

# the victorian coast report

the objectives

integrated  
coastal  
management  
in victoria

2004



**theobjectives**

progress in implementing  
the objectives of the coastal  
management act 1995

**the victorian coast 2004**  
a report on the implementation of  
the victorian coastal strategy (vcs)  
2002 to meet the objectives of the  
coastal management act 1995.

A copy of the victorian coastal strategy is available at: [www.vcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au)

ISBN: 74106 905 X

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# foreword



## the victorian coast 2004

a report on the implementation of the victorian coastal strategy (vcs) 2002 to meet the objectives of the coastal management act 1995



The Coast belongs to all Victorians. It is a priceless limited resource. It is home to communities and to unique biodiversity of world significance.

Worldwide, coastal areas are under pressure. People love to live near the coast, to use its resources and to recreate there. Internationally, there has been increasing focus on moving to more integrated approaches to managing coastal and marine areas - Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) has emerged as the framework for encouraging integrated approaches to managing activities and planning for these areas.

In Victoria, the *Coastal Management Act 1995* was introduced to support the application of ICM. A key outcome of the Act was the development of a Victorian Coastal Strategy - a long-term framework for sustainable management of the whole of the Victorian coast.

The Victorian Coast 2004 reports on the implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 (VCS) and examines whether the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 1995* have been met to date.

### WHAT HAS THE ASSESSMENT REVEALED?

- 81% of the actions in the VCS are underway, ongoing or completed.
- the VCS is being used to guide decision making, however there is scope to improve the consistency of application.
- planning for a more sustainable future has increased with most of the coast now having in place a policy framework including the VCS, coastal action plans, regional catchment strategies, land and resources management plans and planning schemes that seek to provide for sustainable management and use.

- there is a heightened level of awareness of the significance of the coast to society and improved understanding of the environmental, cultural and economic attributes.
- community engagement and participation has increased.
- strategic intervention for long term biodiversity protection has increased, particularly for marine areas, with the declaration of Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries and more sustainable approaches to fisheries.
- regional economies are becoming increasingly dependent on coastal tourism.
- the role of the Victorian coast in the broader regional context is now much better understood - Victoria has unique biodiversity and we owe it to the world to look after it.

However,

- pressures for development are increasing that, in some cases, can threaten the very essence of what is important to us all.
- infrastructure is ageing.
- water quality is improving, but not fast enough.
- litter is still a problem.
- the ocean is not limitless; awareness is still at a low level.
- with year-round use increasing, there is a need to actively manage to 'rest' the coast.
- the diversity of place is challenged through 'Sea Change' and the imposition of suburban lifestyles and development on the coastal landscape.
- climate change will cause fundamental ecological and societal change.

Long term approaches from all governments are crucial if major coastal issues are to be addressed.

Improving science and understanding tempts the conclusion that money and management can change nature - sustainability for the coast really does require a mind set that says you will work with nature rather than against it.

Understanding what we expect for the coast and meeting that management expectation remains a challenge. Limited resources need to be well targeted.

Investing now in ICM will minimise future costs and foster sustainable communities, environments and economies.

DIANE JAMES  
Chairman - Victorian Coastal Council



# executive summary



## the victorian coast 2004

### a report on the implementation of the vcs 2002 to meet the objectives of the coastal management act 1995

This Report has been undertaken by the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC).

The report is in two parts.

**The Objectives** - assesses the progress in implementing the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 1995* providing an evaluation of the changes and improvements that have occurred along the Victorian Coast since the inception of the Act.

**The Actions** - reports on the progress in implementation of the actions identified in the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 (at January 2004).

### the objectives

- The advent of the Coastal Management Act and the Victorian Coastal Strategy has provided a focus for increased commitment to planning and management for coastal and marine areas.
- Most of this has been positive and is contributing to better outcomes simply because people are actively engaged in planning and processes about use, leading to identification of agreed goals and actions.
- Urbanisation pressures generally affecting all Australian States are also impacting in the Victorian context. Victoria is continuing to experience rapid rates of new development and redevelopment pressures in coastal locations. Whilst most of this growth has been accommodated in planned development areas, there is increasing evidence of speculative investment that is driving up expectations that planning strategies and boundaries can be easily ignored. This pressure will place increasing pressure on contemporary planning arrangements and test the adequacy of current policy frameworks.
- Ageing infrastructure on the coast continues to pose a long term funding and management threat. A wide range

of coastal infrastructure (piers, jetties, seawalls, steps) has been built at various times in history to support requirements at the time. Often that specific purpose need has passed but often without either removal of the infrastructure, or establishment of alternative long term funding strategies for its upkeep. Whilst the life span of much of this infrastructure is very long, much of it is in desperate need of repair and or replacement / removal.

- There has been a lack of cohesion in relation to water quality monitoring, particularly as it relates to estuarine and marine environments. Whilst this is now receiving attention, it needs a higher priority.
- There still appears to be a wide range of programs and funding initiatives across government that are targeted at the coast. There is opportunity to streamline this for improved targeted outcomes. The Victorian Coastal Strategy identified the need for a high level process within Government to address this issue and it is appropriate that improved arrangements be established.
- There is no consolidated information on the scope and intent of current coastal plans. Whilst information on individual plans is generally available, there is scope to improve overall accessibility to information.
- The emergence of a range of large scale development proposals in recent years has demonstrated the need for a more comprehensive and agreed methodology for visual impact assessment, particularly in the context of addressing visual impact within the context of a sustainability assessment.
- Identification of a framework for improved governance and decision making for marine areas is emerging as a priority.
- An increased focus on potential adaptation to climate change is required given emerging climate predictions.

### the actions

**The Actions** outlines the current status of implementation of all actions identified in the VCS 2002 as reported by lead agents identified in the Strategy. What the response shows is that:

#### TABLE 1:

TOTAL ACTIONS:	160
Actions completed, underway or ongoing:	131 (81%)
Actions not commenced:	11 (7%)
Actions planned:	8 (5%)
Actions superseded:	1 (1%)
Actions with no response:	3 (2%)
Actions with limited information:	6 (4%)

- The VCS is being used and applied to guide management and decision making.
- There is confusion and conflict about whether the VCS should or should not take precedence in relation to decision making about land use planning applications on private land near the coast.
- There is a significant range of related initiatives that lead to improved outcomes for coastal and marine resources that are underway but these are not well integrated in a reporting or monitoring process.
- Funding for coastal initiatives is still largely delivered via annual grants processes. This creates difficulties for management agencies in planning future works and can result in significant effort being committed to 'trying to link up and source funding', rather than actually implementing actions to achieve outcomes.

- There is a lack of clarity around the overall revenues and expenditures relevant to the coast.
- The integration of coastal objectives and outcomes within coastal planning schemes require further focus to ensure that regional planning models are effectively implemented.
- Visual resource analysis requires further focus and consensus on agreed methodologies for assessing the visual impact of future use proposals.
- Urban development pressures are increasing significantly resulting in rapid changes in the form of residential development in some coastal locations, with consequent impacts on servicing requirements and social impacts. There are also significant emerging pressures for the establishment of new greenfields development in coastal locations. The rate of change is testing current planning and management practices. The challenge is how well we can manage the inevitable increase of these pressures in the future.
- Active rehabilitation of natural systems is required in order to achieve long term sustainability objectives. The rate of changes that are occurring within the coastal zone mean that simply seeking to 'maintain' natural systems values will result in long term decline.
- There appears to be an increasing gap between the funding requirement for maintenance, replacement and repair of coastal infrastructure and funding available each year to undertake the works. This may prove a significant risk to Government in the future if not tackled soon.



# introduction





## the victorian coast 2004

### a report on the implementation of the vcs 2002 to meet the objectives of the coastal management act 1995

#### THE COASTAL MANAGEMENT ACT 1995

The *Coastal Management Act* 1995 (the Act) was introduced in 1995. It led to the establishment of the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) and the appointment of three Regional Coastal Boards. The objectives of the *Coastal Management Act* 1995 are:

- To plan for and manage the use of Victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas.
- To protect and maintain areas of environmental significance on the coast including its ecological, geomorphological, geological, cultural and landscape features.
- To facilitate the development of a range of facilities for improved recreation and tourism.
- To maintain and improve water quality.
- To improve public awareness and understanding of the coast and to involve the public in coastal planning and management.

The Act also establishes requirements for:

- The development of an overarching Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS).
- The development of Coastal Action Plans to further implement the VCS in a regional context or provide detailed regional guidance on issues.
- The development of coastal management plans that provide for detailed local planning at a coastal reserve or park level.

Under these arrangements, the first Victorian Coastal Strategy was approved by Government in 1997 and, following a review of progress, the Government approved the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002.

#### ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) AND THE OPERATING CONTEXT

Coastal management in Victoria is influenced by national and international factors that affect the way implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy occurs. Any assessment of the progress in meeting the objectives of the Act must take these into account.

The principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development are the underlying framework on which the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 was developed.

International experience demonstrates that sustainable management of coastal areas requires a number of ingredients:

- A long term high level plan.
- Identified objectives.
- Governance arrangements to facilitate cross sectoral and integrated outcomes.
- An appropriate regulatory and enforcement regime.
- Community awareness, empowerment and involvement.
- Evaluation and monitoring.

Victoria has a number of these elements in place. Further work is required in relation to governance arrangements for cross-sectoral integration and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. A range of legislation and regulation applies to activities that occur within the coastal zone. Much of this legislation is old and has evolved incrementally over time. However, there are many strengths in the prevailing legislative framework. The historical reservation of much of the coast under the *Crown Lands (Reserves) Act* 1978 and *National Parks Act* 1975 has acted to ensure long term consideration of public interest issues as they relate to development.

Nationally, new arrangements for delivery of Commonwealth natural resource management initiatives have been established resulting in the concept of accredited Natural Resource Management Plans. In Victoria, this is being achieved through the development of new Regional Catchment Strategies which are intended to provide for accredited natural resource management outcomes across catchments, estuaries and state waters.

The Commonwealth Government is continuing to develop Regional Marine Plans for oceans within Commonwealth jurisdiction. In May 2004 the Marine Plan was released.

The focus on regional marine planning has highlighted the need for the establishment of more effective arrangements for oceans governance.

In parallel with the emergence of regional marine planning, progress is being made through the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council on the development of frameworks for oceans governance. This focus is also supported by a framework for a National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Priority actions addressed in the framework are:

- Integration across catchment, coast and ocean continuum.
- Land and marine based sources of pollution.
- Climate change.
- Pest plants and animals.
- Planning for population change.
- Capacity building.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

# objectiveone





## to plan for and manage the use of victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas

Implementation of this objective can be assessed having regard to:

- the activity of planning
- the management of land and resources

### WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

- All land based National Parks on the Victorian coast now have a management plan in place.
- All Victorian coastal wetlands of International Significance listed under the RAMSAR International Convention now have a management plan prepared and approved.
- The development of management plans for 13 Marine National Parks and 11 Marine Sanctuaries declared in 2002 has commenced with the approval and release of an overall Management Strategy 2003 - 2010.
- Of the 52 Coastal Committees of Management, 78% now have an approved management plan or are operating under an approved Coastal Action Plan that has been developed and approved within the umbrella of the Victorian Coastal Strategy.
- 14 Coastal Action Plans have been developed or approved (see Figure 2b: page 13).
- All plans have included mandatory requirements for public comment and participation in the development of the plan.
- There is a significant gap remaining in the development of estuary management plans including identification of baseline condition, values and desired future condition.
- Fisheries Management Plans that meet national sustainability objectives have been developed for Abalone, Rock Lobster, Giant Crab and Eel fisheries.

- For most species that are not subject to specific fisheries management plans, the fishery is subject to consumption regulation. Mallacoota Inlet, Andersons Inlet and Lake Tyers have been declared fisheries reserves where only recreational angling is allowed. Commercial fishing licences have been phased out in these areas.

- The Victorian State Planning Policy Framework has been amended to reinforce application of the VCS through the actions of planning authorities.

- For all municipalities along the South West Coast, Port Phillip Bay, and Gippsland Coast, model planning, scheme provisions and templates have been developed as a guide to the integration of VCS 2002 into municipal planning schemes.

- A Great Ocean Road Region Strategy, including detailed visual resources analysis, was developed for public comment in October 2003.

- Melbourne 2030 - Planning for Sustainable Growth outlines Government's major priorities for metropolitan and regional planning and development. This provides a strong linkage to, and reinforces implementation of, VCS 2002, particularly in relationship to containing the growth of coastal villages.

- Coastal and marine issues and outcomes are being included within the scope of Regional Catchment Strategies which are accredited under new national Natural Resource Management arrangements.

- Determination of detailed condition assessments for Victorian estuaries remains a challenge, however some work has commenced through recently approved Regional Catchment Strategy funded projects.

### ASSESSMENT OF LARGE SCALE PROJECTS

There has been a significant increase in large scale natural resource based projects, particularly in relation to oil and gas exploration and use, wind energy development and other forms of marine based industry development.

It would appear that current processes for Environment Impact Assessment and other legislative requirements lead to comprehensive project assessment and identification of best practice.

Notwithstanding this, project assessment often proceeds on an individual project basis with little assessment of the cumulative and/or strategic regional impacts or benefits. There also appears to be poorly developed arrangements for consolidation and sharing knowledge on prevailing best practice and learning from effective project development.

### FUTURE PLANNING PRESSURES

Coastal development pressures are arising around Australia largely due to changing demographic trends. More people are moving to the coast. Obvious indications of this in Victoria are escalating land prices on the coast, urban infill and increasing subdivision applications for resort, golf course and residential development. Managing growth to achieve outcomes that are sustainable is a test for how strongly the principles of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 are being incorporated in planning and decision making.

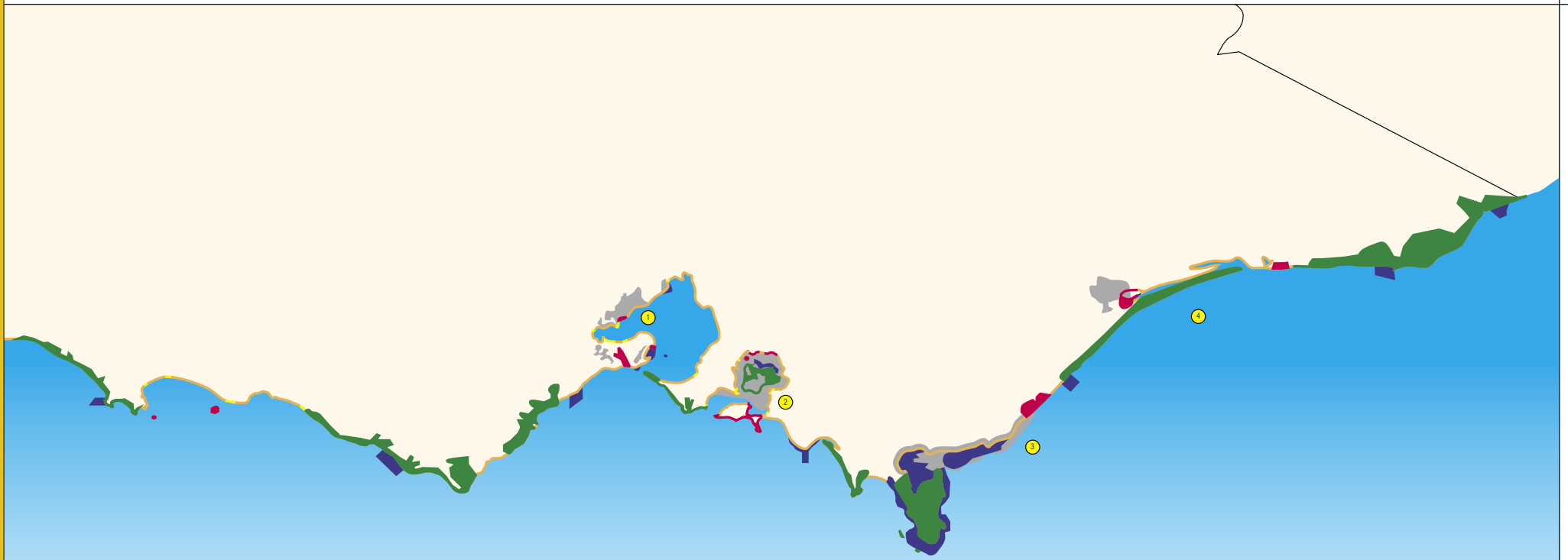
A key objective for the VCS is the containment of urban development to existing centres with strategic growth boundaries and for the retention of a green break between urban centres. The status of existing land use planning needs to be established as a base line. The definition of township boundaries along the coast and how resilient those boundaries are against development pressures needs to be determined.

Significant pressures are emerging for tourism and recreation proposals outside of activity centres. There is a need for establishment of a decision making framework to guide such proposals to appropriate locations.

There is also a need for a comprehensive and agreed methodology for visual impact assessment, particularly for addressing visual impacts within the context of a sustainability assessment.

# objectiveone

**FIGURE 1A:**  
**INDICATIVE LAND CATEGORIES ALONG THE VICTORIAN COAST.**



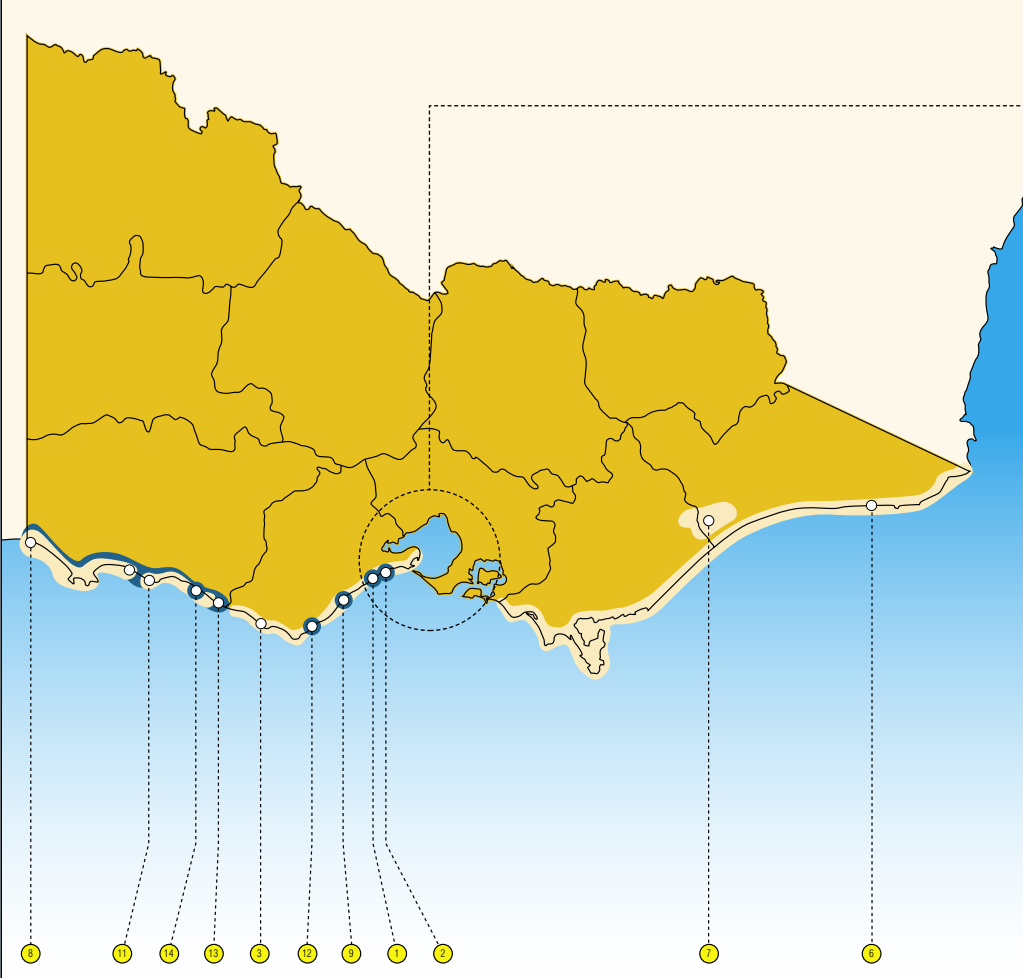
- ① Port Phillip Bay(Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site
- ② Western Port Ramsar site
- ③ Corner Inlet Ramsar site
- ④ Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site

■ National, State and Coastal Reserve Parks - managed by Parks Victoria 
 ■ National Marine, Marine Parks and Reserves - managed by Parks Victoria 
 ■ Wildlife and other conservation reserves - managed by Parks Victoria and Committees of Management 
 ■ Other crown land reserves - managed by Committees of Management, Department of Sustainability and Environment 
 ■ Private land - managed by private land owners 
 ■ Ramsar sites - values managed by Parks Victoria



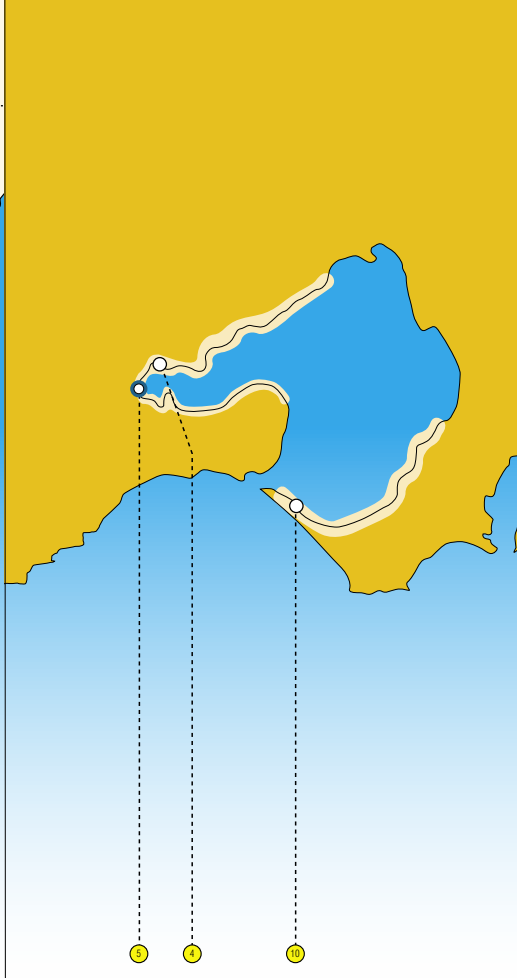
to plan for and manage the use of victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas

**FIGURE 2B:**  
COASTAL ACTION PLANS EXTENT AND REGIONAL CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES.



Regional Catchment Boudaries Represent Coastal Action Plans

**FIGURE 2B:**  
COASTAL ACTION PLANS (METRO).

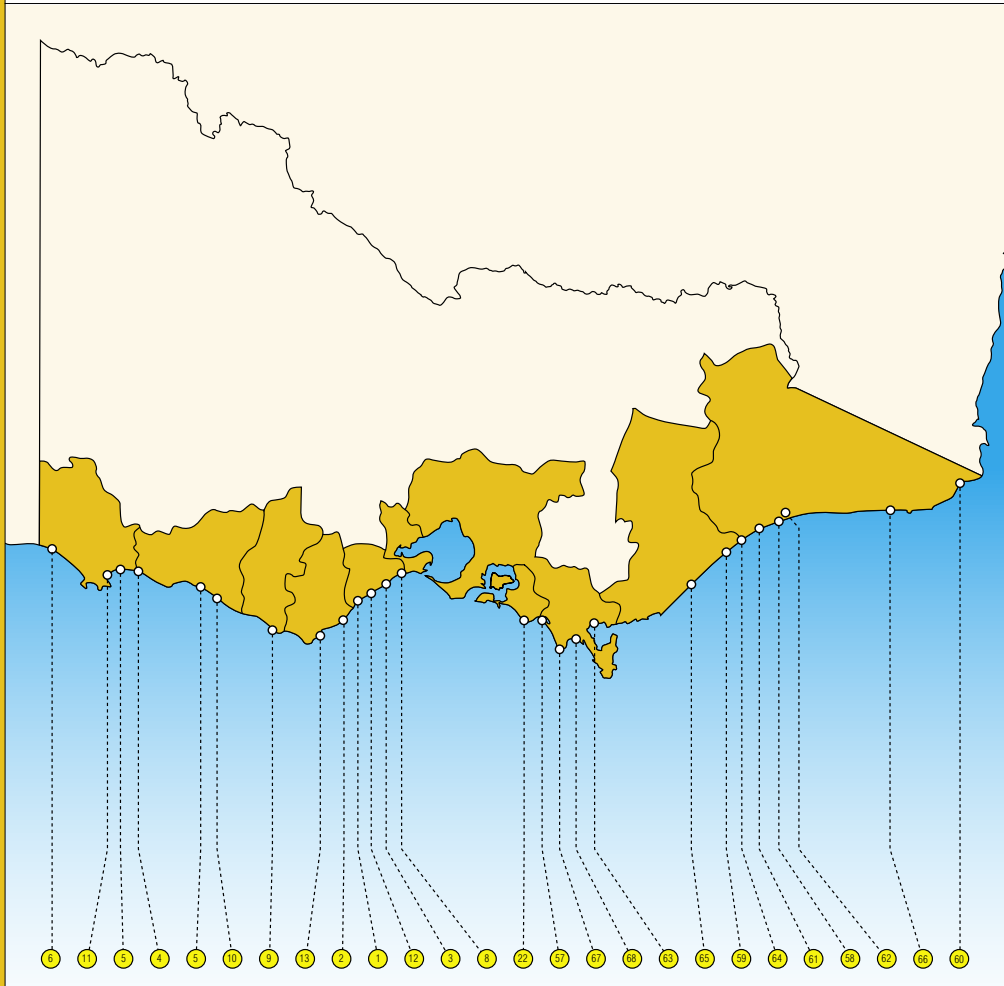


**FIGURE 2B:**  
COASTAL ACTION PLANS.

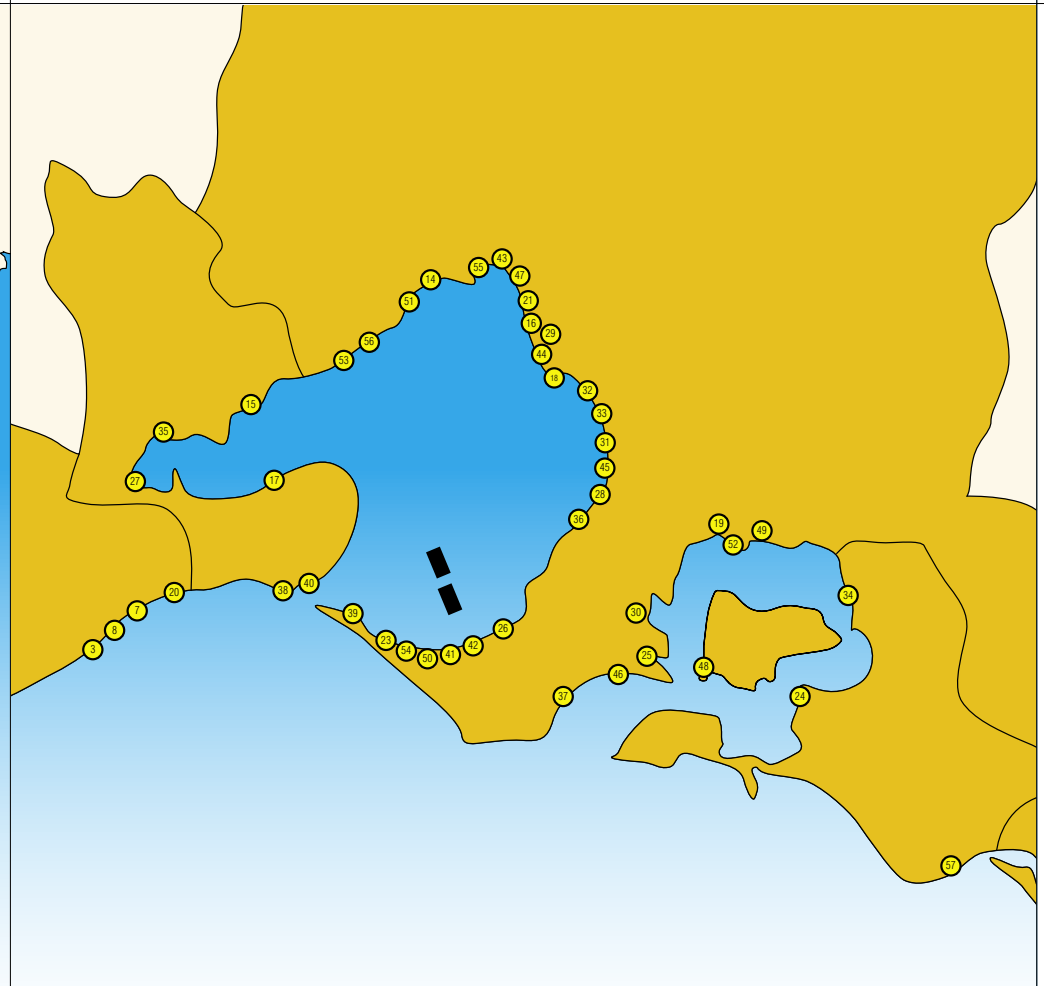
- 1 Anglesea Coastal Action Plan
- 2 Bells Beach to Red Rock Coastal Action Plan (D)
- 3 Central West Victoria Estuaries Coastal Action Plan
- 3 Central West Regional Coastal Action Plan
- 4 Corio Bay Coastal Action Plan
- 5 Geelong Waterfront Coastal Action Plan
- 6 Gippsland Boating Coastal Action Plan (D)
- 7 Gippsland Lakes Coastal Action Plan
- 6 Gippsland Water Quality Coastal Action Plan
- 8 Glenelg Coastal Action Plan
- 6 Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland Coastal Action Plan
- 9 Lorne Coastal Action Plan
- 10 Mt Eliza - Pt Nepean Coastal Action Plan (D)
- 11 Moyne Coastal Action Plan
- 12 Skenes Creek to Marengo Coastal Action Plan
- 13 South West Estuaries Coastal Action Plan
- 13 South West Victoria Regional Coastal Action Plan
- 14 Warrnambool Coastal Action Plan

# objectiveone

**FIGURE 1C:**  
PLANNING SCHEMES (COASTAL), FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLANS EXTENT.



**FIGURE 1D:**  
PLANNING SCHEMES (METRO), FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLANS EXTENT.



Planning Scheme Boundary # See page 15

■ Pinnance Channel Aquaculture Fisheries Reserve-Northern and Southern Section cover by a Fisheries Management Plan



to plan for and manage the use of victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas

**FIGURE 1C AND 1D:  
FORESHORE MANAGEMENT PLANS (OUTSIDE OF NATIONAL PARKS)**

1	Aireys Inlet and Associated Public Land Management Plan	23	Collins Settlement Future Directions Plan	47	St Kilda Urban Design Framework
2	Apollo Bay Foreshore Master Plan	24	Corinella Foreshore Management Plan	48	Tankerton Foreshore Future Directions Plan
3	Bells Beach Management Plan	25	Crib Point/ Stony Point Foreshore Management and Business Plan.	49	Tooradin Township Village Strategy
4	Draft Fitzroy River Reserve Management Plan	26	Dromana Foreshore Management Plan	50	Tootgarook/ West Rosebud (Capel Sound) Foreshore Management Plan
5	Draft Middle Island Management Plan	27	Eastern Beach Draft Management Plan	51	Truganina Explosives Reserve Coastal Management Plan
6	Draft Nelson Committee of Management Reserve Management Plan	28	Frankston Foreshore Management and Business Plan	52	Warneet Foreshore Masterplan
7	Draft Point Danger Coastal Reserve Management Strategy	29	Hampton Masterplan	53	Werribee South Coastal Reserve Management Plan
8	Draft Torquay Foreshore Master Plan and Management Plan	30	Hastings Foreshore Management Plan	54	Whitecliffs to Camerons Bight Coastal Management Plan
9	Gellibrand River Estuary Wetland Management Plan	31	Keast Park Management Plan	55	Williamstown Foreshore Strategic Directions Plan
10	Levy Beach Management Plan	32	Kingston Foreshore Landscape Guidelines	56	Wyndham Foreshore Strategy
11	Narrawong Management Plan	33	Kingston Foreshore Strategy	57	Inveloch Foreshore Reserve and Anderson Inlet Management Plan
12	Split Point Lightstation Master Plan	34	Lang Lang Foreshore Draft Management Plan	58	Lakes Entrance Management Plan
13	Wye River Foreshore Master Plan	35	Limeburners Bay	59	Loch Sport Lake Victoria Management Plan
14	Altona to Williamstown Strategic Directions Plan,	36	Mount Eliza Foreshore Management Plan	60	Mallacoota Management Plan
15	Avalon Beach Management Plan	37	Point Leo Foreshore Management and Business Plan.	61	Metung Management Plan
16	Bayside Foreshore Strategy	38	Point Lonsdale Lighthouse and Foreshore Reserve Management Plan	62	North Arm Management Plan
17	Bellarine Bayside Landscape Management Plan and Business Plan,	39	Portsea - Foreshore Management Plan	63	Port Franklin Management Plan
18	Black Rock - Beaumaris Masterplan	40	Queenscliff Harbour Redevelopment Plan	64	Paynesville Boating Strategy
19	Blind Bight Masterplan	41	Rosebud Foreshore Future Directions Plan	65	Seaspray Reserves Management Plan
20	Bremlea Foreshore Management Plan	42	Rosebud Foreshore Landscape Masterplan	66	Tamboon Inlet Management Plan
21	Brighton Foreshore Masterplan	43	Sandridge Beach Masterplan	67	Walkerville Foreshore Coastal Management Plan
22	Cape Patterson Foreshore Management Plan	44	Sandringham Foreshore Masterplan	68	Waratah Bay Foreshore Strategy Plan
		45	Seaford Foreshore Management and Business Plan		
		46	Somers Foreshore - Flora and Fauna Strategy		

# objectiveone

## MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Sustainable management of resources assumes a number of factors:

- That the resources are known.
- That there is a clearly identifiable and accountable manager.
- The desired outcomes are known and agreed.
- That there is sufficient knowledge and monitoring of natural system values to determine change and the likely cause.

Most of the coastline of Victoria is publicly owned. A significant proportion of this Crown land estate is managed by Parks Victoria. Other areas are managed by Committees of Management appointed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act, including local government and other appointed committees.

## WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

In 1998 a review of local coastal management arrangements was undertaken to strengthen coastal management outcomes. The recommendations of this review were:

- To maintain the current legislative model of appointment of managers to manage public land and assets on the coast.
- To appoint managers based on relevant skills rather than by a process of public election.
- To develop management agreements with appointed managers which establish standards of performance and measures of success.
- To improve integration in coastal planning and management through progressive amalgamation of existing foreshore management bodies into larger more viable business units, particularly in areas which are experiencing high levels of visitation and use.
- To further develop local government's role in coastal management including the appointment of local government as the manager for high usage areas such as the Surf Coast.
- To appoint managers for all public land on the coast.
- To broaden community involvement at all levels.

A recent review of the implementation of these recommendations identified the following changes that have occurred in coastal management over the last 5 years. Table 2 outlines these changes.

**TABLE 2**

### SNAP SHOT OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT CHANGES 1998-2003

	Status in 1998	Status in 2003
No. of Committees appointed under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978	65	56
No. of publically elected CoMs	48	2
CoMs appointed by an EOI process	0	29
Coastal municipalities appointed as CoM for some area of their coast	17	17
DSE (NRE) appointed as CoM	6	4
Management plans for coastal areas (outside National Parks)		68
Agreements/ MOU with local government and CoMs	1 draft	4

### ALSO

Parks Victoria (PV) appointed as CoM for local port facilities at Queenscliff and around Port Phillip Bay and Western Port. Parks Victoria manages approximately 60% of the coastline in National and State Parks and other conservation reserves. Since 1998, 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries have been established and PV has taken on the management of the Rosebud Foreshore Reserve and numerous other areas of coastal public land with environmental significance.



to plan for and manage the use of victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis for recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas

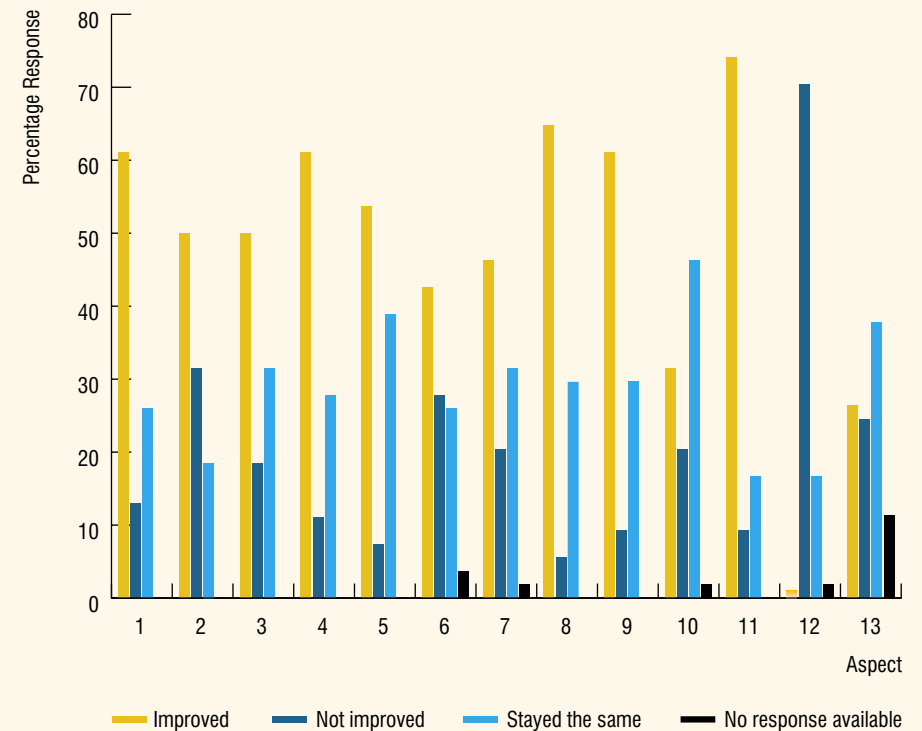
The review of implementation of the recommendations also found:

- 72% of respondents to the study questionnaire believed that coastal management in Victoria had improved.
- The appointment of managers based on skills through an Expressions of Interest process has led to the establishment of stronger relationships between government and delegated managers and direct improvements in coastal management across the State.
- Support to Committees of Management (volunteer and local government) through training, policy, planning and sustainable management advice must continue.
- The Management Agreements/MOUs are broad in nature, used mainly to define roles and responsibilities and establish a philosophy of cooperation.
- Coastal Management Plans incorporating a three year business plan define a specific agreement between a Committee of Management, the Minister and the community about how an area of coast will be managed.
- The amalgamation of smaller committees into larger committees has led to more viable committees, not only due to increased revenue but because the larger committees generally attract more skilled applicants and can employ staff to undertake day to day activities.

- Local government's role in coastal management has strengthened through signing of MOUs with State Government.
- As a result of signing MOUs and other negotiations, most areas of coastal land now have a manager where previously they may have been without one.
- The Coast Action/Coast Care program has had a major impact on increasing community involvement in decision making on the coast, particularly in areas of capacity building of managers and volunteers and the active funding of on ground works.

(Source: *Five Years of Change: 1998-2003*. DSE Internal Report)

**FIGURE 2:**  
**PERFORMANCE IN KEY ASPECTS OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT 1998- 2003**  
**(RESULTS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE TO COASTAL MANAGERS, 2003)**



**1** Protection of environmental values **2** Management of physical risks **3** Management of human impacts on the natural environment **4** Education and interpretation of natural values **5** Provision of a variety of recreation purposes **6** Maintenance of assets **7** Appropriate development of coastal Crown land **8** Acknowledgment and awareness of cultural heritage **9** Community involvement in decision making **10** Accountability for management actions and decisions **11** Planning for the future **12** Adequate resourcing for Committees of Management **13** Business Management of resources

# case study

## implementing the integrated coastal planning for gippsland coastal action plan – east gippsland shire council

### Background

The Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland Coastal Action Plan (GCB, 2002) was approved by the Minister for Environment and Conservation in 2002.

The plan has been prepared by the Gippsland Coastal Board, as required by the *Coastal Management Act* 1995, and is written within the framework of the Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCC, 2002).

This Coastal Action Plan provides for the achievement of integrated and consistent planning outcomes in Gippsland by outlining a Coastal Policy for Local Government in Gippsland. The Policy is recommended for inclusion into Shire planning schemes. The concept of 'activity' nodes and the need to avoid strip development along the coast is strongly supported.

Features of the Gippsland coast and key coastal issues are summarised and population and visitor growth is predicted. Key actions are identified relating to a range of coastal issues such as predicted sea level rise and inappropriate subdivisions. Assessment criteria are also identified for a preliminary evaluation of proposals for coastal dependent uses/developments such as wind farms, commercial shipping and aquaculture.

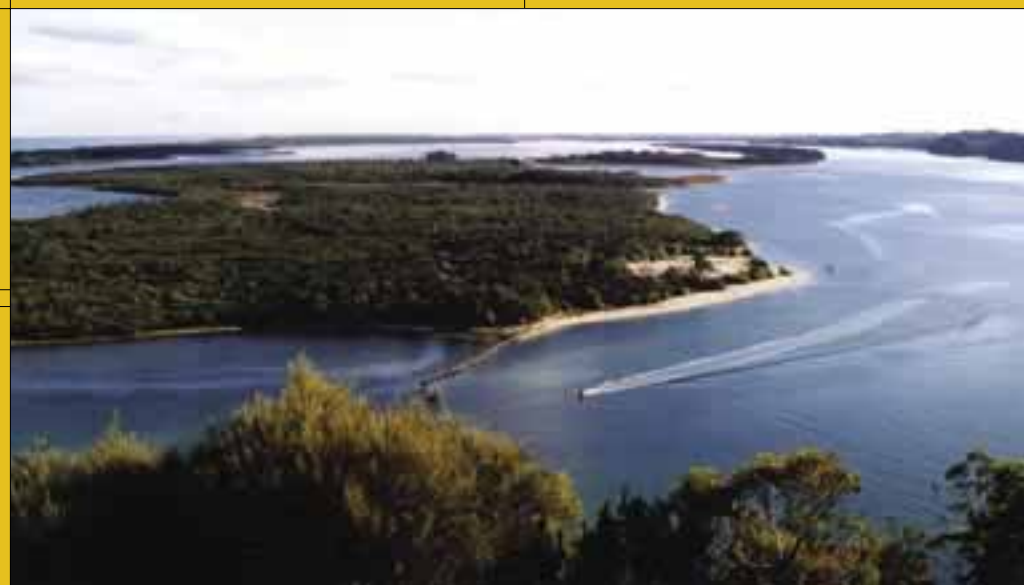
### Response by East Gippsland Shire Council

East Gippsland Shire Council is a Responsible Authority, as defined in the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 and is also the delegated manager of approximately 60 km of Crown land foreshore reserves adjoining coastal townships including Paynesville, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers, Marlo and Mallacoota.

Approved Coastal Action Plans are 'reference documents' in the Planning Scheme.

Council exhibited a Planning Scheme Amendment in early 2004 which includes the following elements:

- Incorporation of the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (VCC, 1988) into the Planning Scheme.
- Inclusion of the Gippsland Coastal Policy from the Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland Coastal Action Plan (with minor amendment), into the Planning Scheme.
- Inclusion of newly developed Siting and Design Guidelines for the township of Metung (with a proposal to develop similar guidelines for the township of Marlo).



East Gippsland Shire Council (in a joint bid with Wellington Shire Council) has been successful in attracting substantial Pride of Place funding (\$280,000) to develop Urban Design Frameworks for specified townships (activity nodes) around the Gippsland Lakes and coast. Work is proposed to commence early in 2004.

Land capability investigations have been undertaken in the Tambo Bluff township (an identified 'inappropriate subdivision').

Two foreshore management plans have been completed - Mallacoota Foreshore Management Plan and Metung and Mosquito Point Foreshores Management Plan.

# case study

## management of coastal crown land changes in the surf coast shire

### Background

For sometime, DSE South West has been working to improve the delivery of coastal management in the Surf Coast Shire, consistent with the findings of the 1998 Coastal Crown Land Review.

The key issues to be addressed in the Surf Coast include:

- The need for five coastal committees across the Surf Coast Shire.
- Some coastal Crown land has no delegated manager at all.
- The demands of contemporary coastal management that are testing the resources, time and skills of the existing volunteer committees.
- DSE directly managed the Anglesea foreshore.
- The absence of recurrent revenue for two committees.
- The need to target existing revenues for maximum benefit.
- Inconsistency in management standards between committees.

It was determined that either (1) a single skills-based committee or (2) two skills based committees made up of a combined Torquay-Anglesea committee and a combined Lorne-Aireys Inlet-Fairhaven committee would provide the best coastal management outcomes in the Surf Coast Shire.



Consistent with current processes, the new committee(s) would be selected on the basis of skill through a call for expressions of interest. An extensive consultation process was completed with local parliamentarians, key stakeholders and community interest groups to assess the risks and opportunities presented by each option.

The existing committees of management gave qualified support to the proposed changes. In October 2003, the Minister for Environment endorsed the recommendation to appoint a single committee for the entire Surf Coast.

The community consultation process confirmed several key concerns arising from the changes. These were:

- Loss of local and community involvement.
- Loss of local character.
- Redirection of funds from larger centres to smaller centres.

These issues will be addressed by binding the new committee to a management agreement setting out the requirements of the committee to address the communities' concerns. The new coastal management arrangements are now being implemented. The new Surf Coast public lands Committee of Management starts work in mid-2004.



# objective<sup>two</sup>



## to protect and maintain areas of environmental significance on the coast including its ecological, geomorphological, geological, and cultural and landscape features

The implementation of this objective involves the protection of sites or features through their inclusion within the protected reserves system (national and other parks) and also the level of knowledge of sites and features of significance that should be addressed in contemporary planning and decision making.

### EXPANDING THE PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

Significant areas of the Victorian coast are reserved under the National Parks Act for conservation management and protection of significant features. In 2002, following a comprehensive assessment of marine environmental values, the Government proclaimed the reservation of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 Marine Sanctuaries. The creation of these parks ensures that a comprehensive and representative sample of the key biodiversity assets found in the Victorian marine environment has been reserved for the highest level of conservation, protection and management.

These parks provide a range of new opportunities for environmentally sustainable tourism use and visitation as well as scientific study.

### KNOWLEDGE OF SITES AND FEATURES OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 2002, the mapping of ecological vegetation classes for the entire Victorian coast was completed by DSE. This has provided a benchmark assessment of existing vegetation communities and will provide the backbone for future assessment of the condition of vegetation and measurement of net gain in the quality and extent of vegetation communities.

In 2002, DSE also completed assessment and mapping of the biodiversity and composition of intertidal and subtidal marine environments. This data set now forms part of the Victorian Coastal Atlas available on the Internet and via GIS.

A comprehensive rare and threatened species database is maintained by DSE and provides spatial analysis of the distribution and status of rare and threatened species.

The coast has significant pre and post European cultural significance. Aboriginal cultural liaison and investigation is now a normal part of planning for future use and, in a number of cases, has been supported by a Memorandum of Understanding between foreshore managers and local communities.

Cultural heritage surveys have been completed for all local government areas abutting the coast and this has generated significant knowledge of cultural values. DSE maintains a separate database of historic places on Crown land. Depending on the significance of sites or structures, they may be further identified in the Victorian Heritage Register and/or on the register of the National Estate.

Existing mechanisms available under the Planning and Environment Act and the Heritage Act provide for protection of heritage values and mechanisms for adaptive reuse of heritage places and structures consistent with the maintenance of the heritage values.

Whilst there are a number of relevant databases and mapping systems available that deal with specific 'themes' these are still disjointed from an external users' perspective and require significant additional manipulation in order to bring together information relevant to a geographic area.

### MARINE PESTS

Victoria has established a sound framework and series of protocols for reducing the threat and likelihood of introduction of marine pests. This has included best practice guidelines for minimising the spread of pests from small vessels, protocols to minimise the risk of translocation of pests in association with aquaculture operations, development of guidelines for the translocation of live biota, and specific programs for port managers and ship operators in relation to ballast water. This is a significant issue that is made more difficult because of the problems in achieving uniform national action by all jurisdictions. Timing issues are associated with the progressive conversion of the world's shipping fleet to hull and ballasting designs that are able to reduce the risk of transfer of pests.

### IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Changes in rainfall and temperature patterns and in the frequency of extreme weather events could affect water resources, coastal environments, native flora and fauna, agriculture and forestry. It is important, therefore, that governments and the community have access to the best possible information on future climate to help plan for, and adapt to, changed climatic conditions. The Victorian Greenhouse Strategy 2002 identifies a need for research into Victorian potential climate change impacts and vulnerabilities. CSIRO has been commissioned to develop Regional based assessments under evolving Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Scenarios for Regions.

# case study

## the hastings demonstration project

Western Port was chosen as the site for a National Demonstration Project to manage the risks of marine pest introductions from both international and domestic ballast water.

Western Port was chosen as the demonstration site because it currently has few marine pests and is within close proximity to the internationally recognised Western Port Ramsar site. It also has a manageable number of shipping movements (about 200 per year) to enable development and trialing of the system.

Since the Hastings Project commenced, several vessels have adopted innovative forward planning to avoid exchanging ballast at sea altogether. Such actions include refraining from the uptake of 'high-risk' ballast and retaining ballast on board where it would normally have been discharged.

EPA Victoria is managing the project on behalf of a Victorian Government Consortium consisting of EPA Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment, (DSE) and Department of Infrastructure (DOI).

Partners in the Project are the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and CSIRO-Centre for Research on Introduced Marine Pests (CRIMP).

The Project cost is \$800,000; of which \$440,000 is from the State Government and \$360,000 from Environment Australia via the Coast and Clean Seas initiative. AQIS is providing the computer-based risk assessment tool for assessing ballast water risk (the DSS) and CSIRO-CRIMP is also making a significant contribution.



The shipping and port industries support the Project and have been operating in accordance with the management system since 1 July 2001. This approach represents a fundamental step in addressing domestic ballast water issues – an identified national priority.



# case study

development of an information brochure and communication program to reduce the risk of small vessels introducing marine pests into victoria

Much of the management of marine pests is based on managing the risks posed by boats that enable pests to be transported from one location to another. Small vessels can pose a significant risk in spreading marine pests around and between local marine waters.

DSE, with the assistance of Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and Commonwealth Scientific and Investigative Research Organisation (CSIRO), has developed a program to raise awareness amongst small vessels skippers of the practical action that they can take to reduce the spread of marine pests and protect the environment.

The program involves six easy steps to follow for cleaning vessels and identifies 'hotspots' where pests may be hidden. The message is about good 'housekeeping' to prolong the life of the vessel whilst protecting marine and inland waters.

The recommendations are based on a systematic and rigorous hazard analysis on the ways in which small vessels spread marine pests, involving input from skippers and local Port Managers between Eden and Apollo Bay.

The resulting brochure and awareness program has been developed with wide consultation throughout industry, government and local communities. Organisations actively promoting the guidelines and program message are Fisheries Victoria, Parks Victoria, Yachting Victoria, the Victorian Boating Industry Association, VRFish and Seafood Industry Victoria.

The program will be implemented in 2004.



# objective three



to facilitate the development of a range of facilities for improved recreation and tourism

Market research reveals that the Victorian coast continues to be one of the major recreational opportunities for all Victorians. Victorians make over 70 million recreational visits to the coast each year. The maintenance of a diversity of experience remains a very high priority for overall coastal management.

The development of contemporary regional and local planning for the coast has provided a strong framework for progressive investment in improved facilities and management of use of coastal areas. Coastal Management Act consents provide an overview of activity that has occurred on coastal Crown land and the broad areas of that activity. (See Figure 3)

Projects consented to under the *Coastal Management Act* 1995 in 2001/02 had an estimated value of \$200 million, and in 2002-03 of \$120 million. It is noted that the Basslink project of some \$500 million was also approved, but this would represent a significant aberration in the reporting of projects fully located on the coast.

The particular focus has been on minimising public risk, maintaining beaches, replacing assets in local ports, improving foreshore facilities and place management in recreation nodes.

Key highlights include:

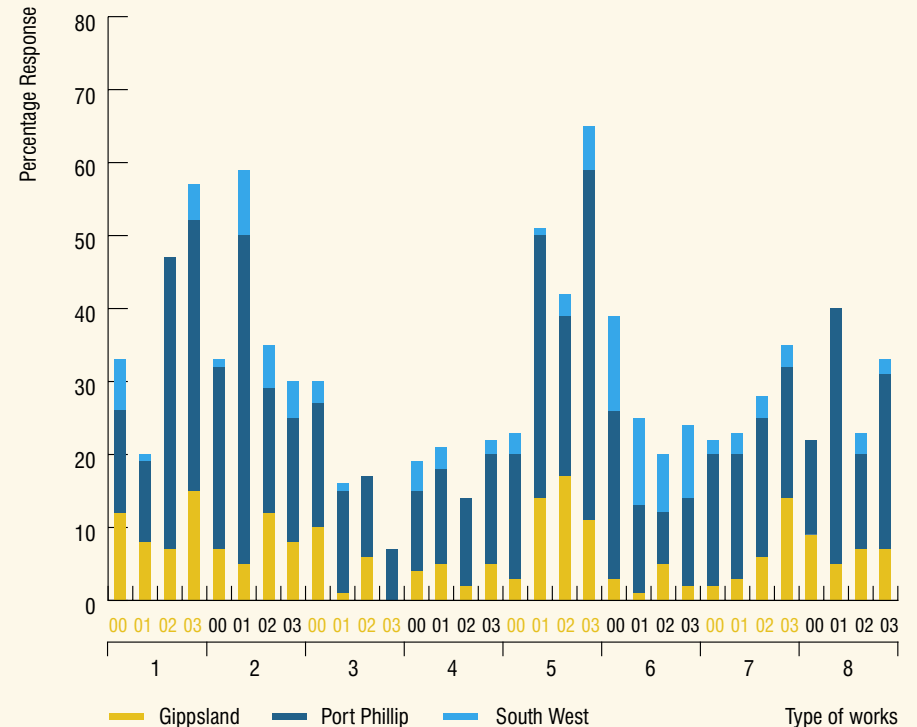
- Twelve Apostles new visitor centre
- Lorne foreshore including new surf club
- Hampton Beach renourishment
- Regional boat ramps
- Pier upgrades around Port Phillip Bay
- Installation of boat sewerage pumpout facilities in Gippsland lakes and progressively around Port Phillip Bay
- Apollo Bay foreshore works
- Port Campbell fishermen's jetty
- Tracks, trails and viewing platforms
- Landscaping
- Aquatic safety signage

There has also been a renewed focus on improving safety associated with recreational boating through awareness raising, training, funding and licensing. Improving aquatic safety for beach users has also received a significant focus. A range of water safety initiatives have been implemented under the Government's Water Safety Program and this has led to a measurable decline in drowning statistics for coastal locations. Resulting from this has been a focus on aquatic risk assessment for a number of beaches, the development of a new aquatic signage manual and the implementation of improved strategic aquatic safety signage at many locations. In addition, a number of local managers have received training in aquatic safety auditing as part of this initiative.

### COASTAL RISK MITIGATION GRANTS

A \$2 million per annum, four year funding program commenced in 2001-2002 to address risk issues along the coast and in local ports. Currently in its third year, the funding is nominally divided equally between coastal and local port projects (ie \$1m each). Approximately 60 coastal projects have been funded to date and include the installation of safety signs and fencing, repairs to paths, boat ramps and jetties, removal of dangerous trees from camping areas and works to unstable cliffs. In the local ports area, the projects that have been funded to date include repairs to breakwaters at Apollo Bay (part) and Warrnambool, the reconstruction of King George Wharf, Port Fairy (part), and enhancements and repairs to slipway facilities at Gippsland Ports and Port Fairy.

**FIGURE 3:**  
**COASTAL MANAGEMENT ACT CONSENTS PROCESSED 2000-2003**



**Type of Consent:** 1 Maintenance & Upgrades 2 Foreshore Rehabilitation 3 Lifesaving Club 4 Commercial Uses 5 Facilities On Water Constructions 6 Water Management 7 Other



# case study



## frankston foreshore improvements

### Frankston Waterfront

Significant improvements have been undertaken as part of a major redevelopment of the Frankston foreshore. This has created a world class environment on this excellent beachfront.

The redevelopment began as a vision to re-orientate Frankston City to the bay, embrace the natural assets at its doorstep and provide a focus for recreation and tourism for people and visitors of Frankston.

### Olivers Hill to Pier Boardwalk

The raised timber boardwalk is a community success story, providing over 700 metres of boardwalk for both residents and visitors to enjoy spectacular views of the Frankston foreshore. This project has not only enhanced the foreshore, but has provided track access to the beach, while protecting the sensitive dune system from further erosion. The project cost was \$500,000 and was jointly funded by Council and Parks Victoria.

### The Frankston Foreshore Playground

The new playground has become a landmark for Frankston as part of the complete revitalisation of the Frankston foreshore. Large numbers of families visit the park all year round.

The playground design is based on the theme of sand-castles emerging from and collapsing into the beach. The playground includes separate toddler, junior and senior level play equipment as well as new picnic facilities. The Victorian Department of Victorian Communities and Frankston City Council jointly funded the playground at a cost of \$525,000.

### Pier Forecourt Development

The Pier Forecourt is the main entrance to Frankston foreshore and has been transformed from an unattractive beach side car park and basic kiosk to a striking new parkland that has lured families and visitors back to the waterfront.

The redevelopment of the Pier Forecourt has been staged over a period of 4 years at a cost of \$5 million with grants received from the Community Support Fund and Pride of Place.



### Frankston Life Saving Club

The Frankston Life Saving Club development complements the works completed at Pier Forecourt as well as the new Frankston Foreshore Regional Playground and the Olivers Hill to Frankston Pier Boardwalk.

The project commenced in March 2001. The redevelopment has increased the year round use of this important community asset while minimising the impact upon the surrounding dune environment. The renovations included:

- A new 120-seat restaurant/cafe and balcony with views across the beach to the bay and Frankston Pier.
- A renovated beach-level kiosk.
- Improved beach-level access and storage for the Frankston Life Saving Club to facilitate more efficient life saving activities.
- A new public toilet facility.
- A new expanded third level to accommodate existing Life Saving Club surveillance operations and to provide improved training and meeting facilities.

The redevelopment was jointly funded by Frankston City Council and the Department of State and Regional Development through the 'Life Saving into the 21st Century' program at a cost of \$1.3 million.

A 250 seat family restaurant adjacent to the Pier Forecourt development is currently under construction and is due to open for Christmas 2004.

Council has State Government approval to build a new visitor information centre

### Sightlines

A unique, innovative arts installation consists of 22 modular components (poles) along the Frankston Pier. Weather vanes decorated with nautical signal designs respond to the prevailing wind, while the movement of the waves is reflected in lighting panels imbedded in the poles. The project is due for completion in mid-2004.

### Linking the Landmark Bridge to Frankston Lifesaving Club

Council is at the planning stage for the area between the new Landmark Bridge and the redeveloped Frankston Lifesaving Club.





# objectivefour





## to maintain and improve coastal water quality

The impact of land use and activity is often transferred to the coast via waterways that drain to the coast. In the Gippsland Lakes, the largest estuarine system in the southern hemisphere, the major threat to long term sustainability is the level of nutrient input that results from past and current land use in the catchment draining to the lakes. In Port Phillip Bay, an extensive and comprehensive study has identified the critical need to reduce nutrient inputs to the Bay. Actively planning to reduce the risk for introduction of and transfer of marine pests remains a high priority.

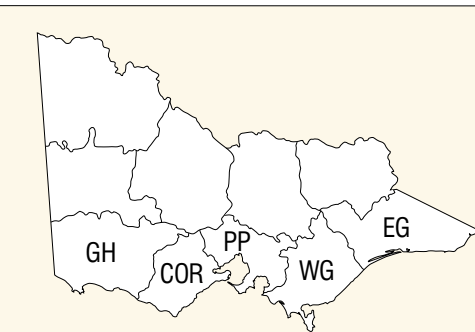
Overall trends for coastal catchments are not good with many indicators showing progressive decline. (See Figure 4)

A major focus of the new Regional Catchment Strategies is to support proactivity in improving water quality.

The establishment of a Water Portfolio and announcement of a 10-year plan, 'Water for the Future', has set the agenda for water management. The Plan aims to guide a progressive and environmentally sustainable water sector and sets targets to change the way we use water. A Victorian Water Trust has been established. The purpose of the Trust is to enhance the health and sustainability of Victoria's water resources.

A key issue has been the generally ad hoc approach to water quality monitoring and determination of preferred management for receiving waters. As a result of the approval of the Waters of Victoria State Environment Protection Policy, overall attainment targets for water quality have been established.

**FIGURE 4:**  
**CONDITION OF VICTORIAN CATCHMENTS.**



TREND IN THREAT	GH	COR	PP	WG	EG
Water PH	Stable	Decreasing	Decreasing	Stable	Stable
Phosphorous	Increasing	Decreasing	Increasing	Increasing	Stable
Nitrogen	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing	Decreasing
Turbidity	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable
Catchment Condition Indicator	<b>GOOD MODERATE POOR</b>				

Source: The Health of Our Catchments - A Victorian Report Card 2002.

A State Water Quality Monitoring Assessment Committee has been established to develop a structure for an overarching statewide framework for monitoring of the health and condition of the State's rivers and streams, wetlands, estuaries and marine environment. At the forefront of this initiative is the Gippsland Regional Water Monitoring Partnership (GRWMP), the first of its kind in Victoria. Eighteen organisations have agreed to be involved. These include agencies, authorities, local government and industry across the entire Gippsland Region. The Monitoring Partnership, incorporating 107 sites, has been competitively tendered, with the contract (managed by DSE) running since 1 December 2002. The inclusion of two wetland monitoring sites within the Gippsland Lakes Hinterland has been a recent success and demonstrates the flexibility of the monitoring contract with regard to future additions. All water quality and quantity monitoring data collected under the GRWMP is freely available at the Water Quality Data Warehouse that is available via the internet - [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

### ADDRESSING URBAN STORMWATER

The Environment Protection Authority administered the Victorian Stormwater Action Program. As a result of this initiative, all 22 local governments on the Victorian coast have an approved stormwater management plan that has been established with the EPA. There has been an increased focus on water quality monitoring particularly in Port Phillip Bay.

A key driver in this program was a three-year grant program to assist local government with the development and implementation of Stormwater Management Plans. Coastal municipalities were allocated \$1,438,225 in the 2002-2003 round of grants for various works including implementation of stormwater management plans, stormwater litter reduction, wetland establishment and enhancement and community education.

# objectivefour

## GIPPSLAND LAKES ACTION PLAN

The Gippsland Lakes and Catchment Taskforce was established in mid-2001 to determine and oversee implementation of actions to improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes. The Taskforce oversaw 33 projects during 2002-2003. Totalling \$2.7 million, the projects included on-ground works, studies to determine appropriate water exchanges and balances and further research to refine future priority actions. The Integrated Scientific Review and hydrological systems study completed for the Gippsland Lakes resulted in a \$12.8 million commitment through the Gippsland Lakes Action Plan, targetted at achieving a 40% nutrient reduction in the Lakes.

## WESTERN PORT - AN ECOSYSTEM BASED ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT MODEL

Melbourne Water has completed a \$3 million sediment source investigation for Western Port. A report commissioned by the Western Port Portfolio Coordinating Group to develop a conceptual model for ecosystem processes in Western Port is now finished. The report, developed by the Coastal Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) and CSIRO, progresses understanding of research issues and needs on Western Port. The project was commissioned to synthesise existing science describing the Western Port marine environment and to provide a holistic representation of the important processes and elements of this ecosystem.

## NUTRIENT REDUCTION IN PORT PHILLIP

In 2001, the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan was approved by Government. This EMP provides the overarching framework to address the risks to the Bay from nutrients and marine pests. A key target for nutrient reduction is to achieve a 1,000 tonne reduction in annual nitrogen loads to Port Phillip Bay by 2006. The Central Coastal Board has recently completed the interim review of the EMP, which independently assesses progress of implementation of the actions. Performance associated with the implementation of the EMP is reported on annually through the Bay Actions report via the internet at [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

## IDENTIFYING COASTAL ACID SULFATE SOILS

Victoria completed a strategic risk assessment of the distribution of coastal acid sulfate soils in 2001/02. When disturbed, coastal acid sulfate soils have the potential to release a significant quantity of sulfuric acid that can be harmful to the natural environment, human health and infrastructure. The strategic risk assessment identified some 55,000 hectares of land that is potentially subject to varying levels of acid sulfate soil. The information is published on the internet - [www.dse.vic.gov.au/uro](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/uro) (soils).

## IDENTIFYING THE HEALTH OF ESTUARIES

Whilst there has been little significant progress to date in development of estuary management planning, good progress has been made on the development of a statewide draft framework for estuarine health monitoring and assessment. This is focussed particularly on the smaller estuaries, given the fairly recent high level specialised studies that have been implemented for Port Phillip Bay and for Gippsland Lakes.

# case study

## community monitoring of coastal and estuarine water quality

### **Beach Report program**

EPA Victoria ran a successful Beach Report Program, sampling the water quality and litter at many Port Phillip Bay beaches and reporting the results regularly to the community. Beach Report enables the community to make informed choices and take full advantage of the Bay's many world-class beaches. It helps educate people about the physical link between what we do in our neighbourhoods and the water quality of our beaches.

Considering the size of Melbourne's population and its associated peninsulas, Port Phillip Bay water quality was excellent and the results for 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 summer were very positive. Beach Report volunteers helped to monitor 17 beaches over the summer season and provided additional information to the scientific sampling program.

Each year, EPA Victoria received assistance from enthusiastic 'Beach Reporters' - volunteers who live around Port Phillip Bay and who adopt one or more Beach Report beaches during the course of the program. Beach Reporters are trained by EPA and are provided with assessment kits to collect information about stormwater drain conditions, litter, and the effects of weather, such as heavy rain, on water quality. Beach Reporters send regular reports back to EPA, and these reports are published on the Beach Report website.

EPA also runs a very successful public information program: Beach Care Days - visiting five beaches (Rye, Queenscliff, Mordialloc, Altona and Eastern Beach). This program involved EPA staff visiting beaches at peak holiday times to give short talks, provide educational material and to engage beach-goers in interactive games and demonstrations designed to highlight our collective impact on our beaches. Beach Care Days had over 350 community participants across the five beaches and generated great local community and media interest.

In 2001-02, EPA marine scientists provided scientific input to a Water/Watch workshop aimed at expanding the highly successful Water/Watch program into estuarine and coastal waters. An issues paper for development of a coordinated statewide estuary monitoring program has been prepared for the State Water Quality Management Advisory Committee (SWQMAC). The Committee had its terms of reference expanded in January 2002 to include coastal and estuarine waters.

EPA and the Western Port Seagrass Partnership have conducted an NHT funded seagrass restoration program in Western Port aimed at developing replanting techniques, scientific

understanding of seagrass biology and reproductive responses to water quality. The program has also placed considerable emphasis on building community awareness of seagrass issues, community involvement in replanting activities and developing an appreciation of catchment impacts on water quality in Western Port.





# objectivefive



## to improve public awareness and understanding of the coast and to involve the public in coastal planning and management

Victoria has a strong history of direct engagement of community representatives in coastal management through participation in coastal Committees of Management. Community participation in coastal management activities in Victoria ranges from on-ground works (eg. revegetation, access construction), monitoring and education to the development of management plans and representation on advisory groups to land managers and membership on Committees of Management Regional Coastal Boards and Catchment Management Authorities.

In recent years, the establishment of the Coast Action program in Victoria provided a catalyst for a demonstrable increase in general community awareness, participation in local conservation initiatives and overall capacity building amongst coastal communities to achieve more sustainable outcomes.

Attendance at coastal education and awareness raising programs such as the 'Summer by the Sea' activities program has increased dramatically from 10,800 in 1996 to 25,317 in 2003 (the program has attracted over 140,000 participants in the last 8 years).

The number of people actively volunteering in recognised community groups on the coast has risen from 12,500 in 200 groups in 1996 to over 21,000 in 360 groups in 2003.

Coast Action/Coastcare community grants have provided much needed resources for coastal projects being undertaken by voluntary groups. These coastal community groups have contributed nearly \$6 million worth of voluntary time, materials and local resources towards the 621 projects that have been funded by Coast Action/Coastcare. This community contribution, together with related local sponsorship and land manager contributions that the groups have coordinated, amount to nearly \$10 million.

These funded projects have contributed significantly to the management of Victoria's coast and all projects have been undertaken by the community in partnership with the land manager.

The outcomes and achievements of these projects include:

- 402 hectares of weed control and management.
- 413,843 indigenous plants planted.
- 1449 signs have been erected for interpretation and information.
- 5,380 metres of boardwalk have been constructed to reduce human impact and erosion on sensitive areas.
- 64,926 metres of track have been established, redirected or improved.
- 81,555 metres of fencing have been erected to conserve habitat and sensitive vegetation.
- 175 booklets, information kits or brochures have been produced and circulated widely.
- 59 reports have been produced including management plans, landscape plans and fauna or flora reports.
- 2520 days of environmental monitoring (water quality, shorebirds, etc) were carried out by the groups.
- 567 interactive workshops were delivered.
- 28 lookouts or platforms were erected or updated.
- 35 videos have been produced and circulated for educational purposes.

Volunteers and community groups actively participate in carrying out environmental works, protecting cultural values and supporting visitor services in many Parks and Reserves managed by Parks Victoria. In 2002/2003 more than 300 community and friends groups contributed nearly 100,000 hours of voluntary works to parks throughout the year.

Public awareness and understanding of the coast is greatly increased by the targeted education and interpretation programs for schools and visitors to the coast. The millions of visitors to parks and reserves on the coast each year gain a greater appreciation and awareness of the coast through interpretation provided by coastal managers, councils and community groups.



# case study

## different perceptions of our coast

Victoria is a culturally diverse region with a population that originates from 208 countries and speaks 151 languages, and this cultural diversity is reflected in the range of perceptions about the role of the marine and coastal environment. Yet, like many conservation groups, members of Coast Action/Coastcare volunteer groups are predominantly people from an Anglo-Saxon background, usually middle class, students and retirees. In order to fully protect our coastline, the need to communicate with the whole community is becoming a pressing issue.

For the Vietnamese, the marine environment has always been a provider of natural resources, particularly food, commonly collected and harvested by families or small cooperatives. The Vietnamese Fisheries Education Project, a major effort spanning three years, resulted in a greater understanding of the sensitive nature of Victoria's waters and a subsequent substantial reduction in some fisheries offences. This kind of education project, together with work with the Cambodian and Korean communities, made it clear that awareness of the natural and cultural importance of coastal and marine environments directly promotes acceptance of the need to protect and preserve these areas.

'Cultural Perceptions of the Coast' was a consultation and research project carried out by the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre that threw light on the cultural uses and perceptions of the coastal environment by migrant communities including Filipino, Eritrean, Vietnamese, Somali, Ethiopian, Spanish and former Yugoslav migrants.



The project's aims also included getting people out and experiencing the environment through coastal tours and tree planting days. These field trips showed that many migrants were unaware of beach localities close to their homes. There was a great willingness among migrant communities to engage in environmental issues, but the majority had been unaware of opportunities to participate.

The project has initiated links between Coast Action/Coastcare and various migrant resource centres in Melbourne, where work will continue on education and hands-on experience of the Victorian coast by migrant communities. The objective of developing and maintaining community networks has met with great success.



# case study

## revegetating local traditions

The Snowy River Coast Action group was formed in 1998. As an initial project, the members put together a weed information folder with assistance from the then Department of Natural Resources and Environment and posted it to all the residents in the area. What resulted was not a simple raising of awareness about the nature and spread of weeds in the district, but a mixed reaction ranging from high interest to extreme hostility. Some people resented the implication that the Arum Lily or the Agapanthus should be removed from the area to allow the regrowth of indigenous vegetation. In fact, a local tradition was to wheel barrows of weeds and grass clippings across the road and simply tip them over the Snowy River escarpment which links with the Marlo foreshore reserve, or dump them in the neighbouring bushland. Some residents thought that the spread of these flowering weeds would 'beautify' the area. Another problem threatening the indigenous vegetation was illegal clearing of the escarpment to provide views for residents of the Marlo-Cape Conran Road.

It quickly became clear that the group had a lot of gentle educational work to do, as well as the hard work of clearing, cleaning, weeding and replanting. The original vegetation of the Marlo-Conran area includes a number of exquisite flowering natives, including the Wedding Bush, Correa and native grasses. Some of these native plants are still found in nature strips in the area but are mowed down by residents unaware of what they are destroying.



The works of the Snowy River Coast Action group are having an effect on the small and large scale. As well as working with the help of other volunteers, the group has taken over a revegetation project initiated by Rotary near the foreshore. This triangular piece of land between the boat club and the Marlo jetty now has a barbeque, picnic area and native garden beds that enhance the natural beauty of the area.

A recent project for the group is a fold-out pamphlet on plants indigenous to the area that the Snowy River Coast Action members hope will encourage locals to plant natives in their own gardens.

# case study

## the long walk of the volunteers

The Great South West Walk on the Victorian south west coast is a 250km track stretching from Portland to Nelson. Parts of the track have foot traffic to the tune of 13,000 people per year. So when the Friends of the Great South Walk formed more than twenty years ago, it was with the knowledge that the members' voluntary work would be needed over the long haul.

In the time that the group has been functioning, many major projects have been successfully undertaken. These include the construction of a thirty metre stairway down to Shelley Beach, the planning, engineering and building of a lookout from Cape Nelson that is designed to stay stable even if the cliff collapses beneath it, the upgrading of the Cape Nelson section of the Walk and the construction of Hirths Landing on the Glenelg River, where visitors can take a boat ride to the platform and then walk the track.

These developments along the track, however, would be pointless without the continuing work that the group also carries out on revegetation, erosion control and protection of indigenous flora and fauna. Heavy clearing last century and ongoing stormwater erosion have left a legacy of degraded land and constant damage to the track and its surrounding vegetation, particularly around Cape Bridgewater. One recent project, which took place with the assistance of the Friends volunteers, schools, service clubs and Work for the Dole participants, was the redirection of stormwater to allow natural revegetation of the area. In another project, the establishment of Australia's first mainland colony of Australasian Gannets (*Morvus serrator*) at



Point Danger was threatened by marauding foxes. The Friends applied for Coast Action/Coastcare funding to erect an electrified vermin-proof fence. In the following year some 40 chicks hatched and fledged at the site.

The stretch of astonishing coastline along the Great South West Walk is also home to a colony of Australian Fur Seals. Visitors to the area are able to view the colony 50 metres below the east side of Cape Bridgewater as a result of a viewing platform built by the Friends of the Great South Walk high on the cliff. Naturally, this opportunity to watch the seals has caused a huge boost in tourist numbers, but the associated track work has ensured that damage to the area is minimised.

# conclusions

- The advent of the Coastal Management Act and the Victorian Coastal Strategy has provided a focus for increased commitment to planning and management for coastal and marine areas.
- Most of this has been positive and is contributing to better outcomes simply because people are actively engaged in planning and processes about use, leading to identification of agreed goals and actions.
- There is a lack of cohesion in relation to water quality monitoring but this is now receiving attention.
- There still appears to be a wide range of programs and funding initiatives across government that, to varying extents, are targeted at the coast. There is opportunity to streamline this for improved targeted outcomes and a reduction in the effort. The Victorian Coastal Strategy identified the need for a high level process within Government to address this issue and it is appropriate that improved arrangements be established.
- There is no consolidated information on the scope and intent of current coastal plans. Whilst information on individual plans is generally available, there is scope to improve awareness of the extent of contemporary planning.
- There is an increasing array of information available about coastal values, issues and systems. Whilst significant progress has been made, accessibility to information is still quite disjointed.
- The emergence of a range of large scale development proposals in recent years has demonstrated the need for a more comprehensive and agreed methodology for visual impact assessment, particularly in the context of addressing visual impact within the context of a sustainability assessment.
- Identification of a framework for improved governance and decision making for marine areas is emerging as a high priority.
- An increased focus on potential adaptation to climate change is required given emerging climate predictions.









Victorian Coastal Council