



Scientists and Experts call for the Protection of Toondah Harbour

22 March 2024

To the Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for the Environment and Water

As researchers and professionals who study, document and work to recover Australia's flora, fauna and ecosystems, we are keenly aware of the importance of Toondah Harbour. Not just for local nature, but also for our community, and wildlife across the world.

Moreton Bay, which includes Toondah Harbour, is an essential part of a global network of internationally significant wetlands called Ramsar sites. The site is also of immense cultural significance to the Quandamooka Nation's people and is habitat to threatened species including dugongs, dolphins, whales, sea turtles, koalas and the critically endangered Eastern Curlew.¹ Every summer, as many as 30,000 protected migratory shorebirds come to feed and rest across Moreton Bay,² including at Toondah Harbour.

Moreton Bay's Wetlands also play a vital role in shielding people and nature from the impacts of climate change.¹ They build resilience to flood and cyclone events by buffering against coastal erosion, storm surges and flooding. At a time when Queenslanders are experiencing more catastrophic weather events than ever before, it is critical that we look after all remaining wetlands like those at Toondah Harbour.

Australia committed to protecting our most precious wetlands, including those found at Toondah Harbour, when we signed an international treaty known as the Ramsar Convention. The treaty was established to "halt the worldwide loss of wetlands" which have declined by 35% in the last 50 years.³ Despite this, Walker Corporation has proceeded with a proposal to destroy 40 hectares of the Ramsar wetlands, destroying the habitat of nationally listed threatened species.

The proposal which currently sits before you for approval, to construct 3,600 luxury apartments and other amenities at Toondah Harbour at the cost of destroying these internationally important wetlands is unacceptable under the intent of our national environment laws. This year is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Australia to become a global leader in nature protection, as we host the Global Nature Positive Summit and create new national nature laws. An essential step in realising this ambition is to reject Walker Corporation's proposal.

We urge you to protect Toondah Harbour for all Australians, the nature we care so deeply for, and the world who is watching.

References:

1. Moreton Bay Ramsar Site – Ramsar Information Sheet. <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/41-ris.pdf>
2. Weller, D., Kidd, L., Lee, C., Klose, S., Jaensch, R. and Driessen, J. 2020. Directory of Important Habitat for Migratory Shorebirds in Australia. Prepared for Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment by BirdLife Australia, Melbourne
3. Ramsar Convention Global Wetland Outlook: State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People. 2018.



[acf.org.au](https://www.acf.org.au)



[birdlife.org.au](https://www.birdlife.org.au)

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