



Central Coastal BOARD



About the Bays

The Newsletter of the Central Coastal Board

Edition 55 – September 2009

ISSN: 1447-7270

Coastal Issues in Port Phillip and Western Port

FROM THE CHAIR

The completion of this year's annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on the CCB's highlights for 2008/09 which I would like to share with you. They are:

- Hosting major public forums to promote and discuss the Victorian Coastal Strategy in Melbourne and Geelong.
- Upgrading the CCB website and circulating "About the Bays" to over 570 people.
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of the Boating CAP and report to direct the Implementation Committee and input to the Bays and Maritime Initiative led by Parks Victoria.
- Completing the Community Capacity Building project, including a forum for over 100 stakeholders highlighting Western Port's key biodiversity assets and current research.
- Obtaining Commonwealth grant funding for a two-year collaborative project to identify and manage critical habitat for waterbirds in the Western Port Ramsar site.
- Presenting to the Federal Panel of Inquiry into Climate Change and Coastal Communities.
- Input to technical working groups for Better Bays and Waterways, Victorian Desalination Plant and Point Lonsdale Golf Club.
- Providing advice to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change on the review of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan and the need for a benchmarking study and steering committee to improve integration and management in Western Port.

Please take the time to read our Annual Report. It is available on the CCB website at www.ccb.vic.gov.au.

The newly constituted CCB is looking forward to the year ahead, where among our activities we intend to focus on awareness and understanding of potential climate change impacts for local government and coastal managers in the central region.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow board members and the staff of the CCB for their continuing hard work and support.

Liz Johnstone
Chair

CURRENT PROJECTS

Community Capacity Building

The CCB hosted a follow-up meeting to the Community Capacity Building forum held in Hastings in June 2009. This allowed feedback on the forum and further discussion on Western Port's key biodiversity assets.

Tools to assist this process included a map of the key assets and summary information on them. This information will be made available on the CCB website at www.ccb.vic.gov.au soon and may assist community groups in applying for funding grants and aligning potential projects with key biodiversity assets.

Western Port Welcomes Waterbirds Update

The Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) has obtained recent Western Port survey data from Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA). ARI has commenced study on some key waterbird species to look for seasonal or annual trends that may correlate with changes both within the bay (e.g. fluctuations in food resource) and beyond it.

David Ball from the Department of Primary Industries, Queenscliff, has kindly provided spatial information from the Oil-Spill Response Atlas (OSRA). The OSRA details important high tide areas for shorebirds and will be a useful tool for identifying areas for further investigation during this summer's field season.

The bathymetric LIDAR data will be released by Future Coasts in the coming months. It will be extremely valuable in improving the resolution of information on important feeding areas and thereby assisting in prioritising them.

ARI has collated a list of the key threatening processes that are relevant to waterbirds in the bay. These can be broadly grouped into two categories, direct impacts (resulting in death or injury to birds and offspring) and indirect impacts which occur through disturbance at feeding and roosting sites (due to dogs, walkers, boats, bikes and other recreation activities). The project aims to address the specific threatening processes for each important waterbird site and develop management strategies to address them.

AROUND THE COAST

Coast Action/Coastcare

Readers of 'Coastline', the newsletter of Coast

Action/Coastcare would have noted that the spring update provides welcome news. The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has successfully secured Commonwealth funding through the investment program, Caring for our Country, to support coastal volunteers and to establish a statewide Coastcare Grants program which will run for the next two years.

Groups will soon be able to apply for funding for local projects that contribute to the Caring for our Country program outcomes on the Victorian coast. This includes the control of rabbits and weeds, the protection of key environmental assets including Ramsar wetlands, and new partnerships with Indigenous communities on the coast. More information will be made available to groups through the DSE Coast Action/Coastcare facilitators and on the Department's website.

Small Grants for Local Land Management Groups

The Federal Government announced on 8 September 2009 that it is establishing a \$5 million program for small grants to support local environmental and land management work. The nationwide program is expected to provide up to 500 grants of between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to support smaller, local projects run by groups such as Landcare and Coastcare, as well as Indigenous groups.

The Community Action Grants will be funded through Caring for our Country and are designed to support some groups which have not yet received funding. The on-line application process and paperwork has also been simplified, to make it easier for community groups to apply. Community groups involved in coastal rehabilitation, restoration and conservation are among the categories eligible to apply.

The new grants would enable more Australians to contribute to the Caring for our Country priorities of biodiversity, natural icons, coastal environments, aquatic habitats and sustainable farm practices.

Applications and guidelines for the Community Action Grants are expected to be announced next month.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Future Coasts

Future Coasts is part of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Adaptation Program to address the impacts of climate change on the coast. It will release information, data and related policy and guidance documents throughout 2009 and 2010. Key products include:

- science and modelling datasets – Digital Elevation Models (DEM), bathymetry, storm event modelling, a first pass assessment to identify vulnerable areas
- flooding visualisation tools – to communicate broad-scale climate change impacts in critical locations along the coast

ABOUT THE BAYS

- discussion paper – to explore the key impacts and responses to managing climate change on the coast
- coastal hazard guidance – to support land-use planning and land managers in relation to the consideration and assessment of coastal hazards such as coastal erosion and inundation
- risk frameworks – to develop risk assessment templates and adaptation principles for responding to impacts of climate change on the coast.

For more information on the Future Coasts program see: www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/futurecoasts.

Climate change 2009: Faster change and more serious risks

The Federal Government has released a report which finds climate change is happening faster than previously thought. Prepared by Professor Will Steffen, Executive Director of the ANU Climate Change Institute, the report '*Climate change 2009: Faster change and more serious risks*' draws on the science of climate change since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2007 Fourth Assessment Report.

It is available at:

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/science/publications/faster-change-more-risks.html>

Inspiring environmental solutions – EPA Community Funding Program

EPA invites Victorian communities to propose new and creative ways to solve environmental problems and reduce environmental impacts. Proposals should tackle significant environmental issues or work with Victorian communities to bring about changes in the way people think and act around issues such as climate change, pollution, air or water quality or resource use. Applications are open until 30 September 2009.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/projects/community-project-funding.asp>

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

