



Ruby, centre, organises her friends for a dredging protest.

Picture: JILL MITCHELL. n34fsm1651

# Ruby fires kids' revolt

Lisa Habermann

ENVIRONMENTAL activism has started early for schoolgirl Ruby Pritchard.

The 10-year-old, from the Steiner stream at Mornington Park Primary School, is so concerned about

the dredging of Port Phillip Bay that she has organised a protest rally for Sunday, March 2 at 10am.

Ruby devised the "Kids Save the Bay Rally - Organised by Kids" with a couple of friends a few weeks ago.

"I am doing this protest against

the dredging because I feel sad for all the marine life in the bay that may lose their home or that may lose their life," Ruby said.

"There are sea grasses, coral, lots of different fish, spider crabs, eels, sponges, mussels, sting rays and especially our friend the weedy sea

dragon that are in danger." Dressed in red and carrying banners, Ruby is calling all kids to join her in the march from Mornington Park to Mornington Pier.

Ruby's mum, Danielle, said Weedy the Sea Dragon puppet would attend the protest.

## Our right to protest

PROTESTERS fined by police for disrupting the first day of controversial Port Phillip Bay dredging were never in any danger, according to a Blue Wedges spokeswoman.

Dr Jo Samuel-King witnessed the protest from Rosebud on Friday, February 8, and praised the efforts of both police and protesters.

"I was in phone contact with the protesters throughout the morning and they all had a lot of experience out on the water," Dr Samuel-King said.

"The police were excellent in their role providing protection and the protesters worked well with them.

"It is important to us that people are allowed to protest and to protest peacefully."

Dr Samuel-King said the lead-dredge ship, *The Queen of the Netherlands* was "quite clearly" not working and had stopped moving at the time protesters approached it.

Protesters felt safe, she said.

Around half a dozen protesters were each fined \$176 by police for entering a prohibited zone around the dredge vessel.

### New voice on group

PORT of Melbourne Corporation last week announced former policy analyst and Terry Laidler would act as chair of the Channel Deepening Project Community Liaison Group. PoMC is reviewing the list of applicants ahead of the first meeting to be held in March.

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