

Victorian Coastal Council



Mid-term review

of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008

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Acknowledgement of Country and Indigenous Australians

The Victorian Coastal Council respectfully acknowledges
the original custodians of what is now known as Victoria;
their rich culture, deep affinity with the land and spiritual
connection to it.

Front and back covers: Western Victoria coastline
(Victorian Coastal Council)

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Terns in Flight (Coastcare Victoria)

Foreword

Victorian's love their coast and it is a precious resource for current and future users.

Many people and organisations have a role in protecting and caring for the coast and the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008*, Government's policy for managing the coastal and marine environment, provides the framework for managing competing pressures.

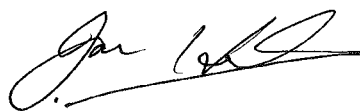
This Report is the outcome of a mid-term review of the 2008 Strategy. It looks at how the Strategy and its policies are being implemented and interpreted across the State. It also identifies emerging issues to be considered in the next iteration of the Strategy.

In summary, the review has revealed that:

- Overall 85% of the actions in the Strategy are complete, in progress or ongoing; the remaining actions are currently in the planning stage.
- The Strategy continues to be a robust framework for balancing the competing needs of the coast.
- The long term vision and 'hierarchy of principles' continue to be relevant and are valued by decision makers.
- A key strength is the link between the Strategy and the land use planning system (achieved through the incorporation of coastal policies into the State Planning Policy Framework).
- The policies in the Strategy are generally sound: in some instances there is a challenge with implementation and a gap between State-level policies and on-ground application. Coastal Action Plans (regional level) and Coastal Management Plans (local level) help address this gap however, the use of Coastal Action Plans in providing a regional interpretation could be improved.
- A specific figure (*not less than 0.8m by 2100*) for future sea level rise has provided a consistent benchmark for coastal management and planning decisions. This certainty has been welcomed and decision makers are giving weight to it in planning for the coast. However, there is an urgent need for stakeholders to be able to access the required maps, tools and guidance material to assist in decision making; action is in hand to provide this material.

- Since the release of the Strategy there has been a focus on considering sea level rise impacts on specific sites through statutory planning, but considerably less focus on longer-term adaptation planning.
- There has been a successful implementation of policies and actions of the *Coastal Spaces Project* relating to consolidating urban development into existing settlements and protecting non-urban landscapes between settlements.
- Both seasonal and residential population increases will continue not only in coastal towns but also in associated regional growth areas. This will lead to increased visitation to the coast and place pressure on foreshore infrastructure. Coastal managers would like to understand the 'carrying capacity' of foreshores in these areas.
- The focus of work in the marine area has been on improving the level of understanding of marine ecosystem values, coordinating planning of coastal catchments and managing pressures from increased urbanisation and agricultural and commercial development.
- Other issues that might be considered in scoping the next Strategy include strategic planning for marine renewable energy infrastructure and emergency management linkages.

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank the individuals and organisations who assisted with the review's preparation. This review will be an important input to the next iteration of Victoria's Coastal Strategy and provide guidance as we continue to work together to manage our precious coastal resource.



Jon Hickman
Chair
Victorian Coastal Council

1. Introduction

The coast of Victoria is a precious resource under constant pressure as we continue to live, work and spend our recreational time there. The Victorian Government's policy for managing the coast is the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* ('the Strategy'), which provides a framework to manage these competing pressures.

Prepared in accordance with the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and reviewed every five years, the Strategy is currently in its third iteration (1997, 2002 & 2008). One action of the Strategy is a mid-term review on progress of implementation.

There are four aspects to this review:

- progress on implementation of the actions
- stakeholder feedback on the interpretation and implementation of the policies
- priority actions for implementation during the remaining life of the current Strategy
- emerging issues to be addressed in the process of scoping the next Strategy (to be produced in 2013).

The Victorian Coastal Council is the lead agent responsible for undertaking the mid-term review of the Strategy. Established under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, the Victorian Coastal Council is the peak advisory body on coastal and marine issues in Victoria.

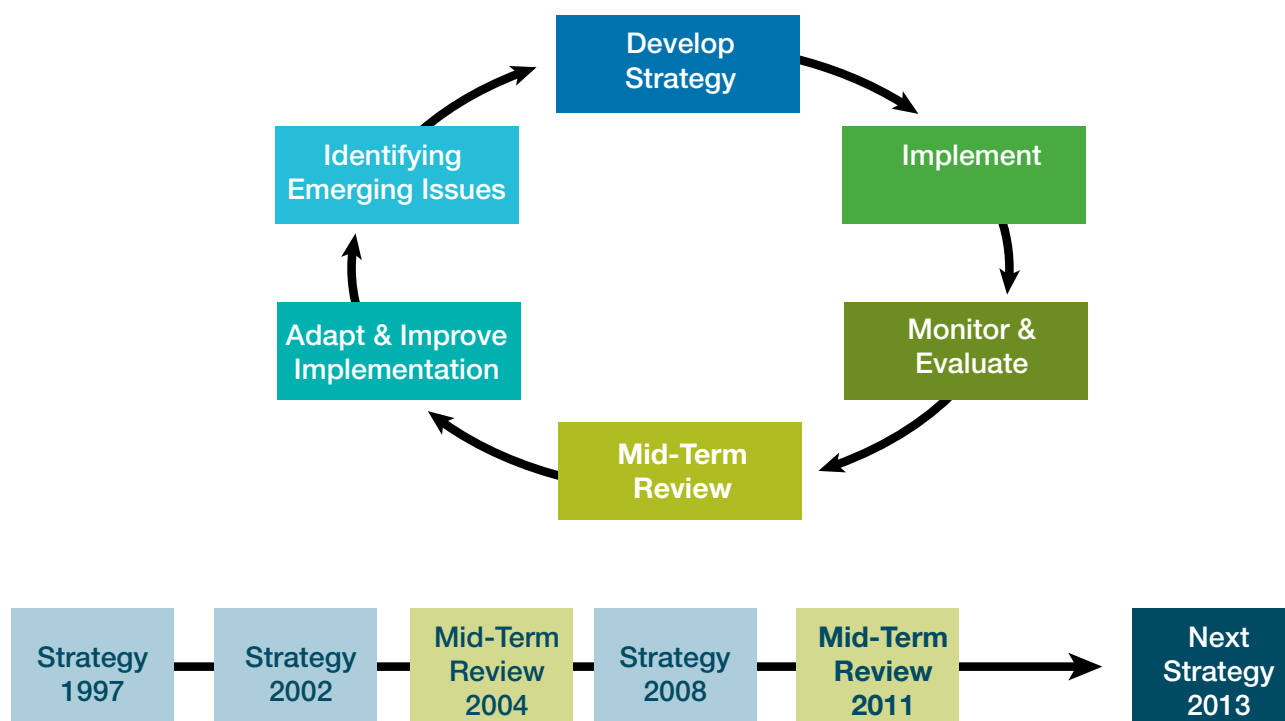


Figure 1. Strategy Lifecycle



1.1 The Victorian Coastal Strategy

The Victorian Coastal Strategy is structured to give effect to the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, which states that the Strategy must:

Provide for the long term planning of the Victorian coast to:

- *ensure the protection of significant environmental features on the coast*
- *provide clear direction for future use of the coast*
- *ensure the sustainable use of natural coastal resources*
- *identify suitable development areas and development opportunities.*

The Strategy is used by all parties responsible for planning and managing the coast, including local councils, government departments and agencies, community groups and private developers.

The 2008 Strategy:

- contains a long term vision and a hierarchy of principles for decision making
- highlights the environmental, social and economic values of the coast
- identifies three significant issues that require specific attention (climate change, population & growth and marine ecological integrity); and
- identifies policies and actions to assist in realising the vision.

1.2 Implementation Coordinating Committee

There are many individuals and organisations that have a role in caring for the coast and no one single department or agency manages the Victorian coast in its entirety. The Strategy identifies over 16 different agents with lead and partner responsibilities including government departments and agencies, local councils, regional coastal boards, catchment management authorities, committees of management, volunteer groups and consultants (Appendix 1 – lead agencies). To manage this diversity, a coordinating committee was established to provide a ‘whole-of-Strategy’ approach for implementation. This review has been undertaken with input from the Implementation Coordinating Committee.



Point Nepean National Park (Victorian Coastal Council)

2. Review Inputs

A number of information inputs were used as the basis for this mid-term review including:

Victorian Coastal Strategy Implementation Plan

The Victorian Coastal Strategy Coordinating Committee Implementation Plan sets priority actions, identifies any gaps in skills or resourcing and identifies possible research needs.

Victorian Coastal Council Science Panel Report – Emerging Scientific Issues on Victoria's Coast: 2011 Update

The Victorian Coastal Council convened a Science Panel in February 2011 to provide advice on emerging issues and knowledge gaps relevant to Victoria's coast and marine environments (Appendix 2 – Key Findings).

Analysis of VCAT and Planning Panel Cases

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions and Planning Panels Victoria reports were analysed to note which reports identified the Strategy as a key consideration in decision making (Appendix 3).

Stakeholder Consultation

Approximately 200 surveys were sent out to stakeholders in September 2011 and 70 were completed and received (refer to Appendix 4 for a summary). There were 16 targeted practitioner meetings across the state between 24 August 2011 and 12 April 2012 (refer to Appendix 5 for a summary).

Latest wave of research into community attitudes on coastal and marine environments

The Victorian Coastal Council, in partnership with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), periodically commissions social research on community attitudes and behaviours on the Victorian coastal and marine environment. The latest wave of research was reported in February 2012 (Appendix 6 – Key Findings).

Review of Coastal Action Plans

A review of Coastal Action Plans (CAPs) older than five years was completed by the Regional Coastal Boards in 2011. A total of fifteen CAPs were reviewed.



Bar-tailed Godwits (Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Steering Committee)

3. Progress on Implementation

The Strategy sets out a wide range of actions and policies covering both natural resource management and planning issues. Policies are considered in decision making, while actions increase knowledge and provide tools to support coastal practitioners. Below are highlights of achievements and a summary of the status of actions that contribute to implementation.

3.1 Highlights of Achievements

Linking the Strategy to the Planning System

An important aspect of implementing the Strategy is the direct link to the planning system through the State Planning Policy Framework. When the Strategy was released in December 2008 specific clauses relating to the impacts of climate change and sustainable development were included in the State Planning Policy Framework, as well as a general requirement for the Strategy to be considered in land use planning decisions, where relevant. Further support and guidance for land use planning decisions was provided through the Minister's Direction No13 *Managing coastal hazards and the coastal impacts of climate change* and a corresponding General Practice Note.

A broad analysis of Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decisions and Planning Panels Victoria reports shows that the Strategy was used as a key consideration in a number of planning cases, particularly relating to; avoiding

development in sand dunes and low lying areas, protecting coastal landscapes, managing coastal township settlement boundaries, maintaining coastal township character and planning for sea level rises and extreme weather events (See Appendix 3).

Establishment of the Implementation Coordinating Committee

The Victorian Coastal Strategy Implementation Coordinating Committee commenced operation in April 2009. The Committee provides a 'whole-of-Strategy' approach for implementation and comprises of representatives of key departments, agencies and partner organisations and an independent chair. The Committee is a valuable mechanism for lead agencies to share information on how implementation actions are progressing and opportunities for collaboration.

Considering the impact of climate change in decision making

A significant aspect of the 2008 Strategy was the inclusion of a policy to: 'Plan for a sea level rise of not less than 0.8m by 2100 and allow for the combined effects of tides, storm surges, coastal processes and local conditions such as topography and geology when assessing risks and impacts associated with climate change'. This provided a consistent benchmark for planning and management decisions and

Legend

- Planning scheme amendment finalised
- Planning scheme amendment process underway and or being finalised
- Metro Melbourne not included in the project area.

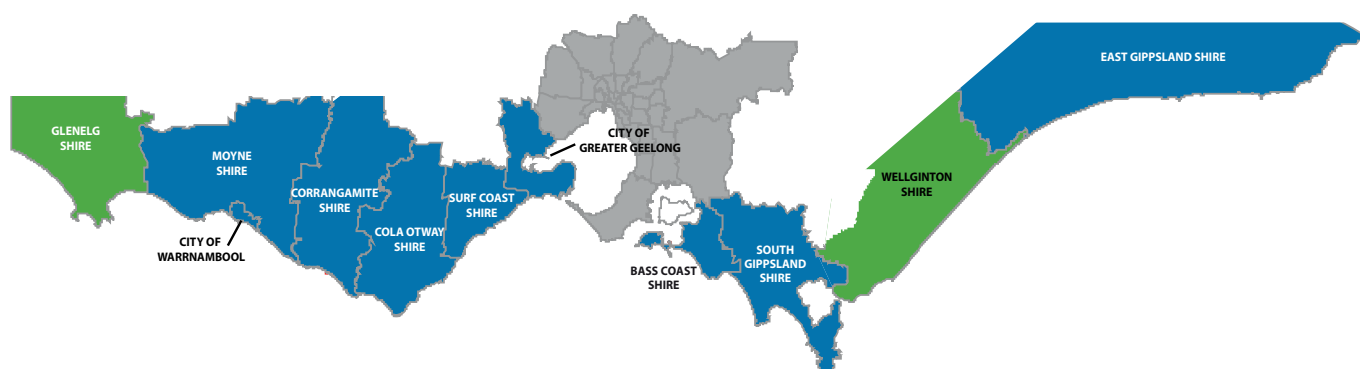


Figure 2. Implementation status of Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (as of October 2010)



allowed decision makers to give weight to understanding the impacts of climate change on the coast.

The Strategy contains actions to support a consistent state-wide approach to planning for the impacts of climate change on the coast. These actions include the development of inundation maps, planning tools and guidance material. Most of the actions are being progressed through the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Actions underway:

- **State-wide coastal inundation dataset** – identifies areas along the coast subject to potential inundation at different time horizons as sea levels change.
- **Local Coastal Hazard Assessment** – provides examples at four locations across the coast of identified coastal hazards at a regional/local level. This information will be a useful input into planning for adapting to the impacts of climate change on a local scale.
- **Victorian Coastal Hazard Guide** – a document that helps stakeholders understand coastal hazards (e.g. erosion and inundation), the effect that climate change may have on these hazards, and ways to manage these hazards.
- **Draft Guide for Coastal Floodplain Management Authorities** – a draft document that provides interim guidance for Coastal Flood Management Authorities in

assessing development proposals in areas which are susceptible to coastal inundation and flooding. This Guide is currently under further development.

- **Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee** – the Committee prepared recommendations for changes to the land use planning system to ensure appropriate triggers for planning decisions, relevant decision guidelines, and long term planning in adapting to the impacts of climate change in township areas. The Minister for Planning released his response to this report on 5 June 2012 and proposed a number of changes to the planning system.

Managing population growth and coastal landscapes

In 2006 the Coastal Spaces Project identified visually significant landscapes and prepared guidance material for local councils to develop settlement boundaries and incorporate them into planning schemes. The Strategy contains policies and actions to support the Coastal Spaces Project. An assessment in October 2010 showed eight of the ten councils (outside of metropolitan Melbourne) had incorporated significant landscape overlays into their planning schemes and the remaining two were underway. Additionally 69% of settlement boundaries had been incorporated into planning schemes, 24% had a township settlement boundary identified or were in progress, and the remaining 7% had no settlement boundary.

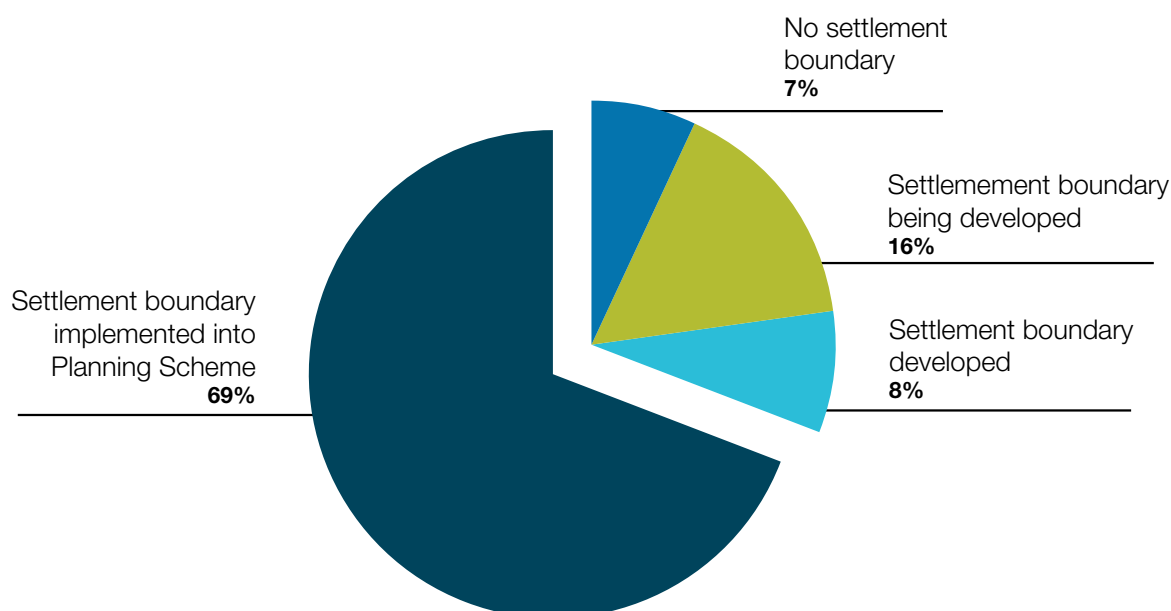


Figure 3. Status of planning for coastal settlement boundaries (as of October 2010)



Resolution of long-standing 'old and inappropriate subdivision' on 90 Mile Beach

Wellington Shire Council has worked together with the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Sustainability and Environment to address the long standing problem of 'old and inappropriate subdivisions' along the Ninety Mile Beach. The area has been under review for over thirty years in an attempt to find a solution to its many challenges including inundation, erosion, wildfire and little or no infrastructure. In 2011 Wellington Shire Council, with support from the State Government, commenced implementing its Ninety Mile Beach Plan which includes changes to the Wellington Planning Scheme and a Voluntary Assistance Scheme to provide certainty to landowners.

Boating Coastal Action Plans

Boating Coastal Action Plans have been prepared by the Regional Coastal Boards for Gippsland, Central and South West regions and provide a strategic context for the planning and delivering of sustainable boating facilities across the state.

Marine biodiversity and ecosystems

Since the release of the Strategy in 2008, there has been a range of activity to improve understanding of marine biodiversity and ecosystems. An important highlight has been the development of a state-wide map of significant marine environmental assets and the inclusion of marine assets into Regional Catchment Strategies. The state-wide map is supported by enhanced spatial information and advice from Victoria's expert marine scientists. The map is being used to inform catchment management investment. There has also been significant progress in marine environmental assessments, with the Common Assessment and Reporting Framework being agreed nationally through the former National Resource Management Ministerial Council system.

Vision for Coastcare Volunteers

In August 2011, the Department of Sustainability and Environment released the *Coastcare Strategy 2011–2015* to set the strategic direction and work priorities for the Coastcare Victoria Program. Key aspects of the Program include: strengthening and building the capacity of community groups; supporting community participation in policy development and planning and management; and broadening the engagement and awareness of the greater community on coastal issues.



Cape Paterson Foreshore revegetation works (Cape Paterson Residents and Ratepayers Association)



3.2 Status of Actions

There is no specific implementation funding provided with the release of each iteration of the Strategy. Actions are progressed through existing budgets of agencies and organisations. Actions that are not part of a program or agency business plan may attract opportunistic funding through grants over the life of the Strategy.

The Strategy identifies 72 actions. Based on the Implementation Plan, 9 of the actions in the Strategy have been completed, 27 are in progress, 25 are ongoing and undertaken as part of organisations day to day operations (a total of 60 of the 72 actions), and 11 actions are yet to be started.

A number of actions yet to commence are now incorporated into lead agency business plans for 2012/2013.

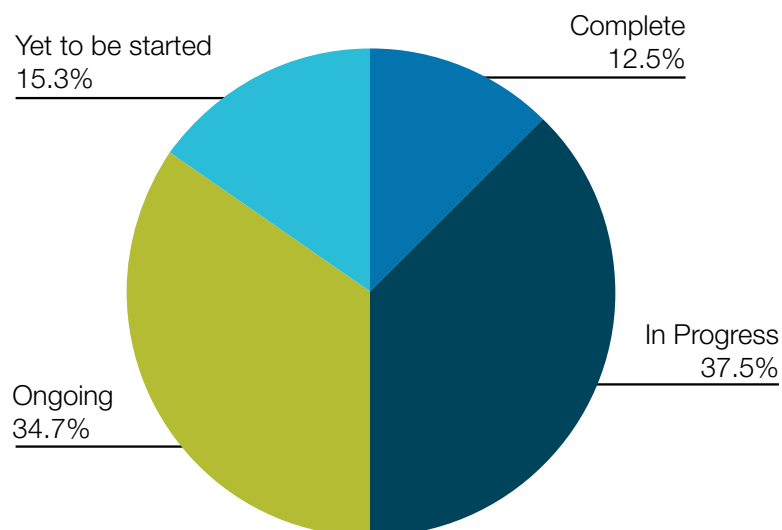


Figure 4. Status of Actions in the Strategy – breakdown by category



4. Feedback from Stakeholders

An important aspect of the mid-term review is to understand how lead and partner agencies are interpreting the Strategy, and their views on what is working well and what could be improved as well as new or emerging issues that should be considered in scoping the next Strategy.

4.1 General Observations

A robust and useful policy framework

Stakeholders commented that the Strategy is a robust framework for planning and management of the coast and that it provides a useful context for discussing challenging coastal issues with the community. Stakeholders also commented that the vision remains relevant and the 'hierarchy of principles' has been valuable in guiding decision making.

Strong links to the planning system

Stakeholders commented that the link to the land use planning system through the State Planning Policy Framework is important, particularly when implementing policies on the impacts of sea level rise through land use planning decisions, and that this link should be maintained and potentially strengthened as further guidance and tools become available.

Guidance for regional implementation

Stakeholders observed that while the policies in the Strategy are generally sound, in some instances there is a challenge with implementation and a gap between State-level policies and on-ground application. Development of Coastal Action Plans (regional level) and Coastal Management Plans (local level) was seen as helpful in addressing this gap, however it was felt that better use could be made of Coastal Action Plans to provide a regional interpretation of the Strategy to address regional issues.

Currency of some reference material

Practitioners found that supporting information such as the *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1997*, *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast 1998*, *Draft Port Phillip Bathing Box Policy* and the *Draft Guidelines for Responding to Coastal Vegetation Vandalism* did provide some guidance on implementation; however, there is a need for this material to be reviewed, updated or finalised.

Effectiveness of coordination

It was observed there could be improved coordination within and between lead agencies in implementation. This could be through practitioners continuing to share information on the use of the Strategy (e.g. the DSE Coastal Planners forums, Victorian Coastal Council and Regional Coastal Boards forums, Association of Bayside Municipalities forums). Stakeholders suggested the Implementation Coordination Committee could continue to bring lead agencies together to share information.

4.2 Climate Change

Support for the 0.8m by 2100 sea level rise policy

Stakeholders felt that a specific figure for future sea level rise has provided a consistent benchmark for management and planning decisions. The policy was welcomed as a real 'line in the sand' and decision makers are giving weight to understanding the impacts of climate change on the coast.

Release of information products to support implementation of the sea level rise policy

There has been a significant commitment to develop maps, data, tools and mechanisms to implement the sea level rise policy. While there has been a time lag between the introduction of the policy and the tools to support implementation, some products have recently been released e. g the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee Report and the Planning Minister's recommendations. Other products are likely to be released in the near future. Stakeholder consultation indicates the need for the State Government to continue to provide leadership and support in implementation.

Planning for a range of time horizons (e. g 2030, 2040)

There was concern and uncertainty amongst stakeholders in how to apply the sea level rise policy to timeframe increments shorter than 2100 (e. g 2030, 2040).

Existing development and strategic adaptation

There was concern in how to consider the application of the sea level rise policy within a township area where existing development will be impacted by inundation and a broader strategic adaptation response will be required.



Guidance and leadership in adaptation planning

Since the release of the Strategy there has been a strong focus on considering sea level rise impacts on specific sites through statutory planning, and less attention has been paid to longer term adaptation planning. Adaptation planning is an important element in managing the impacts of climate change on the coast, as it provides a process for community involvement and can also alleviate the need for site-by-site decisions.

There is currently no consistent approach or set of guidelines for longer term adaptation planning on the coast in Victoria. Some projects at a regional and local level (e.g. Future Coasts local assessments in Port Fairy and the Bellarine Peninsula) can provide some guidance as to what approaches have been useful so far. While there will be no 'one size fits all', stakeholders indicated it would be useful to have access to a range of case studies for adaptation planning and community engagement. This will help stakeholders choose what processes or approaches will be best suited to their circumstances.

Capacity of and access to coastal expertise

As well as stakeholders having access to information, they also recognise the need to build the capacity of practitioners within their organisations so the resources can be used effectively. A training program is planned to help coastal managers and planners use sea level rise data through the Future Coasts Program; however this may be limited, given that the project is due to conclude in 2012.

The Victorian Coastal Council Science Panel Report also identified a serious gap in the expertise available within Victoria in the area of physical oceanography and coastal geomorphology. At present the majority of this expertise resides in private consulting companies. With increased awareness of coastal hazard impacts (inundation and erosion), there may be a greater role for the Government to provide leadership in improving availability of expert advice in this area.

4.3 Population Growth and Development

Protecting landscapes through State and Local Government cooperation

Stakeholders commented that the *Coastal Spaces Project* and implementation of actions in the Strategy to manage significant landscapes has been a valuable example of a partnership between State Government and Local Government. In this project the State Government provided information (*Coastal Landscape Assessment Study*),

guidance for implementation (Planning Practice Note) and funding support. Local councils used this information and worked with their communities to progress implementation through local planning scheme amendments.

The Coastal Settlement Framework as a context for strategic planning

Increased population growth on the coast was a common theme in consultation meetings. Practitioners commented that many coastal areas will continue to be under pressure from development and that the *Coastal Settlement Framework: Spatial Growth Management* provides a context for councils to undertake strategic planning to manage growth pressures.

This strategic work then links into broader planning processes such as Regional Growth Plans and Structure Plans. Stakeholders noted that the framework dates from 2006 and that it would be useful to update it in the next Strategy.

Regional Strategic Plans & Regional Growth Plans

The Victorian Government supports regional and sub-regional plans in each of the five State Government administrative regions. These place-based plans set out aspirations and priorities for the future covering economic development, population settlement, environment and management of resources, infrastructure, community wellbeing and other important issues as determined by the region.

Regional Growth Plans (RGPs) are currently being developed to give strategic land use guidance to the aspirations and priorities set out in the Regional Strategic Plans. There are three RGPs that involve different municipalities on the coast – G21 (Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Colac Otway, Queenscliffe), Great South Coast (Corangamite, Moyne, Warrnambool, Glenelg) and Gippsland (Bass Coast, South Gippsland, Wellington, East Gippsland). G21 is the most advanced with the draft Regional Growth Plan out for public consultation in May 2012.



Increased visitation to the coast

Stakeholders commented that both seasonal and residential population increases will continue not only in coastal towns but also in associated regional growth areas (such as Armstrong Creek near Geelong). This continued growth will lead to increased visitation on the coast and place pressure on visitor infrastructure and assets on the foreshore.

Stakeholders commented that it would be useful to have an understanding of the projected use and ‘carrying capacity’ of foreshores in these growth areas and information on use in different periods including summer, winter, Easter holidays, long weekends and regular weekends. This information would help to guide planning and management of infrastructure like toilet blocks, walking paths and car parks.

Distinguishing between development in urban and non-urban areas

Coastal practitioners commented that the guidance material in the Strategy relating to development on coastal Crown land has been useful, particularly in guiding conditions on *Coastal Management Act* consents. The diagrams and descriptions on activity nodes were also thought to be useful and to be an improvement on the information in the 2002 Strategy. However, it was felt that the material could be further refined and distinctions made between criteria for developed and undeveloped coastlines.

Policy on ‘coastal dependent use’

Increasingly the coast is an important focus for recreational use and in some coastal townships and municipalities coastal land is the only substantial open space available for community use. However, it needs to be acknowledged that not all recreational activities and infrastructure can or should be accommodated in coastal reserves. To address this, the Strategy contains a policy: *‘ensure provision of buildings and infrastructure on coastal Crown land is coastal dependent, sustainable, accessible, equitable and meets community needs for coastal and water-based experiences’*.

Stakeholders indicated inconsistencies in the application of the policy on ‘coastal dependent use’. For example, on urban foreshores like Geelong and St Kilda non-coastal dependent uses such as skate parks and playgrounds have been permitted, while similar activities have been refused in non-urban areas.

4.4 Marine, Catchments and Biodiversity

Understanding of marine values

Stakeholders commented that the focus of recent work in the marine natural resource management area has been on developing tools and resources to improve ecologically sustainable development in Victoria’s marine environment. The challenge is now to sustain this work and ensure the tools flow into managing on-ground risks to Victoria’s marine biodiversity and ecological processes.

Stakeholders also commented that the recently announced Victorian Environmental Assessment Council’s marine investigation will be an important opportunity to further advance marine biodiversity policies across Victoria.

Links between catchments and coasts

The Victorian Coastal Council Science Panel Report highlights the continued importance of understanding the links between catchments, estuaries and broader coastal waters for maintaining marine ecological health. The report acknowledges that while there has been progress there are still considerable knowledge gaps including sources and fates of toxicants, understanding nutrient recycling, impacts of estuary opening and closing rates on species that rely on estuaries for their lifecycle, ‘hidden estuary biodiversity’, and cycling of sediments within and out of estuaries.

Pressure on coastal habitats

At the broadest level, a rise in mean sea level combined with increased frequency and intensity of storm events will lead to inundation of low-lying coastal areas to a greater depth and extent, and for longer periods. This will change the nature of many habitats and is likely to lead to changes in populations and distribution of species and communities along elevation gradients from the sea. Stakeholders commented that there has been little work done in this area and it is ‘falling between the cracks’ in land use planning, terrestrial biodiversity management and marine management.



4.5 Other Topics

Asset-based approach in coastal management

In 2011 the Victorian Catchment Management Council released guidelines for Catchment Management Authorities in preparing their Regional Catchment Strategies. The Guideline encourages the use of an asset-based approach for identifying different asset classes within a catchment.

To support this, the Department of Sustainability and Environment has developed an approach to identify marine assets and is in the process of developing a methodology to identify natural coastal assets. The intent is for these approaches to be used in a range of planning processes such as Regional Catchment Strategies, Regional Growth Plans, Coastal Action Plans and Coastal Management Plans.

For the current round of Regional Catchment Strategies that are being developed, Catchment Management Authorities are using a cooperative but independent series of approaches for identifying natural coastal assets in their regions.

Stakeholders commented there will be a need for some discussion as to how a locality asset based approach across Victoria will link in with the State-wide Strategy.

Addressing community expectations

Stakeholders observed that there have been some challenges in managing community expectations around issues such as coastal protection and beach renourishment. As communities continue to face change, particularly in relation to climate change impacts, stakeholders commented that a clear communication strategy is required.

Awareness of the Strategy and coastal and marine management

The latest social research on community attitudes and behaviours to coastal and marine environments shows that while Victorians think the coast is well managed (67% agree) they don't feel well informed, and the majority (80%) had not heard of the Strategy.

While actions to convene a marine and coastal education taskforce have not yet commenced, community awareness programs such as Coastcare volunteer groups, *Summer by the Sea*, the Marine Discovery Centre Holiday Program and Estuary Watch are continuing to be well attended and are a valuable source of information on coastal and marine issues for the general public. Stakeholders suggested a state-wide education program or a communication strategy to further assist in raising the level of awareness of coastal and marine management.

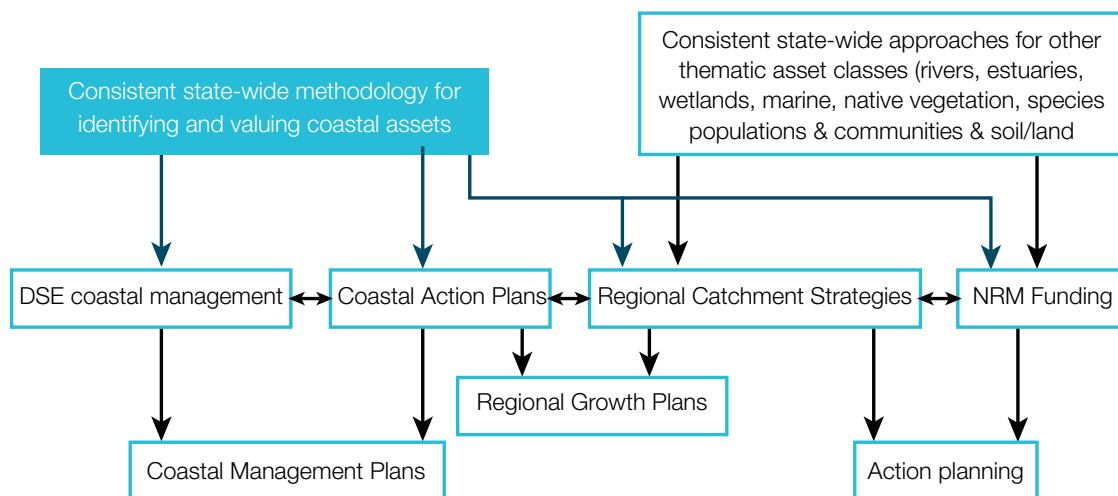


Figure 5. Regional strategic documents that could be informed by a coastal asset-based approach



Public/private interface and market-based tools

The Strategy is intended to be tenure blind, meaning it applies to both public and private land. Stakeholders commented it is sometimes a challenge to consider both private and public land in policy development. In the future, in areas where coastal Crown land may be lost through erosion and inundation, there is an opportunity to investigate a range of market-based tools to manage public/private interface issues like the migration of ecosystems and public access. Suggestions by stakeholders of market-based tools include Bushtender, Ecotender and public/private land interface agreements.

Understanding public benefit

Practitioners commented that the policy statements around 'public benefit' (relating to suitable development in Part 4 of the Strategy) have been useful in decision making and communicating with affected stakeholders; however, the term requires clearer definition and a mechanism to apply it consistently across Victoria.

4.6 Emerging Issues

Stakeholders were also asked to identify any new and emerging issues that could be considered in scoping the next Strategy.

Demand for use of the coast relating to infrastructure to support renewable energy

There is interest from an emerging marine energy industry (e.g. wave and tidal energy) in establishing projects along the Victorian coast. Marine energy projects are dependent on the use of coastal Crown land seabed and adjoining onshore coastal land. Practitioners commented that at present there is no strategic marine planning to determine how this emerging industry might develop along the Victorian coast. The absence of a coordinated approach or overall plan brings with it a risk of *ad hoc* approval of proposals without understanding which areas are most suitable for this type of development.

Emergency management on the coast

Stakeholders commented that the next iteration of the Strategy will need to consider how to best reflect the increased focus on emergency management in coastal policy. In coastal towns such as Loch Sport (Gippsland Lakes) the dual hazards of bushfire and coastal and/or riverine flooding will increase demands on emergency services, relief providers and Government. Stakeholders also observed that there will be a need for policies to balance emergency management and people management, with other considerations such as access and environmental and heritage values.



Boats at Warneet (Coastcare Victoria Snapshots)

5. Conclusions

This review considered the progress of implementation of the actions, feedback from stakeholders on the interpretation of policies, and emerging issues to be considered in scoping the next Strategy. The review has revealed:

Overall

- Overall 85% (61 actions of 72) of the actions in the Strategy are complete, in progress or ongoing. There are 11 actions yet to be started with most of these planned for in lead agency 2012/2013 business plans.
 - The Strategy remains a robust framework for balancing the competing needs of the coast and provides a context for discussing challenging coastal issues with the community. The vision and 'hierarchy of principles' remain relevant and are valuable in decision making.
 - A key strength is the linkage of the Strategy to the land use planning system and incorporation of coastal policies into the State Planning Policy Framework. This is particularly important when implementing policies relating to the impacts of sea level rise and management of growth and development.
 - The policies in the Strategy are generally sound: in some instances there is a challenge with implementation and a gap between State-level policies and on-ground application. Coastal Action Plans (regional level) and Coastal Management Plans (local level) help address this gap, however the use of Coastal Action Plans in providing a regional interpretation could be improved.
 - Practitioners found that supporting information such as the *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1997*, *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast 1998*, *Draft Port Phillip Bathing Box Policy* and the *Draft Guidelines for Responding to Coastal Vegetation Vandalism* did provide some guidance on implementation; however, there is a need for this material to be updated or finalised.
 - It was observed there could be improved coordination within and between lead agencies in implementation of the policies and actions.
- long-term impacts of climate change on the coast.
 - There has been a significant commitment to develop maps, data, tools and mechanisms to implement the sea level rise policy. While there has been a time lag between the introduction of the policy and the tools to support implementation, some products have recently been released e. g the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee Report and the Planning Minister's recommendations. Other products are likely to be released in the near future. Stakeholder consultation indicates the need for the State Government to continue to provide leadership and support in implementation.
 - Stakeholders are concerned about how to apply the sea level rise policy to timeframe increments shorter than 2100 (e. g 2030, 2040) and in township areas where existing development will be impacted by inundation.
 - Since the release of the Strategy there has been a focus on considering sea level rise impacts on specific sites through statutory planning, but little focus on longer-term adaptation planning. There is no consistent approach or set of guidelines for adaptation planning on the coast, and stakeholders would find it useful to have access to case studies demonstrating adaptation planning and community engagement.
 - Research indicates that there is a gap in expertise available within Victoria in the area of physical oceanography and coastal geomorphology. With increased awareness of coastal hazard impacts (inundation and erosion) there may be a role for Government to provide leadership in improving availability of this expert advice.

Climate Change

- A specific figure (*not less than 0.8m by 2100*) for future sea level rise has provided a consistent benchmark for management and planning decisions. This policy has been welcomed as a 'line in the sand', and decision makers are giving weight to understanding the short-and



Coastal vegetation (Coastcare Victoria Snapshots)



Population Growth and Development

- There has been a successful uptake and implementation of policies and actions of the *Coastal Spaces Project* relating to consolidating urban development into existing settlements and protecting non-urban landscapes between settlements. This project was seen as a useful demonstration of state and local government cooperation.
- The *Coastal Settlement Framework: Spatial Growth Management* has provided a useful context for strategic planning. The Framework now requires updating for inclusion in the next Strategy.
- Both seasonal and residential population increases will continue not only in coastal towns but also in associated regional growth areas. This continued growth will lead to increased visitation to the coast and place pressure on visitor infrastructure on the foreshore. Coastal managers would find it useful to have an understanding of the projected use and 'carrying capacity' of foreshores in these growth areas, and information on use in peak and non-peak periods.
- The guidance material in the Strategy relating to development on coastal Crown land has been useful; however, the material could be further refined and distinctions made between criteria for developed and undeveloped coastlines.
- There is ambiguity in the term and application of the policy 'coastal dependent use' and further guidance could be developed to provide a greater distinction between criteria for developed and undeveloped coastlines.

Marine, Catchment and Biodiversity

- The focus of work in the marine area has been on improving the level of understanding of marine ecosystem values; coordinating planning of coastal catchments; and managing pressures from increased urbanisation and intensification, and from agricultural and commercial development.

Other Topics

- The Department of Sustainability and Environment has developed an approach to identify marine assets, and is in the process of developing a methodology to identify natural coastal assets. There will be a need for some discussion as to how an asset-based approach for specific localities across Victoria will link in with the state-wide scope of the Strategy.
- It is a challenge to consider both private and public land in policy development. In the future, in areas where coastal Crown land may be lost through erosion and inundation, there is an opportunity to investigate a range of market-based tools to manage public/private interface issues such as the migration of ecosystems, public use and access and risk to properties on private land.
- Policy statements around 'public benefit' relating to Part 4 of the Strategy *Suitable Development* have been useful in decision making and communicating with affected stakeholders; however, the term requires clearer definition and a mechanism to apply it consistently across Victoria.
- There have been some challenges in managing community expectations around issues such as coastal protection and beach renourishment. As communities continue to face changes to their beaches, particularly in relation to climate change impacts, a clear communication strategy is required.

Emerging issues

- A range of emerging issues need to be considered in scoping the next Strategy, such as strategic planning for marine renewable energy infrastructure and linkages to emergency management.



Shaws Cowfish (B. Boyle)

6. Recommendations

Completion of high priority actions

While not all actions may be completed, the Victorian Coastal Council strongly recommends that the following actions are completed as a high priority:

- Release of tools and mechanisms that support the implementation of the sea level rise policy and guidance for adaptation planning.
- Finalisation of any remaining mechanisms to support the policies for managing growth and development pressures, including: Significant Landscape Overlays and Settlement Boundaries for incorporation into local planning schemes.

Commence preparation of the next Strategy

Preparation for the Strategy, including a meaningful consultation period requires approximately 12 to 18 months.

Steps to begin the development of the next Strategy include:

- Ministerial advice on particular areas of focus for the Strategy
- Development of a timetable and confirmation of resources
- Establishment of a Project Control Group to guide the Strategy
- Development of an engagement and consultation plan.



Aerial view of Port Phillip Foreshore (City of Port Phillip)

Guidance for the next Strategy

This mid-term review has gone some way in understanding how the current policies and actions are being implemented and what areas require clarification and improvement. The Victorian Coastal Council recommends that the next Strategy:

- Continue to be a strategic, high-level document, retaining the 'hierarchy of principles' and a focus of linking policy to on-ground application
- Continue to review the latest science about sea level rise and extreme events to enable setting of appropriate benchmarks for planning and management decisions
- Support and strengthen the use of Coastal Action Plans as a regional planning tool for implementing the Strategy
- Include a monitoring and evaluation framework
- Enhance leadership and support in adaptation planning, particularly in coastal hazards risk management and information on engaging local councils and communities
- Revise the *Coastal Settlement Framework: Spatial Growth Management* as guidance material in strategic planning
- Clarify
 - a. 'coastal dependent use' policy and decision making guidelines
 - b. definition of 'public benefit' in terms of suitable development and outline a mechanism for consistent application
- Investigate the carrying capacity of foreshore community infrastructure and support services to manage increases in visitation
- Encourage the development and application of market-based tools to manage the pressure on coastal habitat
- Identify gaps in technical coastal and marine expertise (including coastal geomorphology) in Victoria (particularly within Government) and develop a strategy to improve availability of appropriate expertise
- Investigate the linkages between state-wide application of the Strategy and identification of coastal and marine assets in specific localities
- Advance a communication strategy to address community expectations on issues such as climate change impacts, coastal protection and beach renourishment
- Explore emerging issues such as strategic planning for marine renewable energy infrastructure and linkages to emergency management.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Lead Agencies on the Implementation Coordination Committee, June 2012
- Appendix 2: Key Findings from the VCC Science Panel Report – *Emerging Scientific Issues on Victoria's Coast: 2011 Update*
- Appendix 3: Summary of VCAT cases and Victorian Planning Panel reports
- Appendix 4: Consultation Survey Summary
- Appendix 5: Consultation Practitioner Meetings Summary
- Appendix 6: Key Findings from the Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute 2012 report: *Coastal and Marine Environments Community Attitudes & Behaviours Report (Wave Four)*



Safety Beach jetty (Coastcare Victoria Snapshots)



Appendix 1: Lead Agencies on the Implementation Coordination Committee, June 2012

Department of Transport
Department of Sustainability and Environment
Department of Planning and Community Development
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Treasury and Finance
Department of Primary Industries
Parks Victoria
Environmental Protection Authority (Victoria)
Municipal Association of Victoria
Victorian Catchment Management Council
Regional Development Victoria
Victorian Coastal Council
Western Coastal Board
Gippsland Coastal Board
Central Coastal Board



Appendix 2: Key findings from the VCC Science Panel Report – *Emerging Scientific Issues on Victoria's Coast: 2011 Update*

The Victorian Coastal Council convened a Science Panel to provide advice to Council on emerging issues and knowledge gaps relevant to Victoria's coast and marine environments in 2011. This action recognised the critical role that independent and credible scientific advice has in informing evidence-based policy, particularly in the mid to long term.

Emerging environmental issues

The Science Panel emphasized three environmental concerns. Common to each is the need to focus on processes that occur at long time scales and potentially over wide areas of the coast. Both of these dimensions will provide challenges to coastal management, as they operate at scales that cross jurisdictions and planning windows.

Issue 1: Understanding the effects of increased climatic variability

Although predictions for future rates of warming and sea level rise to around 2050 are well defined with little prospect of major departures from current trends, impacts cannot be predicted accurately from changes to average climate alone. The Science Panel strongly encourages the development of the scientific understanding and tools needed (including monitoring) and better harnessing of existing data and information to predict local responses of coastal ecosystems and landforms to changes in climatic variability including extreme events, taking into account synergies between climate drivers.

Issue 2: Understanding the importance of links between catchments, estuaries and broader coastal waters for maintaining marine ecosystem health

Catchments are a major source of sediments, nutrients, and a wide range of chemicals, which move into estuaries and potentially out into oceanic waters. An important scientific question is how estuaries influence marine environments along the coast.

Issue 3: Understanding the cumulative ecological consequences of coastal development to meet human needs

Understanding the cumulative ecological impacts of coastal development is important for informed planning decisions, and it will become increasingly so as we adjust our plans for new climates.

Responding to emerging environmental issues

The Science Panel highlighted three additional concerns related to Victoria's technical capacity to respond to emerging environmental issues. Failing to develop basic scientific understanding about the Victorian coast limits our ability to manage coastal and marine environments. Scientific understanding depends on the collection of appropriate data and the existence of a scientific skill base to interpret information and provide independent scientific advice in Victoria.

Issue 4: Understanding the condition of Victoria's coastal environments

Assessing the effectiveness of management actions requires data. Data tell us about the current condition of a particular asset, but the data alone are of little value unless they are linked to a clear decision-making framework.

Issue 5: Matching Victoria's technical capacity to meet scientific needs

New issues will require scientific and technical expertise that may differ from that currently available in Victoria, and it is essential that we develop and maintain expertise appropriate to our needs. The extent and availability of this expertise must also be communicated to coastal managers and other end users of science.

Issue 6: Continuing operation of the Science Panel

There is a strong need for a group such as the Science Panel that provides independent, strategic, scientific advice for the whole coast.

Appendix 3: Summary of VCAT cases and Victorian Planning Panel reports

Some examples of VCAT cases and Planning Panel reports from 2008–2011 that consider the Victorian Coastal Strategy

Policy Themes	Date	Case Name	Planning/ Responsible Authority	Location/s	Matter/Comments
Protecting coastal landscapes	25 Jun 2011	Panel Report Planning Scheme Amendment C177 Bellarine Peninsula Coastal Landscapes	City of Greater Geelong	Bellarine Peninsula	Implementing Coastal Spaces landscape assessments through Significant Landscape Overlays in non-urban areas of the Bellarine Peninsula.
Protecting coastal landscapes Settlement boundaries	7 April 2010	Panel Report Planning Scheme Amendment C93 C98 Coastal towns and landscapes	Bass Coast	Phillip Island, Kilcunda & Inverloch	Implementing Coastal Spaces landscapes through Municipal Strategic Statement and Significant Landscape Overlays for Phillip Island, Kilcunda & Inverloch. Incorporate the Bass Coast Strategic Coastal Planning Framework 2008 and introduce settlement maps for the Coastal Settlements.
Protecting coastal landscapes	26 February 2009	Panel Report Bass Coast Planning Scheme Amendment C85 MSS Review	Bass Coast	Wonthaggi, San Remo, Grantville	Implementing Coastal Spaces landscape assessments through Municipal Strategic Statement and Significant Landscape Overlays in Wonthaggi, San Remo, Grantville.
Protecting coastal landscapes Maintaining coastal township character	27 April 2009	Panel Report East Gippsland Planning Scheme Amendment C68 Coastal Landscape and Urban Settlement Plans	East Gippsland	Applies to coastal land in East Gippsland Shire	Implementing Coastal Spaces through Significant Landscape Overlays (SLOs) across the region. Notes importance of including Crown land in SLO's. Includes introduction of new Design and Development Overlays (DDOs) within the defined settlement boundaries and related changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement.
Protecting coastal landscapes Settlement boundaries Maintaining coastal township character	11 June 2009	Panel Report South Gippsland Planning Scheme Amendment C45 Coastal Landscapes and Settlement Frameworks Plans	South Gippsland Shire	Sandy Point, Tarwin Lower, Venus Bay and Waratah Bay.	Implement the recommendations of two strategic planning projects: The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (CSLAS); and The South Gippsland Coastal Urban Design Frameworks (UDFs).
Protecting coastal landscapes	16 April 2008	VCAT Linfox Property Group Inc v Bass Coast SC [2008] VCAT 642 (16 April 2008)	Bass Coast	Pyramid Rock, Phillip Island	Pyramid Rock, Phillip Island. Permit not granted as not identified tourist precinct and would compromise landscape.



Policy Themes	Date	Case Name	Planning/ Responsible Authority	Location/s	Matter/Comments
Protecting coastal landscapes	16 April 2008	VCAT Linfox Property Group Inc v Bass Coast SC [2008] VCAT 642	Bass Coast Shire	Ventnor, Phillip Island	Golf course, accommodation and conference centre. Permit not granted as is too close to the abutting coastline and coastal reserve and would interact with the reserve in an inappropriate manner (compromise landscape and amenity).
Avoid linear development	19 May 2008	VCAT Strom v Glenelg SC (Red Dot) [2008] VCAT 899 (19 May 2008)	Glenelg Shire	Cape Bridgewater	Permit NOT approved for dwelling in Rural Conservation Zone to avoid linear sprawl.
Settlement framework and settlement boundaries Sewerage and septic system improvements	29 December 2010	Panel Report Colac Otway Planning Scheme Amendment C58 Implementation of Structure Plans for Wye River, Kennett River, and Separation Creek	Colac Otway Shire	Great Ocean Road – Kennett River, Wye River & Separation Creek	Recognise structure plans for the three hamlets. Statements into MSS to reflect strategic directions for the towns (low growth capacity, protect the environmental values, contain urban development within confined settlement boundaries). Also, domestic effluent and stormwater issues compromising water quality.
Settlement boundaries Impacts of climate change	13 January 2010	Panel Report Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Amendment C159 Barwon Heads Structure	City of Greater Geelong	Barwon Heads	Implementing the Barwon Heads Structure Plan, December 2007. Panel thinks that the Amendment raises a number of unresolved climate change related issues such as sea level rises and storm tide inundation.
Avoid development in sand dunes or low lying areas Planning for climate change impacts	26 November 2009	Panel Report Wellington Planning Scheme Amendment C50 Coastal Urban Design Frameworks	Wellington Shire	Ninety Mile Beach	Area highly vulnerable to inundation (coastal and riverine). Planning mechanism to communicate risk to owners. Need for additional strategic planning on coastal vulnerability. Subsidence issues not resolved. Amendment C50 introduces policy statements to the MSS and settlement boundaries for the ninety mile beach settlements.



Policy Themes	Date	Case Name	Planning/ Responsible Authority	Location/s	Matter/Comments
Maintaining coastal township character	30 June 2010	VCAT The Knox School Ltd v Bass Coast SC & Ors [2010] VCAT 1083 (30 June 2010)	Bass Coast Shire	Newhaven	Construction of 11 double storey dwellings, 22 lot subdivision, demolition of buildings within a Heritage Overlay, alterations and additions to allow multiple dwellings in a heritage building and removal of vegetation. The permit application involves the loss of significant heritage fabric that that panel found not acceptable. It proposes works and new built form that would be unacceptable in the context of the site's heritage and character.
Avoid development in sand dunes or low lying areas Planning for climate change impacts	16 June 2009	Panel Report Moyne Planning Scheme Permit Application PL04/232 Residential Subdivision East Beach Port Fairy	Moyne Shire	East Beach, north-eastern edge of Port Fairy	A 22 lot subdivision in floodplain area north-east of Port Fairy. Panel recommended refusal because: sand dune with erosion history; only access road subject to flooding which will be exacerbated by sea level rise; required earthworks resultant filling of floodplain undesirable. Land to be back zoned to RCZ. ES01, DD021 retained.
Planning for climate change impacts	26 October 2009	VCAT Tauschke v East Gippsland SC [2009] VCAT 2231 (26 October 2009)	East Gippsland Shire	Metung	Review of Condition 4 on Permit No. 347/2008. Flood risk associated with Lot 1 can be managed. Before the plan of subdivision is certified the owner must enter into an agreement with the Responsible Authority and East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority pursuant to s173 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority and the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.



Policy Themes	Date	Case Name	Planning/ Responsible Authority	Location/s	Matter/Comments
Planning for climate change impacts	22 June 2009	VCAT Myers v South Gippsland SC (includes Summary) (Red Dot) [2009] VCAT 1022 (22 June 2009); Myers v South Gippsland SC (No 2) (includes Summary) (Red Dot) [2009] VCAT 2414 (19 November 2009)	South Gippsland Shire	Warratah Bay	Subdivision in Waratah Bay, one into two lots. Land subject to ESO. Determined Coastal Vulnerability Assessment is required. Leave granted. Permit not granted. Expert evidence states without mitigation by 2100 there will be no dune, foreshore access, no road and land will be inundated by sea.
Planning for climate change impacts	29 July 2008	VCAT Gippsland Coastal Board v South Gippsland SC & Ors (No 2) (includes Summary) (Red Dot) [2008] VCAT 1545 (29 July 2008)	South Gippsland Shire	Toora	Six permit application in Toora in a Farming Zone (old crown township) near coast. No permits granted. Dwellings not related to agricultural use. Outside of settlement. Application of precautionary principle (regarding coastal inundation, sea level rise).
Coastal Dependent Use	29 April 2010	VCAT Byrnes & Ors v Greater Geelong CC (includes Summary) (Red Dot) [2010] VCAT 533 (29 April 2010)	City of Greater Geelong	Eastern Beach Reserve (Crn Ritchie Boulevard and Bellarine Street)	Ferris wheel to be sited in the Geelong waterfront precinct. Geelong waterfront is an activity node and approval for the proposal has been granted under the Coastal Management Act 1995. It is true that a ferris wheel is not coastal-dependent but its context here is part of promoting the waterfront leisure and recreation experience.

Appendix 4: Consultation Survey Summary

Summary data

- 200 surveys sent out
- 70 surveys received
- 19 different organisations (Table 1)

Table 1: Response by organisations

Category	Number
Local Government	17
Department of Sustainability & Environment	14
Committee of Management	11
Community group and not for profit (friends groups)	7
Consultant/Developers	2
Ports authority	2
Regional Coastal Board	2
Representative organisation (fishing)	2
University	2
Aboriginal corporation	1
Catchment Management Authority	1
Victorian Coastal Council	1
Department of Transport	1
Parks Victoria	1
Victorian Catchment Management Council	1
Water authority	1
Missing	8
Total	70

Survey Questions

Reflections on the VCS

- Q1** Reflecting on how you have used the VCS, provide examples of policies or actions in the VCS that have not worked well (to achieve the vision). What may be impeding or slowing implementation? For example: Is the policy unclear? Is the policy incorrect?
- Q2** Reflecting on how you have used the VCS, provide examples of policies or actions in the VCS that have worked well (to achieve the vision). What supported implementation? For example: Was the policy clear? Was the policy useful?

Vision and Principles of the VCS

- Q3** How relevant and sound do you think the vision and principles of the VCS are?
- Q4** What ideas do you have for developing the vision and principles of the VCS to fit today's thinking?

Emerging Issues

- Q5** What are the new emerging issues or themes that need to be considered in the next few years and could be included in the development of the next strategy?

Useability of the VCS

- Q6** While this review is focussed on content of the VCS not its structure – what other specific comments do you have on the useability of the document?
- Q7** Other comments or feedback?



Summary of Survey Responses

Q1 Policies or actions that have not worked well (to achieve the vision)? What was impeding or slowing implementation?

Were the policies unclear/incorrect? General/ Awareness/Implementation

- Policy is high level and strategic which is good but there isn't enough guidance about how this translates to a regional and more specifically local level.
- The policies are clear, however, promotion of the VCS would serve to heighten people's awareness of the VCS.
- The policy is clear and correct. The problem is there is insufficient funding for implementation.
- Policies are robust, however the actions can be difficult to implement due to changes over time (eg changes of priorities etc).
- Due to the detailed and specific nature of the actions as they are expressed, reporting on progress for VCS implementation can be difficult. The emphasis becomes on implementation of the action itself, rather than achievement of the vision or the policy.

Sea level rise/adaptation

- The policy to plan for at least 0.8 metres of sea level rise by 2100 was a great advance in government recognition of the likely impacts of climate change on the coast. However, inadequate information and support was provided to local Councils and to other decision makers (including property owners) to allow the policy to be implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- The policy of planning for SLR of not less than 0.8 m by 2100 has been difficult to implement because of lack of guidance on what this means and how it is to be achieved. Agree with the policy but the actions to support this have been slow and ambiguous.
- Need to build in elements for considering social impacts in order to provide security and certainty for existing communities living and working in coastal areas.
- Update the VCS to include the latest climate change science and Future Coasts work.
- Need a planned 'united' front for protective measures around Westernport Bay.

- Planning practice note relating to SLR and planning does not cover existing settlements – need to consider planning response to existing coastal settlements. Include consideration of the CCCAC recommendations to guide the key next steps for coastal planning.
- Consideration of land acquisition programs for coastal foreshores.
- Easy to tick the box on a methodology or vulnerability assessment, but as yet there have been no consistent, "signed off by government" standards.
- There is a need for balanced consideration of social impact of aspects of sea level rise planning.
- The policy has not provided enough detailed information or grunt to really make decisions with confidence.
- Stronger policy and action is needed over adaptation planning particularly for the future protection and assistance for coastal wetlands such as mangroves and coastal saltmarsh to adapt in response to projected sea level rise.
- Future Coasts modelling has been patchy with unclear methodology and formats for communicating results.

Settlement/growth/planning

- The development of Regional Growth Plans will be a useful step to help in understanding the role of settlements in coastal settings and how they sit in the broader region in relation to growth. This will help deliver some policies of the VCS around the urban coast and settlement hierarchy's.
- The VCS should promote the preparation and application of detailed precinct plans for all sites nominated for development along the coast. Precinct plans should acknowledge both the physical and aesthetic attributes of a locality and should acknowledge the premier role that local government plays in community planning.

Biodiversity

- There is mention of migratory shorebirds in section 1.2 *Wetlands and Estuaries*, but resident shorebirds are completely overlooked despite being the focus of so much funding and on-ground activity, and being a flagship for coastal protection in Victoria.
- Greater attention and specific reference is needed to plan and protect mangrove and coastal saltmarsh wetlands.



Marine

- Marine Protected Areas should be highlighted more strongly as a conservation tool.
- There has been a lack of progress in the area of marine ecological integrity.

Boating

- There is an emphasis on recreational boating and not much strategic direction/framework for commercial vessel operations and management and indeed shipping in local ports.

Coastal Crown land development/coastal dependent use

- 'Coastal dependant use' is critical – this needs some clarification and support in implementation.
- Non-coastal dependant activities are hard to prevent along the coast due to lack of specifics about 'what is' and 'what is not ' coastal dependent.
- There is a need to clarify the methodology, language and application of the concept of net community benefit. This concept needs to be elevated so it carries equal weight to the coastal planning principles.

Coastal Action Plan

- The VCS provides clear direction for developing CAPs however CAPS themselves need clearer direction on the strategic nature they should take. CAPs often have too much detail.

Q2 Policies or actions that have worked well (to achieve the vision)? What supported implementation? Were the policies clear/useful?

General

- VCS Hierarchy of Principles and policy directions are clear and generally provide relevant (and appropriate) strategic context and direction.
- Reflecting the VCS in the State Planning Policy Framework has been excellent.
- Policies are useful in the development Coastal Management Plans and Master Plans and in applying the principles.

- It is important to have 'actions' within the Strategy as this forces accountability and provides clarification as to how the broader principles should be translated/implemented.
- VSC policies are used by organisations to help inform their own particularly policies and plans e. g catchment strategies.
- The policies are useful as a decision-making framework and to understand the rationale behind actions.
- The policies help to justify project decisions when delivering information to stakeholders. For example DSE's decisions for Coastal Management Act consent applications and planning decisions.
- The policies are clear and direct but may be a need to raise the profile of the Strategy to ensure that Committees are actively using the document.

Climate change/sea level rise/adaptation

- The inclusion of a figure of 0.8m for planning for future sea level rise has provided a baseline for management and planning decisions.
- The benchmark sea level rise of 0.8m by 2100 has provided consistency for planning and management of the coast.
- The policy (plan for 0.8m by 2100) is clear however it has taken some time for guidelines to be established to assist in implementation.
- The measures on planning for a specified sea level rise has been useful in giving formal weight to this issue in decision making both on coastal Crown land and in private land planning permit decisions.

Settlements/growth/planning

- The policies are useful as a decision-making framework and to understand the rationale behind actions. An example would be the retention of non-urban breaks between settlements and protection of landscapes.
- The policies on containment of settlements have worked well and have been translated through the urban development frameworks into settlement boundaries for most coastal towns in Gippsland. Also, the Coastal Spaces project has helped to provide tools to protect areas between towns.
- The VCS has provided useful guidance in the Shire in that the hierarchy of values underpin coastal planning and the role of coastal settlements.
- Elements of Part 4 have helped inform growth planning in coastal townships through providing a framework for discussing key issues.



- Councils have used the VCS policies in land use strategic planning, determining planning permits and in developing a Climate Change Strategy.

Coastal Crown land use

- The criteria for ‘*use and development on coastal Crown land*’, provides useful guidance for assessing applications for Coastal Management Act consents.
- The emphasis on quality design outcomes has been helpful in general terms, but doesn’t always provide DSE and Council decision makers with adequate support to pursue outcomes. It does allow rejection of lowest common denominator proposals, but doesn’t necessarily provide support to drive often grassroots coastal Crown land occupier organisations to lift their aspirations or wait until bigger picture consolidated outcomes can be brokered.
- Section 3.1.1 on Access is useful to explain the importance of community based infrastructure.

Q3 How relevant and sound are the vision and principles of the VCS?

Note: Very strong feedback that the vision and principles are still relevant and sound. All respondents who answered this question (51 respondents) believed the vision and principles remained relevant and sound

- Seem to have withstood the test of time.
- They are contemporary and relevant and without these planning for the coast would be very problematic.
- The principles are very appropriate and provide clear direction to support decision making.
- Guidance on application of principles and at different scales could be useful.
- Importantly the hierarchy ensures the natural resource (which is a key value for the Victorian coast) is the base principle to be considered before other use and development considerations.
- The vision and principles are considered to be very relevant and sound however there can be an issue with implementation and how the VCS is interpreted. For example a planner and engineer may have different interpretations of a principle or strategy.
- Vision may not be ‘owned’ by all Victorians.

Q4 Ideas for developing the vision and principles to fit today’s thinking

- Continue to be bold!
- Hierarchy of principles – this needs more reality on how this is intended to apply to various scales.
- Some examples on the use and application of the hierarchy of principles would be useful.
- Promote a summary version for general media exposure.
- Practical implementation guidance will assist in implementing the vision.
- Test principles through scenarios, future forecasting and simulating/piloting policy implementation.
- Recognise the element of change (that can occur in some coastal areas) could help to improve the vision and principles (some areas of the coast cannot remain the same).
- Could use a principle along the lines of ‘*no net loss*’ such as for native vegetation – ‘*no loss of coastal or marine xxx value*’.
- The vision needs to reflect more strongly the dynamic changes that are occurring on the coast (shoreline loss, biodiversity changes).
- Principles could be reviewed annually at a stakeholder seminar day.

Q5 New and emerging issues or themes to be considered in the next few years and included in the development of the next Strategy?

General

- Need to change the social attitudes towards the management and use of the coast. It is not sustainable to have the general public believe they can use the coast as a recreational resource and treat it as they do other reserves.
- The next Strategy must take into account latest scientific modelling on climate change and the impacts it is going to have on the coast.
- Useful to have a context an overall context of the rates and processes of coastal change.



Climate change/adaptation

- Take into consideration the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee recommendations.
- The next VCS should have a specific focus on retaining public ownership of and access to the coast and allowing coastal ecosystems room to move.
- Recognise the need to develop new planning concepts to deal with the changing land use and values as sea level rise occurs.
- Coastal hazard assessments have now been prepared for several years and there are lessons to be learnt from the practice to date.
- Further exploration of the retreat or adapt scenarios, in particular what standards to apply where.
- Support a whole-of-bay approach or 'regional' approaches to climate change information and adaptation.
- Land acquisition of entire coastal frontage and allowance for inland creep of foreshore and other coastal Crown land reserves.
- Examination of innovative ways to approach gradual change in appropriate land use and sustainable protection measures in coastal areas impacted as sea level rise occurs.
- Understanding coastal squeeze on ecosystems and the need to create buffers.
- Greater skills expertise in coastal management and planning (e.g. coastal engineering).
- Consolidation of the climate change policy. Incorporate the results of the Future Coasts work including the local assessments along the coast.

Increased population growth/settlement planning

- The pressures resulting from increased visitation and population growth along the coasts needs greater recognition.
- Greater demands for recreation by residents – walking, jogging, exercise, dog walking – also infrastructure for day trippers.
- Consider population growth and patterns of settlement even more rigorously.
- A strength of the VCS has been managing development in settlement boundaries and avoiding ribbon development. This needs to be strengthened and supplemented by other planning tools.

- Increasing pressures on Crown land, including for uses such as industrial development, nursing homes and education.
- Rapidly changing demographics in some locations and increased demand and expectation for infrastructure and services.
- Links to regional growth planning processes – identification of significant public values along the coast e.g. environmental, social, economic to assist in balancing competing demands for a limited coastal Crown land resource.

Coastal Crown land/community benefit

- Net community benefit should be the driving principle within activity nodes.
- Ongoing issues with vegetation vandalism from abutting residences.

Built form

- Assessment into coastal infrastructure footprints, with beach uses requiring better facilities and buildings having new standards e.g. disabled access/toilets. Infrastructure built 30–40 yrs ago is no longer suitable and rebuilding requires a larger footprint to fit in all the facilities.

Marine

- Acidification of oceans and its effect on marine species and on vulnerable topography (e.g. limestone cliffs). While there is little an individual country can do to mitigate the effects, they need to be better understood.
- An ongoing process for evaluating the location of Marine Protected Areas in Victoria, so that additions to the current network can be considered based on robust science.
- Use and development of the marine environment e.g. new forms of renewable energy such as wave power. A clear framework is needed to assist in decision making.

Biodiversity

- More emphasis on mangrove and coastal saltmarsh environments and how they should be better planned for. They are the frontline ecosystems that will be at risk from impacts of sea level rise and need to be catered for just as much as the development and infrastructure of urban areas.



Community

- Ongoing issue with succession with regards to community groups and stewardship.
- Policy that guides volunteer coastal community groups to have a strategic approach and plans that aligns with the VCS.
- Encourage communities to become more informed of risks (related to climate change) and encourage joint action and responsibility in addressing these.

Catchments

- Continue to integrate catchment and coastal management in Victoria.
- Further direction on acid sulfate soils and contaminated soil generally.

Implementation

- Support and funds for small volunteer groups managing coastal Crown land reserves.

Q7 Other comments or feedback?

- Useful to have closer integration between the VCS and Coastal Action Plans (CAPs) so that a CAP is a regional interpretation of the Strategy. Need to resource RCBs to prepare new or updated CAPs to coincide with the release of each new VCS.

Q6 Comments on the useability of the document?

- Currently attractive layout and logical, moving from high level principles through strategic directions to specific policies.
- Could make it an Incorporated Document in the Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Case studies within the document would be beneficial.
- An interactive version, to help show the steps involved in coastal developments decisions.
- Maps of the important environmental, social and economic areas of the coast (something similar to the biolinks and flagships maps within the previous Land & Biodiversity White Paper).
- Vulnerability mapping included as a map of future changes to the coastline.
- The document is user friendly and clear.
- Additional one page fact sheets for stakeholders.
- More clarity in policy position as distinct from commentary.
- Reducing the size of the document will make it easier to navigate.
- Current online version extremely useful.

Appendix 5: Consultation Practitioner Meetings Summary

A series of 16 consultation discussion sessions were held with practitioners from government departments, Catchment Management Authorities, local councils, planning and development consultants, Water Authorities and Port Authorities. These meetings took place between 24 August 2011 and 12 April 2012, in total there were 77 participants from 22 different organisations.

Date	Session Participants	Location
24 August 2011	Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Planning and Community Development (regional)	Geelong
5 September 2011	Department of Sustainability and Environment (regional)	Boxhill, Melbourne
6 September 2011	Department of Sustainability and Environment (Public Land, NRM, Officer Water, EPCC)	Nicholson St, Melbourne
7 September 2011	Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Planning and Community Development, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Traralgon
8 September 2011	Department of Planning and Community Development	Spring St, Melbourne
13 September 2011	Borough of Queenscliff	Barwon Heads
13 September 2011	City of Greater Geelong	Geelong
15 September 2011	East Gippsland Shire, Shire of Wellington	Sale
16 September 2011	Parks Victoria	Bourke St, Melbourne
16 September 2011	Surf Coast Shire	Torquay
20 September 2011	Bass Coast Shire	Nicholson St, Melbourne
21 September 2011	Warrnambool City Council, Shire of Moyne, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Wannon Water	Warrnambool
22 September 2011	Frankston City Council, City of Melbourne Kingston City Council, City of Greater Geelong Mornington Peninsula Shire, Port Phillip City Council	Docklands, Melbourne
28 March 2012	Urban Development Institute Australia	St Kilda Rd
2 April 2012	Port of Melbourne Corporation	City
12 April 2012	Member of Victorian Planning Environmental and Law Association	Nicholson St, Melbourne



Summary Notes Practitioner Consultation Meetings

General

- The VCS has been a useful document in giving context and direction when discussing coastal issues with the community.
- There is strength in having the VCS linked to the planning scheme through the State Policy Planning Framework.
- The VCS has been one the Victorian Government's strongest strategies and a sound framework that has been effectively utilised to address difficult challenges over many years.
- A key strength of the VCS is that it reflects community values.
- Need to continue to have Integrated Coastal Zone Management as the core of the VCS and coastal management and planning in Victoria.
- There is wriggle room in the VCS for policy shopping, particularly when the principles are applied in isolation of a broader context.
- The hierarchy of principles is a major strength however it would be useful to have some guidance as to how the hierarchy of principles are translated, what scale are they meant to be applied, state, regional, local, site?
- The policies and Strategy are sound but there is a lack of coordination amongst departments and organisations in implementation.
- The VCS is thematic and state-wide. Coastal Action Plans and Coastal Management Plans help to complete the spatial picture.
- The inclusion of 0.8 metre SLR by 2100 has helped progress the issue of planning and adaptation. It would be good to see a more incremental information e.g. SLR at 2020, 2030.
- In regards to the Future Coasts Program there has been a 2 year time lag in program implementation. This has caused some frustration amongst stakeholders.
- Is it clear what to do on 'green field sites' but not as clear in infill areas.
- Need a consistent approach across the state with how to approach applying the sea level rise policy.
- It is unclear in government who is taking the lead in terms of adaptation –Need to start thinking about land tenure changes and the disappearing coastal strip.
- Local councils and the State are concerned about liability and making decisions now that will have an impact on them in say 30 years time. There is a need for a stepped approach to manage the risk.
- There will need to be decisions about when, where and if to protect natural assets by government.
- Coastal Hazard Vulnerability Assessments – these should occur on a more practical level e. g coastal cells rather than site by site.
- Extreme weather events on the coast are a more immediate problem than sea level rise itself. Both manmade and environmental assets are already vulnerable.
- Need to educate the community on the how the coast will change – accretion and erosion.
- Public ownership of the coast is an important issue to Victorians – with the narrow strip being squeezed we could lose our great Victorian claim that 96 % of the coast is public land.
- A practice note is needed for how to undertake a coastal vulnerability/hazard assessment. Local governments may not have the resources to develop their own templates.

Planning for Climate Change

- Its inclusion of the sea level rise policy has been a big hurdle to overcome. Decision makers are now giving weight to climate change considerations.
- State government were quick to introduce the plan for 0.8m sea level rise policy however the tools for implementing this have not been as forthcoming.
- The policy of 'plan' for sea level rise....the word plan could mean 'to be considering' and 'working out' over the next 5 years, this can be used to create space in which to work through difficult and complex issues.
- The sea level rise policy of planning for 0.8m by 2100 has been a driver for preparing inundation mapping, climate change strategy and infrastructure adaptation guidelines (e.g wharf infrastructure).

Population Growth and Development:

- The hierarchy of settlements has been useful particularly when linking it to planning schemes eg. Low growth for Barwon Heads.
- Need to continue to plan for and manage increases in population to the coast particularly for infrastructure.



- Coastal settlements boundary policies have been useful in protecting spaces from development and identifying suited areas for more intensified residential develop. The statutory framework has taken a long time to develop and there's a risk of it being compromised.
- Urban Design Frameworks have been a good way in which to manage development along the coast.
- Need to invest in open spaces, walking infrastructure, pathways, bike ways – think about how to move people around spaces and towns – linking in park and bike ride options to the beach.
- The *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast* is useful but requires updating.
- Policy of coastal dependence could be further refined, specifically on developed and undeveloped coastlines.
- In planning for visitation increases balancing peak and off peak needs can be difficult.

Other

- Good to have commercial ports section as part of the Strategy. It needs to be recognised that the ports are part of the coast.
- To practice integration of different coastal policies and ICZM need to continue to have forums for information sharing.
- The strategy is meant to be tenure blind, public land is addressed well while private isn't covered in much detail. The VCS doesn't specifically empower private land owners to manage the public land strips.

Emerging Themes

- There is a lot of data from the monitoring programs from Channel Deepening. Need to think about what happens to this data (access, use) once the dredging process and Office of the Environmental Monitor finishes up.
- Planning for marine energy development needs careful consideration and a strategic approach.
- Need to think about fire management links to the coast and VCS (Great Ocean Road only one way in and out in certain areas). Relevant issues include the relationship between fire, fuel loads and sand dynamics.
- Outputs of Future Coasts Program could be incorporated into the next VCS.
- The application of the *doctrine of accretion* could be reviewed.
- Better links into Regional Land Use Plans and Regional Processes.

Structure and Content

- Easy document to navigate and read.
- The VCS should continue to include actions so there is accountable to get things done.
- Examples in the document are useful – could include cases of both what is and what is not acceptable.
- When policies are retired from iteration to iteration of the VCS there's a danger that good policy guidance gets lost. People can misconstrue this as a change of policy rather than a policy becoming part of core business.



Appendix 6: Key findings from the Ipsos Eureka Social Research Institute report (2012): *Coastal and Marine Environment Community Attitudes and Behaviour (Wave Four)*

Use of the Victorian coast

- The coast is an important part of the lives of most Victorians. Victorians make a substantial number of trips to the coast on a yearly basis, over four-in-five (84%) reported having made at least one day trip to the coast in the last twelve months with the average number of day trips in the last twelve months being 23.4 trips.
- Over half (57%) of Victorians had made an overnight trip to the Victorian coast in the last twelve months. The average number of overnight trips within the last twelve months was 5.6 trips.
- The most frequently visited locations along the Victorian coast were Phillip Island (7%); Sorrento (6%); Lorne (5%); Torquay (5%); and Apollo Bay (5%).
- Those living within five kilometres of the coast reported visiting their local foreshore frequently, over a quarter (26%) said that they visited daily, and 86% report visiting their local foreshore at least once a month.
- Overall, Victorians appeared to be satisfied with their coastal experience: 87% gave a rating of either *Excellent* or *Very good*.
- All of those who visited the coast were asked what the most enjoyable aspect of the trip was. The most popular answer, given by just under a fifth of respondent (19%) was *enjoying the atmosphere / scenery / just being there followed by spending time with friends / family and walking / hiking* (11% for both).
- According to Victorians, the top three things that contribute to a good coastal or marine experience all relate to a clean and unspoilt environment. These contributors included *clean / clear water* (37%); *a lack of litter / rubbish / debris* (37%); and *a pristine / unspoilt / undeveloped / natural environment* (22%).
- Among those who made visits to the coast, the most commonly mentioned activity was walking or hiking, (by almost two thirds, 63%). *Swimming* was the next most common activity (52%), then *nature-based activities / appreciation* (31%).
- However, the qualitative research revealed that despite agreement that the Victorian coast was likely to be (or currently is) affected by sea level rise, the implications of a one metre sea level rise were not well understood, particularly in terms of magnitude. Participants found it very challenging to visualise the implications of this scenario. One metre was considered by most to be quite negligible in terms of impact since it would most likely occur via a 'slow creep' that would mean people would be able to adapt to that change. A minority of participants perceived one metre sea level rise to be significant and mentioned implications for things such as land, stormwater and flora and fauna. There were many questions raised relating to flood and storm events and what was or wasn't 'natural cycles'.
- The responsibility for responding to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise in Victoria was thought by 29% of respondents to rest with the Victorian State Government. The second most common response was Federal Government (24%), and third was local government (15%). The perceived role of State Government was reflected in the agreement with the statement *I believe planning laws for the coast should limit development in areas likely to be affected by sea level rise*, the mean agreement rating being 7.4 (on a zero to ten scale).
- Both the quantitative and qualitative research show that Victorians were unsure over the role individuals should play in terms of taking responsibility for risk posed to them by sea level rise. Respondents had mixed feelings about the statement *Individuals who live in coastal areas likely to be affected by sea level rise should be responsible for managing their own risk*, with a mean agreement rating of 5.0 (on a zero to ten scale). Although participants in the discussion groups felt strongly that if people chose to live in property that had clearly been identified as at risk of flooding they should manage their own risk, they also acknowledged the confusion and lack of knowledge that was likely to exist regarding risk.
- Communication from those who possess knowledge about anticipated sea level rise (most likely assumed to be State and Federal Governments) was identified as critical in helping people to manage their own risk.

Planning for sea level rise

- Overall, Victorians considered climate change and sea level rise to pose a (current or future) threat to the Victorian coast. Over two thirds (67%) of Victorians reported they agree with the statement *climate change is causing sea levels to rise leading to coastal erosion and flooding in vulnerable, low lying areas of Victoria's coast*.

Population growth and coastal development

- From both the qualitative and quantitative research it was apparent that the character of coastal settlements is highly valued. The majority (63%) of Victorians agreed with the statement *I am concerned that our Victorian*



coastal towns are increasingly looking more like ordinary Australian suburbs or parts of the city. Participants from the focus group discussions were able to describe easily a 'typical' Victorian town: small, laid-back places with friendly locals and little traffic. Typical coastal towns were usually framed as opposite to Melbourne. The Gold Coast and Surfers Paradise were mentioned frequently as examples of inappropriate development on the coast.

- Victorians had some concern that coastal towns look too much like Melbourne suburbia, and the discussion groups revealed that people have very definite ideas about how coastal towns should not look. Victorians were keen for coastal towns to retain their (often longstanding) sense of character and not develop into sprawling or high-rise metropolises with too many people.
- The consideration of moving to the Victorian coast appeared quite low with seven percent (7%) of those living further than five kilometres from the coast reporting that they were considering this within five years, however, this equates to a large number of Victorians (an estimated 300,000 persons).
- Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents reported that they have access to a Victorian beach house owned by themselves or family. Qualitative research indicated that many have access to beach houses owned by friends.
- In the discussion groups, there were obvious concerns about the development of some areas of the Victorian coast and this was reflected quantitatively, just over half (52%) said they were not confident in Government planning and building guidelines capacity to protect Victorian coastal towns' character and feel.
- Victorians appeared to have mixed feelings regarding how to best accommodate increased demand for housing along Victoria's coastline. In the quantitative research, when asked to choose between two simplified options, just over half (52%) reported a preference for *allowing towns to expand outwards*, and 39% preferred *increasing the density of housing in existing town boundaries* (9% were unable to choose). The qualitative research demonstrated that the dilemma of expansion out or increasing the density was more complex. The majority of the qualitative research participants felt that coastal towns should probably increase in density rather than sprawl outwards. The community felt that there were firm caveats with both scenarios; expansion was tolerated as long as there were parameters on that sprawl and increased density was tolerated as long as buildings remained relatively low-rise. For any growth

to be deemed appropriate, the character of the coastal town has to be retained. Where expansion was thought to need to occur, there was strong support for developing inland rather than creating a continuous stretch of development along the coastline.

Natural coastal and marine environment

- The natural features of the Victorian coastal and marine environment were extremely important to Victorians. There was strong agreement with the statement *The flora and fauna that live in marine environments are important to all Victorians* (with a mean rating of 8.4 on a zero to ten scale). However, there was a more varied response to agreement with the statement *I feel I know a fair bit about Victoria's coastal and marine environments* (with an overall mean rating of 5.3).
- There was relatively strong disagreement with the negatively framed statement *The coastal and marine environments are unimportant to my lifestyle* with a mean rating of 2.8 overall (on a zero to ten scale). The sentiment of feeling that coastal and marine environments are important to Victorians' lifestyles was also reflected in the qualitative research. Participants spoke of visiting the coast quite frequently, or if they did not currently visit the coast often it was almost always a significant part of growing up and family holidays
- From the qualitative research, it is evident that amongst those living in coastal areas there is a clear sense of pride in the local coastal and marine environment.
- Top-of-mind associations with the Victorian coast are usually focused on the iconic features of the coastline including the Great Ocean Road, the Twelve Apostles, Phillip Island and the penguins. Sandy beaches were the classic association with anything coastal; however, there were sometimes mentions of the less obvious features of the coastal and marine environment including fish, birds, marine mammals, invertebrates, estuaries, mangroves, and wetlands.
- Just under half of Victorians (48%) reported concerns or annoyances with Victorian coastal or marine environments (consistent with Wave Three). The biggest cause of concern was *rubbish / litter / cigarette butts* (mentioned by just over a third), followed by *overcommercialised coast / inappropriate development* (11%) and *antisocial behaviour / drunks / hoons* (8%).
- Although a few participants were concerned that the Victorian coast was currently under threat, the general consensus was that it was healthy.



- When asked what threatened the coast, participants in discussion groups were most likely to cite quite broad threats initially, and then litter and pollution. When pressed, participants named a range of other threats such as erosion, population pressure, pressure of recreational use, and dredging. Threats to the coast were either considered to be due to people's proximity to the coast or more indirectly via climate change.
- The majority (83%) of Victorians reported that they have heard of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. Awareness was higher than in Wave Three (72%). Support for Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries remains high in Wave Four, (93%), with no notable difference to Wave Three.

Coastal management

- The majority of Victorians agreed that the Victorian coast is well managed (67% agreed); however, this measure has declined since the previous wave of research in 2007 (when 74% agreed).
- Despite this agreement that the Victorian coast is well managed overall, Victorians appeared to be unsure about whether specifically *the government* is doing a good job of managing the coastal and marine environment. The majority of respondents (58%) rated their agreement with the statement *The government is doing a good job of managing the Victorian coastal and marine environment* as around midway on the zero to ten scale (on average, the agreement rating was 5.2).
- From the qualitative research it is clear that coastal and marine management is generally not 'visible' to the community (other than development on the water's edge), leaving most unsure as to what is involved in actively managing these environments.
- Victorians generally did not feel well informed about coastal planning and management. This may be why there has been a decrease since Wave Three on agreement that the coast is well managed. Group discussions also implied this link. When people were unsure about who managed the coast, there was a greater tendency to assume that it was not being well managed.
- There was scepticism over the ability of communities to influence the development of their local areas. Just over a third (35%) of Victorians agreed that local communities have enough say in government planning decisions affecting their local area.
- The top four mentions when asked what, if any, are the issues affecting the Victorian coastal and marine environment that the government should respond to were overfishing / illegal fishing (29%); pollution (21%); development (14%); and pollution from stormwater (12%).
- Interest expressed in volunteering to help improve and protect the coast was similar to previous waves, with almost one-in-three Victorians in agreement with the statement *I would be interested in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast*.
- Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents said they had definitely heard of the VCC (similar proportion in Wave Three in 2007); the majority, 73%, said they had not (76% in 2007). A majority (80%) of Victorians have not heard of the VCS, 11% said they had definitely heard of the VCS, 9% thought they probably had.



