



Belfast Coastal Reserve Action Group

**MEDIA RELEASE:**

**MINISTERS BACK THE WRONG HORSE AND RIDE ROUGH SHOD OVER THREATENED SPECIES.**

*The Belfast Coastal Reserve Action Group (BCRAG)* is 'gutted' by the decision of the Ministers for Racing, Environment and Aboriginal Heritage to allow commercial horse training to continue in *The Belfast Coastal Reserve* in the State's South West.

The Reserve is a tiny 20 km stretch of beach between Warrnambool and Port Fairy and is an Internationally recognised **Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA)** and is also home to 10% of the State's 'threatened' Hooded Plover population and 50% of its successful breeding sites.

Spokesperson for BCRAG, Bill Yates, said, "Today's proposal by Ministers D'Ambrosio, Pakula and Hutchins, does nothing other than to spread the problem of commercial horse training to other parts of the Reserve. Instead of solving the problem it just compounds it. Today's announcement will consign the Belfast Coastal Reserve to an environmental trash bin".

"For the Environment Minister to sign off on this proposal is an absolute disgrace to her role and in contravention of her obligations as Environment Minister. She might as well say to all those volunteers who have dedicated years of their time to Land Care and Coast Care and those committed to the protection and preservation of threatened species like the Hooded Plover - don't bother", said BCRAG member, Shane Howard (AM)

"The proposed plan will effectively also give approval to commercial activity on public land – this is akin to the issues of Barangaroo in Sydney and the Caulfield racecourse in Melbourne, where commercial interests override public rights on public land. You might as well say the beaches are open for business. You can do whatever you like".

Bill Yates added, "We are local people protecting an environmentally and culturally significant place. For some of us, our families have been here for generations and we simply won't allow the Reserve to be plundered and destroyed by commercial horse training. This is an unacceptable and non-conforming use of public beaches. We will not support this proposal. We will continue to fight".

**Bill Yates: 0414 708 996**

**Shane Howard: 0437 863 057**

[bcrag@fastmail.com](mailto:bcrag@fastmail.com)

[www.bcrag.org](http://www.bcrag.org)

[@savebelfastcoastalreserve](https://twitter.com/savebelfastcoastalreserve)

Phone: 0414 708 996 - Bill Yates (Spokesperson)