



Chairs of the Western, Gippsland and Central Coastal Boards

Dear

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment regarding the three draft regional coastal plans.

The Victorian Association for Environmental Association (VAEE) is a membership based organisation that provides a united voice for the environmental education sector in Victoria. VAEE strongly supports the development of the regional coastal plans, and believe that final versions will be strengthened by incorporating actions relating to the support of school based education programs.

VAEE has more than 220 members from around the state, including local governments, schools and individuals. A number of these members are involved in delivering marine and coastal education services to the Victorian Community. Community and school based education focused on awareness and understanding of coastal processes and ecosystems has an important role to play in protecting future coastal ecosystems and habitats. Although the support of community education and awareness programs for tourists is cited in the plans, highlighting the importance of school-based education would be a great addition.

Specifically we see a great opportunity for incorporating support of marine and coastal education programs and providers as a key action under the following areas:

- Western Regional Plan – Regional Priority 7 -supporting communities caring for the coast.
- Central Regional Plan - Regional priority 8 – promoting Leadership Co-ordination and Capacity Building for the coast.
- Gippsland Regional Plan - Regional Priority 7 -supporting communities caring for the coast.

VAEE suggests that within these plans, education programs for schools such as 'I sea, I care' Marine Ambassadors program, could be supported to engage with more schools around the state. The 'Summer by the Sea' program of events that the state government deliver should be expanded to run for a longer time period. Additionally, we see opportunity further development of curriculum resources specific to the Victorian coastline to build the capacity of teachers to engage in teaching marine and coastal studies to their students.

To further discuss this submission you can contact

Regards