

Ratepayers are refusing to cough up

Residents who take up the Save Bastion Point Group's suggestion of refusing to pay rates in protest of the ocean access project at Bastion Point can expect to be hit with significant interest charges.

In far East Gippsland, a small number of ratepayers angered by East Gippsland Shire Council's decision to go ahead with the Option 3B breakwater development at Bastion Point, Mallacoota, are going on strike.

"Withholding our rates is a tangible way for us to express our lack of confidence in the East Gippsland Shire Council and its ability to manage our funds," spokesperson for Save Bastion Point Group, Jenny Mason said.

"To have proceeded with this oversized, destructive development and committed East Gippsland ratepayers to the maintenance and operational costs shows gross financial irresponsibility," Ms Mason said.

"Why should ratepayers pay for a facility that most will never use, that isn't supported by the broader community, and

which will permanently ruin an area that is currently enjoyed by so many?" Ms Mason said.

It is not understood how many people will refuse to pay their rates, given notices were only recently issued and have a February 15, 2014, payment deadline.

Shire acting chief executive officer, Chris Waites, said the same process is applied to all overdue rates.

"Full payment of rates for those who wish to pay their rates in one lump sum must be received by February 15, 2014, otherwise interest charges will apply to any outstanding amount," Mr Waites said.

"The interest rate is set by the State Government and is currently 10.5 per cent per annum.

"Penalty interest on any arrears of rate, charges or levies will continue to accrue until full payment of the outstanding amount, and accrued interest, to the date payment is received.

"Non-payment of rates may incur legal fees/costs for recovery."



Some of the Mallacoota ratepayers who are taking part in the rates strike. (PS)