

## 21.03 ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE VALUES

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

### 21.03-1 Biodiversity

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Warrnambool's natural environment reflects its location on the magnificent Southern Ocean Coast. The City is home to a number of threatened species of flora and fauna on land and in aquatic environments.

The coastline supports an impressive range of environmental values. Areas of coastal vegetation provide important wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species. In addition, Warrnambool's coastline adjoins a number of ecologically important areas including the Southern Right Whale nursery off Logans Beach and the Merri Marine Sanctuary.

The Merri River, Hopkins River and associated wetlands and floodplains form a highly significant coastal wetland system that provides important habitat for many *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* listed species.

Middle Island, located within the mouth of the Merri River is particularly significant, providing nesting areas for Little Penguins, Little Pied Cormorants, Short-tailed Shearwaters and roosting areas for transient seabirds such as the Pacific Gull.

The Lower Merri River Wetlands (Kelly's Swamp, Saltwater Swamp and the South Warrnambool Wetlands) are listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA), the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA), the Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA) and the BONN Convention.

Lake Gilliear is a significant lake located approximately 11 kilometres east of Warrnambool, close to the coast. It is surrounded by farming and recreational facilities that have the potential to impact on the natural and cultural values of the lake. Erosion, runoff, and the need to protect native vegetation, are significant issues that require ongoing attention. Starlight Cave, one of only two maternity caves for the Common Bent-wing Bat in Victoria, is located within close proximity to Lake Gilliear.

Further urban development, the introduction of pest plants and animals have the potential to impact on biodiversity. Agricultural activities have the potential to impact upon water quality, such as the nutrient enrichment of waterways that can impact on native aquatic species.

#### Key issues

- Recognising, protecting and enhancing biodiversity conservation areas.
- Managing urban and rural pressures on coastal areas, waterways and sensitive ecosystems.

#### Objective 1

**To recognise, protect and enhance the natural environment and habitats.**

#### Strategies

- 1.1 Recognise, protect and enhance sites of significance for their specific biodiversity values.
- 1.2 Support environmentally sustainable practices and uses particularly in agricultural areas and those areas identified with high salinity.

- 1.3 Require development to be directed away from wetlands and rehabilitate urban waterways to protect and enhance sensitive ecosystems.
- 1.4 Improve natural habitats on public land and encourage revegetation on private land and in aquatic systems within the city.
- 1.5 Facilitate the creation of wildlife corridors through the provision of a network of open space.
- 1.6 Protect the natural and cultural values of Lake Gilliar and adjacent land.
- 1.7 Protect Starlight Cave through low impact and low density land use and development.

### **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to biodiversity will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### **Policy guidelines**

- When deciding on an application for use and development that may impact on the environment, the responsible authority will consider as appropriate:
  - Any regional catchment strategies approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and any associated implementation plan or strategy including any regional river health and wetland strategies.
  - Recommendations of the *Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*.

### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to publicly owned river corridors, wetlands, floodplains, and coastal reserves.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay over the coastal reserve, rivers, land adjacent to river corridors and wetlands and other significant habitats.
- Applying the Vegetation Protection Overlay to areas containing significant flora.

### **Future strategic work**

- Identify and map flora and fauna biodiversity values across the municipality.

### **Reference documents**

*Warrnambool Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2008- 2013*

*Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy 2012- 2018*

*Warrnambool Open Space Strategy (2014)*

*Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*

## **21.03-2 Native vegetation management**

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Extensive clearing of native vegetation in the years since European settlement has drastically reduced the extent and quality of habitat for native species.

Further development pressure, particularly on land adjacent to the coast and waterways, has the potential to impact on remnant native vegetation.

The Francis Tozer Reserve located on Wangoom Road, Warrnambool, is recognised as an important example of remnant native grassland and should be preserved as a community education resource.

### **Key issues**

- The decline and fragmentation of native vegetation is a key issue in the municipality and a contributing factor towards many other land and water degradation issues.

### **Objective 1**

**To ensure development recognises, protects and enhances native vegetation values.**

### **Strategies**

- 1.1 Protect remnant vegetation, especially in habitat corridors, associated with drainage lines, stream frontages and on roadsides and protect, in particular, those Ecological Vegetation Classes rated as having either high or very high conservation significance, and habitat corridors or areas identified as habitat for rare and threatened flora and fauna species.
- 1.2 Require revegetation along waterways and floodplains using original Ecological Vegetation Class species, with the inclusion of understorey species.
- 1.3 Contain the spread of noxious and pest weeds and progressively reduce the areas affected.

### **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to native vegetation management will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### **Policy guidelines**

- When deciding on an application for use and development that may impact on the environment, the responsible authority will consider as appropriate:
  - Any regional catchment strategies approved under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* and any associated implementation plan or strategy including any regional river health and wetland strategies.
  - Recommendations of the *Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*.

### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to publicly owned river corridors, wetlands, floodplains, and coastal reserves.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay over the coastal reserve, land adjacent to river corridors and wetlands, and other significant habitats.

### **Future strategic work**

- Identify and map flora and fauna biodiversity values across the municipality.
- Prepare Native Vegetation Management Plans for land within the coastal reserve.

## Reference documents

*Warrnambool Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2008- 2013*

*Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*

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## Coastal areas

### Protection of coastal areas

Warrnambool is situated on one of the most spectacular sections of the southwest Victorian coastline. The coast has significant cultural values for both Aboriginal and European heritage and is also valued highly for its environmental, recreational and tourism aspects.

The coastal area encompasses a range of impressive landscape features including the ancient dune systems of Thunder Point and Pickering Point, the wave dominated Merri and Hopkins River estuaries, brackish wetlands and the both rugged and sheltered beaches of Lady Bay; forming part of what is known as Victoria's 'shipwreck coast'.

Warrnambool's coastal environment exists within close proximity to, or integrated within, the urban environment and is considered one of the city's most valuable assets, supporting a diverse range of environmental, cultural and recreational values.

The coastal foreshore, Lake Pertobe and the Breakwater Activity Node have significant conservation and coastal recreation functions.

The Logans Beach area, located east of the Hopkins River, is recognised internationally for the viewing of the Southern Right Whale. The whale nursery provides a unique opportunity for the viewing of whales. In addition, the area is of high environmental and landscape amenity. Access requirements to the whale viewing area are likely to grow in the future as visitor numbers to Warrnambool increase.

The Hopkins River and Coastal Environment growth area has unique environmental qualities and appropriate planning provisions are in place to ensure the qualities of the coastal environment are not compromised by new development.

### Coastal Crown land

Warrnambool City Council is the Committee of Management established under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to manage Warrnambool's coastline that stretches approximately 12.7 kilometres from Levy's Point Coastal Reserve in the west, to Logans Beach in the east.

The *Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan 2013* provides for the future use, development and management of Warrnambool's coastline. The *Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan 2013* identifies prominent environmental, cultural and recreational values found along Warrnambool's coastline, defines management precincts, identifies key management issues affecting the coastline and provides prioritised management strategies aimed at achieving the plan's vision.

### Great Ocean Road region and coastal tourism

The Great Ocean Road region extends from Warrnambool to Torquay in the east, and northward to the Princess Highway. *The Great Ocean Road Strategy (2004)* designated Warrnambool as the western gateway to the Great Ocean Road region with capacity for residential and visitor accommodation growth.

Warrnambool's role as a major destination for people travelling along the Great Ocean Road is recognised within the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014* and the *Great Ocean*

*Road Destination Management Plan 2012.* Tourists travelling along the Great Ocean Road arrive in Warrnambool via Hopkins Point Road or the Princes Highway.

The Bay of Islands Coastal Park extends into the eastern part of the municipality within close proximity to Lake Gilliear. The Great Ocean Road (including the Bay of Islands Coastal Park) is listed on the Australian National Heritage List.

The Logans Beach area, located off Hopkins Point Road, plays a significant role from a cultural and recreational perspective, largely due to the Southern Right Whale nursery. Land-based whale watching attracts over 37,000 tourists annually to the City and is estimated to inject \$2-2.5 million into the economy each year.

### **Key issues**

- Warrnambool's coastal reserves provide important wildlife habitat and corridors for vulnerable and threatened flora and fauna species.
- The Foreshore and Breakwater Activity Nodes provide important tourism and recreational opportunities.
- Infrastructure requirements for tourism development.

### **Objective 1**

**To protect and enhance the environmental values and significant features of coastal areas.**

#### **Strategies**

- 1.1 Protect vantage points and view lines.
- 1.2 Ensure sites of cultural significance, including Point Richie/ Moyjil, are protected.
- 1.3 Support opportunities for sustainable use and development along the coast (within identified settlement boundaries).
- 1.4 Ensure that new development within close proximity to coastal reserves responds to the characteristics of the coastal environment, demonstrating a high standard of contemporary expression and finish.

### **Objective 2**

**To ensure that the use of and access to the coastal environment is sustainable.**

#### **Strategies**

- 2.1 Ensure developers of land adjacent to coastal Crown land provides public access at designated locations, through a network of access roads, tracks, boardwalks and paths.
- 2.2 Ensure that privately owned coastal areas are planned and developed in a manner that respects the values of adjoining or nearby coastal Crown land.

### **Objective 3**

**To enhance and expand the tourism industry, while protecting the environmental, landscape and cultural values of the municipality and the lifestyle of its residents.**

#### **Strategies**

- 3.1 Support tourism and community access to the coast, without compromising the natural environment.

- 3.2 Support the location of tourism development in appropriate urban areas where their impacts and infrastructure requirements can best be accommodated.
- 3.3 Require new coastal tourism developments in non-urban areas to use high quality, low intensity, unobtrusive, site responsive buildings and works based on ecologically sustainable design principles.

### **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to coastal areas will be implemented through the planning scheme by:

### **Policy guidelines**

When deciding on an application for use and development on coastal Crown land, the responsible authority will consider as appropriate:

- The recommendations of the *Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*.

### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to coastal Crown land in recognition of flora and fauna values.
- Applying the Public Park and Recreation Zone to coastal Crown land in recognition of recreation values (including Lake Pertobe and between the Foreshore Activity Node and the Breakwater Activity Node).
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay over the coastal reserve in recognition of habitat values.

### **Future strategic work**

- Review existing and investigate the application of new Significant Landscape Overlays along the coast to reflect the recommendations of the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment (2006)*.
- Investigate the potential of Hopkins Point Road to be developed as a major tourist gateway to the city.
- Prepare precinct plans to encourage coastal recreation uses between the Breakwater Activity Node and Foreshore Activity Node.

### **Reference documents**

*Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment (2006)*

*Great Ocean Road Destination Management Plan (2012)*

*Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*

**21.03-4 Significant environments and landscapes**22/09/2016  
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The Hopkins estuary is one of only three 'Premier Rivers' for fishing across Victoria. The Merri River is also a significant waterway within the Hopkins Basin.

The rivers have a range of social values including fishing, boating, camping, swimming, picnicking and bushwalking. In an economic sense the rivers are valued for the supply of water for agriculture (and their proximity to agricultural land), drinking water, tourism and fishing.

The South Warrnambool wetlands are significant coastal wetlands that form an important home for wildlife and native vegetation. The wetlands are of regional geological, flora, fauna and recreational significance. They are also of strong local Aboriginal, cultural and historic significance.

**Significant landscapes**

Warrnambool contains areas of great natural beauty. The community values the city's landscape character. The ocean, the Merri River, the Hopkins River, inland hilltops and ridgelines, and surrounding rural areas can be viewed from numerous public areas and private dwellings throughout the city. Respect for the sharing of views, rather than necessarily the retention of all existing views, is an important issue.

Norfolk Island Pines lining the Princes Highway median and a number of other streets are an important local landscape feature. The coastal area is of outstanding cultural, environmental and recreational significance.

The natural landscape is an important asset of the municipality that requires protection from inappropriate use and development.

**Key Issues**

- The management of recreational, tourist and interpretive activities within the South Warrnambool wetlands.
- The management of urban impacts such as erosion, surface runoff and protection and restoration of indigenous vegetation on significant river and estuarine environments.
- The protection of significant landscapes and landforms from inappropriate development.
- Opportunities for sharing of views to the ocean, rivers and surrounding rural areas.

**Objective 1**

**To protect the natural, cultural and visual values of significant natural environments.**

**Strategies**

- 1.1 To ensure that all new use and development proposals sustain and enhance estuary, river and lake water quality, nutrient and sediment load conditions. This is to maintain the capacity for scientific research and the operation of ecological systems, together with appropriate agricultural and recreational uses.
- 1.2 To ensure that all new use and development proposals mitigate against any potential environmental or visual impact to the estuary or rivers and their environs and where possible achieve net environmental gain.

## **Objective 2**

**To protect distinct hilltops and ridgelines, other notable vantage points, and view lines from inappropriate development.**

### **Strategies**

- 2.1 Require new development, including access roads and driveways, to be appropriately located to minimise visual impact.
- 2.2 Encourage the protection and revegetation of prominent hilltops and ridgelines.
- 2.3 Discourage development on prominent hilltops and ridgelines.

## **Objective 3**

**To retain and enhance coastal landscapes of high scenic value.**

### **Strategies**

- 3.1 Maintain existing tree planting and carry out appropriate landscaping on all major approach routes and local streets.
- 3.2 Identify and protect significant exotic and indigenous trees which contribute to the overall character of the city, including avoiding removal and lopping of such trees to facilitate the construction of buildings and works and installation of utility services.
- 3.3 Protect all mature Norfolk Island Pines from removal and lopping.
- 3.4 Require new development to be sited so that existing vistas throughout Warrnambool are not impeded.
- 3.5 Prevent the degradation of scenic landscapes along the coast, river valleys and inland ridge lines.

## **Implementation**

The strategies in relation to significant environments and landscapes will be implemented by:

### **Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to publicly owned river corridors, wetlands and floodplains.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay over land adjacent to river corridors and wetlands, and other significant river and estuarine environments.
- Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay to protect significant landscapes and ridgelines.
- Applying the Design and Development Overlay to viewing corridors within urban areas.

### **Future strategic work**

- Undertake a study to identify opportunities for sharing of views to the ocean, rivers and surrounding rural areas.
- Undertake a study to identify and protect significant exotic and indigenous trees that contribute to the overall character of the city.

**Reference documents**

*Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-2019*

*Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment (2006)*

*Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan (2013)*

Figure 1 - Environmental and landscape values

