



Victorian Coastal Council

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Secretary:	

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

Dear Secretary

Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities

Thank you for the opportunity for the Victorian Coastal Council to provide a submission to the Federal Government's Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities. The matters this Inquiry will consider are of core interest to the Victorian Coastal Council and our detailed responses to the Committee Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are attached.

The Victorian Coastal Council is established under the provisions of the Victorian *Coastal Management Act 1995*. It is the peak independent advisory body on coastal issues in Victoria. Its role is to provide strategic direction and improve the co-ordination of coastal planning and management in Victoria. This is substantially achieved through the development of the Victorian Coastal Strategy on behalf of Government.

The Council thanks the Federal Government in its initiative for setting up this Inquiry to better understand the unique set of impacts that will affect Australia's coastal communities. The Council considers the magnitude of the issues being addressed to exceed the capacity of any one tier of government, and that only a collaborative partnership approach will be effective in addressing future impacts.

The Victorian Coastal Council is fulfilling its role in the development of the 3rd generation of the State's Victorian Coastal Strategy. Substantial reference is made to this 'draft in development' in response to the Committees Terms of Inquiry.

Key matters that the Victorian Coastal Council would like to see the Inquiry consider in its recommendations for Federal Government involvement are:

1. National leadership responding to both the international and regional scale
2. National Research Centre - nationally resourced investigation and research into sea level rise and maintaining centralised information, including improved exchange of information between National/State
3. Funding for the breadth of research facets to the problems being addressed by the Inquiry
4. Forward Planning Infrastructure Replacement Strategy and Infrastructure Fund to respond to loss and change

5. Economic impacts on coastal communities and multiple impact of loss of communities on the National economy
6. Providing guidance to COAG to assist with its effectiveness
7. Developing a National Planning Framework that provides for sustainability by managing growth and managing impacts.

The Victorian Coastal Council would also like to lend its support the following submissions which are also being made to the Inquiry:

- Gippsland Regional Coastal Board
- Western Regional Coastal Board
- Central Regional Coastal Board
- The Victorian Government
- National Sea Change Taskforce

The Council would also wish to appear before the Committee to speak to its submission if the opportunity is made available. At this time it may be that the drafting of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008, which is substantially referenced in this submission, may have been finalised and can be presented as such.

If you have any further enquiries concerning this submission, or would like to contact the Victorian Coastal Council, please contact Mr David Harper, Executive Officer, on (03) 9637 9456.

Yours sincerely



Libby Mears
Chair



Victorian
Coastal
Council

VICTORIAN COASTAL COUNCIL

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**

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.

The Victorian Coastal Council

The Victorian Coastal Council is established under the provisions of the Victorian *Coastal Management Act 1995*.

It is the peak independent advisory body on coastal issues in Victoria. Its role is to provide strategic direction and improve the co-ordination of coastal planning and management in Victoria.

The Council is accountable to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change.

The functions of the Council are:

- To undertake statewide strategic coastal planning
- To prepare and submit to the Minister a draft Victorian Coastal Strategy
- To provide advice to the Minister
- To facilitate the operation of Regional Coastal Boards
- To monitor the development of Coastal Action Plans
- To coordinate the implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy and Coastal Action Plans
- To prepare and publish guidelines
- To liaise with and encourage the cooperation of Government departments, public authorities, municipal councils, industry, community groups and persons and bodies involved in the planning, management and use of the coast in furthering the objectives of the Act
- To provide opportunities for the public and interested groups to be informed of and involved in the work of the Council
- To encourage the work of volunteers in using and conserving coastal resources
- To give consideration to the needs of Aborigines and other interested groups in relation to the coast.

The Vision for the Victorian Coast is:

A biologically and culturally rich, diverse coastal, estuarine and marine environment for its protection, sustainable use and enjoyment today and for future generations.

Addressing the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

1. Existing policies and programs related to coastal zone management, taking in the catchment-coast-ocean continuum

The Victorian Coastal Strategy

The Victorian Coastal Strategy is developed by the Victorian Coastal Council for the Government who then subsequently makes the decision to approve the Strategy as Victorian policy. The Council is currently working on the third generation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy. The first being in 1997, the second in 2002, and the draft released last year in 2007.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy offers a multi-generational vision for the coast for the next 100 years and beyond. The strategy addresses the Government's environmental policy commitment for coastal estuarine and marine environments. To achieve this, the Strategy has a strong integrated philosophy based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). It includes a robust hierarchy of principles with correlating proactive policies and actions to achieve this.

The Strategy applies to all Victorian coastal waters (i.e. the sea and seabed to the state limit – three nautical miles or 5.5 km off shore) and all land, both public and private, which is directly influenced by the sea or directly influences the coastline and coastal waters.

The strategy gives direction for planning and managing the impacts of activities on and in the:

- Catchment – up to the top of the catchment.
- Coastal hinterland – on private and public land next to and within critical views of the foreshore and near shore marine environment.
- Foreshore – or coastal Crown land 200m from the high water mark.
- Marine environment – includes the near shore environment, the seabed and marine waters out to the state limit or 5.5 km.

Understanding coastal and marine physical and ecological processes is essential to effectively plan and manage the coast. Ecologically sustainable development needs strongly coordinated approaches to integrated coastal zone management, ecosystem based management and adaptive management.

The Strategy is based on a hierarchy of 4 principles that set the foundation of the Strategy and guides strategic planning and decisions about development on coastal private and Crown land, as well as in estuarine and marine waters. They are derived from section 15 of the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and included in Clause 15.08 of the State Planning Policy Framework in all planning schemes.

Firstly, the principles establish the need to protect significant environmental and cultural features, based upon a sound understanding of the coastal values, vulnerabilities and risks.

Secondly, they then reflect on the importance of having appropriate integrated coastal policies, plans and strategies that respond to the major issues affecting the coast. The principles then stipulate that coastal resources are to be used in ways that are sustainable, that resources are not to be harmed by over exploitation or depletion below renewable levels.

When and where these principles are met, development along the coast and in the adjacent estuarine and marine waters may be considered.

Decision-making should be consistent with the hierarchy of principles, which are:

1. Provide for the protection of significant environmental and cultural values.
2. Undertake integrated planning and provide direction for the future.
3. Ensure the sustainable use of natural coastal resources.

When the above principles have been considered and addressed:

4. Ensure development on the coast is located within existing modified and resilient environments where the demand for development is evident and the impact requires management.

Our Key Issues

Each of the Coastal Strategies developed in Victoria has had a particular focus to improve and better manage the coast. The first Strategy in 1997 set up a framework for coastal management and decision making. The second Strategy in 2002 supported the development of a network of Marine National Parks and Sanctuary areas, and identified the project "Coastal Spaces" with the aim of addressing coastal township growth and coastal landscape protection.

In the current draft Strategy there are 3 significant coastal issues which the Strategy focuses on addressing. They are:

1. Climate Change
2. Population and Growth
3. Marine Ecosystem Health

The focus areas of 'Climate Change' and 'Population and Growth' bear particular relevance to this Federal Inquiry. More so given that they are 2 of our significant issues, in combination, they identify a problem which without effective control and adaptation measures being seriously considered now, will leave a costly legacy for future generations.

2. The environmental impacts of coastal population growth and mechanisms to promote sustainable use of coastal resources.

Victoria has experienced unprecedented population growth along the coast in the last 10 years. This rapid population growth combined with increasing levels of tourism in coastal areas is placing enormous pressure on Victoria's coastal communities and fragile coastal environments.

Coastal growth can lead to biodiversity and habitat loss, water degradation (coastal waters, wetlands, lakes and rivers) coastal habitat loss, damage to wetlands, the introduction of pest plants and animals, coastal erosion, destruction of coastal ecosystems, loss of cultural heritage, conversion of productive agricultural land and impacts on scenic coastal landscapes, views and vistas.

Socially, it can lead to pressure on the special values and character of urban coastal areas and settlements, the very reason why people have chosen to move to or visit a place. This pressure is particularly intense in coastal areas experiencing rapid change. It can also lead to community instability associated with a high turnover of residents, the polarisation between existing residents and newcomers, who are often more affluent and housing affordability pressures due to the greater purchasing power of new residents and increasing demand for housing.

It can also lead to infrastructure pressures including pressure on water supply, waste disposal and sewage systems, roads, health and aged services and higher levels of waste generation.

Key objectives the Victorian Coastal Council is developing to address this situation are:

1. Plan and manage future patterns of change along the coast to respond to the impacts associated with growth in population and visitation to achieve the sustainable use of coastal resources.
2. Respect the special values and character of urban coastal areas and coastal settlements.
3. Strengthen community understanding and capacity to respond to future patterns of change, particularly those communities experiencing rapid change.

The draft Strategy contains policies and actions to direct development away from sensitive coastal areas and significant landscapes and manage it within existing settlements and within 'Activity Nodes' and 'Recreation Nodes'. Directing development to these locations:

- Reduces the overall impact of use and development and protects more sensitive areas.
- Maintains Victoria's unique coastal landscape values.
- Contains use and development to certain locations.
- Properly establishes boundaries for development.
- Assists in managing and planning for development pressures.
- Guides infrastructure investment for permanent and visiting populations.
- Provides certainty for communities and developers.

The draft Strategy focuses on protecting the coastal environment and its sustainable use. Coastal Spaces 2006 provided clear direction on managing coastal growth pressures by consolidating urban development to existing settlements (Activity Nodes) and protecting non-urban landscapes between settlements.

The draft strategy recognises the importance of Coastal Spaces 2006 and the need to accelerate the incorporation of coastal settlement boundaries and significant landscape overlays into planning schemes to provide the necessary statutory basis to support decision making. This strategy also recognises the need to support local government to undertake this critical task, whether it is funding, providing guidance and/or assistance with implementation processes.

At present there is no strategic policy case that identifies a need and/or supports the establishment of new settlements on Victoria's coast. Canal estates are also discouraged in the Strategy as they often have major adverse impacts on the host estuary and cause the loss of estuarine habitat, wetlands or saltmarsh, and subsequent continuing pollution and disturbance of estuarine waters by urban runoff, boating activities, etc. Canal estates, like waterfront developments in general, also have adverse effects on wader populations (loss of habitat, disturbance of nesting birds).

Coastal Spaces 2006 defined the role and function of the 87 existing coastal settlements outside the greater Melbourne region. These settlements range from regional cities and district towns, to small hamlets and rural district settlements.

Coastal Spaces 2006 also recognised that each coastal settlement in spatial terms is different. Some have significant capacity to accommodate future growth and others have moderate spatial growth capacity or low spatial growth capacity due to limitations associated with the need to protect environmentally sensitive values, have limited services or development constraints.

The Coastal Spaces 2006 Settlement Framework provides:

- Direction on which settlements have capability to sustain and support spatial growth.
- Identifies settlements which need to be managed within their coastal environments.
- Creates a framework to help guide infrastructure investment.

It also recognises the key relationships and connections between coastal and hinterland settlements. Hinterland settlements play an important role in many localities by helping to accommodate demand for residential and other types of urban related development and play an important role in coastal settlement planning.

Understanding the spatial growth potential across a region provides the guidance required to direct local settlement planning effort and expectation. This approach to planning in coastal regions is important as it:

- Focuses urban development to existing settlements and discourages linear and isolated development proliferation within the coastal environment.
- Promotes long term support for non-urban uses and protection of natural landscapes through directing urban pressure to existing settlements.
- Facilitates a more considered and planned response to the likely coastal impacts of climate change.
- Makes the best use of resources.
- Minimises the extent of human habitation impacts on coastal natural values.
- Promotes diversity in and of settlements that support healthy communities with a strong local focus and identity.
- Protects the underlying value and attractiveness of the coast that is important to sustain tourism and other recreational values.

Climate change impacts of sea level rise, increasing storm events and coastal erosion in the future will have a critical impact on the planning and management of many settlements, potentially making some settlements unviable. Settlement vulnerability to climate change presents a short, medium and long term strategic planning and management issue.

Any planning to accommodate future growth of settlements must be based on vulnerability studies and the best current and emerging science. Application of the precautionary principle to guide decision making is important where emerging information supports an increase in exposure to risk. Minimising exposure to increased risk is an important element of managing climate change impacts.

3. The impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise.

The National Sea Change Taskforce has identified two primary threats associated with climate change for coastal communities in Australia. The first is the physical exposure of many coastal settlements to increased natural hazards, which threaten human safety, lifestyle, physical assets, biodiversity and tourism and agriculture based economies. The second is the particular socio-economic profile of coastal communities; many have higher levels of social vulnerability, reducing their capacity to adapt to climate change risk.

Adapting to these risks will be a long-term challenge. Adaptation options such as redesign, rebuilding, or relocation of capital assets; protection of beaches, dunes and infrastructure; land use and development control; and retreat plans must be investigated for all areas along the coast.

In the shorter term, modelling and greater understanding of the potential risk is necessary. Possible responses in the future might include the need for climate change risk assessments for all new developments near the coast and prohibiting development in certain areas.

The Victorian Coastal Council is working on the development of a range of policies and actions to help prepare Victoria's coastal communities for the impacts associated with climate change. We need to understand the environmental, social and economic impact and risk associated with climate change. We need to ensure that up to date information, adequate resources and guidance regarding climate change impacts is available to coastal planners and managers so that they can incorporate adaptation and mitigation considerations in land use planning and management frameworks that are able to respond to unexpected changes or new scientific information as it comes to hand.

Policy and action in development by the Victorian Coastal Council currently to address the impact of climate change on coastal areas and strategies to deal with climate change adaptation, particularly in response to projected sea level rise, are to:

- Apply the precautionary principle to planning and management decision making when considering the risks associated with climate change.
- Plan for and manage the impacts and risks of climate change.
 - Ensuring that development is only undertaken on land which is not subject to, or which can be appropriately protected from, coastal hazards such as:
 - inundation by storm tides or combined storm tides and stormwater;
 - flooding (both river and coastal inundation)
 - geotechnical risk (land slide)
 - coastal erosion; and
 - sand drift.
 - Minimising risk exposure by avoiding development within the primary sand dunes and in low lying coastal areas.

- Supporting the resilience of the coastal environment and maintenance of biodiversity by requiring the revegetation of land abutting coastal reserves using local provenance indigenous species.
 - Ensuring that all new development is protected from future sea level rise and storm surge events and will not require, now or in the future, public expenditure on protection of the development or the environment.
 - Recognising that climate change should not be a barrier to investment in coastal infrastructure provided the design life is within the time frame to potential impact.
- Ensure planning and management frameworks are prepared for changes in local conditions as a result of climate change and can respond quickly to best available current and emerging science.

Actions that will help support this policy are:

- Require all new development to be located and designed to allow for predicted sea level rise as agreed by the government (and revised as scientific evidence becomes available) more frequent storm events of greater intensity and subsequent erosion.
- Work with government to establish an appropriate mechanism and/or instrument to provide the necessary legislative basis to support policy and decision making in relation to the risks and impacts of climate change.
- Prepare an accepted methodology for undertaking of local vulnerability assessments to support planning and management decision making.
- Distribute the Future Coasts Program vulnerability assessment information to all planners and managers regional/local.
- Apply the findings of the Future Coasts program in the development of a coastal vulnerability response plan
- Prioritise the planning and management response and adaptation strategies to these vulnerable areas, such as protect, redesign, rebuild, elevate, relocate and retreat
- Review existing planning provisions and their applicability having regard to current and emerging scientific data on climate changes risks and impacts.
- Investigate the need for new planning provisions to address climate changes risks and impacts.
- Develop a 'tool box' of strategies, planning provisions (including model provisions for inclusion in planning schemes) and other responses for local government and coastal managers to use in their assessment of the impact and risk of climate change to the coastline.

- Ensure Coastal Action Plans and three-year management plans under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and other regional responses consider the impacts of climate change.
- Develop planners and managers capacity to respond to climate change risks and impacts.
- Actively encourage the collaboration between neighbouring local councils in responding to climate change.

4. Mechanisms to promote sustainable coastal communities.

The Victorian Coastal Council in working towards promotion of sustainable communities determined that it was necessary to help describe some key indicators of what a sustainable coastal community might look like. The following table, as a work in progress, highlights key elements under the topic areas of social and cultural wellbeing, economic, development and environment.

A sustainable coastal community is one which encourages

Social and cultural wellbeing

- A sense of community and valued lifestyle even in communities where many residents are not permanent.
- A well informed, engaged community which participates in decisions and actions that affect them.
- Historic buildings used and maintained and significant cultural heritage sites protected and celebrated.
- High quality coastal public infrastructure which is well designed and maintained and utilised as a community asset all year round.
- The promotion of walking and cycling within and between settlements through well planned integrated pathways including quality connections along foreshores and to public spaces.

Economic

- A healthy, diverse economy supporting the requirements of local, regional and visitor populations.
- A variety of holiday and tourist accommodation which is utilised through-out the year.
- Innovative tourism, business and rural activities that demonstrate sustainability practices and do not compromise the integrity and diversity of natural assets.
- Public transport designed to meet local and regional needs and to support links between coastal towns, regional centres and key tourism sites.

Development

- Consolidated urban development within settlements that have capacity for growth and the protection of non-urban landscapes between settlements.
- Building design and development that minimises the impact on natural ecosystems, landscapes and native flora and fauna.
- Building design and development that is sensitive and responsive to the coastal character of the settlement and significant landscapes, features and values.
- Development that is set back from the coast and low lying areas to accommodate coastal features, vegetation and climate change risks and impacts.
- Environmentally sensitive design in residential development and subdivision that seeks to minimise the development impact and footprint.
- Water sensitive design to avoid discharge of waste and storm water into the coastal reserve.
- Incorporation of innovative water sensitive design and practice which supports improved processes of waste and storm water management and avoids direct discharge into sensitive rivers, coastal reserves and estuaries.
- Diversity of housing choice to support more affordable entry points into home ownership and enables older residents to down size their housing needs and remain within their community..

Environment

- The protection and conservation of significant natural and cultural features and values.
- The maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity to deliver healthier waterways and coastal, estuarine and marine environments.
- The contribution of non-urban landscapes as significant agricultural, cultural and landscape value and resource
- The use of local provenance indigenous species in landscaping and revegetation to enhance urban environments, provide habitat and support the resilience of the coast.
- The need to avoid, negate, or offset the impact of the development on greenhouse gas emissions.

To give effect to the key outcomes desired as features of sustainable coastal communities, Council is working on the following policy areas to ensure coastal settlements and growth are appropriately planned and managed for by:

- Ensuring planning authorities and responsible authorities have regard to Coastal Spaces 2006, the Great Ocean Road Strategy, 2004 and the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study, 2006 when preparing and reviewing coastal planning schemes.
- Support a network of diverse settlements as outlined within the Coastal Settlement Framework to provide for a broader range of opportunities and diversity.
- Ensure that the coastal growth management planning objectives that are identified are strategically considered as part of individual settlement planning processes.
- Identifying coastal settlement boundaries as part of the settlement planning process, consistent with the *Coastal Settlement Boundaries Planning Practice Note*.
- Directing residential and other urban development and infrastructure within defined settlement boundaries of existing settlements that are capable of accommodating growth.
- Avoiding linear development along the coastal edge and major transport routes and within rural landscapes to preserve areas between settlements for non-urban use.
- Maintain existing non-urban breaks between all coastal settlements to support community identity, sense of place and limit urban sprawl.
- Protecting visually significant landscapes, views and vistas in coastal areas through the application of the recommendations of the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study 2006.
- Ensuring sustainable water supply, storm water and sewerage for all development.
- Ensuring the incorporation of ecological sustainable design techniques in developments, such as energy and materials efficiency and water sensitive urban design.

- Retain non-urban uses between settlements and protect visually significant landscapes, views and vistas.
- Discourage canal estates.

Actions that will help to support this policy are:

- Continue to promote a network of regional and local settlements.
 - Implement the Coastal Settlement Framework as part of Coastal Spaces 2006 having regard to the best available information on sea level rise and climate change risks and impacts and consultation with the community.
 - Incorporate settlement boundaries into planning schemes by 2010.
 - Finalise Urban Design Frameworks and Structure Plans in relevant planning schemes.
 - Support a Residential Land Supply and Demand Study for Bass Coast Shire.
- Investigate and provide information to planners and managers of the impacts of population growth and peak seasonal populations in coastal settlements on the carrying capacity of coastal Crown land and the environmental and infrastructure implications of these fluctuations.
- Investigate options to reduce economic, environmental and social impacts of old and inappropriate subdivisions along the coast which are environmentally vulnerable and pose fire and health risks.
 - Target priority for infrastructure and innovative solutions in environmental hotspots where the provisions for potable water and reticulated sewerage services are not present.
 - Promote on-going regional coordination and communication mechanisms to maximise knowledge transfer and practice around coastal change management and planning.
- The Victorian Coastal Council to work with the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association to develop a Coastal Strategy and Policy Induction Program for coastal councillors.
- The Victorian Coastal Council to continue promoting and supporting regional integrated co-ordination models as a mechanism for information sharing and collaboration.
- Identify mechanisms and strategies to strengthen community resilience and social cohesion and to preserve a sense of place, particularly within communities experiencing rapid change due to the sea change phenomena
- Undertake impact assessments of major infrastructure development adjacent to coastal communities so that responsible authorities and local governments can develop appropriate planning responses
- Encourage economic development research targeted to the specific needs of small to medium sized communities situated within highly sensitive environmental contexts

- Develop a planning research program to address the following:
 - Fluctuating population levels and the need to build a better understanding for management purposes.
 - 'Seachange' and the effects of an aging coastal population and services delivery relationships to help support future iterations and development of the settlement management objectives and framework.
 - Understanding land tenure and changes in property ownership and development patterns to determine and better understand the organic nature of coastal settlement growth dynamics.
 - Monitoring and reporting on land availability, in particular in settlements with high spatial growth capacity within 1.5 hrs of Melbourne
 - The predicted impacts of climate change on built coastal environments, including economic and social implications

- Protect non-urban coastal landscapes by:
 - Incorporating the recommendations of the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study into relevant coastal planning schemes.
 - Continuing to support the Municipal Association of Victoria in devising a methodological approach for undertaking rural strategic analysis.

- Review coastal planning schemes to ensure appropriate application and use of policies, zones and overlays to retain the non urban areas between settlements.

- Produce updated siting and design guidelines that promote good architecture and sustainable and sympathetic siting and design and addresses the following specific issues:
 - Incorporating energy and materials efficiency and water sensitive urban design techniques, including solar access, natural light and ventilation, use of local materials and services, rainwater capture and water recycling.
 - Coastal culture and the appropriateness of new built form for the existing character of the place;
 - Protecting significant views of waterways and from waterways;
 - The coastal environment and coastal landscapes as a dominant setting;
 - The spaces around buildings and maintaining the coastal landscape between towns along the coast, avoiding 'ribbon' development;
 - Continuity of the built and natural public realms;
 - Effects of extreme coastal weather on the built environment and outdoor spaces; and
 - Effects of different use-patterns and seasonal occupation.

- Prohibit residential canal estates to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected by the creation of new developments of this kind.

5. Governance and institutional arrangements for the coastal zone

The planning and management of Victoria's coastal and marine environment is the responsibility of many parties. It is Government's responsibility in the first instance for and on behalf of the people of Victoria. Through government agencies with legislated responsibilities to protect, conduct or control activity. Through to appointed managers with defined responsibilities. To the Victorian community either as organised groups or as individuals.

Victoria is fortunate to have the *Coastal Management Act 1995* which has now been operating for over 10 years. The Act provides the key legislative basis for the Council, the Regional Coastal Boards and the development of the Victorian Coastal Strategy.

The Act:

- a) Establishes the Victorian Coastal Council
- b) Establishes the 3 Regional Coastal Boards (Western, Central and Gippsland)
- c) Provides for the co-ordinated strategic planning and management for the Victorian coast
- d) Provides for the preparation and implementation of Coastal Action Plans, management plans for coastal Crown land including sea-bed
- e) Provides a co-ordinated approach to approvals for the use and development of coastal Crown land including sea-bed

The Victorian Coastal Council has the task of working to define a vision for Victoria's coast and providing clear direction on how that vision is to be realised.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy is the primary document for coastal and marine management in Victoria. Its purpose is to direct all planning and management that affects the Victorian coast. The Act requires that all land managers must take all reasonable steps to give effect to the Strategy.

The Victorian Coastal Council's role is to co-ordinate the implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy and Coastal Action Plans.

The Regional Coastal Boards have responsibility for development of Coastal Action Plans within their respective regions. Coastal Action Plans are the primary tool for the planning and management of significant coastal and marine areas or issues. Coastal Action Plans are endorsed by the Minister and published in the Government Gazette. Coastal Action Plans must identify strategic directions and objectives for use and development in the region, and must provide for detailed planning of the region or part thereof.

Many other pieces of Victorian Legislation also have a significant function in ensuring the effective planning and management of the Victorian coastal and marine environment. They include:

- Department of Sustainability and Environment – sustainable management of public land, water resources, climate change, bushfires, forests and ecosystems
- Department of Primary Industries – sustainable development of primary industries including fisheries, agriculture, forests, petroleum, minerals and energy
- Department of Planning and Community Development – land use planning and environmental assessment
- PV – management of National Parks, reserves, public land and marine areas
- EPA – prevents and controls pollution on land, in water and air
- Department of Infrastructure – provides essential infrastructure such as commercial ports, channels and roads

Local Government is the critical third tier of government, which is the closest to the community and environment, and is a key coastal planner and manager in Victoria. In its planning capacity, which is provided for by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, Local Government has the responsibility for applying the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF), and developing its own Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF), for the municipal area it has responsibilities for and in consultation with the communities it represents. Through these tools, Local Government drive planning and decision making that affects the Victorian coast, particularly as it applies to the private realm.

Committees of Management on the Victorian coast are an established delegated management set up that are provided for and appointed by the provisions of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*. They include Parks Victoria, Local Government, Port Authorities, and skills based appointed committees with important community representation. The Victorian Coastal Strategy, in concert with Coastal Action Plans and or management plans are the required tools to effective decision making for these committees.

Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) have primary responsibility for catchment planning in Victoria. This authority is provided for by the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. This Strategy applies the principle of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) as its foundation which relies on good catchment management. The understanding and role of Catchment Management Authorities in achieving catchment health is vital to a healthy marine and coastal environment. Through the development of Regional Catchment Strategies (RCS) and Regional Catchment Investment Plans (RCIP), the Catchment Management Authorities have a key responsibility to deliver on marine and coastal protection through effective programs.

Peak bodies, interest groups and universities are also key players in informing coastal and marine planning and management in Victoria. These groups provide good representation of community attitude, have knowledge to share, and contribute to direction setting and decision making. Encouraging these groups to develop and build the best information base they can and encouraging planners and managers to make the opportunity to consult and involve these groups, is an important process to be supported in Victoria's approach to the management of its coast.

Community Groups and Volunteers are vital contributors to coastal management in Victoria. Their passion, dedication, and community and environment spirit help deliver many improvements to the coastal and marine environment that government would have difficulty fulfilling.