

Ocean access decision provides opportunity

Mallacoota Business and Tourist Association has applauded the decision by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to approve East Gippsland Shire Council's preferred project to provide safe, adequate ocean access at Bastion Point, Mallacoota.

The replacement of the existing sub-standard ramp has been under consideration for at least 25 years and the State Government's resolve to support the shire is in the best interests of all concerned, according to the group.

MADBATA president John Rudge said the carefully designed plan known as 'Option 3B' had been subject to rigorous examination and extensive public consultation.

"It meets with all relevant safety, environmental and cultural requirements under state and federal legislation. The design takes into account the requirement of commercial and recreational fishers and conforms to the relevant recommended Australian Standards," Mr Rudge said.

"The approved plan is the only option which will effectively separate the activities of swimmers, beach goers and surfers away from the in-

volved process of launching and retrieving boats.

"In addition to protection from sea swells and tide variances, boaters will be able to moor at the holding jetty provided to load and unload passengers and equipment.

"The old ramp which sits in the middle of an attractive sandy beach at Bastion cove will be removed and the beach restored for family activities. It is also relevant that the location of site 3B will ensure minimal, visual impact in sympathy with the immediate environment."

MADBATA believes that once complete the new facility will provide safe, reliable ocean access for recreation and commercial use.

"It will vastly improve operational conditions for the Department of Fisheries, Parks Victoria and sea rescue operations," Mr Rudge said.

"It will open up the coastal wilderness for sea-based eco tourism including recreational diving, whale, dolphin and seal watching and increased visitation to historical Gabo Island.

"It will greatly enhance Mallacoota's ability to at-

tract visitors throughout the year and sustain the valuable abalone industry. It will provide exciting new business opportunities and employment in keeping with Mallacoota's traditional industries of tourism and fishing."

BEACH PROTEST

Hundreds of people gathered at Bastion Point last Thursday night to give the strong message that opposition continues against the proposed development.

Linking hands, community members and visitors stood in unity along the beach that will become a road if the proposal goes ahead.

Spokesman for the Save Bastion Point Campaign, Leo Op den Brouw said people are determined to keep fighting against the development.

"People aren't prepared to sit around and simply watch Bastion Point be buried under concrete and rubble," Mr Op den Brouw said.

"This development will directly affect not only Mallacoota, but the whole region.

"It will be an ongoing drain on the public purse, a white elephant," he said.