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HILLTOP, RIDGELINE AND PROMINENT COASTAL LANDFORM PROTECTION POLICY

This policy applies to all land located on and adjacent to significant hilltops, ridgelines and prominent coastal landforms found within Farming, Rural Activity and Rural Conservation Zones in the Shire.

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Policy basis

The protection of the visual qualities of prominent landforms and ridges are important to maintaining the landscape qualities of the Shire. The Bass Coast Municipal Strategic Statement promotes development that is sympathetic to environmentally sensitive and significant landscape areas.

Prominent coastal landforms such as those characterising the Anderson Peninsula, Western Port, Southern Coast of Phillip Island, Bunurong coastline and Anderson Inlet should be protected from inappropriate development. Their protection will also safeguard critical views to undeveloped headlands, beaches and dunes.

Hilltops and ridgelines along coastal hinterlands such as The Gurdies and inland landscapes such as the Bass Valley and the Strzelecki Ranges should not be undermined by development.

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Objectives

- To protect the environmental, landscape and visual significance of hilltops, ridgelines and prominent coastal landforms.
- To maintain panoramic roadside views of the scenic natural landscape along hilltops, ridgelines and prominent coastal landforms of the Shire.

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Policy

It is policy that development on ridgelines, prominent hill faces or distinctive coastal landforms should be avoided wherever possible. Where development cannot be avoided, the following considerations should be taken into account:

Siting

- Buildings should not be sited so as to breach ridgelines or hilltops.
- Buildings should be sited to retain important views from existing surrounding buildings and public spaces.
- Structures or buildings in proximity to ridgelines, hilltops and cliff edges should not be visually obtrusive when seen from major viewpoints including valley floors, tourist routes, main roads or from the ocean /bay.
- Where possible, development and structures should be concentrated at particular locations, in a manner that reduces development sprawl and minimises their overall visual impact.
- Whether the owner of the land has an approved 'whole farm plan' that provides strategic information in relation to the function and location of farm infrastructure.

Design and landscaping

- Development should be designed to follow the contours of the sloping site to prevent prominent silhouetting against the skyline.
- Dominant or multiple angular roof slopes and designs are to be avoided.
- Substantial landscaping should be used for buildings that have a significant impact on viewsheds in terms of bulk, scale and size. This can include restoration of existing vegetation in a manner that softens the impact of the development and allows it to blend in the natural landscape.

- Structures requiring extensive earthworks during construction should be avoided to prevent permanent scarring of the landscape.

Materials

- Buildings and structures should be constructed of materials and colours which minimise visual intrusion to the landscape. Colours used should be similar to that found in the natural environment within the immediate area.
- The use of reflective surfaces is discouraged in order to minimise glare and visual impact of the development.

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Policy reference

- *Landscape setting types for the Victorian Coast*, Tract Consultants Pty Ltd and Chris Dance Land Design Pty Ltd, for the Victorian Coastal Council, May 1998.
- Chapter 4, *Strategic Coastal Planning Framework*, Bass Coast Shire Council, June 2005.
- Section 3.2, *The Cultural and Aesthetic Guidelines, Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast*, May 1998, Victorian Coastal Council.
- *Design and Siting Guidelines for Coastal and Hinterland Areas*, Bass Coast Shire Council, July 1999.
- *Coastal Spaces: Recommendations*, April 2006, Department of Sustainability and Environment 2006.