel they are fighting for all South Australians.

Future generations deserve the opportunity to fish and dive off of this magnificent icon.

I look forward to the process gaining full momentum for restoration and will be writing to Mr Rann who I feel is an in touch leader of this state and is someone who is also in touch with the general public and the people of SA and realises the need for such a prime location for families to chase bread and butter fish species and for divers and tourists to have the opportunity to view and film the leafy seadragon.

Brett Oakley
6 Coriole Ct, Reynella

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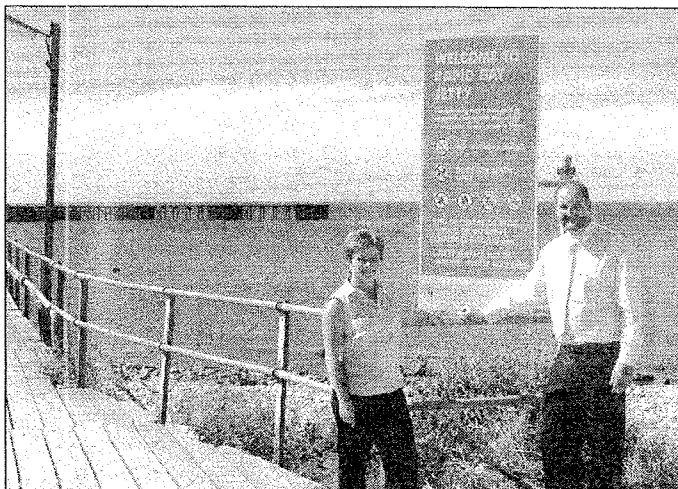
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