

**“Enough is Enough!” says Bob Irwin.  
“This is no longer a local issue. I need your help!”**

**On the eve of ‘Steve Irwin Day’ (Nov 15), Bob Irwin, father of the late Steve Irwin, in a rare plea is calling on one million people to urgently ‘Click and Save’ Tin Can Bay.**

This is a special opportunity for Australians to offer their support to stop the development of a pristine area adjacent to World Heritage listed Fraser Island.

**“Enough is Enough!” says Bob, champion of the campaign. “This is not a local issue. The area provides habitat for species that are threatened all over the world - and we need to make a stand and save some critical habitat for them.”**

“I need to show the world, the amazing biodiversity and beauty of the Great Sandy Strait and what we’ll be losing, should the [proposed] marinas go ahead: the mangroves and the sea grass beds - home to the rare and endangered coastal dolphins, dugongs and turtles will be gone forever.”

“I will fight as long and hard as is necessary to preserve this pristine environment for our future generations. But I can’t do it alone. I’d like to present the opinions of one million people (who also feel that the building of this proposed marina will wreck the biodiversity of this magnificent environment forever) to our state and federal governments. This is the nursery for the Great Barrier Reef and the Pacific Ocean. This is where life begins, where it all gets started. We shouldn’t be interfering with it at all. We, as caring Australians, have to make sure we do our best to make sure this doesn’t happen.”

Bob Irwin.

**Australians have just a small window of opportunity to have their voice heard in protest against the development. A decision could be made by the federal government as early as November 2010.** “I urgently need help to secure absolute protection for this area, before it is destroyed,” says Bob.

Cooloola’s pending World Heritage Listing status may be compromised if Environment Minister Tony Burke approves the marina development. Approval for a second marina is also being sought.

**‘Click and Save’ Tin Can Bay (in just 3 seconds) at**  
**[www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au](http://www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au)**

[ENDS]

**AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW**

BOB IRWIN, Renowned wildlife conservationist and founder of Australia Zoo.

SHEREE MARRIS, Aquatic Scientist, one of Australia’s youngest environment ambassadors.

CAROLE GILLIES, President, Southern Sandy Straits Marine Environment Group

**CONTACT Carolyn Johns: 0418 672 703 [kingdomproductions@bigpond.com](mailto:kingdomproductions@bigpond.com)**

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE

(CONTD)

## FURTHER INFORMATION: 'CLICK AND SAVE' TIN CAN BAY

Tin Can Bay hosts one of few outstanding ecosystems on the east coast of Australia. Since 2004, community groups have banded together in the fight against a powerful developer. The battle has now escalated to a federal issue because of the potential impact on threatened and migratory species.

**“Soon there will be nowhere left for our wildlife to breed and live,” says Bob.** “If any member of the public were to harm a mangrove tree they would be fined. How is it that a marina can be allowed to be built in such an area?” he adds.

“At this final hour, we hope to create a momentum that involves Australians in this very important decision,” says Carole Gillies, President of the Southern Sandy Straits Marine Environment Group. “We’ve made it easy for people to put pressure on the government to reject the developer’s plans.” The campaign’s aim is to preserve some habitat for globally threatened species. Tin Can Bay provides habitat and breeding grounds for many species including threatened Indo Pacific humpback dolphins, and endangered dugongs and turtles.

At low tide, Tin Can Inlet and the Great Sandy Strait are extremely shallow and narrow waterways. “Resident dugongs are highly susceptible to boat strike,” explains Carole. “Boats and our marine wildlife will be forced into the same narrow channels, and dugong have been killed by simply having nowhere to dive and then crushed between the boat and the bottom.”

The highest density of dugongs in the Great Sandy Strait/Hervey Bay region has been found in the southern GSS region between Tin Can Bay and Tuan. **These local dugong densities are amongst the highest recorded anywhere in the world.**

“I’m more than concerned, I’m alarmed at the proposals they’re putting forward at the moment for the Great Sandy Straits,” says Bob. The marina development would involve “a lot of dredging and suction work which will create a lot of pollution. And this in turn will do a lot of the damage to the sea grass, which is very important to the dugongs and the turtles,” says Bob.

“We have to remember that the future of dugongs is a huge international problem at the moment. “The United Nations predicts they may be extinct worldwide within 40 years. That’s a terrible thing. It’s less than a generation.

“People need to get out of their comfort zone,” he says. Bob is urging concerned people to log onto the website, [www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au](http://www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au) to ‘click’ their protest.

The population projections and therefore growth in vessel demand for Hervey Bay will increase pressure on the northern dugong population. “If we force them upwards from the southern end there literally is nowhere for them to go,” says Carole Gillies. “The southern GSS was a place of refuge for dugong following the 1992 floods in Hervey Bay and ended up supporting 85% of the total remaining dugong population at that time. It is critical habitat we are talking about.”

Pollution and traffic from large boats will impact the health of the ecosystem, including the sea grasses and mangroves that the dugongs, dolphins and sea turtles are reliant upon.

The dugongs are just one species that will suffer collateral damage as a result of the development. Dolphins may not survive the territorial conflict when forced to leave the area.

Dolphins have been interacting with residents at Tin Can Bay since the 1950s, when a badly injured dolphin beached itself after it was struck by a boat. The local fishermen noticed it foundering in the shallow waters and started to feed it to nurse it back to health. They named the dolphin 'Old Scarry' because of a row of scars from previous battles. He recovered and was able to head back to the wild but returned to the beach regularly, forming a strong bond with the locals. "After sixty years and four generations of dolphins, each morning 'Mystique' and other pod members come in and interact with humans – where they swim up to people standing in knee-deep water," says Carole. "They are offered a small amount of food – but they don't rely on it. It's just a fraction of their daily intake, yet they choose to come in."

"We know them by name, we know their parenting," says Carole. "They have chosen over a long period of time to have a high level of interaction with humans, and many people who visit are changed by the experience - they're amazed that they can get so close to dolphins in the wild and are stunned to hear that this special bond is going to be destroyed in favour of a marina."

**Developers often rely on the public's apathy when it comes to government approval to develop locations such as this. It is very surprising that an area earmarked for World Heritage listing can find itself on the brink.**

**"This is a nationally important marine wilderness - we need to make that clear. We don't have to recover it - it's in a pristine state with outstanding biodiversity values," says Carole.** "The development of a marina will create irreversible damage. The community has fought the developer and the State government for the last five years, and now we're asking Australians to lend their voice to help protect Tin Can Bay and its vitally important inhabitants."

We have one small window of opportunity to take action to secure this site:

**Click and save Tin Can Bay (in just 3 seconds) at**

**[www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au](http://www.marina.tincanbaydolphins.com.au)**

The region is widely recognised as one of the least disturbed estuarine environments, containing outstanding biodiversity values. The coastal wetlands are listed as internationally important sites under the Ramsar convention. The region also carries the UNESCO designation as the Great Sandy Biosphere with the following key characteristics:

- **Half of Australia's bird species**
- **More marine fish diversity than the entire Great Barrier Reef**
- **More than 7500 recorded species of fauna and flora, many of which are rare or endangered**

Issued on behalf of not for profit organisation, The Southern Sandy Straits Marine Environment Group Inc.