

MEDIA RELEASE:

BASTION POINT BOAT RAMP DEVELOPMENT, MALLACOOTA

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victorian Group) commends the Victorian Government and the Department of Transport for deciding to re-examine the option of providing a new ramp at the site of the current ramp at Bastion Point, Mallacoota, as recommended by the independent Panel Inquiry in 2008.

Mallacoota is one of the few real 'wilderness' destinations left on the Victorian coastline, and still retains a remarkably unblemished coastal environment. The Institute had strongly objected to the proposal for a new boat ramp facility advocated in 2009 by the former Minister of Planning on the grounds that the prominent breakwater and road construction, whether along the beach or within the adjoining heritage landscape, would have a very significant impact on the natural landscape values and visual amenity of Bastion Point and Mallacoota.

Kirsten Bauer, State Group President, said that "It is very pleasing that the latest proposal does not involve a cantilevered road directly along the beach as in previous option, and proposes a smaller car park area and overall footprint then shown in previous options. However we remain very concerned regarding the extent and visual impact of sea-wall infrastructure contained in the most recent proposal."

Ms Bauer noted that the 'Multi-Criteria' analysis undertaken by appointed engineering firm Hyder allocates an overall weighting of just 3.0% to *Visual and Urban Design Assessment* Criteria. "We believe this to be an incredibly insufficient (and in fact token) weighting to assess the visual and landscape amenity of the most recent proposals in this highly sensitive area. The significance of the visual impact of any proposal was emphasized in the recommendations of the independent Panel, and supported by the Institute and the local community. Surely the visual impact warrants a similar weighting to the safety criteria."

Ms Bauer also strongly advocates that appropriate design professionals be involved in the *Visual and Urban Design Assessment* Process in relation to the most recent proposals, and ultimate design of the final facility. "We believe that such infrastructure should be designed to have a 'natural' appearance which visually integrates with the prevailing coastal landscape character as much as possible, as opposed to the imposition of 'hard-edged' engineering structures. We urge that a low-key, sensitive upgrade of the existing boat ramp, parking and associated facilities be undertaken at Bastion Point, having minimal intrusion on this unique coastal landscape."