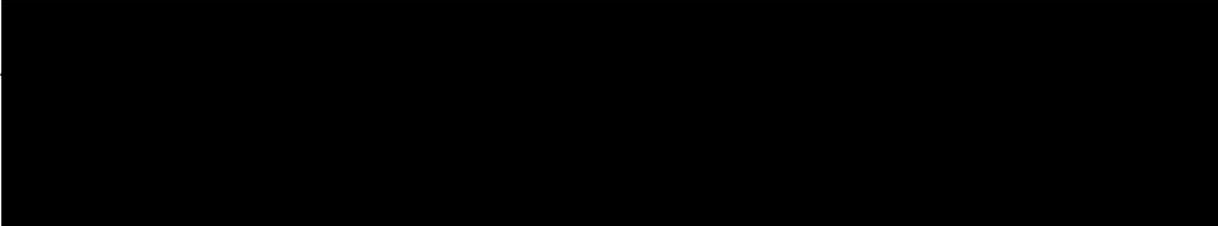




Organisation

Portland Historic Buildings Restoration
Committee Inc.



2. The draft plan identifies a range of environmental, social and economic values that are important in the Western coastal region (see chapter 2, page 5). Are these the most important values? Is there anything you think is missing?

Response –

Members consider that

2.1 'Environmental Values' needs a Web reference to the *Victorian Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* (CSLAS) 2006. Its findings for Significant Landscape Overlays of State and Regional significance throughout Victoria, and especially in the WCB Region, would help to identify and support the proposed 'levels of service' approach to their management.

2.2 'Social and cultural values' last paragraph is not borne out in the rest of the document.

2.2.1 Last para – 'Several whaling stations' were established before the Hentys arrived to settle in 1834 (Henty had explored Portland Bay while collecting whale oil from the stations).

2.2.2 'Built environment' should include the amenity of heritage buildings and the heritage character of the towns on the South Western coast, a source of pride to inhabitants and strong visitation attractants.

Figure 4 on p. 8 is inadequate to describe visitor satisfaction with amenity – it is not sufficiently reflective of the high-level amenity of the WCB Region. It requires the addition of the above re environment and heritage, and improvement to the Vegetation, Natural Physical Form and Water Quality panels – Biodiversity, Significant Landscapes, Marine Environment?

What is missing – As indicated above, in the draft there appears to be a lack of awareness of the quality and variety of coastal geology, land forms, biodiversity, marine environments, and the depth of European and Indigenous cultural heritage in the Far South West.

There are no Actions recommended for Chs. 2 and 3, and in members' view this weakens the document. Actions should include marine health, water quality, environmental protection, plant and animal pest control, dispersal of visitors to the whole region, and celebrating Significant Landscape Overlays where they have been achieved (e.g. the Glenelg CAP 2005 Action 5.6.1 recommended implementing SLOs; they were assessed as of State and Regional Significance in the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study 2006*, and finally gazetted in 2014 in Glenelg Shire).

3. The draft plan identifies several important issues affecting the coast in this region (Chapters 4, 5 and 6, page 13,18 and 21 respectively). Some of these are the same issues that affect the whole state, while others are particularly important in this region. Do you think these are the most important issues affecting the region? What other issues do you think are important in this region?

Response –

Ch.4 – Regional Visitation / Maximizing Access

Members are aware that distribution of visitation requires strong liaison with Tourism Victoria (TV) and regional tourism bodies in order to succeed. Currently TV promotes what is already popular on the coast, increasing visitation pressure e.g. along the GOR, and regional bodies compete with one another for clients.

TV and regional tourism bodies should therefore be involved in actions to ‘balance access’ (Table p. 17).

TV and regional tourism bodies promote the GOR strongly. But there is potential for visitors to experience a greater variety of landscapes, heritage and amenity by travelling inland to the Far South West coast. The best access to Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland is via the Princes Highway (approx. 5 hours to Portland from Melbourne) or the Hamilton Highway (4 hours). If these routes were better maintained and places of interest along them (e.g. the Victorian Volcanic Plains and towns) were better promoted, visitation could be better distributed; but while TV assumes that the best way to access the Far South West is via a day’s journey on the GOR, visitors will not be easy to attract.

4.2 HBRC Inc. supports a ‘level of service’ approach to management of coastal locations (Action 4.2 b p.28). For example, on a regional scale, this could encourage high level environments such as Cape Bridgewater in the Glenelg Shire (of state significance for its geology, environment and cultural heritage) to be maintained according to the intent of Fig. 12 (b), VCS 2008, Note p. 88 – as a ‘cluster’ of housing in a Rural Conservation Zone where ‘The objective is to manage these *in relation to environmental impacts within existing limits of current (housing) development*’.

Because it is only 20 min. from Portland, which is an accommodation centre, access to Cape Bridgewater could be treated similarly to some alpine resorts where accommodation for skiers is off-mountain in order to protect the environment.

NB – Cape Bridgewater (RCZ) now has a Significant Landscape Overlay (gazetted 2014). However it is under threat of over-development through GSC Amendment C 73 ‘inserting’ a map of extended ‘township’ boundaries (to be investigated) into its Planning Scheme, despite strategic advice to the contrary.

In this context, Actions 4.3 b & c (p. 28) identifying ‘vulnerable parts of the landscape’ are urgent. Members consider that they should be prioritized to help prevent the loss of State-significant landscapes and environments to over-development.

5.1 A regional approach to Foreshore Management –

In members’ experience, where Local Governments are also the Foreshore Committees of Management, it is possible that the diversity of LG responsibilities leads to lack of commitment to coastal issues and to conflicts of interest where LGs may encourage development of foreshore facilities that are not coast-dependent (e.g. GSC 2013 proposal for a skate park on Portland’s foreshore, withdrawn after petitions and public meetings showed that the wider community was against it).

The system of coastal consents which was the responsibility of DSE appears to have been relaxed under DEPI. Unfortunately GSC had a costly Master Plan drawn up

for this project, which could have been avoided had it respected VCS 2008 recommendations for 'coastal dependent' uses on foreshores.

5.2 According to Appendix 1 there are currently few Coastal Management Plans (CMPs) developed by LGs in the region (none in Corangamite and Glenelg SCs) while CMAs have accepted CMP responsibility for most estuaries. This may indicate that LGs have been under-resourced to do coastal work in the past; that they have little interest in developing CMPs; and possibly that LGs and other managers have relied on Coastal Action Plans (CAPs) where Planning Schemes are silent on coastal matters.

The 2020 timeline (Table p. 20) to 'ensure there are current CMPs in place' in the region indicates that ongoing 'sub-regional' or municipal CAPs will need to be maintained until CMPs can be resourced and developed.

Members support the need for ongoing sub-regional or municipal CAPS directly relating to Planning Schemes in Appendix 2, p. 32 - Recommendations Nos. 7a, 14a, 20a (from the WCB CAP Review).

5.3 is very vague and its timeline too far into the future to give comfort to communities if there are no CAPs to guide coastal management until 2020.

6.1 Regional-scale Planning for Coastal Flooding and Erosion –

A Web reference (p.21) to the research produced by the Future Coasts Project would assist readers in gaining background information to these issues.

6.3 Members consider that "flooding and erosion actions" may be best dealt with by CMPs rather than developing separate 'adaptation plans.'

Other issues affecting the region –

- The need to maintain environmental and marine health by ensuring that coastal development is contained within existing and resilient settlements (adhering to the VCs Hierarchy of Principles). For example, coastal settlements must be seweraged.
- Bore water is used throughout the region for industry, agriculture, dairying and horticulture. The aquifers flow out to the sea. 'Fracking' of substrata to release gas reserves inland could afflict the quality of water in the aquifers and ultimately marine water quality. Disposal of contaminated water after it has been used under pressure to extract gas is already a problem in NSW; 'flow-back' water contains toxins that must be kept out of rivers and aquifers. HBRC members would encourage a WRCP Action to work with the Environment Protection Authority and CMAs to ensure that aquifers and waterways are not contaminated.
- The south western Victorian coast has had pilot studies in harvesting wave energy, now discontinued. It is possible that technological advances will see other attempts. The area off Portland has been shown to have the most potential for wave energy. It has already been learned that this marine use (including anchor point construction, maintenance and pipelines) could conflict with whale migrations and existing uses – shipping, commercial and recreational fishing. Actions in CAP adaptation plans could be useful in this eventuality.

5. Is there anything else that you think we should consider in revising the draft plan?

The WRCP title does not contain the word 'Action', although it does state on page three, that it *"is a Coastal Action Plan under Section 22 of the Coastal Management Act 1995."*

However, members query whether the document meets the requirements of a Coastal Action Plan as specified in the Act. It states that it identifies and prioritises management actions, but does not mention if it identifies strategic directions for use and development, or detailed planning of the region or part of the region, etc, as required by Section 23 of the Act.

As well, while it mentions Regional Growth Plans, the impacts of their recommendations on the coastal zone are not discussed; since the RGPs are the main regional planning development since CAPs were developed this needs some discussion and action if necessary, such as working with Regional Development Victoria to achieve outcomes.

The WRCP appears to prefer development of CMPs over CAPs, but HBRC members are concerned that CMPs do not require community input as do CAPs. For example, a Foreshore Management Committee operating under a CMP might inappropriately licence commercial development to the detriment of community interests without consultation.

It is the view of the Committee that the WCB should develop new CAPs appropriate to dealing with ongoing and emerging issues on the coast, and providing guidelines to all agencies including COMs, rather than relying on expanded CMPs as appears to be its intent.



On behalf of the HBRC Inc. Committee
19/3/2012