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Planning and Environment Act 1987

APPROVAL OF BASS COAST STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

Order in Council

The Lieutenant-Governor, as the Governor's deputy, with the advice of the Executive Council, under section 46AY(1) of the **Planning and Environment Act 1987**, approves the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy that has been endorsed in accordance with section 46AX, as set out in the Schedule 2 attached to this Order.

Schedule 1 to this Order lists the responsible public entities and responsible Ministers that have endorsed the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy.

This Order comes into effect on the date the notice of approval is published in the Government Gazette under section 46AY(2) of the **Planning and Environment Act 1987**.

The Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at DTP Gippsland Region, 71 Hotham Street, Traralgon, Victoria 3844.

The Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at www.planning.vic.gov.au or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view.

Dated: 14 October 2025

Responsible Minister:

THE HON SONYA KILKENNY MP
Minister for Planning

ANGELA SMITH
Clerk of the Executive Council

SPECIAL

Planning and Environment Act 1987**APPROVAL OF BASS COAST STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY****SCHEDULE 1 TO THE ORDER IN COUNCIL****LIST OF RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC ENTITIES AND RESPONSIBLE MINISTERS THAT HAVE
ENDORSED THE FINAL DRAFT BASS COAST STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY**

Responsible Public Entity	Responsible Minister	Relevant Ministerial Portfolio
Bass Coast Shire Council	The Hon. Nick Staikos MP	Local Government
Bass Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Gippsland Ports Committee of Management Incorporated	The Hon. Melissa Horne MP	Ports and Freight
Grantville Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Inverloch Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Head, Transport for Victoria	The Hon. Melissa Horne MP	Roads and Road Safety Ports and Freight
	The Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP	Public and Active Transport Transport and Infrastructure
Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment Outdoor Recreation
	The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP	Climate Action Energy and Resources
	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Melbourne Water	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Parks Victoria	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
San Remo Foreshore Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
San Remo Recreation Centre Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
South East Water	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
South Gippsland Water	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Southern Rural Water	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Ventnor Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment
Victorian Planning Authority	The Hon. Sonya Kilkenny MP	Planning

VicTrack	The Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP	Public and Active Transport Transport and Infrastructure
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Westernport Region Water Corporation	The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP	Water
Woolamai Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	The Hon. Steve Dimopoulos MP	Environment

Note: On 23 May 2024, the Minister for Planning decided to declare that two RPEs (Court Services Victoria and Victorian Fisheries Authority) are not required to be given a copy of the draft BCSP under section 46AXA of the Act and a notice was published in the Victoria Government Gazette on 10 June 2025.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

APPROVAL OF BASS COAST STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

**SCHEDULE 2 TO THE ORDER IN COUNCIL BASS COAST
STATEMENT OF PLANNING POLICY**

Final Draft Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy

March 2025

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of the Bunurong land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partnering and meaningfully engaging with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Description of artwork

Aaron (Gunaikurnai) 'Movements Between the Five Clans' 2019, acrylic on canvas.

'The tracks are going between the five clans of the Gunaikurnai and the hands are the symbols of my spirit travelling around the campsites.'

This artwork was created through programs provided by the Torch. The Torch provides art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria. The Torch aims to reduce the rate of re-offending by encouraging the exploration of identity and culture through art programs to define new pathways upon release.

Photo credits

Visit Victoria

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INTRODUCTION

About Bass Coast

The Bass Coast declared area has many places of cultural heritage, outstanding natural beauty and environmental, economic and social significance. The declared area has been under the safe stewardship of the Bunurong people for millennia and is rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The challenge facing the Victorian Government and community is managing the growth of metropolitan Melbourne and the state’s regional settlements while conserving and enhancing Aboriginal cultural heritage, significant landscapes, the environment, biodiversity, historic heritage and the unique local characteristics of settlements. The distinctive attributes outlined in the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) must be conserved and enhanced while also achieving sustainable economic development and the provision of adequate housing and strategic infrastructure. Development should be sensitively designed, scaled and responsive to its local context.

Simultaneously, attributes which make these areas thrive must be recognised, protected and enhanced. This includes productive rural land and natural resources, local businesses, sustainable tourism, and transport and essential services infrastructure.

Table 1: Attributes qualifying the Bass Coast declared area as a distinctive area and landscape

ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
1	Outstanding environmental significance	– State, national and international areas of biodiversity significance, including Phillip Island Nature Park, Bunurong Marine National Park, Churchill Island Marine Park, Western Port Ramsar Wetland, Churchill Island, Powlett River Mouth and Anderson Inlet and tributaries. – Parks, river corridors, beaches, wetlands and remnant woodland areas, including the Western Port Woodlands, which are home to remnant vegetation, provide habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors. – An integrated catchment system of river corridors and coastal waterways (estuaries and wetlands) and a unique marine environment with diverse habitats and important feeding areas.
2	Significant geographical features, including natural landforms	– The Bass Hills and Strzelecki Foothills provide a backdrop to landscapes throughout the shire and are highly visible from main road corridors. – The San Remo to Kilcunda coastline contains open pastoral landscapes edged by rocky cliffs and slopes to Bass Strait. – The Kilcunda to Inverloch coastline (the Bunurong Coast) is recognised for its rock formations, dune systems, dramatic cliffs and rock stacks. Eagles Nest is a dominant feature in the landscape and a site of national and geomorphological significance. – Phillip Island has distinctive landscapes, including rocky cliffs, outcrops of volcanic origin (such as the Nobbies and Pyramid Rock), surf beaches and dune systems.

ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
3	Heritage and cultural significance	– Areas of significant cultural, spiritual and heritage value for the Bunurong people include the coastal sand dune systems, Western Port and Bass Strait, the Bunurong Coast, the Coronet Bay area, Bass Hills, Powlett River and the western and southern foreshores of Phillip Island. – Important post-contact heritage sites significant to Victoria’s economic development include the State Coal Mine and associated mining heritage and Churchill Island, the location of the first European farm in Victoria. – A rich surfing history with several beaches recognised as National Surfing Reserve.
4	Natural resources or productive land of significance	– The area is a nature-based tourism destination of national significance, with tourism assets including Phillip Island, the Bunurong Coast and major events facilities. – Extractive industries are of state significance, particularly for their contribution to Victoria’s supply of sand. – Agricultural land is high quality, particularly the Powlett River Valley and Gippsland dairy industry land.
5	Strategic infrastructure or built form of significance	– The Victorian Desalination Plant and associated pipeline are significant public infrastructure for Victoria. – Phillip Island Road and Bass Highway form a significant transport corridor essential to the region’s functioning.

About the declared area

The Victorian Government has legislated to protect and enhance distinctive areas and landscapes for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

On 29 October 2019, Bass Coast Shire was first declared a distinctive area and landscape under the **Planning and Environment Act 1987** (the PE Act) by order of the Governor in Council (GiC) published in the Victoria Government Gazette No. S 430. Since that initial declaration, Bass Coast Shire has been declared and redeclared several times due to various factors that caused delays in the preparation of the Bass Coast SPP. The most recent redeclaration occurred on 8 October 2024, and it came into effect on 9 October 2024, allowing the Bass Coast SPP to be finalised, endorsed and approved.

Under the PE Act, an area of Victoria can be declared a distinctive area and landscape if it has a majority of the attributes section 46AP of the PE Act. Table 1 lists the attributes required under section 46AP of the PE Act that the Minister for Planning must consider to declare the Bass Coast Shire as a distinctive area and landscape.

Additionally, **Table 1** highlights attributes at risk of significant or irreversible land use changes that would impact the environmental, social or economic value of the area.

Map 1: shows the Bass Coast declared area in relation to the Melbourne Central Business District, the regional City of Latrobe, the metropolitan centres of Dandenong, Mornington and Pakenham, and the regional centres of Leongatha and Warragul within the South Gippsland and Baw Baw shires respectively.



Map 2: shows the declared area’s boundary aligns with the Bass Coast Shire boundary and extends 600 metres seaward of the low-water mark.



About the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy

Under the PE Act, the Minister for Planning must prepare a SPP for a declared area. The purpose of the SPP is to guide future use and development of land within the declared area to ensure the protection and conservation of its distinctive attributes. The PE Act also specifies requirements for the contents, consultation, endorsement, approval, commencement and amendment of an SPP.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has prepared the Bass Coast SPP in partnership with the Bunurong people and in collaboration with the Bass Coast Shire Council and other relevant government agencies and authorities. Extensive engagement on the preparation of the Bass Coast SPP was undertaken with the Victorian community.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

DTP supports the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and is committed to ensuring its policies reflect these goals. The Bass Coast SPP will help to deliver on the goals, which provide a framework to achieve a sustainable future.

While the integrated delivery of all 17 goals applies to the declared area, the goals shown in **Figure 1** are most relevant and provide a foundation for the Bass Coast SPP vision, objectives and strategies.

Figure 1: Selected United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

3 Good health and well-being The SPP aims to support active transport and healthy communities that have access to clean air and a healthy environment	6 Clean water and sanitation The SPP aims to protect water quality by reducing run-off and improving water management
11 Sustainable cities and communities The SPP aims to provide certainty about the valued attributes to be protected while indicating preferred locations for potential long-term growth	12 Responsible consumption and production The SPP aims to support the protection and sustainable management of natural resources
15 Life on land The SPP aims to support the conservation and improvement of biodiversity values	17 Partnership for the goals The SPP aims to support governments working together with stakeholders to implement its objectives and strategies
8 Decent work and economic growth The SPP aims to support sustainable economic growth and the visitor economy	9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure The SPP aims to protect infrastructure
13 Climate action The SPP aims to support mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts	14 Life below water The SPP aims to recognise the importance and support the conservation of marine life

Implementation of the Statement of Planning Policy

Effective implementation of the Bass Coast SPP will require a concerted effort by governments, public land managers, the Bunurong people, businesses, industries, residents, visitors and the community.

Collaboration, shared knowledge, expertise and resources are needed to support the long-term vision for the declared area.

Implementation through planning schemes

The Bass Coast SPP takes effect immediately after approval and forms part of the Victoria Planning Provisions. Planning scheme amendments will be progressed to implement it into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme to provide a consistent approach to land use planning and development.

The Bass Coast Shire Council must consider the Bass Coast SPP as the planning authority to prepare planning scheme amendments and as the responsible authority to administer and enforce the planning scheme.

In reviewing planning decisions, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal must also consider the Bass Coast SPP.

Implementation by responsible public entities

Responsible public entities (RPEs), as agencies or bodies responsible for managing land in the declared area, must implement the Bass Coast SPP (refer to Box 1).

The PE Act requires a responsible public entity must not act in a way that is inconsistently with any provision of the Statement of Planning Policy that is binding on it. This applies when the responsible public entity is performing its function, duties or exercising its powers in relation to the declared area. Therefore, RPEs must not act inconsistently with the objectives of the Bass Coast SPP when developing or implementing policies, programs or decisions in relation to the declared area, including when performing their regular functions or duties.

An RPE should endeavour to integrate the objectives and strategies relevant to its responsibilities into its policies, programs and decision-making in the declared area. An RPE should balance any conflicting strategies in favour of an outcome which best promotes the intent of the Bass Coast SPP for the benefit of current and future generations.

In addition, the PE Act provides guidance for an RPE when developing or implementing policies or programs or making decisions in relation to the declared area.

This will:

- Better coordinate decision-making for land use and development across the declared area to achieve integrated management, environmental, infrastructure and development outcomes.
- Ensure proposals for land use changes and development are consistent with the protection of the declared area's significant landscapes and with significant environmental, economic and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.
- Guide the sustainable use of natural resources in keeping with the declared area's significant landscapes and environmental and cultural values.
- Reinforce the importance of building community resilience to environmental risks and climate change, including the potential effects of natural hazards (such as bushfires and flooding).
- Provide greater certainty for current and future residents and businesses.

Monitoring and review

To provide long-term certainty for the declared area, the Minister for Planning must ensure a review of the Bass Coast SPP occurs no later than 10 years after it commences.

An SPP may be reviewed earlier than 10 years if there are compelling reasons to do so supported by strategic planning and technical studies (such as biodiversity, landscape and settlement assessments).

Following a review, an SPP may be amended or a new SPP prepared. The Minister for Planning must prepare a new or amended SPP in accordance with the PE Act requirements and engage with Traditional Owners, RPEs and the wider Victorian community.

Box 1: Responsible public entities for the Bass Coast declared area

Bass Coast Shire Council	San Remo Recreation Centre Inc.
Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management	Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Gippsland Ports Committee of Management	South-East Water
Grantville Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	South Gippsland Water
	Southern Rural Water
Head, Transport for Victoria	Ventnor Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
Inverloch Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	Victorian Planning Authority VicTrack
Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Melbourne Water Parks Victoria	Westernport Region Water Corporation
Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of Management Inc.	Woolamai Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
San Remo Foreshore Committee of Management Inc.	

BUNURONG STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following statement sets out the significance of Bunurong Country and the declared area to the Traditional Owners.

We the Bunurong People are the Traditional Custodians of this Country, it's alive with our stories. These sands of the Bass Coast contain the footprints left behind by our ancestors in every cultural way. The responsibility for the caring of our Country belongs to us as its custodians. She is our Mother and Bunjil our Father.

Our Country has always given us our physical means to flourish and survive, food, water and air. We are saltwater people, and the rivers that run into the sea are our Country, and where these rivers meet the sea have always been important places to our people.

Our Country will continue to preserve us and our values into the future, as we will continue to preserve our Country and protect our past and persist within these modern spaces. We have been here since the beginning and will be here until the end.

These places hold our stories, culture and our Ancestors physically as well as spiritually, and it is by the Lore of Bunjil we protect, love and look after her.

OUR VISION

The vision for the Bass Coast declared area is for the next 50 years. It identifies the values, priorities and preferences of the Victorian community in relation to the declared area's distinctive attributes, including preferences for future land use, protection and development.

The vision will be achieved by implementing the objectives and strategies under each policy domain, which are represented on the declared area framework plan.

By 2075 the vision for the Bass Coast declared area is that the Bunurong people (represented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation), governments, public land managers, businesses, residents and visitors ensure the declared area's distinctive attributes – the things people love about the declared area and value it for – are protected and enhanced for current and future generations. The Bass Coast continues to be a diverse, sustainable and thriving regional area. Part-time and permanent residents are proud of the Bass Coast and work together to achieve common goals.

The declared area's landscapes, highly valued views, environmental and biodiversity values, Aboriginal cultural heritage, and historic heritage, and each settlement's uniqueness are protected in perpetuity.

Bunurong cultural heritage: The Bunurong people's rights to self-determination and their aspirations for their Country, water and culture are realised through the self-determined transfer of relevant decision-making powers. Bunurong traditional and living knowledge, culture and practices inform planning and management decisions to better protect the declared area's distinctive attributes. The community highly values Aboriginal cultural heritage and sites, and it respects the declared area as Bunurong Country.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation: There are net-zero emissions in the declared area. Extensive revegetation of landscapes and transformed agricultural practices support large-scale carbon sequestration. Investment in public and active transport alongside zero-emissions private vehicles has led to a zero-emissions transport sector. The declared area continues to adapt to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, inundation and flooding, polluted run-off and bushfires. The built environment has been highly adapted to climate change impacts. Water is conserved, and there is sufficient water for the environment and consumptive uses. Sustainable economic development and strategic infrastructure support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Landscape: The declared area's significant landscapes and character – with its many views, panoramic seascapes, rugged coastlines, tranquil wetlands, elevated rural hinterland and idyllic pastoral landscapes of rolling rises and gullies – are protected and enhanced. The declared area's scenic beauty is valued and recognised for its importance for the community's health and wellbeing, environment and biodiversity, heritage and the local economy.

Environment and biodiversity: Native vegetation cover is increased, and remnants are protected from clearing and fragmentation. Revegetation on public and private land helps mitigate urban heat, sequester carbon and increase ecological values in urban and rural areas. Native plants and animals flourish within a natural environment that is safeguarded, managed and highly valued by local communities and visitors, particularly the habitat of endangered, threatened and vulnerable species. The health, function and biodiversity values of important riverine, wetland, remnant woodland, coastal and marine areas are protected and restored.

Historic heritage: The declared area's rich tangible and intangible palaeontological, maritime, sealing, early settlement, convict, agricultural, mining, industrial and leisure heritage is protected, and the relationships between the Bunurong people and our colonial heritage are understood by those living within and visiting the declared area.

Strategic infrastructure: The provision of new community infrastructure – for transport, water supply, waste and resource recovery, energy, telecommunications, education, health and wellbeing, sport and recreation – is timely, integrated and in sequence with development. Investment in public and active transport alongside zero-emissions private vehicles has led to a zero-emissions transport sector. Waste is reduced to close to zero, and very little waste goes to landfills: most is reused, re-purposed or recycled. Infrastructure is resilient to climate change impacts and is sensitive to the declared area's distinctive attributes.

Sustainable economic development: The declared area's growing economy is supported by its distinctive landscapes, environment and Aboriginal cultural and heritage value. The economy is based on sustainable tourism, innovation and environmentally sustainable business practices (particularly in the agriculture, natural resources and manufacturing industries). The declared area uses renewable sources to generate energy, and Bass Coast is a net exporter of renewable energy to other regions. The economy is resilient to climate change impacts, having transitioned to net-zero carbon and beyond. Bass Coast is a leader of regional economies in sustainable economic development.

Settlements: Urban settlements are well-planned and responsive to safeguarding the declared area's unique features and special characteristics, including its coastal vistas and ridgelines, high-quality agricultural land, natural resources and the natural environment. The unique character of settlements is maintained and enhanced by maintaining visible green breaks between them. Wonthaggi is one of Victoria's preeminent regional centres, providing diverse housing, employment, education and health services. Across the declared area, revitalised town centres provide for the economic and social needs of the community.

The Bass Coast is a diverse, sustainable and thriving regional area.

DECLARED AREA FRAMEWORK PLAN

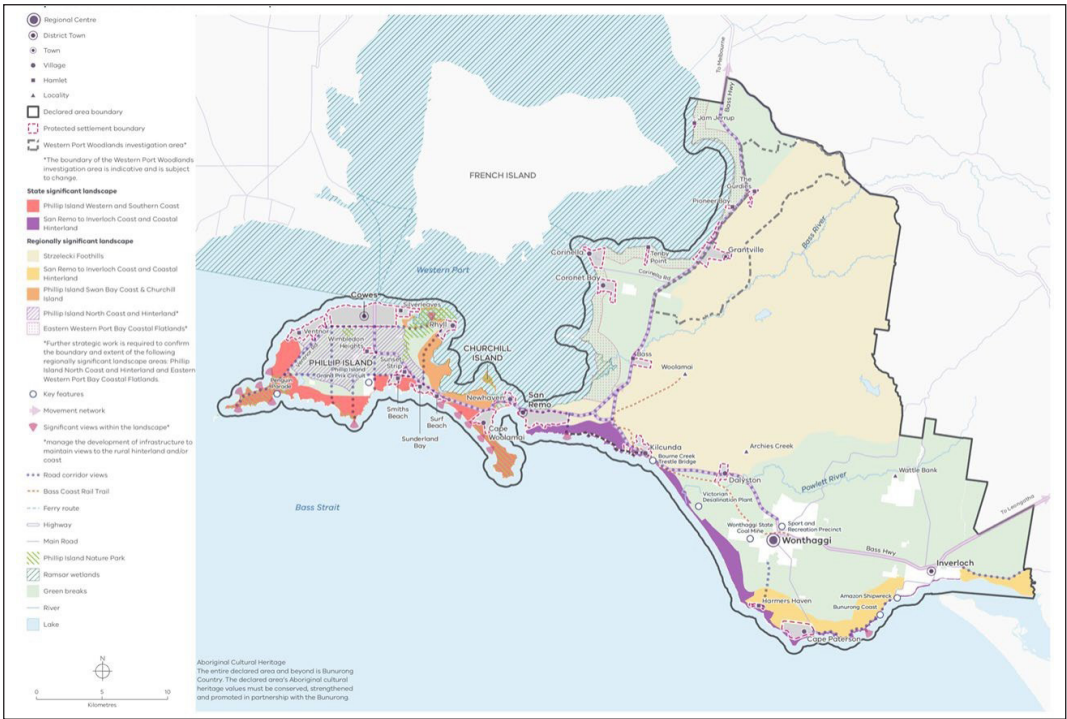
The Bass Coast declared area framework plan spatially represents the strategies for achieving the SPP’s vision and objectives, which aim to encourage long-term, sustainable development within the declared area. The plan identifies areas for protection and conservation and for potential change, subject to planning processes. It shows how environmental, social, cultural and economic factors are integrated for the benefit of the community.

Map 3 shows the Bass Coast declared area framework plan.

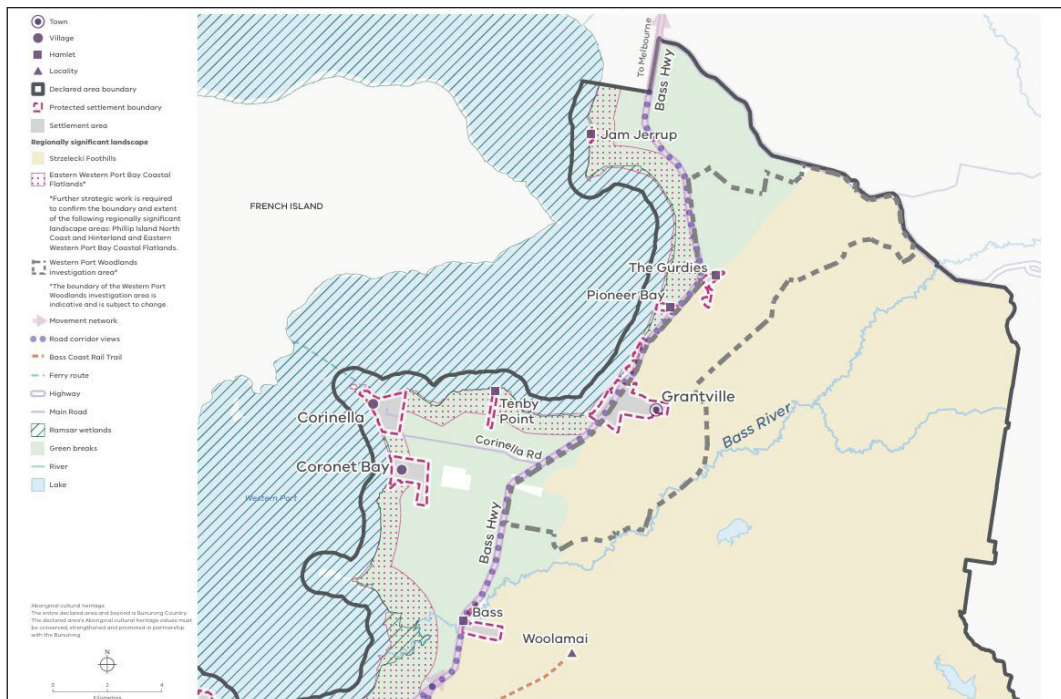
Map 16 to Map 35 form part of the framework plan and show the protected settlement boundaries for settlements in the declared area.

The declared area framework plan must be read in conjunction with the vision and policy domains. Maps provided in the policy domains other than the settlement maps in the Settlement policy domain do not form part of the framework plan, and they are published only to provide context.

Map 3: Bass Coast declared area framework plan.



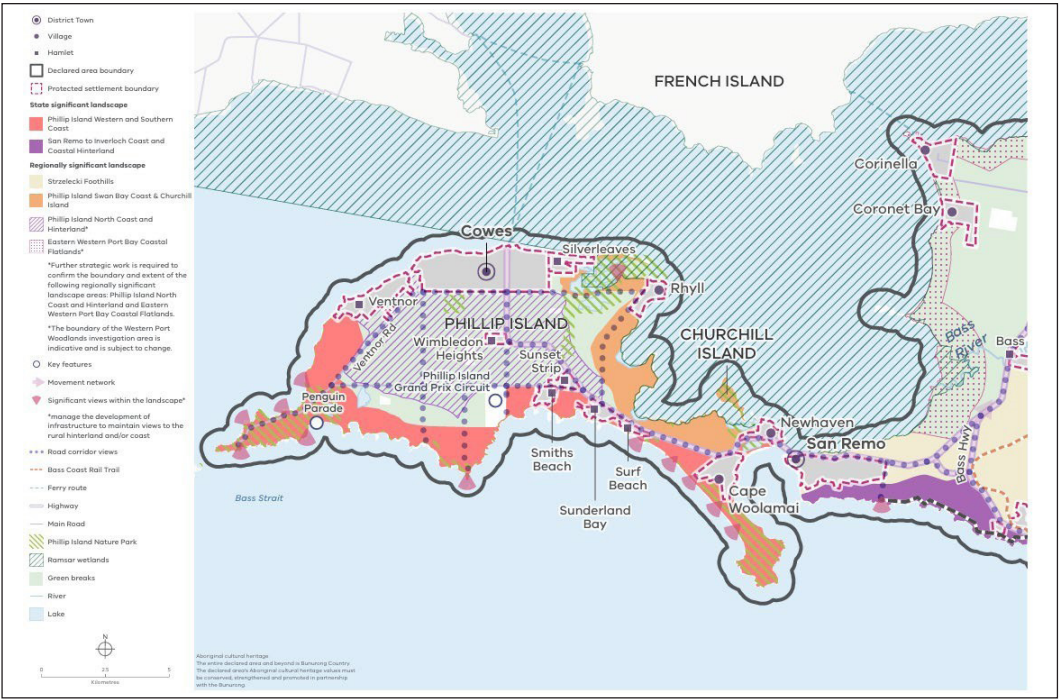
Map 4: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's north-west aspect.



Map 5: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's southern and inland aspects.



Map 6: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's western aspect, including Phillip Island.



POLICY DOMAINS

Table 1 lists the distinctive attributes that qualified the Bass Coast declared area as a distinctive area and landscape under the PE Act. These attributes interact in complex ways, and action is required for each of the policy domains set out in this section to uphold their value and address the threats they face.

Together, the policy domains set out the long-term needs and other considerations to integrate decision-making and planning for the declared area. They provide a framework for achieving sustainable development and land management outcomes.

The policy domains are:

- **Bunurong cultural heritage**
- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**
- **Landscapes**
- **Environment and biodiversity**
- **Historic heritage**
- **Sustainable economic development**
- **Strategic infrastructure**
- **Settlements.**

Objectives specified in the policy domains are binding on RPEs. RPEs must have regard to the specified strategies to achieve the objective when performing a function or duty or exercising a power in relation to the declared area.

Bunurong cultural heritage

The Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, whose ancestors have occupied the Bass Coast declared area for more than 35,000 years, are its Traditional Owners. The area is just a part of the complex and broader Aboriginal cultural landscape. The Bunurong people have a deep connection with all aspects of the environment, including the earth, sea, rivers and sky. Over millennia of custodianship, the Bunurong people have developed a complete understanding of how to care for and manage Country.

The Bunurong people's connection to Country has been devastated by colonisation. Land-clearing for agriculture and development has destroyed aspects of tangible Aboriginal cultural heritage. It continues to do so, although the Bunurong people are working to preserve and protect their sacred places, traditional cultural practices and stories.

The Bunurong people value the declared area's coastal landscapes as a food source (such as shellfish). They once established campsites near rocky platforms and where there was access to freshwater. They occupied coastal areas in the warm and hot seasons, travelling along the coast to find food-rich sites. In the colder periods, the Bunurong people likely occupied upland and inland areas: mainly flat areas on ridgelines and hilltops. Inland areas provided different seasonal food resources and shelter.

There are 640 Aboriginal places within the declared area recorded on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. Known places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance are concentrated along the coast, and they include stone artefact scatters, shell middens, burial sites and culturally modified trees: these provide evidence of long-term Aboriginal occupation.

The area would undoubtedly have Aboriginal cultural heritage sites yet to be identified and protected. Much of the area has not been thoroughly investigated, and dunes, sand ridges, freshwater sources, former swamplands, floodplains and areas of remnant native vegetation indicate areas of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.

Loo-errn

Stories about the land highlight the cultural significance of the coastal landscapes of Bunurong Country. One such story is the story of the Loo-errn, a gigantic, being-like blackfellow who lived on the Yarra. While baking eels in a ground oven on the Yarra flats, he spotted a swan's feather being carried by the south wind. He traced it to its source, where he found flocks of swans resting on Western Port. After a time, the swans flew off to the east, and Loo-errn followed them to the Corner Inlet at Wamman (the Bunurong name for Wilson's Promontory).

– Bunurong Land Council

The Bunurong people are the custodians of the declared area and have a deep connection to Country. Aboriginal cultural heritage must be acknowledged, and Aboriginal knowledge and practice protected by enabling the Bunurong to heal and strengthen their Country. A holistic approach to managing the declared area sees oral histories, cultural practices and values shared and understood, as culturally appropriate. This approach will contribute to resilient communities and help increase understanding, respect for and appreciation of the area's rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 1

To recognise, conserve, strengthen and promote the declared area's Aboriginal cultural heritage values and work in partnership with the Bunurong people in caring for Country.

Strategies

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Acknowledge Bunurong values, cultural practices and knowledge in decision-making about land use, development and land management. |
| 1.2 | Actively involve the Bunurong people in identifying, protecting, managing and enhancing Aboriginal cultural heritage places and tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values. |
| 1.3 | With the Bunurong people, promote and improve community education, awareness and understanding of Bunurong values, Aboriginal cultural heritage, language and cultural practices. |

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Current and future climate change hazards and their impacts are an existential threat to the Bass Coast declared area and Victoria, and sustained action and greater community resilience is needed.

In coming years, the area is forecast to experience higher average temperatures, more extreme heat events, less rainfall, longer droughts, more frequent extreme storm and flood events and rising sea levels. This will increase coastal erosion, coastal inundation and flooding, and bushfire risk, as well as decrease water security and degrade water and soil quality.

Effective, sustained actions to mitigate climate change – to slow and then stop global warming and to better live with the effects of climate change – need all levels of government, the private sector, non- government organisations and communities to work together. Planning policies and other planning controls are essential tools to achieve these goals.

The response to climate change must be global. In 2015, 196 parties (including Australia) to the 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the Paris Agreement. The primary goal of the agreement is to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. The agreement came into effect in November 2016.

To implement the Victorian Government's support for the Paris Agreement, the **Climate Change Act 2017** sets a long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. *Victoria's Climate Change Strategy* sets out the strategies to achieve this target.

Bushfire risk management

There is a need to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfires through risk-based planning which prioritises protecting human life over all other policy considerations.

Much of the declared area has been cleared and is mostly grassland across a mix of flat ground, undulating hills and smaller areas of steeper topography. These areas generally have a lower fuel load, but areas of unmanaged grass vegetation are vulnerable to ember attack and fast-moving, wind-driven fires. There are also some areas with higher bushfire risk (such as coastal parks, reserves and foothill areas), where the vegetation is denser, and fire behaviour is likely to be more intense and unpredictable.

Land use planning is key to managing and minimising bushfire risk in the declared area now and in the future, and it helps communities prepare for bushfire events. Settlement planning and development activities should direct development away from high-risk areas and include bushfire protection measures to reduce risks.

In planning settlements, careful consideration must be given to the need to protect vulnerable communities and larger populations in bushfire-affected areas, and it must link to emergency management planning.

As well as threatening human life and the environment, bushfires have significant economic consequences. Tourism businesses and destinations may need to close when bushfire risk is high, and agricultural businesses can lose land, stock and infrastructure. Businesses need emergency management and bushfire risk mitigation planning and actions to minimise these risks.

Bushfire risk management that integrates scientific expertise with Traditional Owners' fire management knowledge can protect and enhance biodiversity values, mitigate bushfire risk and other climate change impacts and deepen peoples' appreciation of and respect for Country.

Coastal erosion

The declared area's beaches, cliffs, mudflats, coastal wetlands and estuaries are increasingly exposed to rising sea levels, storm surges and erosion. These climate change impacts alter the natural patterns and rates of erosion and longshore drift: the movement and deposition of sand, sediment and other material along the shore by waves. Coastal modifications (such as dredging, stormwater disposal, coastal protection structures and harbours) can have positive and negative effects on the coast.

Infrastructure (such as recreational facilities and buildings), particularly in low-lying areas, are at high risk of damage from coastal erosion. Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage sites are also threatened. The Bunurong people are saltwater people, and many Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are on or near the coast.

Changing erosion patterns along coastlines force marine and coastal plants and animals to migrate inland. Estuary and wetland vegetation (such as mangroves) will naturally migrate inland to areas less threatened by rising sea levels and permanent inundation. Hard infrastructure (such as seawalls and settlements) close to aquatic vegetation are barriers to the natural inland migration process. More visitors and greater use of beaches may damage dune vegetation and affect erosion if not managed adequately.

Coastal inundation and flooding

Coastal inundation and flooding occurs before high waters damage assets (such as infrastructure and agricultural land) on surrounding floodplains. However, if these assets are under imminent threat, an estuary may need to be artificially opened to prevent damage. There are severe environmental risks with artificially and reactively opening estuaries, including mass fish deaths due to low oxygen levels, exposure of acid sulfate soils and disturbances to wetlands.

Floods often accelerate the erosion of river channels and damage nearby infrastructure and the natural environment. This is particularly so in areas cleared of plants that protect the soil. Low-lying urban and non-urban areas around waterways are at greater risk of flooding. More areas near water bodies and coastal reserves will be unavailable for existing uses at times due to inundation, and the ecology of these areas will change due to flooding and storm events.

Water security

To ensure its future water security, the declared area must plan for declining surface water and groundwater availability and greater demand for water. Demand for water in the declared area is increasing as its population grows and demand from agricultural uses increases, but the amount of available surface water and groundwater is declining.

Run-off-fed reservoirs are the traditional source of water for communities. Alternatives (such as stormwater harvesting and reuse, water sensitive urban design, passive irrigation and recycled water) must be pursued in new development to provide water security in established urban centres and agricultural areas. Additionally, water infrastructure (such as the Victorian Desalination Plant) must be safeguarded within the declared area to better prepare it for climate change. The Strategic infrastructure policy domain also addresses water security infrastructure.

Objectives and strategies**Objective 2**

To protect and enhance environmental assets and ecosystem services and support their resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts and natural hazards.

Strategies

2.1	Avoid locating new development and retreat existing development from areas with significant biodiversity and/or high bushfire risk to increase resilience.
2.2	Utilise Bunurong biocultural knowledge and practices to better manage bushfire risk.
2.3	Retain and enhance the declared area's valued biodiversity, landscape character, vegetation and canopy cover (to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk) to sequester carbon and reduce heat island effects in urban areas.
2.4	Ensure coastal infrastructure is designed to respond to future climate change impacts and has minimal effect on existing environmental features, including vegetation, natural landforms and natural water flows.
2.5	Minimise the disturbance of coastal acid sulfate soils, particularly around Western Port, Anderson Inlet and the Powlett and Bass river mouths.
2.6	Minimise the need for artificial estuary openings by mitigating flood risks with alternative methods.
2.7	Use best practice water sensitive design and alternative water sources to reduce potable water consumption and protect and improve the health of waterways, wetlands, beaches and the marine environment.

Objective 3

To ensure communities are prepared and places designed to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of rising sea levels and coastal erosion.

Strategies

3.1	Avoid locating new development and take a pathway approach to managing existing development and sensitive land uses in areas adjacent to waterways and estuaries or at risk of coastal and riverine flooding and coastal erosion.
3.2	Ensure coastal erosion mitigation strategies and approaches restore and preserve natural systems, allow for wetland migration and reduce negative impacts on coastal environments.
3.3	Ensure coastal and waterway infrastructure is located and designed to minimise impacts on existing environmental features including vegetation, habitat, natural landforms and natural flows of water.

Landscapes

The coastal and rural landscapes of Bass Coast are of outstanding natural beauty. Residents and visitors highly value the declared area's beaches and bays, rugged coastlines, rock platforms and formations, seascapes and bush for the diverse enjoyment opportunities they provide. There are countless panoramic seascapes and views across Western Port and along the Bass Strait coastline. Moving inland, rolling, pastoral hills and a patchwork of paddocks and native vegetation give way to the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges, known locally as Bass Hills, which form an iconic backdrop to the rural hinterland.

The coastal and rural landscapes are important to the region's Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage: there are many reminders of the declared area's agricultural, industrial and maritime past.

The declared area's landscapes are at risk of incremental, cumulative and irreversible damage from human impacts and climate change.

Human impacts can include urban development and encroachment, visitation and trespass, water contamination from pollutants and run-off, vegetation removal and other damaging land management practices. Climate change impacts can include rising sea levels, flooding, storm surges, changes in ocean temperature, erosion and bushfire. Long-term planning for the declared area can help to address these issues and safeguard its landscapes for current and future generations.

The declared area's landscapes are defined by both their character and significance. 'Landscape character' is different from 'landscape significance':

- **Landscape character** is the interplay of geology, landform, vegetation, water form and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, that makes one landscape different from another (refer to **Map 7**).
- **Landscape significance** is based on the visual values of a landscape (that is, its scenic beauty, with consideration of other values such as Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage and environmental values) and less- tangible values (such as memories or associations) (refer to **Map 8**).

Landscape character

With respect to landscape character, the declared area comprises:

- **Landscape types** are areas with a generally similar landscape character
- **Landscape areas** within the landscape types are separate geographical units with varying local conditions.

The declared area's four landscape types – South Gippsland Coastal Plains, Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs, Strzelecki Highlands and Western Port Localised Flatlands – and the landscape areas within each, are outlined in **Map 7** and the following narrative overviews.

South Gippsland Coastal Plains

The South Gippsland Coastal Plains landscape type, which comprises the coastal and coastal hinterland areas of Gippsland that extend east to around Lakes Entrance, is shown in **Map 7**. In the declared area, this landscape type has four landscape areas: Westernport and Bass River Lowlands, Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland, Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands, and Inverloch and Anderson Inlet.

Westernport and Bass River Lowlands

The Westernport and Bass River Lowlands landscape area is mainly rural, low-lying and flat to gently undulating. It has two areas abutting the eastern edge of Western Port: the northern area, and an area east of Jam Jerrup between the Bass and South Gippsland highways. The larger part of the area takes in the relatively flat coast and coastal hinterland further south, extending from Corinella to Woolamai, a small settlement at the base of the Bass Hills.

Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland

The Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape area is on the Phillip Island north coast, between Coghlan Road at the eastern edge of Cowes to the west beyond Ventnor, around Davie Lane. The area extends inland, taking in central Phillip Island's rolling, rural landscape. The north coast is a sandy, mostly low-energy coastline adjoining Western Port and is elevated in parts. The hinterland features a patchwork of paddocks separated by long, straight roads running mostly north-south that are draped across the landscape.

Native animals, including little penguins, whales, koalas and kangaroos, are major tourist attractions to the declared area, particularly at sites managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands

The Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands landscape area includes the diverse, rugged Bunurong Coast between the southern edge of Kilcunda and The Caves to the west of Inverloch and a largely cleared, rolling, pastoral hinterland that extends inland to the Strzelecki Foothills. High dunes, sea cliffs, rocky headlands, rock stacks, and beaches are valued landscape features along the Bass Strait coast. The immediate hinterland is largely undeveloped, and in places it supports intact coastal banksia woodland communities and large swathes of coastal heathland vegetation.

Inverloch and Anderson Inlet

The Inverloch and Anderson Inlet landscape area is centred on Anderson Inlet, a shallow, sandy estuary where the Tarwin River meets Bass Strait. The landscape extends inland to take in the slightly steeper and more undulating hinterland to the south of the Powlett River flats, and it extends from the declared area's eastern boundary to west of Inverloch.

Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs

The Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs landscape type occurs in two parts of Gippsland: **Map 7** shows the part in the declared area. The type comprises a basaltic volcanic geology – the Mornington Volcanic Group – which also covers the Mornington Peninsula and French Island. At its interface with Bass Strait, winds and waves have shaped this geology into a varied, dramatic landscape of rugged headlands, sea cliffs and dunes. In the declared area, this landscape type has one landscape area: Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs.

Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs

The Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs landscape area is on the southern side of Phillip Island between Cape Woolamai and around Davie Lane southwest of Ventnor. The area is a varied, dramatic coastline of sea cliffs, granitic headlands and rocky platforms, with an elevated hinterland of rolling hills. Some beaches are small and sheltered, while others (such as Smiths and Woolamai) stretch out in long crescents with surf breaks that attract residents and visitors year-round.

Strzelecki Highlands

Map 7 shows the Strzelecki Highlands landscape type, which comprises the steep, dissected, rugged Strzelecki Ranges and its shallower foothills. The landscape type stretches between San Remo in the west to around Longford in the east and inland to the Latrobe River. In the declared area, this landscape type has two landscape areas: the Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast, and The Gurdies Hills.

Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast

The Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast landscape area comprises the most prominent landforms within the declared area: the westernmost part of the Strzelecki Ranges, which rises steeply from the surrounding coastal plains, and the dramatic coastline between San Remo and Kilcunda. The coastal hinterland is elevated and pastoral, with the Bass Hills further inland consisting of rolling, cleared pastures.

The Gurdies Hills

The Gurdies Hills landscape area also forms part of the Strzelecki Ranges. It is located at the ranges' westernmost edge and separated from the Bass Hills area by the Bass River Valley. The hills are lower and more undulating, and large areas of remnant forest and woodland cover parts of them. Within the declared area, they stretch from the shire boundary in the north to just south of the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve.

Western Port Localised Flatlands

Map 7 shows the Western Port Localised Flatlands landscape type, which comprises flat, coastal areas of intertidal mud and sand flats, marshes and wetlands characteristic of this part of Western Port and its extensive tidal range. The landscape type is adjacent to or forms part of the Western Port Ramsar site, a wetland of international significance. In the declared area, this landscape type has two landscape areas: Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats, and Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands.

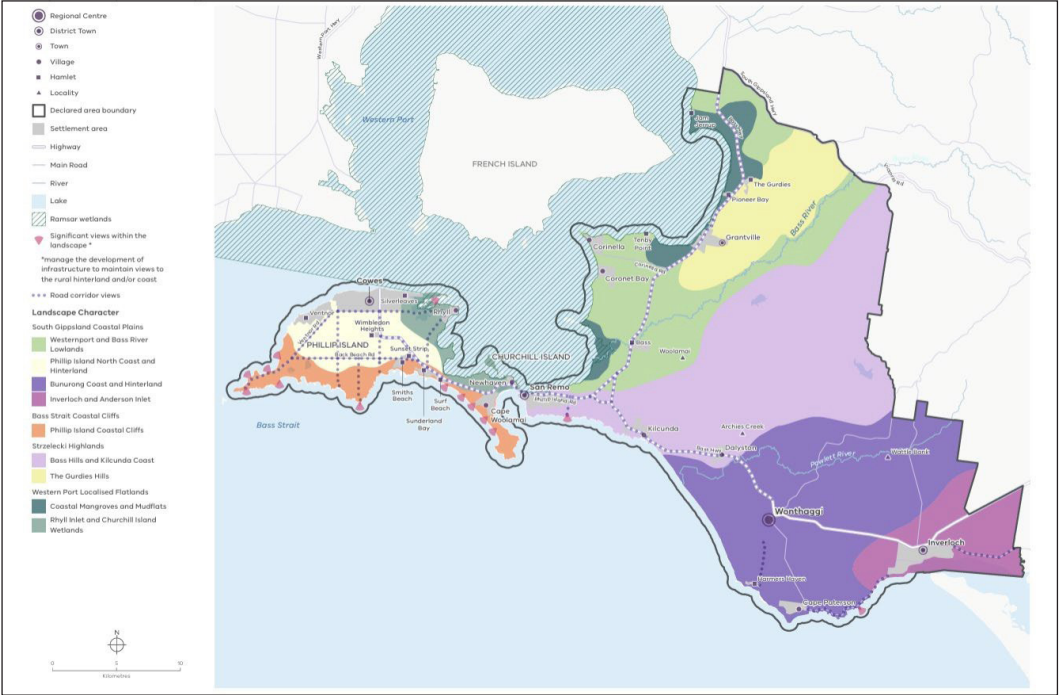
Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats

The Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats landscape area occurs in two locations on the eastern edge of Western Port. The northernmost location hugs the smaller bay on which Grantville is situated, and the other is centred on the Bass River estuary. Both locations have intertidal mangroves, mudflats at their coastal edges and a flat, low-lying, rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks.

Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands

The Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands landscape area is on the eastern coastal edge of Phillip Island, and it hugs the low-energy, south-western side of Western Port. It is a tranquil, low-lying landscape comprising wetlands and a rural hinterland and includes Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island.

Map 7: Landscape character types and areas.



Landscape significance

All landscapes have a character, but not all landscapes are significant. Significant landscapes are areas of land that are valued for their natural, cultural, and/or aesthetic qualities. They can be categorized as having either state or regional significance. State significance indicates that higher levels of protection and management are required.

Map 8 shows the declared area's six significant landscapes, which are the:

- Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, which is of state significance
- San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, which is of state and regional significance
- Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island, Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands, Strzelecki Foothills, and Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscapes, which are of regional significance.

Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast (state significance)

The Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape includes the coast and coastal hinterland generally between Cape Woolamai and the south-western edge of Ventnor, including the Summerland Peninsula and Seal Rocks. It is a varied, dramatic coastal landscape of stunning sea cliffs, granitic headlands, rocky offshore reefs, basalt stacks and high dunes. Some sandy coves are small and sheltered; others (such as Woolamai and Smiths beaches) form long crescents pounded by sought-after surf breaks. The landscape's well-known and highly valued views are of regional and state significance.

Bass Strait's high-energy winds and seas have shaped this dynamic and picturesque coast, its exposed position further contributing to its untamed character. The landscape includes numerous visually and geologically significant features, including the seamed, granitic stack of Cape Woolamai, the multisided columns of The Colonnades, the craggy Forrest Caves and Pyramid Rock's black basalt stack.

Cat Bay and adjacent coves on the north-western Western Port coast are no less spectacular and rugged, with high, grassy dunes, rocky spills, black platforms and stunning offshore basalt stacks and islands. The nightly Penguin Parade at Summerland Bay attracts over 700,000 visitors annually, and Seal Rocks is home to one of Australia's largest Australian fur seal colonies.

The elevated landscape edge and hinterland give rise to spectacular coastal views from the many lookouts and access points: there are far-reaching panoramas along the coastline and out to sea. While quite accessible to visitors, the western and north-western parts of the landscape beyond Smiths Beach have a particularly wild, undeveloped character. To the southwest, it is open ocean between here and Antarctica.

San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland (state and regional significance)

The San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape is state-significant, and the coastal hinterland beginning slightly east of Kilcunda is regionally significant. The highly valued views along the coast are varied and include views of state significance.

The landscape's coast is one of stunning contrasts and iconic features. The high sea cliffs between San Remo and Kilcunda (where the Strzelecki Foothills meet Bass Strait) include jagged headlands and rock shelves – exposed to and battered by Bass Strait seas – interspersed with sandy coves and isolated beaches. The George Bass Coastal Walk from San Remo to Kilcunda offers commanding views of the dramatic coastline and Bass Strait.

The coastal edge between Kilcunda and west of Inverloch is just as visually arresting, with elevated cliffs and dunes, the iconic Cape Paterson headland and nearby offshore rock formations. Eagles Nest, between Cape Paterson and Inverloch, is a particularly notable sandstone formation protruding from the shore platform high out of the water. South of Kilcunda, the large, scenic estuary of the Powlett River meets the coast; there is a hinterland of intact and significant coastal banksia woodland communities to the north and south. There are also views of iconic structures in the landscape (such as the Kilcunda Trestle Bridge and the Wonthaggi Wind Farm turbines).

As the coastline approaches Inverloch from the west, the elevation of the coastal topography steadily declines, merging into tidal sand flats and the low-energy Anderson Inlet landscape. This shallow, dynamic river mouth, edged by broad, sandy beaches and low, grassy dunes, provides important habitat for endangered migratory birds and other animals.

Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island (regional significance)

The Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape is a tranquil, low-lying landscape along the northeastern coastline of Phillip Island. The landscape has valued views of local and regional significance.

Rhyll Inlet provides a rich diversity of habitat for coastal plants and animals, and it is accessible along boardwalks through coastal woodland and paperbark forest to intertidal mudflats and mangroves. There are expansive views from Conservation Hill across the inlet to Western Port.

Churchill Island is more undulating than the adjacent coastal flats. The island's cleared, rolling landscape is hillier on its northern side, supporting an ancient Moonah forest. The land then climbs to a central high point with historic farm buildings. There were once several islands off the Phillip Island coast (such as Cape Woolamai and The Nobbies), but Churchill Island is now the only one. Views directly to the east across Swan Bay of Churchill Island are particularly noteworthy: the island appears to float on the still waters of the sheltered cove.

Beyond this landscape's marshy, intertidal coastal edge is a rolling, rural hinterland with indigenous vegetation and exotic shelterbelts. From here, the topography slopes up to a ridge that partially encircles the landscape, providing shelter and a quiet stillness to this significant part of Phillip Island.

Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands (regional significance)

The Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape is a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. The Bass River estuary is a unique estuarine saltmarsh environment in the southernmost part of the landscape. The low-lying landscape has a serene, secluded quality, affording expansive views across this sheltered part of Western Port to the heavily vegetated eastern side of French Island.

White mangrove mudflats are a spectacular feature of this landscape, and they are sensitive to changes in the duration and frequency of inundation, changes forecast as a result of rising sea levels. They provide a vital breeding ground for fish and are an important habitat for shorebirds. There are intact areas of coastal saltmarsh immediately inland of the marine and estuarine tidal flats, beyond which is a backdrop of indigenous coastal shrubs and grasses. Reef Island, a tertiary volcanic outlier joined to the coast by a basalt rubble ridge, is another remarkable feature. Beyond the landscape's intertidal coastal edge is a flat, low-lying rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks with linear eucalypt reserves and exotic shelterbelt planting.

The Corinella Peninsula is more undulating and elevated than the rest of the landscape, and it has a variegated and visually interesting coastal edge. There are 15-metre cliffs at Settlement Point and a substantial ironstone plane (known as the Corinella Fault), which has resisted erosion to project out above the level of the beach. Other coastal-edge features of the peninsula include protected, sandy coves scattered with rocks, substantial bushland reserves right up to the shoreline and small offshore stands of white mangroves.

Strzelecki Foothills (regional significance)

The Strzelecki Foothills landscape incorporates the Bass Hills, The Gurdies Hills and the picturesque Bass River Valley that separates them. These features are some of the most defining of the declared area, particularly the Bass Hills that rise steeply from the surrounding coastal plains, providing a distinctive and highly visible backdrop to the Western Port lowlands.

The Bass Hills are a mostly cleared, pastoral landscape of bucolic rises and gullies. The foothills are steep and incised in some areas and more rolling in others. Exotic shelterbelts divide patchworks of paddocks, inclines and falls, and remnant native vegetation lines roadsides and waterways. By contrast, The Gurdies Hills on the other side of the Bass River Valley are lower and less visually

arresting than the Bass Hills. They undulate beneath large areas of remnant forest and woodland, particularly on the western side, providing a heavily vegetated edge to the Bass Highway and a bushland backdrop to the hamlets of Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies.

The Bass River meanders between the hills, creating a fertile valley floor with a serene, rural character. Remnants of riparian forest line the river, alongside which the railway line once ran. There are picturesque, pastoral views from within the dale, framed by the valley walls. The adjacent hills also provide many opportunities for panoramic views out over the grids of roads and shelterbelts of the pastoral plains to Western Port and French and Phillip islands.

Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland (regional significance)

The Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape is a picturesque, rolling, rural landscape with a low-energy frontage to Western Port. Volcanic activity has shaped the island, and its basaltic geology forms an undulating hinterland punctuated by hillocks.

The topography is draped with long, straight roads and is overlaid with a patchwork of cleared paddocks. There are corridors of remnant native vegetation adjacent to roadsides, and swathes of Swamp paperbark populate waterways and depressions. Rows of Cypress pines act as windbreaks and form iconic shapes on elevated horizons. There are numerous brick and iron chicory kilns in the hinterland, many ramshackle and abandoned. They are reminders of an important industry in the past.

The north coast comprises a series of dune-backed beaches separated by rocky headlands, some high cliffs and wide basalt reefs that extend offshore. Red Rock Point is a particularly compelling feature of the Western Port coast, comprising stunning red basalt outcrops that contrast with the adjacent muted sand. Further west, McHaffie Point is likely an eruption centre from the Older Volcanics geological period and comprises 10–12-metre cliffs cut in hard, red volcanic tuffs. Rather more tranquil are the lower reaches of Saltwater Creek, an intermittent stream that is frequently sand-blocked; it is the only valley open to the sea on Phillip Island’s north coast.

Objective and strategies

Objective 4

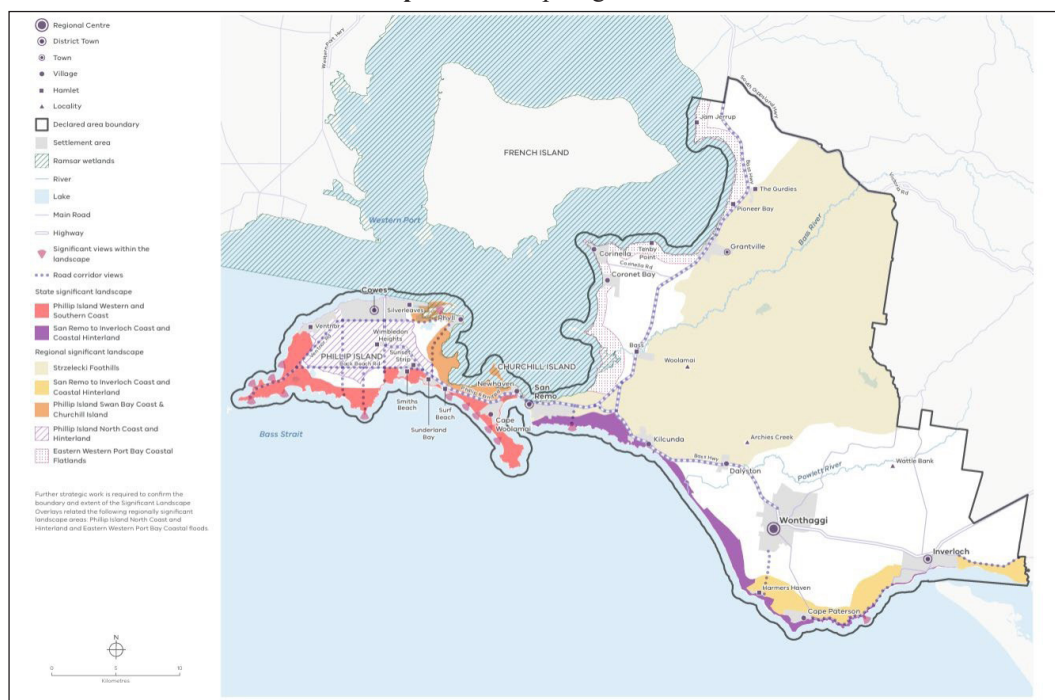
To protect and enhance the declared area’s significant landscapes, including their distinctive characters, physical features and cultural values.

Strategies

4.1	Ensure landscape and seascape features sensitive to change and threats to them are identified and addressed early in strategic planning processes.
4.2	Contain urban growth within protected settlement boundaries, and maintain green breaks between settlements.
4.3	Ensure development responds to the surrounding landscape character and maintains the visual dominance of the natural landscape by: – being sited so that works and buildings are tucked into the landscape and use established vegetation or new vegetation buffers to screen development when viewed from the public realm – providing substantial setbacks from road corridors and publicly accessible land – using building forms, design detailing, materials and colours that immerse buildings within the landscape so they are not visually dominant.
4.4	Ensure development is located away from and does not protrude above hilltops and ridgelines, so the natural contours and vegetation remain visible.

- 4.5 Manage land use, development and infrastructure to ensure that the dominance of significant landscapes, views and vantage points is conserved and enhanced by:
- retaining the rural outlook from inland, main road corridors, particularly the scenic panoramas available of the Bass Hills from the Bass Highway
 - retaining views to the coastline and water from scenic coastal drives (such as the Bunurong Coastal Drive between Wonthaggi and Cape Paterson, and Cape Paterson and Inverloch)
 - retaining and planting native and indigenous vegetation.
-
- 4.6 Retain and enhance remnant native vegetation in coastal reserves, along road and waterway corridors and on private land (for example, in shelterbelts, along fence lines and on steep agricultural land), where appropriate and to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk.
-

Map 8: Landscape significance.



Environment and biodiversity

The declared area's natural environment, biodiversity and habitat – its healthy marine and terrestrial environments and native vegetation – provide many social, economic and cultural benefits. They are integral to the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Bunurong people, who, over countless generations, developed extensive biocultural knowledge and practices to manage habitat and biodiversity values.

The main refuges for biodiversity in the declared area are:

- Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park, which combines the Bunurong Marine National Park, Bunurong Coastal Reserve and other coastal and foreshore reserves and adjacent Crown land.
- Western Port Woodlands, which includes the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve, Grantville Bushland Reserve, The Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve, Hurdy Gurdy Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, Lang Lang Proving Ground and Lang Lang Education Area, and private land between these areas.
- Churchill Island Marine National Park.
- Land managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Its biodiversity-rich wetlands – the wetlands of the Western Port Ramsar site and the nationally important wetlands of the Powlett River mouth and Anderson Inlet – are sustained by rainfall on the steep slopes of the Strzelecki Ranges and Bass Hills, which flows into the Bass and Powlett rivers, Bourne Creek and other waterways.

Biodiversity

Native animals, including little penguins, whales, koalas and kangaroos, are major tourist attractions to the declared area, particularly at sites managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

The Western Port Woodlands includes a string of reserves that contain remnant native vegetation, providing habitat for threatened species, including the Strzelecki gum, tea-tree fingers, thick-lip spider orchid, southern brown bandicoot, giant Gippsland earthworm, swift parrot, lace monitor and powerful owl.

The wetlands of the Western Port Ramsar provide habitat for threatened species, including the bar-tailed godwit, curlew sandpiper, eastern curlew, lesser sand plover, red knot, Australian fairy tern and Australian grayling. Anderson Inlet and its tributaries provide habitat for species listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, which protect migratory birds in danger of extinction. The risk of extinction is exacerbated by climate change, which threatens habitat by increasing coastal erosion and inundation, reducing rainfall and polluting waterways.

The Bunurong Marine National Park is characterised by its extensive intertidal rock platforms and subtidal rocky reefs. It provides habitat for diverse marine plants and animals, many of which are of national, state or regional significance. They include:

- Species-rich algae communities (such as rhodoliths)
- Conservation-listed seabirds and shorebirds (such as the southern giant-petrel and white-faced storm-petrel)
- Threatened and critically endangered species (such as the blue whale, southern right whale and intermediate egret)
- The greatest diversity of intertidal and shallow subtidal invertebrate animals in eastern Victoria.

Other endangered or vulnerable species to which Bass Coast is home include the swift parrot, orange-bellied parrot, red-necked stint, grey-headed flying fox, river blackfish and southern brown bandicoot.

Revegetation

Revegetation is essential for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and mitigating the effects of climate change. As most of the declared area's native vegetation has been cleared since colonisation, there needs to be a focus on revegetation to protect and enhance the environment, as well as prepare for climate change. There are various revegetation approaches, each with its purpose and focus. Three approaches are explained below.

The facilitation of biolinks: A biolink is a connection between two habitat areas that can provide native animals (such as the nationally significant eastern barred bandicoot) with safe transit routes and access to food and water. Biolinks also help improve the genetic diversity of populations and the resilience of native plants and animals to threats including climate change impacts, and they also sequester carbon and help reduce emissions.

Enhancing vegetation on agricultural land: Agricultural and revegetation activities on public and private land can contribute greatly to revegetation, as about 76% of the declared area's land is used for agriculture. Increasing vegetation and retaining significant vegetation on land used for agriculture sequesters carbon and helps achieve net-zero emissions in the declared area.

Increasing vegetation cover in urban areas: Maintaining and increasing vegetation in urban areas can help reverse urban heat island effects and consequent risks to people's health. Vegetation growth in urban areas can be supported by water sensitive urban design and passive irrigation.

What is carbon sequestration?

Carbon sequestration is the process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in soil, vegetation, other materials or underground. Carbon sequestration and net-zero emissions are the main approaches to reducing the overabundance of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Carbon sequestration occurs naturally through photosynthesis: plants remove carbon from the air and store it as carbon in their trunks, branches, foliage and roots and as dead organic matter in forest debris. Revegetation and reforestation increase the amount of carbon plants can sequester. Minimising land-clearing maintains the ability of plants to do so.

'Blue carbon' is when carbon sequestration occurs within coastal ecosystems and marine environments. Mangroves, seagrasses and tidal salt marshes are particularly good at sequestering carbon because the oxygen-poor soil in which they grow prevents the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. As a result, carbon builds up in the soil, layer by layer, with time. Environments with these vegetation types are called 'blue carbon ecosystems'. Blue carbon ecosystems can remove and store carbon from the atmosphere and provide habitat for many marine and coastal species.

Science informs geoenvironmental methods of sequestering carbon, including carbon capture and storage. Farmers have also sequestered carbon for centuries by creating biochar – a carbon-rich substance made by partly burning crop waste – to enrich the soil.

Water and soil quality

Since colonisation, clearing native vegetation and increasing the extent of nonpermeable surfaces have reduced environmental health and functioning by increasing run-off and reducing water quality.

Clearing native vegetation makes the land less able to withstand rainfall events and filter water. In sloping areas, vegetation clearing increases the risk of soil erosion and agricultural run-off, which washes nutrients into waterways and wetlands, potentially creating algal blooms and damaging aquatic ecosystems. In urban areas, replacing vegetation with nonpermeable surfaces increases run-off that can wash household chemicals, fertilisers, litter and other pollutants into waterways and waterbodies. The consequences for marine and coastal habitats can be devastating: the runoff can disrupt the delicate balance of marine and coastal ecosystems, cause detrimental algae blooms and harm aquatic life.

Permeable surfaces, ground cover and canopy vegetation build the capacity of soil to hold and distribute nutrients. They filter water and reduce run-off as stormwater and pollutants are absorbed and treated in situ. They also mitigate the urban heat island effect in urban areas, providing shade and evapotranspiration that help make living cooler.

Development and more intensive agricultural production can increase run-off that pollutes water flowing into waterways and wetlands. More intense rainfall events can also make this pollution worse.

Managing stormwater is a priority for settlements around Western Port, as stormwater run-off directly threatens the health of the Ramsar wetlands. Stormwater must be redirected in some places, so it filters naturally before flowing into wetlands.

Acid sulfate soils – soils saturated with water, are almost oxygen-free and contain iron sulfide crystals – are harmless if not disturbed, but floods and increased urbanisation can disturb them. If disturbed, these soils can form sulfuric acid that can trigger the release of other toxic elements harmful to plants, animals, waterways and human-made structures. The acid can also contaminate drinking water. Acid sulfate soils are particularly prevalent in wetlands around Silverleaves, Newhaven, Coronet Bay and Grantville; at the mouths of the Bass and Powlett rivers; and at Anderson Inlet.

Urban expansion

Urban expansion, native vegetation removal and climate change impacts threaten the declared area's environment, ecology and biodiversity. Wetlands, coastal environs and waterways are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, stormwater run-off, changes to tidal flows, visitation and trespass and increased nutrient loads and salinity. Hard infrastructure (such as seawalls and settlements) can change wetland and coastal processes by creating barriers and limiting natural adaptation (such as wetland migration and natural beach replenishment).

Expansion of urban areas must be carefully planned to limit stormwater run-off and restore and maintain water quality and salinity levels, particularly near sensitive wetlands and coastal areas. As the climate becomes hotter and drier, bushfire risk also increases in and near settlements.

Agricultural and urban stormwater management, increased vegetation cover and biolinks will improve the area's ecological value.

Responsible management of the Western Port Woodlands

The Western Port Woodlands is an area parallel to Western Port generally extending from Lang Lang in the north to Bass in the south. It includes private freehold land and public conservation and bushland reserves. The woodlands' boundary is undefined and recognised as extending beyond the Bass Coast declared area within the Bass Coast Shire into the Cardinia and South Gippsland shires. While some areas of the Western Port Woodlands are designated as conservation reserves, the overall area does not have formal conservation status. Remnant native vegetation within the Western Port Woodlands provides habitat for threatened species, and there are long-standing community concerns about the potential impacts of expanded extractive industry activity on the biodiversity values of the Western Port Woodlands.

It is important to balance protecting Victoria's unique biodiversity and environment with the safeguarding of extractive resources essential for meeting the housing, infrastructure and employment needs of Victoria's growing population. These goals need not be mutually exclusive.

Western Port Woodlands Investigation

There is a need to identify and confirm if there are areas with high biodiversity value within the Western Port Woodlands to help conserve them and inform land use planning, including planning for managing strategic extractive resources.

Further investigative work is needed to understand the intrinsic values of the woodlands and the efficacy of current protections. The investigation may include:

- A strategic environmental assessment to determine the geographical extent and significance of biodiversity within the woodlands
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the protection of high biodiversity values under the existing planning and extractive industry regulations. It would address the work authority and planning approvals processes. Consideration would be given to best practices regarding biodiversity and extractive industry planning and whether new or revised regulations (such as planning controls or other interventions) are required to better protect areas of high biodiversity values within the woodlands to ensure a balance with the development of extractive resources to support Victoria’s growth.

Any investigation would need to be carried out in collaboration with Traditional Owners. It would involve engagement with landowners and occupiers, community groups, industry and other relevant stakeholders.

It is important to balance protecting Victoria’s unique biodiversity and environment with the safeguarding of extractive resources essential for meeting the housing, infrastructure and employment needs of Victoria’s growing population.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 5

To protect, conserve and enhance the declared area’s significant biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Strategies

5.1	Utilise Bunurong biocultural knowledge and practices in managing habitat and biodiversity values.
5.2	Improve habitat quality and quantity, particularly for endangered animal species, by increasing indigenous vegetation and retaining and enhancing remnant native vegetation to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk (for example, in shelterbelts, along fence lines and on steep agricultural land).
5.3	Establish and maintain strategic biolinks, particularly along waterways and coastlines, to enhance habitat and better connect areas of high environmental, biodiversity and ecological value.
5.4	Prioritise ecological restoration works in areas of high environmental, biodiversity and ecological value.
5.5	Minimise the impacts of weeds and pests on biodiversity values by undertaking best practice land management.
5.6	Utilise revegetation to address erosion in coastal and undulating landscapes.
5.7	Encourage regenerative agriculture and environmental practices that increase soil health, diversity in food production and carbon sequestration.

Objective 6

To protect and enhance the health and function of the declared area's integrated water system, particularly the significant wetlands and marine and coastal environments.

Strategies

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| 6.1 | Reduce soil erosion in steep areas through revegetation, undertaking appropriate groundwork and fencing off waterways, particularly in the agricultural areas of the Strzelecki Foothills. |
| 6.2 | Reduce the agricultural run-off impacts of fertilisers, pesticides and effluent, especially in river catchment areas (such as by revegetating them). |
| 6.3 | Minimise the impacts of high-risk invasive weeds (particularly capeweed, cordgrass and emerging salt-tolerant weeds) by developing and implementing best practice land management and prioritising areas abutting or adjacent to significant habitat and biodiversity. |
| 6.4 | Reduce urban stormwater run-off impacts of household chemicals, fertilisers, litter and other pollutants, especially in locations subject to inundation or near wetlands. |

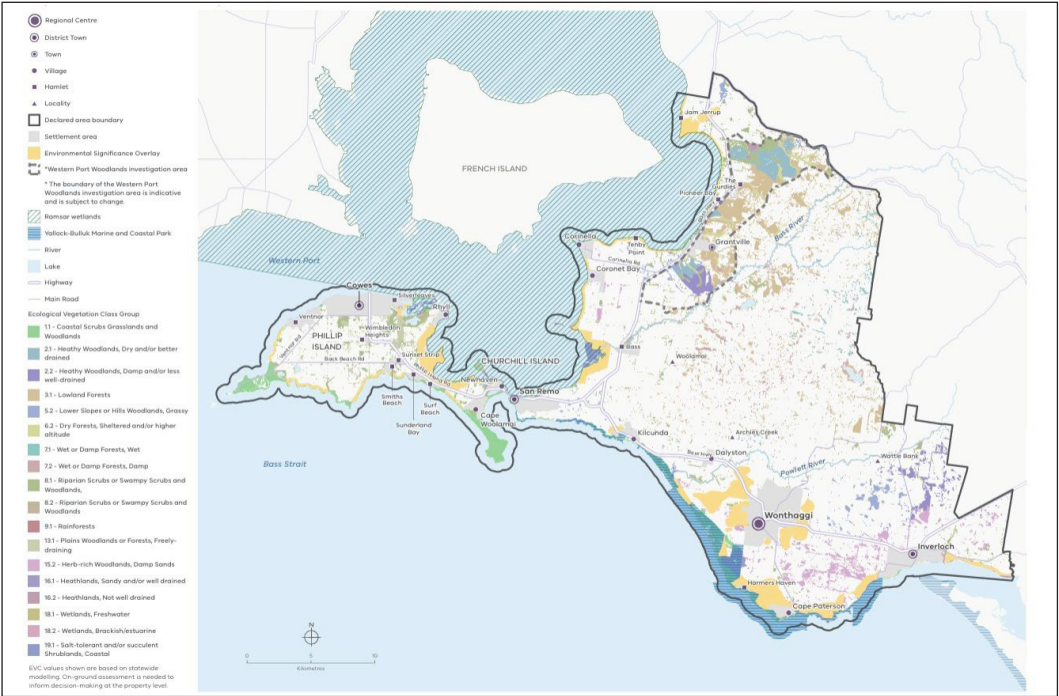
Objective 7

To avoid and minimise human impacts and the effects of urban land uses and development on the declared area's environmental and ecological values.

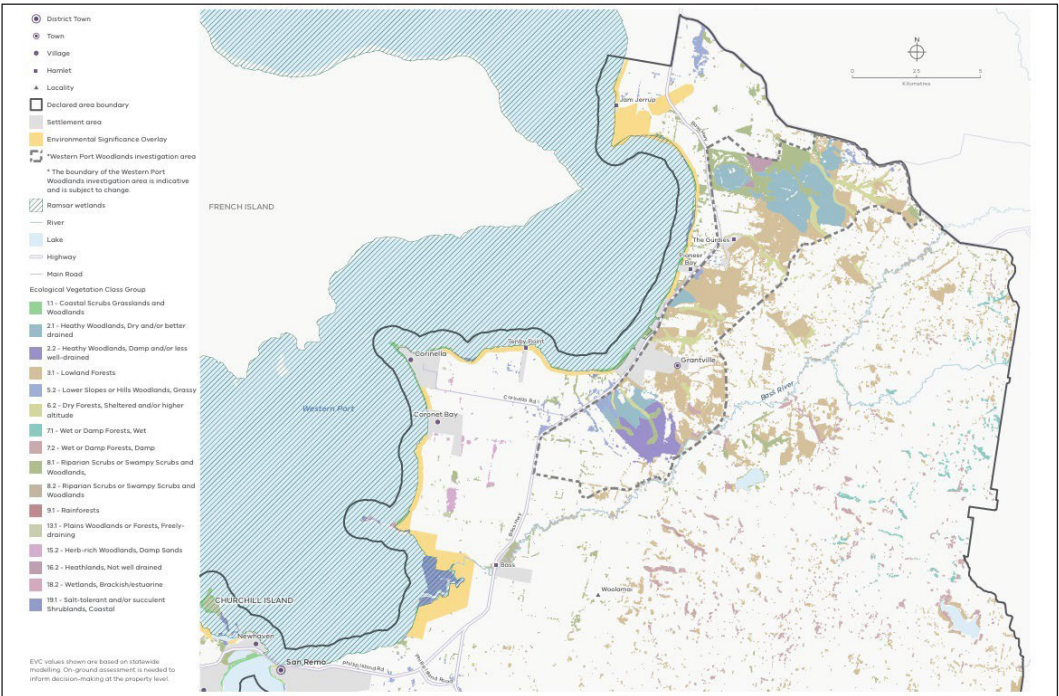
Strategies

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| 7.1 | Reduce the impacts of land use, development, human trespass, noise and light pollution on marine environs and areas of ecological significance, especially those vulnerable to climate change impacts. |
| 7.2 | Encourage tourism practices to minimise the impacts of increased visitation on the declared area's distinctive attributes. |
| 7.3 | Facilitate sustainable public access to and minimise direct human impacts (such as from trespass and fishing) on sensitive sites and their surrounds. |
| 7.4 | Ensure waste collection, storage and disposal activities do not affect sensitive or significant environs. |

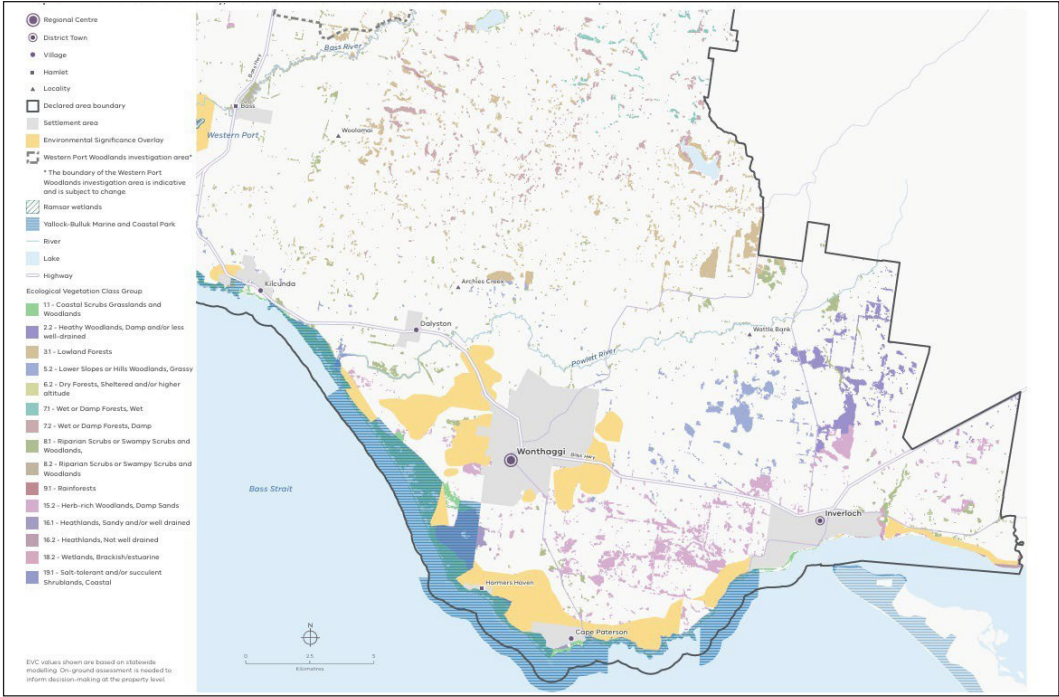
Map 9: Environment and biodiversity.



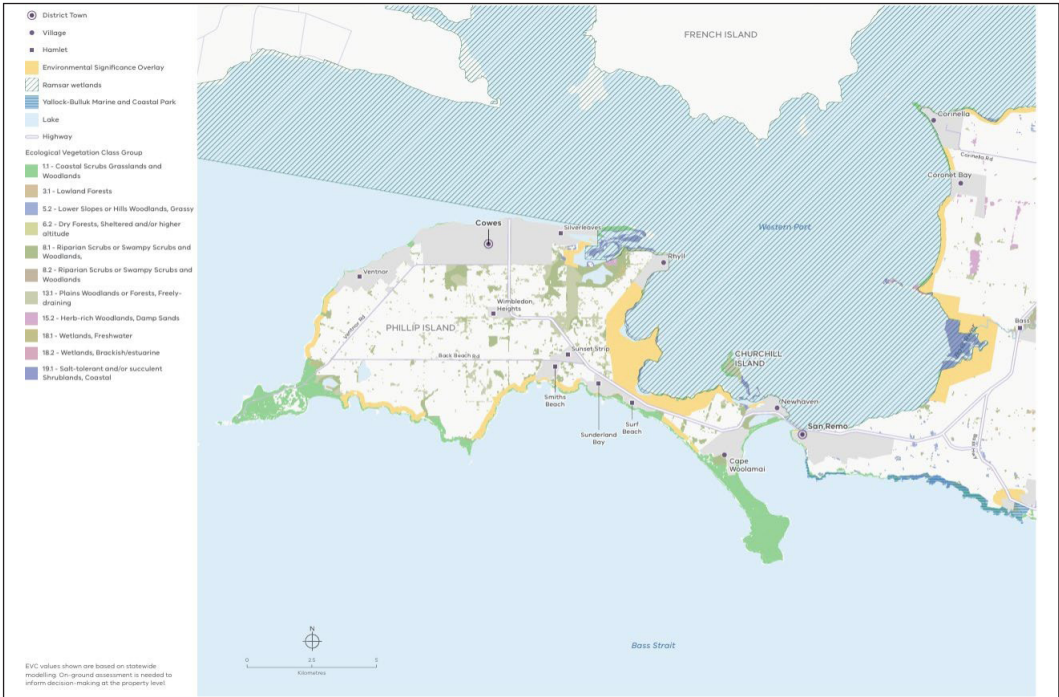
Map 10: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area's north-east aspect.



Map 11: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area’s southern and inland aspects.



Map 12: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area’s western aspect, including Phillip Island



Historic heritage

The declared area offers a window into the colonisation of Victoria. Its many palaeontological and archaeological sites reflect a rich fossil, maritime, early settlement, agricultural (including chicory farming), mining, industrial, convict and leisure heritage.

The declared area, particularly along the coastline near Inverloch and Kilcunda, contains dinosaur fossils and continues to be a highly valued palaeontological research area. Eagles Nest is the site of Australia’s first-documented dinosaur fossil discovery, and many fossils have been uncovered: the fossils of two dinosaur species are found exclusively in the area.

The declared area’s colonial maritime heritage began with the arrival of sealers and explorers (such as George Bass, after whom the area is named) around 1800. This was the start of the conflict with the Bunurong people in the area and their displacement. The many historic shipwrecks along the coastline evidence the declared area’s extensive maritime history. Part of the hull of the mid-19th century wreck of the Amazon is buried on the beach at Inverloch and can be seen when the sand level is low. The main wreck site is located in the intertidal zone at Flat Rocks and is sometimes visible at very low tide. It is the only well-preserved, wooden-barque shipwreck in Victoria, which is described in the Victorian Heritage Register as a rare example of an international wooden trading ship.

Churchill Island was the site of Victoria’s first colonial agricultural pursuit in 1801. Agriculture is an important part of the area’s history and continues to be an important industry.

As early as 1826, rich coal deposits were identified in the area. The State Coal Mine in Wonthaggi was Victoria’s most important black coal mine, and it operated from 1909 to 1968, providing fuel for Victoria’s industries and railways. Remnant elements include mine shafts and tunnels, tram rails visible on Cape Paterson beach and the Kilcunda Bridge, built in 1911 on the Woolamai–Wonthaggi railway. The mine’s operation also shaped the establishment and growth of surrounding settlements: the early miners built coastal shacks, groups of which, over time, evolved into formalised settlements.

For generations, Phillip Island, San Remo and the many smaller coastal settlements have been synonymous with weekend getaways and school holidays for Victorian families. The declared area has several well-known surfing spots, and the southern coast of Phillip Island was named Victoria’s first national surfing reserve. This connection with holidaying and leisure is important to the declared area’s tangible and intangible heritage values.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 8

To protect, strengthen and promote the declared area’s historic heritage values.

Strategies

8.1	Ensure significant historic heritage places are identified, protected, enhanced and sustainably managed.
8.2	With the community, promote the declared area’s rich historic heritage values, including its aesthetic, historical, scientific and social values.
8.3	Conserve and enhance historic heritage through responsible tourism development and practices.
8.4	Minimise the impacts of buildings and works on historic heritage places by designing and siting development to respect their distinct cultural characters and values.
8.5	Acknowledge, interpret and promote significant historic heritage values in the planning, design, development and management of land use and development.

Map 13: Historic heritage.



Strategic infrastructure

The social, economic and environmental resilience of communities depends on providing, maintaining and upgrading transport, essential services and other community infrastructure. Growing numbers of residents and visitors add to demand for this infrastructure, which must be managed to protect and enhance the declared area's distinctive attributes. There is a need to respond to existing and emerging community needs by providing infrastructure in sequence with development. New and upgraded infrastructure must seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where possible and be resilient to natural hazard impacts as climate change increases their frequency and severity.

Energy

Renewable energy generation is essential for energy security and emissions reduction. Stationary energy – electricity, LPG bottled gas, mains gas and firewood – is the declared area’s largest source of emissions. The plan is to transition the area from an energy system reliant on fossil fuels to one powered by renewable energy and for Bass Coast to become a net exporter of renewable energy.

Many renewable energy sources are emerging economic opportunities for the area: wind, solar, small-scale hydroelectricity, bioenergy and marine energy, including wave, tidal and offshore energy.

Transport infrastructure

Good transport networks are essential for economic prosperity and community wellbeing, providing access to jobs, markets, services and recreational opportunities. Land use and transport planning must be integrated for settlements to grow sustainably.

The Bass Highway is a key transport corridor that connects the declared area to Melbourne. Phillip Island Road (including the bridge at San Remo) and the Bunurong Coastal Drive are popular tourist routes affected by peak-visitor-period congestion. They need careful planning to ensure they are resilient to climate change impacts and natural hazards (such as bushfires and flooding). Ferry services between Phillip Island, French Island and the Mornington Peninsula are also essential connections for residents, businesses and visitors.

As motor vehicles are the main mode of transport in the declared area, a more environmentally sustainable future requires a shift to the greater use of active transport, public transport and low or no-carbon transport alternatives. To make this shift, the declared area needs ongoing investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and services.

Water security infrastructure

With anticipated erratic weather patterns and less rainfall due to climate change, water security is vital. In the immediate future, integrated water management approaches and the protection of water infrastructure are crucial to improving water security.

The Victorian Desalination Plant, located close to Wonthaggi, is essential for the state's water security; it can provide up to one-third of Melbourne's water needs. The plant separates salts from seawater and produces high-quality drinking water. The water is then distributed across Victoria via a transfer pipeline. The plant and associated pipeline infrastructure must be protected for the long term to make the declared area and Victoria more resilient and better prepared for climate change.

Community infrastructure and essential services

The social, economic and environmental resilience of Bass Coast communities depends on the provision, maintenance and upgrading of community infrastructure and essential services. This includes water supply, waste and resource recovery, electricity, renewable energy and telecommunications, schools, sporting facilities, libraries and health services.

As settlements within the declared area grow, there is a need for governments and the private sector to respond to existing and emerging community needs by providing infrastructure that is in sequence with development and resilient to natural hazards and climate change impacts.

The delivery of infrastructure and services across the declared area's dispersed settlements should be managed in line with the Bass Coast settlement hierarchy and networks (shown in **Table 2**). Wonthaggi is the municipality's regional service centre, and it is expected to accommodate much of the declared area's future population and employment growth as well as its health, education, civic and retail services. Cowes, Inverloch and San Remo are categorised as district towns, with Cowes continuing to service Phillip Island's residents, businesses and visitors in conjunction with San Remo.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 11

To ensure the integrated and timely provision of transport, essential services and community infrastructure that meets community needs and increases resilience to natural hazard and climate change impacts.

Strategies

11.1	Protect infrastructure in sequence with development to meet the needs of communities, local businesses and visitors.
11.2	Design infrastructure sensitively to: – be sympathetic to landscape character and the preferred character of settlements – minimise the impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage and environmental attributes – maintain view lines from existing and new transport corridors – retain remnant native vegetation and increase indigenous vegetation.
11.3	In consultation with the Bunurong people, ensure the provision, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure that conserves and enhances Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

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| 11.4 | Ensure transport projects minimise impacts on landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values. |
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| 11.5 | Ensure the provision of infrastructure that adjoins or abuts significant environmental areas enables habitat connectivity, providing for the safe passage of wildlife. |
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| 11.6 | Ensure land use and development within the vicinity of the Victorian Desalination Plant does not impact on its operations including pipeline infrastructure. |
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Objective 12

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to stationary energy and transportation, facilitating an orderly and rapid transition to an energy-efficient renewable energy community.

Strategies

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| 12.1 | Ensure transport networks within and between settlements consider safe and accessible active transport modes (including walking, cycling and public transport). |
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| 12.2 | Encourage the provision of sustainable infrastructure that supports sustainable modes of travel. |
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| 12.3 | Encourage mixed-use, walkable neighbourhood and town centres that provide for daily needs and are accessible by active transport to reduce the need to use motor vehicles. |
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| 12.4 | Plan for more renewable energy generation and distribution in the siting and design of development. |
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| 12.5 | Encourage the provision of infrastructure that utilises or manages alternative sustainable energy sources. |
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| 12.6 | Encourage the development of renewable energy facilities in locations where they will not adversely affect the declared area's environmental, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage and landscape values. |
-

Map 14: Strategic infrastructure



Sustainable economic development

Bass Coast Shire is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in regional Victoria. It has become a popular location to live, work and invest due to its unique natural environment, relaxed coastal lifestyle, natural resources and opportunities for economic growth. The Shire is close to Melbourne's south-east growth corridor, and it has strategic transport and communications networks and a growing regional centre with various commercial and community services.

Tourism

The tourism industry is one of the main drivers of the Bass Coast economy and a major employer. The area boasts world-class, nature-based tourist attractions, pristine surf beaches and major events (such as the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit) that attract millions of visitors a year.

There is a need to provide for a sustainable, year-round visitor economy. The number of visitors to the region is projected to double from 1.85 million in 2015 to 3.4 million and be worth upwards of \$1.1 billion by 2035.

Nature-based tourism is one of the declared area's key drivers of visitations. By capitalising on its diverse natural assets for tourism purposes in an eco-friendly way, the declared area can:

- Increase public awareness of its environmental conservation values.
- Attract investment in infrastructure for nature-based experiences (such as tracks and trails).
- Extend the length of visitors' stays by providing more varied tourism offerings.
- Support local businesses that benefit from increased visitation.

The establishment of the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park with a new walking trail between Inverloch and San Remo will increase tourism opportunities and highlight the Bunurong people's connection to and stewardship of Country. There are opportunities to increase the diversity and quality of visitor experiences within the declared area through agritourism, arts and culture and recreational and educational experiences celebrating the area's Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage.

More visitors, seasonal fluctuations in visitation and climate change impacts will increase the demand for local infrastructure (such as increasing road use) and put pressure on the environment that attracts visitors to the region. Infrastructure must be designed, maintained and improved so tourism growth is sustainable and the area's Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage, environment and landscapes are preserved and protected.

The declared area's coastal assets and attractions (such as the Phillip Island Penguin Parade) are major tourism drawcards threatened by climate change impacts, particularly rising sea levels and extreme storm events. To protect the local economy, managing these assets and attractions must include rehabilitating habitat, revegetating, controlling weeds, monitoring the health of wetlands and managing bushfire risk.

The sustainable growth of the tourism industry within the Bass Coast, requires the preferred locations for tourism development to be identified to ensure the declared area's distinctive attributes are safeguarded. This will be informed by local strategic planning led by the Bass Coast Shire Council in collaboration with Traditional Owners, the Victorian government, other stakeholders and local communities.

Agriculture

Farming is a mainstay of the Bass Coast economy, with about 76% of land in the declared area used for agriculture. The climatic conditions are ideal for food production and winemaking. The areas located to the east of the Bass Highway contribute greatly to Gippsland's dairy industry. The open, rural farming landscape is an important contributor to the area's landscape setting and amenity, and it is important for agricultural businesses and tourism.

Farmers must be supported to adapt to climate change impacts and to innovate and embrace new technologies for sustainability, water reuse, value-adding and agritourism.

The declared area must protect its high-quality agricultural land and agricultural operations from encroachment by incompatible land uses. High-quality agricultural land generally has all or most of the following traits:

- Access to quality water that is reliable and affordable
- Sized to support large-scale agricultural uses into the future
- Located on high-quality soil that supports a range of agricultural uses
- Well-located with access to markets
- Part of or close to other industries, forming a cluster.

Natural resources

The declared area's natural resources are strategically important to Victoria. Bass Coast is a critical supply area for the raw materials needed for construction and infrastructure development. The area has active quarries (particularly sand quarries) and Extractive Industry Interest Areas, which indicate the land is likely to contain extractive resources (such as sand, hard rock and gravel) that may be considered for extraction in the future.

Extractive industries require appropriate buffers during operation and rehabilitation at the end of their operating life in a way suitable to the surrounding landscape character, thereby providing a net community benefit. As remnant native vegetation is scarce in the declared area, new industries (including extractive industries) should be directed to areas of lesser environmental significance.

Renewable energy technologies – wind, solar and small-scale hydroelectricity – are live, readily scalable technologies that deserve investment and community support. Emerging renewable technologies – bioenergy and marine energy, including wave, tidal and offshore energy – provide potential economic opportunities for the region and are important ways to reduce emissions.

Building a thriving circular economy

Reducing the amount of waste created and recycling waste reduces the environmental impacts of production and consumption, while enabling economic growth through more productive use of natural resources. Transitioning to a circular economy diverts waste from landfills, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and retains valuable materials in the economy.

Victoria is forecast to create 40% more waste in 2046 than now. Victoria's waste and recycling system must expand to maximise the amount of material recovered for recycling and safely manage the remaining waste. Victoria's planning system can facilitate the expansion of waste and resource recovery infrastructure to ensure facilities are where they are most needed and developed in line with regional priorities.

Objectives and strategies**Objective 9**

To build a sustainable, responsible, year-round visitor economy that builds on or complements the declared area's significant landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.

Strategies

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| 9.1 | In partnership with the Bunurong people, facilitate culturally responsive tourism and related economic development that encourages the community to recognise, understand and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage, rights and authority. |
| 9.2 | Facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation related land uses and development sensitive to the area's landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values. |
| 9.3 | Encourage infrastructure design and development that is adaptable to climate change impacts and reduces visitors' impacts on the declared area's landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values. |
| 9.4 | Encourage tourism and commercial development to include net-zero carbon infrastructure (such as electric vehicle charging stations). |
| 9.5 | Improve gateways to settlements and points of interest by avoiding the introduction of intrusive signage and promoting features that enhance significant views and improve the visitor experience. |
| 9.6 | Ensure tourism development is located in preferred areas and is sensitively designed to minimise the impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage, environment, historic heritage, landscape character and significance and natural resource values. |

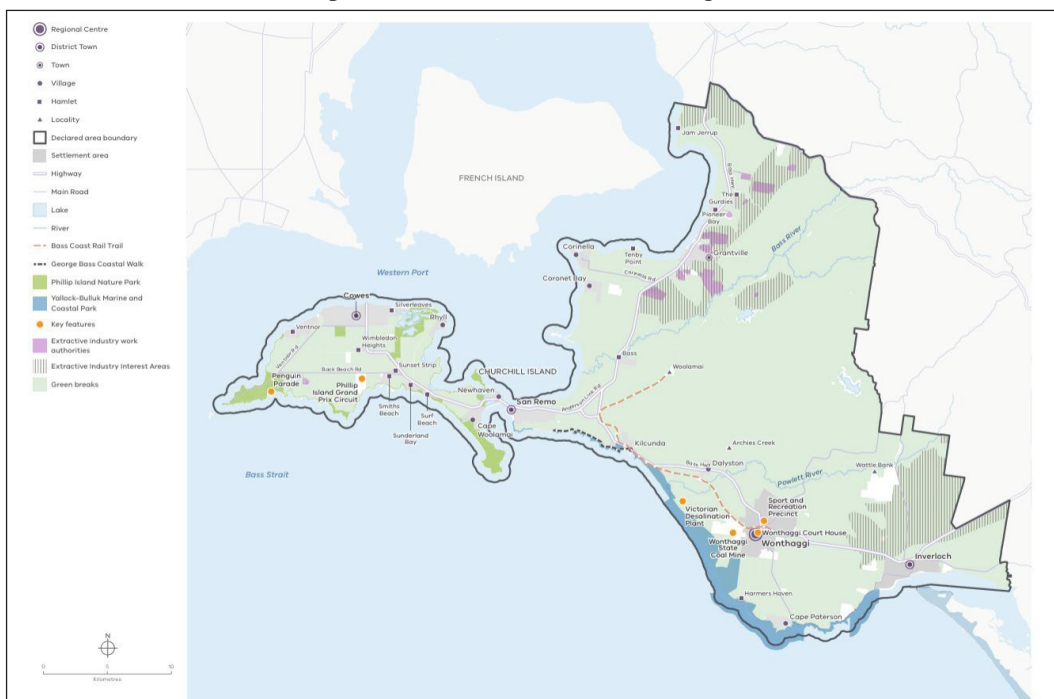
Objective 10

To facilitate a diverse, resilient, circular economy that reduces waste and promotes innovation in the productive use of rural land, natural resources and value-adding activities.

Strategies

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| 10.1 | Protect and manage extractive resource areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and inappropriate development. |
| 10.2 | Ensure extractive industries adhere to best practice measures to minimise impacts on the declared area's attributes. |
| 10.3 | Protect and manage high-quality agricultural land and agricultural operations from encroachment by incompatible land uses. |
| 10.4 | Encourage innovation in agricultural practices (such as regenerative agriculture, sustainable farming, water reuse and efficiency, carbon sequestration and new technologies). |
| 10.5 | Encourage innovation in development practices (such as including recycled materials) in the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure. |
| 10.6 | Restrict the supply of rural living land in rural locations to conserve and protect agricultural practices, natural resources and related activities, and other rural land uses. |
| 10.7 | Encourage practices that reduce waste to landfills including reusing, repurposing and recycling. |
| 10.8 | Encourage the development of facilities, services and innovative practices that support a circular economy that does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental, historic heritage, landscape and natural resource values. |

Map 15: Sustainable economic development.



Settlements

There are 29 settlements within the declared area, located along the coast or nestled among the vast rural hinterland. The character of settlements and the lifestyles they offer make them highly desirable places to live, work and visit. As a result, the Bass Coast Shire is one of regional Victoria's fastest-growing municipalities.

In 2023, Bass Coast had an estimated 42,729 residents, forecast to increase to 47,408 residents by 2036. Projections indicate a need for about 9,800 additional dwellings in the Bass Coast Shire between 2021 and 2036. The growing population will also need a greater diversity of housing types and tenures for different household types, including for older people, smaller households and people with a disability.

The growing visitor population will also drive the demand for housing, other accommodation and services. In 2021, about 27% of dwellings in the declared area were used for holiday rental or holiday home purposes, and the proportion in coastal settlements is higher. The demand for coastal homes is expected to increase.

To achieve the long-term vision for the declared area, settlements must be carefully planned and managed so development respects their existing or preferred character and unique features.

Decision-makers must recognise, conserve, strengthen and promote the declared area's Aboriginal cultural heritage and work in partnership with the Bunurong people in caring for Country.

The declared area must have an adequate supply of well-serviced residential, commercial and industrial land, good access to active transport, jobs and community infrastructure. It is also essential to protect and enhance the native, indigenous and riparian vegetation that contribute so much to the declared area's character and the canopy cover within settlements that helps mitigate heat island effects.

Settlement hierarchy and networks

Table 2 identifies and describes the hierarchy of settlements – designated as a regional service centre, district town, town, village, hamlet or locality – within the declared area.

Settlements clustered together function as networks, offering housing diversity and shared services. Networked settlements include:

- Cape Paterson, Dalyston, Hamers Haven,
- Inverloch, Kilcunda and Wonthaggi
- Cape Woolamai, Newhaven, San Remo, Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach
- Cowes, Silverleaves, Ventnor and Wimbleton Heights
- Corinella, Coronet Bay, Grantville and Tenby Point.

Table 2: Bass Coast settlement hierarchy

SETTLEMENT	DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
Wonthaggi	Regional service centre	A settlement with a substantial and diverse population, employment and housing base. A regional service centre provides all essential services, higher-order goods, education at all levels and access to a large hospital and diverse medical facilities. It can accommodate substantial and incremental housing change and has strong relationships with all types of surrounding settlements.
Cowes	District town	A settlement with a substantial and diverse population. It usually has a dominant town centre. Most essential services are available, including a post office, schools, emergency services, medical and hospital facilities, retail services and accommodation options. There is some reliance on the regional service centre for employment and higher-order services. A district town can accommodate substantial and incremental housing change and has strong relationships with smaller, nearby settlements, providing them with some higher-order services. District towns on the coast are popular visitor destinations. All are connected to reticulated water, electricity and sewerage. They provide diverse housing, services and employment to support residents and visitors
Inverloch		
San Remo		
Grantville	Town	A settlement with a population size varying in line with general service provision and the diversity of housing stock. Services include a post office, supermarket, school, police station and basic medical facilities. There is some reliance on larger, nearby settlements for employment and higher-order services. Towns on the coast are popular visitor, retirement and lifestyle destinations. Towns are connected to reticulated water and electricity, and most to sewerage.
Cape Paterson	Village	A small settlement with moderate population levels that fluctuate seasonally. Basic services are available, including a general store and basic retail facilities. Most have postal services. A village has strong relationships with larger, nearby settlements and relies on them for services and employment. Villages on the coast have moderate-to-high levels of holiday home ownership. Most are connected to reticulated water, and some to sewerage
Cape Woolamai		
Corinella		
Coronet Bay		
Dalyston		
Kilcunda		
Newhaven		
Rhyll		

Bass	Hamlet	A very small settlement with low population levels that fluctuate seasonally. Reticulated water and sewerage connections are generally not available. Hamlets on the coast have high levels of holiday home ownership and some small-scale visitor accommodation.
Harmers Haven		
Jam Jerrup		
Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies		
Silverleaves		
Smiths Beach		
Sunderland Bay		
Sunset Strip		
Surf Beach		
Tenby Point		
Ventnor		
Wimbledon Heights		
Archies Creek	Locality	A small cluster of houses with various lot sizes within the rural hinterland. A locality relies on larger settlements for services. Reticulated water and sewerage connections are generally not available.
Wattle Bank		
Woolamai		

Future development

Most of the declared area’s residential growth will be concentrated within the regional service centre and district towns by developing vacant lots, infill and greenfield areas. It will be planned and designed to respect the unique identities of settlements, including their highly valued landscapes, environmental, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values and coastal characters.

Housing change areas

Each settlement will accommodate housing differently, in line with its designation in the settlement hierarchy and its unique features and character.

Planning for housing growth should address the following principles.

- **Environmental hazards, ecology and heritage:** Housing should be located in areas that avoid environmental hazards and sensitive places with high biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.
- **Neighbourhood and landscape character:** Housing should be designed to protect the unique characters of settlements, including their landscape settings.
- **Urban infrastructure and connectivity:** Housing should be located close to services and infrastructure and have good connections to surrounding areas. Where feasible, opportunities to consolidate and redevelop existing urban areas should be prioritised over developing greenfield areas.
- **Diversity and affordability:** Housing should be diverse, considering the existing and future demographics of the area.

Protected settlement boundaries

Every settlement within the declared area, excluding localities, will have a protected settlement boundary to contain urban growth and provide long-term protection for the settlement's distinctive attributes and environs. **Map 16** to **Map 35** show the location of each protected settlement boundary. The protected settlement boundaries for Inverloch and Wonthaggi are yet to be defined and are subject to further strategic planning work and public consultation.

Green breaks

Maintaining green breaks between the declared area's settlements is important. As shown on **Map 3**, the green breaks together with the protected settlement boundaries will help conserve landscape, environmental and cultural heritage attributes, strategic infrastructure (such as water utilities), agricultural land and other natural resources from encroachment by urban development.

Green breaks help to establish a sense of arrival and a unique identity for each settlement area by containing their outward growth and avoiding settlement areas coalescing. Development at the periphery of settlements has the potential to impact environmental and cultural heritage attributes and the rural land uses contained within the green breaks. It can greatly change the character of the surrounding landscape and must be carefully designed to achieve a successful urban-rural interface. Subject to addressing bushfire risks, providing for a soft-edge transition between urban and rural areas may be achieved through the siting, scale and appearance of development.

Within the declared area, green breaks are mostly rural land zoned as Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone, Public Conservation and Recreation Zone or Rural Living Zone.

Objectives**Objective 13**

To plan and manage the sustainable development of the declared area's settlements, to ensure the protection and enhancement of the area's landscape significance, Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage, environmental and biodiversity values, and consistent with the unique character and hierarchy designation of each settlement.

Strategies

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| 13.1 | Direct urban development to a hierarchy of settlements identified for growth by designating housing change areas and protected settlement boundaries. |
| 13.2 | Support protected settlement boundaries for each settlement identified in the Bass Coast settlement hierarchy, excluding localities. |
| 13.3 | Limit the expansion and intensification of settlements in high-risk locations, actively reducing the risks associated with natural hazards. |
| 13.4 | Ensure the design of development respects the identities, coastal characters and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritages of settlements and their environs. |
| 13.5 | Ensure development at the periphery of settlements is designed to transition to the surrounding landscapes, integrating development with its environs, landscape character and features, subject to addressing bushfire risks. |
| 13.6 | Ensure development in settlements maintains and enhances views of the rural hinterland, to and from the coast and foreshore, and other significant landscapes. |
| 13.7 | Ensure development in settlements achieves best practice environmentally sustainable design and development for the full life of the development. |
| 13.8 | Provide an adequate supply of well-serviced commercial, industrial, community and other employment land in settlements to support local and regional jobs and services. |
| 13.9 | Encourage the voluntary and proactive use of Aboriginal cultural heritage management plans. |
| 13.10 | Ensure affordable and social housing is located close to town centres and services. |

Settlement planning and management

Regional service centre

Wonthaggi

Wonthaggi is the declared area's primary service and employment centre. There are opportunities for the large-scale expansion of residential, commercial, community and industrial land uses.

Growth will be accommodated within designated growth areas (such as the Wonthaggi North East precinct) and through infill development within the settlement area. Housing change will occur within and around the commercial centre.

Wonthaggi needs a protected settlement boundary to protect the distinctive attributes surrounding the settlement and ensure future residential development is not located in areas of environmental risk. The resolution of the location of the future protected settlement boundary will be informed by strategic planning work undertaken in collaboration with the Bunurong people and relevant government agencies and authorities. This work will also involve public consultation.

District towns

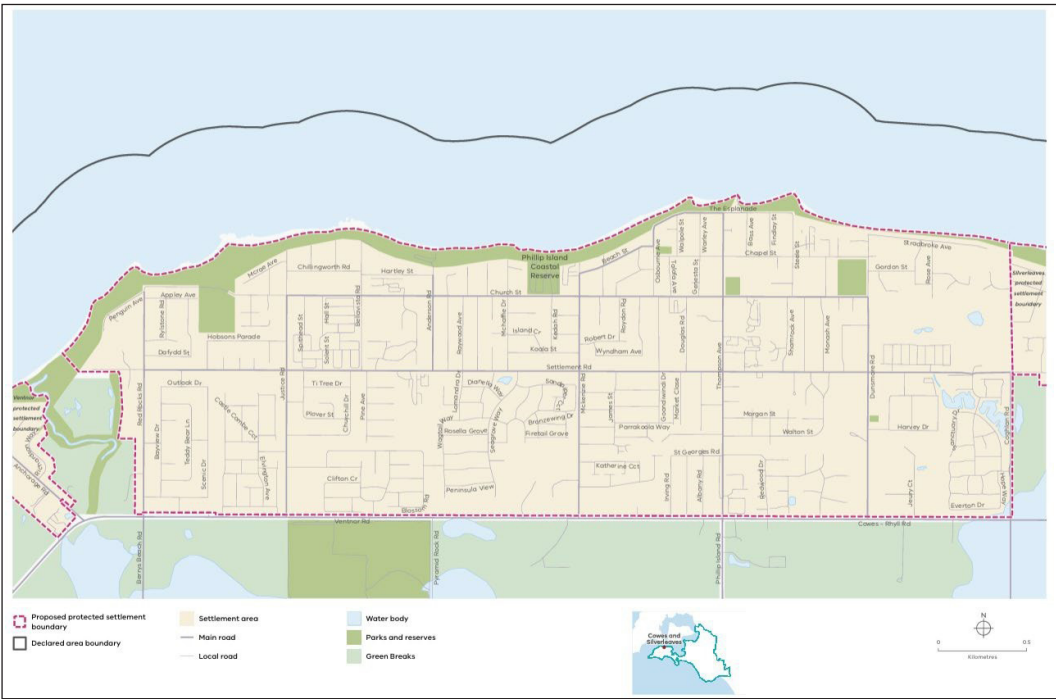
Cowes

Cowes is a vibrant, coastal district town. It is Phillip Island's largest settlement and its primary commercial and community service centre for residents and visitors. It supports a large seasonal visitor community and has a significant foreshore precinct.

The district town's area is elevated and undulating, and the main street, with its activity and avenue of cypress trees, provides a sense of arrival and entry. Residential neighbourhoods on either side of the main street and town centre have an established grid of large, regular-shaped blocks.

Growth will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 16**.

Map 16: Cowes protected settlement boundary.



Inverloch

Inverloch is a coastal district town and a popular lifestyle and holiday destination. Its town centre provides commercial, community and recreational services, with residents depending on nearby Wonthaggi for higher-order services.

Inverloch's character is shaped by its setting on Anderson Inlet and the Tarwin River estuary and the coastline of broad beaches, tidal flats and dunes. Areas southwest of the town have dense canopies of trees and coastal shrubs.

Inverloch adjoins the state-significant and regionally significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, characterised by its low-energy coastline within Anderson Inlet (a shallow, dynamic river mouth edged by broad, sandy beaches and low, grassy dunes) and a mostly cleared, rolling, pastoral hinterland. The Inverloch Surf Beach is highly dynamic and has experienced significant erosion of the dunes and coastal vegetation. There are extensive areas of non-developed grassland at the edge of the settlement.

Growth will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant land within the existing settlement area.

Development should have a distinct coastal character. In areas of minimal housing change, development at Inverloch will occur on larger lots with wide frontages. Buildings should be casually sited on lots with low site coverage, providing space for boats, other recreational pursuits and vegetation. Street spaces should be generous and well-vegetated and have informal pedestrian environments.

A protected settlement boundary is planned for Inverloch to protect the distinctive attributes surrounding the settlement and to ensure future residential development is not located in areas of environmental risk. The location of the future protected settlement boundary will be informed by strategic planning work undertaken in collaboration with the Bunurong people and relevant government agencies and authorities. This work will also involve public consultation.

Inverloch's character is shaped by its setting on Anderson Inlet and the Tarwin River estuary and the coastline of broad beaches, tidal flats and dunes.

San Remo

San Remo is a district town. It is a residential and holiday visitor settlement with a small commercial centre.

Located at the edge of the Anderson Peninsula (where the Bass Hills terminate) and the entrance to Phillip Island, San Remo offers panoramic outlooks: the settlement is prominent and exposed in views across Western Port. Views towards the water are framed and captured by the local street network.

Most of San Remo is within the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, characterised by the undeveloped, rolling Bass Hills, clusters of remnant native vegetation and expansive views to Western Port. Part of San Remo is within the state-significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, a highly valued coastal landscape of stunning contrasts and iconic features, which can be appreciated from the George Bass Coastal Walk: the walk provides commanding views of the dramatic coastline and Bass Strait.

Development should be sensitively designed in relation to the topography, coastal outlook and environs. The foreshore setting of San Remo’s town centre is the settlement’s main focus. Streetscapes should utilise distinctive native vegetation.

The strategic planning of the growth area and the design of development should address:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage values by engaging with the Bunurong people.
- The state-significant and regionally significant landscapes within which San Remo is located, including the scenic journey along Phillip Island Road by:
- Protecting the ridgeline that forms the westerly extent of the Bass Hills and the Anderson Peninsula.
- Using external materials that reduce the visibility of buildings.
- Transport, drainage and other infrastructure requirements to the satisfaction of the relevant authorities.

Map 17: San Remo protected settlement boundary



Town

Grantville

Grantville is a town serviced by a small commercial strip along Bass Highway with retail, community and industrial uses on either side of the highway. It has widely spread residential areas and nearby vacant land and extractive industry.

The part of Grantville between the Bass Highway and Western Port is within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff. The part east of the highway is within the Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which is regionally significant.

Growth will be accommodated by developing infill and greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 18**.

The foreshore precinct should be clearly connected to the town centre. Development within the northernmost precinct at Stewart Street, Malcolm Court and Panoramic Drive should build on the heavily vegetated foreshore character, such as through landscaping the streetscape.

Map 18: Grantville protected settlement boundary.



Cape Woolamai

Cape Woolamai is a village that sits behind a fragile dune on the south-east tip of Phillip Island. It is mainly residential with a small commercial area.

Cape Woolamai is adjacent to the state-significant Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, characterised by a varied, dramatic coastline of sea cliffs, granitic headlands, rocky platforms and beaches and by its elevated, gently rolling hinterland.

The settlement is generally uniform in character, with a grid of consistently sized lots and houses of a similar style. The streets are narrow, with coastal trees and vegetation. It is strongly related to its fragile coastal environmental setting with defined and sensitive pedestrian connections to beaches and foreshores.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 20**, which will provide long term protection for Cape Woolamai’s environs.

Development should utilise building materials and colours that reinforce the coastal setting.

Map 20: Cape Woolamai protected settlement boundary.



Corinella

Corinella is a historic coastal village located at Settlement Point at the head of a prominent peninsula with views to French Island and Phillip Island. It comprises mainly residential uses and relies on other settlements for commercial and community facilities.

Corinella is located within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. The internationally significant Ramsar wetland borders both sides of the settlement.

Corinella’s informal street layout is a modified grid, reflecting its location on a headland. It is clearly separated from Coronet Bay to the south.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 21**, which will protect the green break between Corinella and Coronet Bay and the hinterland. It will also prevent further linear development along the Western Port coastline.

Development should be designed to be sympathetic to its surrounds. Lot sizes should be consistent with those in the established residential areas, except in the Heritage Bay estate, which has smaller lots and more intense development.

Dwellings should fit in with the coastal character, with choices of materials and colours reflecting coastal themes.

Map 21: Corinella protected settlement boundary.



Coronet Bay

Coronet Bay is a residential village located on the eastern shore of Western Port. It has a small commercial centre servicing local needs, a community hall and a reserve in the town centre.

Coronet Bay is located within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, characterised by intertidal mangroves and mudflats at its coastal edge and a flat, low-lying rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks. The village also fronts the internationally significant Ramsar wetland.

Development extends from the shore to a nearby ridge and adjacent farmland. Streets on the western side of Agar Road are in a grid pattern and on the eastern side are more diverse: larger lots provide for low-density residential development.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 22**. This will prevent further linear development along the Western Port shoreline and protect the green breaks south of the settlement between Coronet Bay and Corinella.

Development should be designed to be sympathetic to its surrounds and the village’s distinctive character. Development should utilise materials and styles that respect and complement the village’s low-rise, coastal, holiday feel.

Development east of Agar Road should be differentiated from the established area, and create a new sense of entry to the village, reinforced by urban design treatments.

Map 22: Coronet Bay protected settlement boundary.



Kilcunda

Kilcunda is a coastal holiday and residential village with some commercial uses and community facilities. Residents rely on nearby Wonthaggi for most services.

Kilcunda sits in an elevated, undulating landscape, with development on both sides of the Bass Highway. Most of Kilcunda is within the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, characterised by rolling hills and clusters of remnant native vegetation. Part of Kilcunda is within the state-significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, characterised by exposed headlands and rock shelves with the spaces between forming sandy coves and beaches.

As well as its stunning and contrasting natural beauty, Kilcunda offers views of iconic structures in the landscape (such as the Kilcunda Trestle Bridge and the turbines of the Wonthaggi Wind Farm).

Limited development will be accommodated on vacant residential land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 24**.

Kilcunda’s foreshore, community gathering space, residential hinterland and rural landscape setting should be safeguarded and enhanced through development and streetscapes designed in keeping with the topography and retaining a sense of spaciousness.

Map 24: Kilcunda protected settlement boundary.



Newhaven

Newhaven is a village on the eastern tip of Phillip Island on Western Port, and it is the island’s arrival and departure gateway over the Phillip Island Bridge.

Newhaven is distinguished by its narrow, treed, informal foreshore road that follows a series of small coves and promontories.

Part of the village is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, which is tranquil and low-lying and comprises wetlands with a rural hinterland.

Newhaven’s growth will be accommodated by developing infill and greenfield areas within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 25**.

The settlement mostly comprises development in garden settings, conveying a relaxed holiday destination. Land close to the coast subject to inundation and a rising sea level is unsuitable for conventional development.

Phillip Island Road provides a sense of arrival to Phillip Island.

Map 25: Newhaven protected settlement boundary.



Rhyll

Rhyll is a village with panoramic outlooks over Western Port and a strong relationship to its foreshore. It sits on a hill, and its extent of tree cover and coastal vegetation reinforces its character. Many streets are unsealed and have grassed, vegetated verges.

Rhyll is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, characterised by a marshy, intertidal coast and a rolling hinterland with patterns of indigenous riparian vegetation and exotic shelterbelts.

Limited development will be accommodated on vacant residential land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 26**.

Rhyll should retain a strong visual contrast between its built environment and the adjacent rural landscape. Streetscapes should have an informal feel and incorporate water sensitive urban design.

Map 26: Rhyll protected settlement boundary.



Harmers Haven

Harmers Haven is a coastal hamlet with no services and limited infrastructure; residents rely on nearby Wonthaggi for their services.

Harmers Haven sits high above Bass Strait and is sheltered by dense foreshore vegetation. Housing in the settlement is diverse, and development transitions into the agricultural landscape to the north. The hamlet is located within the regionally significant part of the San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape. The hinterland is a mostly open, elevated pastoral landscape with commanding views of the coastline and beyond. The hamlet borders the state-significant part of the same landscape, characterised by exposed, jagged headlands and rock shelves battered by the powerful Bass Strait seas.

New development will be carefully accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 28**.

Development south of Viminaria Road should retain a coastal, rural-hamlet character, with varied dwellings well set back from the street among established coastal vegetation. This character contrasts with the area to the north, which has larger dwellings on larger, less-vegetated lots.

Map 28: Harmers Haven protected settlement boundary.



Jam Jerrup

Jam Jerrup is a residential hamlet fronting the Western Port coast. It has no services or facilities.

Jam Jerrup sits within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. It is located on an escarpment and has informal, well-vegetated streets. Many dwellings are oriented to and have an outlook over the foreshore reserve and the eastern reach of Western Port.

New development will be carefully contained within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 29**.

Development should respect Jan Jerrup’s distinctive character as a small, ‘hidden’ residential hamlet. It should be kept in scale and height with existing buildings and facilitate views over Western Port. Foreshore Road defines the westernmost extent of development and protects the foreshore. Any enhancement of the road reservation should retain a sense of coastal informality and rely on natural (rather than engineered) systems and treatments.

Map 29: Jam Jerrup protected settlement boundary.



Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies

Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies are residential hamlets with no commercial or community facilities; residents rely on Grantville for services.

Pioneer Bay is located between the Bass Highway and Western Port and is bounded by a vegetated ridge. The Gurdies follow this ridge inland to the north-east. The surrounding landscape of Pioneer Bay includes a reserve and a well-vegetated foreshore area. Pioneer Bay has an informality to its street network.

Pioneer Bay sits within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff. The Gurdies is set back from Western Port within the Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which is regionally significant because of the landform features of the Bass Hills and The Gurdies Hills.

New development will be contained within the protected settlement boundaries shown on **Map 30**. The built form should be low-scale and fit in with the coastal setting and nearby nature conservation reserves.

Map 30: Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies protected settlement boundary.



Silverleaves

Silverleaves is a coastal hamlet located immediately east of Cowes. It is a sensitive, highly vegetated residential area.

Silverleaves adjoins the Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, which is of regional significance due to its marshy intertidal coast, rolling hinterland with cultural patterns of indigenous riparian vegetation and exotic shelterbelts, and visual contrasts.

New development will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 31**.

Development at Silverleaves should retain and enhance its distinctive, highly vegetated, bush residential character in an informal setting. Development should be sited to maintain the existing coastal and tree canopy vegetation.

Map 31: Silverleaves protected settlement boundary.



Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach

These four, close-by hamlets are located along a section of Phillip Island’s southern coastline renowned for its excellent surf beaches. Residents rely on nearby Newhaven, San Remo and Cowes for most services.

Smiths Beach, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach adjoin the state-significant Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, characterised by its gently rolling hinterland adjoining volcanic cliffs and headlands 30–50 metre high above rocky shore platforms and beaches. Sunset Strip is within the regionally significant Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape, in the undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and has various vegetation.

The protected settlement boundaries shown on **Map 32** will contain the four hamlets’ growth.

The streetscapes should be informal, with soft edges and verges and minimal fencing.

Map 32: Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach protected settlement boundaries.



Tenby Point

Tenby Point is a coastal hamlet with a narrow strip of dwellings extending along Bayview Road, which terminates at a headland and the foreshore. There are no services: residents rely on surrounding settlements for them.

The hamlet is within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff.

It is characterised by deep, regularly shaped lots, with native vegetation surrounding dwellings that distinguish the settlement from the surrounding agricultural landscape.

New development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 33**.

Tenby Point’s structure and character are defined by Bayview Avenue, which terminates at the coastal foreshore. Development should respect the mainly low-scale dwellings by using simple building forms, pitched roofs and timber materials. The visual impact of development should be minimised by using sympathetic materials and generous front and side setbacks. Streetscapes should be well-vegetated and have an informal nature. Minimal fencing should allow for views through to dwellings and unstructured native gardens.

Map 33: Tenby Point protected settlement boundary.



Ventnor

Ventnor is a hamlet located immediately west of Cowes on the west coast of Phillip Island. It is mainly a holiday destination with limited commercial and community services due to its proximity to Cowes.

Ventnor is located within the Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape, which is regionally significant due to its contrasting combination of basaltic headlands, low-energy beaches, offshore rock platforms and undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and contains a variety of vegetation.

Ventnor Road is a non-urban corridor traversing the settlement and linking to some of Victoria’s primary tourist attractions: The Nobbies, the Penguin Parade and the rugged coastline around them.

The hamlet has two distinct residential pockets screened by foreshore vegetation. Its grid of mainly unsealed streets has generous grassed, vegetated verges.

New development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 34**.

Development should respect the existing built form with informally sited, simple, coastal dwellings.

Map 34: Ventnor protected settlement boundary.



Wimbledon Heights

Wimbledon Heights is a hamlet in the middle of Phillip Island with few services and facilities. Residents rely on Cowes for most services.

Wimbledon Heights is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape area in the undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and has a variety of vegetation. The rural landscape around the settlement is an important aspect of the area’s landscape character, and it forms part of an important green break between Phillip Island’s settlements.

New development will be contained within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 35**.

Map 35: Wimbledon Heights protected settlement boundary.



Localities

The localities of Archies Creek, Wattle Bank and Woolamai are clusters of houses where new development will protect the area’s landscape character, and environmental and biodiversity values.

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal cultural heritage	Tangible heritage – Aboriginal places, objects and ancestral remains – and intangible heritage – knowledge of or expression of Aboriginal tradition, including oral traditions, performing arts, stories, rituals, festivals, social practices, craft, visual arts and environmental and ecological knowledge (not including anything that is widely known to the public), as set out in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 .
Agritourism	Tourism that brings visitors to rural areas and provides them with opportunities to experience and participate in activities related to food, food production and agricultural practices. Examples include visiting wineries and breweries and tours and fruit-picking at farms.
Biodiversity	All components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including fungi and micro-organisms, across land, rivers, coasts and oceans.
Built form	The combination of features of a building including its style, façade treatments, setbacks, height and site coverage.
Biolink	A set of linkages through a landscape joining two areas of ‘core habitat’: high-quality habitat essential for the survival and well-being of species. Biolinks are essential to maintaining landscape connectivity for many animal species.
Circular economy	A model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials and products for as long as possible. This extends the life cycles of products.
Coastal acid sulfate soils	Soils in low-lying coastal areas and the marine environment that contain high concentrations of iron sulfates. They are relatively harmless in their undisturbed (submerged) state but produce and release large quantities of sulfuric acid when exposed to oxygen through excavation, dredging or drainage, harming coastal and marine environments
Declared area	An area to which an order under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 section 46AO applies. Map 2 shows the Bass Coast declared area.
Declared area framework plan	A plan required by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 section 46AV(2) to provide a framework for decision-making in relation to the future use and development of land in the declared area.
Ecosystem services	The benefits people obtain from healthy ecosystems. These include provisioning services (such as food and water), regulating services (such as flood and disease control), cultural services (such as spiritual, recreational and cultural benefits) and supporting services (such as nutrient cycling that maintains the conditions for life on earth).
Environmentally sustainable design	Design that maximises efficiency and sustainability with respect to water resources, stormwater management, transport, waste management and urban ecology.
Extractive Industry Interest Areas	An area established to raise awareness that extractive industry is a potential land use and to afford protection of the industry from competing land uses.

TERM	DEFINITION
Green break	Mostly rural land located between settlement boundaries may have various non-urban land uses (such as agriculture, hobby farms and agritourism businesses).
Greenfield land	Undeveloped land identified for development, generally on the fringe of a settlement.
Habitat	The place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs.
Historic heritage	Historic types of heritage places, including archaeological sites and artefacts, buildings, structures, precincts, gardens, trees, cemeteries, cultural landscapes, shipwrecks and their artefacts and significant objects and objects associated with places. 'Historic' can refer to a range of periods or eras.
Indigenous vegetation	Vegetation local to the area.
Landscape character	The sum of the physical features of an area (such as its topography, geology, waterbodies, vegetation and urban development).
Landscape significance	The designation of a landscape as special or important due to its visual, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage, environmental, scientific, social and other values.
Marine and coastal environment	The outer limit of Victorian coastal waters and five kilometres inland of the high-water mark of the sea: - the land (whether or not covered by water) to a depth of 200 metres below the surface of that land - any water covering the land referred to in paragraph (a) from time to time - the biodiversity associated with the land and water referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).
Native vegetation	Plants indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.
Peri-urban area	The area beyond Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary and comprising local government areas with a mostly rural character, located all or partially within a 100-km radius of Melbourne.
Planning authority	Any person or organisation given the power to prepare a planning scheme or an amendment to a planning scheme. The Minister for Planning is a planning authority and may authorise any other Minister or public authority to prepare an amendment to a planning scheme.
Protected settlement boundary	A long-term settlement boundary in a declared area intended to protect the valued attributes of the rural hinterland surrounding a settlement by containing its growth. Both Houses of Parliament must ratify any proposed amendment to a SPP to change a protected settlement boundary.
Ramsar (wetland, site)	An area subject to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, which was the first modern treaty between nations aimed at conserving natural resources. It was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and came into force in 1975. The convention's mission is 'the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world'. Once a wetland is listed under the convention, a country agrees to maintain or improve its ecological character as it was when listed.

TERM	DEFINITION
Regional service centre	A pivotal town in Victoria's regional development, fostering economic activity and providing a key network of service hubs. The final draft Bass Coast SPP and <i>Plan for Victoria</i> both classify Wonthaggi as a regional service centre for the declared area.
Responsible authority	The organisation that manages and enforces the planning laws for an area. This is usually the local council. It decides whether a planning permit application is approved or refused and ensures compliance with the planning scheme, permit conditions and agreements.
Responsible public entity (RPE)	An agency or body responsible for managing land in the declared area. In the context of declared areas, responsible public entity means any of: – the Secretary (within the meaning of the Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987) – the water corporation responsible for the area in which the declared area is located – a municipal council whose municipal district contains land in the declared area – Parks Victoria – the Victorian Planning Authority – a catchment management authority for a catchment and land protection region that contains land in the declared area – Department of Transport – Victorian Rail Track – any committee of management or trustees in relation to land in the declared area – any Traditional Owner Land Management Board in relation to land in the declared area – any other public entity prescribed to be a RPE in relation to the declared area
Retreat	The decommissioning or relocation of existing structures, assets or uses away from areas that are or will be harmed by natural hazards. Retreat of natural systems may also be required. For example, saltmarsh habitat that would naturally migrate landward in response to rising sea levels may be obstructed by the built environment, and corridors of undeveloped land may be required to allow for the movement of species and functioning of habitats.
Settlement	An area comprising settlement- or urban-related land uses that includes housing, community facilities, commercial and industrial areas and other uses.
Settlement boundary	A boundary that marks the limit of urban development in an area.
State significance	A quality of environmental, landscape, economic and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage value important to the State of Victoria.
Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)	A Statement of Planning Policy approved under part 3AAB of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 in relation to a declared area

TERM	DEFINITION
Stationary energy	Electricity (including renewable energy generated and exported to the grid), LPG bottled gas, mains gas and firewood.
Traditional owners	An Australian Aboriginal group with Country in an area. The Bunurong people are the Traditional Owners of the Bass Coast declared area.
Urban heat island	An urban area significantly warmer than surrounding peri-urban areas, mainly because of land use changes – vegetation removal and development – that result in land absorbing more heat from the sun. Waste heat generated by energy use also contributes.

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