

Week ending: 26/6/09

Pakenham Gazette
Pakenham Leader
Pakenham News
Pakenham Journal
Ranges Trader Mail
Free Press Leader
Warragul Gazette
Warragul Trader
Other

Subject Seagrass DVD
Journalist Elisa Miller

Letter
Author _____

Media release
Media enquiry made
Positive
Negative
Neutral

Business Unit Assets
Ward _____

Councillor Quote
Councillor Photo
Officer Quote
Officer Photo

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Playback time in fight to save bay

By Elisa Miller

SATRIST John Clarke has launched a DVD and website aimed at highlighting the major environmental changes in the Western Port region.

As director of the Western Port Seagrass Partnership, Mr Clarke prepared the information.

"The DVD is not the product. It's the message behind it — the intelligence that we want to convey," he said. "The more we get knowledge of the beauty of this area out to the community, the better."

Mr Clarke said that in the past 36 years, many parts of the Western Port area had become desolate-looking and a far cry from when he visited the area as a boy.

He described how people could once walk across the seagrass areas but following draining of the Koo Wee Rup swamp begun in the 1890s, that was no longer possible.

"This is a unique area in its diversity. More than 70 per cent of native plants and animals found in Victoria are found here in Western Port, and many of those are not found anywhere else in the world."

The area was once home to thousands of black swans, which are reliant on seagrass for food, but due to lack of vegetation there are



John Clarke speaks out at the degrading of Western Port.
Picture: Ted Kloszynski

few swans in the area, he said.

WPSP chairman John Swan said the DVD was a useful resource in drawing people's attention to the value of the area.

"Around 36 years ago, at low tide when you looked westward from the Lang Lang river it was green, green grass as far as you could see.

"Now it is nothing but black, black mud."

He said with so many environmental concerns in the world action was needed.

"But before you act, you must be informed and that is the reason for the DVD," said Mr Swan.

The project has been supported by Cardinia Shire and Casey councils and various community and environmental organisations.

Residents wishing to get a free copy of the DVD can do so by visiting www.seagrass.com.au