

Estuary -- The epic of how we saved the Bay

By a true Ralphie

A duologue for two speakers.. Oh and a commentator



Opportunity
knocks!

(Land developer)

Shallow, muddy, windblown bay
Me thinks to buy .. not much to pay.
Not at all a lovely place.
Seems to me a wasted space.
Should we drain it? Build a port?
Maybe a village – there's a thought.
Salmon farms, they turn a penny
Shall we build a few ... or many?



Hey! Wait!

(Ralphie)

An estuary's a precious place
Crucible of life. A sacred space.
For tiny sharks and octopi
Spotted handfish, other fry.
For squid and little baby skates
Skating with their stingray mates.
Nature's nursery so it seems
We must protect it by all means.



Go home
Greenie!

(Land developer)

Develop! That's the way.
Take over nature! Wreck the bay!
We'll dig canals and mansions build.
Those little critters have to yield.
We greedy humans we come first.
Great buildings built to slack our thirst.



But .. but ..

(Ralphie)

But that's not all. There're seabirds too.
They've flown a million miles to you.
Godwits and the red necked stint
A threatened species. Worth a mint!
Black capped plovers. Oh! And yoiks!
Grebes and herons, one thousand poiks
Those cheeky devils black and white
With orange beaks their food to spike.



They're here to rest and feed and breed
Loving care is what they need.
Not a plan for relocation
Because we've wrecked their habitation
In the name of reclamation.
Don't send those birdies to damnation.

Came the Twitchers! Twitchers swooped from everywhere

(Commentator)

To save the birds of shore and air.
They perched or waded by the shore
Priscilla Queen of birds for sure.
Birdy Eric said "Not fair!"
They tweeted lots and what is more.
The birdies knew. Of that I'm sure.

Warning!
(Ralphie)

Potential RAMSA now at stake
The estuary's not yours to take!
We must rally for the birds
Not to act would be absurd.
Still twitchers twitched in deep despair
Until Priscilla said "There! There!
We'll demonstrate to show we care."



Battle lines!
(Commentator)

Battle lines were duly drawn!
Placards waved in frosty dawn
Both sides faced off. No peace in sight
We'd set ourselves a ten year fight.



Standoff!
(Ralphie)

We met and organised our group
A small but dedicated troop.
The erstwhile Ralphies we became
Our lives would never be the same
Late nights, big plans, some mystic tantra
"Save Ralphs Bay" became our mantra.

Hard work ...
(Ralphie)

Thomas flexed his digits
And a Ralphie web he wove
Gill stood by to help him
It became a treasure trove
Of stuff to read and how to help
Of things to buy and points of view
Emails sent out late at night.
Supporters came. Our numbers grew.



Bren and Rach hit Salamanca
Bren the maker, Rach the banker.
Set up a stall to make some dough.
As market folk they're in the know.
Spruiked their stuff to all and sundry
Made lots'a dough to bank on Monday.



Gathering evidence..
(Commentator)

Science experts work pro bono
A pile of writing. Stuff that they know
Evidence of many sorts
Ready for commissions, courts.



And the enemy....
(Commentator)

The other side was courting too
To gain support from all of you.
Glitzy mock ups of our bay
Choked with houses of the day.
One could wager either way
Pollies grouped as we expected
The council's views were not neglected.

Community Action
(Ralphie)

We worked our little hearts out
Stayed up late at night
And every day more people came
They came to help us fight.
Each brought their own heartfelt submission
Address - the RPD Commission.



Final hours ..
(Commentator)

Cassy sat in parliament
To raise awareness her intent.
Pollies grouped. Some crossed the floor.
The council came but not much more.
T'was largely left to us to do.
Jane and Jess and others too.
One can't dismiss the sense of doom
As RPDC hearings loomed.



The Hearings
(Commentator)

Boffins met in suit and gown.
We all stood up. They all sat down
Then came discussions diametric.
The little court room was electric
Big corporate dollars now at stake
Others too a quid to make.

Madam Defage was there as Noela
Excited! We could scarce control 'er
With pen and ink pot, notebook too
Record the lot .. That's what she'll do.



Days later ..
(Commentator)

Debate now over . Time to speak.
The panel gave their wigs a tweek.
Transfixed we sat to hear our fate.
For the Bay it's now too late ????
Wigged heads wagged and some de-wigged
The spokesman spoke. Not one reneged.



At last ..
(Ralphie)

We could not believe our ears
The court erupted with our cheers
The poiks can keep their precious bay.
The Ralphies had just saved the day

The developers? I hear you say.
All they could do was slink away.

GRM's village tales



And if you're feeling nostalgic try this link:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20150220202337/http://www.saveralphsbay.org/>