



EAST DRAFT BUDGET

Thursday 12, May 2011

The Bastion Point boat ramp redevelopment is a key feature of the East Gippsland Shire's draft budget. It includes six million dollars announced by the Brumby Government.

But the Coalition is yet to green light the project, and is considering an alternative design.

"We're having a look at the other option up there. So three B is certainly on the table." said Member for Gippsland East Tim Bull.

The Shire says it is factoring in the project because it expects a decision this year.

"It expects to work on next year, given a decision is expected from the relevant Ministers in the next few months." said CEO East Gippsland Shire Steve Kozlowski.

Opponents of the development say it shows the Council's desire to proceed with the breakwater design.

"You would think that they would show some sort of effort to negotiate with the government perhaps, perhaps slow things down a bit until the next step of the process is completed." said Save Bastion Point Leo Op Den Brouw.

The Shire has outlined its biggest ever spend on capital works, at thirty-eight million dollars.

Including one million dollars for the all abilities playground in Bairnsdale, and six-point-two million for a new outdoor swimming pool.

Six million initially planned for an upgrade to Bairnsdale library, has been slashed to two-point-eight million.

While ratepayers will be slugged with a five-point-nine-one-percent rates hike to cover the spend.

"With the perhaps rise in cost of living perhaps that has to happen." said a ratepayer.

"Well it's pretty expensive now. We own a block of land and a house and, yeah through the roof." said a ratepayer.

The council blamed the higher than expected increase on escalating waste management costs.