

Save Bastion Point

protect this coastal environment from inappropriate development

A sustainable solution for improved ocean access at Bastion Point, Mallacoota

Introduction

The Save Bastion Point Campaign has developed a concept plan that we believe provides a long-term and sustainable solution that addresses the Key Criteria for improved Ocean Access as defined in the Environment Effect Statement. It satisfies all environmental, safety, access, tourism and economic considerations, and furthermore is consistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy (and other policy and strategy documents).

We acknowledge that the “No Change” scenario is not acceptable: the current facility is in a serious state of disrepair, the access road and car-parking facilities are in poor condition, and there are safety issues for both boat operators and other beach users that need to be addressed.

However, we cannot support the East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC) proposal and, in particular, the inclusion of breakwaters and the causeway road along the beach. It should be noted that most of the high or extreme risk activities associated with boating will occur at the exit from the breakwater and outside the immediate vicinity of any launching facility and is the reason the Gippsland Boating Action Plan discourages access to waters known to be dangerous.

The EGSC’s option 3b design:

- × is costly with a likely high level of maintenance
- × is expected to require further extensions to the breakwater
- × requires major engineering works
- × would be a significant intrusion into the landscape
- × impacts unacceptably on natural and cultural values
- × causes considerable loss of amenity for all other recreational users
- × will not resolve a number of safety issues and would introduce serious risks to boat operators
- × has attracted a high level of public opposition

We believe it is possible to improve ocean access in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable, that equitably considers all users of the area, improves safety for boat operators and other beach users, would gain the support of a large number of people opposing the current proposal, and would maintain and protect the natural and cultural values of Bastion Point.

A sustainable Bastion Point ocean access solution

Key elements of the solution are the containment of the boating footprint to the current site with the exclusion of large breakwaters and heavy engineering.

➤ A new boat ramp

The existing boat ramp would be removed and replaced at or close to the current site with a ramp that has:

- two lanes in width
- an increase in length and gradient
- been repositioned south closer to the rocky reef
- hard stand/turning circle extended to seaward (east) at the head of the ramp
- a low sea wall that would protect the ramp and boats from side on swell
- a boat holding structure to facilitate launch and retrieval

The foreshore (lower) vehicle access and turning circle would be slightly elevated and protected by a sloping low sea wall designed to protect the car park from wave advance while minimising wave scour of beach areas and the potential undermining of the area. The slight elevation of the car park

above its existing level is consistent with the 2008 *Victorian Coastal Strategy* recognition of 0.8 metre rise in sea level for coastal planning purposes.

The elevation of the car park would also facilitate increasing the slope of the ramp, thereby enabling the launching of boats by conventional vehicles. The launching and retrieval slope of the ramp can also be increased by the ramp extending out from the beach and car park at a low gradient and then being increased in gradient further along to meet relevant Australian Standards Guidelines for boat ramps.

➤ Access road, parking, traffic and pedestrian management

Traffic access and pedestrian safety would be formalised by:

- sealing and kerbing all vehicular traffic areas
- line marking and traffic islands at key points to control access
- one-way vehicle movement at key locations
- controlled vehicle access to lower foreshore during boating operations
- designated disabled parking at upper and lower vehicle access points
- designated parking for Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) and emergency services during peak periods
- car/trailer park closer to boat ramp

These management measures would improve safety for pedestrians and other beach users.

➤ Car park numbers

Car and boat trailer park numbers are limited to meet Safety Audit recommendations and ramp access management, as well as to minimise the impact on adjacent vegetation.

➤ Vegetation protection

Vegetation along the cliff top and adjacent to roads will be protected by appropriate fencing or bollards.

➤ Management

The introduction of the Management Plan outlined in the AMS audit will address most of the safety issues that can be found at the existing site.

➤ Gippsland Ports Special Purpose Zone

The Gippsland Ports Special Purpose Zone would remain in place. This 'shared use' zone has successfully reduced conflict between the users of the existing Bastion Point ramp.

Note: A Special Purpose Zone is proposed for the EGSC 3b facility. It is also likely to be declared a Hazardous Boating Area by MSV.

Benefits of the alternative solution for Bastion Point ocean access

1. Protects Bastion Point's environmental, social, cultural and economic values while allowing for significantly improved and safer ocean access in appropriate conditions at a substantially reduced cost.
2. Improves the management and safety of pedestrians and vehicular access to Bastion Point.
3. Eliminates the need for breakwaters and supports the safety of ocean access by:
 - Maximising boater visibility
 - Providing a sheltered area for boat launch and retrieval
 - Minimising distance to trailer car park area
4. Would have widespread support from the Mallacoota and broader community.
5. Meets key criteria as outlined in the Victorian Coastal Strategy and associated Policies and Strategies.