



## ***Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008*** **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What is the Victorian Coastal Strategy?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) 2008 is the State Government's policy commitment for coastal, estuarine and marine environments in Victoria. It provides a long-term vision for the planning, management and sustainable use of our coast, and the policies and actions Victorians will need to implement over the next five years to help achieve that vision.

It is also a framework to assist in the development and implementation of other locally and regionally specific strategies and plans such as management plans, Coastal Action Plans, and planning schemes.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 is established under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, and is the third VCS to be produced since 1997 – they are reviewed every five years.

### **Q. What is the role of the VCC?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Council was appointed under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* as the peak body for the strategic planning and management of the Victorian coast.

It advises the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy is a key VCC responsibility. Under the Act Council reviews the strategy every five years or at the Minister's request

### **Q. Who will use the VCS?**

**A.** A range of people and agencies will be involved in the implementation of the strategy:

- **Community** - the Strategy will only be effective if there is widespread community support, ownership and involvement
- **Regional Coastal Boards** - will have a major role in co-ordinating and facilitating implementation of the Strategy at a regional level
- **Agencies with clear responsibility under the Coastal Management Act 1995** must take the Strategy into account in carrying out a function involving land and water management, including Catchment Management Authorities.
- **People who operate or propose to establish activities on coastal Crown land** will find that the Strategy provides clear direction on appropriate use and development of the coast.
- **Committees of Management** - who have responsibilities in managing activities along the coast within areas abutting the coast
- **Local government** has a pivotal role in planning and managing activities along the coast within areas abutting the coast (e.g. coastal hinterland)
- **Business and Industry** – who are conducting activities, or a planning on conducting activities in coastal areas.

### **Q. Where does the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 apply?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 gives direction for planning and managing the impacts of activities on and in the:

- *marine environment* – includes the nearshore marine environment, the seabed and waters out to the state limit (5.5 kilometres offshore from the high water mark).
- *foreshore* – or coastal Crown land 200 metres from the high water mark
- *coastal hinterland* – private and Crown land directly influenced by the coast or directly influencing the coastline, and land within critical views of the foreshore and nearshore environment
- *coastal catchments* – feeding rivers and drainage systems, including estuaries.

### **Q. But are there not already things in place?**

**A.** There certainly are – some of which have been operating before there was a VCS. The VCS ensures that these initiatives are complementary in terms of ensuring coastal well-being for Victoria, so that all activities and policies are integrated. So that the VCS is the vehicle for linking together and ensuring that impacts for coastal outcomes are always considered.

### **Q. What's the difference between this Strategy and the last one?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Strategy's vision and hierarchy of principles are similar to the previous strategy (VCS, 2002). The VCS 2008 builds on the policies and actions of the last two strategies and identifies and responds to three significant and priority issues affecting Victoria's coast that require specific attention:

#### **1. Climate Change:**

*The policies and actions outlined in this strategy will address the issue of climate change by:*

- Applying the policy of planning for sea level rise of not less than 0.8 metres by 2100.
- Completing, as a matter of urgency, a coastal vulnerability study and incorporating the findings into relevant policy, planning and management frameworks.
- Establishing a climate change scientific research and data system and ensuring planning and management frameworks and actions respond quickly to the best available current and emerging science.

#### **2. Population and Growth:**

*The policies and actions outlined in this strategy will address the issue of population and growth by:*

- Planning and managing for coastal population growth and increased visitation so that impacts do not cause an unsustainable use of coastal resources.
- Balancing growth and visitation with the need to respect the unique values and character of coastal areas and coastal settlements.
- Strengthening community understanding and capacity to respond to future patterns of change, particularly those communities experiencing rapid change.

#### **3. Marine Ecological Integrity:**

*The policies and actions outlined in this strategy will address the issue of marine ecological integrity by:*

- Improving our understanding of marine ecosystems values through substantial research and monitoring programs.
- Coordinating planning and management of the coastal catchments in response to the increased understanding of the values of marine ecosystems.
- Managing the pressures from increased urbanisation and the intensification of agricultural and commercial development within coastal catchments which threaten the integrity of marine ecosystems.

**Q. How will it be implemented?**

**A.** The VCS is the result of a positive collaboration with many groups and individuals. Coastal sustainability requires a long-term commitment and vision, as well as strong partnerships, involving all levels of government, communities and businesses.

This strategy will be most effective where it is translated and given effect at regional and local scales through coastal action plans, regional catchment strategies, local planning policies and management plans, for example.

As a priority, the Department of Sustainability and Environment will establish a co-ordinating committee with interdepartmental and lead agency representation to provide for a cross government approach to the implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy. Within six months of the release of this strategy, the committee will develop an implementation plan.

**Q. How does the Future Coasts project relate to the Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS)?**

**A.** Work under *Future Coasts* will implement some of the actions in the VCS.

The *Future Coasts Program* will map areas physically vulnerable to climate change impacts along the coasts and develop decision making support tools.

For more information on products generated through the Future Coasts Program, visit the website: [www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/futurecoasts](http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/futurecoasts).

**Q. How will the VCS be given effect to in Planning Schemes?**

**A.** The Strategy is given effect to in Planning Schemes through clause 15.08 'Coastal Areas' of the State Planning Policy Framework.

**Q. How should sea level rise be considered as part of the planning schemes?**

**A.** Sea level rise should be considered as part of strategic long term planning for the coast. Coastal climate change impacts should be considered when reviewing Municipal Strategic Statements and in the development of land use planning strategies.

**Q. Does this mean a moratorium on development along the coast?**

**A.** No – coastal growth and development will continue but be cognisant of future risks posed by coastal climate change impacts.

We already deal with coastal hazards risks such as flooding and erosion constantly. Climate change means that the frequency and intensity of these events will increase over time.

Understanding future exposure through an informed process is a prudent and responsible step to understanding potential impacts. Assessment of development will need take into account potential these impacts as part of the normal decision making process.

Development should seek to respond appropriately through, siting and design and other measures to avoid and be resilient to future impacts.

**Q. What does this mean for rezoning of land?**

**A.** Planning Scheme Amendments that seek to rezone land from non-urban to urban will require appropriate investigations to be undertaken.

These investigations should be used to identify potential risks and to inform the nature, design and siting of the proposed use or development proposed by an amendment.

#### **Q. What does this mean for Planning Permits?**

**A.** As is currently the case, planning permit decision making should be informed by relevant information where there is a need. Each situation will be different and will require information to suit locational variability.

Such information can be obtained from a suitably qualified coastal processes engineer and/or a hydrologist specialist, or suitable equivalent to assist with determining responses.

Applicants are encouraged to seek appropriate information from a suitably qualified professional.

Responses may include appropriate setbacks, construction measures such as higher floor levels, site land forming and drainage works etc.

#### **Q. Is the Victorian Coastal Strategy consistent with the recommendations of Coastal Spaces 2006?**

**A.** Yes, the Strategy is consistent with and seeks to build on the recommendations of the report.

The Strategy outlines a finalised coastal settlement framework which provides direction for coastal growth and development along the coast.

#### **Q. Are settlement boundaries still required?**

**A.** Settlement boundaries are an important tool that helps define coastal settlement areas from non-urban and urban areas. They provide clarity and transparency around coastal development expectations and directions.

The development of settlement boundaries is an important planning policy and is articulated in the State Planning Policy Framework.

It is expected that settlement boundaries will continue to be implemented into planning schemes for individual settlements within each municipal scheme.

#### **Q. When will the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 be reviewed?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 is established under the *Coastal Management Act* 1995. The Act directs the Victorian Coastal Council to review the Victorian Coastal Strategy at the end of five years following the endorsement of the Strategy, or any time at the direction of the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

#### **Q. How was the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 developed?**

**A.** The development of this strategy has been informed by:

1. a comprehensive review of relevant documentation, in particular the previous Victorian coastal strategies published in 1997 and 2002
2. significant social and economic research, which is conducted every five years
3. substantial community and stakeholder feedback to the draft Victorian Coastal Strategy 2007, obtained through various consultation methods. More than 50 consultation sessions were held at 18 locations across the Victorian coast, and 174 written submissions were received to the draft Victorian Coastal Strategy 2007.

Detailed analysis and review of all of this information was undertaken and underpins and supports this strategy.

#### **Fact File – Public Submissions to the draft Strategy**

Over 170 written submissions to the Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy were received during the three month submission period, from a range of individuals, organisations, groups and agencies interested and involved in coastal planning and management.

The four main topics that stood out in the submissions were:

#### **Planning for use and development (raised in 58% of submissions):**

- Incorporating the recommendations of Coastal Spaces
- Servicing implications of rising permanent and temporary populations
- Township character

- Impacts of the predicted population growth of Melbourne
- Socio-economic implications of limiting coastal growth

**Climate change (raised in 57% of submissions)**

- Greater urgency needs to be reflected in the VCS
- Planning for the upper limit of predictions – not a range
- Fast-tracking the Future Coasts program
- Linking the sea-level rise figure to an authoritative source
- Introducing possible adaptation strategies

**Implementation (raised in 42% of submissions)**

- Need for an implementation plan/framework
- Timelines and priorities
- Translating the VCS at local and regional scales
- Accountability
- Performance measures, targets, monitoring and evaluation
- Resourcing

**Hierarchy of Principles (raised in 39% of submissions)**

- Strongly supported
- More direction on means of achieving principles
- Explanation on how policies and actions link back to the principles
- Emphasise hierarchical nature of the principles

**Q. Where can I get a copy?**

**A.** The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 is available to view online or download as a pdf version at [www.vcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au)

Alternatively, a hardcopy may be available by contacting the Victorian Coastal Council at [enquiries@vcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@vcc.vic.gov.au) or (03) 9637 9456.