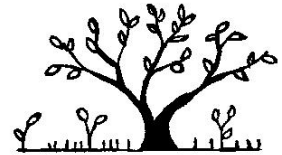



**Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group Inc**  
PO Box 3122  
Port Adelaide SA 5015



Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
Department of House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

	<b>Submission No. 03</b> (Largs North) Date: 02/11/2010
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Dear Madam/Sir,

**Re: Proposed development and construction of housing for Defence at Largs North (Bayriver), Port Adelaide, South Australia**

The Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group (PAREPG) has been operating at a grassroots level in the Port Adelaide area for 25 years and was formed to provide a voice for residents in the area on environmental and social issues affecting their health and the health of the environment.

In view of the heavy industries operating in the Port Adelaide area and the level of industrial traffic on road and rail, PAREPG has had extensive experience of highlighting and working to mitigate the impact of air, water and noise pollution and land contamination on residents and the environment.

PAREPG welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Public Works Committee to seek the Committee's support to ensure the proposed Defence Housing Authority (DHA) housing development in Largs North avoids or mitigates the entrenched amenity, health and pollution problems faced by residents immediately to the north and south of the development site.

The 2006 census identified the suburb of Taperoo as falling within the lowest 3% of Index of SocioEconomic Advantage and Disadvantage  
([http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/379403E9EBEDF2A4CA2574570017FBFA/\\$File/2033.0.55.001%20seifa,%20state%20suburb%20codes,%20data%20cube%20only,%202006.xls#Table 2!A1](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/379403E9EBEDF2A4CA2574570017FBFA/$File/2033.0.55.001%20seifa,%20state%20suburb%20codes,%20data%20cube%20only,%202006.xls#Table 2!A1))

The proposed development will remove a significant section of public open space. The Meyer Oval has been originally built by ICI, the original owner of the Soda Ash plant for the use of residents and employees, but access has been restricted since remediation of the eastern section of the site. PAREPG believe the beneficiaries of this operation, South Australia's Land Management Corporation and the developer have an ethical responsibility to make an active contribution to improving the utility of local open space.

**PAREPG's submission will highlight current environmental and amenity issues for the site and make positive recommendations to increase the long term value of the development to residents, the environment and the local community.**

Our submission specifically addresses:

- Mitigation measures for noise pollution from increasing rail traffic on the Outer Harbour line on the eastern boundary of the proposed DHA development site
- Precautionary testing and control of land and ground water contamination from the previous sulphuric acid plant tailings dam near the eastern boundary of the site
- Site flooding
- Amenity loss from on-going dumping of calcium carbonate waste from Penrice Soda Products factory immediately to the east and north east of the site

- The opportunity to develop safe access to the nearby river frontage on Snowden's Beach
- The opportunity to enhance bicycle transport corridors linking the site to the submarine and ship building sites at the northern end of the LeFevre Peninsula and to other public facilities

## **Noise Pollution Issues**

The two most recent issues of the Portside Messenger have had front page articles voicing the distress of residents living along Mersey Road to the north and south of the proposed DHA development site with the level and frequency of noise pollution from rail traffic (*see attached copies of the articles in Appendix 1, pages 1-7*).

The articles highlight the increasing volume of the rail traffic since the completion of the grain terminal at Outer Harbour earlier this year – quadrupling from 40 to 160 per week since that time. This volume will only increase as the rail line also takes ore from expanding mining operations in the State's north.

The most distressing aspect of the rail traffic noise pollution to residents is that it can occur any time of day or night, with no night curfew in place as with an airport. Residents complain of freight train brakes screeching, wheels thumping and their houses vibrating and windows rattling when trains pass by.

Houses in the DHA development will be less than 100 metres from the rail corridor. Excessive and intermittent night time noise is particularly problematic for families with children and for shift workers - who are likely to be amongst the Defence personnel and the young families in the affordable housing provided in the development.

The Outer Harbour line was substantially upgraded with an addition of the a second track in 2005 in conjunction with the building of the new rail bridge across the Port River.

Works to provide adequate noise pollution measures such as landscaped mounds and walls have been promised to residents in public consultations on the rail corridor upgrade and during the Northern LeFevre Peninsula Development Plan Amendment process by the State Government (eg. see Defence SA Northern LeFevre Peninsula Master Plan, 2008) but no physical noise barriers have been installed. Previously built soil mounds north of the DHA development site built to reduce noise have not been revegetated and are of an inadequate height.

Alarmingly, the State Transport Minister, Mr Pat Conlon, is reported a saying that “the track duplication *eliminated the need for further noise mitigation measures*” (*our italics*, Portside Messenger, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, page 4). Current residents would beg to differ!

### Recommendation 1:

A properly vegetated soil mound with a minimum height of 3 metres should be built along the eastern boundary of the DHA housing site, either within the site boundary or along the road easement of the unmade portion of Mersey Road adjacent to the site. This mound will protect residents from the worst effects of increasing rail traffic.

Given the State Government's view on the lack of necessity for noise mitigation measures for the rail corridor the Commonwealth would need to find ways to ensure this was built.

### Recommendation 2:

That houses on the eastern side of the development have double-glazed windows installed.

## **Site Contamination from Acid Leachate**

The tailings dam for the former Sulphuric Acid Plant immediately to the east of the proposed DHA development site may not be adequately capped or contained. There are some signs of acid soils next to the

mounded tailings dam site and we believe that the Council-built stormwater detention basins to the northeast of the DHA site may be contaminated. PAREPG is concerned that sulphuric acid may be leaching into the groundwater near the tailings dam (see map attached from Supplementary Item 4 of the Defence Housing Authority submission to the PWC)

Recommendation 3:

That testing of groundwater on the site and in the Council stormwater detention basins is conducted prior to the Committee approving the DHA housing development proposal and, if leaching is found to be occurring, for development to be stopped in the area until it is remediated.

### **Site Flooding**

On a recent site visit (July 11<sup>th</sup>) PAREPG members noted that a significant portion of the proposed DHA development site was under water, following what has been relatively average to below average recent winter rains. The site is extremely low lying with king tides and sea level rise being of possible threat in the future.

Recommendation 4:

That the Public Works Committee ensures that the low lying site is built up to at least the current recommended levels above Australian Height Datum to cope with potential sea level rise and backed up stormwater caused by high river tides.

### **Social Amenity Issues**

Penrice Soda Products factory immediately to the east and northeast of the site has been stockpiling its waste (largely calcium carbonate) on site since the EPA ordered disposal in the Port River. These stockpiles are visible to the north and north east of the proposed DHA housing between the development and the Port River

PAREPG understands that Penrice has no takers interested in using their waste product and so the stockpiles will continue to accumulate, spread and possibly grow in height, constituting an eyesore in what should be a pleasant view of the Port River.

PAREPG also understands that the possibly contaminated Council stormwater detention basins east and north east of the proposed DHA housing site may be filled by Penrice waste products, bringing the piles even closer to residents.

The stockpiled waste has been identified as contaminated (chemical analysis has found excessive levels of arsenic and other heavy metals (<http://www.parepg.org.au/AboutPenriceFill>)). The stockpiles will not support vegetation and so will remain a blot on the landscape.

Recommendation 5:

That the Committee requires the DHA to negotiate with Penrice, and the relevant authorities to adequately screen the Penrice waste stockpiles and as a matter of urgency find other locations to dump the product.

### **Safe Access to Riverfront Public Reserves**

The opportunity exists for a pathway and safe pedestrian crossing across the railway for residents to access Snowden's Beach. When the public land adjacent to the beach north of Marina Adelaide boat ramp is cleaned up it could be an attraction for residents of Largs North to access. The preferred route has been marked as Route 1 on the attached map and would save residents walking 1.5 kilometres (Route 2 on the map) which is currently the only option for reaching Snowden's Beach (3), (*See Appendix 2, Page 1*)

Recommendation 6:

That the Council in partnership with Transport SA establish a pathway and safe pedestrian crossing across the railway from the proposed development site to Snowden's Beach

### **Bicycle routes and transport measures**

The opportunity exists for a bicycle track to be established along the unmade Mersey Road adjacent to the DHA development site's eastern boundary which would make Mersey Road continuous as a secondary road suitable for bike traffic up the LeFevre Peninsula. This route would enable Defence personnel and others working at the submarine and ship building site at the northern end of the Peninsula to avoid cycling on the busy main Victoria Road.

Indeed the BikeDirect route runs to the east of Victoria Rd, uninterrupted from the Port River Expressway to the Defence facilities at Osborne and recreational areas to the north, with the sole exception of the section adjacent to the proposed development (*See Appendix 2, Page 2*)

Given that the site is relatively distant and across a main road from shopping facilities and schools, bicycle lanes and crossings on Victoria road would be an additional advantage. Sheltered bus stops would also be required, especially for residents on low incomes without car access.

#### Recommendation 7:

That a bicycle path be constructed at the eastern boundary of the DHA development site

We believe that the standard of the proposed DHA housing development will be greatly improved by attending to the above issues and that the standard of adjoining suburbs will be enhanced in turn to the benefit of residents and the whole community.

Yours sincerely



Liz Millington  
Co-Secretary,  
Port Adelaide Residents Environment Protection Group



Tony Bazeley  
Treasurer

## Call to muzzle rail noise

- [Local News](#)

*30 Jun 10 @ 10:36am by Heather Kennett*



Mersey Rd resident Paul Kennedy, with daughter Michii, are overcome by the noise. Picture: Roy Van Der Vegt

LE FEVRE Peninsula residents living next to the rail freight corridor are demanding noise buffers or a night curfew to shield them from screeching train wheels and blaring horns, as the line becomes the state's busiest.

About 160 freight trains use the line adjacent Mersey Rd weekly, at all hours of the day and night, up from 40 movements, since the opening of Outer Harbor's new \$135 million grain terminal earlier this year.

The rail corridor has now overtaken the Adelaide to Perth route as the most frequently used freight line in SA, which sees an average of 130 trains a week.

Rattling windows, vibrations causing cracks to form in walls, squealing brakes and thumping wheels are among the complaints from residents, who say the increased traffic has made living near the line intolerable.

The aifPortside Messenger aif last week doorknocked the area, with many claiming the noise mitigation measures that were promised when the grain terminal was first approved in 2003 have never materialised.

Gail Moffatt said the train noise used to be bearable but was now much worse, "especially since they put the new tracks down making the trains screech".

“When the upgrade was first raised, they said they would plant shrubs but they haven’t yet, but it’s now so bad I don’t think it would make any difference anyway,” Mrs Moffatt said.

Noise buffers including landscaping and soil mounds were also flagged as part of an upgrade of the corridor in 2005, when a second line was built to cater to increased traffic when the Outer Harbor channel was deepened.

Another resident, Briony, who did not want her surname published, agreed little had been done to protect residents from the noise.

“They said it wouldn’t be all night, that it would stop at 11pm it’s now got beyond a joke,” she said. “Some nights it comes at 11, at 2, at 3am, it would be quite reasonable if it was at 9am.”

Jim Brown questioned why a curfew could not be implemented, similar to that imposed on Adelaide Airport. “They gave us a big spiel about the trains being quieter, but it’s now 24 hours a day,” he said. “The airport has a curfew, yet trains get to do what they want and use their horns it’s just unreal.”

Paul Kennedy argued high fencing similar to what had been offered to some Victoria Rd residents should be made available to Mersey Rd residents to help them cope. “Along there they’ve built significant fences, yet we’ve 1km long freight trains travelling at reasonable speeds,” he said.

Port-Enfield councillor Bruce Johansen said the council had raised the issue with the Transport Department over the past 10 years, but authorities had refused to listen to the resident’s concerns.

“It’s unfair these people aren’t getting the same treatment that residents along Portrush Rd, in Mile End and Salisbury have got with solid brick walls being built in front of their homes.”

A spokesman for Transport Minister Pat Conlon said in an emailed statement the duplication of the railway line had removed the need for passing loops, which “significantly reduced the noise associated with train movements”.

“The duplication ensures noise levels along the corridor remain well within the standards required of the World Health Organisation and the EPA Rail Noise Criteria.”





# Portside Messenger

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WEDNESDAY JUNE 30, 2010

# STOP THE NOISE

By HEATHER KENNETT

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■ Continued, Page 6

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# Residents say enough

■ From Page One

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UNBEARABLE NOISE: Mersey Rd resident Paul Kennedy, with daughter Michii, wants high fencing made available to help combat rail freight noise. Picture: Roy Van Der Vegt H2030270

## Authority wants complaint detail

THE Environmental Protection Authority says it will investigate residents' noise complaints - with the more detail provided the better.

The EPA's Air and Noise Branch manager Rob Lyons said residents should note the time and direction of the train to help with follow-ups.

"Wheel and brake squealing, excessively loud engines - the more detail the better," he said.

"We would try and figure out which train it is and assess the engine and take action if the noise is excessive."

He said the EPA could only intervene when the train was found to be making "excessive noise".

"The operation of rolling stock if complying with normal noise frequency and the number of movements is outside the guidelines of the Act."

■ To register your noise complaint call the EPA on 8204 2004.



# is enough

## TRAIN NOISE WOES OF MERSEY RD RESIDENTS:

"I've lived here eight years and it's got worse. I do shift work, I get home after midnight and they're still coming through with their squeaky brakes. I know industry has got to go on but they could do it through the day – it is really annoying. The screeching brakes, you hear the wheels thumping into the tracks as it moves along."

Donald Holmes

"We've been here 27 years and there was no trains when we came. They gave us a big spiel about trains being quieter, but it's now 24 hours a day. The airport has a curfew, trains get to do what they want and use their horns – it's unreal. I've got nothing against progress but a night curfew would be good. During consultation they told us they might put in an earth barrier but then they told us there wouldn't be enough room."

Jim Brown

"You can feel the ground shake, it's enough to wake me up at night. You can hear the crates shaking as it travels along and then the engine comes through. A sound barrier would help to cut out some of the noise."

Bud

"I can't hear the TV when they go past and the whole house vibrates. It used to be bearable but now it's ridiculous, there's many people trying to sell their homes because of it. A curfew would be really good because the trains come through at 2.30am."

Gail Moffatt

"The trains sound like its coming through the front door. They are at all hours of the night, the house vibrates and you can hear the glasses in the cupboard rattling. A barrier would be good to block out the noise or a curfew."

Bronwyn Roberts

"They said it wouldn't be all night, that it would stop at 11pm, they rattle my windows – it's got beyond a joke. Some nights it comes at 11, at 2, at 3am, it would be quite reasonable at 9am. It's also the squeaking of the brakes, it starts from two streets away down all the way through. My daughter is two-and-a-half, she needs her sleep."

Briony

"The whole house shakes and the house is cracking. The line was here before we were but there has been a significant increase, with the majority of the increase occurring after-hours. Last Saturday night, five trains came through between 10am and 6am. The track is not maintained enough. We live opposite a very straight stretch of track, yet the majority of trains screech – it's this screeching which causes the discomfort."

Paul Kennedy



## Time for action on train noise

- [Local News](#)

7 Jul 10 @ 07:53am by Staff Writer



TESTING NEEDED: Port-Enfield councillor Bruce Johansen wants the council urge the EPA to carry out noise monitoring on the Le Fevre Peninsula rail corridor. Picture: Denys Finney

THE Port-Enfield Council will push the State Government to carry out noise testing along the Le Fevre Peninsula rail corridor, in the wake of resident anger over a four-fold increase of freight traffic adjacent their homes.

Cr Bruce Johansen will raise the issue at the council's July 13 meeting after the *aifPortside Messenger* aiflast week reported Mersey Rd residents' complaints that the noise from the 160 trains using the corridor each week was becoming unbearable.

Cr Johansen said the State Government must recognise the residents' concerns as valid.

"Over the past decade we have attended many, many meetings and workshops with the Transport Department with the same outcome," Cr Johansen said.

"They maintain we do not have a problem."

He said while the council was told the 2007 upgrade of the line, which saw the track doubled, would fix the noise and vibration problems, it clearly had not.

"There are 78 houses that border the Mersey Rd section of the line, but even people one house back would be affected by the increase in traffic.

"Yet not one dollar was spent on noise abatement measures." A spokesman for Transport Minister Pat Conlon confirmed no physical noise barriers were installed during the upgrade.

“The old single track featured passing loops, where idling locomotives sat waiting for trains to pass ... it was these idling locomotives that were the main source of noise,” he said.

“The track duplication eliminated the need for further noise mitigation measures.”

The department said the results of the most recent noise monitoring in 2008 when an average of 30 trains used the line each week fell within EPA guidelines, and there were no immediate plans to do further testing at this stage.

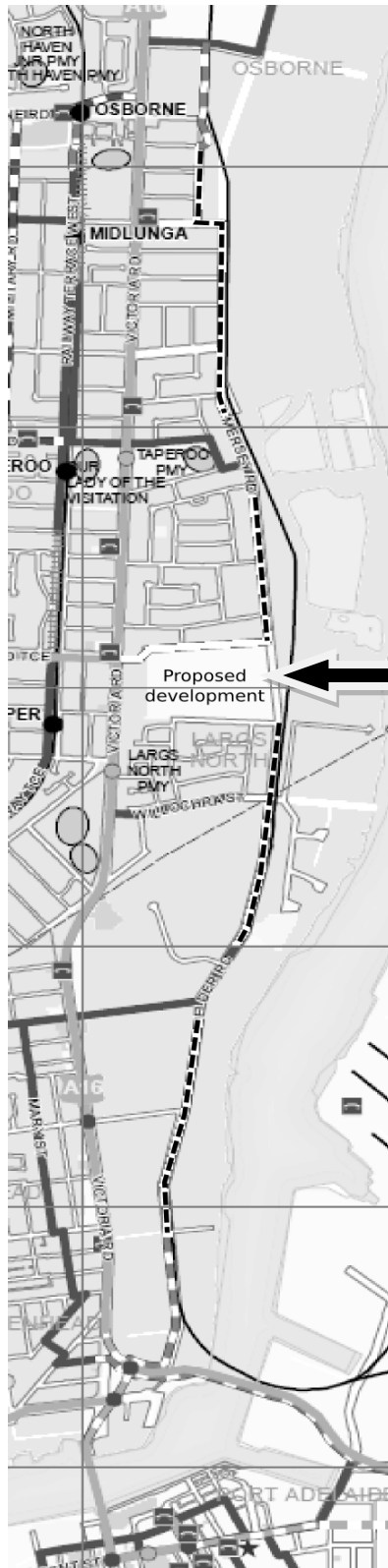
futag pi2155 To register your noise complaint call the EPA on 8204 2004.



**Recommendation 6: Proposed Route for Resident Access to Snowden's Beach**



**Current Break in LeFevre Peninsula Bicycle Route Connection  
- Eastern Boundary of proposed DHA Development, Largs North**



**Break in  
Bicycle Route  
past proposed  
DHA  
development**