

21.08 FORESHORES AND COASTAL AREAS

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C216

Overview

The Mornington Peninsula Shire is surrounded on three sides by coastlines that substantially define the character of the Peninsula. Many of the coastal areas are environmentally sensitive and contain unique landforms and diverse species of flora and fauna. The coastal areas also have rich cultural heritage and scenic value.

The coast is one of Victoria's most popular recreational destinations, with the Peninsula's foreshores attracting more than 2.8 million day trip visitors in 1995. A number of pressures exist on the coast. The challenge confronting those responsible for coastal management is to reconcile the sometimes competing demands for protection of landscapes, environmental systems, habitats and other natural assets of coastal areas with the opportunities that these areas provide for public recreation and economic development.

Accordingly, coordinated coastal and foreshore management is a key element of a sustainable development framework for the Peninsula.

The impact of foreshore development on the viability of existing town centres must also be carefully considered and Council seeks to rejuvenate the perception and image of the Port Phillip foreshore. Foreshores are the doorway to the coast, and should project a sense of identity, embracing the bay, the adjacent township areas and the major access routes.

Key issues

- The Peninsula's coastal and foreshore areas are a major tourism and recreational resource, however over use will result in environmental degradation, loss of natural and cultural values and declining community benefit.
- It is critical to ensure coordinated management of coastal areas including recognition of:
 - The impact of tourist/visitor pressure on foreshore and coastal eco systems.
 - The inter-relationship between drainage systems, effluent disposal and water quality conditions on the coast and in the Bays.
 - The inter-relationship between the foreshores, coastal areas and local character of each township.
 - The need to sensibly integrate new development in identified activity nodes.
 - The opportunities for greater regional linkage, including ferry services on both Port Phillip and Western Port and the Bay Trail.
- The framework of activity nodes and tourism centres provided by the Victorian Coastal Strategy provides a basis for more detail local planning.
- It is important to distinguish between the foreshore areas of Port Phillip Bay, which will continue to support relatively high levels of public use, in association with the facilities provided by adjoining township areas, and the more limited capacity of the coastlines and beaches of Western Port and the Wildcoast/ Bass Strait.

Objectives - what we want to achieve

Objective 1

To protect and enhance the natural ecosystems and landscapes of the coast for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Strategies

Strategies to achieve these objectives include:

- Acknowledge natural processes and the fragile and dynamic nature of the coast in decision making.
- Identify threatening processes including the spread of environmental weeds, introduced pest fauna, erosion and the pollution of water, ground water, air and land that may impact on the foreshore's natural systems and sites and applying appropriate management techniques.
- Prevent the further removal or degradation of areas of indigenous vegetation outside of designated activity nodes.
- Encourage the protection, regeneration and replanting of indigenous species on public and private land in coastal areas, particularly to strengthen and extend habitat areas and corridors and control erosion.
- Identify areas of erosion and cliff instability and implementing appropriate control measures, which are both effective and compatible with the coastal landscape.
- Contain development in coastal locations to existing settlements, avoiding further linear development along the coast and, where necessary, restructure old and inappropriate subdivisions.
- Support the progressive installation of reticulated sewerage to all existing coastal settlements and all new coastal development. Where a local community supports an alternative waste water management strategy this may be considered provided the strategy meets best practice environmental management guidelines.
- Minimise the need for drainage outfalls to the coast and ensuring that the location and design of all structures minimises the impact on both physical and ecological processes and coastal amenity.
- Limit the development of new structures on the foreshore to designated activity nodes where possible.
- Ensure that preference is given to the re-use of existing structures where feasible and the removal of degraded foreshore structures wherever possible.
- Ensure that new construction and development on the coast is designed on the basis of a site and landscape analysis, which takes account of the scenic and visual qualities of the foreshore and coastal areas.
- Establish performance standards and monitoring programs to minimise the risk of pollution of the coastal environment and to improve water quality from urban and rural catchments entering the Bays.
- Identify coastal areas at risk of natural process impacts including potential hazards associated with coastal erosion, flooding, sea level rise and storm surge, including from the impacts of climate change.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Zones and overlays

- Applying the Public Park and Recreation Zone to areas of the Port Phillip foreshore that form part of the General Recreation Zone under the Victorian Coastal Strategy.
- Applying the Public Park and Recreation Zone to areas of Port Phillip Bay to assist in facilitating appropriate development.

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to the areas of the Western Port, Bass Strait and Port Phillip coastline that form part of the General Protection Zone or National Park and Conservation Reserve under the Victorian Coastal Strategy.
- Applying the Special Use Zone (SUZ 1 - Port Related Uses) to identify land adjacent to Western Port that may be utilised for port related activity provided that high environmental standards are met.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay to coastal areas subject to erosion.
- Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay to protect coastal landscapes, including areas classified by the National Trust and scenic roads in coastal areas.
- Applying the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and other relevant planning provisions to coastal areas and waterways identified as being vulnerable to hazards associated with coastal erosion, flooding, sea level rise and storm surge.

Policies and the exercise of discretion

- Applying a precautionary approach to decision making, ensuring that the environmental effects of both the construction and operation of a proposed development are assessed as part of the approval process. New development proposals should respect natural coastal systems and should include an assessment of vulnerability to climate change effects.
- Avoiding the construction of additional structures on the foreshore except where substantial net benefits to the community and/or coastal environment are clearly demonstrated.
- Avoiding the extension or establishment of car parks and roads in sensitive coastal locations such as dunes or wetlands.
- Approving private coastal protection works only where they will not:
 - Cause loss of or damage to public beaches, Crown land or significant natural features.
 - Result in erosion of adjacent properties.
 - Adversely affect coastal landform stability or coastal processes.

Further strategic work

- Identifying areas of habitat significance in foreshore, intertidal and marine areas and preparing appropriate planning scheme provisions.
- Incorporating the major foreshore areas in the review of municipal heritage studies.
- Reviewing the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay and other relevant planning provisions to update the provisions and to reflect the vulnerability of coastal areas to the impacts of climate change.

Other actions

- Developing protocols and partnership arrangements with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria and other bodies involved in coastal management.
- Developing land use management plans in partnership with DELWP and Parks Victoria for the protection and maintenance of the coastal environment.
- Developing a program for monitoring environmental conditions including liaison with the EPA to establish monitoring of outputs from drains and watercourse.

- Determining the need for beach protection works based on sound environmental management principles.
- Defining access paths to the foreshore by appropriate fencing and signage and preventing uncontrolled access to areas susceptible to erosion.
- Rationalising foreshore drains and, where piped drainage outlets are necessary, constructing drains in a manner which avoids erosion or interruption of coastal processes, incorporates sediment and litter control devices and, as far as practicable, discharge below the low water mark. All natural drainage lines should be vegetated and treated to limit the rate of discharge to below scouring velocity.

Objective 2

To achieve coordinated development of public and private facilities that increases the sustainable social, economic and recreational value of the coast and foreshore to the community.

Strategies

Strategies to achieve these objectives include:

- Consolidate all new development within identified activity nodes which are compatible with the long-term protection of the coastal environment and which strengthen the physical and functional connection between existing township areas and the foreshore.
- Ensure that coastal development is designed and constructed in a manner which respects and enhances the coastal environment and the experience and enjoyment of the coast by the community.
- Encourage pedestrian access and connections, both along the coast and between the coastal foreshore and adjoining township areas, provided this does not threaten fragile coastal environments or fragment narrow stands of coastal vegetation.
- Limit the number of structures within foreshore areas to that necessary to meet demonstrated community needs. The preferred option is to investigate the re-use of existing buildings and the multi-use of buildings and structures and the upgrading of existing facilities in preference to a proliferation of separate buildings and structures.
- Ensure that coastal development helps to meet the costs of managing and maintaining coastal and foreshore areas through the development of equitable development contribution plans and special rate schemes.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Zones and overlays

- Applying a Design and Development Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay to residential land adjacent to the foreshore reserves to ensure a consistent approach to building heights and setbacks on land near the coast and to support the retention of native vegetation.
- Applying an Environmental Significance Overlay to Crown land on the Port Phillip Foreshore reserve, extending 600 metres seaward, to facilitate appropriate coastal management and coordination.

Policy and the exercise of discretion

- Ensuring that structures are sited and designed to integrate with and compliment the surrounding coastal landscape in accordance with Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast 1998) and Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998)
- Making provision for car parking that achieves a balance between the convenience for users and the protection of the conservation and landscape values of the foreshore.
- Managing commercial activities on foreshore areas to:
 - Maintain public access,
 - Prevent the proliferation of activities which are not dependent on a beach or coastal location.
 - Avoid adverse impact on the level of service and viability of adjoining commercial centres.
- Encouraging a range of services and activities to enhance the recreational use and enjoyment of the coast by the community in selected activity nodes.

Further strategic work

- Developing a local policy in full consultation with the local community in relation to the appropriate future development of the activity nodes identified in the Victorian Coastal Strategy at Hastings, Mornington, Rosebud and Sorrento and the opportunities to support activity at Dromana and Rye.
- Investigating the preparation of urban design frameworks for coastal towns and villages, with priority to Rosebud, Mornington, Hastings and Sorrento. Design frameworks should encompass issues relating to landscape design, built form, views, siting, building height and integration between town centres, scenic roads and foreshore /coastal areas.

Other actions

- Completing the review of Mornington Peninsula Coastal Management Framework including arrangements in relation to occupation of foreshore areas by various user groups.
- Participating with the Central Coastal Board, DELWP, and other government authorities in the preparation of Coastal Action Plans for Port Phillip, Western Port and the Bass Strait coastline.
- Participating in any review of coastal management arrangements, with emphasis on establishing a viable structure in terms of balancing management responsibilities and economic capacity.
- Ensuring maintenance standards of foreshore facilities reflect reasonable community expectations.
- Developing a risk management strategy for Peninsula foreshores, including fire control plans and minimisation of vandalism through the siting and design of infrastructure, assets and landscaping.
- Identifying locations with potential public safety or security concerns and recommend improvements.
- Investigating a traffic management strategy to support the use of Point Nepean Road as a scenic tourist route and recreational coastal drive.
- Developing interpretative plans for the Peninsula's coastal areas.
- Exploring opportunities for cultural and recreational events and activities on areas of the foreshore, including the public display of art and sculpture.

- Supporting the development of the coastal Bay Trail and exploring opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle links between the foreshore and inland parks, reviewing access needs for the elderly and disabled and investigating opportunities for linking coastal village on Western Port via paths, cycle paths and board walks.
- Developing a program of infrastructure and facility improvement works which may be funded through grants, sponsorship funding and /or from new works and contributions associated with development within activity nodes.