

Save Bastion Point

protect this coastal environment from inappropriate development

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Bastion Point Economic Report Flawed

A new report throws serious doubt on the economic benefits of the proposed Bastion Point boat harbour development, as local councillors prepare to vote on the controversial plan.

The Save Bastion Point Campaign (SBPC) has released a damning review of the Buchan Consulting Economic Impact Assessment report commissioned by East Gippsland Shire Council. The review concludes that the Buchan Report has overstated the economic case for the project.

The review, conducted by Economists at Large^[1] (see attached) states the project should not be approved on the basis of the flawed economic case for the ramp outlined in the Buchan Report.

The review authors stated: "Given the costs of the project and the amount of local opposition it faces, we believe there must be a convincing and thorough economic case for the project to be approved that can demonstrate clear and certain net social benefits.

"We have found the Buchan Report, the fourth such economic assessment, to be neither convincing nor thorough."

"We conclude that there are significant methodological problems within the economic impact assessment, which result in the economic case for the project being overstated. Based on this, we would recommend that this project not be approved based on the economic case for the ramp outlined in the Buchan Report."

SBPC spokesman Mr. Op den Brouw said the Buchan economic report results were contrary to the findings of the EES Panel Inquiry Report.

"It is a completely flawed assessment, particularly in regard to projected future boating use in the area." Mr. Op den Brouw said.

SBPC has also released an alternative concept for improved ocean access at Bastion Point that recognises the needs of all stakeholders.

Mr Op den Brouw said the concept was far superior to the council's favoured design option 3b in terms of economics, environmental and tourism considerations.

The concept responds to not only the criteria that were defined in the EES Assessment Guidelines, but also the criteria they believe must be integral to any development at Bastion Point.

"Option 3B has some serious safety flaws, with Marine Safety Victoria recommending the boat harbour development have hazardous site signage if the proposal is ever constructed," Mr Op den Brouw said.

"Our alternative concept is backed up by the EES Panel recommendations and demonstrates that is possible to achieve an outcome that would meet the needs of all users while significantly improving safety and ocean access."

“We urge the East Gippsland Shire councillors to vote against Option 3b and consider our alternative concept as starting point in establishing a Panel recommended broadly based community group to develop a detailed design of a minor upgrade to the current ramp, without breakwaters,” Mr Op den Brouw said.

East Gippsland Shire Council will vote Tuesday night on whether to apply to Minister for Environment, Gavin Jennings for final approval of Bastion Point Boat Harbour development.

The SBPC group released the alternative concept to the EGSC councillors last week to ensure they had time to consider the proposal before voting at tonight’s council meeting. The alternative concept and associated documents can be viewed at <http://savebastionpoint.org/campaign/alternative-concept/>

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The document: Economists at Large (2010) Review of the Buchan Consulting *Bastion Point Ocean Access Boat Ramp Economic Impact Assessment* can be viewed here: <http://savebastionpoint.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecolarge-Buchan-Review-August-2010-FINAL-v3.pdf>
