



Appendix 2

14.4 Borough of Queenscliffe Coastal and Marine Management Plan

*Borough of Queenscliffe – Coastal and Marine
Management Plan, Issues Paper – June 2020*

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Thursday 17 September 2020 at 7:00pm

(Via Videoconference)



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1. Purpose

The Borough of Queenscliffe manages a significant proportion of the coastal Crown land located within the municipality. The Borough of Queenscliffe is committed to preparing a Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) as required under the new legislative framework of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (MaCA). The intent of the CMMP is to identify and define on ground actions associated with the future management of coastal Crown land. This issues paper has been developed to help scope the key challenges faced by the Borough of Queenscliffe including and analysis of how these challenges might be addressed as part of developing a CMMP.

2. Background

Coastal Crown land is a defining feature of the Borough of Queenscliffe. The pre and post-contact history associated with the foreshore and the prevalence of areas with high aesthetic and environmental value describes both the essence of place and the community's relationship with it.

The *Queenscliffe Open Space Strategy 2015* (QOSS) acknowledges the contribution the coastal reserves make to open space in the municipality. The QOSS outlines the high level of open space relative to the resident population. The Borough of Queenscliffe manages a significant portion of the coastal Crown land in the municipality. There are a number of other land owners and managers, including DELWP, VicTrack, Queenscliff Harbour, Parks Victoria and Searoad Ferries, who are also responsible for areas of coastal Crown land within the Borough.

3. Legislative context

The MaCA was introduced into Victorian legislation in 2018. The Act replaced the *Coastal Management Act 1995* which was repealed on the same day.

Section 57 of the MaCA requires that one or more Crown land managers, can either nominate to prepare, or be requested to prepare, a Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) for the marine and coastal Crown land for which they have management responsibility. Section 57 (3) provides that a CMMP must be prepared if directed by the Minister.

Section 58 (1) of the MaCA specifies that the following must be included in a CMMP:

- (a) An implementation plan, including proposed timeframes for the implementation of actions and the agencies responsible for delivering those actions; and



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- (b) A framework to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of the plan; and
- (c) A description of the proposed use, development and works for the area to which the plan applies.

Section 58 (2) of the MaCA nominates the following items that may be included in a CMMP:

- (a) A description of any proposed use, development or works that may require consent under section 70; and
- (b) Apply, adopt or incorporate any matter contained in any document whether –
 - i. Wholly or partially or as amended by the plan; or
 - ii. As in force at a particular time or as amended from time to time.

Section 59 and 60 of the MaCA detail the policy framework the CMMP must be consistent with, and a consultation process related to determining a CMMP.

In addition to the primary legislative context above it is also noted that the Bellarine Peninsula has been declared a Distinctive Area and Landscape under the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987. The declaration triggers the requirement to prepare a Statement of Planning Policy (SPP). A Bellarine Peninsula Discussion Paper April 2020 (BPDP) has been released as part of Phase 2 engagement for the project. The BPDP details a draft 50 year vision and key strategic policy domains. The key policy domains cover a range of elements ranging from landscapes to settlements in defining the unique qualities of the location. The role of coastal land is a key thread through these policy domains it will be important to ensure any CMMP is responsive and aligns to the outcomes of the Bellarine Distinctive Area and Landscape project as it progresses.

4. Resource Context

The coastal Crown land in the Borough of Queenscliffe accounts for nearly 10% of the total land area of the municipality. In addition to the significant spatial element, the coastal Crown land provides a strong physical and cultural link to the indigenous history of the area, the early post contact settlement of Victoria and the development of the military and maritime presence and townships.

Coastal Crown land plays a significant role in providing for the key active and passive open space areas to service the communities of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale. All of the factors nominated above create a multilayered and complex range of issues that need to be taken into account when considering a strategy for the Coastal areas. When combined with the



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expectations of the local community and the pressures associated with tourism and economic development, reconciling aspirations for the Coastal areas becomes extremely challenging.

The challenges associated with planning and determining the best use for the coastal Crown land is further complicated by the need to manage and protect these areas and Council's capacity to fund capital works. The Borough has struggled to maintain proactive maintenance practices because of the proportionally low rate base and the constraints of rate capping.

5 Borough of Queenscliffe's CMMP focus

5.1 Proposed approach

The aim of CMMP is to deliver an on-ground action plan. Given the challenging resource environment the development of extensive list of on ground deliverables is difficult and would be misleading. Council needs to develop a CMMP that it can implement within current budget constraints, that doesn't rely on external funding to achieve outcomes and recognises the broader community desire for minimal change. The foundation of any on-ground action plan included in the CMMP will be management, protection, restoration and education. With this in mind the CMMP for the Borough of Queenscliffe is anticipated to build on the Coastal Management Plan 2006 (CMP 2006) and establish a foundation for understanding the coastal Crown land in more detail. It is suggested a CMMP will likely focus on the following key questions:

- What currently exists in the coastal crown land the Borough manages using identifiable precincts to define predominant environmental, landscape and/or built features?
- What currently occurs to manage those assets and spaces?
- How do we effectively capture the interdependence between the marine environment and coastal land?
- What opportunities exist for improvement?

5.2 Project Plan

The following is a preliminary project plan for the development of a CMMP for the Borough of Queenscliffe:

1. Stage 1

- Audit the CMP 2006 and confirm gaps in delivery of goals/actions to inform a future focus



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- Develop precincts within the coastal areas and identifying with key values to help align actions – a draft example of the spatial location of precincts in the Borough of Queenscliffe is attached in Appendix 1
- Identify other Crown land managers in the Borough
- Develop a baseline infrastructure inventory for the coastal precincts
- Prepare a Background Paper

2. Stage 2

- Confirm stakeholders for consultation and engage external assistance to assist with consultation processes
- Consultation, in conjunction with Background Paper, will focus on;
 - what the community values about coastal Crown land
 - key challenges for next five years
 - identification of the priority action areas

3. Stage 3

- Draft strategic directions and guiding principles
- Draft objectives and actions
- Prepare draft CMMP

4. Stage 4

- Stage 2 consultation – feedback on draft CMMP with precincts and actions areas
- Review submissions and update/finalise CMMP for adoption



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6. Key issues

Below are a summary of key issues facing the coastal environment and its management. These are detailed with the aim of fostering discussion with DELWP and for potential inclusion in a background paper, which would form part of the material distributed for consultation in Stage 1 of the project. It is anticipated that the response to the issues below will guide development of objectives which would underpin the actions in the CMMP for the Borough of Queenscliffe.

6.1 Visitor Numbers

The popularity of the coast and coastal townships, particularly in warmer months, continues to place pressure on coastal crown land. The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's *Assessment of Victoria's Coastal Reserves – Final Report* acknowledges that impacts of population growth need to be actively managed along with the associated pressures of increased visitor numbers to the Victorian coast.

The growth of the G21 Region and the accessibility of the region from Melbourne continues to drive high visitation to Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.

The Borough of Queenscliffe has a high non-permanent population of approximately 50% and the concentration of non-permanent residents at peak holiday times also intensifies impacts on the coastal spaces. The pressure from increased use of coastal facilities includes:

- Increased pressure on existing facilities e.g. beach access points, car parking, toilet/shower facilities, BBQ/picnic facilities
- Increased waste
- Expectation regarding immediate access to the beach/water
- Increased demand for retail offerings close to the beach/water
- Damage to vegetation
- Negative human interaction with the marine environment/both flora and fauna
- Coastal caravan carpark capacity/layout/access/facilities
- High expectations in relation to service levels

The issues described above create complexities for Council to meet expectations of visitors whilst acknowledging the local communities desire to minimise change and the scale of development in coastal settings.



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6.2 Infrastructure development

The level of infrastructure present in coastal Crown land is varied and there is an inconsistent knowledge about what assets are present, their condition and who is responsible for their management. The range of infrastructure associated with coastal Crown land includes beach access points, pathways, roads and stormwater assets through to major recreation facilities and historic building and features such as gun emplacements and lighthouses.

In the Borough of Queenscliffe some of the infrastructure present is coastal dependant whilst other facilities are less coastal dependant (e.g. recreation facilities, kindergartens and clubs) however these generally have an historic context back to the early 1900's.

The Borough of Queenscliffe relies on a range of existing assets in coastal Crown land. The Borough of Queenscliffe CCMP has an opportunity to better recognise what assets are present and who manages these based on precincts to help prioritise opportunities for improvement.

The Borough also has an opportunity to nominate key infrastructure for improvement both through Council as a funding source and identification of opportunities for funding and works by other agencies.

6.3 Climate change and managing coastal hazard risk

Climate change will have a significant impact on coastal locations over time and is a significant issue into the future. Land managers must make decisions that respond to the acknowledged coastal hazards brought about through changes to our climate.

Key issues that relate to climate change in coastal areas include:

- Coastal inundation as a result of sea level rise
- Erosion
- Increased frequency of storm events and associated storm surge
- Modification to marine and terrestrial environments as a result of higher temperatures
- Increased salinity and level rise in groundwater
- Increased bushfire risk in areas of remnant native vegetation, particularly in the dunes system
- Increased interaction between marine animals (particularly birds) and urban environments

In March 2020, the Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) released the *Marine and Coastal Policy*. The policy clearly sets out a



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‘pathways’ approach to decision making in areas that are acknowledged as at risk of impacts as a result of climate change. The Borough of Queenscliffe CMMP will need to assess both existing and proposed development within marine and coastal Crown land against the preferred outcomes nominated in the *Marine and Coastal Policy*.

In addition, recently exhibited draft CMMP’s have focussed on development of Climate Change Coastal Adaptation Plans (CCCAP).

Projects such as Our Coast have helped inform the Borough of Queenscliffe about climate change challenges related to coastal inundation. Coastal inundation alone raises significant complex issues. The Borough of Queenscliffe will be focussed on guidance for dealing with these matters from the State Government in combination with the work on Council’s own Climate Emergency Response Plan.

6.4 Environment

Some areas of the coastal Crown land in the Borough of Queenscliff have significant environmental features and values. The northern coastal areas interact with the recognised RAMSAR listed areas of Swan Bay. Issues of pest plants and animals, remnant vegetation and stormwater management can all have interface through coastal Crown land.

The environmental values of the coastal areas are a key focus of the local community. The complexity of environmental issues in these spaces will potentially involve expertise beyond that available with the Borough of Queenscliffe. Understanding the capacity for assistance from the State Government where significant environmental issues are evident will be important.

6.5 Indigenous and Post Contact history

Aboriginal connection to coastal areas is strong and the areas managed by the Borough remain important to Indigenous people, represented today by the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd. The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 ensures the values of these areas are protected and provides a legislative framework to be considered when undertaking works. Connection with the Wathaurong will be an important element of developing the CMMP. In addition, the CMMP will need to consider the objectives of the *Native Title Act 1993*.

Maritime, defence and early recreation activities have resulted in key features along the coast including lighthouses, fortifications, piers and boating facilities. Some sites along the coast are included in the Victorian Heritage Register which helps protect their historical context and also ensure a legislative frame work for consideration in delivering projects.



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The legislative environments detailed above are important and respected. The legislative environments do create significant resource and funding burdens on development of on ground works and it is important that these are recognised in the CMMP. Assistance with the effective engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties and funding for heritage studies will be important for future delivery of possible CMMP outcomes.

6.6 Multi agency responsibility, engagement and governance

As noted earlier, areas of coastal Crown land in the Borough of Queenscliffe are also managed by other entities including Parks Victoria, the Commonwealth Department of Defence, Department of Education and Training, Victoria Police, Department of Primary Industries and Vic Track resulting in a greater diversity of management goals and outcomes. Ensuring connection and interaction with other land managers and with permanent lease holders such as sporting clubs is an important element of the CMMP.

Local community also hold a strong connection to coastal spaces which provide important spaces that define the experience of living in the area and support varied recreation outcomes for residents.

In light of some of the complexity of particular parts of the coastal Crown land (e.g.: Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve) there is an opportunity to establish clear and effective governance arrangements to help identify and manage issues where multiple agencies may have varied inputs and objectives.

Community engagement will be a critical element in preparing the CMMP and resourcing an effective engagement and consultation process will be an important foundation of the CMMP project.



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Issues Paper – June 2020 – Appendix 1 Draft Coastal Land Precincts

