



Rockingham marina gets EPA go-ahead

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The planned profusion of marinas along Perth's coastline took another step towards reality yesterday with the Environmental Protection Agency approving the 500-pen Port Rockingham development.

The \$40 million project is one of five marinas planned between Ocean Reef in the north and Port Kennedy in the south which would provide at least 2000 moorings. It would address the State's chronic shortage of recreational boat pens along the metropolitan coast.

The EPA's report said the Port Rockingham development would not have a significant impact on marine plants or animals, mainly because there were no seagrass meadows in the area.

EPA chairman Paul Vogel said the marina's construction would impact temporarily on local water quality and part of Cockburn Sound near the development should be monitored during building work.

He said the finished development would not cause algal blooms or other water quality issues because its rock breakwater would be open at both ends, allowing rapid water movement.

A spokesman for Rosewood Grove, the developers of the Port Rockingham proposal, said he hoped construction could begin before the end of next year.

"The Port Rockingham development

will provide an iconic destination for tourists and local visitors," he said.

Conservationists said it was important not to approve too many marinas in sensitive areas that were home to vulnerable marine life, such as Penguin Island, not far from Port Kennedy's planned new boat ramp.

WA Conservation Council spokesman David Mackenzie said new marinas could lead to "a dramatic increase in local fishing as a result of skyrocketing boat ownership".

He urged the Government to implement a network of marine sanctuaries, to avoid species extinctions as a result of sudden increases in human activity in waters around marinas.

Mr Mackenzie also criticised the approvals process, saying it "does not look at the cumulative impact" of a string of new marinas.

"It is incredibly surprising that in 2009 we still have an approvals process that looks at these elements in isolation," he said.

A study published earlier this year showed that Cockburn Sound had one of the worst records in the world for conserving seagrass.

Mr Mackenzie said it was confusing that marinas were being approved at the same time that Fisheries Minister Norman Moore was introducing new licence fees to curb the damage done by recreational fishing.



Moorings: The Port Rockingham marina will provide pens for 500 boats.