

Push continues for low-impact ramp



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EAST GIPPSLAND NEWS

Information released under Freedom of Information may have discovered just why the former State Government was so keen to push forward the multi-million dollar Bastion Point development.

Investigations by the Save Bastion Point Campaign have revealed that key ministers in the Labor Government ignored the advice of planning and safety bureaucrats, and the findings of both an independent planning panel and a boating safety panel.

"It is now clear the Brumby Government overrode recommendations from two expert panels set up to provide advice, as well as advice from its own bureaucrats," Leo Op den Brouw, of the Save Bastion Point campaign, said.

Save Bastion Point believes that the Labor Government was keen to approve the development to secure the support of Independent Craig Ingram, an abalone license holder, in the likely event of a hung parliament.

In June Mr Ingram sent both major parties a list of 17 items, including the boat ramp, saying they were "an important part of my consideration in the event of a hung parliament".

However Labor lost the election, and Ingram his seat.

The new State Government has announced it will hold a review into the boat ramp and assess whether a lower impact alternative development for Mallacoota was suitable.

The Save Bastion Point Campaign has welcomed the new State Government's commitment to review the process. The News understands this review will be completed by August.

"Any outcomes of the Bastion Point review being undertaken by the Government need to follow the expert advice of the independent Planning Panel, which was not to build the breakwater, and to use a community driven process to find a better solution to boat launching at Bastion Point," Mr Op den Brouw said.

The Save Bastion Point Campaign urges the East Gippsland Shire Council to abandon its current application for Coastal Management Act consent, and to work with the community for a low impact alternative.

"The planning panel found that the breakwater development did not have coastal policy support and that means quite simply that it cannot and should not get approval under the Coastal Management Act," Mr Op den Brouw said.
