

bodies.

The Coalition commissioned a review into the project when it won office in 2010 and put forward an alternate hybrid option, however the council maintains Option 3B remains the most suitable solution to the ocean access issues in the far east of the state.

Dr Rex Campbell, chairman of Surfrider Foundation Australia, said any council that builds roads on beaches and breakwalls through surfing breaks should be ashamed, especially if it wastes public money.

"Where will this stop - the white shoe developers will soon follow this white elephant into town and ruin the very reason why surfers and tourists visit this beautiful place," Dr Campbell said.

Victorian National Parks Association spokesman Simon Branigan said that after a generation-long battle, the bulldozers are now poised.

"But the crazy situation is that there is a sustainable alternative that provides safer open ocean access as well as protecting Bastion Point's environmental and cultural integrity," he said.

In a letter to the editor submitted to this newspaper in the past week, Mallacoota's Patsy Lisle asked why public funding should be used to build and maintain what she describes a "commercial" facility.

"The Boating Industry Association of Victoria has written that recre-

tion, which has everything needed for safe ocean access, and that the money for the huge Option 3B could be better spent. Why not listen to them?" Ms Lisle said.

Long-time campaigner James Thyer, who spends his time between Northcote and Mallacoota, said the Coastal Management Act approval for the Option 3B facility had made it clear that the economics of the proposal are a matter for East Gippsland Shire Council.

"The council looks likely to ignore the prediction by the independent Environment Effects Statement (EES) Inquiry Panel that this facility is likely to become a financial burden on ratepayers," Mr Thyer said in a letter to the editor.

"Instead they will rely on the highly questionable economic assessment by the now defunct economics arm of Buchan Consulting, to validate progressing with Option 3B.

"Not only did the initial Buchan report have a \$56 million mistake due to an addition error, but an unsubstantiated sham methodology remains at its heart.

"Without showing their calculations, Buchan conjures a figure called 'Total Visitor Days' for all tourists staying at Mallacoota. They estimate six per cent of all visitors will launch a boat at Bastion Point.

"However, if, as claimed, the benefit of the boat ramp development for Mallacoota is to bring in new recreational boaters, the Buchan logic requires that for every six new boating parties, Option 3b needs to attract a further 94 new non-boating parties. This just doesn't make sense.

"Indeed the EES Inquiry found the development would have a detrimental effect on other forms of tourism."

Suzie Wells, of Jan Juc, wrote to the *Advertiser* out of "sheer frustration with a process that has seen common sense, public opinion, government process ignored and threatens to damage a pristine area of our environment".

"There is no societal benefit to building breakwater Option 3B at Bastion Point, Mallacoota. An extravagant, hulking breakwater exceeds what is necessary for the town," Ms Wells wrote.

"Isn't a breakwater of this size and cost in a small, remote town a luxury item?"



Former East Gippsland Shire mayor, Mendy Urie protesting on Tuesday in Melbourne. (PS)

beach along Victoria's beautiful coastline safe.

"It is not only damaging to the environment, but to the community's trust in the democratic processes - both State and Local Government have clearly failed the community in this matter."

The group claims the proposed Option 3B development is bad for business because there are cheaper, safer and more environmentally friendly options.

It said governments have ignored overwhelming public sentiment and have over-