



Crunch time for beautiful Bastion Point

The Victorian National Parks Association calls on the East Gippsland Shire Council to save Bastion Point from massive, illogical and ill-conceived development plans.

Decision time looms again for the controversial Bastion Point overdevelopment, with East Gippsland Shire Councillors set to vote tonight on which design option to submit to Environment Minister Ryan Smith for approval.

Tonight's vote is in response to the Victorian Department of Transport's recently completed review of the development, where an overwhelming 88% of public submissions demonstrated a preference for a smaller-scale development rather than the massive Option 3b breakwater and road on the beach.

"This is groundhog day for Bastion Point. Yet another review of the development has shown that the community does not support a large destructive breakwater, and even the Victorian Department of Transport has recommended an alternative design option," the Victorian National Parks Association's Marine and Coastal Project Officer Simon Branigan said today.

"The East Gippsland Shire Councillors are elected to be representatives of the community. They need to listen to the loud and clear message that the community is giving and vote to scrap this large destructive development and support a sustainable low-impact solution to this generation-long battle."

Option 3b has failed several key tests, after the independent Environmental Effects Statement Panel ruled against the development three years ago on multiple grounds, including all three pillars of sustainability – environmental, economic and social.

The Marine Safety Victoria funding panel also rejected Option 3b, finding that the development had poor economic and safety credentials.

The Victorian National Parks Association has always supported safer open-ocean access at Bastion Point.

"The council, by supporting a low impact development, has a golden opportunity to work with the community and the government to make this happen without destroying the area's environmental and cultural values," Mr Branigan said.

"It's time to lay this large destructive dinosaur of a development to rest and develop a low-impact upgrade of the existing ramp and the surrounding area.

"Nineteen organisations are supporting this push in a joint statement that will be presented to East Gippsland Shire Councillors before their vote tonight."

For comment

- Simon Branigan, VNPA Marine & Coastal Project Officer on 0409 087 278.

