



# About the Bays

The Newsletter of the Central Coastal Board

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Coastal Issues in Port Phillip and Western Port

## FROM THE CHAIR

There has been much activity on the coast this summer. As well as the usual exodus to the coast a number of the Victorian Government's major capital works, which have been the focus of much community debate in recent times, have commenced or are progressing. The Channel Deepening Project commenced in the Southern Channel despite a late Federal Court challenge about the Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett's decision to approve the Environment management plan. The proposed desalination plant at Wonthaggi, will require an Environmental Effects Statement (as did the channel deepening) and has a planned timeline of being operational by 2011. As well as these major projects the implementation of the St Kilda Urban design framework on the St Kilda Triangle site, led by Port Phillip Council, created significant public interest and concern despite many years of careful planning and community involvement.

Coastal development is usually controversial - regardless of the scale or type of development proposed - and now, with the implications of climate change becoming better understood, the importance of sustainable coastal land use planning becomes even more critical. The Future Coasts project, see:

<http://www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/greenhouse/wcmn302.nsf/LinkView/E65D1F993121B955CA25719A0021F3F590D67358D2BFA471CA2571A800123387>

should position Victoria strongly to meet the climate change adaption challenge. The recent call-in of a residential subdivision application near Port Fairy by Planning Minister Madden, highlights the importance and challenge that this issue presents for state and local government as well as the community.

The Central Coastal Board has been busy with the development of the new Victorian Coastal Strategy convening consultation sessions around Port Phillip and Western Port for over 150 people - including Council officers, elected officials, stakeholders and members of the public. The Board would like to thank the community for their input.

A number of themes emerged: infrastructure adequacy, climate change and population and demographic pressures. Strong concerns were expressed about the uncertainty or quantum of funding particularly for coastal recreational infrastructure, the general condition of many coastal assets and the lack of co-ordination among the many responsible management agencies causing confusion.

Other issues raised were:

- The strategy's hierarchy of principles need to align with the priorities for action.
- Existing actions should have more prominence within the final strategy document.

- The intensity of coastal uses peculiar to the central region is not addressed adequately in the draft strategy.
- The final strategy should apply the Coastal Spaces policy to areas such as the Mornington Peninsula and central region and Melbourne 2030 should be referenced.
- The evaluation and monitoring section requires further development.
- The extent that the previous strategy was used in Government decision-making.

An implementation guide was suggested, potentially including a monitoring and reporting framework to accompany the final strategy. Council planning officers indicated guidance on how to implement the strategy using planning tools and instruments would be helpful.

The Board is working to see the revised Victorian Coastal Strategy incorporate the feedback of communities around the bays.

*Liz Johnstone  
Chairman*

## CURRENT PROJECTS

### Victorian Coastal Strategy - Next Steps

The development of the updated Victorian Coastal Strategy has entered its final phase. The first stage of research and drafting was followed by an extensive consultation program - including over 20 meetings in this region - and the opportunity for public submissions. Over 150 submissions have been received, predominately from the central region and they are now being analysed, and the strategy amended and edited by a small drafting team, led by Libby Meares, Chair of the Victorian Coastal Council. The project timelines remain on track for the strategy to be recommended to the Minister for Environment by June 2008.

### Coastal Community Capacity Building

The Central Coastal Board has been funded by the Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority (PPWCMA) to undertake a project to investigate and promote the use of Envirofund (and potentially other funds) among coastal and marine community groups and local government. The aim is to prioritise local issues and targets and build capacity within the coastal community to successfully apply for project funding. Special consideration will be given to high value - high risk environmental assets within the Port Phillip and Westernport catchment area. To understand more about the project and for inclusion of assets in your area which are of high value - high risk for this project, please contact the Central Coastal Board's new Project Officer Catharina Greve on (03) 8627 4748 or email her on [Catharina.Greve@dse.vic.gov.au](mailto:Catharina.Greve@dse.vic.gov.au).

**CURRENT PROJECTS (CONT'D . . .)****Engaging Coastal Communities Project Completion**

The Central Coastal Board worked with the PPWCMCA to report on and facilitate 12 of the marine and coastal actions in the 2004-2009 Regional Catchment Strategy. This involved working with a range of organisations deemed responsible for achieving - or contributing to - their implementation. Work involved ascertaining progress, and bringing relevant stakeholders together to identify the appropriate next steps. In some cases the Central Coastal Board undertook small projects in order to progress the RCS actions.

**Future Marine and Coastal Program Development**

The CCB has finished working with a number of stakeholders to develop a list of priority marine and coastal projects for the central region to be consideration for the 2008-2011 Regional Catchment Investment Program (RCIP) funding round. The northern shoreline of Port Philip and the western shore of Western Port were identified as areas of focus and specific project proposals will focus on priorities such as changing land use and integrated management. The implications of the change of federal government for the current NHT grants funding model, which is scheduled for review is not yet known.

**Resourcing**

The Central Coastal Board is currently considering applications for the role of Executive Officer, which leads the Board's small secretariat. Angeline Tew from Parks Victoria is currently the acting EO. The Board has recently appointed a Project Officer, Catharina Greve, to work on the Coastal Community Capacity Building project outlined above.

**AROUND THE COAST****Wonthaggi Desalination Plant Requires EES**

On 28 December 2007, the Minister for Planning determined that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) will be required for the desalination plant and associated infrastructure near Wonthaggi.

- The project could have significant adverse effects on a range of environmental assets (including on terrestrial vegetation, listed flora and fauna species, marine and aquatic ecology, landscape values, community amenity, cultural heritage) depending on the final siting and design of infrastructure components, and the application of effective strategies to minimise, manage and offset adverse effects;
- An EES process would provide the scoping and quality review of studies needed to ensure that the potential environmental effects of siting and design options for a desalination plant near Wonthaggi, including the transfer pipeline and power supply, as well as associated waste and environmental management strategies, are adequately assessed to inform relevant decisions on the project works;
- Integrated assessment of the range of potential adverse effects of the various project components through the EES process will provide a coherent set of findings and approaches to inform relevant decisions.

Copies of the documents the Minister considered in deciding an EES will be required are available at <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrenpl.nsf/LinkView/14A6A41D36FC30A5CA2572F0001561BB996C31703737EE77CA2572DA007FBB97>.

**Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2008**

The 2008 Awards are now closed with over 80 nominations were received over the 11 categories. The Awards acknowledge and recognise the great working being done by community groups, business, local government, State Government departments and their agencies and others to protect and enhance our marine and coastal environments. The winners are to be announced in autumn 2008.

More information on previous winners is available at: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrencm.nsf/LinkView/9307CB91CD0260E1CA256C4100188512E88EEE666F9D66BF4A256DEA0015A3A3>

**Summer By The Sea**

Over January Coast Action/Coastcare's 'Summer by the Sea' Activities Program conducted a whopping 330 activities at dozens of locations along the Victorian coast. The program was extremely well attended with 3500 people participating in activities in the Central Region. Popular activities included the Frankston Sea festival, marine themed films and ecowalks at St. Kilda. See here: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrencm.nsf/childdocs/-E29B03DC67EBB9274A25689E00030035-7B1756D1247B84E5CA2573B3007BE8A8?open>

**Statewide Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils Strategy**

Victoria has commenced the development of a strategy for the management of Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils (CASS) across the state. CASS are naturally occurring soils containing iron sulphides. When exposed to air, iron sulphides oxidise and produce highly dangerous sulphuric acid. The resulting acidic water can contain toxic concentrations of heavy metals and result in fish kills, stunted crops, scalded land and human health risks.

Increasing pressure to develop low lying coastal areas has identified the need for a strategic approach to managing development in areas where there may be potential for CASS. The strategy will build on existing policies, with a particular focus of strengthening the identification of CASS and its potential effects at the planning stage, prior to the approval of a use or development.

The Coastal Spaces Initiative 2006 recognised the increasing risks from CASS in Victoria and the need for a strategic approach to their management of consistent with the National Policy framework.

More information is available at: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/DSE/nrencm.nsf/LinkView/463900D5A9063918CA2572DC00219429FA7943EBC1DA8251CA2572ED001A9A BF>

**AROUND THE COAST (CONT'D . . .)****Brumby thanks surf lifesavers for their hard work**

While visiting the Ocean Grove Surf Life Saving Club the Premier of Victoria, John Brumby, thanked the 6000 surf lifesaving volunteers across Victoria for their hard work during the challenging summer period. Mr Brumby said the club was a great example of volunteers giving up their own time to save lives. Mr Brumby said Victoria had a great swimming culture but this meant people had to always be vigilant. This year the State Government announced \$2.55 million in grants for emergency services groups to help them purchase new equipment, update existing equipment or improve and extend facilities.

More information at:

[http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/domino/Web\\_Notes/newmedia.nsf/8fc6e140ef55837cca256c8c00183cdc/c51517b514950aafca2573de0076a65e1OpenDocument](http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/newmedia.nsf/8fc6e140ef55837cca256c8c00183cdc/c51517b514950aafca2573de0076a65e1OpenDocument)

**Victorian's Love Their Coast: Survey**

A recent survey of Victorians and the coast commissioned by the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) found that almost nine out of 10 Victorians visited the coast in the last 12 months.

The survey shows Victorians consider the most important aspects of visiting the coast are experiencing a clean, healthy environment and the chance to relax.

An executive summary of the survey results is available at:

<http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au/publications.htm#attitudes>

**Australian Bureau of Statistics: Marine and Coastal Waters**

A new release from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) acknowledges the importance of the marine environment and coast for Australia's society, economy and ecology.

**Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends 2007** (cat. no. 4613.0) is the 4th edition in a series that presents a broad selection of environmental statistics and information on topical environmental issues. By drawing on a wide range of statistics from the ABS and other official sources, **Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends** describes major aspects of Australia's environment and how these are changing over time. The material is organised into two main parts - the first part explores an issue of major environmental concern (in 2007 the issue is water) and the second part covers major trends of relevance to the environment: population, human activities, landscape, atmosphere and water.

The publication is available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4613.0?OpenDocument> and the marine and coastal section is under 'Water'.

**Upcoming Events****Tourism Futures National Conference  
Gold Coast 2-4 June 2008  
Global Market, Competitive Edge**

In today's environment, building Australia's competitive edge in the global tourism market must be a priority. This means building on Australia's strengths - its nature and environment, its open and friendly people, indigenous culture, sporting prowess, excellence in event and convention management, climate, health and security - which can only be achieved by industry, government and the community working in partnership.

For further information: [www.tourismfutures.com.au](http://www.tourismfutures.com.au)

**Seaweek 2008: "Extinction-a Saw point"**

Seaweek is held from 2 to 8 March 2008 and is an annual national public awareness campaign coordinated by the Marine Education Society of Australasia's (MESA). Seaweek focuses on increasing community awareness, providing information and encouraging an appreciation of the sea. The theme for Sea Week 2008 is "Extinction - A saw point". More information is available at:

<http://www.mesa.edu.au>

**About The Bays Electronically!**

About the Bays will move to an exclusively electronic format over the course of 2008. If you receive this newsletter in hard copy and would like to receive electronically in future, please complete the attached Change of Details form and return to our office accordingly.

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