



COASTAL PLANNING FACT SHEET

MANAGING COASTAL HAZARDS AND THE COASTAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the next 100 years, our climate is likely to change as a result of global warming. Climate change will impact the Victorian coastline in many ways. However some climate changes are already occurring.

While greenhouse gas emission reductions both globally and locally can help slow the rate, climate change cannot be prevented entirely. Changes such as temperature, rainfall and sea levels will occur to differing extents in different parts of Victoria throughout the 21st century and probably beyond. Victoria needs to adapt to these changes. Adapting to long-term climate change will also contribute to our resilience to extreme events as well as to natural fluctuations in climate.

Within coastal areas increased flood risk, and greater frequency and intensity of storms are likely to occur into the future. Informed and proactive planning now can help minimise exposure to impacts and maximise benefits and minimise the direct and indirect costs of climate change.

Victorian Coastal Strategy, 2008

The Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) 2008 is the State Government's policy commitment for coastal, estuarine and marine environments in Victoria. It provides a long-term vision for the planning, management and sustainable use of our coast. It contains the policies and actions Victorians will need to implement over the next five years to help achieve that vision. The VCS directly responds to the challenges of climate change, coastal population growth and marine ecological integrity.

Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise is the result of a combination of factors caused by global warming of the atmosphere. Warming contributes to the thermal expansion of the ocean and melting of the polar ice caps.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently indicated that:

- Global average sea level has risen since 1961 at an average rate of 1.8 millimetres per year and since 1993 at 3.1 millimetres per year.
- Annual average ice extent has shrunk by 2.7 per cent per decade since 1978.

Based on current scientific projections by the IPCC, the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 identifies the need to:

Plan for sea-level rise of not less than 0.8 metres by 2100, and allow for the combined effects of tides, storm surges, coastal processes and local conditions such as topography and geology when assessing risks and impacts associated with climate change.

Coastal hazards and the coastal impacts of climate change

With the exception of long term sea level rise, climate change is not likely to introduce new types of coastal hazards. However, climate change is likely to increase the frequency, intensity and extent of existing coastal hazards.

This means that for some parts of the Victorian coast, climate change impacts are likely to exacerbate coastal erosion and inundation, further increasing the impacts on existing and future coastal communities and development.

Victorian Government's Future Coasts Program

Future Coasts, led by the Department of Sustainability and Environment is seeking to provide a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of the risk of climate change to the Victorian coastline by the end of 2010. The program will map areas that are physically vulnerable to climate change impacts along the coast and develop decision-making support tools. The program is part of the Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Program.

Land Use Planning decisions and the coastal impacts of climate change

Land-use planning decisions often have long-term implications because of the long life span and permanency of use and development such as residential growth areas, buildings, roads or utilities.

Planning approvals should be informed by appropriate information. Each situation will be different and will require information to suit the locational variabilities and type of proposal. Taking a precautionary approach to planning new development, infrastructure and services to avoid coastal hazards over their intended lifespan is a responsible long term approach.

Development should seek to respond appropriately through, siting and design and other measures to avoid and be resilient to future impacts.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this mean no more development along the coast?

No – coastal growth and development will continue. Normal planning approvals are required, but development proposals must demonstrate that the future risks posed by coastal climate change impacts have been addressed. Assessment of proposals will need take into account potential impacts as part of the normal decision making process. Proposals should seek to respond appropriately through siting, design and other measures to avoid and be resilient to future impacts.

How will the Victorian Coastal Strategy be given effect to in Planning Schemes?

The Strategy is given effect to in Planning Schemes through clause 15.08 'Coastal Areas' of the State Planning Policy Framework.

How should sea level rise be considered as part of planning schemes?

Sea level rise should be considered as part of strategic long term planning for the coast. Coastal climate change impacts should be considered when reviewing Municipal Strategic Statements and in the development of land use planning strategies.

What does this mean for rezoning of land?

Planning Scheme Amendments that seek to rezone land from non-urban to urban will require appropriate investigations to be undertaken. These investigations should be used to identify potential risks and to inform the nature, design and siting of the proposed use or development proposed by an amendment.

What does this mean for Planning Permits?

As is currently the case, planning permit decision making should be informed by relevant information where there is a need. Each situation will be different and will require information to suit locational variability. Such information can be obtained from a suitably qualified coastal processes engineer and/or a hydrologist specialist, or suitable equivalent to assist with determining responses. Applicants are encouraged to seek appropriate information from a suitably qualified professional. Responses may include appropriate setbacks, construction measures such as higher floor levels, site land forming and drainage works etc.

Further information

On issues relating to the need to undertake coastal climate change vulnerability assessments and general climate change information, advice should be sought from the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Call 136 186 or visit www.dse.vic.gov.au

The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008 is available from the Victorian Coastal Council website www.vcc.vic.gov.au.

Further information on the Future Coasts Program can be obtained at www.climatechange.vic.gov.au/futurecoasts.

For more information about Victoria's planning schemes, visit www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/planning