

3B wasn't preferred option

Documents obtained from the Department of Transport (DOT) under Freedom of Information show that the controversial 'Option 3B' breakwater and beach road was not the department's preferred solution for Bastion Point.

The documents allegedly instead recommended that Victorian Premier Denis Napthine supports the lower impact Option H2.

The Save Bastion Point Group said the documents directly refute East Gippsland Shire Council's recent

claims that the lower impact options did not meet relevant design guidelines or usability and were rejected by the Department of Transport.

The department developed the lower impact option it named Option H2.

Its executive director of freight, logistics and marine advised Dr Napthine that of the 254 submissions to a community consultation, the "vast majority (88.2 per cent) would prefer to see a smaller development than Option 3B".

This included the Boating Industry Association of Victoria submission.

The group said that in June 2012 the executive director wrote to Dr Napthine recommending "The whole of Government project group has formed a view that Option H2 would perform as well or better than council's preferred Option 3B. It has significantly fewer environmental impacts and provides an estimated cost saving of \$2 million."

It said DSE advised it would take a submission to Cabinet in July 2012 seeking endorsement of Option H2.

Option 3B has been given Coastal Management Act approval, with construction tender documents being released last week.

Campaign spokesperson Leo op den Brouw said that, in an all too familiar scenario for opponents of Option 3B, FOI material shows the clear findings of a public consultation process had again been ignored.

"We are now in a situation where tenders have been called for the Option 3B development, which has limited public support, a lower score

in the safety-weighted Multi-Criteria Analysis rating and significantly more environmental impacts than lower cost alternatives," Mr op den Brouw said.

"We are calling on East Gippsland Shire Council to not only halt the poor process of ignoring public and professional opinion, but also to correct its misinformation that the lower impact options were rejected in the Department of Transport review. This they should do by placing advertisements in regional newspapers."