

15 November 2007

Mayor & all Councillors
East Gippsland Shire Council
PO Box 1618
Bairnsdale VIC 3875

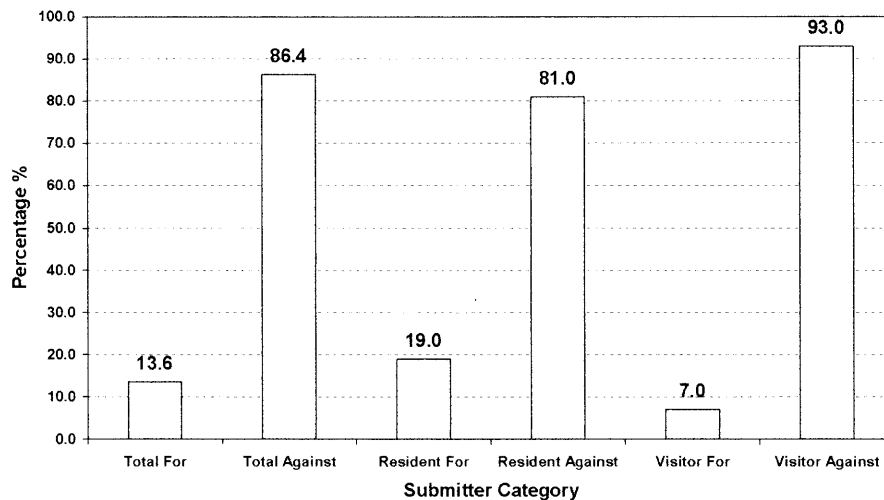
Dear Madam Mayor and all Councillors

A WAY FORWARD FOR COUNCIL WITH OCEAN ACCESS AT BASTION POINT

We understand that as per your request to have the Bastion Point Ocean Access Inquiry adjourned, you are now having discussions with DSE regarding issues raised in its submission.

In addition to the DSE submission, other important submitters also raised issues that you should be equally concerned about. We refer, for example, to the Regional Coastal Board's submission.

We would like to submit the following analysis of the EES submissions. A total of 482 submissions were made to the Bastion Point EES, 471 of which could be scored as 'for' or 'against' the development. Of the submissions available on the DSE website, 263 were identified as being from permanent residents, and 201 from visitors.



The graph shows that the development is extremely unpopular amongst Mallacoota residents, and even more unpopular in the visitor group the development is meant to attract to Mallacoota. In summary, it would appear that support for, and the benefits of the development, have been greatly overstated.

The failure of the EES 'stakeholder consultation' to acknowledge this opposition, other than describing it in the EES as a 'divergence of views', questions the integrity of the consultation process.

Council should acknowledge and accept the views expressed in submissions by agencies, organisations/groups, residents and visitors. We do not believe that it will be feasible to undertake further studies to sufficiently address the serious concerns raised in submissions regarding your preferred option.

We believe the appropriate course of action for the Council is to now consider the range of options for ocean access at Bastion Point which would satisfy the environmental, recreational, cultural, and safety issues that have been made apparent in the EES submissions.

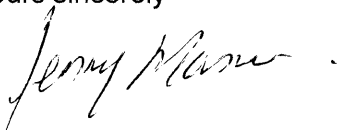
We outlined the basis for a sustainable low impact option that does not include breakwaters, in a recent letter to Minister Jennings (dated 30 October 2007). In summary, this would include:

1. Containment of ocean access from Bastion Point within the site of the existing boat ramp and access road.
2. Assessment of modes of improved ocean access that do not include breakwaters or any other high impact construction or facility. Possibilities include tractor assisted beach launching or a new ramp facility that is slightly longer, wider and steeper in gradient than the existing ramp.
3. Recognition of the shared use of Bastion Point. The area is utilised by a wide group of users and lends itself to a vast number of purposes in addition to boating.
4. Implementation of a safety/risk management plan for launch/ retrieval ocean access as well as land-based safety issues.
5. Implementation of an environment management plan during both the construction phase and for the ongoing use of the Bastion Point area.
6. Implementation of a cultural heritage management plan to ensure ocean access does not destroy or impact upon Aboriginal cultural heritage sites.
7. Designation of parking areas for boat trailers and vehicles to cater for peak period usage. Congestion problems only occur a few weeks per year, therefore this parking may be alternative or temporary. Planning for future expansion of parking must be away from the foreshore. Vehicle and pedestrian access routes also need to be rationalised.

The community expects a transparent, accountable and positive resolution to this longstanding issue. We would appreciate greatly Council providing a regular update on its discussions with DSE and its decisions regarding the future of the public Inquiry process.

We would be grateful for an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the issues raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Mason
Coordinator

CC -

Mr Steve Kozlowski, CEO, East Gippsland Shire Council
Ms Kate Nelson, Director Planning and Community, East Gippsland Shire Council