

**MEDIA RELEASE HUGH BAMFORD RESERVE 18 January 2010**

**Waverley Ratepayers Face 11% A Year Increase in Rates to Partly Fund**

**Mining of 30,000 Cubic Meters of North Bondi Cliff Face for Council Truck Depot**

Waverley Council ratepayers face an 11% a year increase in rates for seven years and a debt of \$244 million by 2020 caused partly by the need to finance the mining of 30,000 cubic meters of a cliff face at one of Bondi's famous reserves for a council truck depot.

"It is absolutely outrageous that the council intends to increase rates by 11% each year for 7 years to partly fund this completely overcapitalised council depot," spokesperson Marietta Davis said. "This would result in the current council rates for an average home jumping from \$2,700 a year to more than \$5,000 a year in seven years' time.

"The council can't be serious in its proposal to remove the current Hugh Bamford Reserve, mine 15,000 cubic metres of sandstone and another 15,000 cubic metres of other material from the cliff face, build a 2-3 level council depot for more than a hundred trucks and vehicles and then replace the Reserve with a turf playing surface on top of the building.

"This is not Tokyo or New York. The council already owns a depot at Zetland which was specifically developed for \$12 million and does not need to sell it and waste our ratepayer's money on this expensive and risky construction right in the middle of a residential area and world-famous cliff walk reserve," Marietta said.

Waverley Council figures released through its own published "Long Term Financial Strategy" shows that even though the council is currently breaking even with its budget, the proposed Hugh Bamford Reserve council depot, costing an estimated \$20-\$30 million, would need to be funded by an increase in rates and local taxes such as car parking fines and leave a shortfall in funding of \$244 million by 2021.

"We have quoted the exact council wording from its own financial strategy (whole document attached):- *"Waverley Council - Long Term Financial Strategy – December 2008"*

*(Page 39) If the Investment Strategy is successfully implemented, the rate variation necessary to fund the Base Layer shortfall is marginally smaller. However, if there is a need to fund the Sustainable Assets Layer, then the pressure for income increases obviously intensifies and it commences sooner. This represents an **average cumulative rates increase of 11.2% per annum over seven years beginning in 2011/12, followed by the Minister's assumed CPI increase from 2018/19 to 2021/22**"*

*(Page 27) When the operating and capital expenditures and transfers from unrestricted reserves are included, the Sustainable Assets Layer projects that Council will have a total unfunded expenditure of some \$224 million up to and including 2021/22.*

***End of Extract.***

“Local residents were only told of the proposal during the Christmas Holiday Festivities and given one month to reply to the council. This has since been extended to 19 February 2010 following an exceptional number of objections by locals.

“We have more than 2,000 supporters registered in a protest group on Facebook, that grows by at least a hundred members per day, and about 500 more in a database from direct contact and will be fighting the council all the way with this issue,” Marietta said. “This is just the beginning.”

“The Greens have come out in supporting us and opposing this outrageous waste of our money. We are calling on the Labor and Liberal Councillors to see that alternatives should be fully investigated.

Residents are being urged to lodge a objection to the council by 19 February, 2010.

Members of the public wanting to learn more can visit the website

<http://hbprotection.com>

or, to receive regular updates, join the Facebook group

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=360699710522>

( <http://tinyurl.com/hughbamford> )

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