



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

Climate change has been central to the activities of the Central Coastal Board in the past few months, particularly as we complete the final draft of the new Victorian Coastal Strategy. Tom Roper, former State Government Environment Minister, now based in New York, led a fascinating round-table discussion on climate change in coastal communities in the United States. Tom touched on many sensitive topics. He considered the prospect of a 2 metre sea-level rise this century, the impact of extreme weather events and looked at how to respond - defence, retreat, who decides and who pays. His presentation reinforced the need for a precautionary approach and a long-term perspective to guide coastal planning.

Also apparent is the need to better engage all sectors of the community so as to respond to the challenge of adapting to accelerated climate change.

The CCB, like many other organisations, forwarded a submission to the National Inquiry into Climate Change and has been involved in workshops on the State Flooding Strategy and, through the Victorian Coastal Council, the Future Coasts project.

We have hosted a round table discussion with representatives from industry, community and government to inform our response to the Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change - Green Paper. This process provides an opportunity to participate in the development of clear policy to guide the Victorian Government's activities over a 50 year period that contributes to improved environmental outcomes. The CCB submission will stress the need to improve the response to coastal and marine issues, and we encourage all those with an interest in the health of the coastal and marine environment to also make a submission.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Annette Hatten who joins us as Executive Officer, after the terrific job done by Angeline Tew, Parks Victoria who acted in the role.

Thank you also to the many organisations and individuals who have participated in the extensive consultation on the revision of the Victorian Coastal Strategy. Your efforts have greatly improved the draft.

*Liz Johnstone
Chairman*

CURRENT PROJECTS

Caring for Our Country: Community Coastcare Grants

The Australian Government's new funding program, Caring for our Country, includes Community Coastcare grants which replace Envirofund grants.

CURRENT PROJECTS (CONT'D . . .)

Applications for grants are now open and close on Friday, 25 July. There are two categories:

- small grants of up to \$50,000
- larger scale grants up to \$250,000.

All Community Coastcare projects are required to contribute to the Caring for our Country national priorities by protecting and rehabilitating coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats, and enhancing community skills, knowledge and engagement.

See www.nrm.gov.au for details, application forms and guidelines to the program.

Coastal Community Capacity Building

This CCB project is designed to assist community groups in applying for small grants under \$50,000, such as under the Caring for Our Coast program.

The Central Coastal Board together with Coast Action/Coastcare is hosting five information sessions in the Port Phillip and Western Port area to brief coastal community groups and councils, who support community groups, on the small grants. These sessions will:

- introduce the new program,
- emphasise the changes between the new program and Envirofund,
- go through the application form using a hypothetical example, and
- answer any questions.

The information sessions will be held at:

1. **Somers** Saturday 14 June 2008, 10am-12pm at the Coolart Homestead, Lord Somers Rd
2. **Rosebud** Saturday 14 June 2008, 3-5pm at the Rosebud Secondary College Staff Room, 245 Eastbourne Rd.
3. **Phillip Island** Saturday 21 June 2008, 2.45-3.15pm at the Education Building of the Environment Centre, 995 Ventnor Rd.
4. **Williamstown** Sunday 22 June 2008, 10am-12pm at the Parks Victoria office, 82 Nelson Pde.
5. **Frankston** Sunday 22 June 2008, 3-5pm at the Library Community Room, 60 Playne St.

For further inquiries, please contact the CCB project officer Catharina Greve on phone 8627 4748 or Catharina.Greve@dse.vic.gov.au.

If you are intending to make an application for the larger-scale grants (up to \$250,000) you are encouraged to discuss your application with Tim Allen, Australian Government NRM Facilitator (Coasts and Marine) - Victoria. Phone 9637 8493 or email: tim.allen@dse.vic.gov.au.

CURRENT PROJECTS (CONT'D . . .)

Boating Coastal Action Plan (BCAP)

The 2008-09 Boating Safety and Facilities Program (BSFP) was formally opened on 3 June 2008 by the Minister for Roads and Ports, Tim Pallas. Applications for grants include a category for boating facilities and community harbours. The closing date for applications is 15 July 2008. The CCB would encourage applicants to ensure that proposals fit within the Boating CAP guidelines.

Recently, there has been a greater demand on boat launching facilities in Western Port by recreational fishers, partially attributed to dredging of Port Phillip Bay. Proposals for upgrading existing facilities should be well planned and, as mentioned, fit within the context of the Boating CAP.

For example, Tooradin Foreshore Committee of Management has commissioned a study to obtain an appropriate understanding of coastal processes to inform the identification and development of viable long term boating solutions for the area. The Committee was successful in its application for funding for the study from Marine Safety Victoria. In addition, Casey City Council has contributed a feature survey to assist the Committee in developing a foreshore masterplan. The Committee was facilitated by DSE in achieving this partnership approach to foreshore management.

Resourcing

Annette Hatten has been appointed as the Central Coastal Board's new Executive Officer, for a period of two years. Previously Annette was a Senior Project Officer in Environmental Planning at DSE's Port Phillip Region. She has also worked in Parks Policy in DSE's Head Office for 16 years and in coastal planning and management in Western Australia for 10 years. Other CCB staff consist of Dr Catharina Greve, Project Officer, currently working on the Coastal Capacity Building project and Stellar Fraser, our Administration Officer.

AROUND THE COAST

Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence 2008

The magnificent work of coastal communities, volunteers and managers was again celebrated and recognised at this year's Victorian Coastal Awards for Excellence. The winners were announced at a gala presentation on 29 April 2008 at the Port Melbourne Yacht Club.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, presented the awards to the 13 winners and congratulated them saying their work will "continue to inspire others to get involved".

This year's lifetime achievement award went to Margaret MacDonald for her many years of outstanding environmental work in the eastern Otways.

Winners from the CCB region were: the People and Parks Foundation's Sea Search program, the North Shore Residents Group in Geelong, the Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management, The Connies, Anthony Boxshall and Paul Morgan Architects.

Other winners included: Lorne Pier Reconstruction Team, Narrawong District Primary School, Tarerer Gundij Project Association, East Gippsland Shire Council, Australian Geographic and Alf Wilder. Congratulations to all.

AROUND THE COAST (CONT'D . . .)

Bays and Maritime Initiative

Recreational anglers and boat-owners are set to enjoy improved boating infrastructure in Port Phillip and Western Port after the State Government announced a \$5 million funding package at the end of May.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, announced \$2.5 million for better safety and access through improvements to boat ramps, piers and navigational aides at key sites around the Bay, including upgrades to facilities at Patterson River.

There will also be \$2.5 million spent on developing a long-term plan to revitalise ageing maritime infrastructure and develop maritime precincts around Port Phillip and Western Port with stakeholders. This plan will greatly assist in implementation of many of the key directions in the CCB's Boating Coastal Action plan. Parks Victoria will manage the program.

i sea, i care Program

The Central Coastal Board continues to be impressed by the work of organisations that foster care for our coasts. One such program, the initiative of CCB member, Jeff Weir who also leads the Dolphin Research Institute (DRI) in their "i sea, i care"® program. It aims to convince Victorians that "what lives around our coast is too precious to lose" and is a response to DRI surveys showing that 90% of Victorians value Queensland's marine environments above our own!

"i sea, i care"® started six years ago as a School Ambassador Program and now involves a wide range of community groups such as yacht and dive clubs, Probus, Rotary, Coast Guard, a Community House and Sea Scouts, as well as businesses such as the ANZ.

Ambassadors in schools and organisations receive monthly "i sea, i care"® newsletters designed to create celebrities out of Victoria's living marine treasures. Schools and groups re-publish the newsletters and ambassadors help spread the word to new audiences. The monthly readership is estimated to be around 30,000.

There are four themes each year: marine mammals; catchments; marine national parks and bays; and waterways. DRI runs workshops for ambassadors on each theme, to encourage enthusiasm. Workshops include: behind the scenes in the museum collections; the clean out of a gross pollutant trap; and a visit to a marine national park.

"i sea, i care"® ambassadors also develop as young leaders and become real champions for Victoria's coast.

Last year "i sea, i care"® partnered with Coast Action/Coastcare to roll out the program in Gippsland and it is now recruiting schools and community groups across the western half of Victoria.

A community values and perception survey along the Victorian coast is being undertaken with the help of ambassadors. Early results suggest that only 10% of people think that creeks and rivers have an impact on coastal environments.

Any schools, community groups or businesses who would like to become involved should contact DRI on 1300 130 949 or education@dolphinresearch.org.au.

AROUND THE COAST (CONT'D . . .)

Better Bays and Waterways

Better Bays and Waterways is the name given to the Port Phillip and Western Port Regional Water Quality Improvement Plan currently being developed. Funds to commence the project originated from the Commonwealth's Coastal Catchments Initiative which identified Port Phillip and Western Port as pollution hotspots. Along with the plan, six interim projects were funded to fill knowledge gaps and further support and inform the plan and add value to the current management system. The project is nearing completion of a draft for consultation to occur later this year, and a final report in early 2009.

Western Port Greenhouse Project Alliance

The Western Port Greenhouse Alliance is finalising the Impacts and Adaptations project report (conducted with the CSIRO). This project aimed to identify likely climate change impacts - sea level rise, rainfall changes, storm surge, heat waves - for the five Alliance councils, Bass Coast, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula.

The project included socioeconomic modelling to estimate the assets and infrastructure that could be at risk from these changes. For example, if storm surges increase both in frequency and intensity, we'll need to know what steps we can take to protect coastal infrastructure.

Victoria's Future Coasts project will add the next level of data so that for the first time we will know the fine detail of sea floor and coastal elevations, and will therefore be able to predict the effects of such storm surges more accurately.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change has been invited to launch the report. For further information, see the Alliance website, www.wpga.org.au.

Coastal Saltmarsh and Mangrove Communities

Coastal saltmarsh communities are amongst the most at risk of all Victoria's coastal ecosystems. Altered hydrological conditions, impacts from sea-level rise, clearing, reclamation for coastal development and weed invasion have led to significant decline in this community over the past 50 years. Current trends suggest that these communities will be substantially lost within only a few decades unless there is a concerted effort to address these issues.

A project being co-ordinated by Professor Paul Boon from the Victoria University intends to address this decline and provide the first comprehensive statewide assessment of Victoria's remnant coastal saltmarsh communities; assess the extent and condition of existing saltmarsh remnants; identify specific threats to the survival of these communities and, most importantly, provide clear strategic guidance to management authorities regarding on-ground actions to halt the decline.

The project will also assess the current extent of the exotic perennial grass, *Spartina anglica*, and develop a coordinated action plan to control these infestations.

AROUND THE COAST (CONT'D . . .)

Coastal Saltmarsh and Mangrove Communities (Cont'd . . .)

Project partners include DSE, DPI, Parks Victoria, Victoria University, La Trobe University, Ecology Australia, Greening Australia, the coastal boards and coastal Catchment Management Authorities. The project will also include relevant Victorian Port Authorities, Birds Australia, PIRVic (Marine Research) and coastal municipal councils. The project commenced in April 2008 and will conclude in March 2009.

Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change, Green Paper Consultation

The Victorian Government's *Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change Green Paper* was launched in April and consultation workshops were held in May and early June.

The Green Paper provides a framework for how Victorians will look after the environment over the next 50 years as the effects of climate change and changing demographics place further pressure on our biodiversity and ecosystems.

The vision is that all Victorians will participate in actively conserving and restoring our ecosystems to ensure our land, seas and waterways are healthy, resilient and productive.

Submissions are invited on the Green Paper until 30 June with the White Paper due for release in early 2009.

For further information call 136 186 or visit: www.dse.vic.gov.au.

Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils

Acid sulfate soils are an issue of national, state and local significance. The National Wool Museum in Geelong was the venue for a recent national forum on Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils (CASS). Practitioners from across Australia shared information on the problems that arise from disturbing acid sulphate soils.

Keynote speakers were Professor Leigh Sullivan from the Centre for Acid Sulfate Soils Research at Southern Cross University and Dr Rob Fitzpatrick from CSIRO Land and Water.

Case studies demonstrated how the National Strategy is being implemented on the ground. Topics included: identifying and defining CASS; avoiding disturbance of CASS; mitigating the impacts of CASS, rehabilitating disturbed acid sulfate soils; and what's happening in Victoria, which covered the development of the draft Victorian Strategy for Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils and the Corangamite catchment management region's soil health strategy.

For further information on CASS visit www.dse.vic.gov.au. For the national CASS atlas visit: www.clw.csiro.au/acidsulphatesoils/atlas.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Coastal Management Forum
Brisbane, 28-29 July 2008**

Australia's coastal municipal councils face significant challenges in dealing with the impact of rapid population growth and the potential impacts of climate change.

A Coastal Management Forum is being convened to bring together council decision-makers, planners and managers and update them on key issues, including an analysis of the latest demographic data and advances in knowledge of the potential impact of climate change on coastal communities. It will also assist in much-needed guidance on how to respond to these pressures.

For further information visit:
www.seachangetaskforce.org.au

**Coast to Coast 2008 Conference
Darwin, 18-22 August 2008**

Coast to Coast 2008 is Australia's biennial national coastal conference. It will focus debate, discussion and learning across the full range of coastal and marine issues at international, national, state, regional and local levels.

The conference will also see the launch of:

- the national Australian Coastal Society (including nomination and selection of office bearers); and
- the national 'OzCoasts' web-based, coastal atlas (by the National Land & Water Resources Audit and GeoScience Australia).

Coast to Coast 2008 provides an opportunity to meet, re-connect and network with people who have an interest in the coast, including many professionals, specialists, community members and coastal managers.

For further information visit www.coast2coast.org.au

**Gippsland Coastal Board Climate Change Forum
Lakes Entrance, 11-12 September 2008**

This forum will provide a regional opportunity to discuss options for adapting to climate change in Gippsland. It will consider the legal and socio-economic implications for coastal communities and the capacity to adapt. The focus will be on Lakes Entrance and smaller communities such as Inverloch, Venus Bay, Seaspray and Loch Sport.

For further information on the forum contact the Gippsland Coastal Board on 03 5152 0451 or visit:
www.gcb.vic.gov.au

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