

**Friends of Mallacoota
Far East Gippsland Surfriders
Mallacoota Surf Life Saving Club
Mallacoota Coast Action/ Coastcare
Melbourne Save Bastion Point Group**
supported by ~
**Surfrider Foundation Australia
Australian Conservation Foundation**

Save Bastion Point

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Save Bastion Point Campaign Update No. 4

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What's happened to the EES & ongoing campaign actions PLUS ~ *Join us for the Blues Vs Breakwater Benefit Gig!*

WHERE IS THE BOAT RAMP/ BREAKWATER PROPOSAL UP TO?

As mentioned in previous Updates, the East Gippsland Shire Council is required by the Victorian Minister for Planning to prepare an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for its proposed boat ramp/ breakwater development at Bastion Point.

In 2004 the Shire Council commenced a series of technical studies in preparation of their EES. In late 2005 it submitted a Draft EES to the Technical Reference Group (TRG) established by Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The TRG rejected the Draft EES on the grounds that various studies were incomplete, the document did not meet the EES Assessment Guidelines and was not of a sufficient standard for public exhibition.

The Shire Council was required to carry out further work on the EES and re-submitted it in Aug 2006. The TRG again rejected the Draft EES and we understand the Shire Council is now making final changes to it.

If the TRG believes the Draft EES meets the EES Assessment Guidelines it will recommend to DSE that it is suitable for public exhibition. If DSE agrees with this recommendation it will advise the Shire Council that it may proceed to exhibit the EES.

It should be noted that the TRG is not reviewing the Draft EES on quality or merit of arguments. The role of the TRG is to ensure that the EES Assessment Guidelines be met. It does not make any decision as to whether the boat ramp/ breakwater proposal should be approved. The Minister for Planning makes this decision following the public exhibition stage.

PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF EES

We believe there is still a number of months before we can expect the EES to be on public exhibition.

We expect the EES will be advertised to the public for a period of up to 8 weeks. During that time the public will be invited to make written submissions on the EES to DSE. Anyone who makes a written submission will be eligible to also make an oral presentation to the Panel Inquiry which we expect will be established by DSE. On the basis of the

EES and submissions received, the Panel will recommend to the Minister for Planning as to whether the proposed boat ramp/ breakwater should be approved or not.

The public exhibition stage is critical to our campaign. It is essential that we have as many people as possible make written submissions. We plan to assist the community and wider general public with information to do this.

Please be in touch or keep checking our website for details on when the EES will be on exhibition.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT?

➤ It degrades a significant coastal environment

The proposed boat ramp and breakwater would cut through the geologically significant Bastion Point reef, resulting in the destruction of diverse and species-rich marine habitats. It would also interfere with the coastal processes and require an on-going dredging operation that would further impact the reef and nearby beaches. Construction of the access road and turning area would remove significant coastal vegetation and habitat, and threaten fragile dunes and a cliff-face of geo-scientific importance. Impacts on the wider environment from the proposed development are also likely. An outstanding coastal panorama would be seriously interrupted, and the natural integrity of a wilderness coast destroyed forever.

➤ It is inequitable, and discriminates against all other users

The proposed development would increase the boating activity footprint substantially, disenfranchising all other users of the area including swimmers, walkers and rock-ramblers. Surfing in particular would be severely affected as the breakwater would cut across an important surf break and affect other surf breaks in the vicinity. This would have a major impact on the town, especially the youth for whom surfing is a vital activity. There are no other surfing locations nearby that provide the same level of shelter in the predominant southerly winds. Ongoing dredging with its discharge, smells and noise would degrade the amenity of the popular nearby beach.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT? continued....

➤ It creates safety hazards

There are major risks for boat operators who would be encouraged to use the new ocean access infrastructure. Dangerous breaking waves regularly occur in the vicinity of the proposed breakwater and beyond. The breakwater would impair vision for boat operators, making exiting and entering the facility dangerous. Inexperienced boaters enticed into waters where conditions can change rapidly and become hazardous, would be especially at risk.

➤ It will destroy Indigenous cultural heritage

The proposed road works would be located in an area that contains significant Indigenous archaeological cultural heritage sites. This infrastructure would have a severe impact on these midden and quarry sites.

➤ It threatens sustainable tourism

The proposal threatens Mallacoota's long-term tourism future by compromising the many values of Bastion Point and the Wilderness Coast. Residents and visitors are attracted to the area because of its natural beauty and low-key development. Investing in and protecting the area's natural assets can better achieve sustainable tourism.

➤ It is not economically sustainable

The need for such a costly and heavily engineered facility has not been demonstrated. The abalone industry does not depend on the proposal proceeding and will sustain itself without it. The economic benefits of the proposal have been exaggerated, and the environmental, social, cultural and economic costs have been ignored or grossly underestimated. There would be significant on-going operational and maintenance costs, and high usage fees are likely.

➤ It is contradictory to Government strategies

The proposal is inconsistent with many government policies, including the principles of sound coastal management as endorsed in the Victorian Coastal Strategy.

WHAT'S THE CAMPAIGN GROUPS BEEN UP TO?

Lobbying

We've continued our lobbying efforts with Victorian State Ministers to ensure they are aware of our concerns about the proposal. We've also made them aware that the Shire Council's conduct of the EES process has been substandard. We've been asking for genuine, transparent and inclusive engagement of the Mallacoota community. We've also been lobbying around appropriate safe and sustainable solutions that respect the natural, cultural and recreational values of the area.

Media

Over the last few months we've had a Mallacoota and Melbourne campaigner interviewed on ABC Regional radio

about our concerns for the Shire's boat ramp/ breakwater proposal. We've had an article in Parkwatch, a magazine of the Victorian National Parks Association. An article has also been published in the National Greens Magazine. More recently we've had campaigners interviewed by WIN TV for a forthcoming television story.

Blues Vs Breakwater - Campaign Benefit Gig

The Melbourne Save Bastion Point Group has organized a gig to be held at the Rainbow Hotel, 27 St David Street Fitzroy on Oct 14th from 2-6pm. Brilliant musicians will be playing at the gig including The Little Stevies, The Hornets, The Wolfe Gang, O'Ziriguidum Samba School and special guests. Please get along and support this great event.

Post card campaign

Our successful Postcard petition to Victorian Minister for Planning, The Hon. Rob Hulls has resulted in over 1,500 postcards. We hope to present the postcards to the Minister within the coming weeks.

BREAKING NEWS!!!!!!

The Save Bastion Point Campaign is now an even bigger state and national campaign!

Earlier this year the Council of the Australia Conservation Foundation (www.acfonline.org.au) passed a motion to oppose any inappropriate boatramp/ breakwater development at Bastion Point and to thereby support the Save Bastion Point Campaign. ACF is the second national not for profit organisation to support our cause. For more than a year the Surfrider Foundation Australia (www.surfrider.org.au) has showed extensive support to our campaign to prevent the destruction of an iconic surfbreak at Bastion Point.

There are many people in Melbourne who have now joined the Melbourne Save Bastion Point Campaign Group. The group meets regularly and is convened by James Thyer (James.thyer@csl.com.au). Please be in touch with James if you wish to know more about the Melbourne group.

All groups wish to thank you for your continued support. Go to www.savebastionpoint.org