

Bairnsdale Advertiser 1/2/13.

## Bastion pressure on rates

Sir,- The decision by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, to issue Coastal Management Act consent to allow the Bastion Point Option 3B ocean access to proceed is certainly disappointing to say the least to many people, not only those within East Gippsland of course.

The shire chief executive officer has stated that the "tenders will go out as soon as the documentation is ready, which is expected to be within the coming weeks."

Now fellow ratepayers will be asking where is the now \$6.8 million funding coming from, as it is unclear from the press coverage to date whether the State Government will still have this in its budget.

With news of Federal funding cuts for all hospitals within Victoria, with beds closing even in the Royal Children's Hospital, together with TAFE cuts and major closures in courses particularly evident in East Gippsland, not to mention our Princes Highway to Mallacoota in urgent need of funds, how can the State Government possibly justify such an extravagant proposal to destroy rock pools and pristine beach environment at Bastion Point.

The statements by Leo op den Brouw and Simon Branigan in last Friday's *Advertiser* clearly states the disgust within the community at this decision.

When this project was first passed by council in 2005 the cost estimate for the ramp was \$1.5 million. This has progressed to \$6.8m in the 2012 estimates, and the final outcome for construction and ongoing maintenance is still unknown, and at that same rate of increase will be a burden for all ratepayers in East Gippsland.

This decision on top of the Raymond Island ferry debacle costing ratepayers in excess of \$1m per year will certainly put pressure on our rates for 2013-2014.

Yours etc.,  
Bill Gamble,  
Forge Creek.

## Consultation questioned

Sir,- The approval to construct the Option 3B breakwater and beach road at Mallacoota's Bastion Point was met by East Gippsland Shire Council chief executive officer Steve Kozlowski making his usual claim

the issue has undergone extensive community consultation (*Advertiser*, January 25).

I assume Mr Kozlowski's definition of consultation goes something like this: We announce what we are going to do, invite people to make submissions, and then despite rejection by a vast majority, continue with our proposal as announced. After repeating this practice we then pat ourselves on the back for having consulted extensively.

In the case of the Environment Effects Statement Inquiry in 2007, 87 per cent of submissions rejected Option 3B, and the inquiry panel found that the consultation did not effectively engage the local community, was counter productive and should have used a 'more neutral consultant.

The more recent Department of Transport consultation showed a similar 87 per cent rejection of Option 3B. De-identified letters to council before its April 2012 meeting, obtained through Freedom of Information, again tracked at 87 per cent opposition to Option 3B.

Since 2006, literally thousands of people have written submissions, letters and postcards, or have signed petitions saying they oppose Option 3B. We have done so because of its alienation of public beach, large effects on the natural and tourism value of Bastion Point, and with an unreliable economic study as its justification.

Unfortunately, we are not the 13 per cent that council listens to in its consultations.

Yours etc.,  
Dr James Thyer,  
Northcote.