

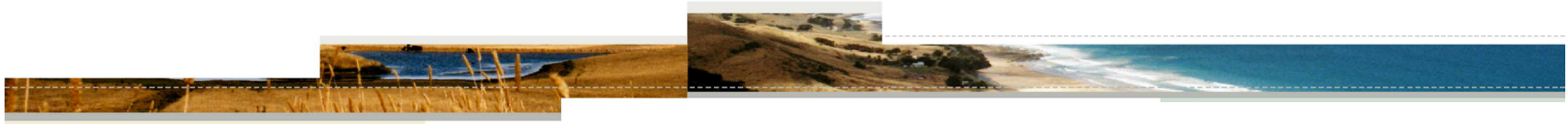


THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

plān|ī'sphēre [urban strategy planners]

REGIONAL TOOLKIT

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT | SEPTEMBER 2003



Acknowledgments

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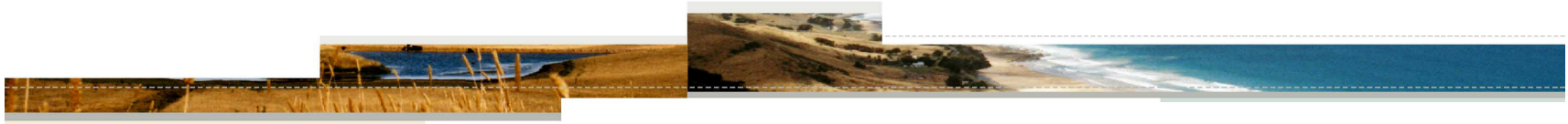
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1. Introduction

Planisphere was commissioned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment to undertake a landscape character assessment of the Great Ocean Road Region.

Landscape character is the interplay of geology, topography, vegetation, water bodies and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, which makes one landscape different from another.

The landscape character assessment was undertaken as part of the overall Great Ocean Road Region Strategy, and has devised a sound and consistent methodology for assessing the character of landscapes and the way in which various types of development can be managed in different landscape types.

This document, the 'Regional Toolkit', contains a summary of the methodology, landscape character types, key issues and recommendations for the Great Ocean Road Region, as well as advice on the best method of implementing the findings of the Study through the Victoria Planning Provisions.

The Regional Toolkit is one of the four components that make up the contents of the Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study. An outline of the full contents of the Study is included on page 4 of this Toolkit.



2. Study Contents

Regional Toolkit

How the Study can be implemented in the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy and State Planning Policy

Regional Toolkit Contents:

Methodology
Regional Landscape Types
Regional Landscape Elements
Landscape Significance
Summary of Regional Issues
Regional Recommendations

Precinct Package Contents:

Precinct Qualities & Objectives
Precinct Development Principles
Precinct Landscape Elements
Precinct Analysis Maps
Planning Scheme Analysis & Recommendations

Precinct Packages

Descriptions, photos, development principles and recommendations for each of the 20 landscape precincts delineated across the region

Precinct Packages (20):

- 1.1 Winchelsea Western Plains
- 1.2 Undulating Mixed Farming
- 1.3 Undulating Grazing
- 1.4 Paddocks & Cones
- 1.5 Partially Wooded Plain
- 1.6 Stony Rises
- 2.1 Northern Foothills
- 2.2 Dairying Hills & Vales
- 2.3 Gellibrand River Valley
- 2.4 Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills
- 2.5 Johanna Coast to Cape Otway Coastal Valleys and Hills
- 2.6 Princetown Coastal Valleys and Hills
- 3.1 Port Campbell Coast and Hinterland
- 3.2 Nirranda Coast and Hinterland
- 4.1 Otway Ranges Forest and Coast
- 4.2 Cleared Uplands and Hilltops
- 4.3 Dry Coastal Woodland and Heath
- 4.4 Low Coastal Heath
- 5.1 Lakes and Saltmarshes
- 5.2 Aire Valley Marshes

Municipal Toolkits

How the Study can be implemented by local Councils

Municipal Toolkits (5):

Colac Otway Shire
Corangamite Shire
Moyne Shire
Surf Coast Shire
Warrnambool City

Municipal Toolkit Contents:

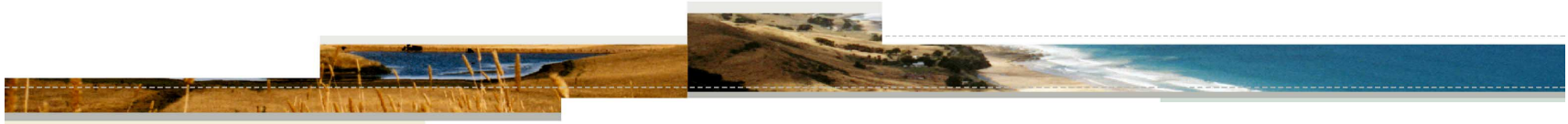
Landscape Types & Precincts
Landscape Elements
Summary of Issues
Recommendations

About the Study

The study's background report (brief, method, process and context)

About the Study Contents:

Brief & Method
Policy & Context Analysis
Study Process
Next Steps



3. Methodology

Determining the boundaries of the Study and the most appropriate methodology was undertaken in consultation with the Stakeholder Group and was the subject of the first Stakeholder Workshop. A set of 'key criteria' was developed with the stakeholders, having assessed the methodology of past landscape assessment studies undertaken here and overseas. The key criteria are listed in the [About the Study](#) report, published separately. The criteria were used to arrive at the methodology for the Study, which is described in the following sections.

The methodology takes as its starting point the results of a Preliminary Landscape Assessment undertaken by Planisphere before the commencement of this Study. This involved a 'desktop' identification of preliminary landscape character types and produced a broad and general hypothesis of the landscape types that exist in the Region. The Preliminary Study also involved a review of relevant literature. The particular usefulness of this Preliminary Study was that it provided a clear indication of the subject matter to be analysed at a detailed level as part of the full Landscape Assessment Study.

In summary, the Landscape Assessment Study involved the following key tasks. The key tasks are discussed in more detail in the [About the Study](#) report.

Key Tasks Summary

Policy Gaps and Development Analysis

The objectives of the policy gaps and development analysis were to:

- Determine the development pressures occurring in Municipal area in the Region, and the threats to landscape character
- Establish the success of current planning scheme provisions and policy in protecting and managing landscape character, and identify gaps

- Gain a detailed understanding of existing policy, zoning and overlay provisions
- Identify past and future policy directions for each Municipal area

This stage of the Study included one-on-one targeted interviews with Council officers from each Municipal area, an assessment of past planning permit applications and decisions, and detailed analysis of existing planning scheme provisions for each Municipal area.

Delineation of Landscape Types and Precincts

The objectives of this key task were to:

- Confirm the identification of landscape character types undertaken in the Preliminary Study through detailed data collection and analysis
- Identify additional landscape types
- Undertake visual and sensory analysis from a professional outsider's point of view
- Define and delineate precincts within each landscape character type

The delineation of landscape types and precincts involved the collection and analysis of a series of 'MapInfo layers' for the Region, including topography/contours, satellite photo imagery and ecological vegetation classes. The analysis and overlay of these contextual maps contributed to the delineation of landscape types and precincts. The other key contributor was a visual assessment undertaken as part of a detailed survey of the Region, where numerous photos and notes were also collected.

All these 'layers' of information were analysed, with an emphasis on how they interacted to create landscape character. The landscape character types and precincts were then delineated and 'precinct analysis papers' were prepared, with much of that information now appearing in the [Precinct Packages](#), a key product of this Study.

A record of key views in the Region, following the establishment of the most photographed locations and scenery, was also prepared as part



of this key task, and information regarding other 'landscape elements' such as townships, edges and corridors was also collected and analysed.

Preparation of Development Principles

The objective of this key task was to:

- Prepare principles for development for each landscape character precinct in the Region

This involved the assessment of the outputs from every previous task, and the synthesis of these into a set of development principles for each landscape character precinct. This was considered an important output because following the policy gaps and threats analysis, it was determined that what was lacking at a local level was user-friendly and straightforward development principles to help guide and manage development in the Region. It was envisaged that these development principles would underpin the development of policy, and would operate within the context of a broader implementation framework. The development principles are now contained in the relevant [Precinct Packages](#).

Identification of Landscape Character Significance

The objective of this task was to:

- Develop a list of criteria against which the landscape character significance of the Region could be assessed
- Identify the significance of various landscapes throughout the Region

The primary purpose of the Study was to determine the character of different landscape types within the Region, and to prepare principles for managing development within each landscape type. The development principles relied more on the characteristics of different landscapes than on judgements about relative significance. However, the identification of landscape character significance was also undertaken as it was one consideration in determining whether

additional planning scheme controls or management measures were required.

Simple assessment criteria were developed for establishing landscape character significance and the terms Regional, State or National were used to indicate the level of significance. The criteria and results of their application are contained in the [Landscape Character Significance](#) section of this Toolkit.

Community perceptions and values were integrated into this task only so far as reading background information such as development proposal submissions, would allow. It is important to note that the assessment of landscape significance only addressed landscape character and not other potentially important factors like cultural heritage and environmental significance.

Analysis of VPP Planning Tools

The objective of the analysis of VPP planning tools was to:

- Recommend a suite of planning scheme tools most appropriate to the protection and management of landscape character in the Region

This task involved re-assessing the outputs from the policy gaps and threats analysis, and analysing the advantages and disadvantages of the various VPP tools available. Relevant recent VCAT and Panel decisions that referenced landscape character were also sourced.

Implementation Recommendations

The objective of this key task was to:

- Propose additional planning scheme controls (if appropriate), policy content and a framework for implementation of the suite of recommendations

The Study's recommendations on additional planning controls were arrived at using the following 'formula':

Significance + Pressure + Lack of Control = Priority Area (for additional control)



This task also involved ensuring that the findings of the Study were easily translatable into policy for inclusion in the local planning schemes, and making recommendations regarding the structure and content of policy both in the SPPF (as part of the implementation of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy) and the LPPF.

Recommendations regarding additional planning scheme controls, such as the location of proposed Significant Landscape Overlay areas were also refined.

It was envisaged that this information, along with the other findings of the Study, would be presented in a user-friendly 'toolkit' format. That way, local Councils could easily translate the information into planning scheme amendment documentation and proceed with implementation.



4. Regional Landscape Character Types

An analysis of broad landscape character types was undertaken for the region, focussing on the distinctions between landscape character types and their capacity to accommodate different types of development. The key purpose of the Study was to determine how development can be managed in different types of landscapes.

Following is a summary description of the landscape character types that exist in the Great Ocean Road Region. These are also shown on the [Landscape Character Types and Precincts Map](#) on page 9.

Western Plains, Cones and Lakes (1.1 – 1.6)

Located in a horizontal band across the northern section of the study area, this landscape character type is associated with the flat to gently rolling topography of the western plains, punctuated in some areas by volcanic cones, craters and outcrops. The landscape consists mostly of paddocks divided by shelter belts, with some remnant stands of vegetation throughout.

The precincts located within this landscape character type are:

1.1 Winchelsea Western Plains

1.2 Undulating Mixed Farming

1.3 Undulating Grazing

1.4 Paddocks & Cones

1.5 Partially Wooded Plain

1.6 Stony Rises

Otway Foothills, Valleys and Uplands (2.1 – 2.6)

Located generally at the foothills of the Otway Forest, both inland and on the coast, this landscape character type is characterised by hilly

topography, varying from gentle to steep, and often incised with rivers, creeks and gullies. A patchwork of paddocks and shelter belts exists, with some remnant vegetation in waterways and valleys.

The precincts located within this landscape character type are:

2.1 Northern Foothills

2.2 Dairying Hills & Vales

2.3 Gellibrand River Valley

2.4 Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills

2.5 Johanna Coast to Cape Otway Coastal Valleys and Hills

2.6 Princetown Coastal Valleys and Hills

Western Coastal Cliffs (3.1 – 3.2)

This landscape character type is located along the western coast of the study area from Warrnambool to beyond Port Campbell, and extends some way inland. The landscape is characterised by low to dramatic sea cliffs, including spectacles such as the Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge, with gently undulating topography further inland. Vegetation is low coastal scrub, with reserves of natives or plantations, and paddocks with shelter belts in the hinterland.

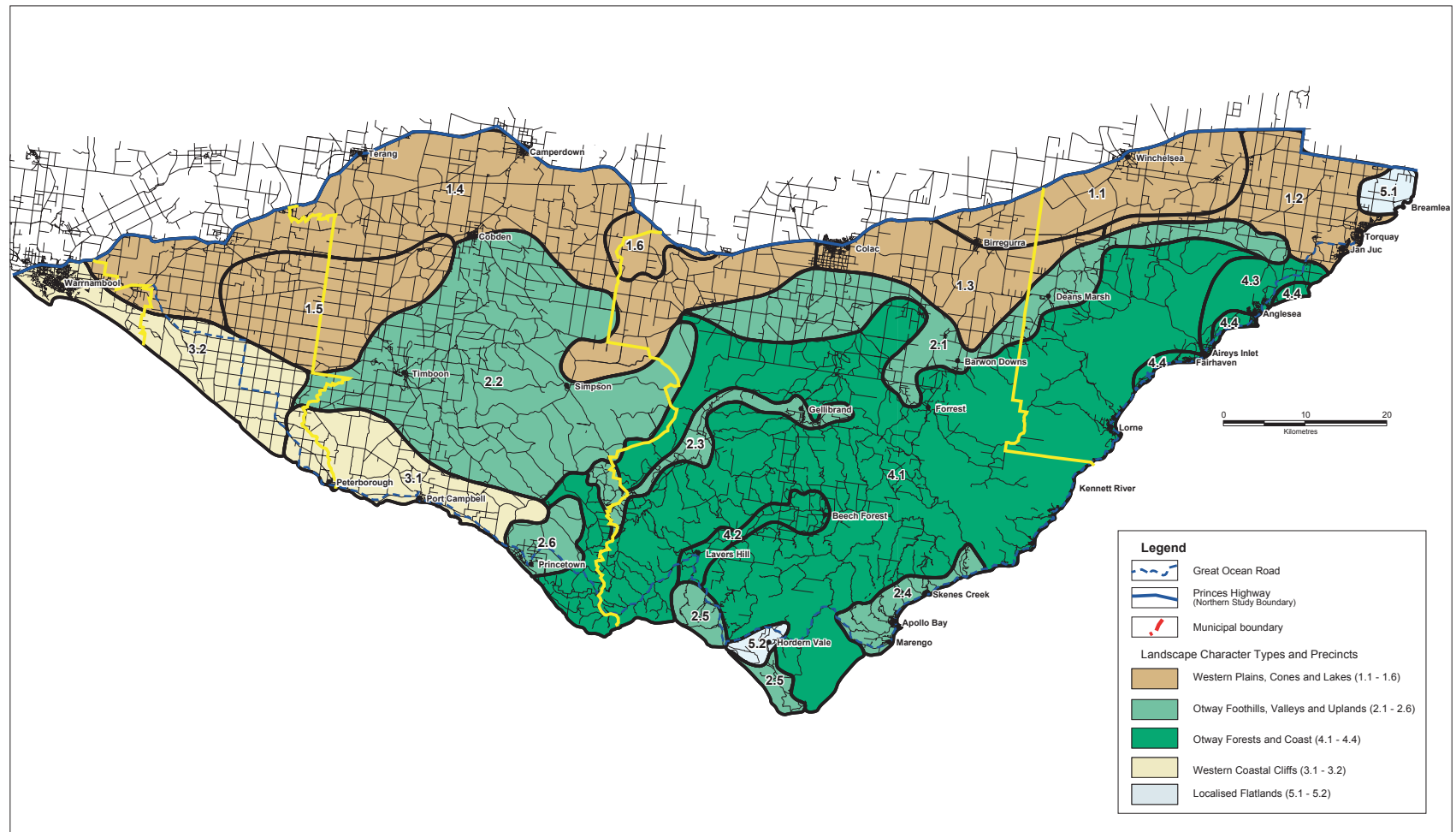
The precincts located within this landscape character type are:

3.1 Port Campbell Coast and Hinterland

3.2 Nirranda Coast and Hinterland



Landscape Types and Precincts





Otway Forests and Coast (4.1 – 4.4)

This landscape character type consists of the main area of the Otway Ranges and coast, containing large areas of dense, tall forest cover in hilly terrain, extending to the sea with high, rugged cliffs in places. In some coastal locations the vegetation is sparser and smaller in scale. This landscape also includes areas of plantation timber and clearings set among the forest.

The precincts located within this landscape character type are:

4.1 Otway Ranges Forest and Coast

4.2 Cleared Uplands and Hilltops

4.3 Dry Coastal Woodland and Heath

4.4 Low Coastal Heath

Localised Flatlands (5.1 – 5.2)

This landscape character type is located in the flat, predominantly open and isolated areas associated with the lakes and saltmarshes around Breamlea and the Aire River estuary.

The precincts located within this landscape character type are:

5.1 Lakes and Saltmarshes

5.2 Aire Valley Marshes

State Policy Implications

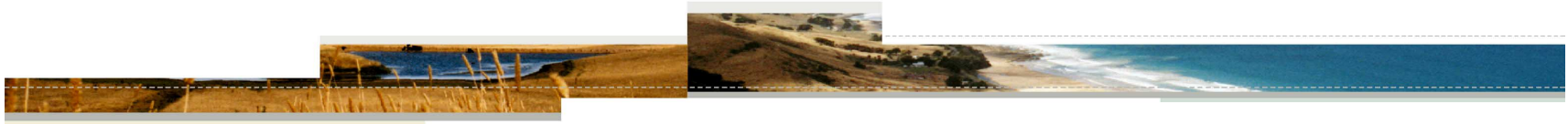
At present the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) in the Victoria Planning Provisions (in all planning schemes in Victoria) contain only very general objectives relating to landscape character.

Therefore, included in the SPPF as part of the Great Ocean Road Regional Strategy section, principles or objectives should be included

in order to reflect the regional landscape character types that express:

- The importance of landscape character to the economy of the Region.
- The need to relate new development to the landscape character types and precincts defined by this Study.

The Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study should also be included within the State Planning Policy Framework as a Reference Document.



5. Regional Landscape Elements

Townships

Townships within the Great Ocean Road Region vary in their settings and relationship to the landscape. Coastal towns such as Apollo Bay and Marengo are dominated by their dramatic landscape setting, being located at the base of steep, cleared hills with a frontage to the beach. In contrast, townships such as Terang and Camperdown are located in the relatively flat topography of the Western Plains, dominated by cleared paddocks, shelter belts and long distance views to volcanic craters and cones. Providing a different landscape experience again are towns such as Forrest and Gellibrand, nestled in clearings of the Otway Ranges with dense forest all around.

The landscape character of the following townships within the Great Ocean Road Region is described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the relevant Precinct Package:

- Winchelsea and Birregurra (Precinct 1.1)
- Torquay and Jan Juc (Precinct 1.2)
- Colac (Precinct 1.3)
- Terang, Camperdown and Cobden (Precinct 1.4)
- Deans Marsh and Barwon Downs (Precinct 2.1)
- Timboon and Simpson (Precinct 2.2)
- Gellibrand (Precinct 2.3)
- Skenes Creek, Apollo Bay and Marengo (Precinct 2.4)
- Princetown (Precinct 2.6)
- Port Campbell and Peterborough (Precinct 3.1)
- Warrnambool (Precinct 3.2)
- Lorne, Forrest, Kennett River and Wye River (Precinct 4.1)
- Lavers Hill and Beech Forest (Precinct 4.2)
- Anglesea and Aireys Inlet (Precinct 4.3)
- Fairhaven and Moggs Creek (Precinct 4.4)

Key issues in townships in the Region include ribbon development between settlements, particularly in coastal areas along the Great Ocean Road. It is important to contain the urban form of townships, and for the natural landscape to dominate beyond the township edge. Township edges may vary in the way they interface with the natural landscape. It may be appropriate that the built form edges of some townships are clearly demarcated, while others are 'softer' comprising a combination of buildings and vegetation. If not appropriately designed and integrated with the landscape, development on the periphery of settlements, often in low density residential areas, can 'blur' the urban boundary of townships with development spilling into the natural landscape. Signage clutter along the main road into a township can have a similar negative visual effect.

Another key issue is the visual dominance of buildings located on hill faces around townships, associated with the clearing of vegetation and multiple storey elevations that result from buildings having no relationship to their topographical setting.

The existence of 'heavy' urban or suburban building forms, particularly in coastal towns, is also emerging as a key issue where previously the casual, 'beachside' character was derived from light, simple buildings with articulated forms and a mix of materials.

Edges

'Edges' occur in the landscape when different landscape types or features intersect. They create complexity in the landscape and provide visual contrast and a point of interest. For any given landscape (eg the coast, a forest) it is often the edge (eg the beach or cliffs, a clearing in the forest) that attracts the most people and creates management issues.

There are many edges within the Great Ocean Road Region landscape, and perhaps the most complex and dramatic that occurs is the coming together of edges in the Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills Precinct (Precinct 2.4). Within this setting, the following landscape elements intersect: Low sea coast, beach side township, topographic



edge of the Otway Ranges sweeping down to the narrow coastal strip, edge of the forest, and the incised, vegetated creek valleys. This contributes to the level of significance attributed to the landscape setting of this precinct.

Other landscape edges are described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the Precinct Packages and include:

- Township / natural landscape edges
- Edges where landscape character types and/or precincts intersect
- The coastline
- The forest edge
- National Park edges
- Topographical edges
- Features in the landscape creating edges ie incised valleys, stands of vegetation, rivers and other waterways, shelter belts, dry stone walls, volcanic craters and cones etc
- Road corridors creating edges

Corridors

Main road corridors and key tourist routes that pass through the Region include the Great Ocean Road and the Princes Highway, and linking these corridors are a number of key north south routes. The road corridors throughout the Great Ocean Road Region pass through different landscape types and precincts, resulting in a variety of landscape experiences and scenery throughout the journey. Some of these journeys are described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the Precinct Packages.

Main road corridors throughout the Region are zoned Road Zone Category 1 and buildings within 100 metres of them require a planning permit in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones. As a result most development adjacent to main roads can be assessed and managed. This is important because the impression and landscape character of an area is often confined to what is seen from the main road corridors, particularly the key tourist routes. Development such as tourism signage and other infrastructure within the road reservations

themselves also has a significant impact on views of the landscape and the impression of landscape character gleaned by tourists and visitors.

The assessment and management of development that can be seen from main road corridors is therefore an important issue in the Region. Particular types of development for which Development Principles have been prepared in relation to this issue include timber plantations adjacent to main roads, development on highly visible hill faces and ridges, ribbon development and low density development on township fringes. It is equally important that public land managers assess the impact of any addition to road reservations on the character and views of the surrounding landscape.

Key Views

There are many key viewing locations that are frequented by tourists and visitors to the Region, with the views featuring on postcards from the Great Ocean Road. These include many stunning views from the coastal side of the Great Ocean Road featuring steep rocky cliffs and the Southern Ocean, and perhaps the best known and highly visited spectacle in the Region - the Twelve Apostles. Other scenic lookouts are located on ridges deep within the Otway Ranges and feature panoramic views of surrounding lush forest and farmland.

Views from the following key locations in the Great Ocean Road Region are described in the Precinct Landscape Elements section of the relevant Precinct Packages:

- Bells Beach South (Precinct 1.2)
- Bird Rock Lookout (Precinct 1.2)
- Mount Leura, Camperdown (Precinct 1.4)
- Cape Patton Lookout (Precinct 2.4)
- Mariner's Lookout (Precinct 2.4)
- Castle Cove (Precinct 2.5)
- Johanna Beach (Precinct 2.5)
- The Twelve Apostles (Precinct 3.1)
- Loch Ard Gorge, the Arch and the Grotto (Precinct 3.1)
- Peterborough car park / golf course (Precinct 3.1)



- Bay of Islands (Precinct 3.1)
- Logans Beach Lookout (Precinct 3.2)
- Mt Defiance Lookout (Precinct 4.1)
- Scenic Lookout at Barramunga (Precinct 4.1)
- Anglesea Scenic Lookout (Precinct 4.3)
- Point Addis (Precinct 4.4)
- Urquart Bluff (Precinct 4.4)
- Cinema Point (Precinct 4.4)

Key viewing locations in the Region that are described as part of this Study are depicted on the [Great Ocean Road Region Key Viewing Locations Map](#) on page 14.

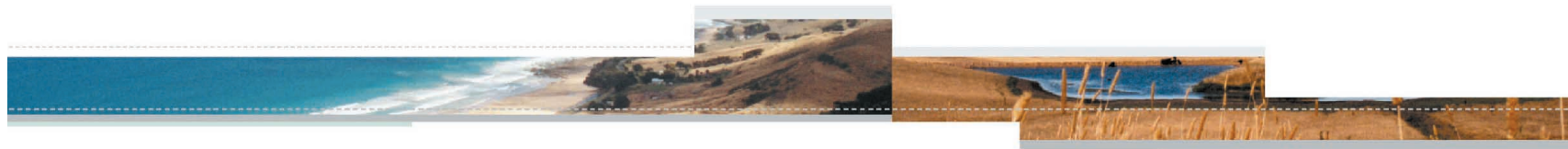
The protection and management of views from popular and established viewing locations is a key issue within the Region. It is very important, in most instances, to retain the dominance of the natural landscape from these key viewing points, and to ensure that any new development is assessed for its impact on the character of the landscape.

State Policy Implications

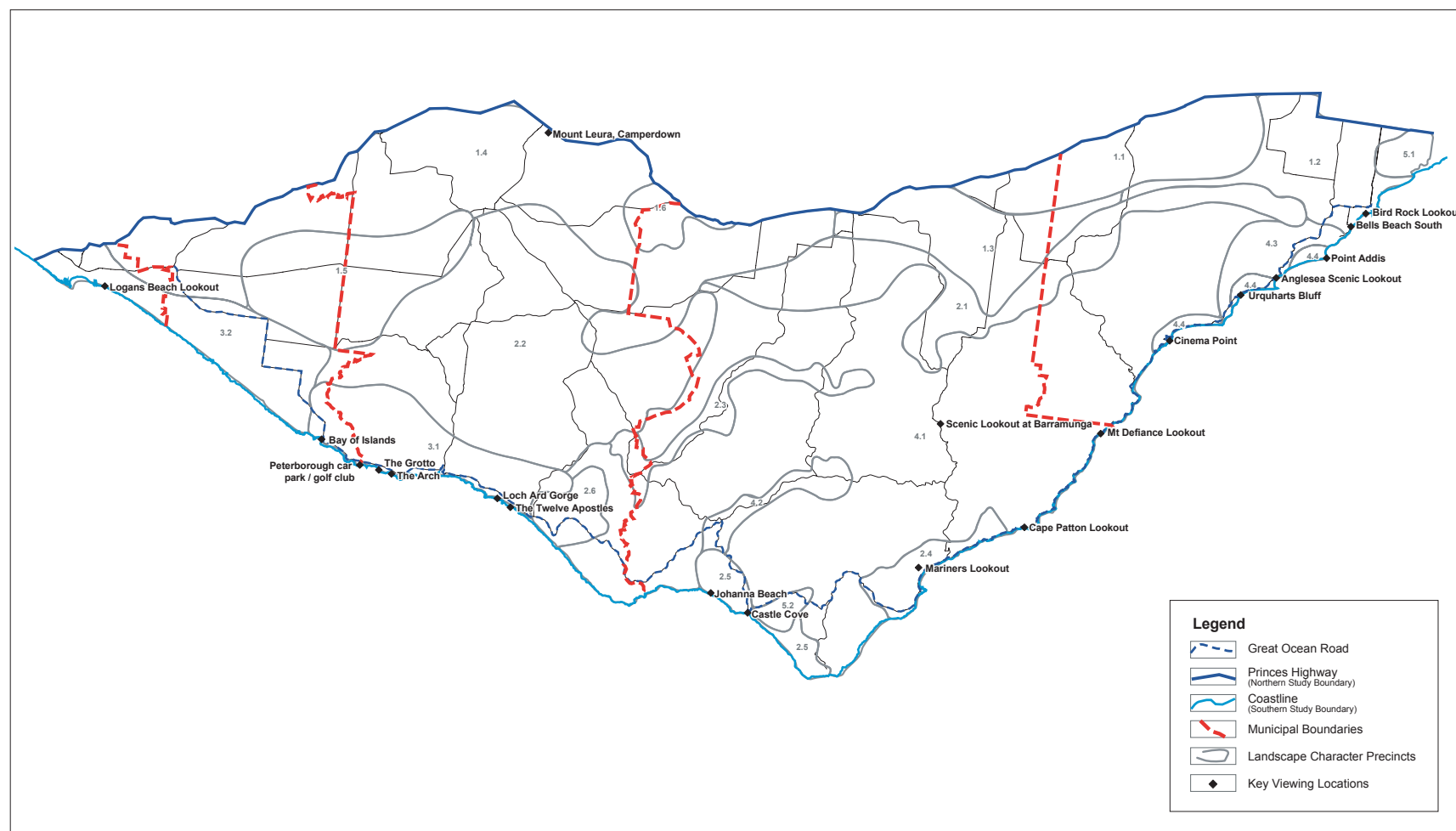
The Landscape Elements should be reflected in the Great Ocean Road Regional Strategy section of the SPPF by including principles and objectives for the Region that express:

- The importance of containing township development within defined boundaries, and of managing development on the fringes of townships so that it enhances the character of the town's landscape setting.
- The need to retain the dominance of the landscape between townships, and avoid ribbon development.
- The importance of views of the landscape from road corridors, and the need to control and manage development that is highly visible from main road corridors and principal tourist routes.
- The need to retain the dominance of the landscape from key viewing locations throughout the Region.

- The preference for screening timber plantations with an indigenous or native vegetation buffer so that they are not visible from main road corridors and principal tourist routes.



Key Views



6. Landscape Character Significance

As the study progressed, 'assessment criteria' were developed for establishing landscape character significance. The terms Regional, State or National were used to indicate the level of significance. The assessment criteria were:

Landscape Features

The presence of a landscape feature or landmark such as a headland, a lake or a volcanic cone provides a contrast with the surrounding landscape and generally increases the significance of a landscape. A landscape lacking obvious visible features may be classified lower in this criterion than a landscape with spectacular contrasts or features.

LOW significance

[illegible]

Landscape lacking obvious features

HIGH significance

$$= = = \rightarrow$$

Spectacular
landscape
contrasts or
features

Landscape Edges

For any given landscape (eg the coast, a forest), it is often the edge (eg the beach or cliff, a clearing in the forest) that attracts the most people and creates management issues. Therefore, a single landscape type may be classified lower in this criterion than a setting where numerous landscape features intersect.

LOW significance

 $\leftarrow = = = = = = = = = = = = = = \rightarrow$

Single landscape
type without distinct
edges

HIGH significance

$$= = = \rightarrow$$

Numerous
landscape types
intersect

Scarcity

The scarcity of the landscape type or feature increases its significance. Natural and wild landscapes are assumed to be increasingly scarce and therefore of higher significance. Public tenure of the land (ie State or National Park) has relevance to the issue of scarcity in some cases.

LOW significance

HIGH significance

 $\leftarrow = = = = = = = = = = \rightarrow$

Very common
landscape type

Unusual or scarce
landscape type or
feature

Visitation

The number of people attracted to a landscape, and broadly the catchment from which they are drawn (eg whether they are local or from overseas), is an indicator of significance. More people are drawn to areas that are spectacular or unusual, and therefore these areas have often become more accessible over time. The greater or wider catchment of visitation to an area is one indicator of its importance both as a landscape, and also to the broader community.

LOW significance

HIGH significance

 $\leftarrow = = = = = = = = = = \rightarrow$

Low visitation

High visitation,
including overseas
tourists

Applying the Criteria

A decision on the level of landscape character significance (eg Regional, State or National) has been made by applying the above criteria to specific landscapes within the study area. For instance, if a



landscape contains iconic landscape features, an intersection of many landscape edges and has high visitation (eg the Twelve Apostles area) it is deemed to be Nationally significant. The level of landscape character significance is one consideration in determining whether additional planning controls or management measures are needed.

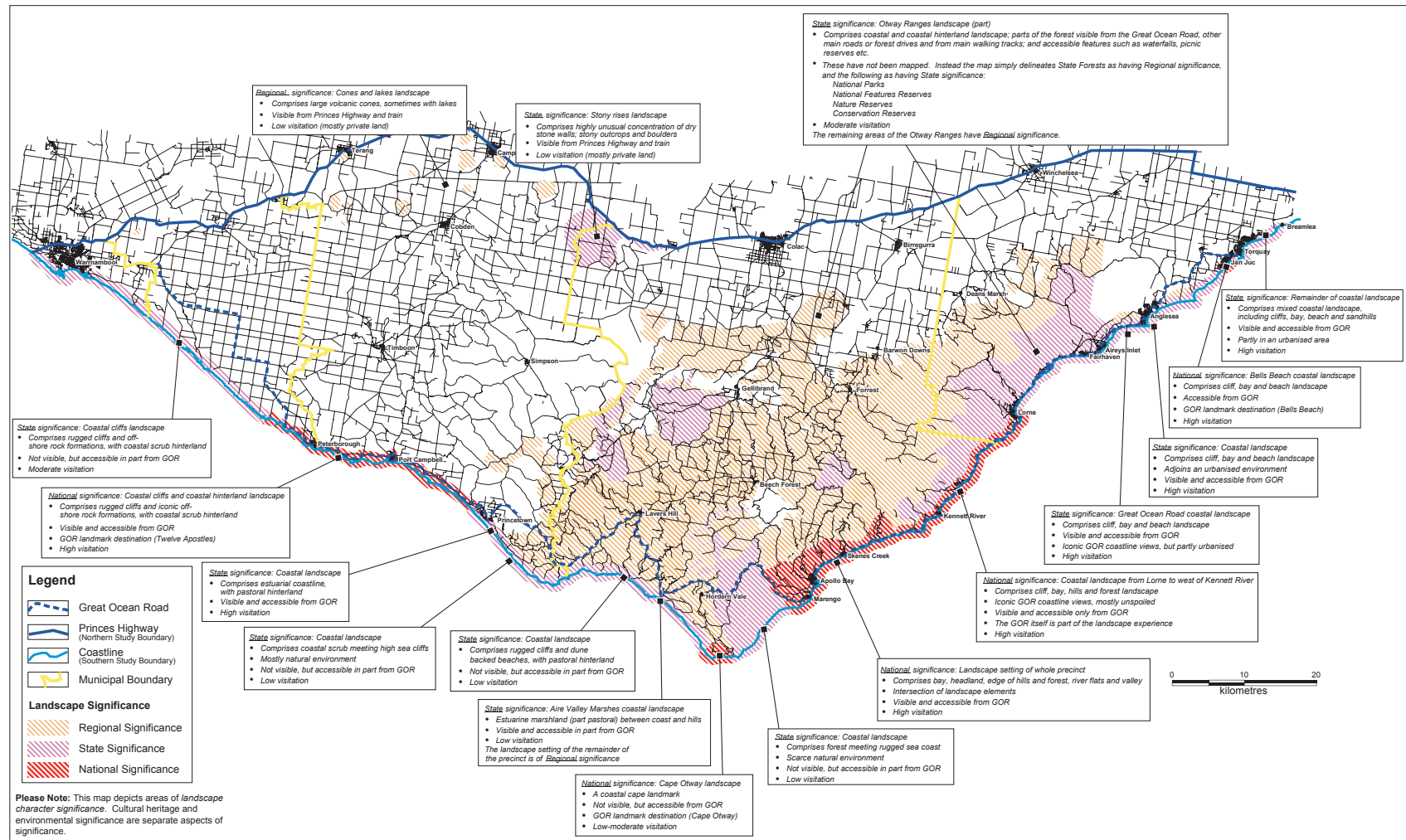
The assessment of significance has addressed landscape character, and not other potentially important aspects of significance such as cultural heritage or environmental significance.

The Landscape Character Significance Map on page 17 shows the result of this work.

It should be noted that the delineation of 'significance areas' was not undertaken at a detailed scale and is not intended to be used for detailed analysis. In the majority of coastal areas, the landscapes of significance are depicted on the map as extending inland approximately 1 kilometre from the coastline. The map should be read in conjunction with the relevant call-out boxes, which summarise the assessment of the landscape against the significance criteria.



Landscape Character Significance





7. Summary of Regional Issues

Development Pressures

The majority of development pressure in the Region is occurring in coastal areas. This is primarily centred on existing townships as well as between towns, and is largely residential or tourism related. Development between settlements is occasionally occurring on previously subdivided lots, and often on steep and highly visible sites.

Dwellings that are being constructed in the Region are also more often permanent or semi-permanent homes, as opposed to holiday shacks. As a result they are larger, more 'imposing' dwellings, that are designed to maximise coastal views and often protrude above existing vegetation. The development of more permanent homes is also resulting in the development of additional infrastructure, and in turn, additional dwellings.

Though there are still B&B and small scaled accommodation developments occurring between townships, there is increasing pressure for substantial tourism developments in coastal and 'wilderness' locations throughout the Region. Signage, car parking and viewing platforms are other tourism related development pressures being experienced.

Other infrastructure pressures include wind farm proposals in the coastal hinterland, and telecommunication and electricity towers throughout the landscape. Commercial timber plantations are also continuing to be developed inland.

Development pressure away from the coast tends to be associated with the rural use of land, and can include large structures such as broiler sheds.

Planning Permit Controls

Zones

A large area of the Great Ocean Road Region is zoned Public Conservation and Resource, reflecting the State or National Park status of the Otway Forest. Other isolated public parks, including the coastal foreshore are also zoned Public Conservation and Resource. Under the requirements of the zone, a permit is required to construct a building or carry out works unless it is shown on an Incorporated Plan which applies to the land, or is carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager.

The northern and westernmost parts of the Region are zoned Rural, as are other isolated areas such as the Gellibrand River Valley (Precinct 2.3) and the cleared hilltop between Lavers Hill and Beech Forest (Precinct 4.2). Privately owned pockets within the Otway Ranges are also zoned Rural. The key purpose of the Rural Zone is for dairying, grazing and crop raising.

A key issue throughout the Great Ocean Road Region that has the potential to be managed through the provisions of the Rural Zone is the clear felling of plantation trees adjacent to main road corridors and tourist routes. This practice leaves large and often highly visible areas of the landscape scarred, detracting from the landscape character of the Region. The schedule to the Rural Zone provides the opportunity to require a permit for timber production over 40 hectares. It can also be specified that this requirement only relates to timber plantations abutting a Category 1 Road Zone.

Introducing a permit trigger in the local Planning Schemes (with the exception of Surf Coast where it already exists) would provide the opportunity to require plantations to be screened from main road corridors by an indigenous and/or native vegetation buffer including understorey (minimum width 20 metres to be stipulated in Local Policy).



This would obscure clear felled areas from key tourist routes and other main roads.

Large areas of coastal hinterland within the Region are zoned Environmental Rural, including the Port Campbell coast to Cape Otway (part Precincts 3.1, 2.6, 4.1, 2.5 and 5.2) and the Apollo Bay coastal area (Precinct 2.4). The Environmental Rural Zone requires a permit for more uses and development than the Rural Zone, with a key purpose of the zone being to conserve environmental sensitivity and bio-diversity.

Both the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones provide a permit trigger for buildings within 100 metres of a Category 1 Road Zone. However, the standard Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) Decision Guidelines under both zones contain minimal reference to the protection and enhancement of landscape character. This gap in the VPPs will be improved through the inclusion of Local Policies in the local Planning Schemes containing the Precinct Principles (including Development Principles) prepared as part of this Study.

A review of existing VPPs rural zones has recently been completed, which may have implications for the detailed implementation of the above recommendations. However, it is recommended that the proposed changes be adapted as necessary and accommodated within any changes to the structure of the new/alterd rural zones.

Towns within the Great Ocean Road Region are primarily zoned Township or Residential 1, with some Low Density Residential or Rural Living zoned areas on the outskirts. As discussed, it is often the low density fringes of townships that 'spill' into the natural landscape as opposed to being contained, and result in an erosion of the landscape character.

It is important to note that the zoning of land relates primarily to its use, and that the purpose of the various zones is clearly stated in the VPPs. For example, the purpose of the Environmental Rural Zone includes *to encourage development and the use of land which is in accordance with sound management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the environmental sensitivity and bio-diversity of the locality*. As such, the zoning of land is not the most appropriate tool to

protect and manage landscape character. The Significant Landscape Overlay is the most appropriate VPP tool for this purpose, as discussed in the [Overlays](#) section of this Toolkit.

The zones that apply throughout the Study Area are shown on the Great Ocean Road Region [Zoning Map](#) on page 20.

Overlays

Existing Significant Landscape Overlays

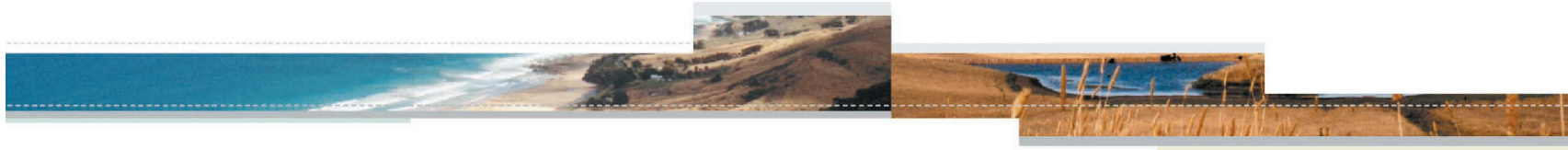
The Significant Landscape Overlay is currently used to protect and manage seven significant landscape areas of the Great Ocean Road Region, and is the most appropriate VPP tool for this purpose. This is backed-up by VCAT findings, including the recent decision on the proposed Moonlight Head Eco Hotel (VCAT Reference Number P2436/2002), and is clearly indicated by the purpose of the Significant Landscape Overlay, which includes:

- *To identify significant landscapes.*
- *To conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes.*

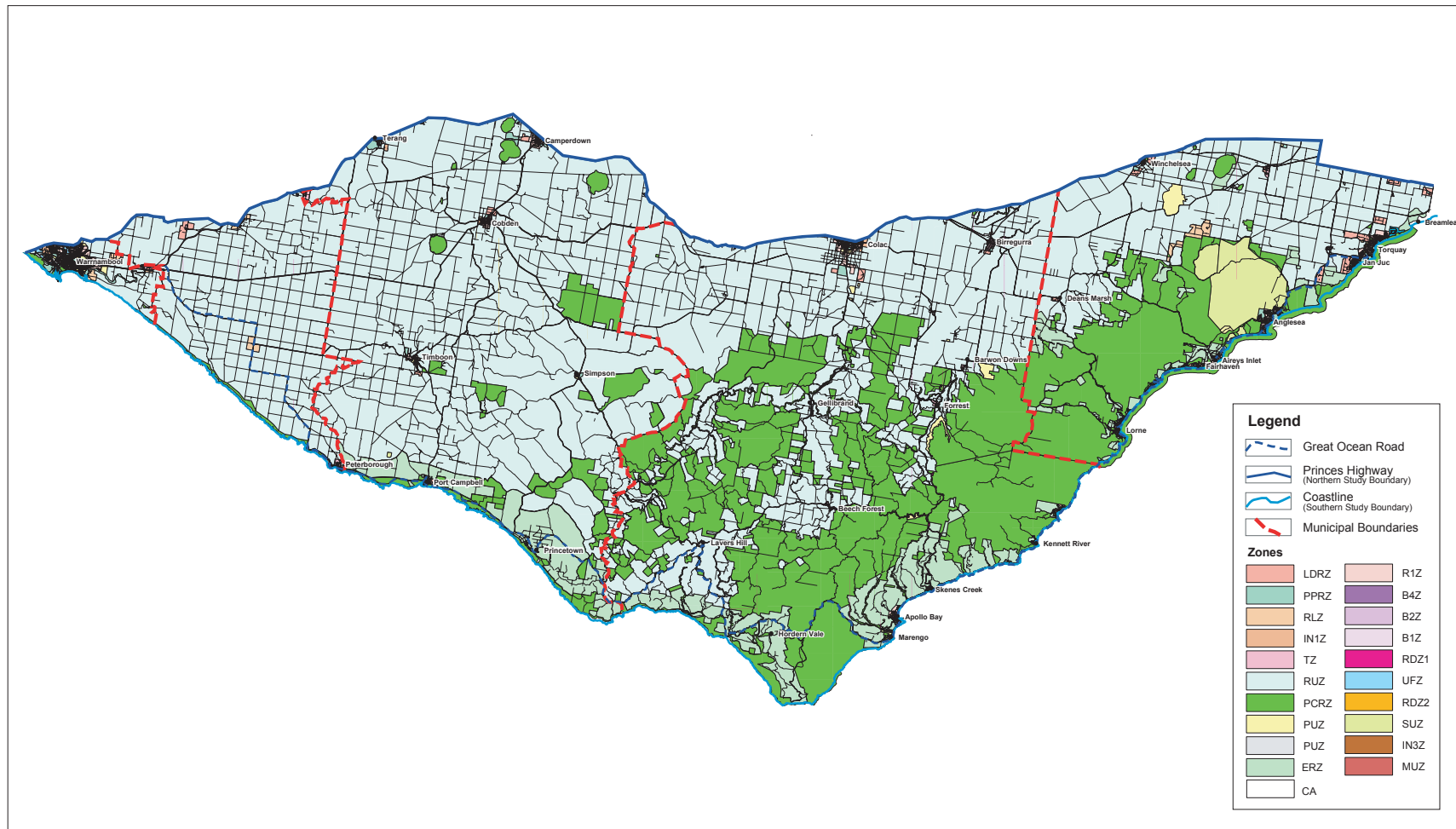
Within the Surf Coast Shire the Significant Landscape Overlay areas are located along the coast, generally between Torquay and Lorne. The overlay areas have two schedules - SLO1 Great Ocean Road and Coastal Environs and SLO2 Coastal Township Character.

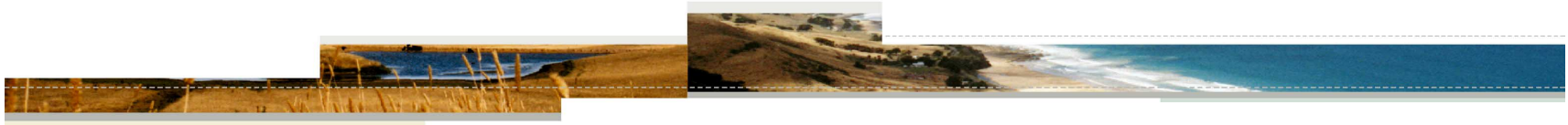
Within the Colac Otway Shire, the Significant Landscape Overlay areas are located near Cape Otway, to the west of Glenaire, and towards the north of the study area, over a large section of the plains landscape. The overlay areas have one combined schedule - SLO1 Coastal, Otway and Plains Landscapes.

Within the Corangamite Shire, the Significant Landscape Overlay areas are located within the volcanic landscape in the north of the Region, and adjacent to the landward side of the Great Ocean Road along the Twelve Apostles coastline. The overlays are have two separate schedules – SLO1 Volcanic Landscape Area and SLO3 Great Ocean Road Landscape Area.



Zoning





Within the City of Warrnambool, the Significant Landscape overlay area is located over the majority of the coastal hinterland from the City's eastern Municipal boundary and extending westwards beyond Warrnambool. The overlay area has a separate schedule - SLO1 Coastal Hinterland Landscape Area.

Overall, it is recommended that many of the schedules to the Significant Landscape Overlay currently in place throughout the Region be reviewed and rewritten in light of the findings of this Study.

In the case of Colac Otway for example, one schedule is used to cover all three Significant Landscape Overlay areas, with a combined statement of the nature and key elements of the landscapes, landscape character objectives, permit requirements and decision guidelines. As a result, the key elements of the landscapes are not clearly defined, and the character objectives are generalised. This is also the case in other Municipalities, where the content of the schedules is very generic and not tailored to the landscape. It is recommended that the schedules are re-structured, and separate detailed schedules are prepared for each of the landscape types.

Also, in many existing Significant Landscape Overlay schedules, the permit requirements contain statements that are decision guidelines, and the decision guidelines themselves are very broad. It is recommended that the permit requirements and decision guidelines be reviewed with reference to the Development Principles prepared as part of this Study, for the relevant precincts.

Other Existing Relevant Overlays

Other relevant overlays utilised within the Great Ocean Road Region are the Environmental Significance, Vegetation Protection and Design and Development Overlays.

Key areas where these overlays are used include the vegetated slopes and vegetation adjacent to the main road in the Gellibrand River Valley, and areas of environmental and vegetation significance in the Lavers Hill, and near Princetown to protect and manage that part of the Gellibrand River. The Environmental Significance Overlay is also in

place for the majority of Precinct 5.2 which is recognised for its environmental qualities and features, including the Aire River and environs.

Existing relevant overlays that apply throughout the Region are shown on the Great Ocean Road Region [Relevant Overlays Map](#) on page 22.

Proposed Significant Landscape Overlays

There are areas of significant landscape character within the Great Ocean Road Region that are not covered by sufficient Planning Scheme controls and are experiencing development pressure. In many of these areas, zone controls are relied upon to trigger a permit and comprehensive assessment guidelines are not available. The following 'formula' has been applied to all parts of the Region to determine where these 'Priority Areas' are located:

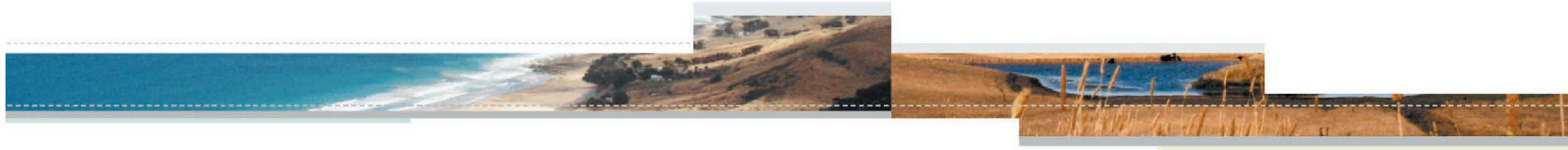
Significance + Pressure + Lack of Control = Priority Area (for additional control)

These Priority Areas are recommended for protection and management through the application of the Significant Landscape Overlay.

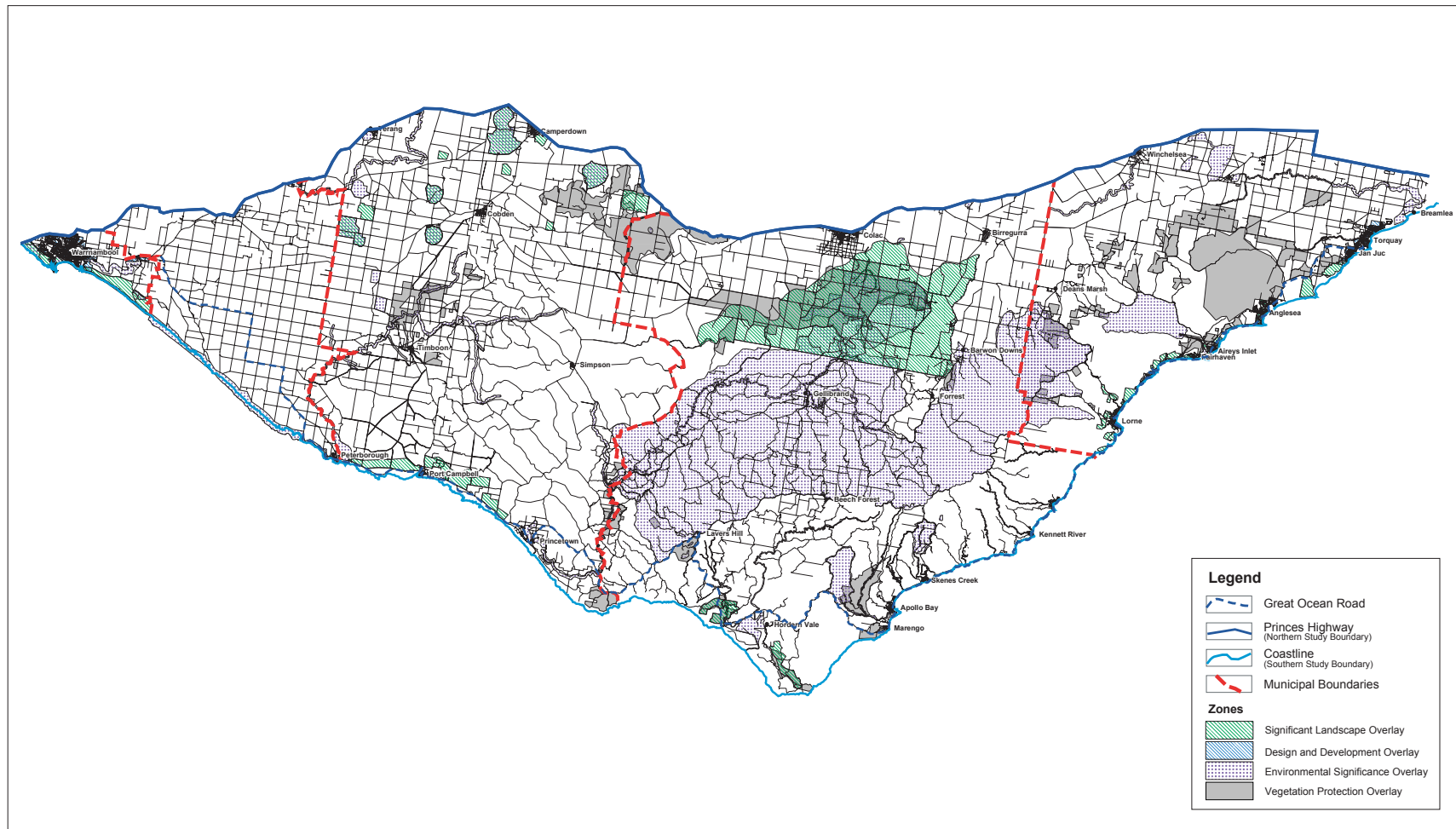
Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay areas are as follows:

Stony Rises Landscape (Colac Otway Shire)

The 'stony rises' landscape of Precinct 1.6 is recommended as a Significant Landscape Overlay area. (The area may also extend into part of Precinct 1.4.) The concentration of dry stone walls, stony boulders and outcrops throughout this landscape are of State significance. In addition, the Princes Highway, a designated main road and tourist route passes through the precinct and development pressures associated with the private ownership of the land are being experienced. It is also of note that the Significant Landscape Overlay is already in place within part of this precinct in the Corangamite Shire.



Relevant Overlays





Moonlight Head / Johanna Coast (Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires)

Private land along the 'Moonlight Head / Johanna Coast' landscape (within Precinct 4.1 and into part of Precinct 2.5), extending approximately from the boundary of Precinct 2.6 to Johanna is recommended as a Significant Landscape Overlay area. The landscape and scenery of this coastal area is of State significance and is accessible, in part, from the Great Ocean Road. In addition, the area is experiencing development pressure focussed on the coast.

Princetown Estuarial Coastal Landscape (Corangamite Shire)

Private land within the coastal landscape of Precinct 2.6 is recommended as a Significant Landscape Overlay area. The landscape setting of the estuarial coastal area is of State significance and differs in character from the adjacent coastline. The area is visible and accessible from the Great Ocean Road, and is experiencing high visitation and increasing development pressure.

Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills Landscape (Colac Otway Shire)

Private land (excluding the townships) in the Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills landscape (Precinct 2.4) is recommended as a Significant Landscape Overlay area. The landscape setting of the whole precinct is of National significance. The Great Ocean Road travels through this area, it experiences high tourism visitation and development pressure is ever increasing.

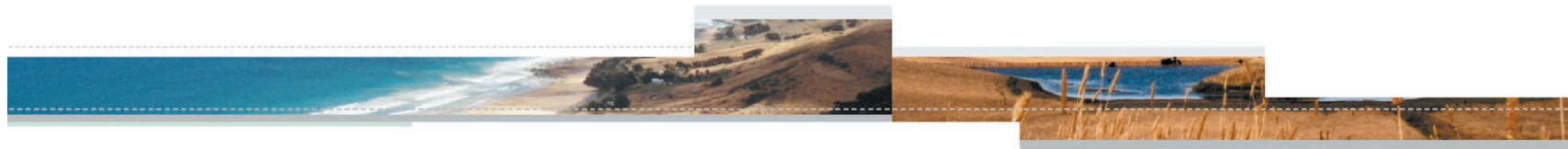
Existing Cape Otway Significant Landscape Overlay Area (Colac Otway Shire)

It is recommended that the existing Significant Landscape Overlay area at Cape Otway be extended to cover the remaining private land immediately to its east (part Precinct 2.5). The coastal landscape and scenery in this area is of State significance and Cape Otway itself is a landmark destination of National significance. Being accessible via a main tourist route and other secondary roads, this area experiences moderate visitation.

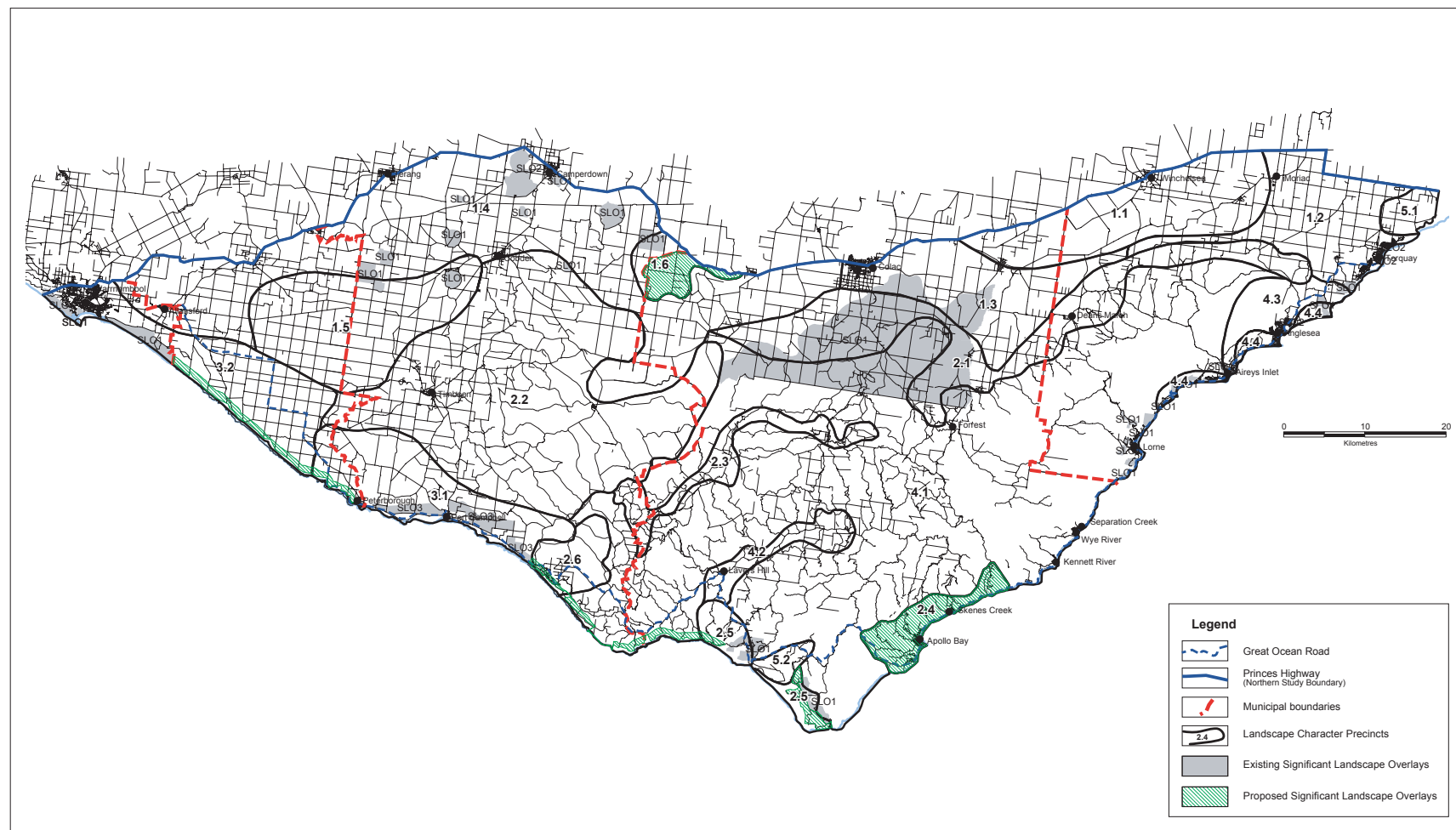
Western Coastal Cliffs Landscape (Shire of Moyne)

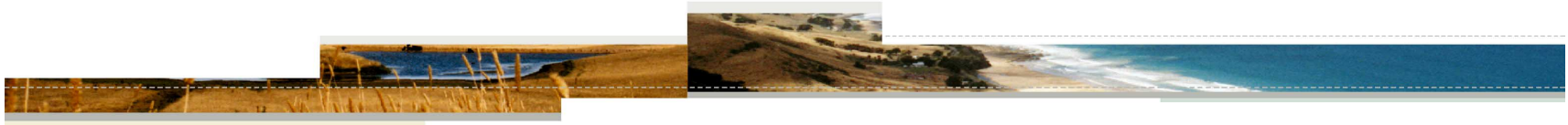
It is recommended that the privately owned coastal landscape between Peterborough and Moyne Shire's western Municipal boundary within the Study Area be protected and managed with a Significant Landscape Overlay (part Precincts 3.1 and 3.2). The rugged cliffs, off-shore rock formations and coastal hinterland are of National and State significance, with areas such as the Bay of Islands being a landmark Great Ocean Road destination. The area is also experiencing development pressure, both on the coast and in the hinterland, and it is of note that the Significant Landscape Overlay is already in place in adjacent Municipalities immediately to the east and west of this area.

Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay areas are shown on the Existing and Proposed Significant Overlay Areas Map on page 24.



Existing and Proposed Significant Landscape Overlay Areas





Local Planning Policy Framework

All of the local Planning Schemes for the Region include strategic directions in the Municipal Strategic Statements loosely related to the protection and management of landscape character. However, in every case these directions should be reviewed and strengthened with reference to the findings of this Study. Similarly, all of the local Planning Schemes include Local Policies which make reference to landscape character, but no Local Policies exist that are specific to the topic.

Following the delineation of landscape character types and precincts, and the assessment of landscape character significance as part of this Study, it is recommended that this information be included as Local Policy in all local Planning Schemes in the Great Ocean Road Region. It is important that Local Policy assists in exercising discretion within the Planning Scheme and it is therefore recommended that the Development Principles prepared as part of this Study also be included.

The Local Policies, including Development Principles, will provide guidance in decision making in relation to landscape character that is currently lacking. Particular issues within the Region that will be covered include development visible from key tourist roads, buildings on hill faces and ridges, and plantations adjacent to main road corridors.

Also, the Three Year MSS Review Report (Keaney Planning and Research Pty Ltd and Michael Kirsch, August 2002) prepared for each of the local Planning Schemes in the Region recommends changes to the structure, format and content of the Municipal Strategic Statements, and Local Policies. The majority of these changes can be implemented without affecting the recommendations of this Study.



8. Regional Recommendations

State Planning Policy Framework

In amending the State Planning Policy Framework to accommodate the findings of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy, list the Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study as a Reference Document, and include policy statements about:

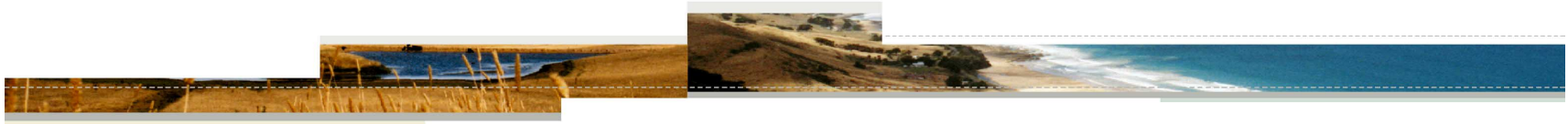
- The importance of landscape character to the economy of the Region.
- The need to relate new development to the landscape character types and precincts defined by this Study.
- The importance of containing township development within defined boundaries, and of managing development on the fringes of townships so that it enhances the character of the town's landscape setting.
- The need to retain the dominance of the landscape between townships, and avoid ribbon development.
- The importance of views of the landscape from road corridors, and the need to control and manage development that is highly visible from main road corridors and principal tourist routes.
- The need to retain the dominance of the landscape from key viewing locations throughout the Region.
- The preference for screening timber plantations with an indigenous or native vegetation buffer so that they are not visible from main road corridors and principal tourist routes.

Ensure that, in the recently completed review of Victoria Planning Provisions rural zones, consideration is given to the implications of the above recommendations.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Encourage each local Council in the Region to amend its planning scheme in accordance with the recommendations in the relevant Municipal Toolkit of this Study, including (as relevant) amendments to:

- Change the schedule to the Rural Zone to provide the opportunity to require a permit for timber production over 40 hectares, and to specify that this requirement only relates to timber plantations abutting a Category 1 Road Zone.
- Introduce the permit trigger to provide the opportunity to require plantations to be screened from main road corridors by an indigenous and/or native vegetation buffer including understorey.
- Review the VPP Decision Guidelines in the Rural and Environmental Rural Zones in relation to the protection and management of landscape character, particularly for buildings within 100 metres of a Category 1 Road Zone.
- Review and restructure existing schedules to the Significant Landscape Overlay currently in place throughout the Region, in light of the findings of this Study.
- Apply the Significant Landscape Overlay to the new areas identified in the Study, including land at or near:
 - Stony Rises Landscape (Colac Otway Shire)
 - Moonlight Head / Johanna Coast (Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires)
 - Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills Landscape (Colac Otway Shire)
 - Existing Cape Otway Significant Landscape Overlay areas
 - Western Coastal Cliffs Landscape (Moyne Shire)
- Review and strengthen the strategic directions in the Municipal Strategic Statement relating to the protection and management of landscape character, with reference to the findings of this Study.
- Introduce new Local Policy specific to the landscape character of the Municipality, including Precinct Descriptions, Distinctive Qualities and Development Principles (including Landscape Objectives) relating to the precincts in the Municipality.



- Include brief policy statements about each of the Landscape Elements in the new Local Policy.

Public Land Management

Institute State Government policies, procedures and processes to ensure that public land is managed in accordance with the objectives set out in this Study, including:

- Adoption of public land management policies equivalent to the proposed planning scheme controls and policies that will apply to private land.
- Sufficient coordination of management practices and works between different departments and agencies to ensure that the desired landscape character outcomes are achieved.
- Careful and coordinated management of all development within road reservations for its impact on the character and views of the surrounding landscape.

Future Work

- Invite public input to the Landscape Assessment Study in the next round of public consultation on the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy. This should include feedback on the determination of significance, to which the input of community values is very important.
- Ensure any future assessment of landscape character in Victoria includes:
 - Comparative analysis within a regional, state and / or national context so that the relative significance of different sections of a landscape type (eg the coast) is able to be assessed.
 - Recognition that other factors such as cultural heritage significance and environmental significance, are different but equally important elements in determining overall significance. These factors should be integrated with landscape character in determining holistic future protection and management regimes for any given landscape.

Community Education

Consider the need for community education programs to disseminate information about landscape sensitive development and the findings of this Study.

Support for Councils

Consider ways of assisting local Councils to amend their planning schemes in the ways recommended by this Study, and to administer the controls and policies efficiently and effectively.