



Media Release

From the Victorian Coastal Council

“SEA LEVEL RISE KEY IN NEW DRAFT COASTAL STRATEGY”

Friday, 9 November 2007

Long-term coastal planning for Victoria should consider a predicted 40 to 80cm rise in the sea level by the end of the century, according to a new draft of Victoria’s key coastal planning document.

The Victorian Coastal Council’s Chair, Ms Libby Mears, said: “The latest scientific evidence shows we need to plan for a sea level rise of up to 80 centimetres by 2100 and prepare for the impact of more storm events of greater intensity.”

The revised draft of the Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) was released this week for public comment by the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC), which is the peak body for strategic planning and management of the Victorian coast.

“The latest draft of the Victorian Coastal Strategy presents a long-term vision to ensure appropriate planning decisions are made which protect the aesthetic, cultural and environmental values of the coast,” Ms Mears said.

The Victorian Coastal Council’s Chair, Ms Libby Mears, said the latest revision of the Strategy seeks to achieve this by addressing the major challenges posed by climate change and development pressures of the “seachange” phenomenon.

“The coast is incredibly important to all Victorians,” Ms Mears said. “The VCC’s draft Victorian Coastal Strategy lets us look at the new challenges that face our coast now and in the future,” Ms Mears said.

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The Victorian Coastal Council revises its strategy every five years. Climate change and associated sea level rise are a key focus for the third edition of the strategy.

Ms Mears said the projected climate change impacts of a rising sea level and other threats including storm surges increased the risk of low-lying coastal land being inundated with sea water.

“The plans we make for our coast today need to take into account where the sea level may be in 80 to 100 years time,” she said. “Sea levels have already risen higher than expected this century and this means that the current trend in projections is towards the upper limit of the predicted range of 80cm by the end of this century.”

The Strategy seeks to address the seachange challenge by supporting good planning work limiting urban sprawl while maintaining the character of coastal towns..

“Pressure on our coastal towns and open coastal landscapes has been a topic of increasing concern to coastal communities over the past 10 years,” Ms Mears said.

Ms Mears urged Victorians to provide written submissions on the latest draft of the strategy by January 31, 2008.

Interested Victorians are also invited to attend consultation sessions about the strategy throughout November and early December in about 16 coastal locations, from Portland in the west to Mallacoota in eastern Victoria.

“We all have a role to play in ensuring the best possible management of the coast,” Ms Mears said. “With this feedback we will prepare a final draft strategy for Victoria’s coast which we’ll submit for final endorsement to the Victorian Government.”

The revised draft of the Victorian Coastal Strategy is available from:

- The Victorian Coastal Council website at www.vcc.vic.gov.au
- Department of Sustainability and Environment offices
- Offices of coastal municipal councils or
- By emailing the Victorian Coastal Council at vcc@dse.vic.gov.au or by phoning 9637 9236.