

Lorne Coastal Action Plan Review

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Prepared for the Western Coastal Board by Pragmatic Environmental Solutions



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Executive Summary

The purpose of Coastal Action Plans is to provide strategic direction and identify priorities for management of local and regional coastal areas in alignment with the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002. The Lorne Coastal Action Plan was the first Coastal Action Plan to be prepared pursuant to the *Coastal Management Act* 1995. It was prepared by the Western Coastal Board and endorsed in May 1998 by the Minister for Conservation and Land Management.

This document constitutes the major review of the Lorne Coastal Action Plan, in terms of its usefulness to coastal managers in implementing the Victorian Coastal Strategy at the local level. (While the intention was to include feedback from the wider community about the Plan, there was no response to the invitation for comment.) This review also makes recommendations regarding the future of the Lorne Coastal Action Plan.

The investigation found that the Lorne Coastal Action Plan was useful to the agency primarily accountable for ensuring that individual actions are implemented. The use of the Plan resulted in 73% of the actions being completed or addressed successfully as ongoing actions; 27% have not been addressed within the five years of the Plan's lifespan.

It was determined that a subsequent local Coastal Action Plan was not necessary because a revised Central West Regional Coastal Action Plan (review set to occur in 2007/2008) would suffice to adequately promote implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy at the local level. Revision would include specific focus on Lorne issues, the addition of clear timeframes for implementation, and communication of the revised document and its purpose to the primary lead agency and to other agencies listed as leads for action implementation.

Until the Regional Coastal Action Plan's review and revision in 2007/2008, an Implementation Plan may be required to drive implementation of key outstanding coastal priorities. Minimal resources would be required to develop the Implementation Plan.

Introduction

The Victorian Coastal Strategy¹ (VCS) was developed in accordance with the *Coastal Management Act* 1995, and establishes the overall framework for planning and management of the Victorian coast. Coastal Action Plans (CAPs) are developed by the relevant Coastal Boards to assist implementation of the VCS on a regional, local or issues-based level. The CAPs relevant to the Lorne coastal zone are as follows:

- Central West Victoria Regional CAP;²
- Draft Central West Estuaries CAP;³ and
- Lorne CAP.⁴

The CAPs provide for strategic coastal planning for the region or local area under the larger framework of the VCS and therefore take a long-term strategic view, clarifying directions for future use and identifying key actions required to achieve preferred outcomes. CAPs also provide managers with a priority rating for each action to help prioritise works.

The *Coastal Management Act* provides that a CAP should be the subject of a major qualitative and quantitative review five years after its commencement, and that an interim review should take place approximately mid-way through this five-year term. The outcomes of a major review will assist the Western Coastal Board (WCB) to determine whether the CAP needs to be amended or rewritten for the next five years, and if so, what the priority directions and actions might be for the future. The outcomes will also provide the WCB with the ability to improve future CAPs.

The Lorne CAP (hereafter referred to as “the Plan”) was endorsed in May 1998 by the Minister for Conservation and Land Management and was the subject of an interim review by the WCB in October 2002 (along with Warrnambool, Moyne and Anglesea CAPs)⁵. This report provides a major review and its purpose is to determine the Plan’s success in guiding the implementation of the VCS along the Lorne coastal zone.

Two types of assessment have been used: firstly, a qualitative assessment that focuses on its usefulness to coastal managers and the wider community’s perception of its effectiveness; secondly, a quantitative assessment of the degree to which the actions in the Plan have been implemented.

It should be noted that while Regional CAPs are intended to provide direction for the preparation of local CAPs, preparation of the Plan preceded that of the Central West (CW) Regional CAP. Therefore, there are some actions within the CW Regional CAP that are relevant to the Lorne coastal zone but do not exist within the Plan. The focus of this review is the Plan and its actions.

¹ *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002* State Government and Victorian Coastal Council

² *Central West Victoria Regional Coastal Action Plan 2003* State Government and Western Coastal Board

³ *Draft Central West Estuaries Coastal Action Plan 2005* State Government and Western Coastal Board

⁴ *Lorne Coastal Action Plan 1998* Western Coastal Board

⁵ *Coastal Action Plan Audit, October 2002* Western Coastal Board

Background

Lorne lies on the Great Ocean Road (GOR), approximately 140 km south-west of Melbourne. The Lorne coastal zone includes the area bounded by the GOR, the State three mile nautical limit, the St George River mouth and Cathedral Rock. The township is one of the most popular holiday spots in Victoria, and the most significant contributor to Lorne's local economy is its tourism industry. The challenge confronting Lorne is to preserve the coastal township character, environmental values and scenic landscapes that are threatened by continuing pressure for development and the intensity of activity during peak holiday periods.

Lorne is recognised as one of the major activity nodes on the West Coast in the VCS. The VCS identifies Lorne as a 'Coastal Recreation Zone', which is an area capable of sustaining recreational opportunities for large numbers of people. The VCS recommends that this type of zone should be managed to minimise impacts on remnant values and the coastal environment. It is also identified as an area with strategic priorities for improved facilities and a need for detailed planning to direct use and future development to suitable locations. The Great Ocean Road Region Strategy (GORRS), prepared by the Department of Sustainability (DSE) in 2004, notes that Lorne's capacity issues will need to be considered as visitor and residential numbers increase, potentially impacting on the significant cultural and natural values of the area. With possible Government endorsement of the proposal by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to create a single national park in the Otway Ranges region, the area will experience a further increase in visitor numbers. The significance of the precinct and current and anticipated use of its coastal zone means its future needs to be carefully planned.

Lorne's coastal zone has been adversely affected by a lack of planning and coordinated management in the past. The major role of the Plan was to build on existing plans from St George River to Cathedral Rock and to develop, through a proper consultative process, a framework for the future direction of the development and management of the Lorne coast.

Preparation of the Plan included the identification of key issues and objectives relevant to the Lorne coastal zone and involved an extensive consultative process. It was supported with significant State Government funds.

An Interim Committee, comprised of members of the Lorne Foreshore Committee of Management (LFCoM), was appointed with the primary task of implementing the Plan. In mid-2004, the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) was appointed by the Government to manage that coastal strip of land in the Surf Coast Shire controlled by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), which includes Lorne. Coordination of the Plan's implementation has been picked up by the GORCC. Both agencies have been involved in coordinating the Plan's implementation.

Other agencies with lead responsibility for implementation of Plan's actions include the DSE, the Surf Coast Shire (SCS), Tourism Victoria (TV), VicRoads (VR) and the Marine Board of Victoria (MBV).

Assessment

This review incorporates a qualitative and a quantitative assessment of the success of the Plan. All agencies with responsibility for implementation, including the SCS, provided input for the review. The Committee of Management is listed in the Plan as having primary responsibility to coordinate the implementation of the Plan and therefore a representative of the former LFCM and a representative of the GORCC provided the majority of input that forms the basis of this review.

Perception of the Plan and Process

The Draft Guidelines for the Preparation, Review and Revision of Coastal Action Plans⁶ (hereafter referred to as “the Draft Guidelines”) state that the function of a CAP is to provide strategic direction and identify priorities for coastal use and development. Both the LFCM representative and the GORCC representative found the Plan to be useful in providing this function. It also reported that the Plan was useful in justifying coastal works to the community. Members of the former LFCM and the GORCC met regularly throughout the lifespan of the Plan to coordinate the implementation of its actions. Use of the Plan resulted in 92% of the actions being implemented to at least some degree; 73% of the actions were completed or are being addressed adequately on an ongoing basis. It should be noted that agencies other than the the former LFCM and the GORCC exhibited a very low level of awareness and/or acceptance of the Plan and its intended function.

Issues with the document

The representatives of the former LFCM and the GORCC reported the following issues regarding the structure and content of the document:

1. The Plan is too prescriptive.

The majority of the Plan’s actions are prescriptive (32 of the total 44). CAPs are strategic by definition and should have a primarily strategic focus. While the Plan allows justification of coastal works to the community, the high level of prescription of the actions does not provide enough leeway for works which are not listed in the document.

2. Confusion regarding identification of lead agency.

For 17 actions (35%) within the Plan, more than one agency is listed as responsible for implementation. The lead is not identified in any of these cases. Although the former LFCM and the GORCC understood that they were responsible for coordinating implementation, each representative reported that coordination would have been assisted if the document had clearly distinguished between lead agencies and partner agencies in each case. It was reported that justification to agencies that they should lead implementation was often a challenge, as they were not highlighted as the primary lead in the document. It is interesting to note that there was

⁶ *Draft Guidelines for the Preparation, Implementation, Review and Revision of Coastal Action Plans, October 2004* Victorian Coastal Council (currently under review).

a higher implementation rate for actions that had only one agency listed as lead, compared to that for actions with more than one lead.

3. Timeline for implementation is not clear.

Required timeline for implementation of individual actions and the Plan in general is not made clear. Priority ratings are assigned for each action, but these are not related to a specific timeframe (as they are for the Moyne CAP, for example). An outline of timeframe for implementation would have promoted timely delivery.

Issue with the process

While the former LFCM and the GORCC were actively involved in the Plan’s implementation, representatives of most of the other lead agencies contacted were unaware of its existence. These agencies are listed as leads (either in partnership or as sole leads) for 22 of the 48 actions (46%). Their understanding and awareness of the Plan would have assisted the former LFCM and the GORCC to engage other lead agencies and facilitate the timely implementation of the Plan’s actions.

Progress in implementing the actions of the Plan

This review defines progress in implementation as:

- the degree to which the actions have been undertaken, and
- the proportion of actions addressed adequately, according to priority rating.

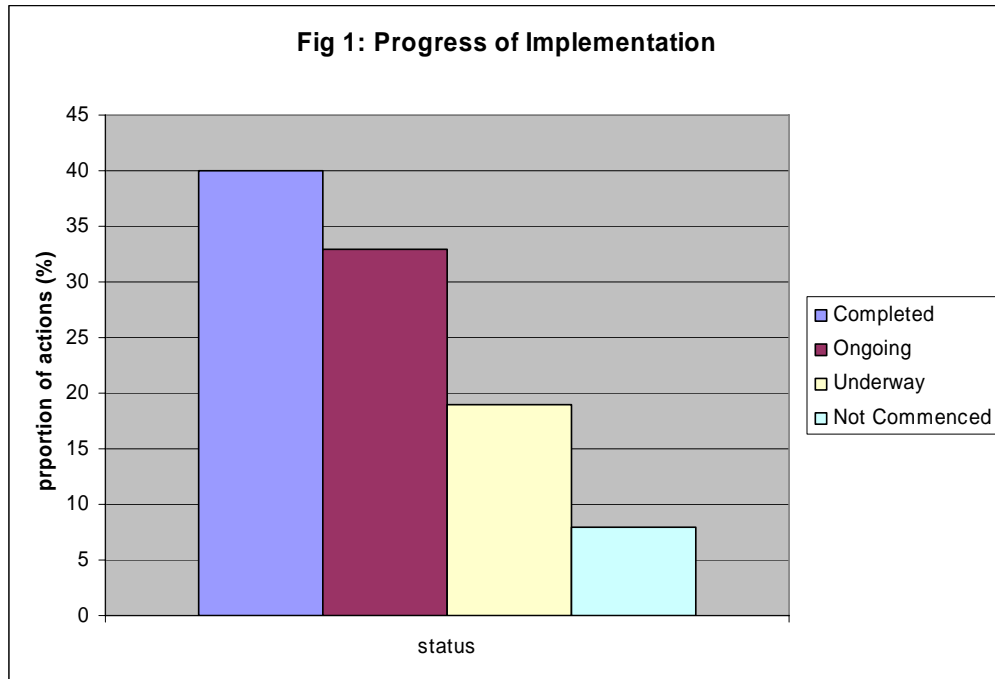
Appendix A comprises a table listing the Plan’s actions with indicators of progress (status), reasons for actions not being implemented (limiting factors), and priority ratings assigned to each action. It also describes progress to date and the future intentions for implementation as reported by lead agencies.

The Plan includes 48 actions, ranging from low to high priority. Of these, the majority (92%) have been implemented to at least some degree. Four indicators have been used to signify action status in this report. They are outlined in Table 1 below, along with the number and proportion of actions that belong to each status category.

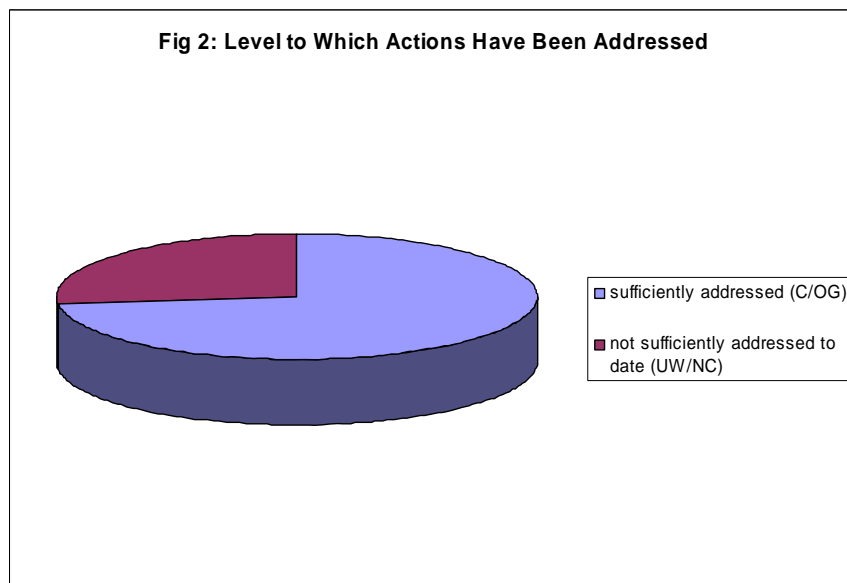
Table 1: Indicators of Progress in Action Implementation

status	description	# actions	proportion of 48 actions
C (completed)	The action has been completed.	19	40%
OG (ongoing)	The action is ongoing in nature and is implemented indefinitely into the future. (Eg: #40: <i>Site management plans be developed as required.</i>)	16	33%
UW (underway)	On-ground works have commenced.	9	19%
P (planned)	The action is in the planning stage. This can include discussions with stakeholders; investigations or research; preparation of planning documents; etc.	0	0%
NC (not commenced)	The implementation of the action as it is written in the Plan has not commenced.	4	8%

Figure 1 below illustrates progress of implementation:



Actions that are considered sufficiently addressed are those that are either completed or are being addressed on an ongoing basis, and these comprise 35 (73%) of the 48 actions. Actions which are not sufficiently addressed are those that require further attention and these include actions that are underway or not commenced. These comprise 13 (27%) of the 48 actions. See Figure 2 below:



While it can be stated that 92% of the Plan's actions have been implemented to at least some degree, the representation of data in Figure 2 may be more informative, as it reflects the degree of effort that is yet to be expended. It can be seen that nearly a third of actions (assuming all of them are still valid) are yet to be sufficiently addressed.

Implementation and priority rating

Of the 48 actions in the Plan,

- 30 are assigned “high” (H) priority,
- 15 are “medium” (M) priority, and
- 3 are “low” (L) priority.

The priority ratings assigned to the Lorne CAP actions do not correlate to specific timeframes for implementation.

Figure 3 below illustrates the proportion of actions that have and have not been addressed sufficiently, according to priority rating.

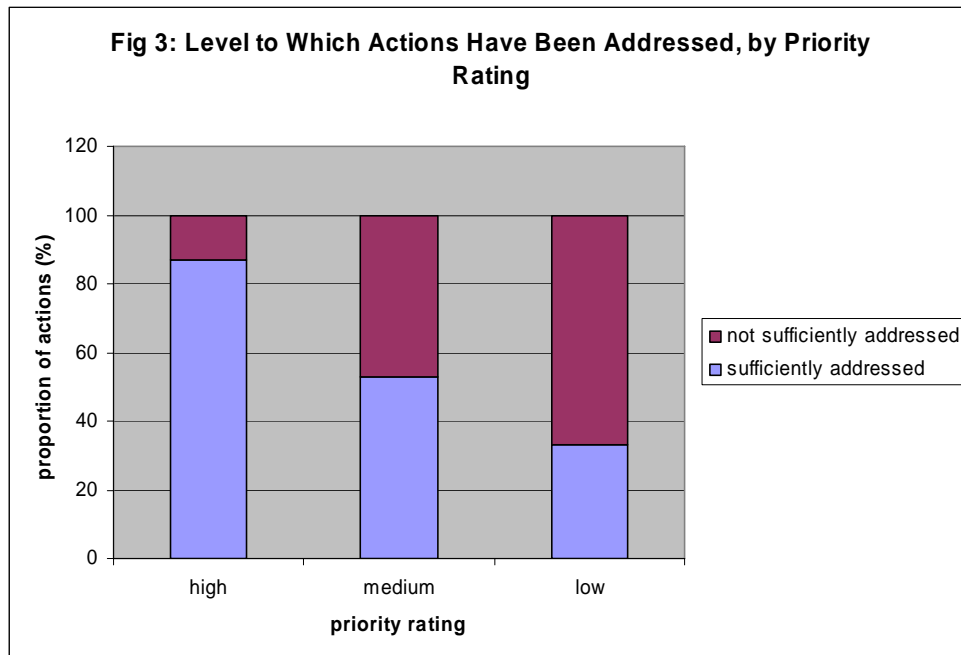


Fig 3 shows that implementation rate is higher for higher-priority actions. That is, implementation reflects priority rating. A significant number of M and particularly L actions are yet to be sufficiently addressed.

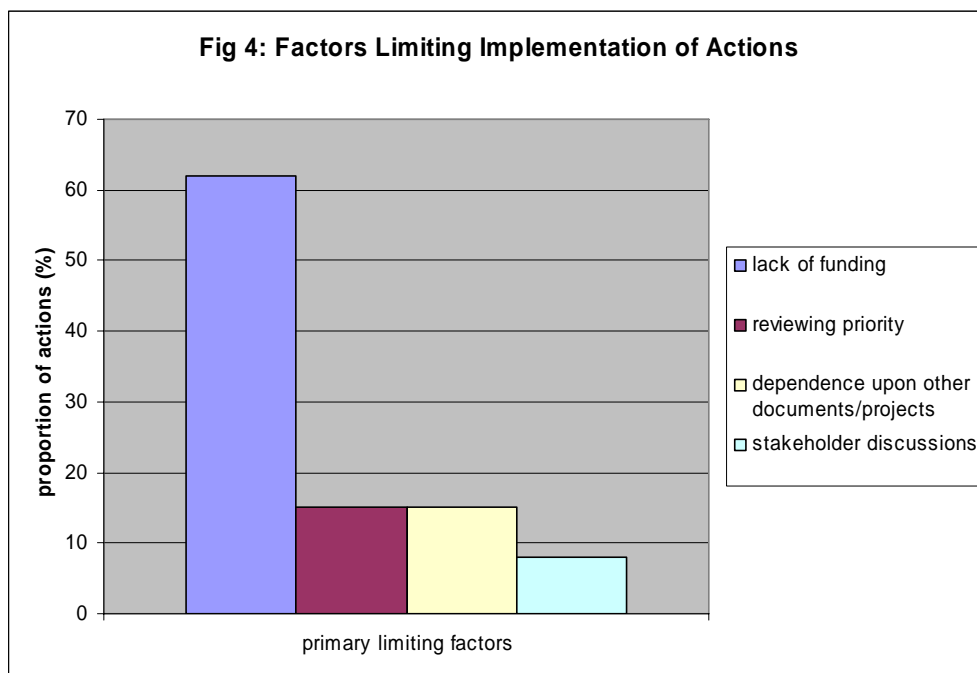
Primary factors limiting implementation of actions

Thirteen actions in the Plan have not been addressed sufficiently to date. Four factors limiting implementation have been identified. They are outlined in Table 2 below, with descriptions, and with the proportion of the 13 actions that fall into this category.

Table 2: Factors Limiting Implementation of Actions

limiting factor	description	proportion of 13 actions
LF (lack of funding)	Amount of funding required to sufficiently address action not available.	62%
RP (reviewing priority)	Lead agency reviewing importance of action.	15%
DD (dependent upon other documents / projects)	Implementation of action dependent upon timeline or findings of other reports or implementation of other projects.	15%
SD (stakeholder discussion)	Implementation is dependent upon further liaison with stakeholders.	8%

Figure 4 below provides a clear illustration of primary factors limiting implementation:



'Lack of funding' was by far the most common reason provided by lead agencies for lack of progress, being cited for 8 actions that have not been sufficiently addressed to date. This correlates well with the findings of the Interim Review, where lack of funding was also the most-cited reason for lack of progress. 'Dependence upon other documents/projects' was the limiting factor for lack of implementation of 2 actions. The 2 actions for which 'reviewing priority' was given as the reason for lack of implementation were reported to be of such a low priority that it was unlikely that they would be sufficiently addressed in the future. Progress of only one action was limited by stakeholder discussions. This action (28), to improve the swimming pool/kiosk

area, requires liaison with a large number of stakeholders and coordination of this has been difficult.

The future of the Lorne CAP

The following factors, as identified in the evaluation model developed by the WCB, are important to consider when determining the future of the Lorne CAP:

- Performance of Lorne CAP
- How a subsequent Lorne CAP would perform
- Whether a different instrument besides a subsequent local CAP would suffice to implement the VCS along the Lorne coastal zone in the future.

Performance of Lorne CAP

The majority (92%) of actions listed in the Plan have been implemented to some degree.

However, 13 of the Plan's actions have not been sufficiently addressed to date. This proportion is comprised of 2 of the 16 strategic-focus actions and 11 of the 32 prescriptive-focus actions. Therefore, the Plan has been more successful in facilitating the implementation of strategic actions than prescriptive actions.

Effectiveness

Using "sufficiently addressed actions" as an indicator of effectiveness, 73% of the Plan's actions have been sufficiently addressed to date. Assuming that the majority of the remaining 27% actions are still valid, this indicates a moderate level of effectiveness. This figure may rise in the future, but it is not certain that it will. Figure 3 illustrates that there is still a significant number of M and particularly L actions that are yet to be sufficiently addressed.

Timeliness

The Draft Guidelines include timeliness as an important factor in implementing the VCS. A significant proportion (27%) of actions have not been sufficiently addressed seven years after the Plan's endorsement (this proportion does not include any ongoing actions – they are all being sufficiently addressed).

Efficiency

In using the Plan, the COM has demonstrated the highest implementation rate of the VCS compared to other Central West coastal zones for which local CAPs have been prepared. Use of the Plan rather than alternative multi-step approaches has promoted efficient delivery of coastal priorities.

The need for a CAP to help manage the Lorne coastal zone

The Draft Guidelines state that a CAP is needed if:

- The area has regional importance.
- A number of agencies are involved in the issues.
- A number of areas of land with a range of tenures are involved.

The Plan has addressed strategic actions better than prescriptive actions. Therefore, it is evident that a CAP is helpful in addressing strategic issues along the Lorne coastal zone.

The VCS has identified Lorne as regionally significant. Ten lead agencies have been identified in the Plan, and a range of tenures is involved with land comprising the Lorne coastal zone. The VCS has acknowledged that this coastal zone will experience increasing capacity pressures and threats to environmental and cultural values as residential and visitor populations rise over time. Management Plans, with their lifespan of ten years, do not afford the flexibility to cater for changes adequately.

A Coastal Action Plan, with its five year outlook and strategic approach, is needed to adequately address the challenges characteristic of the Lorne coastal zone into the future.

What sort of CAP is required?

A subsequent local CAP

A subsequent local CAP tailored to the Lorne coastal zone would be more successful if its uptake by lead agencies (other than the GORCC) were increased. Increasing the uptake, however, would require a substantial amount of resources, as the document and the process would require improvement.

Should a subsequent local CAP be prepared, update of actions to ensure relevance to current times and the next five years, and the addition of clear timeframes for action implementation would be important. Additionally, strategic actions should be the main focus of the CAP; more prescriptive-focus actions should be transferred to documents such as the SCS's Lorne Strategy Review 2003 (see Appendix D for a list of these documents). The document, its uses and its relationship to the VCS would need to be communicated to lead agencies. to improve awareness and acceptance. The SCS has responsibility for the implementation of 23% of the actions in the Plan, but showed a low level of awareness and poor sense of ownership of the Plan. A Memorandum of Understanding, outlining timeline and responsibilities for implementation, could be prepared and signed off by each lead agency. An Implementation Team, comprised of a representative from each lead agency, would support coastal managers to use a subsequent Plan and implement its actions according to timeline.

These improvements would be time-consuming and would require considerable funding to undertake.

A Revised Regional CAP

The existing CW Regional CAP would not be an effective substitute for a subsequent local CAP, because it does not adequately focus on Lorne issues. However, it is due for major review and

revision in 2007/2008 and could be revised to include particular emphasis on Lorne due to the area's significance in the SW region (as identified in the VCS).

Complex strategic issues relating to Lorne would be addressed through the use of this revised document, as well as some priority prescriptive issues. The majority of the prescriptive actions could be adequately identified and addressed through local planning documents (see Appendix D for a list of these documents). With its five year outlook, a revised CW Regional CAP would allow flexibility in managing the high rate of change along this part of the coast.

Appendix B illustrates the proposed process to address strategic and prescriptive coastal priorities using a revised CW Regional CAP instead of a subsequent local CAP. Improvements to the process and the CW Regional CAP document would be required, as outlined below.

Improvements to the Process

Only 16 actions in the local CAP have a strategic focus. If the majority of prescriptive actions are transferred to local prescriptive documents, the revised document will only need to outline a relatively small number of actions which may be more acceptable to lead agencies. Therefore, a formal Communication Plan may not be necessary to promote the revised CW Regional CAP. Informal communication of the revised document and its importance in implementing the VCS may suffice. Likewise, an Implementation Team may not be required to drive progress. The GORCC could be assisted to raise the profile of the revised document and better engage the other lead agencies to encourage action implementation. All stakeholders who would have a role in implementing the revised CW CAP would be involved in its review and revision.

Improvements to the Document

Suggestions for changes to the CW Regional CAP to better cater for the Lorne coastal zone are as follows:

- Section added, "Key Coastal Zones in the South West Region", and Lorne coastal zone added to this new section.
- The section would include a brief outline of the reasons why Lorne is considered an area of regional significance, and a list of strategic actions (and some priority prescriptive actions) to address the issues unique to that part of the South West coast.
- Clear timeframes and priority ratings for each action to promote timeliness of implementation.

The representatives of the former LFCM and GORCC reported that identifying the lead agency and listing partners where more than one agency is required to implement an action would have promoted better implementation of the Plan. This would be worthwhile considering for the Lorne section of the revised CW Regional CAP

Implementation Plan

A Lorne CAP Implementation could be prepared to address priority Lorne coastal issues until the review and revision of the CW Regional CAP in 2007/2008. Its preparation would involve a quick desk-top exercise requiring minimal resources, and would include valid actions from the 1998 Plan which are currently underway, planned, not yet commenced and ongoing, with timeframes for implementation. This document would be used in conjunction with a Central West Regional CAP Implementation Plan currently being prepared by the WCB, which will highlight outstanding regional priorities.

Conclusion

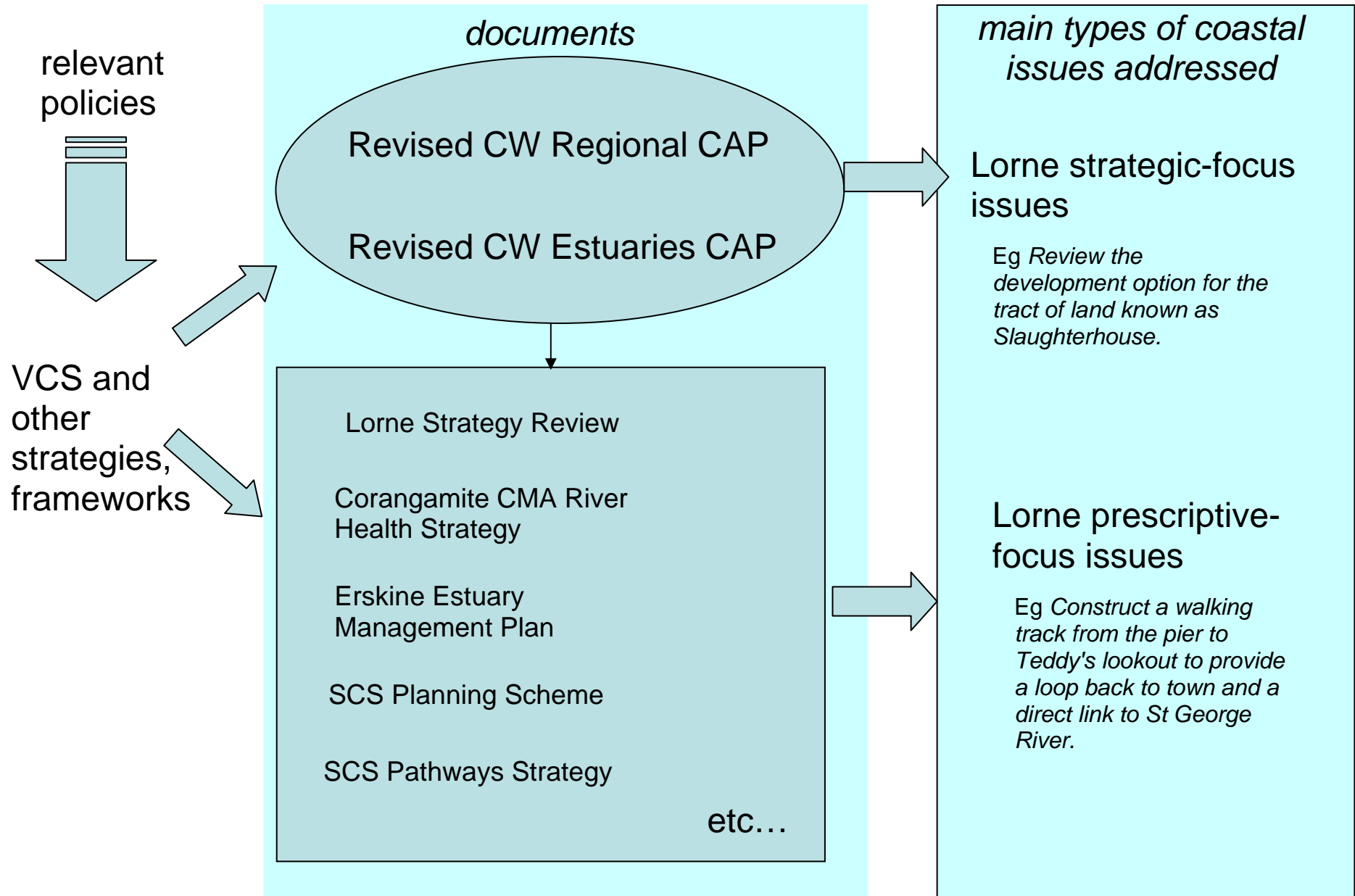
While a subsequent Lorne CAP may adequately facilitate VCS implementation, the amendments needed for its success would require significant resource input. A suitable alternative has been identified, and so the preparation and use of a subsequent Lorne CAP is not recommended.

The use of a revised CW Regional CAP would promote the effective, efficient and timely implementation of the VCS along the complex Lorne coastal zone into the future. A Warrnambool CAP Implementation Plan would be required to highlight priorities for coastal managers until the Regional CAP's review and revision in 2007/2008.

It is unlikely that the development of a formal Communication Plan and the establishment of an Implementation Team would be required. However, it is recommended that the role of the revised CW Regional CAP is promoted and that lead agencies sign a Memorandum of Understanding outlining their responsibilities for implementation of the actions in the revised document.

Coastal initiatives with a prescriptive focus should be transferred to local prescriptive documents including SCS's Lorne Strategy Review 2003 (Appendix D provides a list of such documents).

Appendix B: Proposed Instruments to Address Lorne Coastal Issues



Appendix C

Other documents relevant to Lorne that could provide prescriptive direction to coastal managers:

- Lorne Strategy Review 2003, SCS (provides a planning framework for addressing environmental, social and economic issues over next ten years).
- Surf Coast Planning Scheme 2001, SCS (addresses planning issues and has a local Lorne planning provision).
- Erskine and Stony Creek Estuary Management Plan, SCS. Currently being prepared.
- Pathways Strategy 2005, SCS (prescriptive elements address pedestrian and bicycle recreation and access issues).
- Proposed Surf Coast Open Space Plan, SCS (will address recreational open space issues).
- GOR Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007, TV (includes an implementation plan).
- Corangamite CMA River Health Strategy 2005 CCMA (some sections contain prescriptive elements that will impact on coast)
- Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy and Implementation Guide 2003-2008 CCMA. This provides fairly broad direction but the CCMA intends to update it in 2008/09 and provide more prescriptive directions.
- State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria) Guidelines 1998, EPA (some sections contain prescriptive elements that may impact on coast).
- Boating Safety and Facilities Program, MSV (annual publication).
- Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1998, VCC.

Key:

SCS – Surf Coast Shire Council

CCMA – Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

EPA – Environment Protection Authority

MSV – Marine Safety Victoria

TV – Tourism Victoria

VCC – Victorian Coastal Council