

**Friends of Mallacoota
Far East Gippsland Surfriders
Mallacoota Surf Life Saving Club
Mallacoota Coast Action/ Coastcare**

Save Bastion Point

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Save Bastion Point Campaign Update No. 1

5 September 2005

Request for Panel Inquiry and Public Hearing: Letters to the Minister for Planning and How To Guide PLUS ~ *Join us for the Save Bastion Point Big Shoot*

Welcome to the first update of the Save Bastion Point Campaign. Though the campaign has been happening for a number of years now it has only recently reached a level where we recognize the need to generate a greater amount of awareness and information. We hope a series of updates will assist our collective campaigning and end goal to Save Bastion Point from inappropriate development. Please be in touch with feedback about the updates to ensure we meet your information needs.

WHY CAMPAIGN TO SAVE BASTION POINT?

Bastion Point is on the coast in the small town of Mallacoota, situated in Far East Gippsland near the Victorian/NSW border just west of Gabo Island. Mallacoota is surrounded by Croajingolong National Park, a designated World Biosphere Reserve and abutted by Cape Howe Marine Park. Its untouched coast is part of the Victorian Wilderness Coastline.

Bastion Point is the local beach which can be accessed by foot and bicycle from the town. It is the only location at which the Mallacoota Surf Life Saving Club declares suitable for swimmers and erects its safety flags over the summer holiday period. Bastion Point is a nationally recognized surf break and thus regularly used by surfers and swimmers. The reef is used by rock rambblers and for educational purposes by the local school as well as various universities. Bastion Point is a place of pristine beauty with high environmental values.

WHAT IS A BOAT RAMP ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT?

The East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) wishes to build an all-tide ocean access boat ramp at Bastion Point. In 2000, the Victorian Minister for Planning required that the EGSC undertake an Environment Effects Statement (EES) on any proposed ramp before decisions could be made to proceed with the development. On 23 August 2005, the EGSC decided to finalise the EES process by selecting their preferred site and scale for a boat ramp and voted that the proposal will now be prepared for public exhibition, the final stage of the EES.

WHAT WILL BE THE SITE AND SCALE OF THE BOAT RAMP PROPOSAL?

The preferred site selected by the EGSC for an all-tide ocean access boat ramp is located at 'Broken Board', an area along the Bastion Point reef named for the significance of the surf break. The development would

include a 130 metre long break wall that is 2.5 metres high and 5 metres wide at the crest. It is estimated that 9,000 tonnes of imported rock would be required for the break wall, including cementing and possible blasting of the reef as well as an access road through and around dune headland that has Aboriginal middens and quarry sites. The proposed boat ramp will require ongoing dredging, and other infrastructure including car and boat trailer parking, boat washing facilities, lighting and toilets. The Shire would need to raise over \$1.5 million from State and Federal funding for the construction. Ongoing recurrent maintenance costs are estimated at \$50,000 which is likely to have been grossly underestimated.

WHAT DOES PUBLIC EXHIBITION STAGE OF THE EES MEAN?

Once the EGSC has prepared the all-tide ocean access EES boat ramp proposal it must 'exhibit' (advertise), it publicly for a period of 8 weeks. During this time, the public are invited to comment on the boat ramp proposal. Submissions should be sent to the Minister for Planning. *We strongly encourage* everyone who is opposed to this inappropriate development to write a letter or submission to the Minister *once the EES is on public exhibition*.

WHEN WILL THE EES PROPOSAL BE ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION?

The EGSC is currently finalizing some of the studies for the EES and is preparing the proposal documents. It may not be available to the public for another month. Please check www.savebastionpoint.org or contact Stephen Chey to find out when the EES proposal is on public exhibition and how to obtain a copy. We'll also give you information about submission writing to the Minister for Planning.

HOW DOES THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING MAKE AN ASSESSMENT ON THE PROPOSED BOAT RAMP DEVELOPMENT?

The Minister for Planning receives all the public submissions and may require a panel inquiry to review the EES proposal and submissions. The panel inquiry may involve a public hearing at which time individuals and groups that made submissions may be invited to the public hearing. The panel will prepare a report for the Minister. The Minister then prepares his assessment of recommendations on whether the boat ramp should be developed.

WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISION TO BUILD THE BOAT RAMP?

Under the Victorian Coastal Management Act 1995, the Victorian Minister for Environment will use the recommendations of the Minister for Planning in making a decision as to whether the boat ramp can be built on coastal Crown land. The entire process to reach this decision is still going to take many months and there remains a lot we can do to influence the decision and prevent any inappropriate development.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

WRITE TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING

You can now write individual personal letters to the Victorian Minister for Planning. Suggested points for your letter are-

- The Bastion Point Mallacoota ocean access boat ramp EES process has lacked sufficient and transparent community consultation. In particular, community views have not been taken into account in all the EES studies.
- The East Gippsland Shire Council did not represent community views when it recently voted on its preferred boat ramp option for the EES proposal.
- The EES proposal was limited to options that included large scale inappropriate break wall developments and ancillary infrastructure.
- The community requests the Minister for Planning to require a peer review of the Coastal Processes Study that was conducted as part of the EES process.
- The community requests the Minister for Planning to require a *panel inquiry* and *public hearing* as part of his assessment of the proposed boat ramp at Bastion Point. We request that two public hearings be held, one in the township of Mallacoota during non-holiday season to enable as many local community residents as possible to participate, and a second hearing to be held in Melbourne to enable the participation of many non-resident householders/ratepayers and regular Mallacoota tourists.

Please write your letter to the Minister for Planning before the end of September 2005. Post, fax or email to-

The Hon. Rob Hulls
Minister for Planning
Level 1, 55 St Andrews Place,
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Fax - (03) 9651 0556
Email - rob.hulls@parliament.vic.gov.au

JOIN IN THE SAVE BASTION POINT BIG SHOOT

If you are opposed to inappropriate development at Bastion Point then join your fellow campaigners at the Point for a big photo shoot. The aim of the big shoot is to gather in support of each other to celebrate the work we have done to date and to energise ourselves for the campaigning to

come. A photo will be taken of the campaign supporters and sent to the East Gippsland Shire Council, various Ministers and the media to demonstrate that we will continue to fight to protect Bastion Point and urge the Minister for Planning to hold public hearings before making his assessment. Come dressed in your wetsuit, bathers or beach hiking gear. Bring your surfboards, boogie boards, kayaks, kids buckets and spades, beach towels, snorkels and flippers, and have fun at the big shoot. A BBQ will be held after the photo shoot to raise funds for the campaign. We're planning this event for early Oct. just after school holidays. Stay tuned for the date to be announced!

SAVE BASTION POINT CAMPAIGN

The Save Bastion Point Campaign started loosely over 5 years ago and has since grown into an organized and active campaign. The campaign aims to protect the Bastion Point environment and coastline from inappropriate development and infrastructure, to promote Bastion Point for all user-groups and to encourage safety for all users of Bastion Point.

The campaign is supported by four Mallacoota community volunteer groups:

Friends of Mallacoota are dedicated to caring for and protecting the natural environment.

Far East Gippsland Surfriders is a branch of the Surfrider Foundation Australia and is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the Mallacoota and surrounding regional oceans, waves and beaches for all people.

Mallacoota Surf Life Saving Club promotes safe water use by all user groups, and patrols and undertakes rescues at the Bastion Point beach during the peak summer season.

Mallacoota Coast Action/ Coastcare works to protect and improve the sustainability and biological diversity of the coastline and its marine environment.

Hundreds of local community residents and regional and interstate people are supporters of the campaign to Save Bastion Point from inappropriate development. Campaigners have to date written letters and petitions to Ministers and local Councilors, made submissions as part of the EES process, represented the interests of the campaign groups and concerned individuals at local Council and community meetings, and commissioned expert reviews of the EES studies.

We need your help. You can join us in supporting the campaign! It is critical that we continue to be actively involved in the EES process and to educate the public and Ministers about the need to protect Bastion Point. For more information please visit <http://savebastionpoint.org/> or contact Stephen Chey on 0437543473 or Jenny Mason on (03) 5158 0720.

Next update – Summary of EES proposal once it is available to the public and what to write in submissions to the Minister for Planning.