



Media Release

9th February 2014

Rehabilitating Tuggerah Lakes needs more than Grandstanding.

The Community Environment Network has taken issue with claims by the Save Tuggerah Lakes Group that they have achieved more for the lake since taking control of council. In reality, they have reduced community involvement, been indifferent to pollution and used a harvester and swamp dozer (Truxor) to remove weed and black ooze for aesthetic purposes.

To claim this will not damage the lakes or hurt wildlife is not credible.

Chairman, John Asquith said: *"It will take a lot more than spurious claims about wrack harvesting to rehabilitate the lakes.*

The facts are: since taking office the Save Tuggerah Lakes Group has;

- *abolished Councils' Environment Department*
- *removed community members from the Estuary Management Committee;*
- *planned to abolish community input through Precinct Committees;*
- *reclassified nearly 240 Ha. of council owned community land containing threatened species, so that it may be sold, leased or developed;*
- *approved subdivisions for clearing without vegetation corridors or identified offsets;*
- *not taken action to address ongoing pollution of the lakes, and;*
- *doubled wrack harvesting, which is treating less than 1% of the problems caused by pollution and poor catchment management,"*

On most measures the new management of the lakes is going backwards. Most of the water quality improvements we are currently seeing are the results of expert strategies and community engagement implemented during the Tuggerah Lakes Rehabilitation program over the past 5 years.

Mr Asquith went on to say: *"It is estimated that approximately 100,000 tonnes of wrack are produced annually in the lakes. Rehabilitated salt marsh removes many thousands of tonnes of wrack annually for no cost. In comparison, the weed harvester removed 5,000 tonnes at a high cost. The STL group seems to be claiming credit for the results of the \$20 million spent in a federally funded project over the past 5 years. However, those improvements such as rehabilitating salt marsh will be improving water quality over the long term, whereas wrack harvesting and use of a Truxor are expensive, unsustainable and largely cosmetic"*

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