



• Construction of a new two lane boat ramp at Mallacoota began on Monday. Photograph by Michael Rayner.

## BASTION POINT: Woman charged as construction begins

Mallacoota resident Melinda Beacham has been charged with trespass and supplying false information to Victorian Police after staging a protest at the controversial Bastion Point boat ramp development on Tuesday.

On day two of construction of the \$6.5m project, Ms Beecham locked herself onto a concrete anchor point and sheltered under a structure that was shaped like a giant seal.

Her protest followed a day of peaceful protest attended by about 60 residents on Monday.

Save Bastion Point group spokesperson Julie Parker said machinery came within metres of Ms Beacham and refused to stop working when told of her presence.

"When told that there was someone under the seal-shaped shelter the workers refused to stop the machines which were within five metres of Melinda and

endangering her life," she said.

However East Gippsland Shire Council director Operations, Chris Waites said workers were unaware that someone was underneath the seal prop.

"The contractor was about to lift the structure and move it out of the way when her friend came running along the beach," he said.

Ms Beacham expressed her disappointment at the construction: "To stand back and allow this destruction would be harder to bear."

Commercial fishermen have ongoing access to the existing boat ramp however the public is locked out until December 21 when construction halts until January 28.

While the East Gippsland Shire Council argues the project is needed to improve safety for boats, opponents say it will destroy the beach.