



## NEWS

# Marina plan makes waves

By **Chanelle Leslie**

AN application for a commercial marina at Cowirra has sparked a row between houseboat owners and a group of landholders from the district.

Houseboat owners Graham Parry and George Papantoniou say a vendetta has been held against them by locals for two years.

The pair have had their houseboat moored on crown land off Hunter Road since 2007, and applied for a 10-berth marina licence in order to keep their boat in its location.

The application was triggered when they were notified for the first time by the State Government that their mooring was illegal, which the pair claim to have had no previous knowledge.

"There's been a fair bit of feuding and blame shifting," Mr Parry said.

"All we asked for was continuation of existing use.

"The only reason we applied was because we were told that that's the only way the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) can allow us to stay

there."

The Cowirra Action Group, formed by locals Michael and Liz Young, has rallied residents against the application, and held a public meeting to discuss ways to stop the proposal from moving forward.

The Youngs said that Mr Parry and Mr Papantoniou's boat was illegally moored, but the State Government has denied the claim, stating the houseboat was legally moored while the development application was being considered.

According to the Cowirra Action Group, a marina

approval would affect all residents in the area because locals would be kept out of the section of crown land in question, although Mr Parry and Mr Papantoniou have said that they do not intend to exclude the land from public use.

"There's enough berths available from Kia Marina down to the new Mannum Waters that are being run by legitimate rate payers," Mr Young said.

"Why would we need another one in the middle of what is a beautiful piece of river on the river?"

"All we're really asking is

that that little bit of land gets left alone and those illegal boats move."

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick took the issue to State Parliament last week, and said he opposed the approval of a marina application.

"From what I'm hearing this is happening in several places along the river," he said.

"I think there should be a far better education program, but at the end of the day it just needs the Department (of Environment, Water and Natural Resources) to step forward and enforce compliance.

"If they (applicants) do get a proposal approval they'll be rewarded for having it parked illegally there for what I have been told is quite a number of years."

Mid Murray council chief executive officer Russell Peate said he expected it would take four to six weeks for the marina application to reach the council if it was approved by the State Government.

"The development application ultimately is determined by council if the State Government approves it," he said.