




Premier of Victoria

1 Treasury Place
GPO Box 4912
Melbourne Victoria 3002
DX210753
Telephone: +61 3 9651 5000
Facsimile: +61 3 9651 5054
Email: premier@dpc.vic.gov.au
Internet: www.premier.vic.gov.au

Submission No:	90
Date Received:	24-6-08
Secretary:	

D08/70258

20 JUN 2008

**The Secretary
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Dear Secretary

VICTORIAN SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Thank you for providing Victoria with the opportunity to make a submission to the *Inquiry into Climate Change and Environmental Impacts on Coastal Communities*, which is being conducted by the House of Representatives' Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts.

Victoria has a range of policies and initiatives that are designed to address the major emerging issues in coastal zone planning and management, and is pleased to submit its views to the Committee.

Please find attached Victoria's submission to this important inquiry.

Yours sincerely



**HON ROB HULLS MP
Acting Premier of Victoria**

Submission to
The House of Representatives
Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Committee

for the
Inquiry into climate change
and environmental impacts on coastal communities

From
The State Government of Victoria

Terms of Reference for the Inquiry

- Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum.
- The environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources.
- The impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise.
- Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities.
- Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone.

Contents of Submission

1 Roles and responsibilities for federal, state and local governments on the issues contained in the Terms of Reference.

1.1 Principles for involvement of the Federal Government

1.2 Responsibilities for State and local governments

1.2.1 Key roles for states

1.2.2 Key roles for local governments

2 Opportunities for national leadership

on key issues, particularly in relation to adaptation to climate change on the coast.

2.1 Climate change adaptation

2.1.1 Policy

2.1.2 Research

2.1.3 Funding

2.2 Coastal population growth and sustainable use of coastal resources

2.3 Promoting sustainable coastal communities

2.3.1 Capacity building

2.3.2 Research

3 Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

for national coastal zone management.

3.1 Policy

3.2 Program delivery

3.3 Partnerships

4 Existing policy

used in Victoria to address the issues contained in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

4.1 Climate change policy

4.2 Coastal policy

4.2.1 *Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy (2007) (VCS)*

4.2.2 *Coastal Spaces Initiative*

4.2.3 *Future Coasts project*

4.3 Natural resource management

The House of Representatives
Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts Committee
Inquiry into climate change
and environmental impacts on coastal communities

1 Roles and responsibilities

Governments have a key role in fostering adaptation in climate change. These risks should also be managed by all parts of the community, where businesses, industry and individuals have better knowledge of their own preferences and circumstances. All spheres of government need to establish shared goals and a clear allocation of responsibility.

1.1 Principles for involvement of the Federal Government

The Federal Government has a key role in facilitating relationships across jurisdictions and with major industry. It also has a key role in funding, research, monitoring and in providing benchmarks and consistency nationally.

The basic principle in determining the division between Federal and State responsibilities should be 'subsidiarity', that is that a function should be performed by the lowest level of government that can do it well.

The Federal Government should be involved in coastal and climate change adaptation issues where:

- there are economies of scale, such as developing decision support tools which could be applied by the states.
- coordinated action is required due to significant overlap across state/territory borders, such as digital elevation model data purchase, research and action on marine issues.
- policies and measures require national uniformity or consistency.
- there is an impact to major industries.
- there is potential for risk at a scale that could challenge the resources of individual jurisdictions acting alone.

Section 2 explores some of the actions where the Federal Government could take a lead role.

1.2 Responsibilities for State and local governments

Many coastal and climate change adaptation actions will require local or state responsiveness to suit local conditions from local and state governments. Local government will play a critical role in climate change adaptation as they are closest to the community - it is not the role of the Federal Government to be involved in local planning.

1.2.1 Key roles for states include:

- Preparing land use planning systems for change
- Protecting public assets
- Building knowledge of climate change science and impacts and sharing information between stakeholders
- Identifying and managing risk
- Reducing risk taking

- Facilitating change on a large scale
- Providing emergency response and recovery arrangements
- Increasing local capacity to adapt to climate change

1.2.2 Key roles for local governments include:

- Understanding local vulnerabilities to climate change
- Informing the local community of the impacts of climate change
- Supporting local community groups
- Implementing statutory planning decisions
- Ensuring planning schemes take account of vulnerabilities

2 Opportunities for national leadership

2.1 Climate change adaptation

There is a range of examples across the country where best practice is being implemented on many of these coastal issues and in preparing for climate change. The Victorian Government has developed and is working on a number of significant projects and policies where lessons and methods could be shared between states – see Section 4. There is also likely to be lessons government could learn from industry and business who are implementing best practice adaptation.

The Victorian Government supports continued effort in the areas identified by the *National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management* as coastal issues for national collaboration. The following issue highlights specific opportunities where the Federal Government could take a role of national leadership.

2.1.1 Policy

There are a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories:

- **Adopting a consistent sea level rise scenario** across jurisdictions, agreed to by the states through COAG and the ICAG (Intergovernmental Advisory Group). To support a risk management approach to decision making, a low or conservative scenario should not be considered. An agreed approach is needed to changing the adopted scenario as new information becomes available.
- **Developing a ‘tool box’** of options for policy/planning tools and adaptation strategies to be used by the states and local governments/land managers. States can complement this by:
 - working with local government and land managers to determine the types of tools required.
 - analysing planning systems for any existing tools which could be used or enhanced as climate change planning/adaptation tools.
 - leading stakeholders through a process of determining a road map for the development of planning tools, policy and adaptation strategies.
- **Forging close relationships with major industry, including the insurance sector.** Government could benefit from sharing knowledge and drawing on the contributions of industry. These partnerships could also ensure that policy and local level decision making is developed in a timely way that meets the needs for industry to plan for management in risk zones.

2.1.2 Research

There is a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories:

- **Better coordination of a high resolution digital elevation model data capture program.** The Commonwealth should take a lead to make sure that the best DEM data is available for Australia's coastal regions, supporting and taking advantage of States' (eg Victoria, Queensland, NSW) investment in high resolution data.
- **Providing support on best practice methodology for coastal vulnerability mapping at a state and local scale,** for consistency between states/territories and potentially supported by the provision of a pool of experts.
- **Sharing all information collected for the National First Pass Vulnerability Assessment.** There are limitations to the usefulness of this assessment at a state and local scale, however some of the GIS products developed for it will be very useful.
- **Securing access to international and national scientific research for state needs** by attracting international scientists to Australia (recognising that the pool for expertise is small) through partnerships with research centres and the CSIRO. Investment in Australian based coastal and marine climate research and modelling is necessary to understand impacts likely to occur in our region.
- **Continuing support for the national tidal data monitoring network** system at key sites around Australia as a means of monitoring sea level rise.
- **Leading and coordinating research into marine impacts** of climate change in partnership with the states.

2.1.3 Funding

There are a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories:

- **Providing financial support and policy and engineering options** for dealing with major 'retreat' and 'protect' options on the coast such as moving settlements and protecting large cities and assets (such as major ports and tourist attractions). This could also involve:
 - Supporting the development of strategic adaptation management options available to state and local government to support the long term strategic planning management objectives of state and local governments relevant to settlement planning.
 - Undertaking detailed investigation into settlement and city scale protection 'engineering' management options likely to be required into the future.
- **Providing incentives for early action through funding.** Early action on adapting to climate change and supporting better decision making could minimise emergency relief funds potentially required from the Federal Government in the future.

2.2 Coastal population growth and sustainable use of coastal resources

There is a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories:

- **Investment in research and monitoring** for marine, coastal and estuarine biodiversity and its key threats, recognising the increasing pressures of marine ecosystems health from increased urbanisation and the intensification of agriculture and commercial development within the coastal hinterland.

- **Promoting large scale and local scale connectivity of habitats** across public and private land. States and local governments can encourage landholders on private land to protect & rehabilitate remnant coastal habitats through a range of mechanisms.
- **Encouraging investment and research into biolink zones** (across public and private land) to provide space for coastal species and ecosystems to “self adapt” to climatic changes through recolonisation and natural selection.

2.3 Promoting sustainable coastal communities

2.3.1 Capacity building

There is a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories:

- **Facilitating the development of a strong concept of stewardship** with industries & communities who are utilising the marine and coastal environment, entrenched in the principles of intergenerational equity.
- **Continuing and strengthening education and awareness** along the coast through programs such as Coastcare. There is potential to broaden this program on increasing skills and capacity of coastal and marine managers to increase capacity for climate change adaptation.
- **Supporting emergency management planning** within coastal communities with an emphasis on increasing community participation and volunteer capacity.
- **Supporting emergency management awareness raising** within the community.

2.3.2 Research

There is a range of opportunities for action where the Federal Government could assist states/territories in supporting research that seeks to better understand coastal communities and their needs and relationships with climate change, such as:

- Undertaking comprehensive assessments such as a summer time census to better understand and manage increasing population levels, demands and seasonal fluctuations.
- Research into new models for long-term planning and decision-making that take account of a shifting risk (sea level).
- Supporting the continued development, utilisation and application of Integrated Coastal Zone Management to support decision making.
- Understanding the effects climate change will have on culturally sensitive sites across the coast.
- Establishing regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms and tools to assist in understanding settlement impacts and the environment.
- Understanding the likely implications of climate change impacts on existing emergency management arrangements.

3 Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

The Victorian Government acknowledges the work to date so far by the Federal Government in developing the *National Cooperative Approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management* and supports the continuation of efforts to implement it across the states/territories. This could be strengthened with a definitive structure in place at a national level to support its delivery.

3.1 Policy

While the national framework is considered adequate for the purposes of ICZM implementation, policy recognition and leadership is needed on adaptation to climate change in the coastal zone. The Federal Government has a key role in facilitating partnerships and showing leadership on issues of national importance. Such a policy could replace the climate change components of the existing *Framework*, continuing to implement actions on the same issues, but with a stronger program of delivery from a departmental level.

3.2 Program delivery

Delivery of programs to address the issues outlined in these terms of reference should continue from all levels of government with the community, as outlined in Section 1. One model of delivery is unlikely to be suitable for all jurisdictions. Where there is overlap in program objectives, opportunities for shared delivery should definitely be explored.

3.3 Partnerships

The Intergovernmental Coastal Advisory Group (ICAG) should be maintained and strengthened, where the Federal Government has a key role in facilitating cross-jurisdictional partnerships. Better resourcing for this group from a departmental level may assist in achieving outcomes at a national level for this group.

4 Existing Policy

Victoria has a range of policies and initiatives that are designed to address the major emerging issues in coastal zone planning and management.

4.1 Climate change policy

The Victorian Government released a summit discussion paper in April at the Victorian Climate Change Summit to explore the development of a climate change framework in Victoria. The paper discusses roles and responsibilities for the Victorian Government in relation to reducing emissions and climate change adaptation and how the Government can progress policy on this issue.

4.2 Coastal policy and initiatives

4.2.1 *Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy (2007) (VCS)*

The VCS establishes climate change as a key issue requiring immediate action and a precautionary approach to planning on the coast. It also sets new directions for marine policy, in the absence of a marine strategy in the State. It encourages the continuation of mechanisms such as joint membership on regional coastal boards and catchment management authorities (CMAs) to encourage better coordination.

4.2.2 *Coastal Spaces Initiative*

Victoria's *Coastal Spaces Initiative* 2006 created policy and recommendations that aim to 'preserve' the spaces between settlements while recognising the service needs for local and regional communities. This policy requires that local municipalities create settlement boundaries around coastal settlements to minimise lineal coastal development and to protect the character of smaller hamlets and villages.

4.2.3 *Future Coasts* project

Victoria is undertaking a major project, *Future Coasts*, to develop comprehensive vulnerability assessments for the whole Victorian coastline worth in excess of \$8 million. This project will

also develop planning and policy guidance and adaptation strategies for decision making. The Victorian State Government will be working closely with land managers and local government on this work.

4.3 Natural resource management

The regional delivery model of the former Natural Heritage Trust program assisted in developing stronger links between catchment, coastal and ocean jurisdictions. However, recognition of the fundamentally different approaches between catchment, coastal and ocean management still requires attention as the coast is largely a public asset while catchment management generally deals with private landholder interests.

The green paper "*Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change*" has recently been released inviting discussion. Its focus is conserving and restoring ecosystems to ensure our land, seas and waterways are healthy, resilient and productive.

Existing programs such as Coast Action continue to work closely with CMAs to deliver joint Australian Government and State Government Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) outcomes, particularly in areas of national significance, eg. Ramsar areas.