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C27**ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE VALUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISK****Natural Environment**

The Borough contains natural areas of local and international environmental significance.

The Borough forms the southern end of Swan Bay and is almost entirely within the Swan Bay catchment. Swan Bay contains marine and terrestrial environments, foreshore areas and islands that are protected under the Ramsar, CAMBA (China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement) and JAMBA (Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement) treaties. It contains areas that are on the Commonwealth Heritage List, and species endangered and listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

The Borough's beaches, foreshores and marine environments contribute towards valued urban and landscape character, and are a major attraction for their tourism value.

The natural environment:

- Provides the Borough with its unique setting, character and natural landscape beauty;
- Provides important habitat for flora and fauna;
- Possesses scientific and natural heritage value for present and future generations;
- Contributes to the health and well-being of the Borough's residents and visitors; and
- Is economically valuable as a tourism asset.

Key Issues

- Protecting and maintaining the integrity of the Borough's natural environment.

Objective 1

- To protect and maintain the ecology of environmentally significant areas.

Strategies

- Protect environmentally significant sites from adverse use and development impacts.
- Protect cliff, dune and foreshore areas from inappropriate development and subdivision.

Objective 2

- To protect the biodiversity of the Borough.

Strategies

- Require that all use and development protects and restores significant and remnant native vegetation, particularly tea tree, Moonah and coastal heath, and retains other existing vegetation that contributes to the biodiversity of the Borough.

Objective 3

- To avoid use and development that has adverse impacts on the natural environment.

Strategies

- Avoid inappropriate tourism use and development in foreshore areas.
- Require, where relevant, that new development includes water sensitive urban design treatments and stormwater management systems, that minimise impacts on nearby water bodies and wetlands.

Implementation

The strategies will be implemented by:

Policy Guidelines

- Applying Clause 22.02 (Heritage Policy) in considering all applications under the Heritage Overlay.
- Applying Clause 22.03 (Urban Character) in considering applications that trigger a Planning Permit.

Future Strategic Work

- Develop a local policy to address the management of coastline and foreshore environs for inclusion within the Planning Scheme.

Other Actions

- Assess the need for the preparation of an Environment and Conservation Plan to integrate environment and conservation initiatives into planning decision-making.
- Monitor the application of planning controls to significant terrestrial and marine environments through periodic consultation with the DELWP and Parks Victoria, and undertake amendments to the Planning Scheme as appropriate.
- Work with Commonwealth agencies to develop agreements on changes of use or major development undertaken on Crown Land, and undertake amendments to the Planning Scheme as appropriate.
- Work with the City of Greater Geelong to protect and enhance the shared natural environment, particularly the management of Swan Bay.

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Significant Landscapes

The Borough contains highly valued coastal landscapes. The Heads at Point Lonsdale are of State significance, and Swan Bay and Queenscliff are of regional significance. The remainder of the Borough is considered to be of local significance.

The coastal landscape features a typically rugged surf coast with sweeping beaches, headlands and dunes with largely intact indigenous vegetation. Historic built elements include the Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff lighthouses.

Key Issues

- Providing ongoing protection and enhancement of coastal vegetation.
- Visual exposure of existing buildings at Point Lonsdale town centre.
- Minimising the visual impact of built form on natural landscape features.

Objective 1

- To maintain locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Borough, including (but not limited to) views to the ocean and Swan Bay, coastal dune environments, the townscape skyline and historic cultural features, including the lighthouses.

Strategies

- Maintain development between Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale below the height of surrounding vegetation and topography, and retain locally significant views and vistas.
- Avoid development on the coastal side of existing coastal roads.

Objective 2

- To require that development is subordinate to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character and significance.

Strategies

- Require that development have a form and finish that complements the coastal landscape and reduces distant visibility.
- Avoid light coloured or highly reflective building materials that are highly visible.

Objective 3

- To protect and increase indigenous coastal vegetation, and ensure that it is the dominant landscape feature, especially when viewed from the foreshore and offshore.

Strategies

- Require the use of indigenous coastal species for landscaping works.
- Protect the strong and continuous indigenous vegetation cover between dwellings in Point Lonsdale.

Implementation

The strategies will be implemented by:

Policy Guidelines

- Applying Clause 22.02 (Heritage Policy) in considering applications under the Heritage Overlay.
- Applying Clause 22.03 (Urban Character) in considering applications that trigger a Planning Permit.

Decision Guidelines

When deciding on an application for buildings or works, consider the cumulative impacts of development visible from key-viewing corridors.

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Environmental Risks

Large sections of the Borough are low-lying and particularly vulnerable to the coastal impacts of climate change. Accordingly, the Borough has an obligation to plan for projected sea level rises when considering the risks and coastal impacts associated with climate change.

Areas of the Borough have been identified as subject to bushfire hazard and are included within the Bushfire Management Overlay. As identified in the *State Bushfire Plan 2014*, the overall level of bushfire risk in Victoria is increasing.

Key issues

- Applying the precautionary principle to decision-making:
 - When considering the risks and coastal impacts associated with climate change; and
 - When assessing the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from bushfire.

Objective 1

- To ensure that the community and assets are not exposed to an unacceptable level of risk associated with the coastal impacts of climate change.

Strategies

- Avoid new development and the intensification of land use in areas that are exposed to an unacceptable level of risk associated with the coastal impacts of climate change.

Objective 2

- To ensure that the community and assets are not exposed to an unacceptable level of bushfire risk

Strategies

- Avoid new development and the intensification of land use in areas that are exposed to an unacceptable level of bushfire risk.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Policy guidelines

- Seek the informal views and advice of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority when considering Planning Permit applications on land which may be exposed to risks associated with the coastal impacts of climate change

Scheme implementation

- Applying the Bushfire Management Overlay to areas where bushfire is a significant risk.

Future strategic work

- Develop a Borough-wide coastal hazard vulnerability assessment that identifies areas most vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge inundation, and sets out a long-term plan to respond to the projected coastal impacts of climate change.
- Investigate possible drainage improvements for Point Lonsdale, to establish where flooding is liable to occur and to determine whether further works to the drainage system are required.
- Undertake environmental investigations (including hydro-geological and ecological) into the surrounding landscape of Point Lonsdale to determine appropriate protection of natural environmental areas and features in the planning scheme.
- Continue to work with the City of Greater Geelong to identify and address common cross-municipality issues, such as flooding and stormwater management.