

**21.05 THE ENVIRONMENT**

19/05/2016  
C5

This Clause provides local content to support Clauses 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values) and 13 (Environmental Risks) of the State Planning Policy Framework.

**21.05-1 Coastal environs and landscape**

20/01/2011  
C2

**Overview**

The French Island Marine National Park encompasses approximately 2800 hectares along the northern shoreline of French Island and includes extensive areas of saltmarsh and mangrove communities and seagrass beds which act as a nursery for fish, especially King George Whiting, Bream and Mullet. The area is also a significant feeding habitat for migratory waders found in Western Port Bay.

French Island, due to its extensive natural environment and minimal development, has unique landscape values. The National Trust has given the landscape on French Island a 'high' rating, assigned to parts of the physical environment considered to be essential to the heritage of Australia. The National Trust refers to the Island as a prominent feature in Western Port Bay.

**Key issues**

- Protecting and managing the Island's coastal areas that are recognised by the Ramsar Convention.
- Recognising the importance of the French Island Marine National Park to the environmentally sensitive waters of Western Port Bay.
- Protecting the botanical and zoological significance of the coastal environs.
- Conserving and protecting the Island's landscape qualities that have been recognised by the National Trust of Australia.
- Managing the interface between the National Park and Marine National Park, and private land holdings.
- Protecting areas of environmental, landscape, agricultural, cultural and recreational significance for the benefit of the local and wider community.
- Recognising the impacts of climate change on development opportunities on the Island and the waters of Western Port Bay.

**Objective 1 To minimise negative impacts on the coastal environment.**

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| Strategy 1.1 | Support use and development in coastal locations where they are compatible with the sensitive nature of their surrounding environment and the capacity of the land. |
| Strategy 1.2 | Ensure that there is no net loss of coastal vegetation through the use or development of land.  |
| Strategy 1.3 | Require proposals to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect the habitat and breeding values for migratory birds, waterfowl and other fauna species.        |
| Strategy 1.4 | Protect coastal and wetland areas from inappropriate land use and development.  |

Strategy 1.5 Ensure that use and development does not have an adverse impact on the waters, and the environmental values of, Western Port Bay and the French Island Marine National Park.

Strategy 1.6 Ensure that development is set back an appropriate distance to minimise impacts on the stability of the coastline.

**Objective 2 To protect and enhance the landscape values of the Island.**

Strategy 2.1 Respect the National Trust landscape classification by minimising visual impacts of development through appropriate siting and design, particularly along the coastline and from elevated viewing points.

Strategy 2.2 Ensure that development is designed and setback an appropriate distance from the coastline to minimise visual impacts and retain coastal landscape values.

Strategy 2.3 Require buildings to be set back an appropriate distance from a road or road reserve and be designed to reduce their impact on the Island's landscape values.

**Objective 3 To minimise the impacts of climate change on the Island.**

Strategy 3.1 Ensure that any use or development proposal has regard to relevant impacts of climate change.

**21.05-2**

**Biodiversity**

20/01/2011  
C2

**Overview**

French Island's size, location and isolation are basis for its relatively untouched natural environment. The natural biodiversity of the Island is highly regarded by both the Island community and the State Government. More than two thirds of the Island included in the French Island National Park. Both the French Island National Park and French Island National Marine Park play an important role in conserving and protecting the Island's natural environment. The whole of the Island has important and unique environmental qualities, including a high number of rare or threatened flora and fauna species.

**Key issues**

- Protecting and managing the Island's significant vegetation as recognised by the Ramsar Convention.
- Recognising the importance of the French Island National Park in conserving and protecting the Island's natural environment.
- Protecting the whole of the Island's ecological values, including particular sites of State botanical and national zoological significance..
- Recognising the presence of a high number of rare or threatened flora and fauna species on the Island.
- Recognising that rural areas contain unique environmental qualities that need to be protected.

**Objective 1 To protect, conserve and enhance natural habitats for the Island's indigenous flora and fauna.**

Strategy 1.1 Retain areas of existing remnant vegetation, wetlands and streamlines which provide movement corridors and habitat for wildlife.

- Strategy 1.2 Ensure that land use and development on sites identified as having zoological or botanical significance are compatible with conservation values and objectives.
- Strategy 1.3 Encourage best practice techniques for land use and development in environmentally sensitive locations, particularly in coastal areas and on land abutting the National Park.
- Strategy 1.4 Encourage revegetation of land with plants indigenous to the Island.
- Strategy 1.5 Minimise the fragmentation of areas with continuous remnant vegetation that provides corridors or refuge for wildlife.
- Strategy 1.6 Ensure that use and development does not adversely affect soil stability or contribute to soil erosion.
- Strategy 1.7 Ensure that use and development adjacent to waterways does not adversely affect the Island’s water resources.
- Objective 2 To minimise the impact of land use and development on biodiversity.**
- Strategy 2.1 Ensure that land use and development is in accordance with the land’s environmental capability.
- Strategy 2.2 Encourage the continued maintenance of an environment that is relatively free of pest plants and animals.
- Strategy 2.3 Ensure that design, siting and location of all development does not affect water quality or habitat.
- Strategy 2.4 To ensure that the conservation values of the site are enhanced and that environmental management plans are implemented.

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## **Wildfire**

### **Overview**

French Island’s isolation, road network, lack of reticulated services and prominent natural environment make it highly susceptible to wildfire. The local community’s Country Fire-fighters Association is organised to provide first attack protection to the residents and assets of the Island. Further the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Parks Victoria are involved in fire management and suppression responsibility for the Island.

### **Key issue**

- Managing the susceptibility of significant stands of native vegetation including heath land, woodland, open forests and scrub to wildfire.

### **Objective 1 To minimise the potential fire risk on the Island.**

- Strategy 1.1 Ensure that use and development have regard to the potential fire hazard and are protected from wildfire, particularly in areas abutting the National Park or areas of remnant stands of native vegetation.
- Strategy 1.2 Consider fuel reduction burning and fuel breaks in the provision of land use and development.
- Strategy 1.3 Ensure the provision of satisfactory and accessible water supply for land uses and developments on the Island.

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## **Implementation**

These environmental strategies will be implemented by:

### **Policy and exercise of discretion**

- Requiring the use of non-reflective materials and the application of muted colour tones.
- Requiring buildings to be painted or coloured within 12 months of being completed.
- Requiring buildings and works to be single storey and to not exceed a height of 5 metres from ground level.
- Siting buildings at least 40 metres from a road and 200 metres from land in a Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

### **Zones and overlays**

- Applying the Rural Conservation Zone to areas recognised for their environmental coastal values to ensure that use and development in these locations are appropriate to the fragile environment.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay to areas recognised for their significant botanical or zoological values or nominated for their conservation values to protect and conserve these areas.
- Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay to the whole of the Island (excluding public land zones) to protect the landscape values of the Island that have been recognised by the National Trust for contributing to Australia's heritage.
- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to the whole of the National Park.
- Applying the Wildfire Management Overlay to the whole of the Island

### **Other action**

- Ensure that grazing stock is prevented from accessing sensitive inter-tidal areas.

### **Reference documents**

A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, 3rd edition (Environment Australia 2001)

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and their Environment (Tokyo 6 February 1974) (Department of Foreign Affairs 1981)

Agreement between the Government of Australia and the People's Republic of China for the protection of Migratory Birds and their Environment (Canberra, 20 October 1986) (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 1988)

Sites of Zoological Significance in the Westernport Region (D L Andrew 1984)

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention 1979)

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention 1971)

French Island National Park Management Plan (Parks Victoria 1998)

The Western Port Marine Environment (Environment Protection Authority 1996)

- Sites of Archaeological Significance in the Westernport Catchment, Volumes 1 and 2 (D Gaughwin 1981)
- Melbourne Area, District 2 Review: Descriptive Report (Land Conservation Council, Victoria 1991)
- Melbourne Area, District 2 Review: Final Recommendations (Land Conservation Council, Victoria 1994)
- National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity (Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories 1996)
- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee 1992)
- Sites of Botanical Significance in the Westernport Region (Opie et al. 1984)
- Port Phillip and Westernport Regional Catchment Strategy (Port Phillip Regional Catchment Management Authority 2013)
- Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance in the Westernport Bay Catchment (N J Rosengren 1984)
- Westernport Bay Environmental Study 1973-1974 (Shapiro 1975)
- Waters of Western Port Bay and Catchment (State Environment Protection Policy 1979)
- Victorian Coastal Strategy (Victorian Coastal Council 2014)
- Commonwealth Government Wetlands Policy (Government of Australia 1997)
- Western Port Bay Strategy (Westernport Regional Planning and Coordination Committee 1992)