

Regional Coastal Plans

Project Update - May 2014

Consultation starts on Regional Coastal Plans

The first round of consultation on Victoria's three new Regional Coastal Plans has been completed, with more than 70 submissions received. The response shows just how important the Victorian coastline is to the community, and how seriously Victoria's coastal managers and tiers of government take their responsibilities to meet the expectations of communities.

The submissions will help the Project identify values, concerns, ideas and issues, and to consider the implications as the Regional Coastal Plans move into their next phase of formulating what may – or may not – be in a draft strategy.

The Regional Coastal Plans will recognise the dynamic nature of Victoria's coastline and the complexity both in terms of how to manage them, and how to balance different and sometimes competing needs. The success of coastal planning relies on the ability to develop a vision that takes into account the values of different community groups, and creating a path on how to work together toward a common goal.



The Victorian Coastal Strategy has identified some key issues along the coastline. They include:

- responding to population growth
- risks of a changing climate/sea level rise
- coastal infrastructure and management
- valuing environmental resources
- marine planning

Introductory brochure helps guide consultation

In March the Western, Central and Gippsland Coastal Boards opened the concept of Regional Coastal Plans up to discussion, to help ensure Victoria's first draft Regional Coastal Plans reflected the expectations of key stakeholders.

Submissions were mainly received from local government, state government departments, catchment management authorities, public land managers, environmental groups, recreation groups, Indigenous groups, and individuals.



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What the submissions said

- In addition to involvement of government authorities, community involvement was important in the formation of the Regional Coastal Plans.
- Environmental management and planning for maintaining environmental values was a recurring theme, in the face of pressures such as competing interests, increasing urbanisation, climate change, resource limitations
- Coastal erosion and declining ecological values were a real concern.
- There was some dissatisfaction regarding the timing of the Regional Coastal Plans, given the Victorian Coastal Strategy wasn't finalised. It was important to a number of submitters that the timing between the two processes aligned so the Regional Coastal Plans could meet its objectives and respond to the Coastal Strategy.
- It was suggested Regional Coastal Plans aligned with Regional Catchment Strategies.
- There was merit in planning at a regional level
- There was a strong theme that existing strategies and initiatives needed to be recognised by the Regional Coastal Plans.
- The acknowledgement and protection of cultural values was highlighted
- Population growth was seen as impacting on the existing coastal character and that here needed to be a balance between resourcing and funding coastal care and meeting the needs of user groups and local economies
- There was some concern regarding how much time the Regional Coastal Plans had to get feedback, and be drafted. One suggestion was there was more information put out for discussion, rather than the drafts, then the final plans.
- The need to balance interests that are sometimes in conflict, and enforce regulations that control how people interact with coasts

“Better support can be provided through clear governance – identification of roles and responsibilities of committees and community involved in the planning process”

“Management and authority arrangements for the coast remain inconsistent and unclear. This has a significant impact particularly on the protection, use, access, maintenance and policing on the coast.”

In response to climate change: *“The new Regional Coastal Plan needs to provide strong directions to planning authorities like local councils and referral authorities to ensure that future scenarios are accounted for in planning and responses and mitigation actions are promoted in all types of plans affecting coastal land.”*

Your next chance to have a say

The Coastal Boards will meet later this month to discuss the submissions and to start to shape the draft Regional Coastal Plans. They will also be meeting to discuss regional issues with key agencies with responsibility for coastal land management, particularly local government, catchment management authorities, Parks Victoria, coastal Committees of Management and Traditional Owner Land Management Boards.

They will then prepare the drafts for release later this year with a further round of public consultation. It is expected the consultation period will be open for five weeks, and be complemented by consultation activities to support people interested in making a submission.

It is expected the final plans will be ready for release in 2015.