

Save Bastion Point

protect this coastal environment from inappropriate development

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOI Documents Reveal A Lower Impact Solution For Bastion Point Was Recommended By Government Taskforce

Documents have recently been obtained by Freedom of Information (FOI) from the Department of Transport (DoT) that show that the controversial 'Option 3b' breakwater and beach road proposed by East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) was not the preferred solution of DoT executive for Mallacoota's Bastion Point. It recommended that Minister Napthine support the lower impact, Option H2'.

The documents directly refute EGSC's recent public claims that the lower impact options did not meet relevant design guidelines or usability and were rejected by the Department of Transport.

After coming to Government with a promise to review the long running and controversial project, DoT developed the lower impact option they named Option H2. The Executive Director of Freight, Logistics and Marine of DoT advised Minister Napthine that of the 254 submissions to a community consultation, the 'vast majority (88.2%) would prefer to see a smaller development than Option 3b'. This included the Boating Industry Association of Victoria submission.

In June 2012 the Executive Director wrote to the Minister recommending; 'The whole of Government project group has formed a view that Option H2 would perform as well or better than Council's preferred Option 3b. It has significantly fewer environmental impacts and provides an estimated cost saving of \$2 million...DSE has advised they will take a submission to Cabinet in July 2012 seeking endorsement of Option H2'.

Yet, the unpopular Option 3b has been given Coastal Management Act approval, with construction tender documents being released last week.

Says Campaign spokesperson Leo op den Brouw "In an all too familiar scenario for opponents of Option 3b, FOI material shows the clear findings of a public consultation process have yet again been ignored."

"We are now in a situation where tenders have been called for the Option 3b development, which has limited public support, a lower score in the safety-weighted Multi-Criteria Analysis rating and significantly more environmental impacts than lower cost alternatives."

"We are calling on East Gippsland Shire Council to not only halt the poor process of ignoring public and professional opinion, but also to correct its misinformation that the lower impact options were rejected in the Department of Transport review. This they should do by placing advertisements in regional newspapers."

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FOI documents available

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<http://www.savebastionpoint.org/2013/04/20/foi-dot/>