

## Bastion Point announcement welcomed

At a well-attended meeting held on Wednesday, October 27, the Mallacoota Business and Tourism Association welcomed the State Government's announcement of a \$6.2 million funding package to construct a new ocean access facility at Bastion Point, Mallacoota.

Chairman Steve Waixel said it was now almost certain that something would be done to address the unsafe, minimal facilities that currently exist at Bastion Point.

"Hopefully, 2010/2011 will be the last season boaters will have to endure these conditions," he said.

"The extensive studies conducted by the East Gippsland Shire Council clearly show the potential lethal conflict between swimmers, surfers and boating activities and has to be rectified.

"Our association has received many reports of injuries, some serious, occurring over recent times. The risk of injury, together with damage to vehicles, boats and trailers is regarded as a serious impediment to the growth of our tourist industry.

"Our members are well aware that the extensive numbers of blue water recreational fishermen bypass Mallacoota in favour of NSW tourist towns where there are excellent and safe boat launching facilities.

"We estimate the loss to our town extends to millions of tourist dollars per year through the lack of adequate ocean access at Bastion Point.

"Our association has worked tirelessly with the shire and other relevant authorities to bring this long running issue to a successful conclusion. We have appreciated the strong support given by our local Member Craig Ingram and other regional Parliament representatives who have all indicated that they are in favour of the proposal.

"We are aware there is a hold up with Ministerial consent under the Coastal Management Act and some additional cultural heritage issues to be addressed. We trust these issues will be resolved quickly now the funding is in place.

"We are now entering our annual tourist season and the local auto repair business is now preparing to receive numerous salt water damaged vehicles. Four were written off last summer. No doubt there will be injuries again occurring as in previous years, our hope is that the injuries will be minor and by this time next year we will at last have safe, adequate ocean access at Mallacoota.

"Through our real estate agents and other connections, we are aware of at least five commercial investment projects in the area that are dependent on Bastion Point proceeding.

"In fact, the prolonged delays exhibited by the authorities involved has inhibited the commercial growth of Mallacoota for many years.

"Our 45 members, representing 80 per cent of the businesses in our area and the majority of the local community, look forward to this being the last year we and our visitors have to endure the problems associated with the current facility at Bastion Point."

BARNSDALE ADVERTISER NOV. 8.