

COASTAL SPACES LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY



PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL LANDSCAPES
in the East Gippsland Shire

MUNICIPAL REFERENCE DOCUMENT

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

plān|ī'sphēre [urban strategy planners]



Acknowledgments

The *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* forms part of the broader Coastal Spaces range of projects, being funded by the Victorian State Government, that aim to contribute to the more sustainable use and development of Victoria's coast.

The Study was project managed by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) Coastal Spaces Team, and overseen by a Steering Committee comprising local government, academic, DSE and regional coastal board representation.

Three Reference Groups were also established, one for each coastal region. The Reference Groups comprised representatives from the DSE, DSE Regions, local government, regional coastal boards, catchment management authorities, Heritage Victoria and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. The Gippsland Region Reference Group oversaw and contributed to the development of the landscape work for their geographic area.

The contributions of the DSE Coastal Spaces Team, Coastal Spaces Steering Committee and Gippsland Region Reference Group are gratefully acknowledged.

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Introduction

The **Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study** was commissioned in December 2004 as part of the *Coastal Spaces Initiative*, led by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The Study focuses on the coastal areas of Gippsland (Bass Coast to the NSW border), the Bellarine Peninsula and the coast west of Warrnambool to the South Australian border.

The project identifies and maps individual landscape characteristics within these coastal regions, identifies significant landscapes and provides an implementation framework to assist local government and other agencies in managing development impacts within coastal landscapes.

The Study is designed to implement the objectives of the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002*. This Study complements the landscape assessment work undertaken for the Great Ocean Road Region as part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study 2004*.

This Document

This **Municipal Reference Document**, *Protection and Management of Coastal Landscapes in the Bass Coast Shire*, identifies and describes the character and significance of the coastal landscapes of the municipality. It also provides the background justification for the proposed planning scheme changes that are outlined in the Bass Coast Shire **Municipal Implementation Toolkit**.

Study Area

The study area for the East Gippsland Shire is shown on the Character Types and Areas Map in Chapter 1.

The project brief identified indicative areas of 5 kilometres and 30 kilometres inland as “reference points” for the project. It also stated that the work should:

- Not extend seaward from the coastline
- Exclude the urban areas of settlements
- Exclude national and state parks, as these are subject to separate management arrangements; detailed landscape management guidelines were not prepared for these areas, but they were assessed for their significance and attributed a significance level in the state wide context.

The study area boundaries were expected to vary for different parts of the coast according to topography, landscape features and views. The Study brief required the study area boundaries to be further defined and justified.

In the early stages of the project, it was determined that the Landscape Assessment Study should cover all landscapes that are visible from the coast, and from which the coast is visible. In this context, ‘visible’ is taken to cover established patterns of public viewing, as it is from this pattern that the landscape character of the coast is constructed and understood by the viewer. ‘Established patterns of public viewing’ occur from roads, townships, and recreational locations across the entire study area.

Inland Extent of Field Survey

The initial field survey for the Study involved the determination of an inland boundary that encompassed all important patterns of public viewing. The assessment of landscape character was conducted across all landscapes located between this inland boundary and the coastline. The boundary is therefore expressed throughout the Study documentation as the ‘inland extent of field survey’. It encompasses an area that can be referred to as ‘the coastal landscape’, from the perspective of public viewing patterns and has been used to guide the development of coastal landscape management guidelines and provide a more focused area from which visual landscape significance could be assessed and mapped.

Inland Extent of Desktop / Character Area Analysis

In the assessment of landscape character types and areas, desktop analysis enabled the delineation of character areas to be extended inland beyond the field survey boundary.



For the Gippsland Region, the Study Area extends from the New South Wales State border in the east to the Bass Coast Shire municipal boundary in the west. The inland extent of field survey and proposed Local Policy area extends approximately 4 to 10 kilometres inland from the coastline. Desktop and character area analysis extended approximately 20 kilometres inland from the coastline, but also taking in the Gippsland Lakes, that are considered to have a coastal relationship.

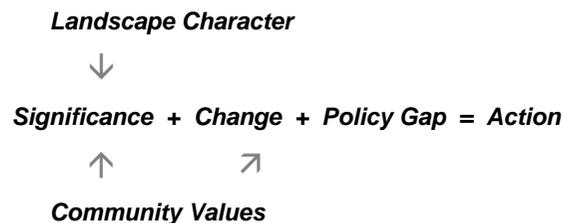
National and State Parks

Assessment of overall significance has been undertaken across all study areas irrespective of land tenure (public or private). This was considered important to inform a comparative level of assessment of significance from which to judge other landscapes.

Given the relative legislative and management frameworks for Crown land management, for the purposes of this Study, consideration of Planning Scheme controls to strengthen protection of significance values on public land was not considered necessary, as the core findings of this Study are able to be given effect within existing public land management responsibilities.

Study Framework

In developing the methodology, analysis and recommendations, the study team devised the following Landscape Management Framework around which the study outcomes are structured.



The framework is explained in detail in the **Background Report** that sets out the methodology for the project.

This Reference Document represents the application of the study framework to the Bass Coast Shire, specifically the *Landscape Character*, *Community Values*, *Significance* and *Change* parts of the framework.

Structure of this Report

The relevant components of the study framework that are addressed in this report are as follows:

Chapter 1 – Landscape Character

Chapter 2 – Community Values

Chapter 3 – Landscape Significance

Chapter 4 – Change in the landscape

The remainder of the framework is covered in Chapters 1 and 2 of the **Municipal Implementation Toolkit**.

Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment : Study Products

Background Report

1 DOCUMENT

State Overview Report

1 DOCUMENT

Municipal Reference Documents

1 DOC PER MUNICIPALITY = 9

Municipal Implementation Toolkits

1 DOC PER MUNICIPALITY = 9

Acknowledgements

Introduction

- 1. Project Brief**
- 2. Methodology**
- 3. Community Consultation**
 - 3.1 Community Questionnaire
 - 3.2 Community Photographic Exercise
 - 3.3 Significance Brochures
 - 3.4 Other Identified Values
- 4. Landscape Management Framework**

Landscape Character

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Significance + Change + Policy Gap = Action

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Community Values

 - 4.1 Landscape Character
 - 4.2 Community Values
 - 4.3 Significance
 - 4.4 Change
 - 4.5 Policy Gap
 - 4.6 Action

Appendices

- Project Brief
- Consultants' Inception Report
- Significance Areas Delineation Flowchart
- Planning Scheme Analysis Summary Tables
- Steering Committee Update Reports
- Reference Group Agendas
- Community Questionnaire
- Community Questionnaire Responses
- Community Photographic Exercise Survey Form
- Significance Brochures
- Significance Brochure Responses Summary Tables
- Significance Assessment Tables
- 'Evolution of Significance Areas' Table
- Reference Groups' Feedback to Character Area Analysis Papers

Introduction

- 1. Landscape Character Types & Areas**
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 South West Victoria
 - 1.3 GORRLAS
 - 1.4 Bellarine Peninsula
 - 1.5 Gippsland Region
- 2. Significant Coastal Landscapes**
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 Local, Regional & State Significance
 - 2.3 Visual Significance
 - 2.4 Determining Levels of Significance
 - 2.5 Supporting Evidence
 - 2.6 Evolution of Significance Methodology
 - 2.7 Community Opinion
 - 2.8 Significant Landscapes of Coastal Victoria
 - 2.9 Implications for this Study
 - 2.10 South West Victoria
 - 2.11 GORRLAS
 - 2.12 Bellarine Peninsula
 - 2.13 Gippsland Region
- 3. Protecting & Managing the Character & Significance of Coastal Landscapes**
 - 3.1 Introduction
 - 3.2 State Planning Policy Framework
 - 3.3 Landscape Management Guidelines
 - 3.4 Best Practice Policies
 - 3.5 The Significant Landscape Overlay
 - 3.6 Non Statutory Recommendations
 - 3.7 Outside this Study

Acknowledgements

Maps included in this report:

- Regional Landscape Character Types and Areas
- Regional Levels of Significance

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Landscape Character

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Significance + Change + Policy Gap = Action

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Community Values

- 1. Coastal Landscape Character**
 - 1.1 Coastal Landscape Character Types
 - 1.2 Coastal Landscape Character Areas
 - 1.3 Key Features
 - 1.4 Landscape Characteristics
 - 1.5 Settlements
 - 1.6 Pattern of Viewing
 - 1.7 Implications for this Study
- 2. Community Values**
 - 2.1 Community Questionnaire
 - 2.2 Community Photographic Exercise
 - 2.3 Significant Landscapes Brochure
 - 2.4 Other Identified Values
 - 2.5 Implications for this Study
- 3. Landscape Significance**
 - 3.1 Visual Significance
 - 3.2 Supporting Evidence
 - 3.3 Determining Levels of Significance
 - 3.4 Significant Landscapes
 - 3.5 Implications for this Study
- 4. Change in the Landscape**
 - 4.1 Municipal Landscape Change
 - 4.2 Sensitivity to Change
 - 4.3 Management Considerations
 - 4.4 Future Character Directions
 - 4.5 Opportunities and Threats
 - 4.6 Landscape Management Objectives & Guidelines
 - 4.7 Implications for this Study

Maps included in this report:

- Landscape Character Types and Areas
- Aerial Photo
- Landform and Waterform (Topography)

Appendices

- Explanatory Character Area Analysis Paper
- Character Area Analysis Papers

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Landscape Character

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Significance + Change + Policy Gap = Action

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Community Values

- 1. Policy Gap**
 - 1.1 (Planning Scheme Analysis)
 - 1.2 Non Statutory Documents
 - 1.3 Implementation Options
 - 1.4 Adoption of this Study
 - 1.5 Implications for this Study
- 2. Action**
 - 2.1 Planning Scheme (Recommendations)
 - 2.2 Non-statutory Recommendations

Maps included in this report:

- Existing Zones
- Existing Overlays

Appendices

- Model SLO Schedule
- Package for each proposed SLO comprising:
 - Description of Boundary;
 - Boundary Map;
 - Boundary superimposed over Aerial Photograph;
 - Boundary superimposed over Existing Zones Map;
 - Proposed SLO Schedule



1. Coastal Landscape Character

The coastline of the East Gippsland Shire extends from the Gippsland Lakes in the west, to the border of New South Wales, just past Mallacoota Inlet, in the east. Notable landscape features of the shire include many well known coastal lakes such as Lakes Victoria and King, the Snowy River Estuary, and the extensive wilderness of the Croajingolong National Park coastline. The shire's coastal townships are popular holiday and recreational locations and include Lakes Entrance itself, Marlo, Bemm River and Mallacoota.

1.1 Coastal Landscape Character Types

At the regional scale, the coastal areas of the shire can be divided into landscape Character Types based on broad areas of common physical, environmental and cultural characteristics. A professional assessment of landscape character underpinned this part of the study, focussing on objective distinctions between character types, and the relationship between landscape Character Types and their constituent Character Areas. The tasks that were undertaken as part of this stage are detailed in the **Background Report**.

A study of key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use identified two Character Types in the East Gippsland Shire (shown on Map 1):

- Character Type 6: Gippsland Plains
- Character Type 7: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Established landscape classification mapping developed by Leonard and Hammond for the Forest Commission Victoria (*Landscape Character Types of Victoria*, 1984), and the current Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) (<http://www.deh.gov.au/parks/nrs/ibra/version5-1/index.html>) were also reviewed as part of the identification of coastal landscape Character Types. There was general agreement between these established

classifications and the Character Types identified in this study. Where there was not, this is noted on the relevant **Character Area Analysis Paper**.

1.2 Coastal Landscape Character Areas

At a local scale, each Character Type has been divided into landscape Character Areas, which are separate geographical units within the same Character Type, or areas across which local conditions such as the density of settlement, pattern of viewing, or special landscape features vary.

In total, eight coastal Character Areas have been identified. These are shown on the Landscape Character Types and Areas Map following this section and are illustrated in Figure 1:

- Character Area 6.1: Gippsland Lakes Plains
- Character Area 6.2: Ninety Mile Coast
- Character Area 7.1: Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland
- Character Area 7.2: Ewing Morass Forest Coast
- Character Area 7.3: Snowy River Floodplains
- Character Area 7.4: Cape Conran Coast
- Character Area 7.5: Croajingolong Coast
- Character Area 7.6: Mallacoota Inlet and Coast

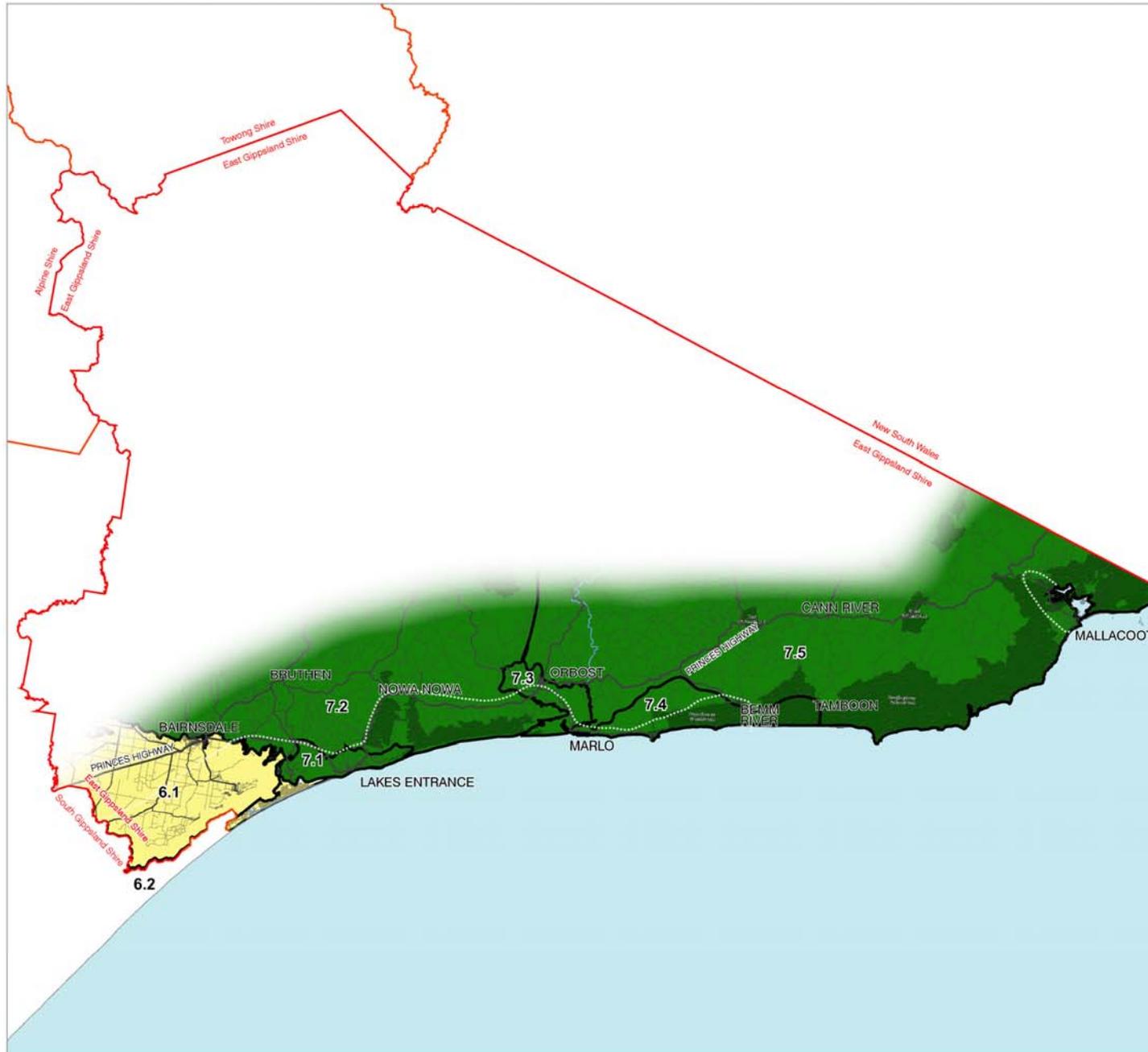
The characteristics of each are outlined in detail in the attached **Character Area Analysis Papers** (Appendix 2) that address the following specific issues for each Character Area:

- Key features
- Landscape characteristics
- Settlements
- Pattern of viewing
- Community and other identified values
- Landscape change and sensitivity to change



- Existing policies
- Opportunities and threats
- Management considerations
- Preferred future character
- Landscape management objectives and guidelines

An ***Explanatory Character Area Analysis Paper***, describing and explaining their contents is attached as Appendix 1



Legend

Landscape Character Types

- East Gippsland Wilderness Coast (South East Corner)
- Gippsland Plains

Character Areas

- 7.2

State and National Parks
(including Coastal and Regional parks)

Roads

Hydrology

- Watercourse
- Water body

Administrative Boundaries

- State Border
- Municipal Boundary

Settlements

- Inland Extent of Field Survey / proposed Local Policy*

*This boundary encompasses an area that can be referred to as 'the coastal landscape', from the perspective of public viewing patterns (refer to the introduction for details). Desktop analysis has extended the Landscape Character Types inland beyond this line, as indicated.

Character Types and Areas
East Gippsland Shire

date | Jan / 06 revision | 01 client | Dept. of Sustainability & Environment





**Figure 1: Coastal Landscape Character Areas
(East Gippsland Shire)**



6.1 Gippsland Lakes Plains



6.2 Ninety Mile Coast



7.1 Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland



7.2 Ewing Morass Forest Coast



7.3 Snowy River Floodplains



7.4 Cape Conran Coast



7.5 Croajingolong Coast



7.6 Mallacoota Inlet and Coast



1.3 Key Features

The key features of the coastal landscapes of the East Gippsland Shire include:

- Low-lying, flat topography adjoining extensive inland lake system in the west of the Shire. Sharply undulating topography in the north and east of the Shire.
- In the south-east of the Shire, coastal character is wild and natural with towns and rural areas substantially buffered by an undeveloped coastal edge, while in the south-west of the Shire the coastal character is dominated by the eastern extremity of the Ninety Mile Beach sand dunes and native vegetation.
- Extensive lakes and waterbodies including the Snowy River and Lake Corringale.
- Steep vegetated escarpments to Lake King, Lake Tyers and the Ninety Mile Coast.
- Indigenous native vegetation throughout with large expanses of intact, low coastal and wetland vegetation.
- Diverse vegetation pattern including rolling pastures and wet forest in reserves, riparian strips and at roadsides.
- An intact bushland character with minor rural uses bounded by native forest.
- Traditional tourism and recreation locations (fishing and four-wheel-driving).
- Landmark coastal features including Gabo Island, Point Hicks, large mobile sand dunes and inlets.

1.4 Landscape Characteristics

A municipal aerial photo and topographic map which follow this section illustrate the following landscape character elements that can be summarised as follows for the East Gippsland Shire:

Landform

The topography within the coastal region of the Shire is generally flat to undulating at the coastal edge, with sandy beaches and low to medium sized dunes. The hinterland is mostly undulating with some areas of deeply dissected near-coastal regions. Sandy beaches and dunes are in some places backed by interdunal depressions and rocky headlands. The area surrounding Mallacoota Inlet also contains some steep topography.

Waterform

There are a number of waterbodies along the coastline of East Gippsland including Lake Victoria, Lake King, Lake Tyers, Lake Corringale, Sydenham Inlet and Mallacoota Inlet. Just behind the coast at Ninety Mile Beach is an extensive marsh area which empties into Lake Corringale in the adjacent Snowy River Estuary. The Snowy River is a highly significant and important landscape feature that widens to a significant coastal brackish estuary at Marlo. Numerous small and medium-sized watercourses occur, the largest being Mississippi Creek that enters North Arm near Lakes Entrance and the Tambo. At the coastal edge the wild seas of the Bass Strait and the Tasman Sea are defining features.

Vegetation

Although land outside reserved parkland has been substantially cleared for pasture, elements of the pre-European vegetation remain, including dune scrubs, coastal tussock grasslands and healthy woodlands. In pastoral areas linear vegetation features are frequent and include indigenous remnants along roadsides and exotic shelterbelts. Along the coastal edge, only a few areas of mobile sand dunes and small pastoral land holdings are devoid of vegetation.



There are also some areas of lowland forest, open forest with shrubby or heathy understorey and grassy woodlands.

Land Use

A large portion of the East Gippsland Shire is set aside for nature conservation in Croajingolong National Park and various regional and coastal parks. Where there is private land, particularly around settlements, it is generally used for residential / holiday residential. The flat plains and other areas of the Shire are predominantly used for cattle grazing and pasture as well as productive forestry. Small settlements and infrastructure are scattered loosely throughout the Shire.

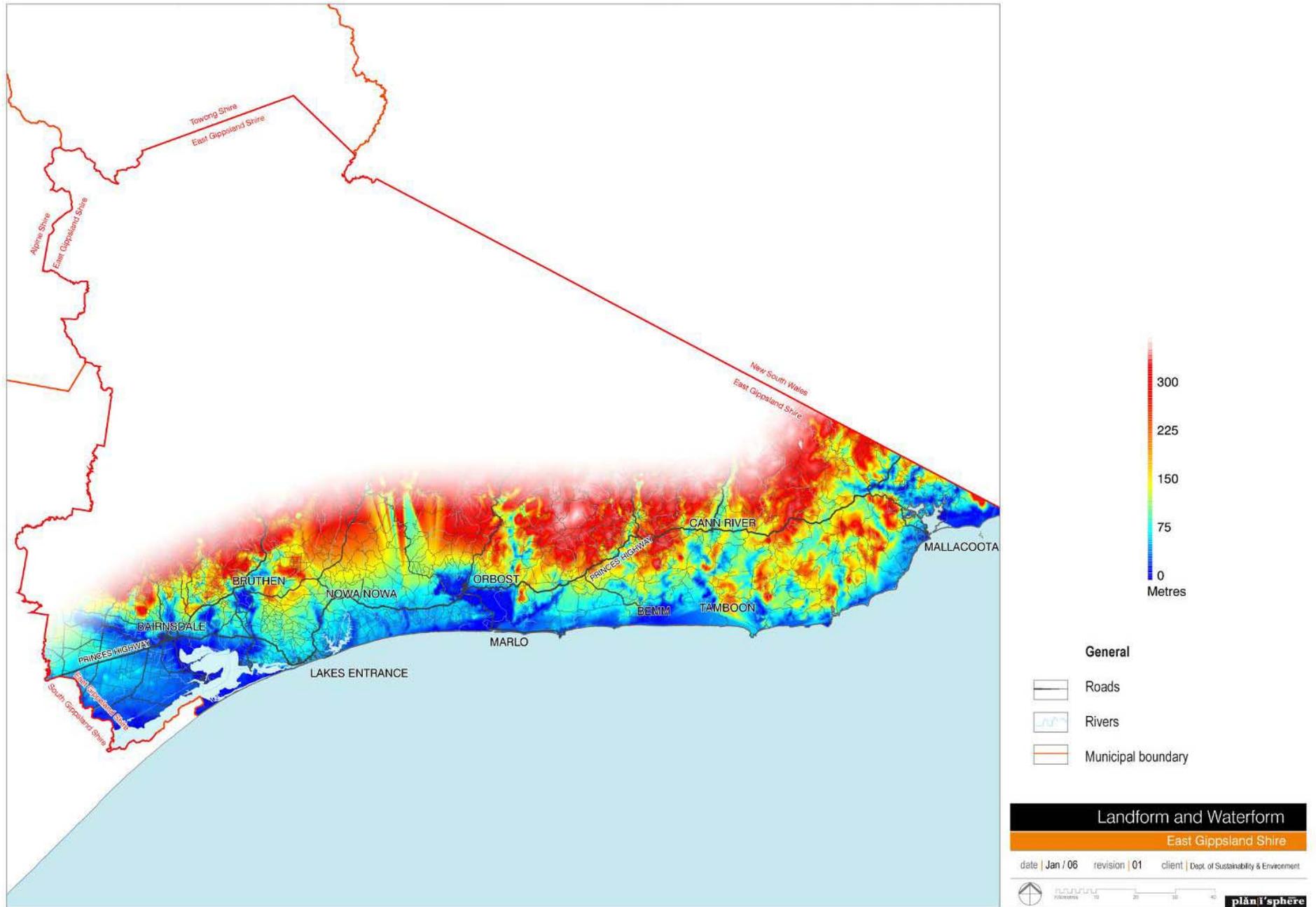


- General**
- Roads
 - Rivers
 - Municipal boundary

Aerial Photograph
East Gippsland Shire

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1.5 Settlements

The focus of this study is the landscape between settlements. However, the following townships have been assessed at a broad scale in relation to their landscape character and relationship to the surrounding landform:

- Paynesville
- Lakes Entrance
- Metung
- Orbost
- Marlo
- Bemm River
- Mallacoota

These assessments and landscape management guidelines in relation to their future management are included in the appended ***Character Area Analysis Papers***.

1.6 Pattern of Viewing

There are a number of key viewing locations within the large coastal region of the shire, including the Princes Highway, Point Hicks, Genoa Peak, Mount Everard, Rame Head, as well as townships and coastal recreation nodes throughout. There are also a number of formal lookouts at selected locations that provide long-distance views. The township and inlet at Mallacoota provides an important viewing location with extensive views across the inlet to the Howe Range. Other important and scenic views include long views along Ninety Mile Beach, views along the wild and unbuilt coastline, and across water bodies and inlets. The vegetation and topography of the Shire often contains or filter views, with incised valleys and roadside vegetation allowing only occasional glimpses.

1.7 Implications for this Study

Landscape character is a key component of the Landscape Management Framework and a major input to various aspects of significance, change and the development of landscape management guidelines.

The Character Areas form the basis for describing the coastal character of the shire at a detailed level. It is from this underlying character that guidelines for appropriate development in the landscape can be derived. In each Character Area Analysis Paper the preferred future character and landscape management objectives and guidelines have been prepared to guide development decisions within the coastal areas of the shire.

The landscape character and pattern of viewing also help to identify the landscape features that are sensitive to change (this is expanded in Chapter 4 of this report).



2. Community Values

2.1 Community Questionnaire

At the outset of the project, a questionnaire was distributed throughout the study area. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine which areas of the coast are special to the Victorian community, what changes are occurring in coastal landscapes according to local people, and whether the community likes or dislikes those changes. Specifically, the questions included:

1. *What is special or significant about the landscape of the Victorian coast?*
2. *Is there one place on the Victorian coast that you think is particularly special or significant?*
3. *What are the features of that place that make it special or significant?*
4. *What changes have you noticed that are occurring along the coast? Are these positive or negative changes?*
5. *Is there one place on the Victorian coast that you think is unattractive or spoiled? Please describe?*

Respondents were asked which town they live in (or are closest to), and whether they represented one or more of the following groups:

- Local resident
- Land care / environment / coast care group
- Indigenous community
- Primary production / farming
- Other (please specify)

This allowed the returned questionnaires to be sorted into regional and municipal areas. A copy of the questionnaire and a summary table of all responses are appended to the **Background Report**. Over 160 responses were received.

Findings

Positive Features and Significant Places

Local residents noted that positive features of the coastal landscapes of the East Gippsland Shire include the remoteness and lack of human impact, the wilderness, sand dunes, pristine beaches, lakes, bushwalks, sandy beaches, swampland, coastal landforms, large vegetated sand dunes, views of the Howe Ranges and Gabo Island and the good offering of recreational activities.

The broader community identified Ninety Mile Beach, Lake Tyers and surrounds, the Snowy River Estuary, Cape Conran, Marlo to Cape Conran coastline, Croajingolong National Park, the beaches at Mallacoota, Wingan Inlet and Bastion Point as significant places within the shire.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

The local community noted that negative changes that have occurred to the coastal landscapes of the shire include intensive development, loss of vegetation, erosion, privatisation of coastal areas, industrial areas along the coast, overdevelopment of the foreshore, development on cliff tops and overuse of areas around Lakes Entrance.

The wider community identified Lakes Entrance, the Gippsland Lakes, Metung and the temperate rainforest at Marlo as places that have been spoiled by multi-storey buildings, high levels of pollution, mismanagement and invasive weeds.

2.2 Community Photographic Exercise

A community photographic exercise was also undertaken as part of the study, to provide an insight into the local community's values in relation to scenery and landscapes, and to gain an understanding of which landscapes the local community believe are significant and, most importantly, what makes them significant.



Cameras were distributed on a regional, as opposed to municipal, basis, and though the results were not always specific to the East Gippsland Shire, the types of landscapes that were photographed and the explanations as to why, provide useful information for the future management of coastal landscapes locally.

Five disposable cameras were distributed to the following groups in the Gippsland Region:

- Friends of Walkerville
- Prom Coast Tourism
- Friends of the Prom
- Venus Bay Community Group
- Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (Cultural Heritage Program)

A photographic survey form accompanied the disposable cameras so that participants could write explanatory notes to accompany the photos. As part of the exercise, participants were asked to include photos that demonstrated each of the following:

- A. One photo from one place where they would take a visitor to show them the landscape of their area.
- B. One photo of a feature, place or view that they think is *significant* in their landscape and why they think it is significant.
- C. One photo of something they think is *scenic* or *beautiful* in their area and what makes it scenic or beautiful.
- D. One photo of a feature, place or view that they think is *unattractive* or *spoiled* and why they think it is unattractive or spoiled.

For the remaining photos, participants were asked to take photos of landscapes they liked or disliked, and explain why.

A copy of the photographic survey form is appended to the **Background Report**. A selection of the photographs taken by participants can be found in the **State Overview Report**.

Findings

Following is a summary of the findings from the community photographic exercise in the Gippsland Region.

One photo from one place where they would take a visitor to show them the landscape of their area

Photographs taken in response to where participants would take a visitor generally corresponded with a location that provides a general overview of the landscape in the area, featuring scenic views and/or a well known landscape feature.

One photo of a feature, place or view that they think is *significant* in their landscape and why they think it is significant

Participant responses correlated mostly with photographs of locations that are scenically beautiful, are picturesque, or have social, cultural or environmental significance.

One photo of something they think is *scenic* or *beautiful* in their area and what makes it scenic or beautiful

Participants chose scenic and beautiful locations based on the 'uniqueness' of the area, views, and the presence of environmental qualities particularly birdlife.

One photo of a feature, place or view that they think is *unattractive* or *spoiled* and why they think it is unattractive or spoiled

Photographs of locations that participants felt were unattractive or spoiled were chosen for a number of reasons, predominantly relating to human impacts on the landscape. Some of the issues raised have the potential to be managed whereas others relate to more permanent impacts on the landscape.



Like and Dislikes

The factors that participants liked about particular landscapes were related to locations that are 'natural' or unaffected by human impacts, have a variety of landscape features, and include views to significant landscapes. Generally, landscapes that were considered to be negatively affected by human activity were the least liked. These included landscapes where structures ruin views or the environment has been severely degraded.

These findings from the community photographic exercise, and in particular the 'reasons for significance' proved useful in determining the significance criterion and methodology as outlined in Chapter 3 of this report.

2.3 Significant Landscapes Brochure

Following feedback from the community questionnaire and community photographic exercise, and combined with background research and field survey work, a map was developed that was the 'first go' at identifying the most significant coastal landscapes within the Gippsland Region.

The map was distributed throughout the Gippsland Region as a brochure seeking community input to further refine the preliminary significance areas shown on the map. As part of the exercise, the community was asked the following questions:

- *Do you agree that the landscapes shaded on the map are the most significant?*
- *Are there areas we have missed? If so, what makes the place (or places) significant to you?*
- *Are too many areas identified or are some areas too large? Should some be deleted?*

Again, the exercise was conducted at a regional, as opposed to municipal, level. However, as the summary of the findings below indicates, a number of

significant coastal landscapes within the East Gippsland Shire were identified and considered by the community.

The significance brochure for the Gippsland Region is appended to the **Background Report**.

Findings

Forty two responses were received from the Gippsland Region.

Approximately 50% of respondents agreed with the areas highlighted on the Significance Map, however, many respondents commented that certain areas should be added to the map.

Those respondents who disagreed with the areas highlighted on the Significance Map generally did so because they felt that either certain areas were missing or not enough areas had been included. Some of these respondents suggested that the entire coast should be highlighted as significant.

Only three respondents felt that the areas highlighted were sufficient and did not request further areas to be added.

Many people suggested that areas should be added on the basis of their environmental or historical values, rather than visual landscape qualities. Many respondents suggested areas based on their significance as animal habitats or historical sites.

Several additional potentially significant areas were suggested by the community for inclusion however they were excluded from further analysis because they are townships, or are areas of public land such as State or National Parks.

A summary table of all community responses is appended to the **Background Report**.



2.4 Other Identified Values

Established values relating to landscape were also determined from a variety of other sources, including:

- Existing surveys and research (e.g. Victorian Coastal Council Market research)
- Quantitative perceptions studies from other locations (e.g. Great Ocean Road Region and South Australia)
- Other evidence for valued landscapes (e.g. artistic inspiration, tourism brochures, National Trust landscapes etc.)

Within the East Gippsland Shire, the following established valued landscapes are of particular note:

- The Gippsland Lakes are listed by the National Trust for being a unique estuarine environment and valued recreational resource, described in The Lakes National Park and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park Management Plans as diverse and undisturbed with spectacular views and extensive coastal dune systems; identified in the Regional Forest Agreement (CRA) for providing a scenic backdrop to coastal townships and main tourist roads; identified as internationally significant wetland system by the Ramsar Convention; identified as a significant regional landscape by the South Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Policy (cl22.12); and described in Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast as extensive lakes and dunes with outstanding scenic quality.
- The area also has high Aboriginal significance with extensive known occurrences of Aboriginal heritage sites throughout, particularly around the Gippsland Lakes and at the coastal edge.
- Numerous historic coastal landscape features including Boole Poole peninsula and the artificial outlet to the sea at Lakes Entrance.
- High tourism and recreation visitation, and the iconic image of the coastal lakes landscape at Lakes Entrance.
- Lake Tyers – Lake Bulga Cultural Landscape is listed by the National Trust for demonstrating historic values and natural beauty and identified as a significant regional landscape in the East Gippsland Planning Scheme.
- *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast* describes the coastal areas of the shire as being of outstanding scenic quality and requiring special landscape protection to ensure development does not impact on landscape values. It is also noted for the outstanding scenic quality of coastal bluffs, and coastal and inland waterforms.
- The Snowy River is listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic and cultural value.
- Marlo to Cape Conran Coastline is listed on the Register of the National Estate for ocean beaches, rugged rocky headlands and dry eucalypt forests.
- East Gippsland Coastal Streams Catchment Area listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic / cultural value.
- Bemm River is listed in the Heritage Rivers Act for scenic / cultural value.
- The Croajingolong National Park Management Plan identifies spectacular views of the pristine coastal environment and associated landforms across Mallacoota Inlet to the Howe Range as particularly significant
- The Croajingolong National Park is one of the most significant conservation reserves in Victoria, and is one of the State's three Biosphere Reserves.
- The entire National Park is known to have had history of occupation by reasonably large populations of Koori people, who most probably concentrated around the inlets, estuaries and wetlands of the present Park.
- Historic built form landscape features including the Point Hicks Light Station are listed by Heritage Victoria. Mallacoota Township and Inlet are listed by the National Trust for diversity of unique intact natural and scenic landscapes. Croajingolong National Park is listed by the National Trust for diversity of unique intact natural and scenic landscapes and is also on the



Register of the National Estate for diversity of flora and fauna and unique landforms.

- East Gippsland Coastal Streams Catchment Area listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic / cultural value.

2.5 Implications for this Study

The identification of community values about coastal landscapes allowed the study team to refine the methodology for assessing the significance of landscapes, including formulation of the significance criterion and supporting evidence categories. The level of importance attributed by the community to 'natural' or 'untouched' landscapes was of particular note, and has been included in the significance criterion.

The results of the work on landscape significance are contained in the following chapter.

Local community knowledge also helped in refining and finalising the landscape Character Types and Character Areas, and feedback regarding positive and negative changes in the landscape was considered when developing the Landscape Management Guidelines.



3. Landscape Significance

3.1 Introduction

The interface between the land and the sea is one of the most important manifestations of a landscape 'edge' – the boundary between two landscape types – as referred to in the 'significance criterion' (detailed later in this chapter). The coastline is expressed topographically as beaches, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, estuaries and other important and highly valued landscape features, most if not all of which could be considered visually significant in their local context at least. In fact, when any stretch of coastline is considered in comparison with its inland hinterland, it is likely to be judged significant. Therefore it has been concluded as part of this study that every non-urban part of the Victorian coast is at least locally significant. The response to the Significance Brochure provides evidence that there is widespread community support for this judgement.

3.2 Local, Regional and State Significance

This Study has assessed the landscape significance of each non-urban part of the coast, considered in relation to every other stretch of coast. Relative significance is important because it was a factor in considering whether additional controls on development were needed – in other words, whether more classes of development should require a permit, and whether more aspects of a development should be regulated.

This determination of whether additional controls were required was initiated by applying the Landscape Management Framework, which is explained in detail in the **Background Report**, and summarised in the introduction of this report. Recommended additional controls are outlined in detail in each of the **Municipal Implementation Toolkits** prepared as part of this study.

The Study has concluded that every coastal landscape designated as having regional or state significance, other than national or state parks, should be recognised by a Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).

SLOs are the appropriate planning tool to protect landscapes of significance. Some Councils have already protected landscapes in this way, and others may seek to do so in the future. The primary focus of this study has been on identifying and protecting landscapes considered to be of regional and state significance.

It should be noted that although some coastal landscapes are potentially nationally significant, it was concluded that a significance rating above state significance would be difficult to justify, given the state context of this Study.

3.3 Visual Significance

A single criterion has been used to assess whether a landscape is visually significant for the purposes of this study:

The landscape is significant for its visual qualities, including landform features, views, edges or contrasts, and for its predominantly natural or undeveloped character, in which development is absent or clearly subordinate to natural landscape characteristics.

Visual significance has been determined with reference to the 'landscape components' referred to in the criterion: landform features; views; edges or contrasts; and natural or undeveloped character. These have been rated as having moderate, high or exceptional visual qualities, as shown below:

Landform Features

A topographical feature or landmark such as a headland or a volcanic cone that provides contrast with the surrounding landscape.



	Moderate Visual Qualities	High Visual Qualities	Exceptional Visual Qualities
	← = =	= = =	= = →
Landform features	If one or more of the landscape components is rated as having moderate visual qualities, then the landscape is considered to be of Local Significance . NB: It is considered that every non-urban part of the Victorian coastline is of at least Local Significance . Therefore every landscape will have a minimum of one or more visual significance categories rated as having at least moderate visual qualities.	If one or more of the landscape components is rated as having high visual qualities, then the landscape is considered to be of Regional Significance .	If one or more of the landscape components is rated as having exceptional visual qualities, then the landscape is considered to be of State Significance .
Views			
Edges or contrasts			
Natural or undeveloped character			
Supporting Evidence	Further confirmed by supporting evidence.	Further confirmed by supporting evidence.	Further confirmed by supporting evidence.
Level of Significance	Local	Regional	State

3.5 Supporting Evidence

The level of significance was further confirmed by consideration of the 'supporting evidence' (see table) categories, though supporting evidence did not contribute to determining the levels of visual significance. The supporting evidence comprised other elements, as opposed to visual qualities, that supported, but did not determine, in its own right, a landscape's significance. The assessment of supporting evidence for landscapes classified as having

regional or state significance is summarised in the *Supporting Evidence Assessment Tables* appended to the **Background Report**. The supporting evidence categories were:

Exemplar landscape: How representative is the landscape of a landscape character type?

Scarce landscape: How uncommon, rare or endangered is the landscape character type or area?

Iconic landscape: Is the landscape instantly recognisable as a place that represents the valued qualities of the Victorian coast? *Example sources: Artworks, tourism brochures, other publications etc.*

Documented cultural / heritage value: Does the landscape have documented cultural / heritage value? *Example sources: Local planning scheme Heritage Overlay, AAV register, Victorian Heritage Register, Register of the National Estate, National Trust Register etc.*

Documented environmental value: Does the landscape have documented environmental value? *Example sources: Local planning scheme Environmental Significance Overlay, Ramsar Convention etc.*

Established social / community value: Does the landscape have established social / community value?

Visitor attraction: How important is the landscape as a visitor destination?

3.6 Significant Landscapes

The significant coastal landscapes of the East Gippsland Shire are shown on Map 4, at a regional scale.

Statements of Significance have been prepared for these landscapes where they are of regional significance or higher.

The intended purpose and use of the Significance Statements is:

- As a complete statement of the values that make the landscape significant.



- Along with the 'Significance Assessment', able to be used to justify the significance and significance level of the landscape, as well as the use of the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO), where relevant.
- Able to form the first part of the SLO Schedule for that landscape (i.e. Statement of nature and key elements of landscape), followed by the landscape character objective(s) to be achieved, permit requirement and decision guidelines.

An explanation as to the structure of the Statements of Significance is contained in both the **State Overview Report** and the **Background Report**.

The significant coastal landscapes and their Statements of Significance are as follows:

State Significance: Ninety Mile Beach (part)

Ninety Mile Beach is the longest stretch of uninterrupted beach in the country and the second longest in the world. This unparalleled linear landscape with its combination of sandy beaches, low dunes, peninsulas, and wetlands is set against the wild seas of Bass Strait, is visually of state significance, and potentially of national significance in that context.

Ninety Mile Beach is protected by a series of official designations - National Park, Wildlife Reserve, and Coastal Park - that recognise the remarkable ecological and scenic values of this area. The landscape is characterised by large swathes of indigenous vegetation including coastal heath, mangroves, and dune grasses, and there are vast ocean views along its entirety.

Ninety Mile Beach is listed by the National Trust as regionally significant, as part of the Gippsland Lakes region. Due to its iconic landscape features and extent, Ninety Mile Beach is an international visitor destination, featuring strongly in Victoria's tourism promotion. Lake Reeve is a bird habitat of international importance that is recognised under the Ramsar Convention, and the area includes Rotamah Island, a bird observatory managed by the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union. The area is also important for its Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, the dunal systems still containing many remnants and evidence of indigenous settlements.

State Significance: Gippsland Lakes (part)

The Gippsland Lakes are of state significance as a unique estuarine environment with a network of lakes fringed by Ninety Mile Beach and extensive coastal dune systems.

Lakes Victoria and Wellington are the most prominent water features in this landscape but there is also a collection of islands and small peninsulas that contribute to its visual significance. It is the interplay of these features and their vegetated and undeveloped backdrop that make this landscape a valued scenic resource and Victorian icon.

As well as its visual qualities, also recognised by the National Trust, this landscape contains some of the most significant and well known environmental and recreational areas in the state. The Ramsar Convention notes this landscape as a wetland system of international significance, and there is a diverse array of flora and fauna, including many endangered species. There are some 60 sites of scientific interest in the area, including sites of geological and geomorphologic significance associated with the sand barriers that have led to the formation of the Gippsland Lakes. The Gippsland Lakes are a highly significant Aboriginal cultural landscape. Evidence of traditional indigenous occupation of this unique system of waterways is commonplace and is found in the form of shell middens, flaked stone artefacts, scarred trees and other traditionally significant sites and places.

Regional Significance: Metung and Lakes Entrance Hills

The Metung Hills provide a scenic backdrop to the settlement of Metung and to the expansive waters of Lake King. This prominent series of hills stretches to the township of Lakes Entrance, where they are an important part of the town's landscape setting. The Metung and Lakes Entrance Hills are visually of regional significance.

The hills provide a distinctive topographic edge to the surrounding lakes and plains, and to the built form of the settlements. These escarpments provide fine vistas out to sea and along the Ninety Mile Beach, and Jemmy's Point



Lookout is a famous high point from which to admire the coastline and the ocean beyond. The hills have a largely natural character and a native vegetation cover that is biologically significant.

The views from the Metung and Lakes Entrance Hills feature on many of Victoria's tourist publications and attract visitors from across the state. The townships of Metung and Lakes Entrance are bases for recreation activities such as surfing, boating and fishing, and are also notable for their other landscape elements, including the ocean, lakes, islands and inlets.

Regional Significance: Lake Tyers and Surrounds

Lake Tyers is a complex inland water body with scenic landscape qualities of regional significance.

The lake is contained by steep natural escarpments, giving the landscape a dramatic edge that contrasts with the flat plains around Lake Tyers Beach. There are expansive views along the Ninety Mile Beach and to the Gippsland Lakes from high points along the escarpments.

The area attracts visitors from across the state for its natural beauty and scenic views, as well as for its recreation opportunities. The Register of the National Estate recognises the Aboriginal heritage values of this landscape, particularly as the site of the Lake Tyers Aboriginal mission and reserved land. The National Trust endorses this as a landscape that "... demonstrates the colonisation process of Gippsland, including the displacement of the Kurnai people".

Regional Significance: Snowy River Estuary and Surrounds

The Snowy River Estuary is a floodplain landscape of regional significance that contrasts with the rugged and remote coastlines of Ninety Mile Beach and Croajingolong National Park.

It is a flat alluvial floodplain that has been modified for pasture and horticulture, but which culminates in a scenic brackish estuary at Lake Corringale. The

natural features of Lake Corringale contrast with the surrounding farmland, and the floodplain itself is a visual point of difference from the surrounding wilder and more natural coastal landscapes.

The Snowy River's significance is recognised by the Register of the National Estate and the Heritage Rivers Act. The former lists the geological importance of the Snowy River entrance, and the latter recognises its high scenic and cultural value.

State Significance: Cape Conran Coast

The Cape Conran coast between Marlo and Bemm River is a wild natural coastline of ocean beaches and rocky headlands. It has outstanding scenic qualities of state significance.

The landscape features a combination of ocean beaches backed by dry eucalypt forests with occasional rocky headlands. The prominent sedimentary rock formations of Pearl Point contrast with the colourful granites of Cape Conran. This is a wild and natural coastline with scenic ocean views, and a hinterland of dry sclerophyll forests, with coastal heaths and swamps near the coastal edge.

The natural values of this landscape are recognised by the National Estate and through designation of Cape Conran as a Coastal Park. Visitors from across the state are attracted to the area for its beaches, but also for its inland features such as the Bemm and Yeerung Rivers, and Dock Inlet – a beautiful and remote freshwater lagoon locked behind a coastal dune barrier.

State Significance: Croajingolong Coast

The Croajingolong coastline is an untouched coastal wilderness that has been designated as a National Park, and is of national significance for its visual landscape qualities.

This landscape has outstanding natural values, and is characterised by forested hills that run into the sea. There is a diversity of landforms within the National Park including coastal lakes, estuaries and tidal inlets, large mobile



sand dunes, and rugged cliffs. Enhancing the coastal area are notable landmarks including historic Point Hicks and Gabo Island and the hinterland, with its undisturbed rivers and water catchments.

The Croajingolong coastline also has outstanding ecological significance for its fauna and flora. There are over 1,000 native plant species in the National Park, including over 90 types of orchids. There are 43 species of threatened native fauna, including the Ground Parrot and the Eastern Bristle Bird, and the area also contains some of the state's richest amphibian habitats. The landscape is of major significance in Victoria for its Aboriginal cultural heritage, and Point Hicks has historical significance as the first sighting of the eastern mainland by Captain Cook's *Endeavour* in 1770.

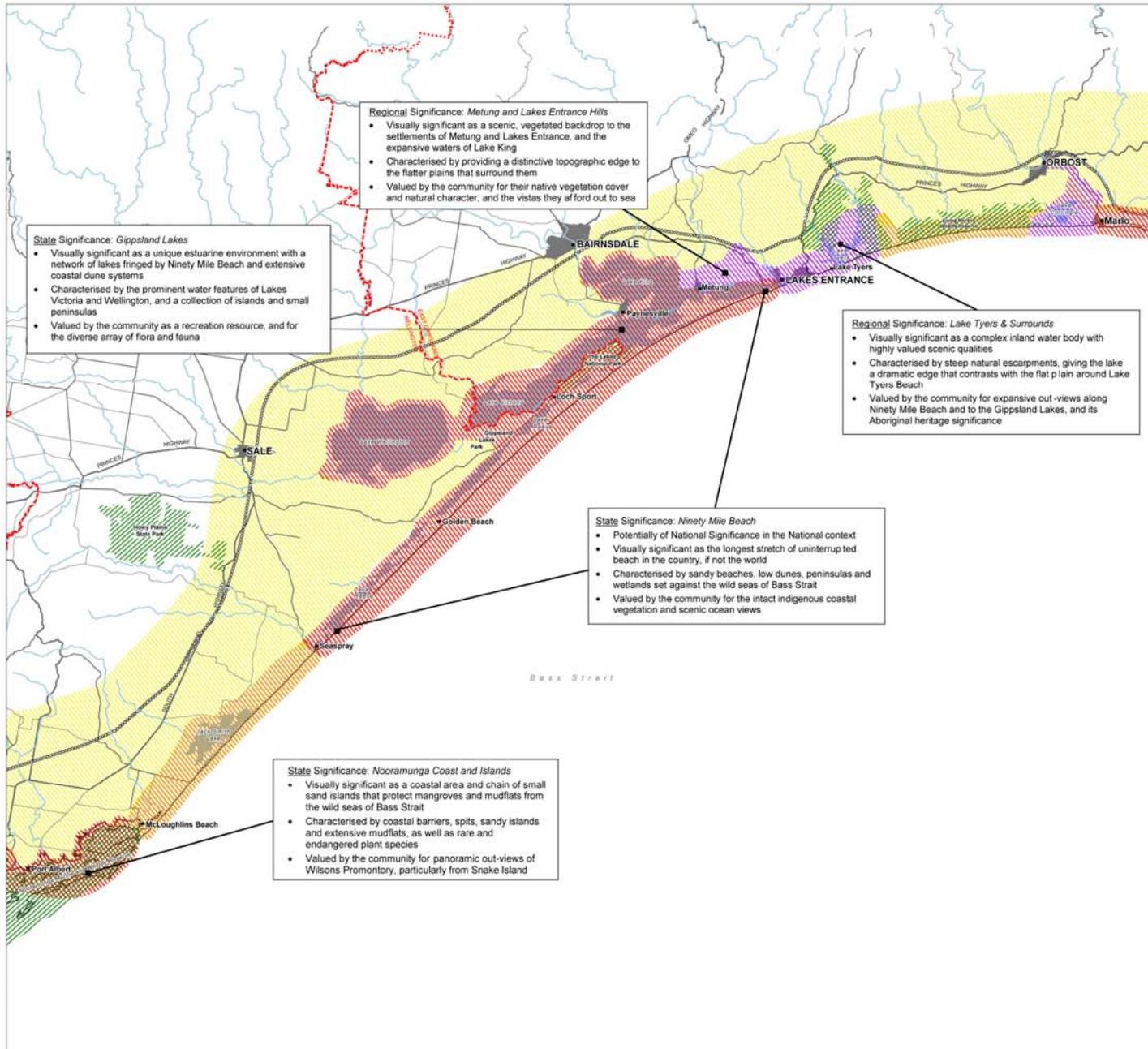
State Significance: Mallacoota Inlet and Surrounds

Mallacoota Inlet is an intricate inland waterbody with a backdrop of densely vegetated hills that come right down to the sea. Its landscape and scenic qualities are of state significance.

The inlet is the dominant feature of the landscape but its context is integral to its visual significance. The small coastal township of Mallacoota overlooks the inlet and is sheltered from the wild seas of the Tasman Sea by high coastal sand dunes. The deeply dissected surrounding ranges are cloaked in coastal sclerophyll forests, with temperate rainforests in the more enclosed valleys. A variety of views are experienced from within the landscape, including wide ocean views from the beaches, and an outlook across the inlet to a forested mountain backdrop, from the township.

Mallacoota Inlet is a popular holiday destination for visitors from across Victoria and New South Wales. Apart from its notable scenic qualities, it offers a range of recreational activities including snorkelling, rock pooling, walking, fishing, nature study, and artistic pursuits. The landscape is listed by the National Trust for its scenic qualities and is on the Register of the National Estate for its Aboriginal heritage values including occupation sites, ceremonial sites, and middens.

A table showing the 'evolution' of these significant landscapes (from the identification of landscapes on the Significance Brochure to proposed SLOs) is appended to the ***Background Report***.



Legend

- Study Area
- Inland extent of field survey / proposed Local Policy
All of the area between this line and the coast is proposed to be managed with development guidelines and policy.
- Coastal, National and State Parks
Other kinds of public parkland and conservation reserve have been taken into account but do not appear on this map.
- Roads
- Watercourse
- Waterbody
- Municipal Boundary
- Settlements

Landscape Significance

- Local Significance
It has been determined that every part of the Victorian Coast is at least locally significant.
- Regional Significance
- State Significance

The delineation of areas of significance on this map is indicative and approximate only. Due to the small scale of this map the delineation of significance continues across the urban areas of settlements, however urban areas are excluded from the scope and recommendations of this study.

The map depicts areas of visual landscape significance. Other aspects of significance, eg. environmental, cultural heritage etc. have been considered, but have not contributed to determining the levels of significance.

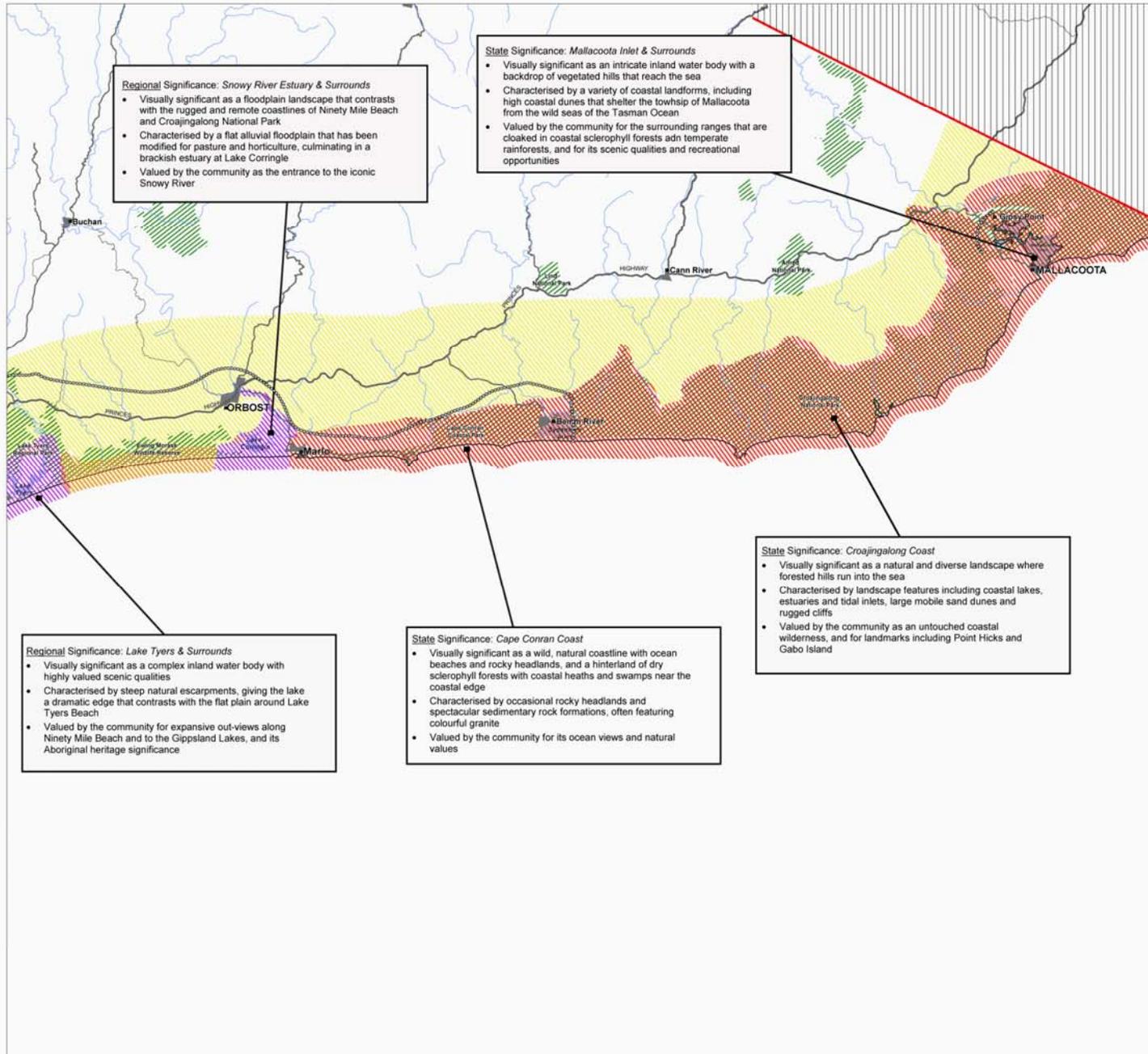
All areas of regional and state significance (outside National and State parks) are recommended for inclusion in the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO). Maps showing detailed proposed SLO boundaries can be found in the relevant Municipal Implementation Toolkit.



Significant Coastal Landscapes

Gippsland Region (Part 2)

date | April / 06 revision | 02 client | Department of Sustainability and Environment



Legend

- Study Area
- Inland extent of field survey / proposed Local Policy
All of the area between this line and the coast is proposed to be managed with development guidelines and policy.
- Coastal, National and State Parks
Other kinds of public parkland and conservation reserve have been taken into account but do not appear on this map.
- Roads
- Watercourse
- Waterbody
- Municipal Boundary
- Not in Study Area (Outside State Border)
- Settlements

Landscape Significance

- Local Significance
It has been determined that every part of the Victorian Coast is at least locally significant.
- Regional Significance
- State Significance

The delineation of areas of significance on this map is indicative and approximate only. Due to the small scale of this map the delineation of significance continues across the urban areas of settlements, however urban areas are excluded from the scope and recommendations of this study.

The map depicts areas of visual landscape significance. Other aspects of significance, eg. environmental, cultural heritage etc. have been considered, but have not contributed to determining the levels of significance.

All areas of regional and state significance [outside National and State parks] are recommended for inclusion in the Significant Landscape Overlay [SLO]. Maps showing detailed proposed SLO boundaries can be found in the relevant Municipal Implementation Toolkit.

0 4 8 kilometres

Significant Coastal Landscapes
Gippsland Region (Part 3)

date | April / 06 revision | 02 client | Department of Sustainability and Environment



3.7 Implications for this Study

The landscapes identified as *significant* were a major input to the development of planning scheme and other recommendations i.e. the greater the significance of an area, the more likely it was that additional statutory controls were considered, although other factors, such as the adequacy of existing planning scheme provisions and the extent to which the landscape was under threat, were also taken into account.

This process is articulated in the 'landscape framework' that is explained in detail in the **Background Report** and is summarised in the introduction to this report. The outstanding input to the landscape framework 'formula' (landscape *change*) is discussed in the following chapter.



4. Change in the Landscape

Landscape character is a product of, and is affected by, changes that occur within the landscape. The aim of this study is to manage the *rate*, *scale* and *type* of landscape change, in accordance with the desires for the character of the landscape into the future.

Some types of change are detrimental to both the character and what residents and visitors expect or desire for the future of that landscape e.g. a large industrial development within a scenic vista. Other changes contribute to the character e.g. variations to patterns and colours in natural and agricultural landscapes across seasons. Others changes still, are the product of efforts by members of the community to improve landscapes e.g. revegetation of degraded sites.

This study has analysed anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape for each Character Area within the East Gippsland Shire, and these are addressed in detail in the **Character Area Analysis Papers**. However, at a municipal level it is relevant to review both the development pattern occurring (or expected to occur) across the shire, and the relative sensitivity of different types of landscapes to developments and ongoing landscape changes. These are outlined in the following sections of this chapter.

4.1 Municipal Landscape Change

Ongoing changes to the landscape of the East Gippsland Shire include:

- Active revegetation of degraded landscapes in parts.
- Ongoing and evolving agricultural practices throughout rural areas.
- Naturally dynamic coastal and lake landforms, as well as seasonal inundation.
- Ongoing park management works and visitor infrastructure management / upgrades.
- Rehabilitation of lakes and waterways by landowners / community groups.

- Active forestry including clear-felling and plantation throughout State Forests.
- Clearing of vegetation around houses near the Mallacoota Inlet for views.

Drivers of landscape change in the shire include:

- The population of the East Gippsland Shire is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years. The natural beauty and boating opportunities in and around the shire are driving factors for potential new settlers (e.g. from metropolitan Melbourne).
- Increased tourism visitation.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Some constraints on development at the lake / coastal interface is foreshadowed owing to storm-surge and flooding risks, particularly as a result of global warming.
- Scope for the modest expansion of some settlements within the shire.
- Scope for potential growth in the tourism sector for some townships.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the East Gippsland Shire include:

- Pressure for dwellings along lake and waterway edges and other locations offering coastal / lakes views
- Large-scale residential/recreational orientated developments.
- Rural living and lifestyle developments outside settlements in previously pastoral land.
- Enhanced recreation, tourism and visitation infrastructure.
- Expansion of the settlement of Mallacoota with new dwellings and residential estates being proposed and developed on previously rural slopes overlooking Mallacoota Inlet.



4.2 Sensitivity to Change

The 'sensitivity to change' of landscapes relates to their ability to absorb different types of development, without altering the character or significance of the landscape. Sensitivity is a factor of the environmental and physical characteristics (e.g. vegetation and topography), the types of change or development likely to occur, and from where and how a landscape is viewed. For example, in the case of residential development, in landscapes of varied topography and vegetation, dwellings can be sited among vegetation, or nestled into slopes without substantially altering the valued landscape character, therefore making such landscapes 'less sensitive'. On the other hand, in a flat open landscape, or steeply sloping vegetated hillside, development of a dwelling would be much more conspicuous, and more likely to impact on character (either by being visible itself or requiring the removal of vegetation). Therefore, these types of landscapes are of 'higher sensitivity'.

The types and locations of landscapes that are most sensitive to development are outlined for each Character Area in the **Character Area Analysis Papers**. This analysis is based on the ability of the landscape to accommodate the developments existing and likely occur in the Character Area. Key inputs to this analysis included the environmental and physical characteristics of the Character Area (e.g. whether there is varying topography which affects visibility, or the type and density of vegetation cover), the existing pattern of viewing, and, broadly, the kinds of landscape changes anticipated.

Apart from the western coastal parts of the shire, many views are contained by the dense native vegetation that is characteristic of the Wilderness Coast. This means that although many landscapes are sensitive to changes such as vegetation removal, the impact of built form is lessened where it can be concealed behind native vegetation. Undeveloped landscapes surrounding waterbodies and watercourses, as well as landscapes visible from roadsides are particularly sensitive to changes such as the introduction of built form or large scale development. Some coastal hinterland areas have also been substantially cleared for rural land uses, making them sensitive to the introduction of built elements, in particular vertical structures. The topography

throughout the shire is varied, but where it is rolling or hilly, built form can be sited lower on slopes to lessen its impact on landscapes.

4.3 Management Considerations

For each coastal landscape Character Area within the East Gippsland Shire, the key issues for managing change in the landscape and possible solutions have been prepared. These are the first step towards developing a *Future Character Directions* statement for each area. The management considerations are outlined in the attached **Character Area Analysis Papers** and can be summarised for the shire as follows:

- Increase indigenous vegetation cover throughout.
- Manage roadsides and key viewing locations by protecting the intact native vegetation cover.
- Utilise screening vegetation and long set backs to avoid visual clutter with built elements.
- Careful management of development throughout the shire is warranted to ensure the undeveloped wilderness character of the coastline and immediate hinterland is maintained.
- Contain settlements and soften their built intrusion into the landscape as seen from their surrounds, through substantial indigenous vegetation as landscaping and appropriate muted colours and materials.
- Avoid large-scale and vertical elements that substantially alter the open pastoral character of rural hinterland areas in the west.
- Large scale infrastructure should be sited out of the coastal viewshed wherever possible.
- Avoid linear infrastructure developments that create landscape 'scarring' throughout vegetated areas.
- Protect the integrity of lakes and waterbodies as substantial natural landforms without dominant built development.
- The areas adjacent to high use recreation areas and access roads, and the more remote and undisturbed parts of Croajingolong National Park require



particular attention to ensure that the natural qualities of the landscape are not impaired. Park management activities, structures and activities on adjacent land have the potential to adversely affect landscape qualities.

- Continue to provide input into management activities on land adjacent to National Parks and State Forest. Private property has the potential to affect landscape values within these areas, in particular access routes on the park boundaries and gravel pits.

4.4 Future Character Directions

A *Future Character Directions* statement has been prepared for each landscape Character Area within the shire. These statements describe the desired directions for managing the rate, scale and type of landscape change appropriate for each area, and reflect both the local community's values and aspirations for that landscape, as well as the study team's assessment of appropriate places for landscape change based on landscape characteristics and sensitivity.

A municipal wide *Future Character Directions* statement has also been prepared, outlining a future vision for all coastal landscapes within the shire:

Along the western coastal edge of the shire, natural landforms will dominate the coastal character with development contained in settlements. The open rural character of the hinterland will be enhanced by increased coverage of native vegetation in stands and corridors throughout. Development near the edges of waterbodies will avoid disturbance to the lake edges and will be low-scale and set back a substantial distance.

In the eastern coastal areas of the shire, extensive forested landscapes with an absence of visible built form will continue to dominate. Existing cleared hinterland areas will develop an increasingly vegetated character, with low scale built form filtered through native forest and indigenous roadside vegetation.

Along the wilderness coastline, management activities and infrastructure will avoid disturbance to natural landscapes while low scale visitor facilities will be

concentrated in nodes as designated through the Croajingolong National Park Management Plan. Development on private land will ensure that views from roads walking trails, the coastline and recreation locations retain a natural and undeveloped wilderness quality.

4.5 Opportunities and Threats

A list of opportunities and threats to achieving the preferred future character of the coastal landscapes of the shire have also been identified. These have been summarised for the shire, based on the detailed opportunities and threats that have been prepared for each Character Area. The list of opportunities and threats for each Character Area contributed to the preparation of the *Landscape Management Objectives and Guidelines*.

Opportunities

- Strengthen vegetation links across cleared landscapes and within townships with the use of indigenous vegetation.
- Protect and enhance native vegetation throughout settlements to soften the intrusion of built form into vistas from adjacent areas and to link the character of built areas with the surrounding natural landscapes.
- Pursue revegetation and restoration of riparian vegetation throughout, especially along the Snowy River.
- Protect and strengthen roadside vegetation.
- Site built form away from key viewing corridors and among retained native forest vegetation to minimise visual intrusion.
- Site developments among rolling topography out of the coastal viewshed.
- Site built form in previously developed areas away from key viewing corridors.
- Investigate potential for low scale infill development in Lakes Entrance and low-scale expansion of Marlo, with new developments screened by vegetation.



Threats

- Large scale developments which dominate natural landscapes.
- Development in or close to scenic natural landscape features, including the wild dune coast, the Snowy River Estuary and Sydenham Inlet.
- Developments including infrastructure which create visible landscape scars through the removal of vegetation, particularly at roadsides or coast or lake edges.
- Uncontrolled expansion of settlements and coastal strip development.
- Subdivision of privately owned bush lots for residential hobby farm developments.
- Uncontrolled rural living and residential development.
- Piecemeal intrusion of built form into natural lake and coast edges.
- Developments visible amongst natural vegetated spits, islands and lake edges outside settlements, especially those viewed from key touring routes (e.g. Princes Highway at Lakes Entrance) and recreation locations (e.g. on the lakes).
- Destruction of environmental and scenic values of riparian vegetation through poor management.
- Loss of extensive and scenic outviews across open rural plains to topographic backdrop (e.g. through inappropriate siting of development close to roads).

4.6 Landscape Management Objectives and Guidelines

Landscape Management Objectives and Guidelines have been prepared for each coastal landscape Character Area within the east Gippsland Shire. These are included in the attached **Character Area Analysis Papers**. The objectives describe how to achieve the Future Character Directions and correlate with a set of more detailed design guidelines prepared to manage

development, control negative change and protect and/or strengthen the valued landscape qualities of the area.

It is intended that the objectives and guidelines be included in local policy. The detailed recommendations in relation to this initiative are included in the *East Gippsland Shire Municipal Implementation Toolkit*. It is also intended that these more detailed, place-based guidelines be used in association with the whole of coast *Best Practice Policies* that have been prepared for all coastal landscapes of Victoria. The Best Practice Policies are included in the **State Overview Report**.

4.7 Implications for this Study

Known development pressures and the relative sensitivity of coastal landscapes to these and other changes are essential factors contributing to the identification of priority areas for additional controls. Where there are changes or pressures that negatively affect landscape character or significance, there is the expectation that there will be some control or management, either indirectly or directly through the planning system.

Future character directions provide a basis from which to manage the rate and scale of landscape change and, along with the landscape management objectives and guidelines, are central to the development of planning scheme provisions.

EXPLANATORY CHARACTER AREA ANALYSIS PAPER



APPENDIX ONE

Character Area Name

A brief description highlighting the overall character, features and views experienced in the Character Area and its location within the study regions. It is derived from the study team's field notes and analysis of background physical data, and aims to capture the valued elements identified by members of the community through the questionnaire and disposable cameras exercise (where relevant). Accompanied by four photos depicting important elements of the Character Area.

Key Features

Short statements identifying elements that make the Character Area distinctive. These are the places, views and features noted in the field survey or highlighted by members of local communities and visitors as the defining characteristics of the landscape. They are the sorts of things that, should they be lost or changed in some way, the Area would not be the same.

Landscape Characteristics

A description of existing landscape characteristics in the Character Area obtained from field notes and background physical data set out under the following headings:

- Landform
- Waterform
- Vegetation
- Land use

Settlements

Settlement name

An overview of the character and setting of key coastal and hinterland settlements in the Character Area. Settlements are often the locations of greatest divergence from the established character and may be under

substantial pressure for further change or expansion. As such the way the settlement sits within the surrounding landscape (including locations of particularly conspicuous development) is described in greater detail in this section. The descriptions also include overall characteristics of each settlement, and discuss the backdrop to viewing from the town. A photo of the settlement is often provided to assist in description.

Pattern of Viewing

A description of how and from where the landscape of the Character Area is viewed and the kinds of views that are experienced. The existing pattern of viewing is defined by the major viewing corridors (e.g. roads, railways, walking tracks, scenic drives), the location of settlements and public use areas, and the occurrence of key viewing opportunities such as lookouts, or 'gateway' views defined by topography.

Types of views are described in terms of landscape features or vistas that draw the eye (e.g. prominent landforms), whether views are open or enclosed (e.g. by vegetation or topography) and the backdrop to viewing. This section also indicates how the Character Area is viewed from adjacent Character Areas.

Community Values

A review of the what members of interested communities **like**, **dislike** and consider **significant** about the landscape of the Character Area. Inputs include:

- Locations or features within the Character Area photographed as part of the community photographic exercise;
- landscapes identified as significant by respondents to the community questionnaire; and,
- the landscape elements described in responses to the community questionnaire or photographic exercise as contributing to either the special or spoilt qualities of landscapes.

Other Identified Values

A list of previously identified values in the Character Area sourced from:

- *National Trust / National Estate listed landscapes;*
- *river listed on the Heritage Rivers Act 1992;*
- *locations identified by the study Reference Groups as important;*
- *locations of high tourism visitation; and,*
- *landscapes identified as particularly valuable for character or aesthetic reasons in secondary sources (e.g. National Park Management Plans, Regional Forest Agreement regional assessments or previous landscape values studies).*

These values are used as an input to the identification of Significant Landscapes in each region.

Landscape Change

Dot point list of anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area resulting from:

- *dynamic and changing landscape features (e.g. evolving coastal landscapes);*
- *existing land use activity (e.g. seasonal variations in agriculture or harvesting of established forestry plantations etc.);*
- *landscape improvement (e.g. revegetation of degraded river valleys);*
- *development pattern (e.g. expansion of townships, increased rural residential living); and*
- *existing state / local government policies likely to affect change (e.g. constraints on type or location of development, release of land for expansion of settlements, policies to encourage development).*

Sensitivity to Change

An assessment of the ability of landscapes within the Character Area to accommodate change without altering the valued characteristics of the Area. This is a professional judgement based on analysis of the environmental and physical characteristics of the Character Area, the types of change or development expected to occur, and the existing pattern of viewing. Sensitivity is rated as high, moderate or low. For example, landscapes less sensitive to residential development might include those in which dwellings can be sited among vegetation, or nestled into slopes of low hillsides without being prominent in the viewed landscape. The level of existing alteration to the landscape is also a factor for consideration.

Existing Policies

A summarised list of State and Local Government policies currently directing landscape management in the Character Area.

Management Considerations

Dot points covering some of the key issues for managing change in the Character Area and possible solutions. This section is the first step toward developing a Future Character Directions statement for the Area.

Future Character Directions

Statements that describe the desired directions for managing the rate, scale and type of landscape change appropriate for the Character Area. It is derived from the community's values and aspirations for the landscape of the Area and the study team's assessment of appropriate places for landscape change based on landscape characteristics and sensitivity. The Future Character Directions statement forms the 'stepping stone' between the existing character description and Landscape Management Objectives for the Character Area.

Opportunities and Threats

A list of opportunities and threats to achieving the future character directions are identified. These build on the landscape change elements outlined above

and aid in the development of Landscape Management Objectives and design guidelines and strategies for managing change in the Character Area.

Landscape Management Objectives

A set of objectives to describe how to achieve the Future Character Directions for range of landscape elements (e.g. roads, vegetation, settlement edges) in the Character Area. These objectives drive the development of more detailed design guidelines and strategies to manage development, control negative change and protect and / or strengthen the valued qualities of the Area.

Landscape Management Guidelines

A table of detailed guidelines and strategies for managing change in the Character Area. Set out in four columns:

Character Element: Lists aspects of the landscape and development that warrant specific consideration (e.g. vegetation, roads, township edges and colours and materials).

Landscape Management Objectives: Copied from previous section. State the intention and desired outcome for that character element.

Response: The preferred method to satisfy the relevant character element objective(s) through appropriate design and siting of development, or strategic actions. Other methods of achieving the relevant objective may also be demonstrated.

Avoid: Statements specify inappropriate actions or design responses.

CHARACTER AREA ANALYSIS PAPERS



APPENDIX TWO

6.1 Gippsland Lakes Plains

Landscape Character Type: Gippsland Plains

Flat to gently undulating mostly pastoral Character Area adjoining the Gippsland Lakes. Large inland waterbodies including Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington are the major landscape features, and the edges of which are locations of increasing pressure for recreational uses and settlements. Very flat topography provides open and expansive views. Although there are few topographic features to break up the expansive plains, scattered vegetation and settlements create points of variation to the character.



Key Features

- Low-lying, flat topography adjoining extensive inland lake system.
- Native vegetation at lake edges providing natural landscape setting in parts.
- Rural character throughout hinterland areas.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – The landform includes extensive lowland coastal and alluvial plains characterised by generally flat to gently undulating terrain. Extensive mud flats adjoin the lakes in parts and dynamic landforms including floodplains and lake edges are a feature.
- **Waterform** – The northern half of the Character Area is dominated by the large waterbodies of Lakes Wellington, King and Victoria forming the largest inland lakes system in Victoria. The lakes are fed by large rivers including the Latrobe, Avon, Nicholson and Tambo, the surrounds of which include extensive areas of seasonally inundated floodplains and mudflats. South and west of Lake Wellington, water features are less extensive with a scattering of farm dams and medium-sized creeks.
- **Vegetation** – Although the Character Area has been substantially cleared for pasture, elements of the pre-European vegetation remain including dune scrubs, coastal tussock grasslands and heathy woodlands. Tea-tree and Banksia woodlands occur nearer to the coast on the south side of Lake Wellington. Linear vegetation features including indigenous remnants along roadsides and some exotic shelterbelts are also a feature.
- **Land use** – The flat plains of this Character Area are extensively used for pasture with some substantial settlements in the northern half (the towns of Sale and Bairnsdale are likely to occur in this Character Area although were not surveyed in this study) while in the south small settlements and infrastructure scattered loosely throughout.

Settlements

Paynesville

This settlement is characterised by contemporary dwellings adjoining natural and man-made waterways. The settlement is separated into three developed areas, the first on the mainland and the man-made Burrabogie Island, another across Newlands Backwater and a third on Raymond Island. The mainland settlements have a largely suburban character and are exposed to views from the lake and adjacent settled areas. However, on Raymond Island a unique, low-scale residential settlement is set amongst native vegetation. Linear development along the lake edge extends for a substantial distance from the two mainland settlement areas, while substantial development pressure has seen expansion inland in new residential estates being developed in open rural land on the approach from Bairnsdale.

Pattern of Viewing

The key viewing opportunities in this Character Area include the South Gippsland and Princes Highways, recreation locations and the lake edges settlements. Views from the Lakes themselves are also important. Open long-range views are available throughout this Character Area. There is very little topographic variety to form the backdrop to viewing except at the northern and eastern edges of the Area where views to rolling hills in adjacent Character Areas are available. Accordingly, the key landscape features including Lakes Wellington and Victoria are largely hidden from view. Nonetheless, open expansive views across water bodies are an important feature of the character.

Community Values

Positive Features

Members of the local community commented that the remoteness and lack of human impact in this Character Area were its most positive features.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

The wider community, however, identified intensive development, loss of vegetation, erosion, privatisation of coastal areas and industrial areas along the coast as negative features and changes occurring in the region.

Significant Landscapes

The Gippsland Lakes were noted in the community survey for natural beauty and views and photographed by participants in the disposable cameras exercise.

Other Identified Values

- The Gippsland Lakes are listed by the National Trust for being a unique estuarine environment and valued recreational resource, described in The Lakes National Park and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park Management Plans as diverse and undisturbed with spectacular views and extensive coastal dune systems; identified in the Regional Forest Agreement (CRA) for providing a scenic backdrop to coastal townships and main tourist roads; identified as internationally significant wetland system by the Ramsar Convention; identified as a significant regional landscape by the South Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Policy (cl22.12); and described in Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast as extensive lakes and dunes with outstanding scenic quality.
- The Character Area also has high Aboriginal significance with extensive known occurrences of Aboriginal heritage sites throughout, particularly around the Gippsland Lakes.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- Naturally dynamic environments at lake edges.
- Revegetation of degraded landscapes and natural regeneration of unproductive pasture.
- Land management works within the Gippsland Lakes Park.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- Migration from cities and inland areas to the coast and increased permanent population in coastal settlements.
- Aging population across East Gippsland and Wellington Shires.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Increased tourism visitation.
- Some constraints on development at the lake / coastal interface is foreshadowed owing to storm-surge and flooding risks, particularly as a result of global warming.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the character area include:

- Pressure to accommodate recreational/residential developments along the shores of Lake Wellington..
- Potential for linear residential sprawl and intensive residential development at the lake edges, particularly Paynesville to Bairnsdale.

Sensitivity to Change

Flat and open topography and a lack of topography and vegetation makes it more difficult to integrate many large-scale and vertical developments. However, many smaller developments can be sited back from viewing opportunities and the edges of the lakes without substantially altering the character. Intact roadside vegetation and slight rises also provide locations of lower sensitivity to change.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.

- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Gippsland Lakes as a significant regional landscape, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity, The Policy also seeks to protect landscapes viewed from the Princes Highway and Bairnsdale-Paynesville Road.
- The Mitchell River Valley at Bairnsdale is identified as a significant heritage precinct under the East Gippsland Shire Heritage Policy (cl22.10) which describes the need for new development to respect the traditional rural character and topography and preserve views, vistas, ridge-line profiles and patterns of subdivision, and minimise the visual impact when viewed from any viewing point or vista and within its context or setting.
- The Wellington Shire Planning Scheme Coastal Land Policy (cl22.01) aims to minimise the impact of human activities on the ecological values of the coastal and lakes environments and sets out policies to contain urban settlements and appropriately design buildings for environmental and visual values.
- The majority of the Character Areas is zoned Rural (RUZ) with large bushland reserves in the south east zoned Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ). The edges of Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington are in the most part zoned Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ) although Rural Zone extends close to the edges of Lake Victoria west of Paynesville and Lake Wellington near Seacombe. Larger settlements in the Character Area are zoned Residential (R1Z), Public Use (PUZ) with large areas of Rural Living (RLZ) on the outskirts of Bairnsdale and Paynesville (including much of Raymond Island).
- In the Wellington Shire part of the Character Area, the Gippsland Lakes and the coastline are covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) which aims to protect the natural beauty of the coastal landscape and protect visual amenity, among other things.
- Many watercourses and lakes are covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (Wellington ESO2 and East Gippsland ESO38, among others) to protect and enhance the ecological, habitat, aesthetic, scientific, floristic, faunal, cultural, educational, and recreation values of wetlands (Wellington) and to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these values (East Gippsland).
- In the East Gippsland part of the Character Area, roadside vegetation is covered by Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) to protect ecological, landscape and aesthetic values of this vegetation and the Princes Highway environs are covered by Design and Development Overlay to prevent linear or ribbon development along the Highway corridors and protect significant native vegetation in the Highway road reserves.
- Large areas surrounding Lakes King, Wellington and Victoria are covered by Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and / or Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO) for flood risk.
- A forthcoming Coastal Town Design Framework for Eagle Point will provide a sustainable vision for the future form, image and function of this settlement and give greater certainty about what is possible in terms of future development.

Management Considerations

- Avoid large-scale and vertical elements which substantially alter the open rural character.
- Utilise screening vegetation and long set-backs to avoid visual clutter with built elements.
- Protect the integrity of the lakes as substantial natural landforms without dominant built development.

Future Character Directions

An open rural character will be retained throughout this Character Area and enhanced with increased coverage of native vegetation in stands and corridors throughout. Development near to the edges of waterbodies will avoid disturbance to the lake edge, be low-scale and set back to allow the protection or rehabilitation of substantial riparian vegetation and protect the natural, unbuilt setting to views from the lake and lakeside recreational locations.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Encourage landscape improvements which utilise indigenous vegetation to improve the character.
- Strengthening vegetation links across cleared landscapes and within townships with the use of indigenous vegetation.

Threats

- Lineal sprawl between settlements and large-scale residential/recreational developments adjacent to major water features which impact on the natural value and unbuilt character of the Area.
- Developments which disturb natural geomorphology and landform, particularly along rivers and lakes.
- Dwellings and other building close to roads and / or without softening landscaping cluttering the open rural character.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To strengthen the presence of native and indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area, particularly at roadsides, and in settlements and riparian strips.*
- *To protect and enhance the presence of indigenous vegetation adjacent to lakes, rivers and other waterbodies.*
- *To protect the cultural vegetation patterns in rural areas.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, including scenic lookouts and recreation locations with views over the Gippsland Lakes.*
- *To ensure that development in and around settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.*
- *To manage the impact of new development on sense of space and openness in the rural landscape.*
- *To protect the largely natural and unbuilt views of Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington from the lakes' edges.*
- *To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Gippsland Lakes, or areas of high visibility.*
- *To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To strengthen the presence of native and indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area, particularly at roadsides, and in settlements and riparian strips.</i></p> <p><i>To protect and enhance the presence of indigenous vegetation adjacent to lakes, rivers and other waterbodies.</i></p> <p><i>To protect the cultural vegetation patterns in rural areas.</i></p>	<p>Retain existing native and indigenous trees and understorey, and provide for the planting of new native and/or indigenous vegetation wherever possible.</p> <p>Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation species throughout the Character Area, particularly for rehabilitation works, including at the edge of lakes, rivers and other watercourses.</p> <p>Use indigenous vegetation in preference for exotic, except for the use of non-invasive exotic species (that are already a feature of the area) in open rural areas away from lakes and watercourses.</p> <p>Protect and enhance indigenous roadside vegetation throughout the Character Area.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Loss of native and indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation as a feature of the landscape, such as roadside planting, vegetation in settlements and shelterbelts in open rural areas.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, including scenic lookouts and recreation locations with views over the Gippsland Lakes.</i></p>	<p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways) and scenic lookouts on the open rural character of these views, and the availability of scenic views lakes and waterbodies.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields.</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To ensure that development in and around settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Refer to Best Practice Policies 'All Settlements'.</p>	<p>Unclear edges to settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter at entrances and exists to settlements.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Between settlements	<p><i>To manage the impact of new development on sense of space and openness in the rural landscape.</i></p> <p><i>To protect the largely natural and unbuilt views of Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington from the lakes' edges.</i></p>	<p>Design buildings near lakes and waterways to be low scale and set back a sufficient distance to allow for the protection or rehabilitation of a substantial zone of riparian vegetation (e.g. over 100 metres).</p> <p>In rural residential and low density residential areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain trees that form part of a continuous canopy beyond the property, and plant new trees in a position where they will add to such a continuous canopy. Utilise vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing, except where substantial vegetation would interrupt important or panoramic outviews. If fencing is necessary, provide open style fencing of a type traditionally used in rural areas e.g. post and wire. <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements'.</p>	<p>Visually dominant, bulky buildings.</p> <p>Buildings that have no relationship to landform.</p> <p>Loss of rural character.</p> <p>Colours and materials that make no reference to the landscape.</p> <p>Visual clutter (including buildings, structures and signage) along highways and key touring routes outside settlements.</p> <p>High, solid fencing.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation.</p> <p>Lack of vegetation</p> <p>Loss of rural outlook from road corridors.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and condition that consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>
Infrastructure and Signage	<p><i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Gippsland Lakes, or areas of high visibility.</i></p>	<p>Set back non-boating infrastructure from lakes and lake edges.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.</p> <p>Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes.</p> <p>Visually dominating signage and infrastructure.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
			signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements. Signage clutter.
Plantation forestry	<i>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.</i>	<p>Set back plantations from lake edges and avoid highly visible locations including adjacent to the Princes and South Gippsland Highways.</p> <p>Site and design plantation forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be of a scale that reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; avoid ridgelines and high slopes that are highly visible from roads; be screened from touring routes by retaining shelterbelts or remnant indigenous vegetation (including understorey) or with substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping; and be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features and integrated with existing forest edges. 	<p>Dominance of plantations at roadsides, including continuity of vegetation without intervening screening planting, especially along the Princes and South Gippsland Highways.</p> <p>Plantations in prominent locations that will create visual scars with periodic harvesting.</p> <p>Loss of scenic outviews views from roads and lookouts.</p>

6.2 Ninety Mile Coast

Landscape Character Type: Gippsland Plains

In this Character Area, recent coastal and alluvial landforms have formed a series of narrow spits and peninsulas which separate the Bass Strait Coast at Ninety Mile Beach from the extensive inland lakes system of Gippsland Lakes. There is an unspoilt natural character in the northern half of the Character Area where extensive indigenous coastal vegetation dominates and the intersection of landforms and lakes creates a scenic setting to minor settlements and recreation locations. In the south, the Character Area has been substantially cleared and less dramatic landform and only a low density scattering of built development creates a uniform rural character to the coast edge.



Key Features

- Ninety-mile beach coastal edge with sand dunes and native vegetation.
- Extensive lakes and waterbodies separated by narrow peninsulas.
- Large expanses of intact, low coastal and wetland vegetation.
- Important recreation and tourism destination.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – The extensive and continuous ocean coast of Ninety Mile Beach dominates the Character Area. Dunes at the coastal edge are usually no higher than 10 m and topography across the Character Area rarely exceeds 20 m. Gentle undulations along narrow spits and peninsulas are found between poorly drained mud and sand flats and shallow lakes and inlets. The Character Area also includes a number of islands within Lake King near Lakes Entrance.
- **Waterform** – Water features including salt lakes and lagoons are a dominant element of the landscape of the Character Area. Long ephemeral lakes occur behind the narrow coastal strip (e.g. Lake Reeve) while the northern and western edge of the Character Area is bounded by large permanent lakes including Lake King and Lake Victoria.
- **Vegetation** – The vegetation includes freshwater and coastal wetlands, mangrove scrubs, saltmarshes, dune scrubs and coastal tussock grasslands, and behind the dunes coastal tea-tree thickets and some extensive *Banksia* woodlands near Loch Sport. Relatively small areas have been cleared, predominately for shack dwellings and settlements.
- **Land use** – Much of the Character Area is set aside for nature conservation in the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park and The Lakes National Park. Where there is private land, this is used for residential (including holiday residential) in the settlement of Loch Sport, and the small coastal villages of Golden Beach, Paradise Beach and the Honeysuckles. Some dwellings have been developed in a remote vegetated strip near Lakes Entrance.

Settlements

Lakes Entrance (part)

A distinct topographic change occurs at Lakes Entrance between the flat lakes and plains of this Character Area, and the steep rolling topography contained in the adjacent Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland Character Area.

Development within Lakes Entrance is primarily clustered in the low, flat plains between Lake King and North Arm which are contained in this Character Area (Photo 1). While highly urbanised, the flatter topography makes development less conspicuous in this part of the settlement than the surrounding escarpment. Nonetheless, large or high developments tend to dominate the landscape and views from the lakes, and in some locations dwellings have been sited in prominent locations amongst sand dunes interrupting the otherwise undeveloped coastline character.



Photo 1 At Lakes Entrance the flat plains of this Character Area are substantially developed.

Loch Sport

This relatively large settlement is developed in low rolling topography and dense coastal woodlands between Lake Reeve and Lake Victoria. Vegetation and topography provide a setting in which the extent of the settlement is not apparent from any single vantage point. While dwellings at the Lake Victoria edge are in many cases exposed to views from the lake, dwellings are characteristically screened by dense vegetation in views from Lake Reeve and the coastal dune strip (with a few exceptions, see Photo 2).



Photo 2 Dwellings at the south eastern edge of Loch Sport set in vegetation overlooking Lake Reeve.

Golden Beach / Paradise Beach

These two townships form an almost continuous strip of low coastal dwellings for seven kilometres of the coastal edge of the Character Area. A consistent character of simple, modest single storey dwellings set in vegetation persist throughout, whilst low to medium sand dunes and coastal vegetation (in which there are numerous camping sites) buffer views to development from the coast. A small town centre with a wide avenue entry and open views to the sea is found at the southern edge.

Seaspray

A medium-sized coastal settlement set on flats behind low to moderate dunes (3-8 m). A seaside suburban character of one to two-storey dwellings is gradually evolving with larger, modern dwellings. Development appears to spread loosely into surrounding rural land. An inlet adjoining the town is an important landscape feature and the focus of much development. To the north of the settlement ephemeral lakes contain expansion and provide a natural landscape character. The Ninety Mile Beach coast retains an undeveloped wild character as dwellings within the township are screened from view from the beach by dunes, however, more recent development south of the town has occurred on flats adjoining low 1-3 m dunes and houses compete with the low topography for visual dominance.

Pattern of Viewing

Long views along Ninety Mile Beach have become the iconic experience of this Character Area. However, inland of the Beach, roads and townships are frequently set low in the topography and coastal heath and dunes contain views. In some parts of the Character Area, including the township of Loch Sport, expansive open views are available across the inland lakes.

High recreational use of the larger inland lakes and coast makes these important locations from which the Character Area is viewed.

Two formal scenic lookouts at Lakes Entrance view over the northern extremes of this Character Area. The view from these locations is frequently used in tourism publications and has become an iconic image of the landscapes of the Victorian Coast.

Community Values

Positive Features

People from within this Character Area noted that the wilderness, sand dunes, pristine beaches, lakes and water features were all positive features of the area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

Members of the local community commented that overdevelopment along the foreshore is one of the most negative changes taking place in the Character Area.

The wider community feels that Lakes Entrance has been spoiled by multi-storey buildings, rock walls, the dredging channel and buildings too close to the foreshore. They also feel that the Gippsland Lakes area has been spoiled by high levels of pollution and mismanagement.

Significant Landscapes

The Ninety Mile Beach coast and Gippsland lakes were noted as iconic landscapes containing wild and natural landforms that were valued for their lack of built development.

Other Identified Values

- Lake Reeve is an internationally significant wetland identified by Ramsar Convention.
- Numerous historic coastal landscape features including Boole Poole peninsula and the artificial outlet to the sea at Lakes Entrance.
- High tourism and recreation visitation, and the iconic image of the coastal lakes landscape at Lakes Entrance.
- This Character Area is known to have high Aboriginal significance with extensive known Aboriginal heritage sites throughout, particularly on the coastal edge.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- Rehabilitation of lakes and waterways by landowners / community groups.
- Land management works within the Gippsland Lakes Park.
- Naturally dynamic coastal and lake landforms.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years.
- Trend for increased migration from cities and inland areas to the coast.
- Increased permanent population in coastal settlements.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Some potential for modest expansion of Seaspray identified by a draft Coastal Town Design Framework for the town.
- Increased tourism visitation.
- Increased storm-surge and flooding risks as a result of global warming, potentially restricting development at the lake / coastal interface.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- Potential for ribbon development along the Ninety Mile Beach Coast between Loch Sport and Seaspray as a result of take up of existing inappropriate subdivisions.
- Large-scale residential/recreational orientated developments.

Sensitivity to Change

While low-heath and undulating dunal landforms contain views in much of this Character Area, sensitive landscapes are found where the edges of the landform adjoin open landscape features such as lakes, coast or flat rural hinterland. An absence of built development throughout the Area heightens this sensitivity. Particularly sensitive landscapes include the low, steep and vegetated slopes of Loch Sport adjoining Lake Reeve, and the Ninety Mile dune coast where dense, low native vegetation and light coloured fragile soils enhance the visibility of disturbance and / or built form. Higher sensitivity occurs in locations that are visible from recreational or tourism destinations (e.g. the lookouts at Lakes Entrance, or views from Lake Victoria toward Loch Sport) due to the high numbers of viewers.

Some locations including the settlements at Lakes Entrance and the Lake Victoria edge of Loch Sport already have an established built character and are therefore less sensitive to most developments.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The Wellington Shire Planning Scheme Coastal Land Policy aims to minimise the impact of human activities on the ecological values of the coastal and lakes environments and sets out policies to contain urban settlements and appropriately design buildings for environmental and visual values.
- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- Much of the Character Area including large stretches of the coast and lake edges is zoned Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ) with Environmental Rural Zone (ERZ) over most of the private land. Settlements are predominantly Township Zone with Residential Zone (R1Z) and other urban zones at Loch Sport.
- Many watercourses and lake edges are covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (Wellington ESO2 and East Gippsland ESO23, ESO53, among others) to protect and enhance the ecological, habitat, aesthetic, scientific, floristic, faunal, cultural, educational, and recreation values of wetlands (Wellington) and to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these values (East Gippsland).
- Large areas surrounding Lakes King, Wellington and Victoria are covered by Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and / or Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO) for flood risk.
- The Entrance at Lakes Entrance is covered by a Heritage Overlay (HO225).
- Forthcoming Coastal Town Design Frameworks for Loch Sport, Golden Beach / Paradise Beach, The Honeysuckles, Seaspray, McLoughlins

Beach, Woodside Beach and Robertsons Beach will provide a sustainable vision for the future form, image and function of these settlements and give greater certainty about what is possible in terms of future development.

Management Considerations

- The iconic natural scenic character of the northern sections of the Character Area (Lakes Entrance to Loch Sport) warrants careful management to ensure built development does not intrude into natural landscapes, islands
- Ensure the natural character of Lake Reeve is retained by strictly controlling development in Loch Sport to avoid impacting on the vegetated character as viewed from the lake and causeway.
- Retain the wild and natural character of lake landforms and Ninety Mile Beach by siting developments inland of the dune / lake edge amongst vegetation and topography.
- Encourage greater vegetation in the southern parts of the Character Area

Future Character Directions

This Character Area will be characterised by natural landforms and contained urban development. Indigenous coastal vegetation adjoining inland lakes and coast will dominate and large stretches of the Character Area will be free from built development. The majority of new development will be located in existing settlements including Lakes Entrance and Loch Sport but sited and landscaped to retain natural and wild landscape edges at Ninety Mile Beach and Lake Reeve respectively. Other settlements will be low scale and tucked into the existing topography and vegetation to minimise visual intrusion into the landscape. An increasingly vegetated character will develop throughout the southern half of the Character Area, south of Seaspray.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Low scale infill development in Lakes Entrance and potentially Loch Sport, the latter set amongst retained native vegetation.
- Developments inland of the dune / lake edge amongst vegetation and topography.
- Minor expansion of Seaspray on low flats away from prominent views and landscapes on the inland expansion of the town.
- Strengthening vegetation links across cleared landscapes and townships with the use of indigenous coastal vegetation.

Threats

- Ribbon development along the Ninety Mile Beach Coast, especially between Loch Sport and Seaspray.
- Development (including dwellings) atop the low escarpment overlooking Ninety Mile Beach south of Seaspray and / or without substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping.
- Developments visible amongst natural vegetated spits, islands and lake edges outside settlements, especially those viewed from key touring routes (e.g. Princes Highway at Lakes Entrance) and recreation locations (i.e. on the lakes).

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.*
- *To strengthen the presence of indigenous coastal vegetation, particularly south of Seaspray and within existing settlements.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas, including expansive open views across the inland lakes, natural and unbuilt views along Ninety Mile*

Beach and views from formal scenic lookouts at Lakes Entrance over the northern extremes of the Character Area.

- *To ensure that development in and around existing settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including the natural and unbuilt character at the edge of the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach.*
- *To reduce the visual impact of buildings and structures at the coastal edges of large settlements, such as Lakes Entrance.*
- *To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.*
- *To avoid buildings set high on dunes or development that will be visible on the skyline.*
- *To protect the largely natural and unbuilt views of Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington from the lakes' edges.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Gippsland Lakes or Ninety Mile Beach or areas of high visibility.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.</i></p> <p><i>To strengthen the presence of indigenous coastal vegetation, particularly south of Seaspray and within existing settlements.</i></p>	<p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>Lack of indigenous vegetation within settlements.</p> <p>Highly visible buildings and structures at the coastal edge.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas, including expansive open views across the inland lakes, natural and unbuilt views along Ninety Mile Beach and views from formal scenic lookouts at Lakes Entrance over the northern extremes of the Character Area.</i></p>	<p>Minimise the contrast between landscape and built development for any development greater than 500 metres from important scenic lookouts (e.g. from above Lakes Entrance).</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways) and scenic lookouts on the natural landscape character of these views, and the availability of scenic views to the ocean, or lakes.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields.</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To ensure that development in and around existing settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including the natural and unbuilt character at the edge of the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach.</i></p> <p><i>To reduce the visual impact of buildings and structures at the coastal edges of large settlements, such as Lakes Entrance.</i></p>	<p>Within the smaller Ninety Mile Beach settlements (e.g. Golden Beach / Paradise Beach, Seaspray, McLoughlins Beach) minimise visual intrusion by utilising low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape and colours and materials that reduce contrast and distant visibility (particularly at the coastal edge settlements or locations or in vistas to the coast from main roads).</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'All Settlements' and 'Coastal Settlements'.</p>	<p>Large developments in prominent coastal locations.</p> <p>Buildings dominating vistas to and from the coast.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Between settlements	<p><i>To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.</i></p> <p><i>To avoid buildings set high on dunes or development that will be visible on the skyline.</i></p> <p><i>To protect the largely natural and unbuilt views of Lakes King, Victoria and Wellington from the lakes' edges.</i></p>	<p>Site buildings within existing settlements wherever possible and prevent urban development close to main roads and key touring routes outside settlements.</p> <p>Design buildings near lakes and waterways to be low scale and set back a sufficient distance to allow for the protection or rehabilitation of a substantial zone of riparian vegetation (e.g. over 100 metres).</p> <p>Avoid any buildings or structures visible from the foreshore on the Bass Strait coast by setting new developments back from the Coast and natural coastal landforms. Where development within the coastal strip cannot be prevented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site developments on the inland slope of dunes (avoid buildings protruding above the dune ridgeline); • set buildings and structures among existing vegetation, maximising the retention of coastal vegetation; • utilise appropriate indigenous vegetation to further integrate the development with the landscape; • design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site and avoid visually dominant elevations; • minimise overlooking of the foreshore; and • avoid access in highly visible or undisturbed areas. <p><i>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations' and 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations'.</i></p>	<p>Visible development from the foreshore.</p> <p>Buildings and structures that are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials on visible slopes.</p> <p>Dark coloured building materials on the skyline.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</p> <p>Development outside settlement areas.</p> <p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominating development.</p> <p>Ad hoc urban development cluttering roadsides along key touring routes.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Infrastructure and Signage	<i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Gippsland Lakes or Ninety Mile Beach or areas of high visibility.</i>	Set back non-boating infrastructure from lakes and lake edges. Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.	Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations. Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes. Visually dominating signage and infrastructure. Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements. Signage clutter.

7.1 Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Steeply undulating and mostly rural Character Area the southern edge of which forms an important topographic backdrop to lakes and settlements between Lake Tyers and Metung. The settlement of Lakes Entrance is an important tourism and recreational centre located at the confluence of this hilly Character Area, and the Ninety Mile Coast with views over the coast and lakes. Inland, a more traditional rural character is present, although the undulating topography provides diversity to viewing.



Key Features

- Steep and prominent escarpment to Lake King, Lake Tyers and Ninety Mile Coast.
- Sharply undulating topography.
- Diverse vegetation pattern including rolling pastures and wet forest in reserves, riparian strips and at roadsides.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – The landform of this Character Area is steeply undulating although does not reach over 120m AHD at any point. Tertiary and Quaternary alluvial fans and gravels have been worn more recently to form incised valleys and escarpments, some of which form a significant topographic backdrop to viewing from outside the Character Area.
- **Waterform** – Several edges of the Character Area adjoin substantial inland lakes including Lake King (at Metung and Lakes Entrance) and Lake Tyers. Inland, numerous small and medium-sized watercourses occur, the largest being Mississippi Creek which enters North Arm near Lakes Entrance and the Tambo River, on the edge of Character Area to the west.
- **Vegetation** – Former dense sclerophyll forests and rainforests have been substantially cleared for pasture although many native vegetation clumps remain in stands amongst paddocks, along watercourses and at roadsides. There are very few examples of established exotic vegetation except for some mature conifers around rural homesteads.
- **Land use** – Cattle grazing is the primary land use of the area, although substantial use for tourism accommodation and settlements occurs at Metung, Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers. Water-based recreational uses occur at the edges of this Character Area.

Settlements

Metung

The settlement of Metung is set amongst dense native vegetation on steep escarpments to Lake King. In the most part, development is confined to slopes above and overlooking the lake, and separated from the lake by road. However, newer medium-density and townhouse-style developments extend to the lakes edge in parts while dwellings exposed to views from the lake are found throughout.

Lakes Entrance (part)

A distinct topographic change occurs at Lakes Entrance between the flat lakes and plains of the Ninety Mile Coast Character Area, and the steep rolling topography contained in this Character Area. This escarpment forms an important backdrop to the settlement of Lakes Entrance.

Development within Lakes Entrance is primarily clustered in the low, flat plains between Lake King and North Arm, however dwellings and accommodation developments extend into the low, steep escarpment of this Character Area at the western entry to town, and more recently immediately north of the settlement itself. Suburban developments also occur in the rolling country side in pockets along the highway out of settlement to the north and east. Continued pressure for development within and outside the settlement is expected to occur.



Photo 1 Development on the low steep escarpment of this Character Area at Lakes Entrance

Pattern of Viewing

The Princes Highway runs through this Character Area and is the primary viewing corridor. At the southern edge of this Character Area, steep topography meets flat plains and Lakes providing extensive and scenic outviews from the settlements of Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers Beach across the Gippsland Lands and Ninety Mile Beach. There are two formal scenic lookouts accessed via the Princes Highway at the western entry to Lakes Entrance. Inland, incised valleys and roadside vegetation frequently enclose views although regular undulations provide outviews to the ocean as occasional glimpses from roads and dwellings.

Community Values

Positive Features

People from within this Character Area noted that the wildlife, bushwalks, isolated areas and combination of wide sandy beaches and swampland were the most positive features of the area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

Members of the local community commented that negative changes occurring in the area included residential development on cliff tops, overuse and degradation of areas around Lakes Entrance and the destruction of walking trails.

The wider community feels that Metung is a place within the Character Area that has been spoiled.

Significant Landscapes

Vegetated slopes and escarpments to the important recreational locations of Lake King and Lake Tyers.

Other Identified Values

- Lake Tyers – Lake Bulga Cultural Landscape is listed by the National Trust for demonstrating historic values and natural beauty and identified as a significant regional landscape in the East Gippsland Planning Scheme.

- This Character Area is known to have high Aboriginal significance with extensive known occurrences of Aboriginal heritage sites throughout.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- Active revegetation of degraded sites including waterway valleys by community groups.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years. The natural beauty and boating opportunities in and around this Character Area are driving factors for potential new settlers (e.g. from Metropolitan Melbourne).
- The East Gippsland Shire Planning Scheme designates Lakes Entrance as a future growth node in the Shire.
- Metung is recognised in the Draft Metung Coastal Town Design Framework as having the potential for growth in the tourism sector, through the provision of experiences connected to the natural assets of the area.
- Some potential for modest expansion of Lake Tyers Beach and Nungurner identified by draft Coastal Town Design Frameworks.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- Substantial pressure for residential development particularly at Lakes Entrance and Metung.
- Pressure for dwellings along lake and waterway edges and other locations offering coastal / lakes views.

- Rural living and lifestyle developments outside settlements in previously pastoral land throughout the Character Area.
- Pressure for large scale tourism/recreational developments outside settlements.

Sensitivity to Change

The southern slopes and escarpments of this Character Area are prominent to views from the Gippsland Lakes, Lake Tyers and the settlement of Lakes Entrance. The steepness and lack of vegetation of these slopes, and the importance of the settlements and recreation locations as key viewing opportunities makes this a highly sensitive landscape. Developments which contrast with colours and textures, or occur on the skyline will be particularly conspicuous. Inland, steeply undulating topography creates a number of sensitive locations such as skylines viewed from roadsides, however there is a greater opportunity to site developments lower on slopes or amongst vegetation to reduce their visual intrusion. Where native vegetation occurs at roadsides and on visible hillslopes this is also sensitive to change and developments which involve substantial vegetation removal is likely to have significant visual impacts

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Lake Tyers and Lake Bunga cultural landscape (from Lake Bunga to Nowa Nowa and east of the Princes Highway to Lake Tyers Road) as a significant regional landscape, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity of the area and landscape quality, including views from the water. The Policy also seeks to protect landscapes within 100 metres of the Princes Highway.
- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- Large sections of the Character Area, particularly in the western half are zoned Rural (RUZ1 and RUZ3). Much of the eastern half of the Character Area, inland of Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers is zoned for Rural Living (RLZ).
- The settlements of Metung, Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers Beach are primarily zoned Residential (R1Z) as well as other mixed urban zones (e.g. B1Z). Metung has substantial areas of Low Density Residential (LDRZ) on its outskirts, including areas adjoining Lake King. There is also LDRZ covering the approach to Lake Tyers Beach and part of Lakes Entrance.
- Land in the vicinity of Nungurner and Metung is covered by a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO3) to conserve high conservation value vegetation and vegetation with high aesthetic and landscape value which provides for a unique character in a lakeshore setting. Roadside vegetation is covered by Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) in part of the Character Area to protect ecological, landscape and aesthetic values of this vegetation.
- Much of the land outside settlements in the eastern half of the Character Area (east of Nungurner) is covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO53 and ESO54 to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these values (East Gippsland).
- The Princes Highway environs are covered by Design and Development Overlay to prevent linear or ribbon development along the Highway corridors and protect significant native vegetation in the Highway road reserves.
- The edge of Lake King and (including part of the settlements of Metung and Lakes Entrance) is covered by Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) and / or Floodway Overlay (FO) for flood risk.
- Forthcoming Coastal Town Design Frameworks for Metung, Nungurner and Lake Tyers Beach will provide a sustainable vision for the future form, image and function of these settlements and give greater certainty about what is possible in terms of future development.

Management Considerations

- The edges of the Character Area adjoining lakes and settlements provide valued setting to the lakes and settlement landscapes and warrant special attention by ensuring buildings do not extend into skylines and developments are softened by vegetation.
- The escarpment overlooking the settlement at Lakes Entrance environment is worthy of special protection, particularly as it forms an important backdrop to the regional and tourism centre of Lakes Entrance.
- Encourage development of dwellings and other buildings to occur tucked into in the rolling inland topography and away from prominent viewing locations and skylines.
- Large scale infrastructure should be sited out of the coastal viewshed wherever possible.
- Maintenance of the integrity of the vegetated edge to Lake King and Lake Tyers is essential to the character of this Area.

Future Character Directions

This Character Area will be characterised by rolling rural topography and native vegetation outside of existing settlements. Prominent slopes viewed from the Princes Highway and the settlement of Lakes Entrance will become increasingly vegetated to reduce the visual intrusion of buildings, and the dominance of built development will be avoided through careful design and siting. The natural and largely unbuilt character of slopes adjoining Lake Tyers and Lake King (outside the existing settlement boundaries) will be protected and enhanced with increased vegetation. The integrity of open rolling inland topography will be maintained by avoiding large scale built developments and dwellings sited close to roads, and protecting and enhancing corridors of vegetation.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Siting developments (including the majority of agricultural buildings and structures) amongst rolling topography out of the coastal viewshed.
- Strengthening indigenous vegetation cover throughout the Character Area and around new developments to create linkages between existing bushland and forest parks and coastal vegetation.
- Increasing vegetation on the prominent slopes above Lakes Entrance to soften the impact of built development on the viewed character.

Threats

- Built structures sited in prominent locations and skylines without vegetative screening especially above Lake Tyers and Lakes Entrance.
- Coastal strip development between Lakes Entrance and Metung impacting on the natural character of the landscape adjoining Lake King.
- Rural living development and 'hobby farms' cluttering the rolling rural landscape.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To maintain and strengthen indigenous vegetation cover throughout the Character Area, particularly around new developments to create linkages between existing bushland and forest parks and coastal vegetation.*
- *To increase vegetation cover on prominent slopes within the Character Area, particularly above Lakes Entrance, to reduce the visual impact of built development.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, including extensive and scenic outviews from the settlements of Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers Beach across the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach.*
- *To ensure that development in and around settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.*

- *To minimise and reduce the visual intrusion of buildings and structures at the lake edge of settlements (e.g. Metung, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Beach etc.)*
- *To prevent lineal urban sprawl along main roads and key touring routes between settlements, particularly between Lakes Entrance and Metung.*
- *To maintain the dominance of the open rural landscape and indigenous vegetation outside settlements.*
- *To prevent linear urban sprawl development along main roads and key touring routes outside settlements.*
- *To ensure buildings and structures sit within, rather than dominate the landscape, especially adjacent to lakes, waterways and the coast.*
- *To protect a vegetated and natural character in landscapes between Metung and Lakes Entrance, at Lakes Tyers and Bunga, and adjoining the Bass Strait Coast.*
- *To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and other infrastructure, particularly on hill faces, in coastal areas and in other areas of high landscape values or visibility.*
- *To ensure that the open rural character and scenic coastal features of this Character Area are not dominated by plantation forestry.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To maintain and strengthen indigenous vegetation cover throughout the Character Area, particularly around new developments to create linkages between existing bushland and forest parks and coastal vegetation.</i></p> <p><i>To increase vegetation cover on prominent slopes within the Character Area, particularly above Lakes Entrance, to reduce the visual impact of built development.</i></p>	<p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Cleared areas on vegetated hill faces and slopes.</p> <p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, including extensive and scenic outviews from the settlements of Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers Beach across the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach.</i></p>	<p>Minimise the contrast between landscape and built development for any development greater than 500 metres from important scenic lookouts (e.g. from above Lakes Entrance).</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways) and scenic lookouts on the open rural character of these views, and the availability of scenic views to the ocean, or lakes.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To ensure that development in and around settlements does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>To minimise and reduce the visual intrusion of buildings and structures at the lake edge of settlements (e.g. Metung, Lakes Entrance, Lake Tyers Beach etc.)</i></p> <p><i>To prevent lineal urban sprawl along main roads and key touring routes between settlements, particularly between Lakes Entrance and Metung.</i></p>	<p>Strengthen vegetation around development and use lower building heights that conform to topography in prominent locations with settlements that strongly contribute to the landscape character of the area (e.g. the escarpment at Lakes Entrance).</p> <p>Set back buildings a sufficient distance from lake edges to allow for the protection or reestablishment of riparian vegetation, wherever possible.</p> <p>Encourage dwellings and cleared land along the prominent lake escarpment (e.g. Metung, Nungurner and Lake Tyers Beach) to become increasingly vegetated with regenerated indigenous vegetation and / or landscaping.</p> <p>The height and form of new development at the lake edge of settlements should be sensitive in scale to surrounding development, the surrounding landform and the visual setting of the settlement.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Settlements'.</p>	<p>Lineal urban sprawl, particularly along the coast between Lakes Entrance and Metung.</p> <p>Unclear edges to settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter at entrances and exists to townships.</p> <p>Large developments in prominent lake edge locations.</p> <p>Buildings dominating vistas to and from the lakes' edges.</p> <p>Disturbance to the lake edge through earthworks.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Hinterland locations</p>	<p><i>To maintain the dominance of the open rural landscape and indigenous vegetation outside settlements.</i></p> <p><i>To prevent linear urban sprawl development along main roads and key touring routes outside settlements.</i></p>	<p>In steep or hilly locations, design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site, to minimise need for earthworks on the site and articulate buildings into separate elements to avoid visually dominant elevations.</p> <p>In rural residential areas:</p> <p>Use permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to minimise surface run-off and to support vegetation.</p> <p>Retain trees that form part of a continuous canopy beyond the property, and plant new trees in a position where they will add to such a continuous canopy.</p> <p>Utilise vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing.</p> <p>If fencing is necessary, provide open style fencing of a type traditionally used in rural areas ie post and wire.</p> <p>Locate buildings on the site to minimise views of the building from the main road.</p> <p>Mirror traditional homestead clusters and reduce the impact of development on large areas of the landscape by grouping buildings in the landscape, and setting buildings back long distances from roads, with landscaping.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations'.</p>	<p>Development on prominent hill faces and ridgelines (particularly with the sea or sky as backdrop when viewed from roads).</p> <p>Buildings and structures that are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials on hill faces.</p> <p>Dark coloured building materials on ridge tops.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</p> <p>High, solid fencing.</p> <p>Lack of vegetation</p> <p>Loss of rural outlook from road corridors.</p> <p>Visually dominant, bulky buildings.</p> <p>Buildings that have no relationship to landform.</p> <p>Loss of rural character.</p> <p>Colours and materials that make contrast strongly with the landscape.</p>
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Coastal / lake interface</p>	<p><i>To ensure buildings and structures sit within, rather than dominate the landscape, especially adjacent to lakes, waterways and the coast.</i></p> <p><i>To protect a vegetated and natural character in landscapes between Metung and Lakes Entrance, at Lakes Tyers and Bunga, and adjoining the Bass Strait Coast.</i></p>	<p>Locate any development outside settlements sparsely, siting buildings and structures to avoid the loss of existing vegetation.</p> <p>Keep development below the dominant tree canopy height.</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from lakes on the natural vegetated character of escarpment edges.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations'.</p>	<p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominant development in the landscape.</p> <p>Buildings protruding above the ridgeline when viewed from lakes or foreshore areas.</p> <p>Pedestrian and vehicular access in highly visible or undisturbed areas</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and condition consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>
Infrastructure and signage	<p><i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and other infrastructure, particularly on hill faces, in coastal areas and in other areas of high landscape values or visibility.</i></p>	<p>Refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in linear 'scars' in prominent locations.</p> <p>Large, tall or visually intrusive infrastructure close to roads, settlements.</p> <p>Infrastructure in undeveloped coastal locations.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Plantation forestry	<i>To ensure that the open rural character and scenic coastal features of this Character Area are not dominated by plantation forestry.</i>	Site and design plantation forests to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be located on the lower two-thirds of visible slope of prominent hillsides • be of a scale that reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; • be integrated with existing vegetation (e.g. shelterbelts, remnant indigenous vegetation) forest edges; • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features; and • have with vegetative screens, preferably utilising existing indigenous roadside vegetation or shelterbelts. 	

7.2 Ewing Morass Forest Coast

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Steeply undulating and mostly forested character type, largely contained in State Forest, State Park and Ewing Morass Flora Reserve. The Area is characterised by an absence of built development and extensive native vegetation communities. Patches of cleared land amongst forests are used for pasture, with more extensive cleared areas on rolling topography above the Snowy River Floodplain in the east of the Area.



Key Features

- Intact bushland character with minor rural uses bounded by native forest.
- Natural water features including Lake Tyers and numerous rivers, many of which remain largely undisturbed.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – The landform is undulating throughout, flatter near the coast and increasingly steep inland with incised gullies. The coastline at Ninety Mile Beach has a continuous low-dune edge with poorly drained Quaternary coastal plains behind the dunes.
- **Waterform** – Numerous watercourses and lakes including the eastern arm of Lake Tyers and the Hartland River create scenic landscape features throughout the Character Area. Just behind the coast at Ninety Mile Beach is an extensive march area which empties into Lake Corringale in the adjacent Snowy River Estuary.
- **Vegetation** – The vegetation includes lowland forests, open forests with shrubby or heathy understoreys, grassy woodlands and low marshy and dune scrub near the coast. Some areas are more heavily cleared for pasture, in particular the eastern extremes.
- **Land use** – More than three-quarters of the Character Area is in public ownership either as extensive areas set aside for nature conservation or productive state forest. Grazing occurs in pockets and on the slopes near Newmarella.

Pattern of Viewing

The Princes Highway runs through the Character Area, however vegetation and topography contain views throughout much of the Area to the local bushland character. In the east, rolling slopes near Newmarella provide outviews to the Snowy River Floodplain Character Area and adjoining hillsides and dune coast. There are not notable lookouts or formal viewing locations.

Community Values

Positive Features

While there were no specific responses to the community questionnaire from people within this Character Area, the wider community commented that the wilderness, ruggedness, natural coastal landforms and isolated places were all positive features of this Character Area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

Significant Landscapes

Vegetated slopes and escarpments are important to the recreational location of Lake Tyers. The wider community feels that the Wilderness Coast to the east of Lakes Entrance is one of the most significant places within this Character Area.

Other Identified Values

- *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast* describes this area as being of outstanding scenic quality and requiring special landscape protection to ensure development does not impact on landscape values.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- Ongoing and evolving agricultural practices throughout rural areas.
- Active forestry including clear-felling and plantation throughout State Forests.
- Active revegetation of degraded landscapes in parts.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years. The natural beauty and boating

opportunities in and around this Character area are driving factors for potential new settlers (e.g. from Metropolitan Melbourne).

- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Increased tourism visitation.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the character area include:

- Some pressure for rural living and residential estates in rural land near Newmarella.
- Possible tourism and / or recreation developments in forested settings.

Sensitivity to Change

Dense and continuous native vegetation character of this Area is sensitive to linear and large-scale landscape changes which require the removal or disturbance of vegetation. This is particularly the case at the edges of water features and at the coast where intact vegetation frequently extends to the water. Smaller scale changes can often be more easily accommodated in forested hinterland areas utilising vegetation and topography to soften and screen views.

Open rural landscapes near Newmarella are also sensitive to the introduction of built form which is likely to be conspicuous to views from Lake Corringale, the Snowy River estuary and Princes Highway. Particularly sensitive areas include slight rises and skylines viewed from roads.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- Much landscape change in this Character Area is currently controlled in existing conservation reserves.
- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Lake Tyers and Lake Bunga Cultural Landscape and the Croajingolong Coast (including part of the Ewing Morass Forest Coast)

and landscapes within 100 metres of the Princes Highway as a significant regional landscapes to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing the visual amenity of the area.

- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- The Character Area is a mix of Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) covering reserves and State Forest, and Rural Zone (RUZ1) over most of the private land. A large area of Rural Living Zone (RLZ2) occurs adjacent to the Princes Highway south of Nowa Nowa and surrounding Newmarrella. Other urban zones (e.g. B1Z and INZ) also occur at Newmarella.
- Roadside vegetation is covered by Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) in part of the Character Area to protect ecological, landscape and aesthetic values of this vegetation. Some large areas are covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1, ESO2 and ESO55) to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these values (East Gippsland), including the area of land zoned RLZ near the Princes Highway.
- The Princes Highway environs are covered by Design and Development Overlay to prevent linear or ribbon development along the Highway corridors and protect significant native vegetation in the Highway road reserves.
- The former Lake Tyers Aboriginal Mission is covered by a Heritage Overlay (HO244).

Management Considerations

- Avoid development close to roads and coast and lake edges which requires the removal of substantial areas of vegetation or introduces substantial built elements previously natural landscapes.
- Avoid linear infrastructure developments which create landscape 'scarring' through the vegetated areas.

Future Character Directions

This Character Area will continue to be characterised by extensive forested landscapes with an absence of visible built form. Intact native vegetation communities will be protected throughout the hinterland areas and allowed to extend unbroken to lake and coastal edges. Existing cleared hinterland areas will develop and increasingly vegetated character with views to open pastures and low scale built form filtered through native forest and indigenous roadside vegetation.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Protecting and strengthening roadside vegetation.
- Siting built form away from key viewing corridors and amongst retained native forest vegetation to minimise visual intrusion.
- Siting development (including new built form) in previously cleared landscapes, utilising existing vegetation edges to minimise the visibility of alteration.

Threats

- Developments which create visible landscape scars through the removal of vegetation, particularly at roadsides or coast or lake edges.
- Intensive rural living development near Newmarella, including built form on skylines.
- Linear urban development and other built visual clutter along roadsides.
- Subdivision of privately owned bush lots for residential hobby farm developments.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To retain the dominance of the extensive forested landscapes throughout the Character Area.*

- *To protect intact native and vegetation communities, and to extend these to lake and coastal edges.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas, including outviews to the Snowy River floodplain, adjoining hillsides and the dune coast from elevated topography in the east of the Character Area, near Newmarella.*
- *To maintain and enhance the strongly vegetated character of hill slopes and ridges throughout the Character Area, and to avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.*
- *To maintain the natural and largely unbuilt character of the landscape, particularly adjacent to landscape features such as lakes and other watercourses.*
- *To ensure that no buildings or structures are visible above the coastal vegetation, within the coastal strip.*
- *To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and other infrastructure, particularly on hill faces, in coastal areas and in other areas of high landscape values or visibility.*
- *To ensure that the open rural character and scenic coastal features of this Character Area are not dominated by plantation forestry.*

Landscape Management Objectives

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To retain the dominance of the extensive forested landscapes throughout the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To protect intact native and vegetation communities, and to extend these to lake and coastal edges.</i></p>	<p>Refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Clearing of heavily vegetated hill faces and gullies.</p> <p>Loss of native or indigenous vegetation.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas, including outviews to the Snowy River floodplain, adjoining hillsides and the dune coast from elevated topography in the east of the Character Area, near Newmarella.</i></p>	<p>Using low building forms integrated with topography and extensive landscaping of indigenous species (or non-invasive exotic / native vegetation that is already a feature of the area) to minimise visual intrusion in the foreground (up to 500 metres) of all key views and vistas.</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways) and scenic lookouts on the open rural character of these views, and the availability of scenic views to the ocean, or lakes.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields</p>
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Hinterland locations</p>	<p><i>To maintain and enhance the strongly vegetated character of hill slopes and ridges throughout the Character Area, and to avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain the natural and largely unbuilt character of the landscape, particularly adjacent to landscape features such as lakes and other watercourses.</i></p>	<p>Development on prominent hill faces should be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>In circumstances where development can not be avoided on ridge tops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate development to avoid the loss of vegetation; construct buildings and structures of lighter materials to minimise visibility against the sky. <p>Keep development below the dominant tree canopy height.</p> <p>Minimise visual intrusion by utilising low scale building forms, tucked into the landscape.</p> <p>Avoid development near or adjacent to lakes and other watercourses. If it cannot be avoided, design development to be low scale and set back to allow for riparian vegetation.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations' and 'Ridges and Hill Slopes'.</p>	<p>Buildings and structures that are visible on the skyline.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials on hill faces.</p> <p>Dark coloured building materials on ridge tops.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</p> <p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominant development</p> <p>Buildings close to the Princes Highway.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Buildings Coastal locations	<i>To ensure that no buildings or structures are visible above the coastal vegetation, within the coastal strip.</i>	<p>Avoid any development within the coastal strip of the Character Area.</p> <p>In steep or hilly locations, design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site, to minimise need for earthworks on the site and articulate buildings into separate elements to avoid visually dominant elevations.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Coastal Settlements' and 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations'.</p>	Visible development within the coastal strip.
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To recognise and protect the landscape of the Gippsland Lakes as a places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and condition consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>
Infrastructure and signage	<i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and other infrastructure, particularly on hill faces, in coastal areas and in other areas of high landscape values or visibility.</i>	Refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.	<p>Loss of vegetation in linear 'scars' in prominent locations.</p> <p>Large, tall or visually intrusive infrastructure close to roads, settlements.</p> <p>Infrastructure in undeveloped coastal locations.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Plantation forestry	<i>To ensure that the open rural character and scenic coastal features of this Character Area are not dominated by plantation forestry.</i>	Site and design plantation forests to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be located on the lower two-thirds of visible slope of prominent hillsides • be of a scale that reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; • be integrated with existing vegetation (e.g. shelterbelts, remnant indigenous vegetation) forest edges; • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features; and • have with vegetative screens, preferably utilising existing indigenous roadside vegetation or shelterbelts. 	

7.3 Snowy River Floodplains

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Large, open and very flat floodplains of alluvial sediments extending from north of Orbost to the mouth of the Snowy River. The flats are extensively cleared for pasture and horticultural uses and form a distinctive rural pocket contrasting with vegetated hill slopes which surround and form the boundary to views from within the Character Area. The Snowy River is a highly significant and important landscape feature which widens to a significant coastal brackish estuary at Lake Corringale. There are numerous other streams and rivers as well as lakes and reedy swamps throughout this poorly drained floodplain. The township of Orbost sits on a minor rise overlooking the floodplains and is the major built element in this rural landscape.



Key Features

- Extensive open agricultural and pastoral floodplains with outviews to steeply sloping undeveloped hillsides.
- Contrast between open pasture and native vegetation.
- Large and extensive water features including the Snowy River and Lake Corringale.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – Very flat and extensive alluvial floodplains with only minor undulations of around 10m. Surrounded by steeper wooded slopes which form a dominant topographic backdrop.
- **Waterform** – The Snowy River is a highly significant and important landscape feature which widens to a significant coastal brackish estuary at Marlo. There are numerous other streams and rivers as well as lakes and reedy swamps throughout this poorly drained floodplain.
- **Vegetation** – Largely cleared for pasture and agriculture, with native vegetation is restricted to some riparian areas, minor copses and individual trees within paddocks and occasionally wind breaks. There is very little established exotic vegetation except around the township of Orbost and some farm residences.
- **Land use** – Extensive areas of pasture and agriculture throughout with the settlement of Orbost a major regional centre.

Settlements

Orbost

The township of Orbost sits on a minor rise overlooking the floodplains and is the major built intrusion to the rural landscape. It is a large regional centre with substantial residential suburbs. Established vegetation of both exotic and native species helps the township integrate well with the landscape as it mimics the contrast between native vegetation and pasture that characterises much of the Area.



Photo 1 The settlement of Orbost is a substantial built landscape element set in vegetation on a slight rise above the floodplain.

Pattern of Viewing

Open and expansive views across agricultural floodplains are available from the key viewing corridors including the Princes Freeway, and Marlo Road. Orbost is slightly elevated above the plains with views filtered through vegetation.

The edge of view is strongly defined by topographic features which bound the area including at the southern edge, high sand dunes.

Community Values

Positive Features

The local community highlighted the wild coastline as one of the most positive features of this Character Area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

People from within the Character Area commented that urban development and erosion are two negative changes currently taking place in the Area.

Significant Landscapes

The wider community feels that The Snowy River Estuary is one of the most significant places within the Area.

Other Identified Values

- The Snowy River is listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic and cultural value.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the Character Area include:

- Ongoing and evolving agricultural practices, including seasonal variations to crops and crop coverage.
- Naturally dynamic waterfeatures and seasonal inundation.
- Active revegetation of degraded riparian areas.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Increased tourism visitation.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the Character Area include:

- Substantial pressure for dwellings to be established adjacent to or with views over waterfeatures, in particular the Snowy River estuary near Marlo and Lake Corringale.
- Some pressure for subdivision of larger land holdings for residential hobby farms.

Sensitivity to Change

Almost the entire Character Area has an open and undeveloped rural character making the landscape sensitive to the introduction of built elements, particularly large or vertical structures which are viewed from key road corridors and towns. The township of Orbost sits on a minor rise amongst extensive flats making it potentially more sensitive, however, established vegetation reduces the sensitivity. A lack of roadside vegetation means that views from roads are highly sensitive, while flat topography means that views are often long and extensive. Near the edges of the Character Area, many landscape changes might be more easily sited near the foot of adjacent slopes.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Croajingolong Coast (including the Snowy River Floodplains) as a significant regional landscape, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity of the area. The Policy also seeks to protect landscapes within 100 metres of the Princes Highway and the Snowy River.
- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- The Character Area is almost entirely Rural Zone (RUZ1) with Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) over large bushland and lake reserves in the south. The settlement of Orbost is primarily Residential (R1Z) with mix of other urban zones, and some small areas of Low Density Residential (LDRZ).
- The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1, ESO2 and ESO55) applies to areas of intact bushland and wetlands in the south of the Character Area and aims conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these places.
- Most of the Character Area (with the exception of Orbost and adjacent topographic rises) is covered by Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) for flood risk.

Future Character Directions

This Character Area will retain an open and uncluttered rural character, with most built development contained township of Orbost. Views from roads will be improved by increasing roadside vegetation as a landscape buffer to built form, or restricting development and planting where expansive open outviews are important. Active revegetation around watercourses will enhance the natural character of these important landscape features. Further development in flats will be set long distances back from roads and sited amongst indigenous landscaping.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Revegetation and restoration of riparian vegetation throughout, but especially along the Snowy River.
- Increasing native vegetation cover in conjunction with new developments by appropriate landscaping plans which use indigenous species.
- Siting development within Orbost, or long distances from viewing corridors (including near the toe of slope of topographic features).

Threats

- Uncontrolled rural living and residential development creating a cluttered landscape throughout.
- Destruction of environmental and scenic values of riparian vegetation through poor management.
- Loss of extensive and scenic outviews across open rural plains to topographic backdrop (e.g. through inappropriate siting of development close to roads).

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To protect existing indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area and to increase its presence, particularly riparian vegetation associated with watercourses (e.g. the Snowy River) and other landscape features, and roadside planting.*
- *To maintain vegetation within the settlement of Orbost, and to strengthen vegetation cover by requiring landscaping with new development.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas, particularly extensive and scenic outviews across open rural plains from Orbost – Marlo Road and the Princes Freeway to surrounding vegetated hill slopes.*
- *To ensure that Orbost is contained within the landscape, and that development in and around the settlement does not impact on the characteristics of the surrounding landscape, including key views and viewing opportunities.*
- *To maintain the open and uncluttered character of the rural landscape, outside the settlement of Orbost.*
- *To retain the contribution of productive agricultural practices to the character of the landscape.*
- *To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area, particularly around the Snowy River and settlement of Orbost.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure on the open rural and uncluttered character, particularly in views from the Princes Highway and Orbost-Marlo Road.*
- *To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To protect existing indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area and to increase its presence, particularly riparian vegetation associated with watercourses (e.g. the Snowy River) and other landscape features, and roadside planting.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain vegetation within the settlement of Orbost, and to strengthen vegetation cover by requiring landscaping with new development.</i></p>	<p>Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new development that utilises appropriate species.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Clearing of vegetated areas.</p> <p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>Loss of indigenous vegetation adjacent to landform features such as the Snowy River or other watercourses.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation as a feature of the landscape, such as roadside planting, vegetation in settlements.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas, particularly extensive and scenic outviews across open rural plains from Orbost – Marlo Road and the Princes Freeway to surrounding vegetated hill slopes.</i></p>	<p>Avoid all intrusive development within 500 metres of the Princes Freeway at the entry into the Character Area from the west.</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways) and scenic lookouts on the open rural character of these views, and the availability of scenic views to the Snowy River and Lake Corringale.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields.</p> <p>Inappropriately sited development adjacent to key viewing corridors.</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To ensure that Orbost is contained within the landscape, and that development in and around the settlement does not impact on the characteristics of the surrounding landscape, including key views and viewing opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'All Settlements'.</p>	<p>Ad hoc urban development cluttering the open rural character at roadsides outside townships.</p> <p>Unclear edges to the settlement.</p> <p>Signage clutter at entrances and exists to the settlement.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p>	<p><i>To maintain the open and uncluttered character of the rural landscape, outside the settlement of Orbost.</i></p> <p><i>To retain the contribution of productive agricultural practices to the character of the landscape.</i></p>	<p>Site buildings within the settlement of Orbost wherever possible.</p> <p>Set larger or intrusive developments back to the edges of the Character Area distant from roads, e.g. the toe of slope of surrounding hillsides where the topographic backdrop helps minimise the visual impact.</p> <p>Manage the expansion of non-agricultural developments in rural areas.</p> <p>Design buildings near lakes and waterways to be low scale and set back a sufficient distance to allow for the protection or rehabilitation of a substantial zone of riparian vegetation (e.g. over 100 metres).</p> <p>In rural residential and low density residential areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set buildings back from roads. • Utilise low open fences (e.g. post and wire) or vegetation to delineate property boundaries (except where substantial vegetation would interrupt important or panoramic outviews). • Maximise the proportion of a lot able to support vegetation. <p><i>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations' and 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations'.</i></p>	<p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Loss of rural outlook from road corridors.</p> <p>Visually dominant, bulky buildings.</p> <p>Buildings that have no relationship to landform.</p> <p>Loss of rural character.</p> <p>Colours and materials that make no reference to the landscape.</p> <p>High, solid fencing.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation.</p> <p>Lack of vegetation</p> <p>Impervious surfacing.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area, particularly around the Snowy River and settlement of Orbost.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and condition that consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Use low, non-dominant building forms and colours within and adjacent to the historic settlements.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>
Infrastructure and signage	<p><i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure on the open rural and uncluttered character, particularly in views from the Princes Highway and Orbost-Marlo Road.</i></p>	<p>Refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.</p> <p>Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes.</p> <p>Visually dominating signage and infrastructure.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p>
Plantation forestry	<p><i>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.</i></p>	<p>Set back plantations from lake edges and avoid highly visible locations including adjacent to the Princes Highway / Freeway.</p> <p>Site and design plantation forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be of a scale that reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; 	<p>Dominance of plantations at roadsides, including continuity of vegetation without intervening screening planting, especially along the Princes Highway / Freeway.</p> <p>Loss of scenic outviews views from roads and lookouts.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be screened from touring routes by retaining shelterbelts or remnant indigenous vegetation (including understorey) or with substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping; and • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features or integrated with existing forest edges. 	

7.4 Cape Conran Coast

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Extending from Tamboon Inlet to Marlo, this Character Area has low coastal landforms including unstable dunes, rocky headlands and extensive inlets and swamps. Inland areas are dominated by low-heathy coastal forest including *Banksia spp.*, most of which is reserved in Cape Conran National Park. There is one small area of extensive pastoral land uses on flat topography in the immediate coastal hinterland, east of Marlo. The *Landscape Setting Types of the Victorian Coast* describes an area more extensive than this Character Area and identifies the cape and headland landscape features of Cape Conran and Pearl Point as providing contrast with the predominantly aeolian and sedimentary landforms.



Key Features

- Wild and natural coastal character with towns and rural areas substantially buffered by undeveloped coastal edge.
- Extensive native vegetation cover throughout.
- Traditional recreation location (fishing and four-wheel-driving).

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – Undulating Tertiary and Quaternary coastal plains including unstable dunes characterise this Area. Low rolling hinterland plains adjoin dunes and coastal bluffs, including some prominent headlands of igneous origin, such as Cape Conran.
- **Waterform** – Brackish and fresh water swamps and lakes occur behind the dunes in parts, and there are substantial inlet water features including Tamboon Inlet and Sydenham Inlet, fed by large, permanent watercourses including the Bemm River. The Snowy River lies just outside the Character Area to the west.
- **Vegetation** – Indigenous vegetation is extensive throughout this Character Area. Inland vegetation is dominated by low heathy dry-sclerophyll forest including areas dominated by *Banksia* spp, while at the coastal edge, heathlands and swamplands occur.
- **Land use** – Much of the Character Area is reserved in Cape Conran National Park. Development is confined to minor settlements including Bemm River and township of Marlo, which lies on the border of this Area and the Snowy River floodplains. There are also a few minor (and often unserved) shack settlements, some of which occur on Crown land (e.g. near Tamboon Inlet).

Settlements

Marlo

The township of Marlo is developed on the rolling topography of this Character Area above the wide mouth and floodplain of the Snowy River. The township is oriented away from the coast and offers expansive views across the river estuary and in turn is exposed to views from across the valley. The town has less of a direct landscape relationship with the coast which is buffered by local sand dunes. There is considerable pressure for expansion of the township.

Bemm River

The settlement of Bemm River sits on low, flat topography adjacent to the Sydenham Inlet. Views to and from the Inlet are important to the landscape setting of the town. Vegetation and open space at the Inlet edge filters views to and from the Inlet while the lack of prominent slopes reduces visual exposure while development is primarily single-storey shack-style set amongst established native vegetation. Where there is a lack of vegetation, dwellings are more conspicuous to views. A large car park and jetty abut the Inlet at one point.

Pattern of Viewing

Much of this Character Area is relatively inaccessible or screened from views by vegetation. The townships provide key viewing locations, as do coastal recreation nodes and the road corridors from Marlo to Cape Conran and the approach to Bemm River.

Open views across inlets are an important defining feature in some locations, particularly from established settlements, while Marlo offers expansive views outside the Character Area.

Community Values

Positive Features

People from within this Character Area noted that the large vegetated sand dunes and animal and birdlife are two of the most positive features within the Area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

Members of the local community commented that the spread of weeds and inappropriate development were two negative changes taking place in the Area.

The wider community feels that the narrow strip of temperate rainforest at Marlo has been spoiled by invasive weeds.

Significant Landscapes

Cape Conran Coast (particularly Marlo to Cape Conran) was noted by several respondents for its wild and rugged wilderness character.

Other Identified Values

- *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast* describes this area as being of outstanding scenic quality for coastal bluffs, and coastal and inland waterform.
- Marlo to Cape Conran Coastline is listed on the Register of the National Estate for ocean beaches, rugged rocky headlands and dry eucalypt forests.
- East Gippsland Coastal Streams Catchment Area listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic / cultural value.
- Bemm River is listed in the Heritage Rivers Act for scenic / cultural value.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- Naturally dynamic coastal landforms.
- Active forestry including clear-felling and plantation throughout State Forests.
- Ongoing and evolving agricultural practices throughout rural areas.
- Active revegetation of degraded landscapes in parts.

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years. The natural beauty and boating opportunities in and around this Character area are driving factors for potential new settlers (e.g. from Metropolitan Melbourne).
- Increased permanent population in coastal settlements.
- Scope for the modest expansion of Marlo is identified in a Draft Coastal Town Design Framework for the town.
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Increased tourism visitation.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the character area include:

- Substantial pressure for residential development in Marlo, sited to take advantage of views and proximity to recreation opportunities.
- Some potential for further residential pressure in and around Sydenham Inlet.

Sensitivity to Change

Dense native vegetation underlain by light-coloured sandy soils means that landscape disturbance throughout much of this Area is potentially highly visible. Existing vegetation in reserves and at roadsides, as well as undulating topography creates some less-seen locations in which landscape change will be less visually prominent. However, the visible edges to the Snowy River estuary including the slopes to Marlo are highly visible from surrounding areas including important recreation locations and are more sensitive to change, particularly development which broadens the visible built intrusion of the township. Similarly, the edges to the Sydenham Inlet are sensitive to built development and change to the natural vegetated character.

The Marlo-Conran Road sits between the dune coast and a largely undeveloped and vegetated inland rise. Both of these topographic features contribute highly to the character of this important tourism and recreation route and are sensitive to alteration.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- Much landscape change in this Character Area is currently controlled in existing conservation reserves.
- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Croajingolong Coast (including Marlo to Bemm River) as a significant regional landscape, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity of the area. The Policy also seeks to protect landscapes within 100 metres of the Bemm River and Marlo-Cape Conran Roads, and the Snowy River.
- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- The Character Area is a mix of Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) covering reserves including Cape Conran Coastal Park, and Rural Zone (RUZ1) over most of the private land. The settlement of Bemm River is zoned Township (TZ) while Marlo is almost entirely Residential 1 Zone (R1Z), with larger areas of Low Density Residential north and east of the town.
- Private rural land adjoining Cabbage Tree Creek and the Brodribb River is covered by Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO69), while most of the rural land east of Marlo is covered by ESO68, both of which aim to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these places.
- The streetscape at Marine Parade, Marlo is covered by a Design and Development Overlay (DDO3) to protect the existing streetscape and to protect views to and from the coast and adjacent residential areas.
- Part of the Princes Highway environs adjoining this Area is covered by Design and Development Overlay to prevent linear or ribbon development along the Highway corridors and protect significant native vegetation in the Highway road reserves.
- Forthcoming Coastal Town Design Frameworks for Marlo and Bemm River will provide a sustainable vision for the future form, image and function of this settlement and give greater certainty about what is possible in terms of future development.

Management Considerations

- Avoid development along Marlo-Conran Road, in particular the sensitive dune and vegetated inland ridgeline.
- Contain the settlement of Marlo and soften its built intrusion into the landscape as seen from Lake Corringale and surrounds, through substantial indigenous vegetation as landscaping and appropriate muted colours and materials.
- Protect the modest, low rise character of Bemm River.

Future Character Directions

This Character Area will continue to be characterised by extensive natural and undeveloped landscapes with low-scale built form confined to already developed areas. Substantial native vegetation corridors will extend from existing conservation reserves throughout cleared areas and into townships. Vegetation throughout settlements will be protected and enhanced to soften the intrusion of built form into vistas from adjacent areas (including the Snowy River Estuary and Sydenham Inlet) and to link the character of built areas with the surrounding natural landscapes.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Siting development and substantial landscape change in cleared pastoral land behind the ridgeline immediately to the north of Marlo-Conran Road wherever possible.
- Protect and enhance native vegetation throughout settlements to soften the intrusion of built form into vistas from adjacent areas (including the Snowy River Estuary and Sydenham Inlet) and to link the character of built areas with the surrounding natural landscapes;
- Potential for appropriate low-scale expansion of Marlo to the north west, with new developments screened from view by protecting existing vegetation and substantial revegetation with indigenous species.

Threats

- Development close to the Snowy River estuary at Marlo and adjacent to Sydenham Inlet (outside the established settlement at Bemm River).
- Ribbon development along Marlo-Conran Road.
- Development in scenic natural landscape features, including the wild dune coast and headland at Cape Conran.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To retain indigenous vegetation as an essential part of the character of the Area and increase its presence, particularly in vegetation corridors extending from existing conservation reserves throughout cleared areas and into settlements.*
- *To maintain vegetation within existing settlements, and to strengthen links to the surrounding landscape by requiring additional vegetation with new development.*
- *To protect locally important views and vistas which contribute to the character of the Area, including open views across inlets from existing settlements, expansive outviews to the surrounding landscape from Marlo, and views from main road corridors (e.g. Marlo to Cape Conran, and the approach to Bemm River).*

- *To ensure that development in and around Marlo and Bemm River does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.*
- *Support only the appropriate expansion of existing settlements that does not impact on the valued character of the surrounding natural landscape.*
- *To avoid visually dominant buildings and structures in the undeveloped landscape between settlements.*
- *To protect natural landscape features, including watercourses and prominent hills free from intrusive development.*
- *To retain the natural, wild and undeveloped character of the coastal strip between settlements.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscapes of the Character Area as places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To protect landscape character and conditions that are consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the coast or inland areas of high visibility.*
- *To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To retain indigenous vegetation as an essential part of the character of the Area and increase its presence, particularly in vegetation corridors extending from existing conservation reserves throughout cleared areas and into settlements.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain vegetation within existing settlements, and to strengthen links to the surrounding landscape by requiring additional vegetation with new development.</i></p>	<p>Prepare a landscape plan to accompany all applications for new development that utilises appropriate species.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Clearing of vegetated areas.</p> <p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally important views and vistas which contribute to the character of the Area, including open views across inlets from existing settlements, expansive outviews to the surrounding landscape from Marlo, and views from main road corridors (e.g. Marlo to Cape Conran, and the approach to Bemm River).</i></p>	<p>Minimise any increase in intrusion of built development into views from Marlo-Cape Conran Road by setting buildings long distance back on the inland side with low unobtrusive building forms and sited to use vegetation and / or topography to screen views to development.</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from Marlo – Cape Conran Road and Sydenham Inlet Road on the natural and undeveloped character of these views, and the availability of scenic views to the ocean coast or inland landscape features.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields.</p> <p>Inappropriately sited development adjacent to main roads and other key viewing locations.</p> <p>Development close or on the coastal side of to Marlo – Cape Conran Road.</p> <p>Loss of natural character around main roads.</p> <p>Intrusive development near or in views to scenic coastal or inland landscape features.</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To ensure that development in and around Marlo and Bemm River does not impact on the characteristics of surrounding landscapes, including key views and viewing opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Support only the appropriate expansion of existing settlements that does not impact on the valued character of the surrounding natural landscape.</i></p>	<p>Retain undeveloped open space within the settlement of Marlo that provides views over the Snowy River estuary.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'All Settlements' and 'Coastal Settlements'.</p>	<p>Inappropriate expansion of settlements that impacts on the valued character of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Increased development visible from the coast or offshore.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Hinterland locations</p>	<p><i>To avoid visually dominant buildings and structures in the undeveloped landscape between settlements.</i></p> <p><i>To protect natural landscape features, including watercourses and prominent hills free from intrusive development.</i></p>	<p>Confine development to settlements as far as possible. In particular, avoid development close to the Snowy River estuary and adjacent to Sydenham Inlet (outside established settlement areas) and prevent ribbon development along Marlo-Cape Conran Road.</p> <p>In steep or hilly locations, design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site, to minimise need for earthworks on the site and articulate buildings into separate elements to avoid visually dominant elevations.</p> <p>Site servicing and access away from landscape features and areas of high visibility and avoid the loss of vegetation.</p> <p>Utilise vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing. If fencing is necessary, use open style fencing traditionally used in rural areas (e.g. post and wire).</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations'.</p>	<p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominant development in the landscape between settlements.</p> <p>High, solid fencing.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation.</p> <p>Lack of vegetation</p> <p>Impervious surfacing.</p>
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Coastal locations</p>	<p><i>To retain the natural, wild and undeveloped character of the coastal strip between settlements.</i></p>	<p>Site developments on the inland slope of dunes (avoid buildings protruding above the dune ridgeline).</p> <p>Set buildings and structures among existing vegetation, maximising the retention of coastal vegetation.</p> <p>Utilise appropriate indigenous vegetation to further integrate the development with the landscape.</p> <p>Avoid pedestrian and vehicular access in highly visible or undisturbed areas.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations'.</p>	<p>Loss of undeveloped and unbuilt qualities of the coastal strip.</p> <p>Development overlooking the foreshore. Or visually intrusive.</p> <p>Visually dominant development within the coastal strip.</p> <p>Disturbance of fragile dune landscapes.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Cultural heritage	<p><i>To recognise and protect the landscapes of the Character Area as places of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and conditions that are consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>
Infrastructure and Signage	<p><i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the coast or inland areas of high visibility.</i></p>	<p>Locate power lines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, preferably in previously cleared locations (e.g. inland of the topographic rise which screens views from Marlo – Cape Conran Road).</p> <p><i>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</i></p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.</p> <p>Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes.</p> <p>Visually dominating signage and infrastructure.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Plantation forestry	<i>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.</i>	<p>Set back plantations from Marlo Cape Conran Road.</p> <p>Site and design plantation forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be of a scale that reflects the existing paddock sizes or scale of existing agricultural activity; • avoid ridgelines and high slopes that are highly visible from roads; • be screened from touring routes by retaining shelterbelts or remnant indigenous vegetation (including understorey) or with substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping; and • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features and integrated with existing forest edges. 	<p>Dominance of plantations at roadsides, including continuity of vegetation without intervening screening planting.</p> <p>Plantations in prominent locations that will create visual scars with periodic harvesting.</p> <p>Loss of scenic outviews views from roads and lookouts.</p>

7.5 Croajingolong Coast

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Wild and largely inaccessible coastal Character Area dominated by rugged topography and extensive native vegetation cover, mainly contained in the Croajingolong National Park. Numerous inlets create scenic features along the coast including Wingan Inlet in the east, one of very few accessible coastal parts of this Area. Views are enclosed by vegetation and topography with the exception of the township of Mallacoota, which offers extensive outviews across Mallacoota Inlet. Coastal landmarks including Point Hicks and large mobile sand dunes in the west are primarily accessed by foot.



Key Features

- Magnificent unspoilt coastline with its beaches and rugged cliffs, undisturbed rivers and diverse vegetation.
- Landmark coastal features including Gabo Island, Point Hicks, large mobile sand dunes and inlets.
- Wild coastline with absence of built development.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – Deeply dissected near-coastal ranges composed of Devonian granites and Palaeozoic sediments, flanked by more recent Quaternary coastal plains, dunefields and inlets provide a dramatic and contrasting landform, including major features at Point Hicks and large mobile dune systems in the west. The coastal edge is characterised by sandy beaches and dunes often backed by interdunal depressions and rocky headlands.
- **Vegetation** – There is consistent indigenous vegetation coverage throughout consisting of diverse vegetation types from coastal sclerophyll forests and woodlands to extensive coastal heathland communities and closed temperate rainforest. Only a few areas of mobile sand dunes and small pastoral land holdings are devoid of vegetation. The varied pattern of the contrasting vegetation communities contributes to a special scenic beauty.
- **Waterform** – Coastal water features are influenced by the wild seas of Tasman Sea and Bass Strait while there are substantial inland waterfeatures including Wigan and Tamboon Inlets and permanent watercourses.
- **Land use** – With the exception of a few patches of private land in the north of the area close to the Princes Highway, the entire Character Area is reserved for nature conservation in Croajingolong National Park. Built features are scarce and restricted to minor unserviced shack developments on inlets (e.g. Tamboon Inlet) and lighthouses at Point Hicks and Gabo Island. There are recreational locations within the National Park at Sydenham Inlet, Wigan Inlet and near Mallacoota and

accommodation at Point Hicks. An airfield is developed within the Character Area near Mallacoota.

Pattern of Viewing

Croajingolong National Park attracts visitors to coastal viewing locations including Point Hicks. Other significant viewing sites include Genoa Peak, Mount Everard, Rame Head and Little Rame Head. There are a few roads and access tracks into the National Park, mostly unsealed, and an extensive network of walking trails including the Wilderness Coast Walk which extends 100km from Sydenham Inlet into New South Wales.

Views are enclosed by vegetation and topography with the exception of open views across waterbodies (e.g. Tamboon Inlet) and the less accessible coastal edge and features which frequently provide distant views along the wild coastline. This Character Area covers a long and largely natural part of the Victorian Coastline and views to the Area from offshore are also important.

Community Values

Positive Features

Members of the local community commented that the lack of development, the forest continuing down to the coastline and little evidence of human impact were some of the most positive features of this Character Area.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

The wider community identified intensive development, loss of vegetation, erosion, privatisation of coastal areas and industrial areas along the coast as negative features or negative changes occurring in the region.

Significant Landscapes

The Croajingolong Coast, Point Hicks and Thurra River were all identified as significant places by respondents to community questionnaire and disposable cameras exercise, citing rugged and windswept character untouched by development as the key elements contributing to this significance.

The wider community also highlighted Croajingolong National Park, Big Beach, the beaches at Mallacoota, Wigan Inlet and the Mallacoota foreshore as some of the most significant places within the Character Area.

Other Identified Values

- The Croajingolong National Park Management Plan identifies spectacular views of the pristine coastal environment and associated landforms across Mallacoota Inlet to the Howe Range as particularly significant
- The Croajingolong National Park is one of the most significant conservation reserves in Victoria, and is one of the State's three Biosphere Reserves.
- Landscape setting types for the Victorian Coast describes this area as being of outstanding scenic quality and requiring special landscape protection to ensure development does not impact on landscape values.
- The entire National Park is known to have had history of occupation by reasonably large populations of Koori people, who most probably concentrated around the inlets, estuaries and wetlands of the present Park.
- This Character Area is known to have high Aboriginal significance with extensive known occurrences of Aboriginal heritage sites throughout, particularly on the coastal edge.
- Historic built form landscape features including the Point Hicks Light Station are listed by Heritage Victoria.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- Naturally dynamic coastal landscapes including mobile sand dunes and rock and cliff formations.
- Ongoing park management works and visitor infrastructure management / upgrades.

Drivers of landscape change and development patterns in the Character Area include:

- Trend for increased migration from cities and inland areas to the coast.
- Increased permanent population in coastal settlements.

- Increased tourism visitation.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the character area include:

- Enhanced recreation, tourism and visitation infrastructure.

Sensitivity to Change

While many locations are screened from key viewing locations by vegetation and topography, consistent vegetation cover and a strong wilderness character makes many locations sensitive to development. Locations which are visible above coastal features, or over open inlets – including the slopes visible Mallacoota – are particularly sensitive to change, as are views from recreational sites, walking tracks and access roads.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Croajingolong Coast as a significant regional landscape, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity.
- Change within the Character Area is largely controlled under the Croajingolong National Park Management Plan which mandates that the Park will be maintained in a largely undeveloped condition, and significant natural features will be given special protection. Visitor enjoyment of the Park will be enhanced by improved interpretation at key sites.

Management Considerations

- The areas adjacent to high use recreation areas and access roads, and the more remote and undisturbed parts of the Park, require particular attention to ensure that the natural qualities of the landscape are not impaired. Park management activities, structures and activities on adjacent land have the potential to adversely affect landscape qualities.

- Continue to provide input into management activities in adjacent State forest and private property which have potential to affect landscape values within the Park, in particular access routes on the Park boundary and gravel pits.
- Minimise as far as practicable the visual impacts of management activities.
- Improve the landscape quality of degraded areas by rehabilitating sites as appropriate.

Future Character Direction

Careful management of development throughout this Character Area is warranted to ensure the undeveloped wilderness character of the coastline and hinterland is maintained. This Character Area will continue to be characterised by extensive natural landscapes with an absence of visible built form. Management activities and infrastructure will avoid disturbance to natural landscapes while low scale visitor facilities will be concentrated in nodes as designated through the Croajingolong National Park Management Plan. Development on private land in the Area will ensure that views from roads walking trails, the coastline and recreation locations retain a natural and undeveloped wilderness quality.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Protecting and strengthening roadside vegetation.
- Siting built form away from key viewing corridors and in existing activity nodes, cleared private land or other disturbed areas to minimise visual intrusion.

Threats

- Developments including infrastructure which create visible landscape scars through the removal of vegetation, particularly at roadsides or coast or lake edges.

- Large scale tourism or accommodation facilities which dominate natural landscapes.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To retain the dominance of the extensive forested landscapes throughout the Character Area.*
- *To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.*
- *To strengthen the presence of indigenous vegetation in cleared hinterland areas and at roadsides.*
- *To protect significant views and vistas, including views across from Mallacoota Inlet to the Howe Range.*
- *To protect the setting of scenic and natural areas within Croajingolong National Park.*
- *To maintain and enhance the strongly vegetated character of hill slopes and ridges throughout the Character Area, and to avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.*
- *To maintain the natural and largely unbuilt character of the landscape, particularly adjacent to landscape features, watercourses and in locations adjoining Croajingolong National Park.*
- *To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscape of Croajingolong Coast as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To protect landscape character and conditions that are consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Croajingolong National Park or areas of high visibility.*
- *To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To retain the dominance of the extensive forested landscapes throughout the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.</i></p> <p><i>To strengthen the presence of indigenous vegetation in cleared hinterland areas and at roadsides.</i></p>	<p>Use indigenous vegetation in favour of exotic throughout this Character Area.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Clearing of heavily vegetated hill faces and gullies.</p> <p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect significant views and vistas, including views across from Mallacoota Inlet to the Howe Range.</i></p> <p><i>To protect the setting of scenic and natural areas within Croajingolong National Park.</i></p>	<p>Avoid large infrastructure or other developments that will be visible from walking trails, recreation locations or lookouts and scenic natural landscapes within Croajingolong National Park.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Key Views and Vistas'.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p>	<p><i>To maintain and enhance the strongly vegetated character of hill slopes and ridges throughout the Character Area, and to avoid development which will be visible on the skyline.</i></p> <p><i>To maintain the natural and largely unbuilt character of the landscape, particularly adjacent to landscape features, watercourses and in locations adjoining Croajingolong National Park.</i></p>	<p>Utilise vegetation for screening and to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing. If fencing is necessary, use open style fencing traditionally used in rural areas (e.g. post and wire).</p> <p>Avoid development near or adjacent to lakes and other watercourses. If it cannot be avoided, development should be low scale and set back to allow for the protection of riparian vegetation.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations'.</p>	<p>Development on prominent hill faces s.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials in visible locations.</p> <p>Buildings on ridge tops, particularly where they will be visible from roads public use areas.</p> <p>Development without substantial indigenous revegetation / landscaping.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</p> <p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominant development in the landscape outside settlements.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Coastal locations</p>	<p><i>To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.</i></p>	<p>Where development within the coastal strip cannot be prevented (e.g. development for essential public purposes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site development in existing disturbed areas and activity nodes maximising the retention of coastal vegetation; • minimise building footprints and heights and manage servicing so as not to adversely impact the foreshore landscape (overshadowing of the public foreshore should not be reduced); • use dark, non-reflective materials and colours that compliment the coastal environment, with consideration as to how the materials will weather over time; • avoid duplication of access in highly visible or undisturbed areas. <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Coastal Locations'.</p>	<p>New Visible development from the foreshore, beach or offshore.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials on visible slopes.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations.</p> <p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p> <p>Visually dominating development within the coastal strip.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage</p>	<p><i>To recognise and protect the landscape of Croajingolong Coast as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p> <p><i>To protect landscape character and conditions that are consistent with Aboriginal cultural values of the area.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Infrastructure and Signage	<i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Croajingolong National Park or areas of high visibility.</i>	<p>Site infrastructure to avoid highly scenic locations, key views and near-coastal locations, (including those within Croajingolong National Park) or in the case of powerlines and other utility services be underground in these areas.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.</p> <p>Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes.</p> <p>Visually dominating signage and infrastructure.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p>
Plantation forestry	<i>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.</i>	<p>Set back plantations from the Princes Highway.</p> <p>Site and design plantation forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid ridgelines and high slopes that are highly visible from roads; • be screened from touring routes by remnant indigenous vegetation (including understorey) or where existing vegetation is not available, plant substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping; and • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features and integrated with existing forest edges. 	<p>Dominance of plantations at roadsides, including continuity of vegetation without intervening screening planting.</p> <p>Plantations in prominent locations that will create visual scars with periodic harvesting.</p> <p>Loss of scenic outviews views from roads and lookouts.</p>

7.6 Mallacoota Inlet and Coast

Landscape Character Type: East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

This small Character Area consists of undulating slopes adjoining Mallacoota Inlet and the Croajingolong Coast. The Inlet with its vegetated slopes is the dominant landscape feature, creating a scenic natural landscape setting to the settlement of Mallacoota. Extensive native vegetation occurs throughout much of the rolling hinterland, except for a few small patches of pasture. There is an absence of built form except for the settlements of Mallacoota and Gipsy Point.



Key Features

- Outviews across Mallacoota Inlet to rugged and natural ranges and vegetated hillslopes.
- Wild and undeveloped coastline with absence of built development.
- Indigenous native vegetation throughout.

Landscape Characteristics

- **Landform** – Undulating often steep topography adjoins Mallacoota Inlet throughout this Character Area. At the coastal edge in the south, high sand dunes are backed by small scale coastal plains. Deeply dissected near-coastal ranges create dominant landscape features across Mallacoota Inlet.
- **Waterform** – Mallacoota Inlet is the dominant inland landscape feature fed by several permanent watercourses. At the coastal edge while the wild sea of the Tasman Sea and Bass Strait are a defining feature.
- **Vegetation** – There is substantial indigenous vegetation coverage throughout the Character Area consisting of diverse vegetation types from coastal sclerophyll forests and woodlands to extensive coastal heathland communities and closed temperate rainforest. Substantial areas cleared for pasture occur near the settlements of Gipsy Point and Mallacoota.
- **Land use** – Most of the Character Area is reserved for nature conservation (including the Croajingolong National Park), while substantial areas of productive forestry and pastoral land uses also occur. The settlement of Mallacoota is a major recreation destination and its adjacent Inlet and coast are valued tourism and recreation resources.

Settlements

Mallacoota

The settlement of Mallacoota is developed on rolling hills overlooking the Inlet, and behind coastal sand dunes. In the northern and eastern parts of the town,

residential and holiday development occurs on former farmland set on sloping topography above a low energy coastal inlet edge (Photo 1) with extensive views across the Inlet to the Howe Range. Views to the prominent slopes from the Inlet are important, and there is a lack of vegetation around the dwellings in parts, exposing them to these views. In the west of the town, there is low-rise coastal residential development set on low-lying topography behind coastal dunes with few outviews. To the west of the township is a relatively large cleared area that caters for the Mallacoota airfield and communications facility. The airfield caters for regional air traffic and scenic flights.



Photo 1 Dwellings set above the Inlet in patchy vegetation at Mallacoota.

Pattern of Viewing

There is one entry road to the Character Area which offers varied, largely enclosed viewing, while the township of Mallacoota and adjacent recreation locations (including the Mallacoota Inlet itself) are also important viewing locations attracting tourism and recreational visitation.

Views throughout the Area are enclosed by vegetation and topography with the exception of the settlement of Mallacoota which offers extensive views across the Inlet from to the Howe Range which is a prominent and vegetated hilly / mountain backdrop. Views to the prominent slopes from the Inlet are also important. Long distance views along the wild and unbuilt coastline are characteristic of the coastal edge of the Character Area.

Community Values

Positive Features

People from within this Character Area noted that its positive features include the lack of visible development, the extensive wilderness, the beautiful ocean beaches, views of the Howe Ranges and Gabo Island, the village atmosphere of the Mallacoota Township and the provision of recreational activities.

Negative Changes and Spoilt Places

Members of the local community identified overdevelopment and intrusive development near the coastline as well as destruction of native vegetation as negative changes that are occurring in the area.

Significant Landscapes

Scenic beaches and waterways at Mallacoota and Basion Pt, and the natural and undeveloped edges to Mallacoota Inlet. The undisturbed wilderness coast at Croajingolong National Park was also mentioned.

Other Identified Values

- Mallacoota Township and Inlet are listed by the National Trust for diversity of unique intact natural and scenic landscapes. Croajingolong National Park is listed by the National Trust for diversity of unique intact natural and scenic landscapes and is also on the Register of the National Estate for diversity of flora and fauna and unique landforms.
- East Gippsland Coastal Streams Catchment Area listed in the Heritage Rivers Act (1992) for high scenic / cultural value.
- *Landscape Setting Types for the Victorian Coast* describes this area as being of outstanding scenic quality and requiring special protection.

Landscape Change

Anticipated and ongoing changes to the landscape of the character area include:

- Clearing of vegetation around houses near the inlet for views.

- Dynamic and changing estuarine and coastal landforms including mobile sand dunes.

Drivers of landscape change in the Character Area include:

- East Gippsland Shire as a whole is expected to grow strongly and age significantly over the next 30 years. The natural beauty and boating opportunities in and around this Character Area are driving factors for potential new settlers (e.g. from Metropolitan Melbourne).
- Significant increase in coastal and hinterland land values and declining viability of agriculture driving change in land use from traditional farming practices to residential or tourism / recreational.
- Mallacoota is recognised in the Draft Mallacoota Coastal Town Design Framework as having potential for limited residential growth and further provision of tourism product drawing on the natural assets of the area.

Development trends and pressures known in or likely to occur in the character area include:

- Expansion of the settlement of Mallacoota with new dwellings and residential estates being proposed and developed on previously rural slopes overlooking Mallacoota Inlet.

Sensitivity to Change

While many locations are screened from key viewing locations by vegetation and topography, consistent vegetation cover and a strong wilderness character heightens the sensitivity of this entire Character Area. Steep and naturally appearing coastal features and undeveloped Inlet / waterway edges are highly sensitive to change, and particularly sensitive to the introduction of built elements. The steep slopes adjoining Mallacoota Inlet are also sensitive owing to their visibility from and proximity to the Inlet. The less visible, already developed parts of Mallacoota settlement are less sensitive, while the loss of indigenous vegetation in any visible part of the Area would be detrimental to the character.

Existing Policies

The following State and Local government policies currently direct landscape change in the Character Area:

- The East Gippsland Planning Scheme sets out a policy for tourist, commercial or industrial developments in non-urban areas to retain the productive capacity, environmental and landscape quality and generally rural or natural character of these localities.
- The East Gippsland Shire Significant Landscapes Local Policy (cl22.12) identifies the Croajingolong Coast and land adjoining the Genoa River as significant regional landscapes, and seeks to ensure that the impacts of subdivision, building (including design, siting, bulk and materials) and planting / removal of vegetation are consistent with maintaining and enhancing visual amenity of these areas and landscape quality, including views from the water. The Policy also seeks to protect and enhance landscapes viewed from Mallacoota Road.
- The Majority of the Character Area is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) as part of Croajingolong National Park and adjacent State Forest. Larger areas of Rural Zone (RUZ) occur near Gipsy Point and Mallacoota.
- The settlement of Mallacoota comprises mix of urban zones including Business (B1Z), Industrial (IN3Z), Mixed Use (MUZ), Public Use (PUZ2 and PUZ6) and larger areas of Residential (R1Z). Surrounding areas are zoned Low Density Residential (LDRZ) and Rural Living (RLZ1).
- The settlement of Mallacoota and surrounds is covered by a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO8) to conserve high conservation value and existing trees and other vegetation which contribute significantly towards aesthetic values of the area and provides for a unique character in a lakeshore setting.
- A Design and Development Overlay (DDO9) applies over residential areas in Mallacoota to protect views from Mallacoota Inlet to the residential areas of the township, to ensure that the new built form compliments the existing special character, appearance and environment of the Mallacoota area, among other things. The Mallacoota Airstrip is covered by a Heritage Overlay (HO227).
- A number of Environmental Protection Overlays (e.g. ESO78, ESO79; ESO96) apply to parts of this Character Area to conserve and enhance the environmental sustainability and ecological integrity of these places.
- Forthcoming Coastal Town Design Frameworks for Mallacoota and Gipsy Point will provide a sustainable vision for the future form, image and

function of these settlements and give greater certainty about what is possible in terms of future development.

Management Considerations

- Careful management of development throughout this Character Area is warranted to ensure the undeveloped wilderness character of the coastline and immediate hinterland is maintained.
- Prominent slopes above Mallacoota Inlet are important to the landscape setting of the Inlet, and dwellings should be carefully designed and sited to being conspicuous to views, and efforts should be made to increase indigenous vegetation coverage to softens views from the Inlet.
- Create a definite visual edge to the settlement of Mallacoota as viewed from the inlet and restrict linear development along the inlet edge.
- Increase indigenous vegetation cover throughout, including in rural areas adjoining the settlement of Mallacoota.
- Manage roadsides and key viewing locations by protecting the intact native vegetation cover.

Future Character Directions

The wild and natural character of this Character Area will be retained and native vegetation will dominate low-scale built form. Large sections of the Area will remain undeveloped offering extensive scenic vistas free from built intrusion, including much of the landscape visible from Mallacoota Inlet. Settlements and cleared areas will complement the surrounding natural character expansion of urban areas will be controlled and the vegetated character of visible areas adjoining Mallacoota Inlet in the settlement of Mallacoota (and its rural surrounds) will be increased.

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- Strengthening native vegetation around dwellings in Mallacoota, in particular around houses in slopes above the Inlet where substantial indigenous landscaping could improve the character.
- Siting built form in previously developed areas away from key viewing corridors.

Threats

- Uncontrolled expansion of settlements, especially Gipsy Point.
- Large-scale developments dominating natural and rural landscapes, especially at edge of Mallacoota Inlet.
- Piecemeal intrusion of built form into natural lake and coast edges.
- Large dwellings sited in prominent locations overlooking Mallacoota Inlet and / or lack of vegetation around houses.
- Subdivision of privately owned rural zoned land for rural living or low density residential altering the bushland and rural character outside townships.

Landscape Management Objectives

- *To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.*
- *To strengthen indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area, particularly on the slopes above Mallacoota Inlet.*
- *To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, particularly extensive outviews from the settlement of Mallacoota to the ranges across Mallacoota Inlet, and long distance views from the foreshore along the wild coastline.*
- *To protect the views from and setting of natural areas and recreation locations within Croajingolong National Park.*

- *To encourage a balance between development and a vegetated landscape at the inlet, waterway and/or coastal edges of settlements.*
- *To increase the vegetated character of those parts of the Mallacoota settlement visible from Mallacoota Inlet.*
- *To protect or restore the dominance of the natural landscape and vegetation on the hill slopes above Mallacoota Inlet.*
- *To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.*
- *To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.*
- *To recognise and protect the landscape of Mallacoota and Mallacoota Inlet as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.*
- *To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Mallacoota Inlet, Mallacoota settlement or the Coast.*
- *To minimise the visual intrusion of infrastructure into landscapes visible from Croajingolong National Park.*
- *To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.*

Landscape Management Guidelines

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Vegetation	<p><i>To protect indigenous coastal vegetation and ensure that it is the dominant feature of the landscape at the coastal edge of the Character Area and adjoining inland lakes.</i></p> <p><i>To strengthen indigenous vegetation throughout the Character Area, particularly on the slopes above Mallecoota Inlet.</i></p>	<p>Prepare a landscape plan which documents views to the site from key viewing opportunities (including Mallecoota Inlet) and details approaches to prevent, minimise or mitigate impacts on the character of these views (e.g. landscaping with appropriate indigenous species).</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Vegetation'.</p>	<p>Loss of indigenous vegetation.</p> <p>Highly visible development on the slopes above Mallecoota Inlet.</p>
Key views and vistas	<p><i>To protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the Area, particularly extensive outviews from the settlement of Mallecoota to the ranges across Mallecoota Inlet, and long distance views from the foreshore along the wild coastline.</i></p> <p><i>To protect the views from and setting of natural areas and recreation locations within Croajingolong National Park.</i></p>	<p>Using low building forms integrated with topography and extensive landscaping of indigenous species (or non-invasive exotic / native vegetation that is already a feature of the area) to minimise visual intrusion in the foreground (up to 500 metres) of all key views and vistas.</p> <p>Consider the cumulative impact of developments visible from all key viewing corridors (e.g. touring routes, highways), scenic lookouts and from within the settlement of Mallecoota on the natural and scenic character of the views and availability of views to the ocean, or Mallecoota Inlet.</p>	<p>Unsympathetic development in key view fields</p>
Settlements	<p><i>To encourage a balance between development and a vegetated landscape at the inlet, waterway and/or coastal edges of settlements.</i></p> <p><i>To increase the vegetated character of those parts of the Mallecoota settlement visible from Mallecoota Inlet.</i></p>	<p>The height and form of new development at the Inlet, waterway and/or coastal edge of settlements should be sensitive in scale to surrounding development, the surrounding landform and the visual setting of the settlement, particularly when viewed from the waterfront / foreshore.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'All Settlements' and 'Coastal Settlements'.</p>	<p>Linear urban development along roadsides.</p> <p>Unclear edges to settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter at entrances and exists to townships.</p> <p>Large developments in prominent inlet, waterway and/or coastal locations.</p> <p>Buildings dominating vistas to and from the coast.</p> <p>Increased overlooking of the public foreshore.</p> <p>Overshadowing of the public foreshore within and adjacent to the settlement.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Hinterland locations</p>	<p><i>To protect or restore the dominance of the natural landscape and vegetation on the hill slopes above Mallaoota Inlet.</i></p>	<p>Site buildings within existing settlement areas wherever possible. In particular, avoid development close to or visible from Mallaoota Inlet or adjacent to Mallaoota Road.</p> <p>In steep or hilly locations, design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site, to minimise need for earthworks on the site and articulate buildings into separate elements to avoid visually dominant elevations.</p> <p>Site servicing and access away from landscape features and areas of high visibility and avoid the loss of vegetation.</p> <p>Keep development below the dominant tree canopy height. Maximise the space on a lot able to support vegetation.</p> <p>Further Integrate any new development with the landscape through the use of appropriate indigenous vegetation, and a landscape plan where appropriate.</p> <p><i>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations' and 'Ridges and Hill Slopes'.</i></p>	<p>Buildings and structures that are visible on the skyline, prominent locations or close to roads.</p> <p>Increased built form visible from Mallaoota Inlet outside the settlement.</p> <p>Light coloured or highly reflective building materials on hill faces.</p> <p>Dark coloured building materials on ridge tops.</p> <p>Excessive cut and fill.</p> <p>Large building footprints.</p> <p>Loss of vegetation in visually prominent locations</p> <p>Development that visually dominates the landscape setting.</p> <p>Buildings that protrude above the tree canopy height.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
<p>Between settlements</p> <p>Coastal locations</p>	<p><i>To minimise any increase in development visible above the dunes and coastal vegetation outside settlements, when viewed from the beach, foreshore or offshore.</i></p>	<p>Design buildings on the coast (or Inlet) to be low scale and set back a sufficient distance to allow for the protection or rehabilitation of a substantial zone of indigenous coastal / riparian vegetation (e.g. over 100 metres).</p> <p>Avoid any buildings or structures visible from the foreshore by setting new developments back on the inland side of dunes. Where development within the coastal strip cannot be prevented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site developments on the inland slope of dunes (avoid buildings protruding above the dune ridgeline); • set buildings and structures among existing vegetation, maximising the retention of coastal vegetation; • utilise appropriate indigenous vegetation to further integrate the development with the landscape; • design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site and avoid visually dominant elevations; • minimise overlooking of the foreshore; and • avoid access in highly visible or undisturbed areas. 	<p>Increased visible development within or the coastal strip outside settlements.</p> <p>Increased overlooking of the public foreshore.</p> <p>Overshadowing of the public foreshore.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage</p>	<p><i>To encourage landscape change that is consistent with the cultural heritage values of the Character Area.</i></p> <p><i>To recognise and protect the landscape of Mallacoota and Mallacoota Inlet as a place of high Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</i></p>	<p>Relate landscape character to the relevant heritage values of significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.</p> <p>Identify and preserve landscape conditions and settings of places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.</p> <p>Respect the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations to avoid impacts on places, objects or landscapes that have Aboriginal heritage value.</p>	<p>Intrusive development that detracts from cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Loss or damage to Aboriginal cultural heritage relics, artefacts or places.</p> <p>Disturbance to Aboriginal heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities.</p>

Character Element	Landscape Management Objective	Response	Avoid
Infrastructure and signage	<p><i>To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure, particularly adjacent to the Mallacoota Inlet, Mallacoota settlement or the Coast.</i></p> <p><i>To minimise the visual intrusion of infrastructure into landscapes visible from Croajingolong National Park.</i></p>	<p>Set back all non-boating infrastructure from the edges of Mallacoota Inlet.</p> <p>Also refer to Best Practice Policies 'Infrastructure' and 'Signage'.</p>	<p>Loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.</p> <p>Tall or dominant structures near to roads or lakes.</p> <p>Visually dominating signage and infrastructure.</p> <p>Large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, particularly near to the coastal edge or intruding into scenic outviews are available from roads and settlements.</p> <p>Signage clutter.</p>
Plantation forestry	<p><i>To encourage the appropriate siting and design of plantation forests that protects the character and viewing of the Area.</i></p>	<p>Set back plantations from Mallacoota Road.</p> <p>Site and design plantation forests to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid ridgelines and high slopes that are highly visible from roads; • be screened from touring routes by remnant indigenous vegetation (including understorey) or where existing vegetation is not available, plant substantial indigenous vegetation landscaping; and • be designed with varied edges that respond to natural features and integrated with existing forest edges. 	<p>Dominance of plantations at roadsides, including continuity of vegetation without intervening screening planting.</p> <p>Plantations in prominent locations that will create visual scars with periodic harvesting.</p> <p>Loss of scenic outviews views from roads and lookouts.</p>