

'Hybrid' carries \$4.4m price tag

Sunday, 26 February 2012

The concept for what is being referred to as a 'hybrid' design to solve the ongoing ocean access concerns at Bastion Point, Mallacoota, was on Friday released to the public via the Department of Transport website.

The new hybrid design, as flagged in last Wednesday's East Gippsland News, rejects both the East Gippsland Shire Council-preferred 'Option 3B', and the Save Bastion Point Group's low-scale alternate option at the same site as the current 40-year-old small concrete slab which allows for what has been described as an unsafe beach launching facility which creates a lethal mix of swimmers and boats.

The hybrid option involves construction of a new boat ramp at the site of the existing boat ramp with a breakwater to the east of the ramp and the provision of a jetty at the western side of the ramp. The proposal includes additional works to the existing car park area to enable better and more efficient access for cars and boat trailers.

The hybrid option is estimated to cost \$4.4 million and would be funded primarily by the State Government with a contribution from council. A figure of about \$6 million was anticipated for Option 3B.

In November 2010, the Government decided to re-examine the option of providing a new ramp at the site of the current ramp, as recommended by the Environment Effects Statement Panel in 2008.

According to the Department of Transport, the hybrid option emerged as a result of that review.

In the documents released last Friday, the department proposes a new ramp at the approximate location of the existing ramp. It would include the redevelopment of the access road, development of car and boat trailer parking, compliance with cultural heritage requirements, offset planting to compensate for vegetation removed, and construction of a two-lane boat ramp protected by a breakwater wall and jetty.

The department claims the hybrid option has fewer environmental impacts needing management and less vegetation removal.

Post construction, if boats continued to launch from or pull up at the beach like they've always done, a local regulation would enforce swimming-only zones and prevent boats from approaching the beach or being temporarily moored within the vicinity of the beach.

An analysis to compare the alternate Save Bastion Point Group option, the council-preferred Option 3B and the new hybrid concept came out in favor of the hybrid option ahead of Option 3B and the alternate option in that order.

Annual operational costs would be similar for all three options, in excess of \$200,000.

The Department of Transport (DOT) will host a public information session on 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. Residents will have the opportunity to examine the details of the concept design and to provide feedback to the Department of Transport.