



media release

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BID FOR \$5 MILLION TO DEVELOP LAKES ENTRANCE FORESHORE

For immediate release – Friday, 25 May 2007

East Gippsland Shire and Gippsland Ports have joined forces in a bid to raise \$5 million from the Commonwealth Government for a major development of the Lakes Entrance foreshore to be called Cunninghame Quay.

They have developed a proposal that provides for the development of the foreshore between Barnes Avenue and Mechanics Street and the construction of a new jetty to accommodate the growing number of private pleasure craft that are visiting the town, as well as the Lakes Entrance charter boat fleet.

The proposal also includes provision for a possible commercial opportunity such as a café at the end of the proposed jetty, a pump out station on Post Office jetty and new arrangements for charter boat operators' ticketing and administration.

If successful Gippsland Ports will manage and contribute to the \$3,123,000 'over water' construction while East Gippsland Shire will manage and part finance the \$1,858,000 onshore development that includes works to allow pedestrians safe access across the Princes Highway to the shopping precinct, upgrading of paving, boardwalk and car parking.

Gippsland Ports Acting CEO Greg Hatt said the application was being made as the result of the economic impact of the 34 percent reduction in the number of commercial fishing vessels based in Lakes Entrance under the Commonwealth Government's program to buy-back fishing licenses.

"The development would help correct the economic loss from the fleet reduction," he said

"There is a rapidly growing number of boats on the Gippsland Lakes and for them Lakes Entrance is one of the most popular cruising destinations."

“However, on arrival there is precious little in the way of infrastructure to allow them to berth and then use the town’s resources.

”As well there are between 500 and 600 leisure boats that pass by Lakes Entrance on passage between Eden and either Melbourne or Tasmania.

“For these vessels also there are very few itinerant mooring spaces and no accessible sewage disposal facilities but the Cunninghame Quay project would address these needs and potentially become a magnet for both the local and out of town boating community.

Shire CEO Steve Kozlowski said the project would also provide for recreational fishing that is a key attraction the opportunities for which have been reduced because of the need to ‘gate’ many existing jetties for security reasons.

“The proposal would also resolve the current congestion around the existing charter boat berthing areas and in combination with the Post Office Jetty, provide a sheltered area with an attractive setting at the centre of the town,” he said.

“We believe the development would also help alleviate the problem created by Lakes Entrance being bypassed by a road upgrade through Bruthen.

“While this poses a threat to Lakes Entrance it also presents an opportunity if the town can provide the attractions to draw people to the area.

“The Cunninghame Quay project would add considerably to the attractions of what is already the most recognised tourist destination in East Gippsland and go a long way to attracting the growing number of ‘baby boomer’ mobile home tourists as well as those who use town accommodation.”

Mr Kozlowski said the Shire and Gippsland Ports had prepared a comprehensive joint submission that had been presented to the Commonwealth Government.

“We have the support of Federal Member for Gippsland, Peter McGauran MP as well as State Member for Gippsland East, Craig Ingram MP,” he said.

“Both are committed to the project and will work within their respective government circles to secure the necessary funding.”

Mr Kozlowski said that while community interest groups and agencies support the proposal, further community consultation will be conducted by both Gippsland Ports and the Shire if the application is successful.”

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Further information Greg Hatt, Gippsland Ports, 5150 0500; John Websdale, EGSC, 5153 9500.