

21.04 ENVIRONMENT

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21.04-1 Environment Overview

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The coastline of Bass Coast Shire has renowned surf beaches, safe swimming beaches, distinctive coastal cliff formations, fossil sites, fragile mangrove ecosystems and significant aboriginal cultural heritage sites. The municipality is adjacent to several marine national parks.

The relationship between the coastal environment and land use planning highlights the need for effective catchment management strategies. Major catchment areas in the Bass Coast Shire include the Powlett and Bass River Catchments.

The municipality is subject to environmental hazards; they include erosion and landslip in Strzelecki foothills, salinity and acid sulphate soils around waterways and in coastal areas, and riverine flooding around waterways.

Climate change is predicted to cause an increase in sea levels, a decrease in rainfall and more frequent and severe storm events. It is predicted that sea levels will rise by not less than 0.8 metres by the year 2100. As a result there is likely to be impacts on coastal settlements, biodiversity, infrastructure and agricultural production.

21.04-2 Key Issues

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- Managing the coastline, which contains the main proportion of significant habitat.
- Protecting and enhancing environmental values.
- Protecting areas subject to future impacts as a result of climate change.
- Seeking a balance between urban growth of coastal communities and planning for the effects of climate change.
- Halting the decline and fragmentation of indigenous vegetation.
- Conserving and enhancing of the municipality's biodiversity.
- Balancing the competing interests of protecting existing habitat and development pressures.
- Maintaining water quality (avoiding increased concentrations of nutrients and suspended sediments) by better managing erosion, agriculture, forestry and urban uses.
- Protecting estuarine, river and coastal environments, from pollution, high nutrient run off and flash flooding.
- Managing environmental hazards including:
 - The effects of climate change and coastal inundation.
 - Riverine flooding.
 - Land subject to subsidence due to previous coal extraction.
 - Increased areas affected by salinity.
 - Erosion and landslip.
 - Acid Sulphate Soils.

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C140**Biodiversity Conservation and Habitat Protection****Overview**

The decline and fragmentation of indigenous vegetation and loss of biodiversity is a major environmental issue in the Shire, and a contributing factor towards other land and water degradation issues.

The Phillip Island Nature Park manages most of the publicly owned coastal areas on Phillip Island. The entire coastline in the municipality needs to be protected from degradation and inappropriate development. Management of public use of the coast is critical.

Habitat protection and enhancement is a high priority, including minimising changes in drainage, minimising soil disturbance, retaining top soil wherever practical, and retaining habitat trees with hollows (both dead and living) and fallen logs and branches.

Opportunities to consolidate and link existing fragmented habitat areas and identified wildlife corridors and, where possible, the creation of new blocks of habitat and corridors is also a priority.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 **To effectively manage and conserve the Shire's biologically diverse natural environment as an ecologically sustainable resource for present and future generations.**

Strategy 1.1 Protect and enhance significant habitat.

Strategy 1.2 Support the development of wildlife corridor projects across the municipality, in accordance with a Wildlife Corridor Network.

Strategy 1.3 Encourage the revegetation of degraded rural land, including in creeks and waterways.

Strategy 1.4 Investigate appropriate locations within the municipality to set aside land to facilitate the planting of vegetation offsets and provide the opportunity to establish carbon offsets for the Shire.

Strategy 1.5 Protect the breeding habitat for Short Tailed Shearwaters on the foreshore south west of Ventnor.

Strategy 1.6 Ensure all revegetation projects on large scale development sites use locally indigenous species sourced from local seed stocks of the Environmental Vegetation Classification for that area.

Objective 2 **To discourage development in locations, which impacts or conflicts with the quality and sensitivity of the natural environment.**

Strategy 2.1 Discourage any new or additional access points to foreshore reserves, dunes, wetlands and inter-tidal areas directly from private properties.

Strategy 2.2 Strongly discourage the establishment or extension of car parks and roads in sensitive coastal locations such as on dunes or in wetlands.

Strategy 2.3 Strongly discourage development that affects the natural flow paths of waterways.

Objective 3 **To minimise impacts on areas with high habitat value.**

Strategy 3.1 Encourage developments adjacent to reserves with habitat values to enhance the environmental values of the reserves.

- Strategy 3.2 Ensure that the boundary between reserves and abutting properties are clearly delineated and that reserves are protected from incursions by adjoining private properties.
- Strategy 3.3 Protect significant habitat abutting the Phillip Island Nature Park.
- Objective 4 To identify and protect good quality vegetation stands throughout the municipality.**
- Strategy 4.1 Encourage the protection and enhancement of remnant indigenous vegetation, including roadside vegetation where possible.
- Strategy 4.2 Encourage the planting of locally indigenous and native vegetation species, while encouraging the removal of exotic and environmental weed species.
- Strategy 4.3 Encourage the design of developments to retain existing vegetation, and to incorporate revegetation, on properties throughout the municipality.
- Objective 5 To control pest plants and animals throughout the municipality.**
- Strategy 5.1 Continue to support and develop the Land Management Biodiversity Incentive Scheme (including the Rural Rate Rebate Scheme) that recognises and rewards landholders that implement land management principles and practices to improve sustainable agricultural opportunities and protect and enrich the natural environment.
- Objective 6 To protect the Western Port Ramsar listed wetland, Anderson Inlet and the Marine National Parks.**
- Strategy 6.1 All development close to Western Port, Anderson Inlet and identified Marine National Parks should take into account any relevant Ramsar wetland listings and environmental significance. Development should not only minimise impacts on these areas, but enhance the environmental values of these areas.
- Strategy 6.2 Ensure the protection of sites of botanical, zoological and geomorphological significance.

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Catchment Management

Overview

Pollution in our bays, inlets and waterways from stormwater is a major environmental issue. The protection and enhancement of Bass Coast's waterways and catchments is important and can be achieved through the provision of buffer zones, the provision of fencing around reserves, by discouraging new access points, by improvements to existing access points and through the revegetation of riparian zones.

Objectives and Strategies

- Objective 1 To improve water quality and availability.**
- Strategy 1.1 Encourage the incorporation of water sensitive urban design principles into future, and, where practicable, existing urban subdivisions, in accordance with Council's Stormwater Management Policy at Clause 22.01.
- Strategy 1.2 Encourage landowners to revegetate gullies, stream banks and degraded areas to minimise erosion and salinity, and improve water quality.
- Strategy 1.3 Maintain and improve indigenous vegetation and land management practices within Proclaimed Water Catchment Areas.

Objective 2 To ensure new use or development does not cause water pollution, land degradation or pose a threat to the sustainable productive capacity of the Shire’s major economic base.

Strategy 2.1 Ensure development and associated road infrastructure works minimise impacts on stormwater quality, and sediment and nutrient loads to local waterways.

Strategy 2.2 Improve water quality by better management of urban stormwater inflows.

Strategy 2.3 Reduce sediment inputs in coastal areas by sealing and/or landscaping large unsealed gravel foreshore car parking areas.

Objective 3 To protect waterways, wetlands and floodplain areas of environmental significance; protect life, health, safety and community well being from flood hazard and to minimise the impact of flooding on the community.

Strategy 3.1 Reduce erosion and sediment inputs in catchments by encouraging the retention and replacement of riparian vegetation.

Strategy 3.2 Preserve the natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways and the flood storage function of floodplains.

Strategy 3.3 Encourage the use of "constructed wetlands" or other similar systems, as a means of storing floodwater, improving water quality and adding to natural habitats.

Strategy 3.4 Work to stabilise stream banks and improve the overall condition of waterways.

Specific Implementation

- Apply the Stormwater Management Policy at Clause 22.01.
- When deciding on applications that create wetlands consider as appropriate:
 - *Constructed Wetland System: Design Guidelines for Developers*, produced by Melbourne Water in 2005.

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Environmental Hazards

Overview

Natural disasters (including fire, flood, storms and drought) have the potential to substantially affect the community economically and socially, in addition to the environmental issues created by these disasters. The municipality is also susceptible to slower moving hazards, including erosion, landslip, salinity acid sulphate soils and sea level rise. The prevention and management of hazards into the future will create challenges and opportunities for improvement for the Council.

Objectives and Strategies

Fire

Objective 1 To ensure new development is designed to lessen the risk of fire.

Strategy 1.1 Encourage development to be sited, designed and constructed to minimise the impact of emergency conditions arising from fire.

Strategy 1.2 Encourage the location of accessways, fencing and dams to maximise fire fighting potential and minimise the interface with fire fighting measures.

Objective 2 To restrict and control development on land prone to wildfire.

Strategy 2.1 Discourage development on land prone to wildfire and ensure that development does not increase the risk of an environmental hazard.

Flooding and salinity

Objective 3 To restrict and control development on land prone to flooding and salinity.

Strategy 3.1 Ensure that the areas prone to flooding are planned and managed in a way which reduces the vulnerability of uses to flooding and prevents inappropriate works and developments.

Strategy 3.2 Strongly discourage development on land prone to flooding and salinity and ensure that development does not increase the risk of an environmental hazard.

Strategy 3.3 Promote floodplain management policies, which minimises impacts on waterways, maintains the function of the floodway to convey and store floodwater and protects areas of environmental significance.

Erosion and subsidence

Objective 4 To restrict and control development on land prone to erosion and subsidence.

Strategy 4.1 Ensure that new uses and developments are located on land that has the capability to sustain the development.

Strategy 4.2 Discourage development on land prone to erosion and subsidence, and ensure that development does not increase the risk of an environmental hazard.

Strategy 4.3 Encourage the planting of mangroves along the coast (particularly along Western Port) to minimise the impacts of coastal erosion.

Acid Sulphate Soils

Objective 5 To minimise the disturbance of Acid Sulphate Soils as a result of development.

Strategy 5.1 Support development of land in degraded areas only if land management practices will result in improved land quality.

Strategy 5.2 Ensure that development does not activate Acid Sulphate Soils.

Strategy 5.3 Investigate and map the potential locations for Acid Sulphate Soils in the municipality.

Strategy 5.4 Request a detailed report by a suitably qualified person that outlines any potential impacts on Acid Sulphate Soils for all developments proposed on land which is lower than five metres AHD (Australian Height Datum) where the soil may be disturbed.

Contaminated land

Objective 6 To ensure potentially contaminated sites are suitable for intended future use or development.

Strategy 6.1 Require detailed information on the adverse effects potential contamination may have on the future land use of a site.

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Climate Change

Overview

Climate change is predicted to cause an increase in sea levels, a decrease in rainfall and more frequent and severe storm events. There will be impacts on coastal settlements, biodiversity, infrastructure and agricultural production. As Bass Coast Shire has a number of low lying regions (both on the coast and further inland), and a large amount of viable agricultural land, the future impacts of climate change on the municipality are significant planning issues.

Issues associated with climate change include potential sea level rise, storm surge, increased fire risk and rain intensity, and development will be strongly discouraged in areas that may be affected.

Planning must consider as relevant:

- The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 (Victorian Coastal Council).
- Any relevant coastal action plan or management plan approved under the Coastal Management Act 1995 or National Parks Act 1975.
- Any relevant Land Conservation Council recommendations.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To protect and conserve existing water reserves and prevent degradation of water catchment areas.

Strategy 1.1 Maintain and improve indigenous vegetation and land management practices within Proclaimed Water Catchment Areas.

Objective 2 To conserve water resources within townships.

Strategy 2.1 Encourage developments to minimise stormwater run-off by reusing rainwater and recycling waste water. This should include, but not be limited to, incorporating facilities for the re-use of water, through the use of rainwater tanks, grey water tanks and grey water pipelines.

Objective 3 To discourage development in areas that may be affected by climate change.

Strategy 3.1 Determine the effects of sea level rise and storm surges and prepare and implement strategies to address any potential issues.

Strategy 3.2 Increase the Council and the community's knowledge and understanding of the effects of climate change in the municipality.

Strategy 3.3 Discourage individual landowners adjacent to the coast from constructing their own sea wall barriers in an attempt to minimise impacts from erosion and coastal processes.

Strategy 3.4 Apply appropriate planning controls to ensure responsive development in areas affected by environmental hazards.

Strategy 3.5 Discourage inappropriate development in areas affected by riverine flooding and coastal inundation, in particular, areas affected by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay.