



Central Coastal BOARD



About the Bays

The Newsletter of the Central Coastal Board

Edition 56 – November 2009

ISSN: 1447-7270

Coastal Issues in Port Phillip and Western Port

FROM THE CHAIR

In late October the Federal Parliamentary Committee report *Managing our Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: the Time to Act is Now* was released. The report looks at both new and existing assets and identifies almost \$2b of assets vulnerable to flooding in the Western Port area.

It makes many findings and recommendations about insurance, building standards and liability for coastal hazards and the current and future use and development of coastal buildings and infrastructure, leading to significant media interest. Importantly, the roles of all levels of government are clarified. The report can be found at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ccwea/coastalzone/report.htm>

In my work as Manager Planning Policy and Projects with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) we convened a meeting of representatives from most of Victoria's 22 coastal councils to identify and address challenges they face when considering planning permit applications on land likely to experience such hazards (erosion, storm surge, sea level and water table rise). This work will assist councils and also inform MAV input to the Coastal Climate Change Advisory Committee established under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and chaired by Nick Wimbush.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change is currently calling for expressions of interest for six positions on the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) to commence from 1 July 2010. Expressions of interest close on 18 December 2009 and an information kit for applicants is available on our website.

The terms of the regional coastal boards and the Victorian Coastal Council are staggered terms with positions on the boards being recently filled and work underway at the CCB on our new three year business plan.

Liz Johnstone
Chair

CURRENT PROJECTS

Community Capacity Building

The last update on this project referred you to the CCB website for a map of Western Port and information to assist community groups in applying for funding grants and aligning potential projects with key assets. This information is available at www.ccb.vic.gov.au

Western Port Welcomes Waterbirds Update

The Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) has recently undertaken a preliminary analysis of key waterbird species that have been identified as potentially in decline since the commencement of the Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA) Western Port survey in 1973. Most of these species are birds in three foraging groups: gulls, grebes and fishers. Exploration of species-specific trends has indicated that declines are not consistent around the bay, and patterns vary between sites over time.

The first spring intertidal field surveys have commenced, beginning with the mudflats around the Warneet/Tooradin area, to get an idea about the distribution of waterbirds across intertidal areas and other specific regions of the bay such as those areas exposed for longest or with important features like seagrass. Unfortunately, the windy weather made boat work tricky and delayed exploration of the northern shores of French Island.

The first of two summer counts (the second being in February) is scheduled for Saturday 21 November and is a great opportunity to learn about identification and counting alongside experienced team members. If you are interested in participating, please contact either Xenia Dennett at BOCA on 9457 2816 or Birgita Hansen at ARI on 0419 267 223.

AROUND THE COAST

Current Grant Programs

Coastcare Victorian Community Grants

A two year, \$1M program available to coastal communities for conservation projects, funded by the Australian Government's *Caring for our Country* initiative and delivered by DSE and Coast Action/Coastcare. Grant categories are:

Coastcare Victoria Small Grants up to \$5,000 to fund local coastal conservation projects delivered by

community groups.

Coastcare Victoria Indigenous Grants up to \$20,000 for new coastal management partnerships which include indigenous communities, and which develop and share 'traditional ecological knowledge' on the coast.

Coastcare Victoria Medium-scale Grants up to \$50,000 to fund strategic projects that improve or protect the ecological integrity of key Victorian coastal natural assets.

Round 1 closes on November 30 2009 for the Medium-scale Grants, with the small-scale and indigenous grants open until March 2011.

All information is available at www.dse.vic.gov.au/coasts or through your local Coast Action/Coastcare facilitator. An information session for community groups is scheduled for 9 November, 11-12 pm at Coolart Wetlands and 2-4 pm at Rosebud.

Corangamite CMA – Coastal Small Grants

Also funded under *Caring for our Country* is a grants program to address priorities along Port Phillip Bay's western shoreline, Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar sites, threatened coastal vegetation areas or important habitat for threatened flora and fauna. The Corangamite CMA is delivering the program. There are grants of up to \$50,000 for large-scale coastal vegetation projects and up to \$5,000 for smaller community groups.

Applications for the \$5,000 grants close on 13 November 2009. The larger grants application period will open later in 2009.

For more information contact the Corangamite CMA Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Coordinator, Polly Matthews, on 5232 9126 or email polly.matthews@ccma.vic.gov.au or visit www.ccma.vic.gov.au

Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority (CMA) Community Grants

\$273,000 is available for landcare groups in the Port Phillip and Western Port region for projects that will benefit land and waterway health in the region. Projects would typically involve weed removal, the planting of indigenous plants and fencing of native vegetation to protect it from stock. The categories are:

Group support grants – up to \$300 for general administrative assistance to community groups involved in natural resource management (NRM).

Group promotion and development grants – up to \$500 to increase participation, raise public awareness, undertake training and/or educate the community about local NRM programs.

Project grants – up to \$20,000 for on-the-ground projects that address NRM issues.

Applications close on 6 November 2009. For information visit www.landcarevic.net.au or contact Melbourne Water or the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA.

BIODIVERSITY

Giving Coastal Birds a Helping Hand to Survive

The Hooded Plover has an enviable lifestyle living on the beach and feasting on amphipods (the equivalent of dining on lobster). It also looks particularly smart with a black hood, white collar and grey jacket, a white belly and red beak and eye ring. Unfortunately, it is one of the most threatened birds living in Eastern Australia.

Their eggs are the size of 20 cent coins (there are usually three) and match the sand perfectly in colour. Very few hatch because they either get crushed when people use the upper beach and dunes or they overheat or cool because the parent gets disturbed too frequently or for long periods.

The chicks are hard to protect, because as soon as they hatch they need to get to where the food is and start feeding – usually amongst the seaweed at the edge of the waves. They can't fly and have a lot of running to do when people or dogs approach them. Only about 10% survive.

Things are improving for these birds due to dedicated individuals and groups from coastal communities working with Birds Australia on a *Caring for our Country* project. The fences and signs you may see this summer give the birds a better chance of raising a chick on busy beaches.

How can you help? During the breeding season - August to March - stick to the lower part of the beach and avoid walking high up above the water mark or in the dunes. Be most cautious in November to January, which is the peak of the breeding season. If you see signs and fences on the beach, avoid that area.

More volunteers are needed to help with monitoring the birds. To help out contact Birds Australia on 9347 0757 or email: g.maguire@birdsaustralia.com.au. You can register to get updates about your local beach at www.birdsaustralia.com.au/beach

MEDIA NEWS

Seagrass and Reef Research

In late September Acting Premier Rob Hulls joined Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings to announce the Seagrass and Reef Program, which includes \$3 million in funding for seagrass research and \$2.5 million for research into

cool temperature reefs. This will be one of the most comprehensive series of environmental research projects on reefs and seagrasses ever undertaken in Victoria.

For more information visit www.premier.vic.gov.au

\$1 Million to Improve Coastal Safety Projects

Reducing the risk of landslips, erosion and storm surges on our beaches will be the focus of \$1 million coastal improvement funding announced by Minister Jennings. The first round of the Coastal Risk Mitigation Program funding would provide \$429,900 to 15 projects in areas including the Great Ocean Road, San Remo and Cowes.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) Marine Forum

The VCC is hosting the Victorian Marine Forum on Monday 16 November 2009 at Federation Square, Melbourne.

The Marine environment is one of three significant issues identified by the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008. Climate Change and Population and Growth being the focus of a forum conducted in April 2009.

Community, government, interest groups, students and non-government organisations are encouraged to attend. Details are available on the VCC website at www.vcc.vic.gov.au

Estimating Sea-level Extremes in an Uncertain Future

On Wednesday 11 November from 4-6 pm in Melbourne there will be a free information seminar to help coastal infrastructure owners, planners, engineers and policy makers consider the potential impacts of rising sea level when making decisions. The event is part of a national series co-sponsored by the Australian Department of Climate Change and the Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems CRC. To register: www.sealevelrise.info

About the Bays is published on a monthly basis. To receive a copy of the newsletter contact:

Central Coastal Board
10/535 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Ph: 8627 4724 Fax: 8627 4791
E-mail : enquiries@ccb.vic.gov.au

GENERAL DISCLAIMER: This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

© The State of Victoria, Central Coastal Board, 2009

www.ccb.vic.gov.au

