

## Bob Brown's green living

The image of bulldozers moving towards a shallow reef habitat in East Gippsland gives Bob Brown nightmares

When the Vandals swept into Rome in 455AD they looted, raped and burned. The vulgarity of their behaviour has etched them a notorious place in the English language. A vandal is a selfish, cruel, needless destroyer, and pretty stupid.

At the far south-east tip of the Australian continent, on the Croajingalong Coast, is Bastion Point. It is a rocky headland that is placed in just about as pleasant a coastal area as the world provides, with its lakes, lagoons, waterbirds, coastal woodlands, panoramic clifftop views and humpback whales in the migratory season. A couple of years ago, Paul and I camped for a night in a teatree thicket high above the ocean near Mallacoota, listening to the ringtail possums whistling beneath a full moon. After a brilliant sunrise, we descended to a deserted beach for a swim and walk along the sand, staying near the water to avoid the chance of plodding through the camouflaged nests and eggs of the anxious local dotterels and oystercatchers. But why bother? While some folk are tippy-toeing to avoid harming nature, others are arriving with truckloads of dynamite to blast it to smithereens. At Bastion Point, the officially authorised vandals have arrived.

This unique natural gem is about to be enhanced with a bitumen road, new two-lane boat ramp with a dredge and 130-metre-long breakwater to support the abalone industry. The Bastion Point reef, an ancient nursery for many species of sea life, is not the right geometry for the invaders and so will be blasted into shape. If Bastion Point, with its curl of waves, is to be smashed, there's little chance for any of the other remaining little headlands, coves or fish nurseries in the world. Isn't it quaint that on some parts of our rapidly transmogrifying Australian coastline we are sinking rusty ships to create fake meccas for underwater adventurers while on others we're blasting the bejesus out of fertile, natural reefs that should be kept for authentic underwater experiences?

There is a brave group of local residents fighting to save Bastion Point in favour of a lower impact, more economic boat ramp. Excavation and vegetation clearing started in November, with plans to resume in February, but you can help. If you are near Melbourne, Sydney, Wollongong or Canberra, take a couple of days holiday in Mallacoota and visit Bastion Point. Send the politest letter possible to the reef wreckers and the local, state and federal politicians who should be protecting this beautiful corner of our nation. A donation or letter of encouragement to the reef defenders would also be a help. And spread the word, because public opinion is vital for Bastion Point and for all the shore-based wildlife, in and out of the sea, which it has regenerated and harboured for so long.



[savebastionpoint.org](http://savebastionpoint.org)

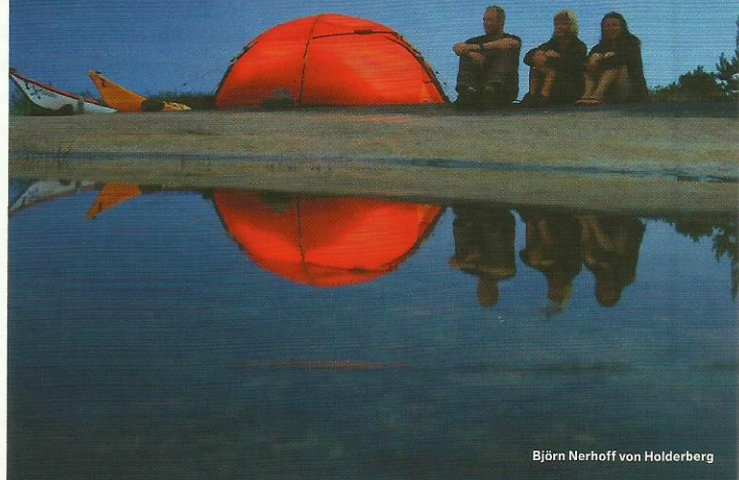


Bastion Point in December  
Photo: Julie Parker

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