

# ge predictions way short: WWF

has already been approved, but environmental groups have continued a strong campaign against the plan, favouring instead an extended wharf plan that would limit dumping.

WWF said the project would have serious impacts on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and must not be fast-tracked. "We urge the Queensland government to reconsider this proposal and look once again at the less damaging alternatives that are available," its submission said.

Expert advice to WWF

included in the submission said the amount of disturbed dredge material that needed to be stored was likely to be greater than the capacity of the ponds built to hold it in the short term.

Brett Miller, principal engineer at the University of NSW School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, said the project modelling "underestimates by almost 30 per cent the amount of water and sediment to be discharged by pipe to the ocean from these ponds during the second dredge stage".

WWF said it was concerned be-

cause these fine sediments caused water pollution and would smother nearby seagrass beds.

Richard Bush from Southern Cross University told WWF the project's acid sulphate soil assessment did not adequately identify or quantify potential impacts.

Former Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority director Jon Day said the project impact on World Heritage values was based on old criteria "clearly wrong in the light of today's knowledge".

WWF campaign leader Louise Matthiesson said there were many

other concerns including that the ponds would not be lined, allowing seepage, and their construction was proposed in the wet season early next year.

"There's a risk of storm surge and cyclone damage, impacts on turtle hatchlings on the adjacent beach, and ... maximum disruption to wetland birds as their numbers swell at this time of year," Ms Matthiesson said.

The Queensland government said 80,690 submissions had been received as part of the public consultation process despite the com-

ment period being open for only 10 days. The submissions will be passed to the federal environment department and Environment Minister Greg Hunt will have 40 business days to make a decision.

North Queensland Bulk Ports has been authorised to begin dredging in March 2015.

The Queensland government has acknowledged the project will have an impact on nearby wetlands but said an "offset" program was in place.

The project would affect an area covering 307ha next to cur-

rent Abbot Point port and terminal sites, including 148ha of existing wetland, representing 2.17 per cent of the existing wetland area.

An offset strategy has been proposed covering 1409ha, more than four times the amount required by the commonwealth.

The Queensland government said while impacts to threatened species and migratory birds were possible, these impacts were considered acceptable once mitigation and offsetting measures were implemented.

## When oceans call, the Oyster is his world



Mariusz Koper, a publisher from Poland, is sailing his luxury yacht Katharsis II in the Sydney to Hobart race on his way to Antarctica

D.D. McNICOLL

THE 628 nautical mile (1163km) trip from Sydney to Hobart is a long voyage, but for retired Polish publisher Mariusz Koper it barely counts as an ocean passage.

In the past five years, he has sailed more than 67,000 nautical miles, more than three times the distance around the Equator.

After recently sailing across the Pacific in his Oyster 72 Katharsis II, the 52-year-old decided to

enter this year's Sydney to Hobart race because it would take him halfway to his summer destination, the 78th parallel of latitude in the Ross Sea in the Antarctic, the southernmost point on Earth to which it is possible to sail.

"I like sailing around tropical islands but I also like to explore the remotest and most extreme parts of the planet," Koper said as he prepared his yacht at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia marina in Sydney.

"As I was going south anyway, I

couldn't resist being part of the Sydney-Hobart fleet.

"I am not a racer by nature but this is a challenge."

Koper had no worries about taking his luxury 21m yacht into the Antarctic ice or across the Roaring Forties, the furious fifties and the screaming sixties of the Southern Ocean as he has already sailed Katharsis II through the famed North West Passage, across the normally ice-bound Arctic Sea that links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

"When we have finished with the Ross Sea, I'll sail back to New Zealand and consider the future," he said. "I think I might attempt to sail the North West Passage from west to east. I'm already in the Pacific Ocean and I have to get back to the Atlantic."

Koper calls himself a relative newcomer to sailing after devoting his early years to establishing what became the largest publishing house in Poland after starting with a few educational titles.

"In 2008 I sold the business to a

Finnish company and suddenly became a free man," he said.

"I had previously owned an Oyster 48, so when I decided to explore the world I decided to buy a larger Oyster."

Koper's Oyster 72 may not give him the fastest ride to Hobart but he will certainly be the most comfortable skipper in the fleet and the one with the happiest crew.

Koper sails with a mixture of family and friends and all will enjoy the remarkable comforts of the yacht — 19m of headroom,

airconditioning, real bathrooms with flushing loos and cabins with proper innerspring beds.

There is a luxury saloon, a gourmet galley and a cockpit refrigerator to keep the beer cold.

"She is a very solid and heavy boat but also not slow," Koper said. "She is a performance cruiser with safety in mind that can be successfully raced." The boat has been modified to comply with the safety rules of the Hobart race.

SPORT P25

## ality to murder appeal: legal experts

court's judgment on Friday that he "was denied a fair trial and that denial amounts to a substantial miscarriage of justice".

While Mr Keogh's conviction was set aside and he was granted a re-trial, experts said it was unlikely the Director of Public Prosecutions would re-try the case due to loss of forensic evidence and the length of sentence already served.

Bromley, now serving his 29th year in prison, has refused to show remorse or apologise for the 1984 drowning murder of Stephen Do-coza, which he maintains he did not commit. His co-accused, who

also maintained his innocence, walked free on parole in 2004.

Bromley's legal team includes the former Federal Court and NSW Supreme Court judge Marcus Einfeld.

Robert Moles, legal academic and supporter of Mr Keogh and Bromley, called on the South Australian government to set up a forensic review panel to identify any cases that may need to be reviewed as a result of the Keogh decision.

"The government needs to get on the front foot here and help to identify any defective cases," he

said. "If there have been problems, why not set up the review panel which would have the power to refer things back to the courts?"

Dr Moles said a review panel would be an efficient alternative to a royal commission into the state's forensic pathology service.

The South Australian Attorney-General, John Rau, would not comment on the Keogh decision yesterday.

"As I understand it, the court has ordered a retrial. I do not intend to make any statements which might in any way prejudice a fair trial," he said in a statement.

## Ozone hole 'rewriting' ecosystems

THE ozone hole over Antarctica caused by humanity's toxic chemical emissions remains as large as ever and is "rewriting" entire ecosystems across Australia, Antarctica and South America, scientists have found.

Ozone is a form of oxygen found in the stratosphere where it forms a layer that absorbs high-energy ultraviolet light. This prevents UV from reaching Earth, where it can damage the DNA of plants and animals.

The hole in the ozone shield, discovered in 1985, was later found to be caused by chemicals

called chlorofluorocarbons and halons, used as propellants in aerosols and as coolants.

The chemicals were banned but have lingered; the hole forms every year, allowing deadly radiation to reach Earth. The ozone hole is one factor behind Australia's surging skin cancer rates.

Australian scientists have now found the radiation is having much wider effects. "Ecosystem impacts documented so far include changes to growth rates of South American and New Zealand trees, decreased growth of Antarctic mosses and changing

biodiversity in Antarctic lakes," say Sharon Robinson, of Wollongong University in NSW, and David Erickson, from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.

Because it is no longer absorbing UV light, the stratosphere has cooled, which is reducing air pressure over the South Pole and sucking the southern jetstream southwards, along with its associated weather systems.

That has helped cool the Antarctic and direct more extreme weather towards Australia.

THE SUNDAY TIMES