



# Media Release

## From the Victorian Coastal Council

### **“VCC WELCOMES FEDERAL INQUIRY REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON COASTAL COMMUNITIES”**

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Chair of the Victorian Coastal Council Libby Mears says she is pleased that the Federal Government is considering effective ways of helping Victorian coastal communities to plan for climate change.

“Local, State and Federal governments need to work together to tackle the impacts of climate change on the coast”, Ms Mears said.

“The release of the Federal House of Representatives Inquiry Report, *Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: the Time to Act is Now*, is a good starting point for action”

Sea level rise coupled with increasing storm events will impact on the Victorian coast causing flooding, loss of coastline, and damage to infrastructure and property.

“Climate change is real and communities need to plan for the impacts of sea level rise and an increasing intensity of storm events” said Ms Mears

“Careful thought will need to be given to the location and design of new housing and coastal infrastructure such as jetties and boat launching ramps.”

“Fortunately Victoria is well placed with good scientific data and planning tools as a result of the Victorian Government’s ‘Future Coasts’ program, which will identify areas of the coast particularly vulnerable to the impact of sea level rise and storm surges.”

Ms Mears said that local Councils in Victoria are already involving their local communities in coastal planning and starting to seriously incorporate the impacts of climate change on their future planning. "The active involvement of a well informed community will be essential as we learn to plan and adapt to climate change. However the scale of the issue is far greater than local government can address on its own. This is why Federal involvement in this issue is vital and welcomed." Ms Mears said.

Of the 47 recommendations made in the Report, the Victorian Coastal Council welcomes recommendations for:

- Increased investment in coastal based climate change research
- A coastal zone component of a National Climate Change Science Framework
- Completed coastal zone mapping to assist planning and decision making
- The need for investigation into insurances and liabilities
- Protecting natural coastal environments threatened by climate change by strengthening protection measures and expanding protected areas
- Supporting the features of sustainable coastal communities
- Australian Government establishing a separate funding program for infrastructure enhancement in coastal areas vulnerable to climate change
- Development of an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Coastal Zone
- Establishment of a National Catchment-Coast-Marine Management program

The Victorian Coastal Council, which is the peak advisory body on coastal issues in Victoria, assisted the State Government in the preparation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008. The Strategy is significant as for the first time ever, the Strategy addresses the problem of climate change and the need to plan for sea level rise of no less than 0.8 metres by the end of the century. All planning in coastal areas in Victoria must give regard to this sea level rise figure.

Ms Mears also said that she welcomed Inquiry Co-Chair Dr Mal Washer's comments that the impacts of climate change along the coast are no longer disputed and moving to action on adaptation now needs to be our focus.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 presents a long-term vision to ensure appropriate planning decisions are made which protect the aesthetic, cultural and environmental values of the coast.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy can be found at [www.vcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au)

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