

# MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 25 June 2013

## Buried Beaches = Bad Business

Ziggy the massive blow up white elephant is set to stampede Parliament House trumpeting “buried beaches equals bad business.”, to highlight long running community opposition for plans to build a damaging breakwater at one of Victoria’s most loved beaches, Bastion Pt at Mallacoota.

Today at 12.30pm, the Save Bastion Point Campaign is holding a rally at Parliament House to let the State Government know, loud and clear, that our coast is too precious to lose, and damaging developments have no place in Victoria’s coastal environment.

The construction of a giant breakwall and road on the beach is getting very close to being a reality for Bastion Point, on Victoria’s far east wilderness coast. Approvals and funding have been given by the State Government, and the local Shire is currently considering tenders with a vote expected next week on July 2.

“The breakwall is a white elephant. If this damaging development goes ahead it sets a dangerous precedent and leaves no beach along Victoria’s beautiful coastline safe,” said Jenny Mason, spokesperson for the Save Bastion Point Campaign.

“It is not only damaging to the environment, but to the community’s trust in the democratic processes - both State and Local Government have clearly failed the community in this matter.”

The overdevelopment at Bastion Point, named Option 3B is bad for business because, there are cheaper, safer and more environmentally friendly options:

- Governments have ignored overwhelming public sentiment; they have over-turned recommendations from an Inquiry Panel, a Marine Safety Funding Panel and the more recent Government Review.
- Information obtained by Freedom of Information of the Department of Transport record senior departmental executives recommending in June 2012 to then Minister for Transport Denis Napthine that: ‘a whole of Government project group has formed a view that Option H2 [a lower impact option] would perform as well or better than Council’s preferred Option 3b. It has significantly fewer environmental impacts and provides an estimated cost saving of \$2 million’.
- The independent Inquiry Panel that reviewed the project in 2008 found that the project was of no societal benefit and would have an overall net detriment on tourism, and was likely to be a long term financial burden to the people of East Gippsland.
- Coastal Planning Principles are being undermined and weakened leaving no beach in Victoria safe.

Bastion Point is now listed as Australia’s most Endangered Wave as part of Surfrider Foundation Australia’s national campaign.

“Any Council that builds roads on beaches and breakwalls through surfing breaks should be ashamed, especially if it wastes public money,” said Dr Rex Campbell, Chairperson of Surfrider Foundation Australia.

“Where will this stop - the white shoe developers will soon follow this white elephant into town and ruin the very reason why surfers and tourists visit this beautiful place.”

“After a generation long battle, the bulldozers are now poised but the crazy situation is that there is a sustainable alternative that provides safer open ocean access as well as protecting Bastion Point’s environmental and cultural integrity,” said Victorian National Parks Association’s spokesperson, Simon Branigan.

“It’s now up to East Gippsland Shire Council and the State Government to see sense and finally stop this damaging development before it’s too late,” concluded Simon Branigan.

We are calling on the State Government to withdraw support and funding for this damaging development.

We are also calling on the East Gippsland Shire Council to please listen to the community and move forward with a lower impact and more environmentally friendly option for boating at Bastion Point.

Greens MP Sue Pennicuik is tabling a motion for debate this Wednesday, asking the Upper House not to support the development at Bastion Point.

UNIQUE PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: A huge White Elephant 4 meters x 6 meters, plus a big splash of colour and people with sea motifs, signs and banners.

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