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Save Bastion Point

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MEDIA RELEASE

Planning Minister betrays Victorian Coastal Strategy

Minister for Planning Justin Madden today ignored the basic principles of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008* when he announced the go ahead for the controversial Bastion Point breakwater and headland development in Mallacoota in the state's far-east.

The Minister also went against his own Panel Report's recommendations which did not support any of the development proposals because they were thought to be unsafe and would have no net economic benefit to society.

Local community action group Save Bastion Point, the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and the Australian Conservation Foundation called on Mr Madden to review his decision because the development was strongly opposed by the community and did not follow the environmental protection principles of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*.

Leo op den Brouw, Save Bastion Point spokesperson, said the proposal to build an extensive breakwater, access road on the beach, car park and boating channel was unsustainable and unsafe, and would irreversibly damage the Bastion Point environment and surrounding coastline.

"We are concerned that the removal of more than 3000 cubic metres of reef, to make way for the boating channel, and the addition of more than 8000 tonnes of imported rock, to construct the 130-metre-long breakwater, will disturb tidal flows and damage the marine habitat," he said.

"The permanent sand dredging required to keep the boating channel clear will also impact on marine life and cause unnatural siltation build up.

"While the community agrees the existing boat ramp is in need of repair, we believe there are smarter, sustainable and safer low-key developments that will improve ocean access, protect the area's outstanding attractions and values and meet the provisions of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*.

ACF oceans campaigner Chris Smyth said Minister Madden appeared to have ignored the advice of the expert panel.

"The Minister's approval of the development contradicts the recommendation of his own expert panel which rejected the proposal after a lengthy and comprehensive inquiry," he said.

The *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008* states that planning and management of coastal, estuarine and marine environment should: provide for the protection of significant cultural and environmental values; ensure the sustainable use of natural coastal resources; undertake integrated planning and provide clear direction for the future; and ensure suitable development on the coast.

More than 85 per cent of submissions to the Environmental Effects Study (EES) public inquiry were strongly opposed to the Bastion Point development. The Gippsland Coastal Board stated it could not support the options set out in the EES because none of them were consistent with the 2002 Victorian Coastal Strategy.

Megan Clinton, VNPA's Conservation and Campaigns Manager, called on the Environment Minister Gavin Jennings to reject the proposal.

"This is a poor decision for our coasts and clearly a failure of the coastal planning system. The Environment Minister must now use his powers under the Coastal Management Act to ensure this environmentally destructive idea is dropped once and for all," she said.

For further comment please contact: Leo op den Brouw on 03 5158 0255; Megan Clinton on 0419 539 73; Chris Symth 0438 123 536. More information about the development is available from <http://savebastionpoint.org/>.