

New Bastion Point proposal

East Gippsland News Feb 23

A new ocean access proposal for Bastion Point, on a similar scale to the East Gippsland Shire Council-endorsed 'Option 3B', will go before the Mallacoota community on March 1.

The new concept, which rejects the Save Bastion Point group's proposal, is sure to re-ignite the long-running debate.

While not having access to the concept plans, this newspaper understands the new proposal has a significant breakwall but is located in the

same position as the current sub-standard ramp. The road along the beach is removed and car parking spaces reduced compared to 3B.

The Department of Transport (DOT) is today advertising a public information session for Thursday, March 1, at the Mallacoota Golf and Country Club from 5-7pm.

On display will be the new concept design, while the project team will be on hand to answer questions local residents may have about the proposed development. This information

session is at the request of the council to gauge community feedback on the latest concept design proposed by DOT.

Residents will have the opportunity to examine the details of the concept design and to provide feedback to DOT. Details on the next stage will also be available.

The Department of Transport and the Department of Sustainability and Environment have been in recent discussions with council on the proposal. East Gippsland Shire Council chief

executive officer, Steve Kozlowski yesterday confirmed council had been in discussions with the department, which had outlined the review of the project.

"They (the department) have indicated that the Save Bastion Point alternative option has been rejected, however following the independent panel recommend under the EES (Environmental Effects Statement) process a hybrid option has been proposed at the existing site," Mr Kozlowski said.

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Does new plan 'tick the boxes'?

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"The review outcome has considered a further option, which essentially is at a similar scale to 3B, but in the current location. That will now be the subject of discussion and community feedback.

"In terms of council's position, council was keen to get community

feedback from the government department's review and then we'll consider what impact it might have on the previous position of council.

"Council will be an interested bystander at those sessions."

Asked whether the new proposal was a compromise on council's preferred 3B option, Mr Kozlowski said it was not.

"What they were very keen to do was tick all boxes - safety, environmental impact etc," he said.

"What was quite clear was the Save Bastion Point option didn't tick all the boxes and would be an unacceptable solution. They (department) then looked at how a boat ramp on the existing site ticked all boxes."

The Department of Sustainability and Environment yesterday told the *News* that a snapshot of the plan, technical report, frequently asked questions and details of the professional sessions were planned to be available on its website on Friday.

The DSE declined a request to release those plans to this newspaper earlier.

The Department of Transport also confirmed information would be made available on council, DSE, Regional Development Victoria and its own website on February 24 (Friday). The DOT also said calls would be made to key stakeholders to inform them the information was 'going up'.

lan Lewis, of the Mallacoota Ocean Access Committee, which has long called for improved ocean access and was a supporter of the 3B option, told the *News* yesterday his group was awaiting information.

"My understanding is that it's (the design) something different yet again and until we see it it's difficult to make any sort of comment to be honest," he said.

State Member for Gippsland East, Tim Bull said the community forum would present a concept that was an option for a way forward in relation to improved ocean access at Mallacoota.

"This will give local residents the chance to examine in detail the proposal and ask questions and provide feedback to Department of Transport staff," he said.

"It goes without saying this has been a long running issue and it is important the community has the opportunity to make comment.

The State Government had promised action on this issue by December last year. It is now late February.