

Wednesday June 9 2010

Have Your Say

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Appeal to councillors

Sir,- An open letter to East Gippsland Shire councillors.

After contemplating the front page of last Wednesday's *Snowy River Mail* (Bastion Point decision stands), I am appealing to the East Gippsland Shire councillors as a ratepayer and resident of Mallacoota for the past 43 years (a lifetime) to seriously reconsider your position regarding the proposed Bastion Point boat ramp / breakwall (3b) development.

Councillors are no-doubt aware of this very contentious issue, which has divided our small Mallacoota community. This proposed development continues to be pursued by the East Gippsland Shire despite the independent government appointed panel's findings against the proposal, the Shires flawed EES, and overwhelming opposition from the Mallacoota community.

With reports suggesting the recent Supreme Court hearing 'seals the deal', along with misleading comments and statements made by our mayor and

MOAC - I question individual councillors' understanding of this project, and their ability to ultimately make the right decision for our environment and community, with the information they have been provided.

The issue of councillors (and ratepayers) not being provided with all information and false information concerns me, after reading this article in the *Snowy River Mail* (Wednesday, June 2 - 'Bastion Point decision stands') Cr Freshwater states (in regards to Minister Maddens perceived 'approval') "... he hoped opponents to the ramp would now accept the umpire's decision and step back from this issue".

Firstly, Minister Madden is not and has never been 'the umpire' (as the ultimate approval sits in the lap of Environment Minister Gavin Jennings) and secondly Minister Madden's decision was never an 'approval' but an 'assessment'.

Basically the Supreme court finding was that Justin Madden acted within the law to ignore his own panels recommendations and present his own 'assessment'.

In this same article MOAC spokesman Ian Lewis is quoted as saying "The 3b design proposal ... is safe ocean access and built to Australian Standards".

Clearly Mr Lewis is also without correct information, as there are no Australian Standards for ocean access facilities that provide launching facilities directly into the open ocean - but standards for facilities that provide access into a port or harbour - one would hardly consider Bass Strait this.

Mr Lewis also neglects to mention the Panels found this (3b) proposal to be a "death trap".

If the mayor and MOAC disregard or misinterpret vital facts how can we be confident our councillors are being provided with the correct information to

make well-informed, unbiased decisions on behalf of our community?

As ratepayer appointed representatives I ask each individual councillor to:

* Read the independent Government appointed panel report.

* Read the recent Supreme Court papers handed down by Judge Osborn.

* Do not allow the East Gippsland Shire to progress with proposed development 3b, in doing so wasting more ratepayers' money, and further dividing the Mallacoota community.

Have our councillors already done this or do they live 'too far away' from this community to really bother about this issue? Have they made the effort to research, read and assess this proposal as it develops or are they merely 'just another briefcase in this bank-breaking game of 'Deal or no deal?'

Yours etc.,
Julie Parker,
Mallacoota.

Snowy River Mail