



11 March 2012

Freight, Logistics and Marine Division
Department of Transport
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RE: Mallacoota Open Ocean Access Development

To Whom It May Concern:

The Australian Coastal Society is a voice for the sustainable use of coastal resources. Our members have followed the Bastion Point issue closely for a number of years and we have previously written to the Victorian Government to express our concerns about the Option 3B proposal. We did not support the decision by ex-Minister Madden (June 2009), nor the rationale that supported the reversal of the Inquiry Panel's recommendation for a low level upgrade to the existing boatramp and car parking area. We do not support the current 'H2', which appears to include a further extension of 70m of the proposed breakwall.

The new option 'H2', inclusive of the extended breakwall proposed by Hyder Consulting does little to ameliorate the significant concerns we have previously raised over safety and the displacement of many existing users, including the youth of Mallacoota, who use this area for swimming and craft-riding. Further, its economic benefits are highly questionable. We consider the potential risks to boaters, in particular, inexperienced boaters, as a result of using the proposed boatramp under adverse ocean conditions to be significant. Replacing an existing known and managed safety issue (the intermixing of bathers, craft riders and boats) with an unknown and potentially risky solution (inexperienced boaters not able to handle the often dangerous sea conditions in the region) appears not to be a productive solution.

At the heart of this issue is a desire by all parties to secure the social and economic future of the region. Mallacoota's long-term economic future must be based on the most beneficial and sustainable use of its abundant natural assets. The future for this region can and should be based around wilderness tourism. This is the pathway most likely to secure ongoing opportunities, investment and long-term economic security for the region.

A decision such as this has significant impacts and needs to be part of a wider wilderness coast Coastal Action Plan, which places it in the regional context. The Coastal Action Plan should be prepared under the Coastal Management Act (1995) before any further consideration of the ramp proposal.

We commend the Victorian Government on its persistence with this issue and welcome the opportunity to provide further information on this important issue.

Cordially

Assoc. Prof Geoff Wescott
Vice-President
Australian Coastal Society