



ANNUAL REPORT 2003/2004

Guiding Coastal Management for a Sustainable Future



The Western Coastal Board's role is to be a champion for the balanced protection and development of South West Victoria's coastal and marine areas.

It performs this function through being a

- Strategic Planner
- Educator
- Partner / Facilitator
- Adviser / Expert

The Vision of the Victorian Coastal Council for Victoria's coast is

A biologically rich and diverse coastal and marine environment for our use and enjoyment today and for our children tomorrow.

The Western Coastal Board contributes to the achievement of this vision by.....

- Applying and promoting sustainability concepts and principles
- Strengthening partnerships and networks
- Assessing and improving the effectiveness of coastal programs
- Taking a bold approach to leading coastal policy
- Providing leadership and support to coastal strategic planning
- Encouraging community participation



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The year 2003/2004 heralded the realisation of the so-called 'Sea Change Phenomenon' along Victoria's coast. The increasing trend of city-dwellers to opt for a coastal home has begun to place potentially unsustainable demands on infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, roads and community facilities. It will be one of the Western Coastal Board's priorities for the coming year to contribute to strategies aimed at ensuring that coastal towns grow sustainably without undue impact on town character or environmental values.

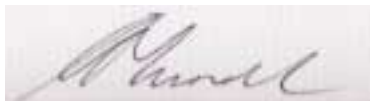
The 2003/2004 year was a watershed for the Board, as it moved from a phase of Coastal Action Plan development to one of Coastal Action Plan implementation and monitoring. The Board also fulfilled its role in providing strategic advice to government, through the contributions it made to a large number of working groups, strategies and plans developed by all sectors of government.

In addition, the commencement of the Board's significant Ecological Risk Assessment Project was an important step in filling the void of knowledge about our coastal waters, and the threats and risks facing their ecology. This project will enable future funding bids to be based on priorities agreed by key stakeholders, and will provide many opportunities for partnership projects.

I had the pleasure of welcoming Helen Arundel, Lawrie Baker, Craig Delahoy, Neil Longmore and Sue Mudford to the Board, and I am excited by the new skills, sets of experience and thinking styles that they bring to the Board table.

The year also saw a change of personnel, as Dr Adrian Volders moved to warmer climes and Jennifer Lilburn took up the position of Executive Officer.

It promises to be an exciting, challenging and productive future for the Board, and I am privileged to be leading it for another three-year term.



Lynn Murrell
Chair
Western Coastal Board



1. IMPLEMENTING THE VICTORIAN COASTAL STRATEGY

1.1. Strategic Coastal Planning

1.1.1. Local Government Planning System

The Local Government Planning System is the primary instrument through which development on coastal private land is managed. Recent reviews of planning schemes in the region have identified the need to implement Coastal Action Plans, particularly the South West and Central West Victoria Regional Coastal Action Plans.

The Western Coastal Board is seeking ongoing opportunities to work with council officers in the further development of planning schemes. Several of the Coastal Action Plans have made recommendations on the format of the planning scheme and it is a priority of the Board to see these implemented.

At a broader level Local Government planners have expressed concern at the workloads that are being placed upon them. In some parts of the region, a 'Sea Change' development boom has greatly increased their workloads. In addition, Councils find that it is difficult to attract planners to regional locations.

The Board was concerned about a number of planning decisions that appeared to have been made outside the intent of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002 or relevant Coastal Action Plans. This has highlighted a need to work more closely with councils to ensure that Coastal Action Plan recommendations are agreed to and are woven into local Planning Schemes.

1.1.2. Coastal Action Plans

The Board continues its program of preparing Coastal Action Plans as the key mechanism for implementing the Victorian Coastal Strategy in the region. Coastal Action Plans are either based on an area of strategic significance (for example, a developing coastal town), or an issue of strategic significance (for example, sustainable management of estuaries).

The following table outlines the Coastal Action Planning program for the Western Coastal Board region.



Coastal Action Plan	Progress	Endorsed	Interim review / audit	Scheduled for major review
Lorne	Completed	May 1998	October 2002	2004/2005
Anglesea	Completed	August 1999	October 2002	2004/2005
Warrnambool	Completed	August 1999	October 2002	2004/2005
Skenes Creek to Marengo	Completed	May 2001		2006/2007
Moyne	Completed	June 2001	October 2002	2006/2007
South West Victoria Estuaries	Completed	June 2002	Scheduled for 2004/2005	2007/2008
South West Victoria Regional	Completed	August 2002	Scheduled for 2004/2005	2007/2008
Central West Victoria Regional	Completed	August 2002	Scheduled for 2004/2005	2007/2008
Glenelg Shire	Completed	January 2004	Scheduled for 2006/2007	2008/2009
Bells Beach to Red Rock	Completed to draft stage*			
Central West Victoria Estuaries	Final report nearing completion		Scheduled for 2007/2008	2009/2010

* The Bells Beach to Red Rock Coastal Action Plan has been completed to draft form. The process has been suspended pending the outcome of the Bells Beach and Winki Pop Management Plans.

Responsibility for implementing Coastal Action Plans falls mainly to the Foreshore Committees of Management or to Shire Councils. The extent to which Coastal Action Plans are implemented largely depends on

- Availability of funding
- Availability of staff
- Changing priorities.

The audit of Coastal Action Plan implementation in October 2002 by the Western Coastal Board outlined the following recommendations to more effectively implement the Plans:

- Greater promotion of the benefits of Coastal Action Plans should be undertaken,
- Greater effort to attract funds to Coastal Action Plan implementation should be made,
- Partnership arrangements between implementing agencies to obtain resources should be encouraged,
- Information and assistance need to be provided to Foreshore Committees on ways and means of capturing alternative sources of funding,
- During the development of Coastal Action Plans there should be serious consideration of the level of priority given to actions against the availability of resources,
- Commitment from agencies for implementation must be agreed upon and negotiated during the Coastal Action Plan development and preparation stage,



- Progress of implementation would be facilitated through regular monitoring and reporting,
- Formation of an "Implementing Committee" for each Coastal Action Plan (or some mechanism to get stakeholders together) to ensure that the execution of the Coastal Action Plan stays on track, is meeting the objectives originally developed and to suggest changes where necessary to the implementation activities and/or priorities.

These recommendations continue to be useful as the Western Coastal Board facilitates Coastal Action Plan implementation. This work will be given a greater focus during the coming financial year, as shown in the program above.

1.1.3. **Best Practice Coastal Access Guidelines** for Glenelg Shire were completed to draft form pending broader stakeholder consultation. The guidelines aim to assist land managers to provide access to coastal areas whilst protecting vulnerable natural and cultural values. The Port Phillip Region of Department of Sustainability and Environment will now utilise the guidelines to develop a decision support system for use by all land managers.

1.1.4. **Contribution to Strategies Developed by Others**

Throughout the year the Board provided input to a number of strategies and plans which were developed within the South West Region. Contributions largely related to adherence to principles, objectives and actions of the Victorian Coastal Strategy and relevant Coastal Action Plans.

- The Board submitted comments to Surf Coast Shire's **Lorne Strategy Plan Review** in relation to aspects associated with sustainable growth, tourism and commercial development, traffic and car parking.
- Comments on the **Draft Warrnambool Land Use Strategy** related to the need to ensure that coastal tourism opportunities and further development, particularly in the coastal/Hopkins River area, are considered in line with the Victorian Coastal Strategy and the Warrnambool Coastal Action Plan. The Board's submission followed input to the document via the Warrnambool Land Use Strategy Reference Group.
- In its submission to the **Aireys Inlet to Eastern View Neighbourhood Character Study and Vegetation Assessment**, the Board encouraged the finalisation of the Aireys Inlet Urban Design Framework in order to *inter alia* establish performance standards for development in commercial areas.
- The Board's input to the **Great Ocean Road Regional Strategy** related to the need to revisit the document's vision, the relationship between various Directions described, the opportunity to address planning controls within coastal township boundaries, the need to integrate water issues, speed and pedestrians, social sustainability, and resourcing of Councils to implement appropriate planning controls.
- **Peterborough Urban Design Framework:** The Board made a submission to the panel appointed by the Minister to consider Moyne Shire's Planning Scheme Amendment C8 on the basis of insufficient demand for extra subdivision, drainage



issues and adverse effects, lack of public consultation following a late modification, and potential impact of acid sulphate soils.

1.1.5. Other forums

The Chair, Members and the Executive Officer made contributions to a number of other forums in order to facilitate implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy:

- Corangamite Regional Catchment Investment Panel
- Deakin University Faculty of Arts Advisory Group
- Department of Sustainability and Environment Public Land Stewardship project
- Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Investment Panel
- Forums and workshops for the development of Catchment Management Strategies (Corangamite and Glenelg Hopkins).
- Hopkins River Management Plan Workshop
- South West Sustainability Partnership
- Southern Catchments Forum
- Victorian Economic, Environmental and Social Advisory Council

1.2. Protecting the Environment

1.2.1. The Board's Executive Officer is the chair of the Steering Committee for the development of a **Decision Support System for Estuary Entrances**. The aim of the project is to develop a framework for estuary managers to determine the circumstances under which an estuary should be artificially opened (if at all). Using the framework, managers will be able to consider the socioeconomic and environmental assets of individual estuaries, including the values placed on them by the community, during the decision making process. Project partners include Deakin University, Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, Environment Protection Authority, Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria.

1.2.2. The Board's submission to the **Draft Corangamite Shire Council Plan** put forward opportunities to further Council's objective to be a leader in environmental management practices. Following its submission, the Board was invited to be part of a working group to develop an Environmental Strategy for the Shire.

1.2.3. Representation on the **Surf Coast Marine Parks Advisory Group**, and later the more general **Parks Victoria Marine Parks Advisory Group** enabled the Board to contribute to the development of management plans for Marine Protected Areas along the South West coast.

1.2.4. The Board was represented on the **Woodside Otway Gas Project Community Reference Group**, and the **Minerva Gas Development Environmental Review Committee**. This has enabled the Board keep abreast of these two major projects as they develop, whilst having an input into aspects of environmental protection and public consultation processes.



1.2.5. The Board obtained federal funding on behalf of Coastcare to develop and implement a works program for **Griffith Island**, off Port Fairy. Implementation involved conservation works, including habitat restoration for rare and threatened bird species.

1.3. Improved Recreation and Tourism

1.3.1. In addition to the works described in 1.2.5 above, funding obtained for **Griffith Island** included improved access for visitors with disabilities.

1.4. Maintaining and Improving Coastal Water Quality

1.4.1. In its submission to the **South West Water Authority – Sewage Management Strategy**, the Board prompted South West Water Authority to consider a number of options in order to maximise use of recycled water and minimise ocean outfall discharges.

1.5. Increasing Awareness and Understanding of Coastal Issues

1.5.1. Natural Heritage Trust funding was secured for a **Health of the Coast** report (through Corangamite Catchment Management Authority) and a **Ecological Risk Assessment Project** (through Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority). These two projects were combined in order to facilitate the development of an understanding of the risks facing ecological systems in the region's waters to the three-nautical-mile Victorian boundary. Information obtained will be prioritised and fed into a cross-agency program for future projects and funding applications. A project officer has been seconded from Parks Victoria to undertake this project on behalf of Western Coastal Board in partnership with Parks Victoria and Melbourne University.

2. EMERGING ISSUES

- **Growth of coastal towns, the 'Sea Change' phenomenon**, is an issue that generated significant media, political and public interest throughout the year. There are concerns relating to the potential for coastal towns to sprawl along the coast, thereby losing their local village character and permanently changing the face of the coast. The phenomenon has significant implications for environmental, economic and cultural sustainability, for example, demands on limited water supply, waste services, transport infrastructure and social infrastructure, such as health facilities for aging populations and employment opportunities. The Board will be providing input into a project to address these issues in the near future.
- Colac Otway Shire has indicated that **landslip along the coast** is one of the most significant issues that will need to be addressed in the near future.



3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

3.1. Financial Statement

Funding from the Department of Sustainability and Environment for the Western Coastal Board during 2003/2004 was \$162,679, representing an 10% reduction in budget from 2002/2003. However, during May 2004 the Board was made aware of an additional \$25,200 available through unallocated trust funds.

Total expenditure was as follows:

ITEM	BUDGET (\$,000)	EXPENDITURE (\$,000)
Contracted services, salaries, related oncosts	130.4	88.5
DSE levies, rent, vehicle, IT costs	31.3	30.3
Stationery, office equipment, admin, other operating	1.0	20.4
Board Members Fees and Travel	0	26.9
Research Grant	0	3.0
TOTAL	162.7	169.1
Other income: trust funds	25.2	0
REVISED TOTAL	187.9	169.1
End of Year Position - unspent		18.8

In March 2004, the Western Coastal Board office was moved from Warrnambool to the State Public Offices in Geelong. This move has enabled the Board to be more accessible to stakeholders across the region, given the Chair's base at Portland, and the number of issues to the east.

3.2. Board Membership

Chairman

Lynn Murrell

Lynn is the Chair of the Western Coastal Board and the Victorian Coastal Council representative on the Board. He is a former secondary school teacher and farmer at Cape Nelson, a member of the Board of the Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, a member of the Greater Green Triangle Area Consultative Committee and the Natural Resources Conservation League.

Members – Community Representatives

Helen Arundel

Helen has lived in the Port Campbell/Peterborough area for the past 13 years. During this time she has been active in the local environment group. Helen recently completed a PhD on estuarine ecology and has also undertaken research on the intertidal reefs in south west Victoria. Helen started her professional life as secondary teacher and later became a primary producer. Helen is currently employed as a research fellow at Deakin University on the Estuary Entrance Decision Support System Project.



Lawrence Baker

Lawrie's qualifications include PhD, MEng Sc, BE, Dip CE, Emeritus Professor. Lawrie has worked as a Senior Design Engineer with the Geelong Harbour Trust, and held positions of Head Civil Engineering, Dean Architecture, Head Building, and Head Engineering and Technology with Gordon Institute of Technology / Deakin University over a period of 33 years. Lawrie was also Deputy Leader of the Australia / Thailand Science and Engineering Assistance Project. Directorships/Memberships include Masonry Research Centre, Australian Standards Committee, Water Training Centre, Barwon Water, Central Coastal Board. Lawrie lives in Lorne, and is a former Chair of Lorne Foreshore Committee of Management and past President of Lorne Planning and Preservation League.

Cr Craig Delahoy

Craig was first elected to Moyne Shire Council in 1999 as one of two Port Fairy riding councillors, and was subsequently re-elected in 2002. In addition to multimedia work with South West TAFE, Deakin University and University of Melbourne, Craig runs his own multimedia development business.

Rachel Faggetter

A former President of the Airey's Inlet and District Association and a long time member of the Anglesea and Airey's Inlet Environment Association, Rachel has been active in the coastal township of Airey's Inlet for over 25 years. Rachel lectures in Natural and Cultural Heritage and Interpretation at Deakin University.

Neil Longmore

Neil has a law degree from Deakin University and a post graduate qualification in urban and regional planning from the University of New England. He is currently the principal solicitor of the Southwest Community Legal Centre which provides legal services to the disadvantaged from Colac in the east to the South Australian border and north to the Grampians. Neil is a native of Colac and has lived for the past 25 years at Gellibrand River. There he runs a small sheep farm and a private environmental law practice.

Vivian McWaters

Viv lives in Torquay where she works as a freelance facilitator and trainer specialising in conservation and rural industries. She has completed a Masters in Applied Science (Agriculture and Rural Development) and is a former state-wide coordinator for Landcare and secretary of the Australian Soil and Water Conservation Association.

Susan Mudford

Sue has professional experience in community engagement, facilitation, regional development, biodiversity and conservation, developing conservation management plans and risk management. She has qualifications in education, conservation and land management, and has attended numerous short courses on wetland, grassland and weed management, rare and endangered species recovery programs. Sue has a farming property at Woorndoo (near Mortlake), is member of the Boards of Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Future Environment Fund, and is Regional Manager with Trust for Nature (Vic).



Margaret O'Toole

An active scuba diver and marine researcher, Marg has lived in Port Campbell since 1984. Marg runs an environmental interpretation and education business with her husband and is an active member of a number of environmental groups, including the Port Campbell Environment Group, the Marine Education Society of Australia and the Aquatic Naturalists Club of Victoria.

Members – Agency Representatives

Rachael Robertson – Parks Victoria

Rachael is Chief Ranger - South West Coast, and is responsible for the operational management of Victoria's parks and reserves within the Western Coastal Board's region. Rachael lives in Anglesea.

Roger Macaulay - Department of Sustainability and Environment

Roger is employed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) as Manager of Land Victoria in the South West Region. Roger has extensive knowledge of Crown land management in the region.

Kim McGough – Department of Sustainability and Environment

Kim is the Manager of Planning, Environment and Communities Group with the South West Region of the Department of Sustainability and Environment. He has 20 years of professional work experience and a Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning (Hons). He was formerly Executive Officer of the Loddon-Campaspe Regional Planning Authority and Town Planning Manager with the former Shire of Broadford. Kim was initially appointed to the inaugural Western Coastal Board in 1996.

Executive Officer

Adrian Volders (Executive Officer to December 2003)

Adrian holds a PhD in Environmental Management from the University of Tasmania and a Masters in Public Policy from Deakin University. He is the former Regional Catchment Strategy Director with the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and has held a number of previous natural resource management positions.

Jennifer Lilburn (Executive Officer from February 2004)

Jennifer has been seconded to Western Coastal Board from Parks Victoria, where she holds the senior executive position of Regional Manager. Jennifer has a Bachelor of Education (Environmental Studies) and a Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Assessment and Land Use Policy).

Executive support consists of the Executive Officer. Dr Adrian Volders, who had been with the Board since March 2003 resigned in December 2003. Board Member Helen Arundel acted as temporary Executive Officer while the position was advertised, and Jennifer Lilburn was appointed as Executive Officer in late February 2004. Jennifer Lilburn is on secondment from Parks Victoria until December 2005.



3.3 Board Meetings

Five 'ordinary' Board meetings were held during the financial year as follows:

MEETING NO.	LOCATION	DATE
05/2003	Warrnambool	22 August 2003
06/2003	Geelong	31 October 2003
07/2003	Port Campbell	12 December 2003
01/2004	Portland	27 February 2003
02/2004	Lorne	7 May 2004

Meetings were held throughout the Board's region in order to facilitate attendance by stakeholders, and to facilitate investigation and discussion of local issues.

In addition to the above, the Board held an extraordinary meeting in Geelong on 1 April 2004 to discuss strategic directions for the future. Also discussed at the meeting were the roles of the Board and its Chair, Executive Officer, Agency Representatives and Community Representatives.

4 PRIORITIES FOR 2004/2005

The overall challenge facing the coastal and marine environment in western Victoria remains the same as it has in the past – balancing the protection of natural resources with human use of those resources. The focus for the Western Coastal Board for the coming year will be in the following areas:

- Input into the government's 'Coastal Spaces' project (re 'Sea Change Phenomenon')
- Review of the Lorne, Anglesea and Warrnambool Coastal Action Plans as appropriate
- Interim reviews of the implementation of the South West Victoria Estuaries, South West Victoria Regional, and Central West Victoria Regional Coastal Action Plans
- Completion of the Ecological Risk Assessment Project for the south west coastal waters
- Facilitation of the Estuary Entrance Decision Support System project
- Completion of the Coastal Access Guidelines project
- Facilitation of information sharing and skill development of publicly elected Committees of Management.
- Influencing integrated coastal/marine management (involving Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment, local government, Committees of Management)
- Development of a Communication Strategy, focussing on stakeholder engagement

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