



SOUTH WEST VICTORIA LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

Consultation & Community Values Report

June 2013

CONSULTATION & COMMUNITY VALUES

Community values are sourced through communication and consultation with the people who live or work in, or visit the study area.

Landscapes hold different values for different people. Some people may enjoy the scenic values and settings of landscapes. Others may appreciate the habitats they provide for wildlife or their potential for productivity and economic return.

Purpose

Seeking the opinion of the community is essential for understanding what values are placed on the landscape.

The key objectives of the consultation program developed for this project were to:

- inform the community, key stakeholders and specialist advisors about the project and its progress at each stage;
- invite input at each stage of the project;
- determine perceptions and values in relation to landscape character in order to better inform the character analysis being undertaken; and,
- determine perceptions and values to assist in the identification of the most significant landscapes in the study area.

This required involvement of a broad cross-section of individuals who have extensive contacts, knowledge and experience of, and connection to, the south west Victorian landscape.

Stakeholders

Project Reference Groups

Focused engagement was undertaken with two Project Reference Groups made up of key stakeholders to be closely involved in the project. These stakeholders had specialist knowledge, skills, information and resources and represented various groups in the public. The Project Reference Groups had already been established as part of the Regional Growth Plans project.

The groups were divided by area as shown on the map opposite - South West and Central West regions.

The two Project Reference Groups comprised representatives from:

- Corangamite Council
- Glenelg Shire Council
- Moyne Shire Council
- Southern Grampians Shire Council
- City of Greater Geelong
- Colac Otway Shire
- Ararat Rural City Council
- City of Ballarat
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Northern Grampians Shire
- West Wimmera Shire Council
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA)
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA
- Wimmera CMA
- Heritage Victoria
- Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV)
- Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)

Four meetings were held at key stages of the project to update on progress, discuss draft outcomes, seek feedback and provide material to members for dissemination to other interested parties.

COVER IMAGE: View from Mount Rouse looking towards Mount Napier, image courtesy of Tracey Kruger

Figure 1 Reference Group Areas

There were two separate Reference Groups arranged by area, the same meetings were held with each group

Interested Groups & Individuals

Given the large extent of the study area and the number of people affected, broad scale engagement was also undertaken.

Interested groups and individuals were invited to participate via DPCD's project website, Council websites, word-of-mouth and direct phone or email contact.

Project Reference Group members also assisted in identifying many of these stakeholders. The Project Reference Group helped to disseminate information about the project to this wider audience, particularly Council representatives via their websites. They also provided names of people and organisations to be nominated to participate in the project as part of the community photographic exercise.

Interested parties could request to be included on an email mailing list, whereby they were kept informed of the project's progress and invited to comment on the outputs of each stage. An email was sent out each time the website was updated and a new Bulletin was available. Around 120 people were on the email list.

Consultation Method

Consultation with the public occurred using a variety of means. A summary of the method is shown in the following table:

STAGE 1	Analysis & Research	Community Bulletin 1 Project Website set up Project Reference Group meetings round 1
STAGE 2	Landscape Character Analysis	Community Bulletin 2 Community Photo Exercise Project Reference Group meetings round 2 Website updated
STAGE 3	Landscape Significance Assessment	Community Bulletin 3 Project Reference Group meetings round 3 Website updated
STAGE 4	Final Recommendations	Project Reference Group meetings round 4 Website updated

Community Bulletins

Community Bulletins were prepared to:

- inform the community about the study progress;
- seek feedback at key stages; and,
- provide details about how to be involved in the project.

The aims and content of each Bulletin were as follows:

Bulletin 1

Bulletin 1 announced the project commencement, provided background information and included feedback questions (as per those included on the website, refer opposite).

Bulletin 2

Bulletin 2 explained the key findings of the landscape character assessment. Bulletin 2 thanked everyone who had submitted photos and information and explained that further opportunities would be available to contribute as the study progressed.

Bulletin 3

Bulletin 3 included a map of significant landscapes and views and invited people to refer to the detailed documentation for comment. It included feedback questions about the significance work.

A copy of the Bulletins can be found at Appendix 1.



Website

The website for the project was created as a single page on DPCD's website. It was prepared to:

- inform the community about the study progress;
- provide access to the draft work and community Bulletins;
- seek feedback throughout the process; and,
- provide details about how to be involved in the project.

The site was updated at key stages of the project to include Community Bulletins as they were released and draft and final documents of the findings of the character and significance assessment.

All Councils were encouraged to provide information and links to the project website on their websites.

Stage 1

During Stage 1 of the project, the website asked for the following community input:

As a starting point, what would you consider to be:

- a landscape feature, place or view that is significant, scenic or beautiful;
- a landscape feature, place or view that captures the character of your area;
- a significant aspect of the landscape which is intangible or non-visual, such as its cultural, heritage or ecological value; and,
- a 'threat' to the landscape, i.e. a feature, place or view that you believe has been spoiled.

People were also invited to send emails and / or photos both in relation to the points outlined or any other important issue.

Stage 2

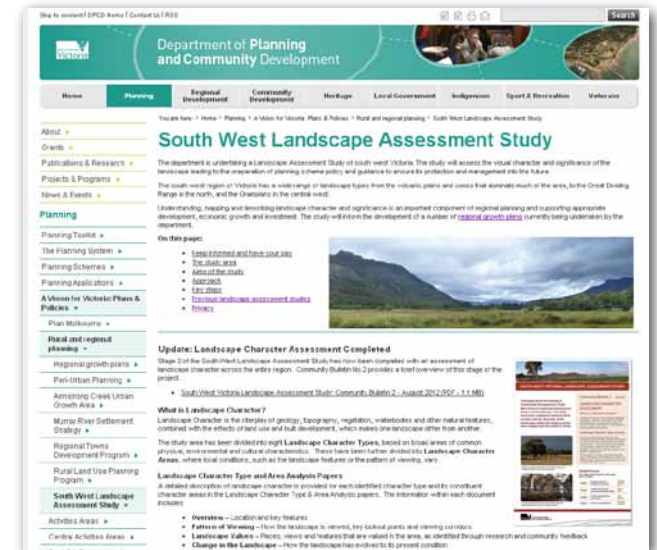
During Stage 2 of the project, the website was updated with Community Bulletin 2 and the draft character papers for public viewing and comment. The community were invited to keep informed and have their say.

Stage 3

During Stage 3 of the project, the website was updated to include all draft Landscape Analysis Papers for areas and views assessed as being potentially of state or regional significance. The broader community was invited to provide their feedback on all draft material outlining areas and views of significance. Consultation on draft material commenced on 12 December 2012 and concluded on 18 January 2013.

Stage 4

The website was updated at Stage 4 with the completed documents for community information.



Community Photographic Exercise

A community photographic exercise was undertaken as part of the project in order to:


- identify community views and values in relation to landscape character, landscape significance, intangible and non-visual aspects of landscape and threats to landscapes.

It also provided details about how to be involved in the project.

Key community members, nominated by Project Reference Group members, were asked via email and follow up phone calls to take photographs and fill in an accompanying survey form. Several individuals who expressed interest in the project were also invited to respond to the exercise. A copy of this form can be found at Appendix 2.

Participants were asked to take two photos each relating to each of the following themes:

- a landscape feature, place or view that you consider to be significance, scenic or beautiful;
- a landscape feature, place or view that captures the character of your area;
- a significant aspect of the landscape which is intangible or non-visual, such as its cultural, heritage or ecological values; and,
- a 'threat' to the landscape i.e. a feature, place or view that you believe has been spoiled.



SOUTH WEST VICTORIA LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY
COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXERCISE

THE STUDY & YOUR INVOLVEMENT

The Department of Planning and Community Development is undertaking a Landscape Assessment Study of south west Victoria. The study will evaluate the visual character and significance of the landscape, resulting in the preparation of planning scheme policy and guidance to ensure its protection and management into the future.

The photo exercise is an essential part of the study and will be used to gain a better understanding of the community's perceptions and values of landscapes within South West Victoria. It will also provide insight into the issues, challenges and threats that exist in managing those landscapes. Some of the photos will be selected to display in meetings and in the final report we prepare for the project.

For more information you can check our website www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/southwestlandscapes

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Complete the consent page, if this is not completed we cannot use your photos.
- Take a maximum of **eight** photos
- There are four themes which are described on the following pages, take two photos for each theme and write a caption to describe why you have chosen each photo
- The photos and captions will be used to gain an insight into your values and perceptions of the landscape.
- Please do not include any photographs of people as we will be unable to use them
- **Please reduce your images to less than 500KB**

SUBMITTING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS:

There are two ways you can submit your completed form:

BY EMAIL

Save the form and return by email to :
southwestlandscapes@dpcd.vic.gov.au



BY POST

Print out the form and return it by post to:

Project Manager
 South West Landscape Assessment Study
 Department of Planning and Community Development
 Level 10, 1 Spring Street,
 Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Please return your photos by **Monday 11th June, 2012**

southwestlandscapes@dpcd.vic.gov.au

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON THE LANDSCAPE

Key Findings

The community was invited to provide feedback in relation to their views and values of landscape in the South West region in Stages 1 and 2. The invitation was extended via the website, Bulletin 1, the community photographic exercise and Council representatives in the PRG.

The feedback that was received related to different parts of the South West region and highlighted the range of values that people place upon the landscape.

A summary of the feedback follows, themed under the headings:

- Landscape Character
- Landscape Significance
- Intangible & Non-visual Significance
- Spoiled Landscapes & Threats
- Other Feedback

A number of responses related to locations outside of the study area. These were still included in the analysis as they nonetheless provide insight into people's thoughts, feelings and values of their local landscapes that have in themselves have relevance to the study.

A copy of all the feedback in tabulated form can be found at Appendix 3.



*Lake Kennedy with Mount Napier in view
Photo provided by Tracey Kruger*

Landscape Character

Which feature, place or view captures the character of the area?

Features, places and views that were identified as capturing the character of a part of the study area were:

- Seasonal wetlands, river red gums, paddock trees (dead or alive) and lakes, characteristic of West Wimmera

...The West Wimmera is unique because of the seasonal wetlands and the majestic river red gums. It is the wetlands that make each season have its different smell – be it a muddy smell of flourishing wetlands, or the sweet dry smell of drying grass and parched earth.....

Excerpt from Rachel Farran's submission

- Resilient lakes and transient wildlife populations, characteristic of the area at Lake Colongulac
- Primary industry such as agriculture, depicted through images of livestock around Mount Warrenheip

Features, places or views that were identified which are not in the study area:

- Natural rolling hills with volcanic rises in the background depicted at Tarrone North Road, Tarrone
- Agricultural and varied landscape depicted at Landers Lane, Tarrone



Landers Lane, Tarrone "The landscape is typically interesting and varied with many gullies, wetlands and stony barriers"
Photo provided by Genevieve Gleeson



Colin White's Road, Edenhope "the beauty of dead paddock trees"



Edenhope looking over paddock trees at sunset
Both photos provided by Rachel Farren, Landcare facilitator (Kowree Farm Tree Group)



Mountain duck grazing on fresh growth as Lake Colongulac refills
Photo provided by Stuart McCallum, Friends of Bannockburn Bush, Greening Australia



"Sheep, farmed for wool and meat, grazing under leaden skies (typical scene in winter)"
Photo provided by Jo Stephens & Kay Paton, Yendon History Group