

COASTAL SPACES LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STUDY

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF
VICTORIA'S COASTAL LANDSCAPES

STATE OVERVIEW REPORT

September 2006

For further information on this Study and/or the Coastal Spaces Initiative please visit out website: www.dse.vic.gov.au/coastalspaces

Report prepared by Planisphere.

Published by the Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment
Melbourne, September 2006

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Authorised by the Victorian Government, 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne.

Printed by CMA Print
Printed on 100% Recycled Paper

ISBN 1 74152 579 9

For more information contact the DSE Customer Service Centre 136 186

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Foreword

Victoria's coastal landscapes are some of the most spectacular and recognisable in the country, if not the world. They include the rugged wilderness of Wilsons Promontory and the Croajingolong Coast, the unparalleled landscape of the Ninety Mile Beach and the iconic offshore rock formations of the Twelve Apostles and Bay of Islands in the Great Ocean Road region.

The many visually significant landscapes along the coast, in both an individual and collective sense, contribute to the overall coastal experience and image portrayed in Australia and the world, which in turn delivers economic benefits through tourism and social benefits to all Victorians.

The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study provides a thorough assessment of landscape characteristics and identification of visually significant landscape from State border to border (excluding metropolitan Melbourne). Importantly, it provides a detailed implementation framework to assist local government, landholders and other agencies to manage future development impacts within the coastal landscape.

This study, along with the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study 2004*, provides the most comprehensive understanding of landscapes for any coastline in Australia, confirming the meaning and worth of these landscapes to the Victorian community.

The study delivers on the actions and objectives established within the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002* and the *Coastal Management Act 1995* by providing an appropriate package of tools and information to manage and protect visually significant landscapes across the entire Victorian coastline.

The important challenge now is to implement its findings so that Victoria's coastal landscapes are there for future generations.





Contents

Foreword	i
Contents	ii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Landscape Character Types and Areas	6
Chapter 2. Significant Coastal Landscapes	46
Chapter 3. Protecting & Managing the Character & Significance of Coastal Landscapes	86
Acknowledgments	94



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 document, **Protection and Management of Victoria's Coastal Landscapes: State Overview Report**, is an 'executive summary' of the coastal landscape character types and significant coastal landscapes of Victoria. The report contains the key recommendations for protecting and managing these landscapes, including changes to the State Planning Policy Framework.

The **State Overview Report** is one of four sets of documents that make up the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study*. An outline of the full contents of the study follows this introduction.

Study Area

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 statewide 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.

In summary, the following study areas have been defined for the three coastal regions:

	SW Victoria	Bellarine Peninsula	Gippsland Region
<i>Length of coastline</i>	South Australian state border to the western extent of the Great Ocean Road region at Warrnambool	The entire Bellarine Peninsula is within the study area, with the western boundary defined by a change in character, the extent of the Geelong urban area, and the Great Ocean Road region study area boundary (west of Breamlea)	New South Wales state border in the east to the Bass Coast Shire municipal boundary in the west
<i>Inland extent of field survey / proposed local policy</i>	Approximately 6 km to 10 km inland from the coastline		Approximately 4 km to 10 km inland from the coastline
<i>Inland extent of desktop / character area analysis</i>	Approximately 20 km inland from the coastline		Approximately 20 km inland from the coastline, but also taking in the Gippsland Lakes that are considered to have a coastal relationship

The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* covers the coastline between the South West and Bellarine regions, and extends inland

to the Princes Highway, as that formed the study area for the *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy 2004*.

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.

Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study

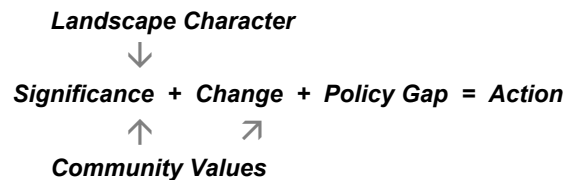
The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* was undertaken by Planisphere in 2003. The study was the first of its kind in Victoria, if not Australia, and produced the methodology on which this study is based. Though the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* has built on and refined some aspects of the methodology (e.g. the determination of levels of landscape significance), its recommendations are compatible with the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*, which remains relevant and current.

The completion of the two studies means that Victoria now has a comprehensive analysis of the character and significance of its entire coastline and coastal hinterland, including detailed recommendations for its future protection and management.



Study Framework

In developing the methodology, analysis and recommendations, the study team used the following Landscape Management Framework (developed as part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*), around which the study outcomes are structured.



The framework is explained in further detail in the **Background Report** that sets out the methodology for the project. The methodology involved in obtaining community values input is described briefly below. The way in which community opinion was used is outlined in Chapter 2.

The **Municipal Reference Documents** and **Implementation Toolkits** represent the application of the study framework to each of the nine municipalities covered by this study. The framework also forms the basis of the key recommendations outlined in this report.

Consultation

Steering Committee

The Coastal Spaces Steering Committee, chaired by Diane James of the Victorian Coastal Council, oversaw the preparation of this study. The committee includes representatives from coastal boards, government departments, RMIT, local council and Tourism Victoria (refer to Acknowledgments for full list).

Reference Groups

Three reference groups were established to provide local expertise, advice and input throughout the study – one for each region (South West, Bellarine and Gippsland). Councillor and officer representation from each municipality was invited, together with regional coastal board, catchment management authority, agency and departmental representation (refer to Acknowledgments for full list). Each regional reference group met four times over the course of the study.

Community Involvement

Beyond each regional reference group, community engagement throughout the study formed an important component of the study methodology. The key objectives in involving the wider community were to:

- determine community perceptions and values in relation to landscape character, and ensure these were embedded into the work at the early stages of the project
- identify community issues relating to existing and future landscape character, including opinions on positive and negative changes that have occurred
- determine what makes a landscape significant from the community's point of view, and use this information to refine the significance methodology for the project and identify the most significant coastal landscapes on the Victorian coast.

The techniques used to engage the community included:

- broad distribution of a community questionnaire at the outset of the project
- a community photographic exercise that involved the distribution of disposable cameras to key stakeholder groups with an interest in landscape management in each region



- distribution of significant landscapes brochures containing the initial thoughts of the consultant team on significant landscapes in each of the three coastal regions.

Structure of this Report

As described, this report outlines the findings of the Landscape Assessment Study at the state level, including the following key topics:

Chapter 1 Coastal Landscape Character

Chapter 2 Significant Coastal Landscapes

Chapter 3 Protecting and Managing the Character and Significance of Coastal Landscapes

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



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

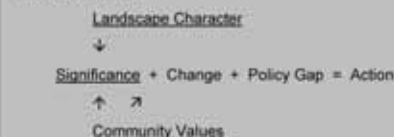
Acknowledgements

Maps included in this report:

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

Acknowledgements

Introduction



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:

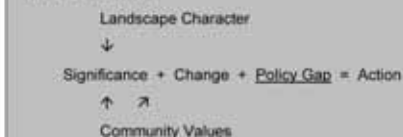
- Landscape Character Types and Areas
- Aerial Photo
- Landform and Waterform (Topography)

Appendices

- Explanatory Character Area Analysis Paper
- Character Area Analysis Papers

Acknowledgements

Introduction



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

Landscape Character Types and Areas



1.1 Introduction

Coastal Landscape Character Types

At the state level, Victoria's coastal areas can be divided into landscape Character Types based on broad areas of common physical, environmental and cultural characteristics.

A professional assessment underpinned the determination of landscape character, 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**.

In brief, the Character Types in each region were identified through a study of key landscape character elements including landform, waterform, vegetation and land use, as well as a detailed field survey.

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, unless otherwise noted in the **Character Area Analysis Papers**.

Coastal Landscape Character Areas

At a local level, 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 landscape features, or the pattern of viewing, vary.

The landscape Character Types and Character Areas are shown on the maps following this section, along with descriptions and photos illustrating each of the Character Areas.

Character Area Analysis Papers

Each Character Area is described and analysed in detail in the **Character Area Analysis Papers**. The papers are attached to the **Municipal Reference Documents** as Appendix 2, and 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 to the **Municipal Reference Documents** as Appendix 1.

Implications for this Study

Landscape character is a key component of the Landscape Management Framework (which underpins the methodology of this study) and a major input



to various aspects of landscape significance, landscape change and the development of landscape management guidelines.

The Character Areas form the basis for describing the coastal character of Victoria at a detailed level. It is from this underlying character that guidelines for appropriate development in the landscape have been derived. These have been prepared for application to the whole coastline in the form of Best Practice Policies, and have also been prepared for each Character Area in response to detailed local conditions.

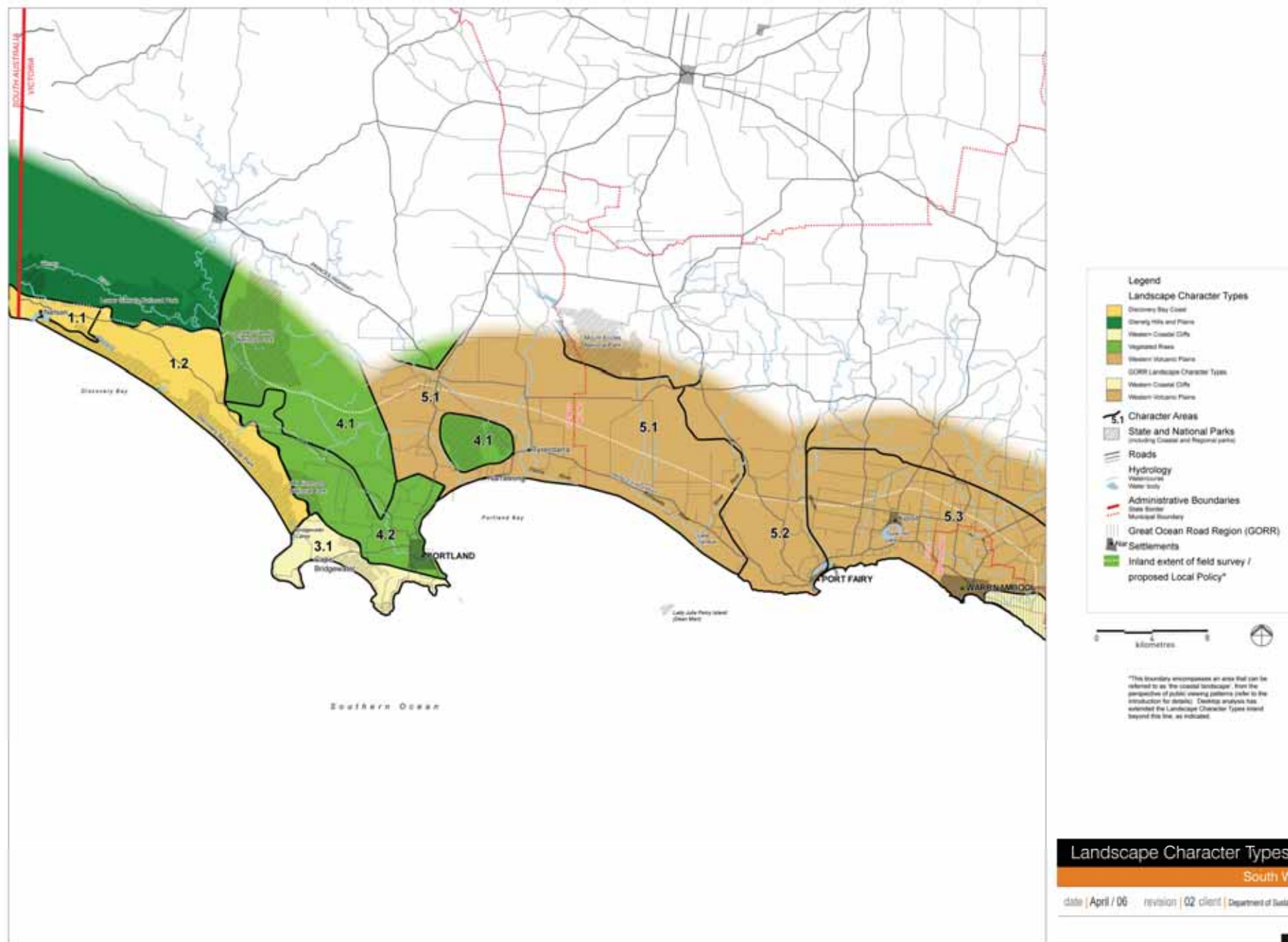
The whole of coast Best Practice Policies for the protection and management of landscape character are outlined in Chapter 3, and the detailed landscape management guidelines are contained in the **Character Area Analysis Papers**. Recommendations regarding the implementation of these policies and guidelines are also included in Chapter 3.



Landscape Character Types and Areas:

South West Victoria

1.2 South West Victoria





South West Victoria: Landscape Character Type 1

Discovery Bay Coast

Character Area 1.1: Far West Coastal Hills

This small Character Area near the border of South Australia abuts the coast and contains scenic landscape features including the Glenelg River. The coastal edge is dominated by wide sandy beaches and vegetated sand dunes with lakes behind. The mouth of the Glenelg River creates a scenic setting for the Nelson township and is a significant water feature that opens out to the sea via Oxbow Lake. Inland, the area is characterised by open pastures in an undulating landscape with scenic copses of wind-pruned native vegetation.

Character Area 1.2: Discovery Bay Dunes and Hinterland

Characterised by a long coastal edge and a large inland area dominated by pine plantations, this Character Area is unique for its large scale active dune system that extends from east of the settlement of Nelson to the Bridgewater Lakes west of Cape Bridgewater. The undulating topography is completely dominated inland at the west of the Character Area by pine plantations and other vegetation that mostly filters or blocks views from roads. Roadsides occasionally provide scenic views to Mount Richmond and larger dunes near the coast. There are no major settlements in the Character Area and much of it is free of built development, despite inland sections being highly modified by pine plantations.

South West Victoria: Landscape Character Type 2

Glenelg Hills and Plains

Character Areas have not been delineated for this landscape Character Type as it is located entirely outside the area of detailed field survey.



1.1 Far West Coastal Hills



1.2 Discovery Bay Dunes and Hinterland



South West Victoria: Landscape Character Type 3

Western Coastal Cliffs

Landscape Character Area 3.1: The Three Capes

The Three Capes (Cape Bridgewater, Cape Nelson and Cape Sir William Grant) form a dramatic landform that protrudes into the wild seas of Bass Strait near Portland. The Character Area is surrounded on three sides by high sea cliffs and dunal escarpments with sandy beaches. The hinterland landscape consists of tightly undulating topography of mobile and stabilised sand dunes which frequently provide views across low coastal vegetation or cleared pasture to the capes and ocean, as well as pastoral areas further inland. Much of the coastal edge is reserved in National Park and contains intact coastal heath, while the hinterland is largely cleared of native vegetation and dotted with pastoral properties and low density and rural living.



3.1 The Three Capes

South West Victoria: Landscape Character Type 4

Vegetated Rises

Landscape Character Area 4.1: Wooded Hinterland and Mount Clay

With gently rolling topography incorporating the peaks of Mount Kincaid and Mount Clay, the densely forested land in this Character Area is cleared in parts to accommodate hobby farms and pastures. Residential dwellings spreading from the eastern edge of the Portland township also enter into the Character Area, however no major towns exist within its boundaries. Some residential dwellings are set within often highly vegetated relict dunes that roll down towards the ocean. Significant vegetation along roadsides and property boundaries filters views that mostly lead to the low rises in the area, including the inland escarpment, an important feature of the landscape that is dominated in height by powerlines towards the north.



4.1 Wooded Hinterland and Mount Clay



Landscape Character Area 4.2: Portland Coast and Hinterland

The gently undulating hinterland in this Character Area is raised above the coast and extends to low coastal cliffs and slopes that meet the flat foreshore. The rolling topography is punctuated at the western edge by Mount Richmond which rises 200 metres above the surrounding pastures. The landscape is often cluttered with built form and rural living. In other places it is dominated by large industrial structures, including the Portland Aluminium smelter which is especially visible above the low coastal topography. Native vegetation has been extensively cleared to accommodate pastoral land use, settlements and rural living, although indigenous coastal vegetation and native bush in roadside reserves also exists.

South West Victoria: Landscape Character Type 5

Western Volcanic Plains

Landscape Character Area 5.1: Eumarella Coast and Hinterland

This large Character Area is dominated by flat coastal plains west of Port Fairy and east of Portland, and extending for several kilometres inland. Long distance views across open plains are available throughout the area, terminating at coastal dunes which are the only notable topographic feature. Behind the dunes several water features occur, including Lake Yambuk and Fitzroy outlet, which are scenic recreation locations. To the west, adjacent Character Areas contain steep and often vegetated landforms that provide a sense of containment of the plains. The Codrington wind farm dominates the skyline for part of the coastal length of this Character Area.



4.2 Portland Coast and Hinterland



5.1 Eumarella Coast and Hinterland



Landscape Character Area 5.2: Port Fairy Stony Rises

Among very flat hinterland, this Character Area represents a region of more varied topography, characterised by small-scale hillocks with exposed basalt bedrock. Pastoral land use has led to the clearing of most remnant native vegetation, however ferny groundcover can be found at stony outcrops and mature coniferous shelterbelts are visible throughout the landscape. The area has a distinctly historical character due to its homesteads, dry stone walls and old shelterbelts. Island Swamp appears as a wide depression in the landscape and provides a large and flat feature within the undulating topography. The sheltered coastline at Port Fairy is lined with exposed development, with many dwellings located on particularly significant dunes along the coastline. Residential dwellings and historical homesteads are also scattered throughout the historical pastoral landscape.

Landscape Character Area 5.3: Pastoral Plains

This open pastoral hinterland Character Area is part of the extensive volcanic plains that extend west of Geelong. Landform is consistently flat to gently undulating, with the unique and dramatic topographic feature of Tower Hill a product of the area's volcanic origins. Flat topography provides long-range views across rural pastures bounded by shelterbelts and native vegetation towards the east of the Character Area.



5.2 Port Fairy Stony Rises



5.3 Pastoral Plains

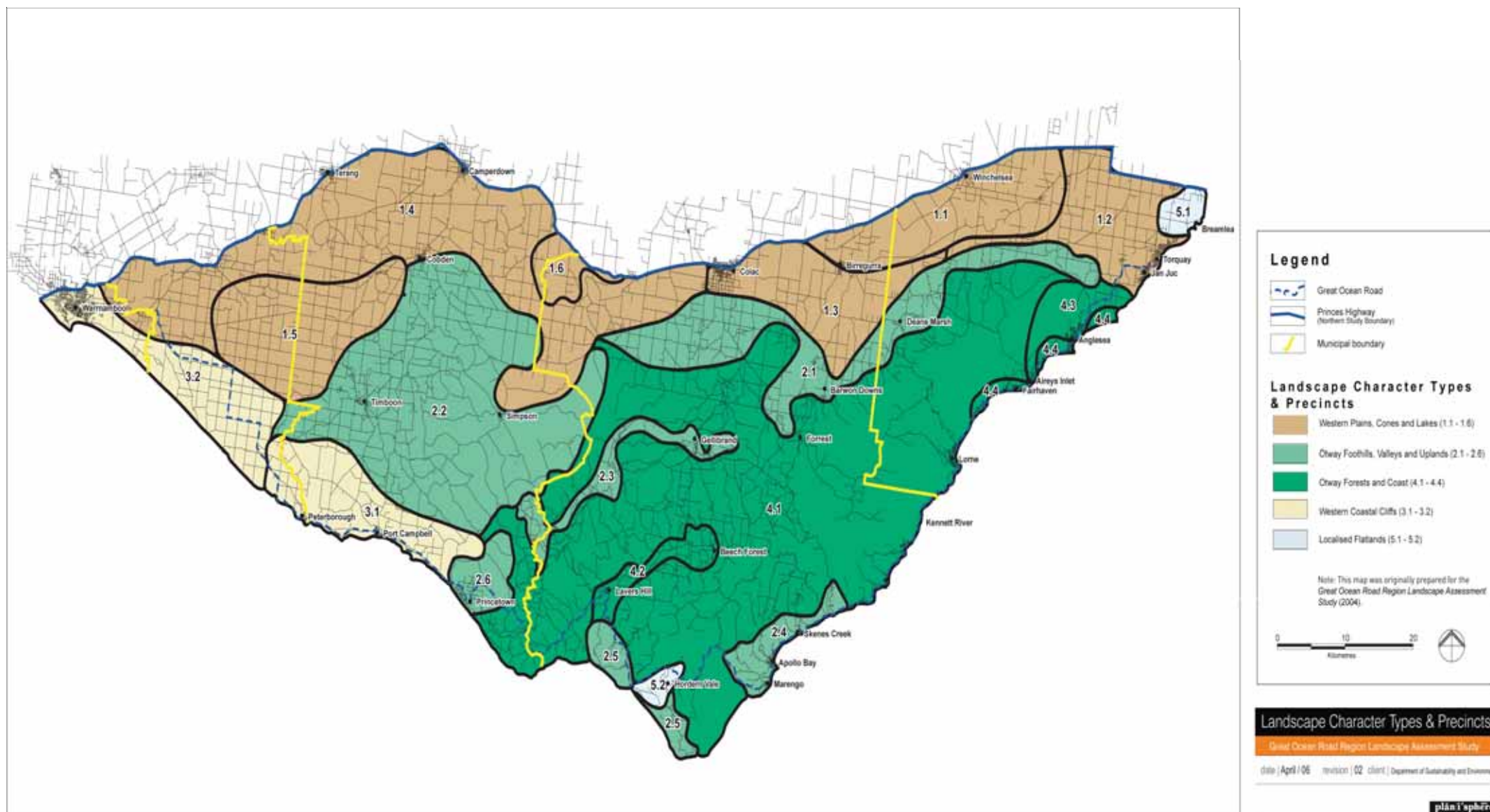


Landscape Character Types and Areas:

Great Ocean Road Region

The following is extracted from the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment*, undertaken in 2003-4 as part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy*

1.3 Great Ocean Road Region





Great Ocean Road Region: Landscape Character Type 1

Western Plains, Cones and Lakes

Precinct 1.1: Winchelsea Western Plains

Precinct 1.1 is characterised by generally flat topography, with occasional volcanic outcrops. The large, open paddocks are sometimes divided by shelterbelts of cypresses and low, transparent post and wire style fencing. Stands of remnant vegetation are located throughout the precinct, often adjacent to the road corridors and in proximity to waterways such as the Barwon River. Farmhouses and outbuildings are scattered throughout the pastoral landscape, with a smaller subdivision pattern occurring on the perimeter of the townships. Long distance views to the low horizon are available from within the precinct.



1.1 Winchelsea Western Plains

Precinct 1.2: Undulating Mixed Farming

Precinct 1.2 is an area of undulating, cleared pastoral land that meets the sea at Torquay. The hinterland has become increasingly occupied by smaller allotments such as hobby farms, horse paddocks, vineyards and tourist accommodation. It is crisscrossed by shelterbelts, with older conifers planted in strong lineal arrangements, and more recent plantings in less formalised arrangements of native trees. The landscape is dotted with simple rural buildings such as small farmhouses and sheds, many of which are located near the roadside. The topography becomes hillier approaching the coastline at Jan Juc, with undulations in the landform further emphasised when roads drape across them. Here, the quantity of vegetation increases and becomes more coastal in character. However, this character has been eroded in places by hilltop residential estates that are dominated by large dwellings with very little vegetation. The precinct ends in a line of limestone sea cliffs and sandy surf beaches.



1.2 Undulating Mixed Farming



Precinct 1.3: Undulating Grazing

Precinct 1.3 is an expanse of large, gently rolling paddocks slashed with occasional lines of shelterbelts and remnant trees. Shelterbelts and roads follow a large scale grid pattern that rises and falls across undulations between different levels of plateau. Most valleys are broad depressions, some are more deeply incised, but few have significant amounts of vegetation cover. To the south, the wooded slopes of the Otway foothills provide a horizon. In other directions there are long views across the plain, with occasional volcanic cones visible against the skyline. Scattered farm buildings, including old structures related to sheep-raising, tend to be located back from the road. In areas with smaller subdivisions, buildings are often located closer to the road. This is a sparsely treed landscape, but with some regeneration and new planting in specific locations.

Precinct 1.4: Paddocks and Cones

Precinct 1.4 is characterised by the flat, sometimes subtly rolling landform of the basalt plain, punctuated by occasional cones and craters of extinct volcanoes, some of which contain lakes. These craters form topographically prominent landmarks that are visible from long distances, each with a different size and shape, and mostly uncloaked by trees. The larger and more distinctive cones are valued by the community as local landmarks, and are prominent features in an otherwise relatively featureless grassland landscape. This is sparsely vegetated dairying country, overlaid by a geometric pattern of shelterbelts, fences and roads. These geometric patterns break down around craters and creeks.



1.3 Undulating Grazing



1.4 Paddocks and Cones



Precinct 1.5: Partially Wooded Plain

Precinct 1.5 straddles the boundary between the coastal plains formed by the emergence of the sea floor, and the basalt lava plains to the north. The distinctive factors are the flat land (although it includes some gentle slopes around creek valleys) and the partially wooded vegetation character. There is native vegetation in roadside reserves and occasional stands of apparently remnant vegetation, including some wet eucalypt forest. The eucalypt canopy of the vegetation softens the profile of the horizon. However, the landscape is generally characterised by open paddocks with big skies and long views. The paddocks contain scattered eucalypts and some pine shelterbelts. Farm dwellings are scattered, with dairies and some houses adjacent to the road.

Precinct 1.6: Stony Rises

Precinct 1.6 is characterised by a roughly textured landscape with exposed rocky outcrops and water-filled, peaty sinkholes. The small paddocks are strewn with rocks and boulders and mostly cleared of vegetation, although there are some stands of eucalypts and rows of cypress. Bracken and blackberries are also scattered throughout the precinct. Apart from the unique geology, another feature of the area is the dry stone walls, dark in colour, partitioning the paddocks and defining the road corridor. Built form in the landscape is characterised by rambling farmhouses, some being constructed of stone. Short and medium range views are available to plains and hummocks.



1.5 Partially Wooded Plain



1.6 Stony Rises



Great Ocean Road Region: Landscape Character Type 2

Otway Foothills, Valleys and Uplands

Precinct 2.1: Northern Foothills

Precinct 2.1 is characterised by gently rolling hills and vales, with some incised creeks and gullies. Red-soiled pastures undulate between shelterbelts and, in some areas, hawthorn hedges. Remnant eucalypts dot the landscape, and tree plantations (native and exotic) are concentrated in road reserves and towards the eastern end of the precinct. Most views across the precinct include belts of trees, contributing to a sheltered, enclosed landscape. Buildings tend to be located away from the road, often in valleys or among trees.

Precinct 2.2: Dairying Hills and Vales

Precinct 2.2 is characterised by a complex network of sprawling hills and vales, with incised creeks and gorges around Timboon. The pastoral landscape is crisscrossed by geometric lines of shelterbelts and hedgerows, and more informal tree planting, both native and exotic. There are areas of remnant bush, including some forest with understorey. Farm buildings are scattered, and dairying-related buildings tend to be located close to the road. There is a dramatic contrast between the more open areas that offer long distance views from ridge-top roads, and the seclusion of the narrow, heavily treed valleys around Timboon. Roads follow curving alignments as they straddle ridges and meander into valleys.



2.1 Northern Foothills



2.2 Dairying Hills and Vales



Precinct 2.3: Gellibrand River Valley

Precinct 2.3 is a cleared pocket, tucked into the Otway Forest. It is an intimately scaled area, following the river valley with enclosed views to forested ridges and hilltops. The pastoral landscape and openness on the valley floor provides a contrast to the dense bushland beyond, although occasionally this bushland runs into the precinct in the form of forested gullies and slopes. The enclosed landscape is emphasised by the simple timber structures dotted throughout, tucked into the landscape. There is a sense of history within the precinct and links to the past in the form of the original logging rail line and old routes through the area.

Precinct 2.4: Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills

Precinct 2.4 is characterised by a backdrop of tall and steep, rugged hills, at the foot of which is gently rolling land, sloping down to the coast. The wide sandy beach at Apollo Bay curves around to Wild Dog Creek, with grassy dunes and low bluffs behind. The hills that encase the precinct are predominantly cleared with some remnant shrubby foothill and riparian forest vegetation. Numerous rivers and creeks incise the hills and run to the bay, which is vegetated with remnant coastal heathland scrub. This largely open, cleared precinct is surrounded by dense, wet eucalypt forest, providing a stark character contrast.



2.3 Gellibrand River Valley



2.4 Apollo Bay Coastal Valleys and Hills



Precinct 2.5: Johanna Coast to Cape Otway Coastal Valleys and Hills

Precinct 2.5 is located in two areas stretching from the western side of Cape Otway to the Johanna coast, excluding the Aire River estuary. The coastal landscape of this area is characterised by rugged cliffs and dune-backed beaches with low heathland vegetation, while further inland are rolling hills and pastures. The coastal areas of this precinct are windswept and isolated, with long-range views available across the cliffs to the ocean. Inland, the landscape becomes more serene, the green dairying pastures often dotted with remnant vegetation or shelterbelts. Simple farm dwellings are nestled among the rolling hills inland, while the few structures that are located near the coast are highly visible due to the low scrubby heath.

Precinct 2.6: Princetown Coastal Valleys and Hills

Precinct 2.6 is centred on the broad estuary of the Gellibrand River. The serpentine river flows through the marshy floor of the inland valley, eventually running to a sandy beach, which is backed by dunes. South-east of the river mouth are cliffs with small promontories and bays, in front of an ascending coastal ridge, which is backed by the river valley. The river corridor throughout the precinct is very broad and flat and flanked by steep to moderate hills, which are mostly cleared for pastoral use. Small farm buildings and dwellings are scattered throughout the open landscape.



2.5 Johanna Coast to Cape Otway Coastal Valleys and Hills



2.6 Princetown Coastal Valleys and Hills



Great Ocean Road Region: Landscape Character Type 3

Western Coastal Cliffs

Precinct 3.1: Port Campbell Coast and Hinterland

Precinct 3.1 includes the iconic Twelve Apostles coastline. The coastal strip, which is generally wider east of Peterborough than west, is mainly low heath and scrub, sometimes with taller casuarinas, and with grassland or dunes in some locations. The dunal undulations gently rise and fall in places, offering occasional glimpses from the road of sea cliff promontories. Natural spectacles like the Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge, with their rugged cliff faces and unique 'sculptured' pillars and arches, are only visible from walking tracks that start from well-developed tourist car parks and visitor centres. The ground-hugging scale of much of the vegetation ensures that normal structures and buildings are highly visible, and the coastal strip is gradually accruing toilet blocks, helicopter hangars, signs, lighting columns and other infrastructure that intrudes into the untamed character of the coast. The hinterland rises gradually from the coastal strip, continuing its gentle topography, but becoming steeper along creek valleys. The inland landscape is open and rolling, with little in the way of vegetation apart from occasional shelterbelts, some of which enclose groups of roadside farm buildings. The arch of the big sky unites the hinterland and the coastline, and there are views of the sea from higher points.

Precinct 3.2: Nirranda Coast and Hinterland

Precinct 3.2 is an area of coastal plains formed by the emergence of the sea floor, behind a line of low sea cliffs that includes the Bay of Islands. The landscape is flat to gently undulating, with open paddocks interspersed with exotic shelterbelts and occasional reserves of natives or plantations. Most of the precinct is laid out in a rectilinear grid of roads, shelterbelts and paddocks. There are long views, sometimes extending to a horizon of distant volcanic cones, and big skies. The cliffs are backed by low coastal scrub, which lies within a coastal park. Small offshore islands can be seen from the cliff tops

along parts of the coast. Because the landscape is flat and the main roads are set back from the coast, it is only possible to see the sea and appreciate the coastal scenery by walking from a parking area to the cliff edge.



3.1 Port Campbell Coast and Hinterland



3.2 Nirranda Coast and Hinterland



Great Ocean Road Region: Landscape Character Type 4

Otway Forests and Coast

Precinct 4.1: Otway Ranges Forest and Coast

Precinct 4.1 contains large areas of dense forest cover in hilly terrain, extending to the sea in places. The vegetation changes from wet to dry in response to changes in the orientation and type of terrain, which ranges from steep and rocky to smoothly rounded hills. Dry coastal sclerophyll forests occur on south-west facing slopes, some of which meet the coastline. The vegetation is indigenous tall, closed forest with understorey – sparser in the dry forest areas, and denser in sheltered gullies. Giant tree ferns and ancient beech trees can be found in some of the wetter, more sheltered locations. In the most forested areas (e.g. north of Cape Otway and Apollo Bay) the trees tower above the winding road, their canopies meeting overhead. The tall forest plunges down to the coast between Apollo Bay and Cape Otway. In other coastal locations the vegetation is sparser and smaller in scale. In exposed locations around Moonlight Head, which has the highest sea cliffs in the region, there is low coastal heath, blasted by the Bass Strait gales, and much of the drive from Lorne to Apollo Bay is lined with relatively low coastal vegetation. Here, the road clings to the face of rocky promontories and snakes past steep gullies, offering a constantly changing prospect of sea, sky and coastal scenery. In contrast are forest drives such as Turtons Track and the road to Cape Otway, where there are also exposed areas of new forest plantation (e.g. blue gum, pine) and some isolated clearings. The clearings contain a mix of private freehold, farming and tourism uses, sometimes with scattered, simple structures. Clearings, townships and the coast itself provide a different experience to the isolation and enclosure found in the depths of the forest.

Precinct 4.2: Cleared Uplands and Hilltops

Precinct 4.2 covers the long ridge that extends from Lavers Hill to Beech Forest. The Colac - Lavers Hill Road meanders along the ridge-top, providing

elevation above the surrounding landscape and long-range views over the Otway Ranges. Immediate views are of lush agricultural slopes, with some forested reserves and timber plantations. A lack of built form generally, but particularly adjacent to the road corridor, provides a sense of clear, uncluttered openness, with the sides of the ridge sloping steeply down to the valleys below.



4.1 Otway Ranges Forest and Coast



4.2 Cleared Uplands and Hilltops



Precinct 4.3: Dry Coastal Woodland and Heath

Precinct 4.3 includes the townships of Aireys Inlet and Anglesea, and is located inland from the areas of low coastal heath. The landscape is characterised by dry coastal vegetation, including short eucalypt trees with an understorey of dense scrubby woodland. The topography climbs towards the Otway Ranges in the east and pastoral land in the north. A large area of the precinct inland from Anglesea is reserved for coal mining, yet is also recognised for its significant flora and fauna values (Anglesea Heathland). Buildings are predominantly located in townships, with some examples of isolated farm dwellings on the northern periphery. Residential development on the edges of townships is often highly visible, being sited on prominent hill faces.

Precinct 4.4: Low Coastal Heath

Precinct 4.4 is located in three areas along the coast, adjacent to the towns of Aireys Inlet and Anglesea. The landscape is characterised by coastal dunes and cliffs, interspersed with inlets. Inland from the coastal cliffs, the topography is hilly and exposed, with low, dense vegetation including stunted tea-tree and tussocks. Foliage is grey-green in colour and wind swept, and long-range views are available in all directions. There is some scattered ribbon development in the precinct, mostly dwellings and holiday homes, and these are highly visible due to the low coastal heath and exposed landscape.



4.3 Dry Coastal Woodland and Heath



4.4 Low Coastal Heath



Great Ocean Road Region: Landscape Character Type 5

Localised Flatlands

Precinct 5.1: Lakes and Saltmarshes

Precinct 5.1 is a lonely expanse of flat, open land set behind coastal dune systems. Much of the area is marshy or subject to seasonal inundation, and the rest is grassland with few trees. Coastal vegetation covers the banks of the dunes, which cut the area off from views of the sea. There are very few buildings in the precinct, but it is traversed by stretches of long, straight road.

Precinct 5.2: Aire Valley Marshes

Precinct 5.2 is a flat, estuarine inlet into a partly cleared area of the Otways. The meandering river winds through marshes, wetlands, pastures and fields of vegetables, eventually flowing between grassy dunes to an outlet through sandy Glenaire Beach. Vegetation includes exotic shelterbelts and coastal shrubs on lower slopes near the coast edge, plus tea-tree and reeds. The surrounding hills, which are only partially vegetated, drop steeply to the inlet, and almost completely enclose it. Small, simple rural buildings nestle in the slopes and gullies of the hillsides. The precinct provides an unexpectedly flat and open landscape after the hilly, forested sections of the Great Ocean Road to the east.



5.1 Lakes and Saltmarshes



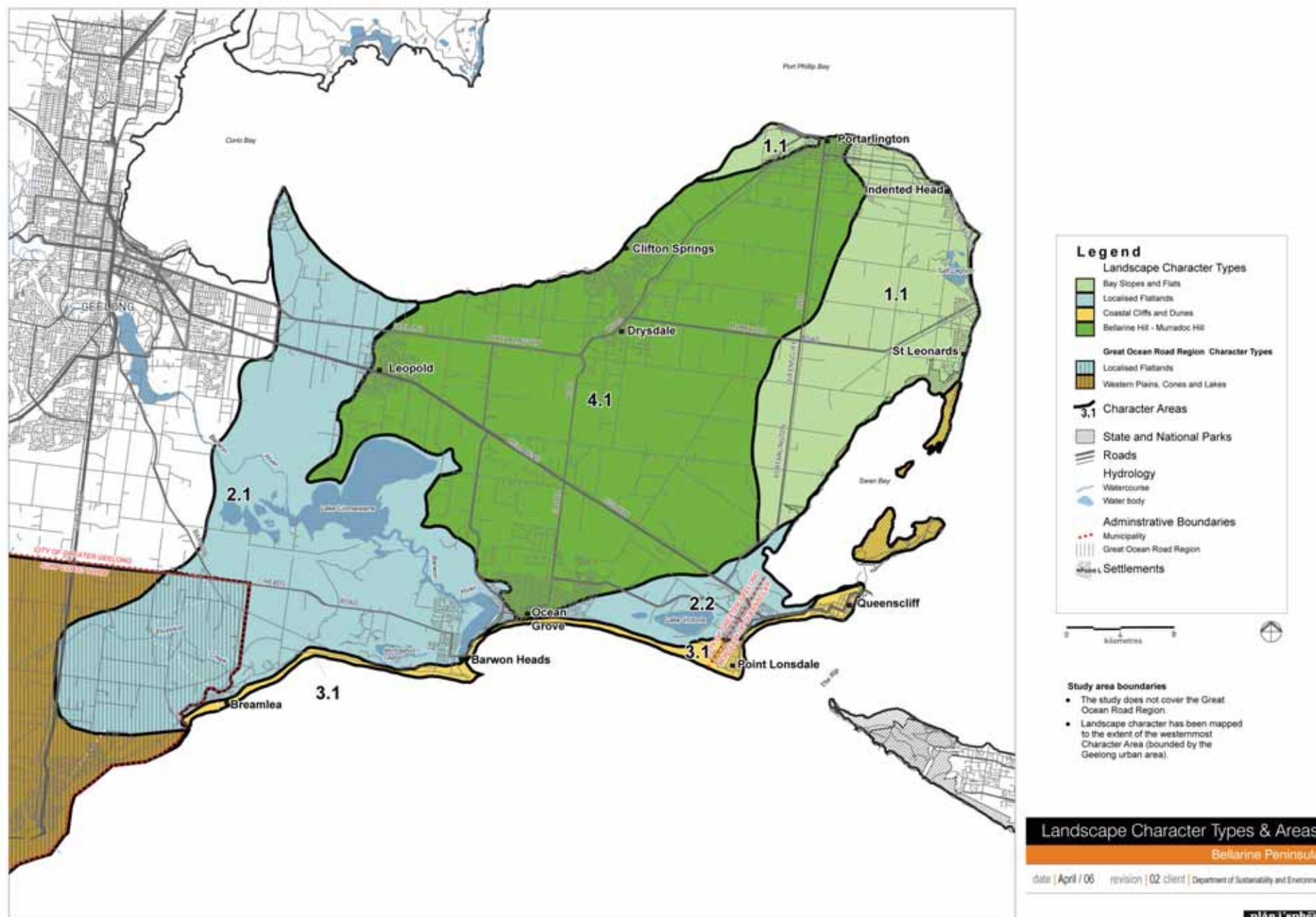
5.2 Aire Valley Marshes



Landscape Character Types and Areas:

Bellarine Peninsula

1.4 Bellarine Peninsula





Bellarine Peninsula: Landscape Character Type 1

Bay Slopes and Flats

Landscape Character Area 1.1: Bay Slopes and Flats

This Character Area is low-sloping and occasionally gently undulating, with open expansive views east to Port Phillip Bay and Swan Bay. Open paddocks are dissected by exotic conifer windbreaks and native vegetation in roadside reserves which contain views in parts. At the coastal edge, the landform is very flat with low-energy beaches, salt lakes and some minor cliffs no more than five metres high at Indented Head. Swan Bay is a significant natural feature on the eastern edge of approximately half the Character Area, while to the north, coastal townships including St Leonards and Indented Head extend inland for some distance on the flats. Further inland there is a low density of built elements with homesteads and farm sheds often exposed in large paddocks.



1.1 Bay Slopes and Flats

Bellarine Peninsula Landscape Character Type 2

Localised Flatlands

Landscape Character Area 2.1: Lake Connewarre Flats

Much of this very flat Character Area is seasonally inundated or under large lakes including Lake Connewarre. The Character Area extends from Breamlea in the south (including the lower Thomsons Creek catchment) to Barwon Heads in the east, and Point Henry in Corio Bay where it is contained by large, high sand dunes at the southern edge, and flat, low-energy swamps and salt marshes in the north. There is an inland topographic boundary at Leopold and the northern edge of Lake Connewarre, as well as prominent topographic edges at the ocean coast dune.



2.1 Lake Connewarre Flats



Landscape Character Area 2.2: Lonsdale Lakes

A small, very flat and seasonally inundated landscape is found between Point Lonsdale and Ocean Grove in the Swan Bay catchment. The Character Area is dominated by waterbodies and wetlands, including Lake Victoria, and is mostly pastoral in the remainder. There is very little built development in this Character Area, although part of the settlement of Point Lonsdale occurs in the area. High, vegetated sand dunes at the coastal edge and prominent slopes inland are important topographic features that provide a backdrop to open views. A small part of the Character Area adjoins the low-energy edge of Swan Bay.

Bellarine Peninsula: Landscape Character Type 3

Coastal Cliffs and Dunes

Landscape Character Area 3.1: Coastal Cliffs and Dunes

The wild seas and winds at the southern edge of the Bellarine Peninsula have given rise to a varied and often dramatic landscape of sandy beaches, high dunes, low cliffs and rocky headlands. Steep escarpments are frequently vegetated with local species and landmark landscape features such as Point Lonsdale and The Bluff at Barwon Heads punctuate long sandy beaches and dunes. The Character Area also includes some coastal dune landforms fronting low-energy bay beaches in Swan Bay and Port Phillip Bay (Swan Island, Sand Island and Edwards Point). Similar characteristics are likely to occur outside the study area towards Torquay and at Point Nepean and the Mornington Peninsula Back Beach. Part of the settlements of Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove and Point Lonsdale are also in the Character Area. Historical built elements such as the lighthouses at Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff are a feature of the area.



2.2 Lonsdale Lakes



3.1 Coastal Cliffs and Dunes



Bellarine Peninsula: Landscape Character Type 4

Bellarine Hill (Murradoc Hill)

Landscape Character Area 4.1: Bellarine Hill (Murradoc Hill)

This hilly to gently undulating Character Area covers much of the central and northern Bellarine Peninsula. As the major topographic feature of the peninsula, this Character Area forms a significant landscape backdrop to many towns and viewing locations, and offers expansive outviews. While it is largely open and cleared, cultural vegetation patterns of windbreaks, vineyards and established exotic trees around homesteads are important landscape features.



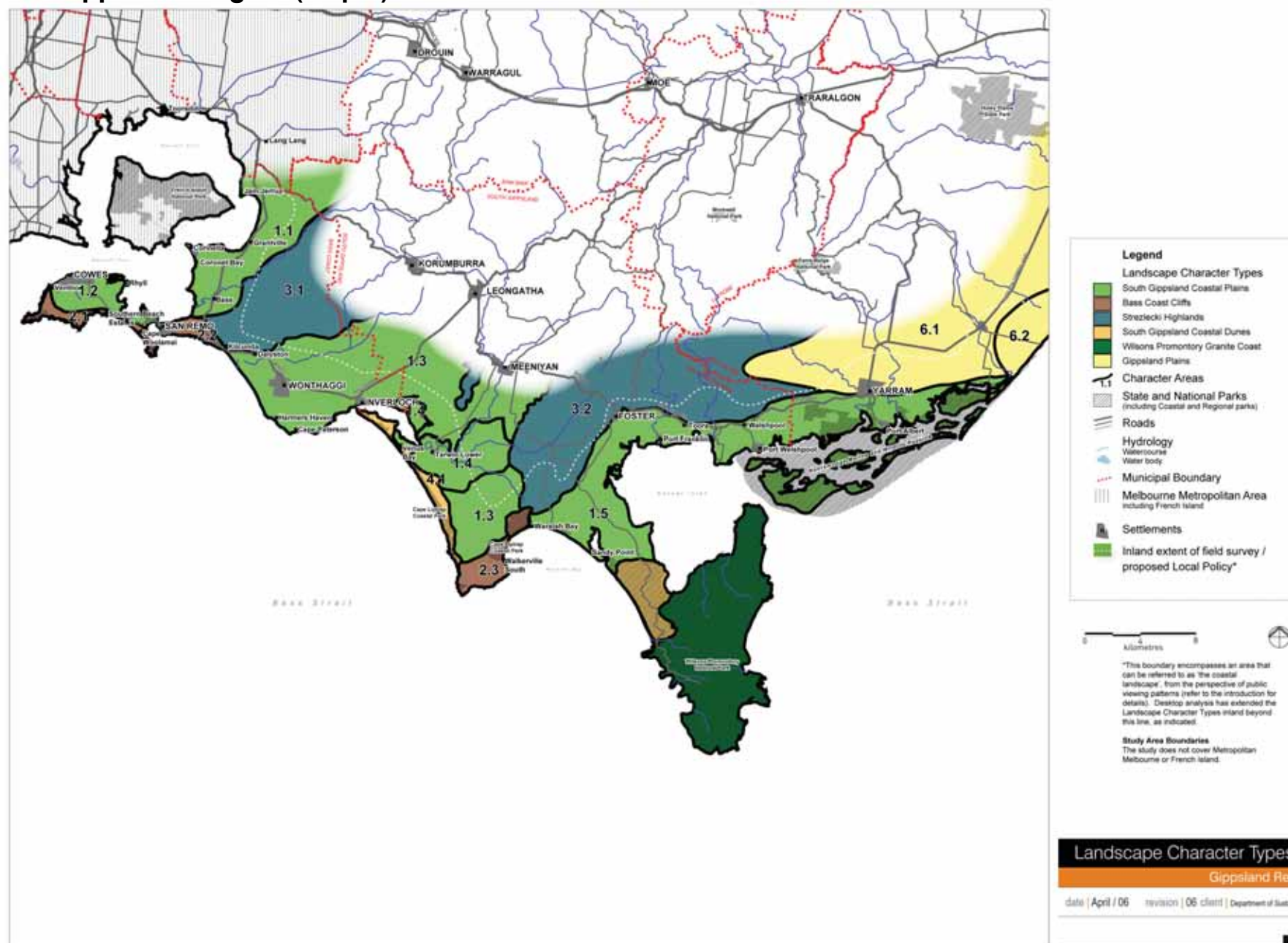
4.1 Bellarine Hill (Murradoc Hill)



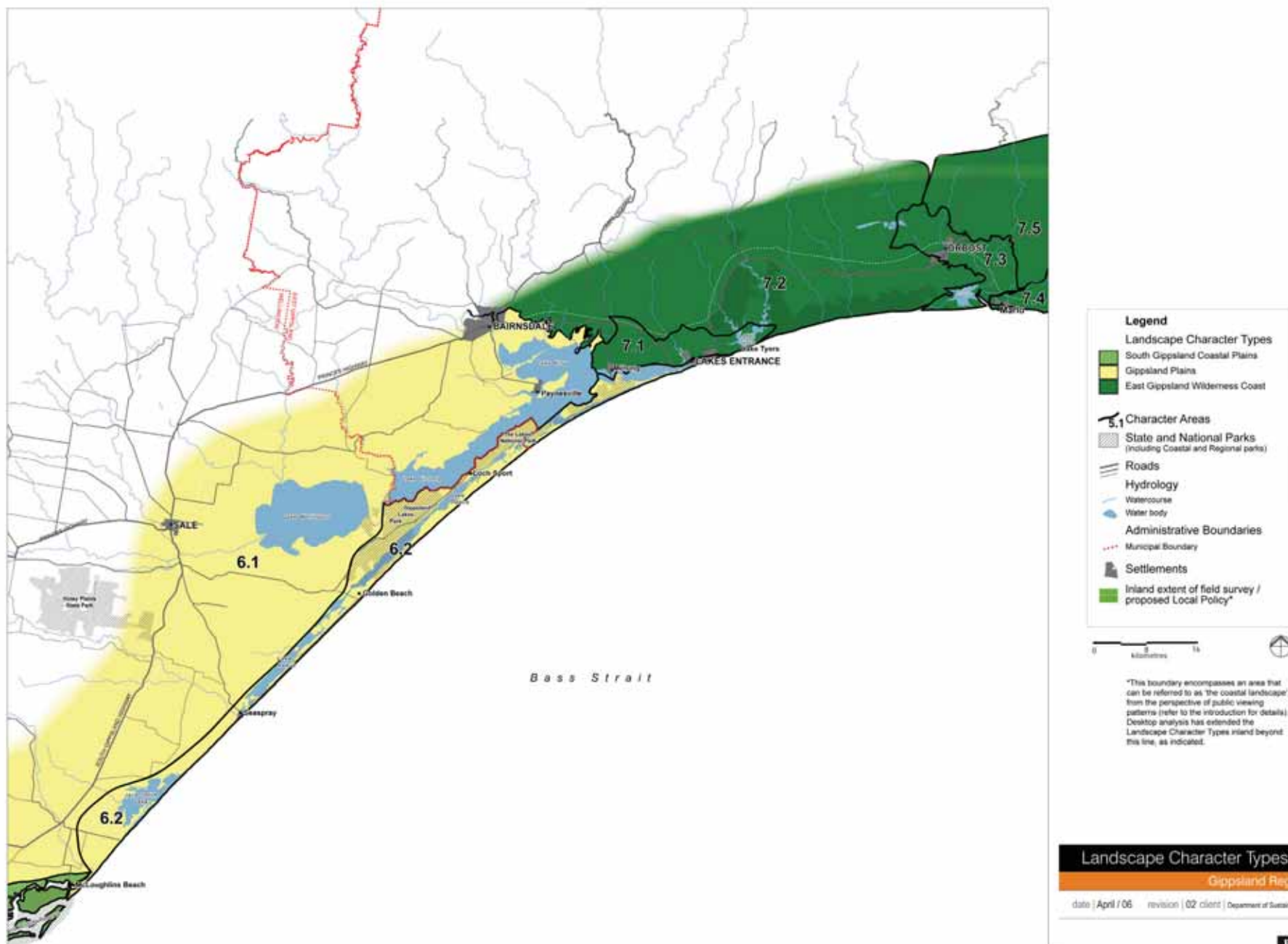
Landscape Character Types and Areas:

Gippsland Region

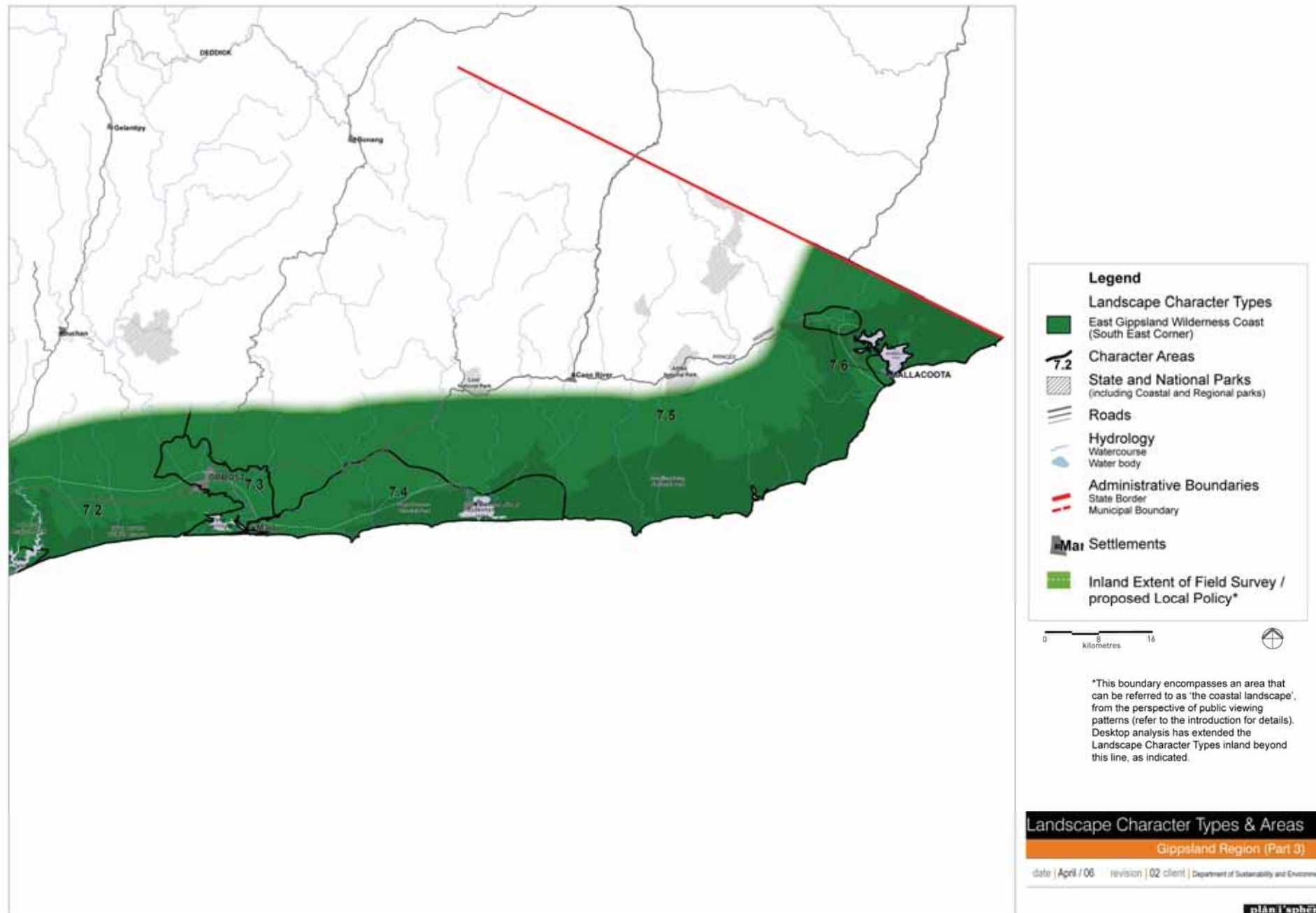
1.5 Gippsland Region (Map 1)



Gippsland Region (Map 2)



Gippsland Region (Map 3)





Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 1

South Gippsland Coastal Plains

Landscape Character Area 1.1: Westernport Lowlands

This Character Area is located on the eastern edge of Westernport Bay. It is low-lying and mostly rural, with beaches, mangrove flats and coastal woodlands along a diverse coastal edge. Hills and rises near Corinella provide expansive views across Westernport Bay to French Island and Phillip Island. Inland, the Bass Highway is an important viewing corridor and the Bass Hills provide a topographic backdrop. The Character Area terminates in the south at the Anderson Peninsula, although it is likely to extend around Westernport Bay outside the study area for some distance to the north and west.

Landscape Character Area 1.2: Phillip Island Northern Coast

This Character Area includes the majority of Phillip Island and is characterised by a rolling rural landscape adjoining a low-energy sandy and mud-flat coastline on the northern edge at Westernport Bay. Features include a cultural vegetation pattern of windbreaks and roadside vegetation with extensive urban areas in three settlements at the northern coastal edge (Cowes, Ventnor and Rhyll). The rolling topography inland is largely undeveloped, offering open rural views with glimpses of Westernport Bay.



1.1 Westernport Lowlands



1.2 Phillip Island Northern Coast



Landscape Character Area 1.3: Bunurong Coast and Hinterland

This Character Area includes the diverse and rugged Bunurong coastline between Kilcunda and Inverloch, and a largely cleared, rolling pastoral hinterland extending inland to the Strzelecki Range and east to Cape Liptrap (including the Bald Hills). High sand dunes, sea cliffs, rocky headlands, rock stacks and beaches along the Bass Strait coast throughout much of this Character Area are valued landscape features. The immediate hinterland is largely undeveloped and in parts supports native heath vegetation in coastal reserves. Further inland, open grazing land is interspersed with corridors of native vegetation (especially riparian reserves and at roadsides), exotic windbreaks, farmhouses and settlements. Two major urban settlements (Wonthaggi and Inverloch) are within the Character Area, while Cape Paterson is a coastal holiday home location set atop the rugged coastline.

Landscape Character Area 1.4: Tarwin Floodplain

A wetland environment with very flat topography surrounding the Tarwin River estuary and part of Anderson Inlet, this Character Area is primarily used for agricultural purposes. The Character Area extends inland to include the flood plains of Bald Hill Creek and Fish Creek and their confluence with the Tarwin River. Open views are experienced throughout owing to a lack of topographic and vegetative screening. The township of Tarwin Lower is also located in the Character Area.



1.3 Bunurong Coast and Hinterland



1.4 Tarwin Floodplain



Landscape Character Area 1.5: Waratah Bay / Corner Inlet

This low-lying, flat Character Area covers a long stretch of varied coastline at the gateway to Wilsons Promontory. The area exhibits a strong and open rural character wedged between the dramatic topographies of the lower Strzelecki Range and Wilsons Promontory. Scenic coastal landforms and extensive views to the Promontory provide valued visual links to natural landscapes. To the north, the Strzelecki Range and Mount Hoddle form the boundary and create prominent landscape features adjoining the flat plains. Low-density development is scattered throughout, with several small lifestyle settlements on the coast and medium sized rural towns in the east.

Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 2

Bass Coast Hills

Landscape Character Area 2.1: Phillip Island Southern Coast

The southern coast of Phillip Island between Cape Woolamai and McHaffie Point at Ventnor consists of volcanic landforms shaped by the high seas and winds of Bass Strait. A rugged and varied landscape valued by the community for undeveloped, rocky headlands, high sand dunes and beaches has resulted, including regionally significant landforms such as Cape Woolamai, Pyramid Rock and The Nobbies. Open vistas along the coast are available from numerous access points. Several townships have been developed along the coastal edge in the eastern half of the island (with substantial undeveloped breaks between), while inland rolling pastoral landscapes are contiguous with the Northern Coast Character Area. The landscape features in this Character Area are attracting growing demand for residential dwellings within and outside settlements sited to take advantage of views.



1.5 Waratah Bay / Corner Inlet



2.1 Phillip Island Southern Coast



Landscape Character Area 2.2: Anderson Peninsula

Between San Remo and Kilcunda is an elevated open pastoral landscape edged by dramatic rocky sea cliffs and slopes to Bass Strait and Western Port. The settlement of San Remo is set on sloping topography at the gateway to Phillip Island in the west, while Kilcunda has commanding views of the eastern edge of the Character Area. This area shares characteristics with the Bass Hills Character Area. Whilst contiguous with this Area, its coastal setting and high sea cliffs warrants its individual classification.

Landscape Character Area 2.3: Cape Liptrap

This elevated Character Area consists of a broad, rocky headland with an undulating plateau, creating a unique landscape unit extending from Cape Liptrap to the township of Waratah Bay. Natural landscape features including rugged coastal cliffs and beaches are scenic and valued elements of the area. Intact coastal vegetation communities dominate the few small settlements that occur along the Waratah Bay edge. Historic built elements including the Cape Liptrap Lighthouse and limestone kilns at Walkerville add character to the wild natural landscapes.



2.2 Anderson Peninsula



2.3 Cape Liptrap



Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 3

Strzelecki Highlands

Landscape Character Area 3.1: Bass Hills

The Bass Hills are a prominent and important landscape element throughout much of the Bass Coast Shire, particularly as the backdrop to landscapes surrounding Westernport Bay. The landform rises steeply from coastal plains and pastures and forms part of a near-continuous landform (the Strzelecki Highland Character Type) which stretches between San Remo in the west to Yarram in the east. Inland, of the coastal viewshed the Character Area is characterised by steeply undulating topography and limited viewing throughout. It is mostly cleared of indigenous vegetation, although cultural vegetation patterns including roadside remnants and exotic shelterbelts are a feature. The Character Area is likely to extend some distance inland, although this boundary was not surveyed in this study.



3.1 Bass Hills

Landscape Character Area 3.2: Welshpool Hills and Mount Hoddle

This hilly Character Area stretches from Waratah Bay almost to Yarram and is part of the Strzelecki Range landform that extends inland to Warragul and west to the Bass Hills. The southern edge rises sharply from flat coastal plains, forming the topographic 'amphitheatre' setting to Corner Inlet. Mount Hoddle and the Welshpool Hills are prominent and regionally significant landforms that are highly visible backdrops to coastal and coastal hinterland areas from Yarram to Waratah Bay, while Mount Hoddle is visible as far west as Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay. While much of the Character Area has a cultural landscape quality, contributed to by a pattern of cleared land and exotic vegetation, there is a distinct absence of built elements in prominent locations, with the exception of a wind energy facility north of Toora.



3.2 Welshpool Hills and Mount Hoddle



Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 4

South Gippsland Coastal Dunes

Landscape Character Area 4.1: Venus Bay Dunes

Extending from Point Smythe at the mouth of Andersons Inlet almost to Cape Liptrap, this Character Area contains large coastal dune landforms extending for up to one kilometre inland. A large portion of the Character Area is reserved as part of the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park and, with the exception of the sprawling settlement of Venus Bay in the north, is undeveloped. South of Venus Bay the Character Area is largely inaccessible except by four-wheel drive, however, the high dunes are a backdrop landscape feature to the inland agricultural plains for much of the length of the area.

Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 5

Wilsons Promontory Granite Coast

Character Areas have not been delineated for this landscape Character Type as it is located entirely within a National Park, and was outside the area of detailed field survey.

Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 6

Gippsland Plains

Landscape Character Area 6.1: Gippsland Lakes Plains

This is a flat to gently undulating mostly pastoral Character Area adjoining the Gippsland Lakes. Large inland waterbodies including Lake King, Lake Victoria and Lake Wellington are the major landscape features, 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.



4.1 Venus Bay Dunes



6.1 Gippsland Lakes Plains



Landscape Character Area 6.2: Ninety Mile Coast

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 the Gippsland Lakes. There is an unspoilt natural character to 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 a low-density scattering of built development creates a uniform rural character to the coast edge.

Gippsland Region: Landscape Character Type 7

East Gippsland Wilderness Coast

Landscape Character Area 7.1: Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland

This steeply undulating and mostly rural Character Area forms at its southern edge 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.



6.2 Ninety Mile Coast



7.1 Lakes Entrance Hills and Hinterland



Landscape Character Area 7.2: Ewing Morass Forest Coast

This steeply undulating and mostly forested Character Area is largely contained within State Forest, State Park and the 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.

Landscape Character Area 7.3: Snowy River Floodplains

This Character Area is defined by 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 the 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 brackish coastal estuary at Lake Corringle. 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.



7.2 Ewing Morass Forest Coast



7.3 Snowy River Floodplains



Landscape Character Area 7.4: Cape Conran 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, coastal heath forest, including *Banksia spp.*, most of which is reserved in Cape Conran National Park. There is one small area of extensive pastoral land use 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.

Landscape Character Area 7.5: Croajingolong Coast

This is a 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 the 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 outlooks across Mallacoota Inlet. Coastal landmarks including Point Hicks and large, mobile sand dunes in the west are primarily accessed by foot.



7.4 Cape Conran Coast



7.5 Croajingolong Coast



Landscape Character Area 7.6: Mallacoota Inlet and Coast

This small Character Area consists of undulating slopes adjoining Mallacoota Inlet and the Croajingolong Coast. With its vegetated slopes, the inlet 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.



7.6 Mallacoota Inlet and Coast



2

Significant Coastal Landscapes



2.1 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 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.

2.2 Local, Regional and State Significance

This study has assessed the landscape significance of each non-urban part of the coast, and considered it 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.

2.3 Visual Significance

A single criterion has been used to assess whether a landscape is visually significant for the purpose 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.



Views

The viewpoint is open and publicly accessible; the view is a panorama, a broad prospect, or a linear view to a defined object or group of objects; and it offers a cohesive viewing experience.



Edges or Contrasts

The boundary between two landscape elements, for example, the coastline (the boundary between sea and land); the edge of a forest or a forest clearing; the boundary between vegetation types or different landform types; the intersection between a range of hills and a plain; a cliff or beach; an incised valley.



Natural or Undeveloped Character

A landscape that is devoid of any development, or a landscape in which its natural characteristics visually predominate over any development that may be present.



2.4 Determining Levels of Significance

For each level of visual significance (local, regional and state), a threshold was defined for each landscape component in the significance criterion. A place would be designated as being of state significance if any one of its landscape components (landform features; views or edges; and natural or undeveloped character) rated 'exceptional'. A place would be designated as being of regional significance if any one of its landscape components rated 'high'. As previously indicated, every other part of the coast has been considered to be of local significance, implying that the entire coastline has at least 'moderate' visual qualities.

Each landscape classified as having regional or state significance has been assessed using the *Visual Significance Assessment Tables* appended to the **Background Report**.

The following table explains how the different ratings were applied to arrive at levels of landscape significance.



	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

2.5 Supporting Evidence

The level of significance was further confirmed by consideration of the 'supporting evidence' (see table) categories, although 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 their 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?

2.6 Evolution of Significance Methodology

The significance assessment methodology used in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* (GORRLAS) made use of four 'assessment criterion': landscape features, landscape edges, scarcity and visitation. As is evident from the preceding sections, landscape features and landscape edges are referred to as components of the single criterion. Views and 'natural or undeveloped character' have been added as a result of



community and Reference Group feedback. 'Scarcity' and 'visitation' (renamed 'visitor attraction') are now included in supporting evidence, along with the additional categories added to extend and improve the methodology for the study.

In applying the GORRLAS criteria, every part of the Great Ocean Road region coast was identified as having regional or greater significance. While GORRLAS identified areas of national significance, the present study has applied state significance as its highest level.

2.7 Community Opinion

The views of members of local communities, community groups, agencies and others with an interest in the coastal environment were sought by various means during the study process. These views were considered in the following ways in relation to the topic of significance:

- as input to the formulation of the significance criterion and supporting evidence categories
- the extent to which they supported the identification of a landscape already provisionally identified by the study team as being significant, including the geographic extent of the area
- for the attention they drew to the possible significance of a particular landscape not already identified by the study team
- for the information they provided as to the reasons justifying the designation of a landscape as significant
- for information they provided in relation to any of the supporting evidence categories, or any other information that could assist in determining the level of significance of a landscape.

Community Photographic Exercise

The following pages show a selection of photos and comments that resulted from the community photographic exercise. The photos were taken by representatives of key stakeholder groups with an interest in landscape management, who also wrote the caption that appears beneath each photo. They are included here to illustrate the kinds of feedback received from members of the community during the study.

The community photographic exercise was carried out in the early stages of the study, involving the distribution of disposable cameras to residents in each region. The purpose was to provide an insight into the local community's values in relation to scenery and landscapes, to gain an understanding of which landscapes the local community believe are significant and, most importantly, what makes them significant. The exercise is explained in greater detail in the **Background Report**.

The photos are grouped by region, and by the subject they respond to. The subjects were:

- one photo from one place you would take a visitor to show them the landscape of your area ('show a visitor')
- one photo of a feature, place or view you think is significant in your landscape and why you think it is significant ('significant landscapes')
- one photo of something you think is scenic or beautiful in your area and what makes it scenic or beautiful ('scenic/beautiful landscapes')
- one photo of a feature, place or view you think is unattractive or spoiled and why you think it is unattractive or spoiled ('spoiled landscapes').

The participants were also asked to take photos of landscapes representing their 'likes' and 'dislikes'.



Selection of Photos from the Community Photographic Exercise: South West Victoria

Show a Visitor



South Beach, Port Fairy: *Relatively untouched, natural, no buildings.*

Significant Landscapes



Lake Gilliear Coast: *A dramatic landscape with interesting and beautiful rock pools and rock formations.*

Scenic / Beautiful Landscapes



Looking east from The Craggs: *Indigenous vegetation, significant Aboriginal site, dramatic, rugged and isolated.*

Spoiled Landscapes



Bluestone Bay, Port Fairy: *Buildings on dunes.*

Likes



Coast north of Hopkins River: *Cave and rock formations, natural and untouched part of the coast.*

Dislikes



East Beach, Port Fairy: *Dislike the rock wall and houses on dunes.*



Selection of Photos from the Community Photographic Exercise: Bellarine Peninsula

Show a Visitor



Red Cliff Lookout, Bluff Road: *Panoramic Views of Port Phillip Bay*

Significant Landscapes



Barwon River Mouth: *an ever-changing tidal river.*

Scenic / Beautiful Landscapes



The view north from Barwon Heads Airport illustrates the low-lying character of Bellarine with its consistent expansive views.

Spoiled Landscapes



Cliff top houses at Ocean Grove.

Likes



Barwon Bluff from Breamlea: *Includes the very rugged and wild surf of Thirteenth beach.*

Dislikes



Sewage Treatment Plant: *Visible against the skyline from miles away.*



Selection of Photos from the Community Photographic Exercise: Gippsland Region

Show a Visitor



Yeerung River Gorge: *A good day-visitor area.*

Significant Landscapes



The islands and inlet, Shallow Inlet: *The natural beauty and views that can be seen.*

Scenic / Beautiful Landscapes



A first glimpse of Bird Rocks from the base of the cliff: *This area gives Walkerville part of its unique appeal. It is wild, rugged and beautiful.*

Spoiled Landscapes



Terminus of Bayside Drive, Waratah Bay: *This area is neglected and degraded and gives no sense of arrival.*

Likes



Surf beach at Venus Bay looking west from Beach 5: *Magnificent coastline with unspoilt beach and dunes.*

Dislikes



Electricity posts along the coastline and bluestone dumped on the beach.



2.8 Significant Landscapes of Coastal Victoria

The Significant Coastal Landscapes maps on the following pages show areas designated by this study as having local, regional and state significance. The maps are followed by the Statements of Significance (each accompanied by a photograph) of the areas designated as having state significance.

The Statements of Significance have been structured to reflect the methodology used for the significance assessment, and are recommended for use in the schedules to the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) where it is proposed. Remaining statements of significance (for landscapes of regional significance) are included in the ***Municipal Reference Documents***.

Detailed maps showing proposed SLO boundaries are appended to the relevant ***Municipal Implementation Toolkit***.

2.9 Implications for this Study

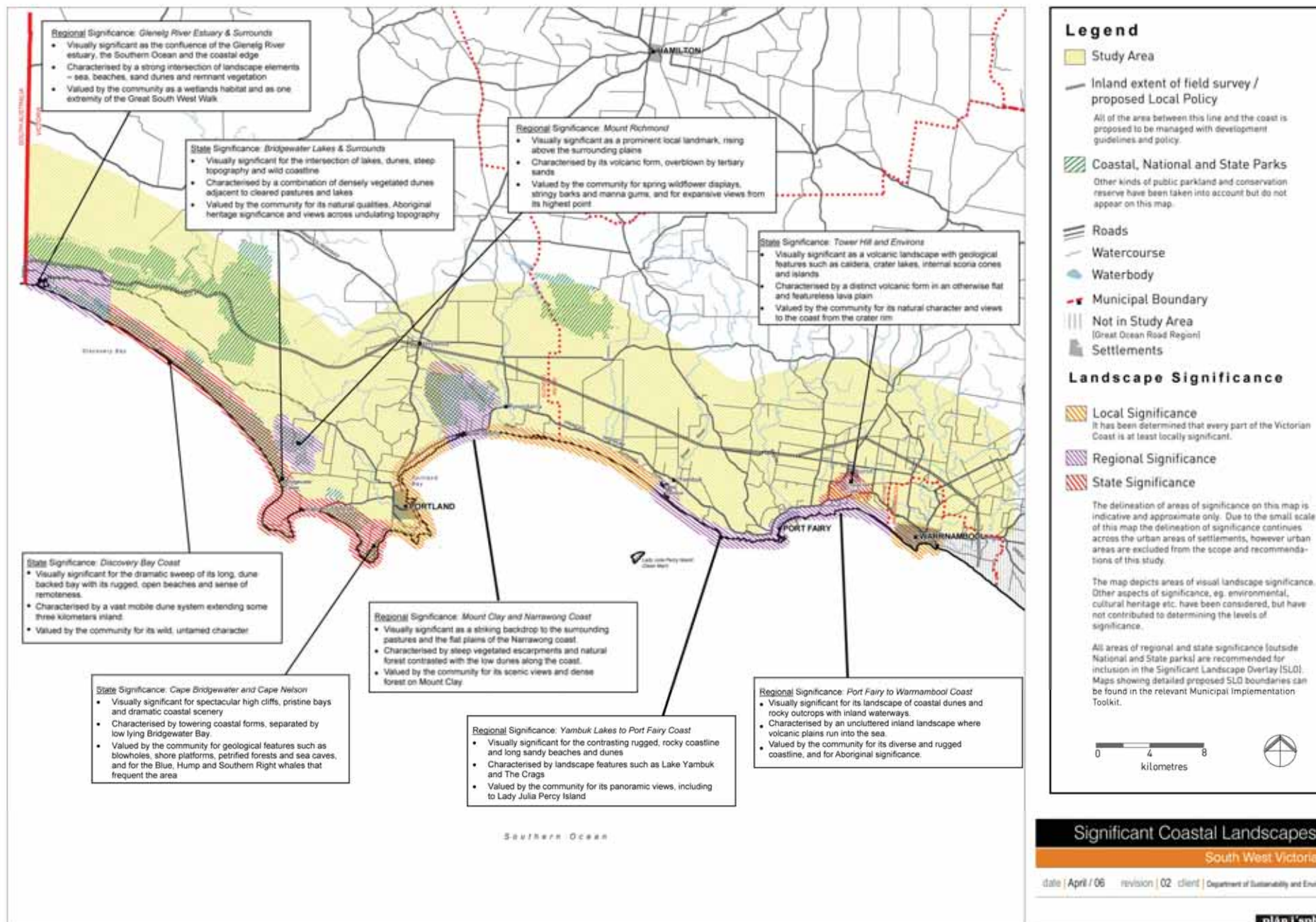
The landscapes identified as having regional or state significance were a major input to the analysis and development of the planning scheme and other recommendations. Recommendations for managing significant landscapes are explained in Chapter 3.



Significant Coastal Landscapes:

South West Victoria

2.9 South West Victoria





South West Victoria: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Discovery Bay Coast

The Discovery Bay Coast is of state significance for the dramatic sweep of its long dune-backed bay, with its rugged, open beaches, and sense of remoteness.

The landscape features include a vast mobile dune system up to 40 metres high, extending some three kilometres inland. It has a wild, natural coastal edge and is almost entirely free of development and settlements, with coastal heath and sedge vegetation prevailing across the coastal reserve.

Discovery Bay is an intact and representative example of this Landscape Type in Victoria. It attracts visitors from around the State, including many people attracted by the Great South West Walk that runs directly through the area. The landscape is included in the Register of the National Estate for its geological and geomorphological features, and fossils have been found here that have led to the discovery of previously unknown species. The area is also said to contain some of the most significant Aboriginal archaeological sites in south-eastern Australia.



Discovery Bay Coast



South West Victoria: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Bridgewater Lakes and Surrounds

Bridgewater Lakes is of state significance for its outstanding visual and scenic qualities.

The intersection of lakes, dunes, steep topography and wild coastline combine to make this landscape highly valued by communities alike. The landform is particularly noteworthy, with its combination of densely vegetated dunes adjacent to cleared pastures, the lakes, and occasional stands of trees. The undulating topography of Bridgewater Lakes and surrounds lends itself to fine views across cleared pastures.

The landscape has strong cultural and historic associations. It is listed on the Register of the National Estate for its Aboriginal cultural values, including rock shelters and ceremonial sites, and it is believed that the first settlement in the Portland area may have been next to the southern lake. The Bridgewater Lakes are also significant as dune-blocked lakes fed by fresh groundwater, and the area is known for its caves of scientific and educational importance. The Great South West Walk passes through this landscape.



Bridgewater Lakes and Surrounds



South West Victoria: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Cape Bridgewater and Cape Nelson

The spectacular cliffs, pristine bays and the dramatic coastal scenery of Cape Bridgewater and Cape Nelson are unique in Victoria and combine to make a landscape of state significance.

The capes are listed by the National Trust for their dramatic coastal forms, with the huge bulk of the capes separated by the low-lying Bridgewater Bay. The towering cliffs, which are the highest in the state, provide an unusually dramatic edge to the rural hinterland where, in places, native vegetation comes right down to the water's edge. There are notable views of the capes from the Great South West Walk along the beach, and along the coast from high points at the top of the cliffs. Cape Bridgewater is a remnant of a volcanic crater.

The visual significance of the landscape is enhanced by high cultural and environmental values. Blue whales, Humpback whales, Southern Right whales, dolphins and orcas frequent the area, and there are also seal colonies and gannet rookeries. Each of the capes is of high geomorphological and geological significance, with a number of rare features such as blowholes, shore platforms, petrified forests and sea caves, of great interest to academics and visitors alike. There are extensive Aboriginal sites throughout the area and the Cape Nelson Lighthouse settlement is significant as an intact example of a Victorian light station.



Cape Bridgewater and Cape Nelson



South West Victoria: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Tower Hill and Environs

Tower Hill is a visually outstanding volcanic landscape, having the full sequence of geological features including the caldera, crater lakes, internal scoria cones and islands. It is the most popular and well-known volcanic landscape in Victoria and is of state significance for its visual qualities.

The views from Tower Hill and its crater rim are remarkable, both across the surrounding plains to the coast, and within the complex to the crater floor and its island lakes. Its distinctive volcanic form, in an otherwise flat and featureless lava plain, make this a recognisable and highly prominent landscape feature of the western region.

Much of the area's vegetation was denuded and is being re-established, and it is a refuge to a variety of native plants, birds and animals.



Tower Hill and Environs

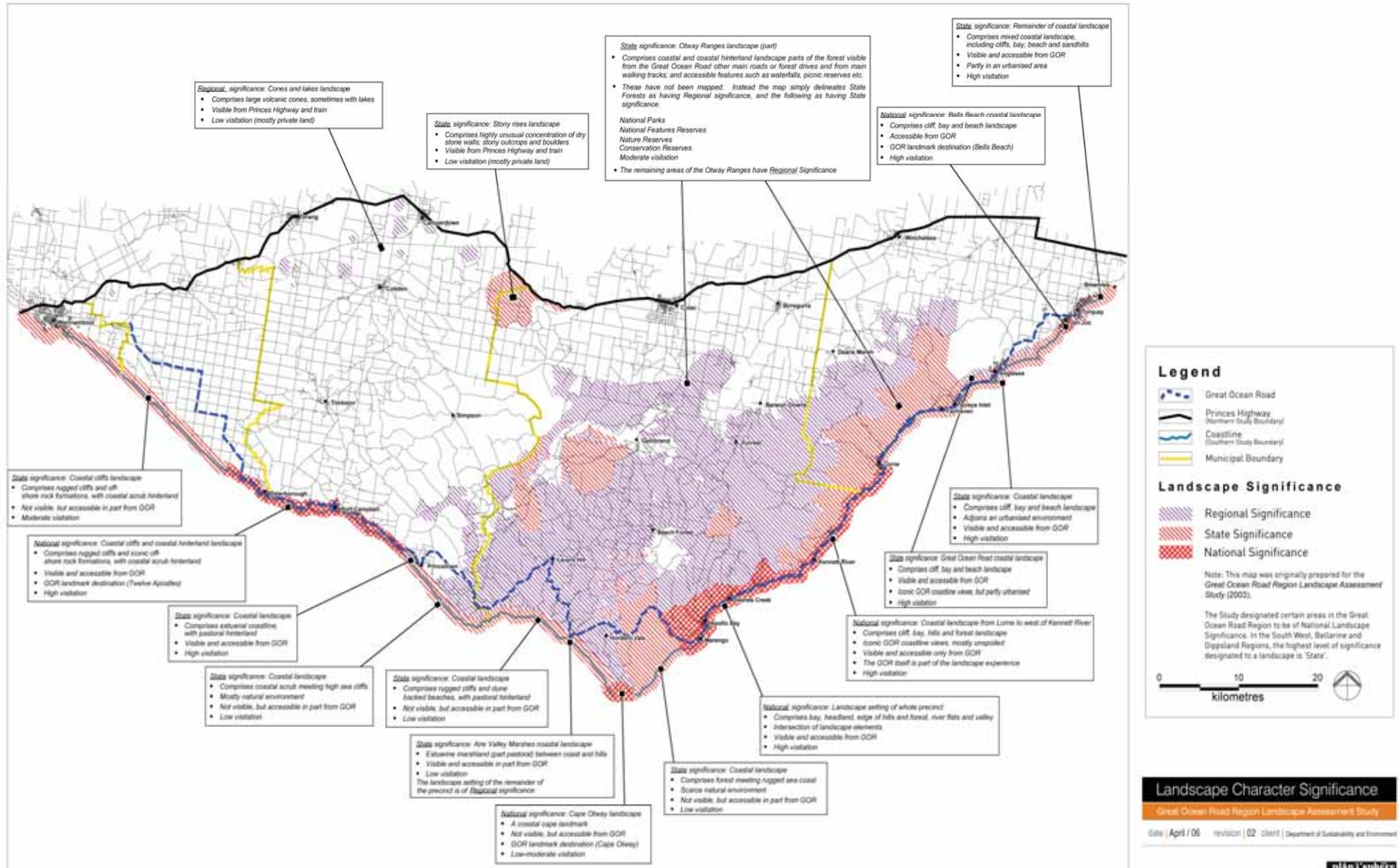


Significant Coastal Landscapes:

Great Ocean Road Region

The following is extracted from the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment*, undertaken in 2003-4 as part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy*

2.10 Great Ocean Road Region





Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline and Otway Ranges from Breamlea to Lorne

- Coastal landscape comprises cliffs, bay, beach and sandhills.
- Otway Ranges landscape comprises a coastal and hinterland landscape, with parts of the forest visible from the Great Ocean Road, other main roads or forest drives. Also includes accessible features such as waterfalls and picnic reserves.
- Coastal landscape is entirely visible and accessible from the Great Ocean Road.
- Adjoins some urbanised environments, particularly around Lorne and Torquay.
- Iconic Great Ocean Road coastline views.
- Includes the Great Ocean Road landmark destination of Bells Beach.
- Visitation levels range from moderate in the Otway Ranges landscape to high in the coastal landscape.

National Significance: The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* designated Bells Beach as an area of National Landscape Significance. In the South West, Bellarine and Gippsland regions, the highest level of significance designated for a landscape is state.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



View from Aireys Inlet to Urquharts Bluff



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline from Lorne to west of Kennett River

- Comprises cliff, bay, hill and forest landscape.
- Iconic Great Ocean Road coastline views, mostly unspoiled.
- Visible and accessible only from the Great Ocean Road.
- The Great Ocean Road itself is part of the landscape experience.
- High visitation levels.

National Significance: The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* designated the coastal edge of this area as having National Landscape Significance. In the South West, Bellarine and Gippsland regions, the highest level of significance designated for a landscape is state.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



Mount Defiance



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline from east of Skenes Creek to west of Marengo

- Comprises bay, headland, edge of hills and forest, river flats and valley.
- Intersection of landscape elements.
- Visible and accessible from the Great Ocean Road.
- High visitation levels.

National Significance: The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* designated the coastal edge and hinterland of this area as having National Landscape Significance. In the South West, Bellarine and Gippsland regions, the highest level of significance designated for a landscape is state.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



Apollo Bay



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline from west of Marengo to Cape Otway

- Comprises forest meeting rugged sea coast.
- Scarce natural environment.
- Not visible, but accessible in part from the Great Ocean Road.
- Includes the Great Ocean Road landmark destination of Cape Otway.
- Low-moderate visitation levels.

National Significance: The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* designated Cape Otway as having National Landscape Significance. In the South West, Bellarine and Gippsland regions, the highest level of significance designated for a landscape is state.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



Cape Otway Forest



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline from west of Cape Otway to west of Princetown

- Comprises estuarine coastline, estuarine marshland between coast and hills, coastal scrub meeting rugged and high sea cliffs, dune-backed beaches and a pastoral hinterland.
- Visitation levels range from high at the western edge of the landscape to low in the east.
- Visible and accessible in parts from the Great Ocean Road.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



Johanna Beach



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Coastline from west of Princetown to Warrnambool

- Comprises rugged cliffs and iconic off-shore rock formations, with coastal scrub hinterland.
- Some parts visible and accessible from the Great Ocean Road.
- Moderate to high visitation levels.
- Includes landmark Great Ocean Road destination (Twelve Apostles).

National Significance: The *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* designated the coastal edge and hinterland between west of Princetown and west of Peterborough as having National Landscape Significance. In the South West, Bellarine and Gippsland regions, the highest level of significance designated for a landscape is state.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



The Twelve Apostles



Great Ocean Road Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Stony Rises, west of Colac

- Comprises highly unusual concentrations of dry stone walls, stony outcrops and boulders.
- Visible from the Princes Highway and train.
- Low visitation levels due to high proportion of public land.

Strictly speaking, this is an inland, rather than a coastal landscape. However, it forms part of the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study* area.

The 'dot points' above come from the significance map included in the *Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment Study*. Statements of significance of the kind incorporated into the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment* were not prepared.



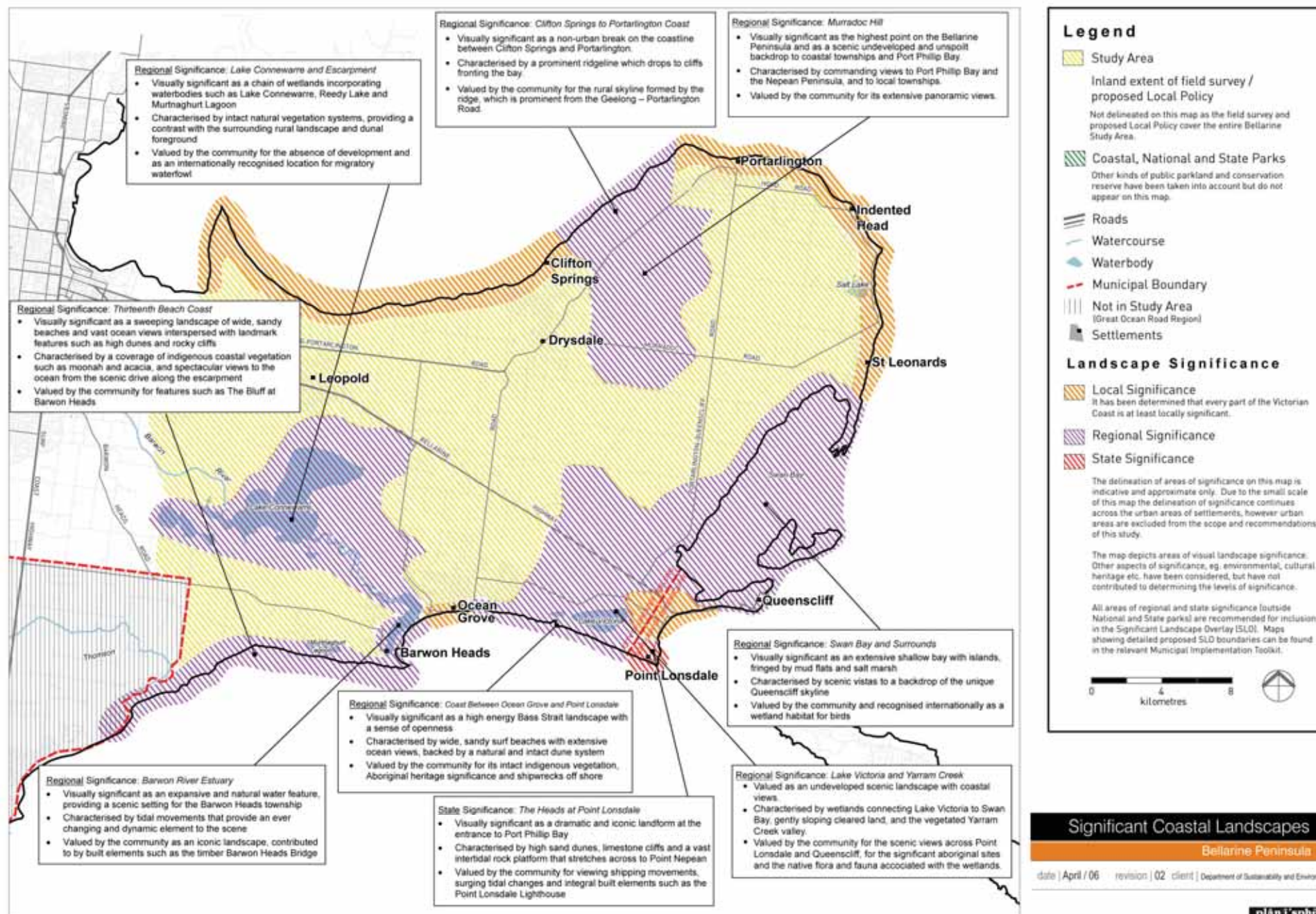
Stony Rises, west of Colac



Significant Coastal Landscapes:

Bellarine Peninsula

2.11 Bellarine Peninsula





Bellarine Peninsula: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

The Heads (at Point Lonsdale)

The Heads at Point Lonsdale is a dramatic and iconic landform at the entrance to Port Phillip Bay, and is of state significance.

The Heads is a well-known landscape throughout Victoria and features on numerous early artworks. It is part of a Marine National Park that includes high sand dunes, limestone cliffs, and a vast intertidal rock platform that stretches across to Point Nepean. There are spectacular views from the foreshore and the lighthouse across to Point Nepean, at the other side of The Heads.

This landscape is part of an ever-changing scene, with frequent shipping movements and surging tidal changes – an experience that attracts numerous visitors from across the region and further afield. Point Lonsdale itself is a well-defined coastal village, nestled in vegetation between the high-energy ocean currents at The Heads, and the natural wetlands that inhibit development to the west. A number of buildings in the township are also of heritage value, most notably the Point Lonsdale lighthouse.



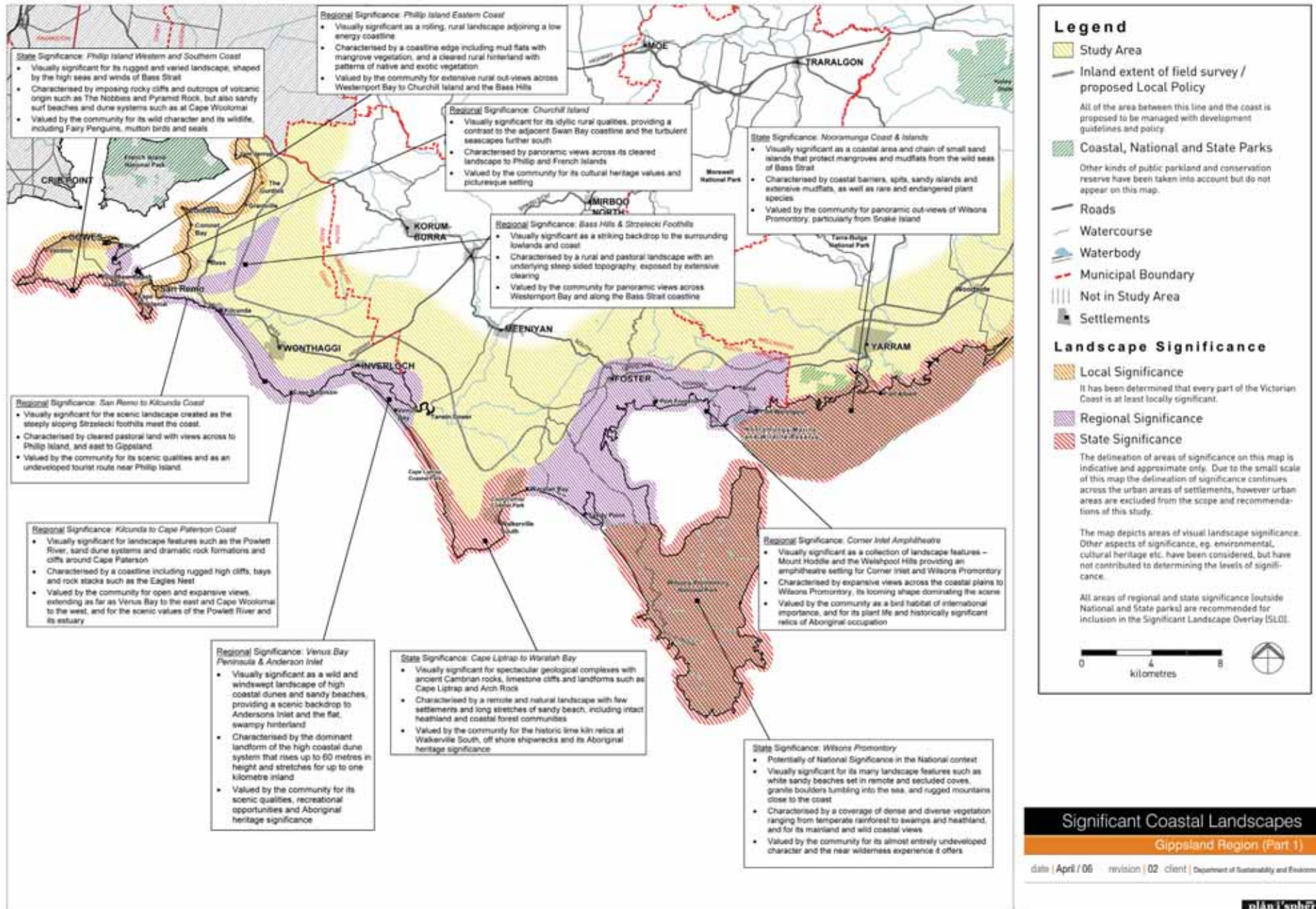
The Heads at Point Lonsdale



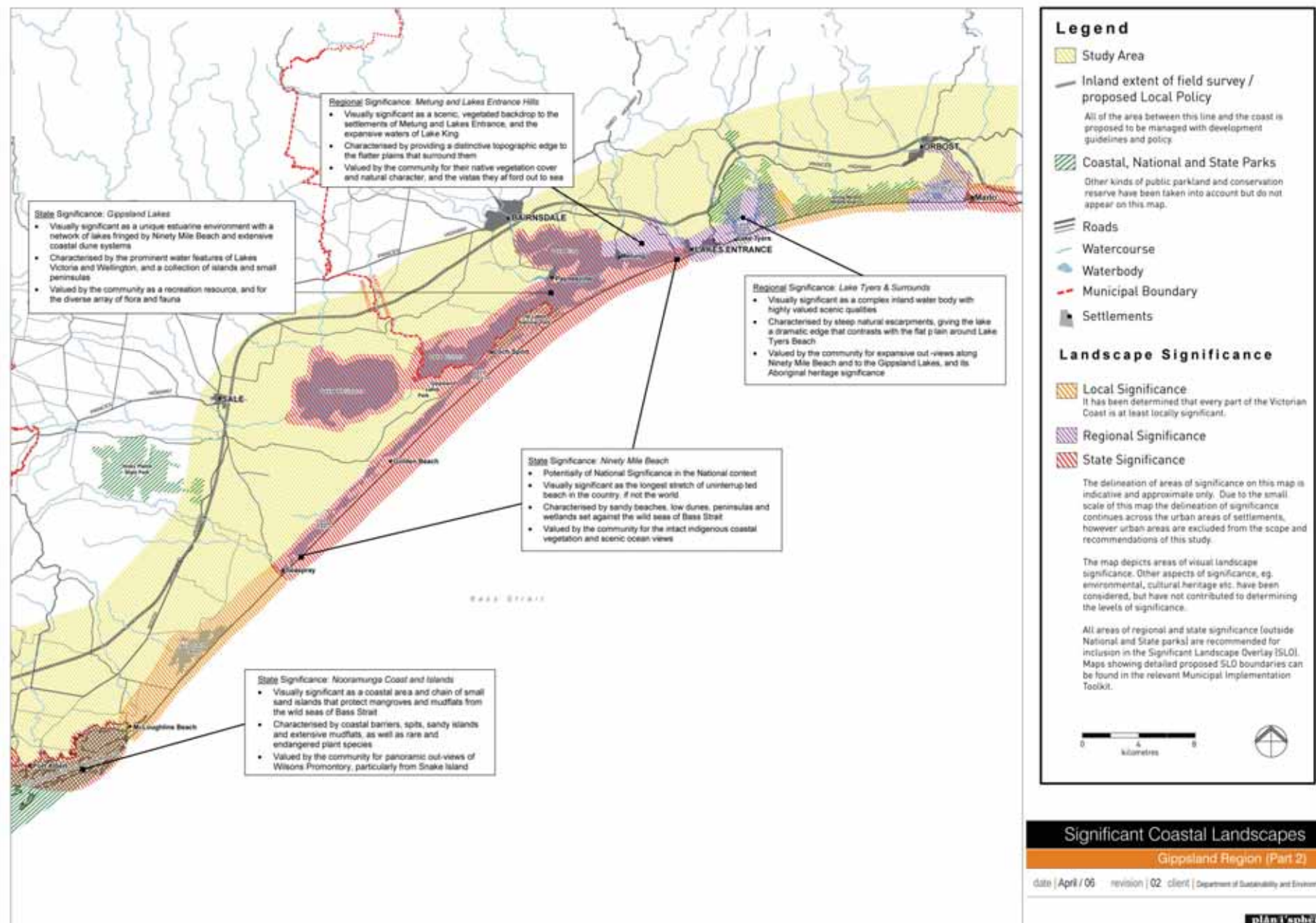
Significant Coastal Landscapes:

Gippsland Region

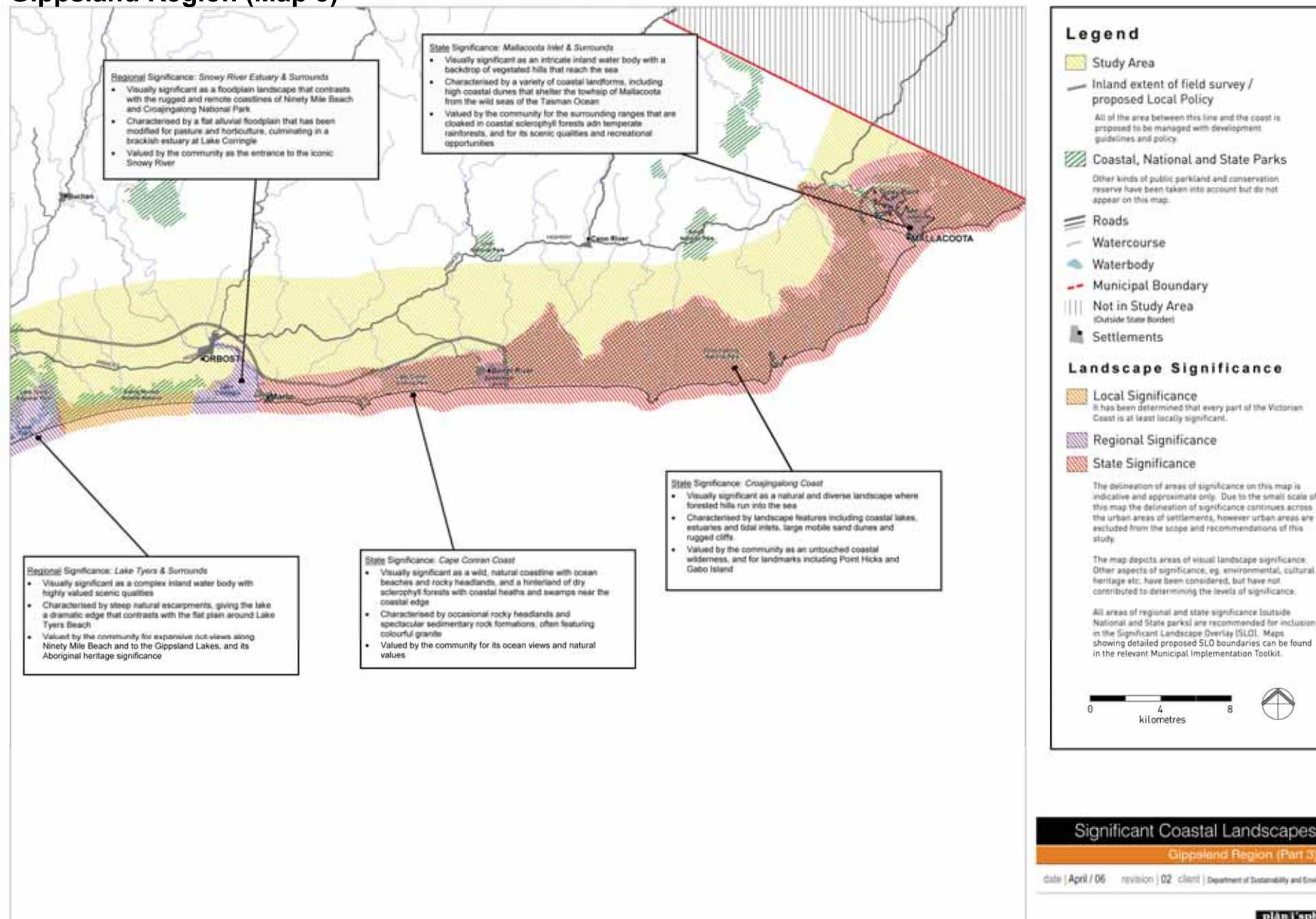
2.12 Gippsland Region (Map 1)



Gippsland Region (Map 2)



Gippsland Region (Map 3)





Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast

The southern and western coastline of Phillip Island is a rugged and varied landscape of state significance that has been shaped by the high seas and winds of Bass Strait to create some of Victoria's best-known landforms.

The landscape comprises imposing rocky cliffs and outcrops of volcanic origin such as The Nobbies and Pyramid Rock, as well as sandy surf beaches and dune systems such as at Cape Woolamai. These landforms give rise to some spectacular scenic views from the many lookouts and access points along the coastline, including vistas along the entire coast and out to sea. Although this is a very accessible and popular tourist area with many townships, the western half of this landscape, from Smiths Beach to The Nobbies, has a particularly wild and undeveloped character.

Most of the southern coastline is recognised by the National Trust and the Register of the National Estate for its geomorphology and its geology. The National Trust also recognises the area for its significant bird habitats, including the Fairy Penguins that attract both national and international tourists. Other attractions include the mutton bird rookery at Cape Woolamai, and the colony of seals at Seal Rocks, located at the western tip of the island.



Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Cape Liptrap to Waratah Bay

Cape Liptrap and surrounds is a diverse coastal landscape of state significance, comprising spectacular views and dramatic rock formations.

This is a remote and natural landscape with few settlements and long stretches of sandy beach, and is home to intact heathland and coastal forest communities. The area includes spectacular geological complexes with ancient Cambrian rocks and limestone cliffs, and remarkable landforms at Cape Liptrap and at Arch Rock. There are also unforgettable ocean views from high points such as the Cape Liptrap Lighthouse, particularly across Waratah Bay to the dramatic profile of Wilsons Promontory.

In addition to its visual qualities, the landscape has significant cultural heritage and environmental values. The area is recorded on the Victorian Heritage Register and is recognised by the National Trust for relics of the lime burning industry at Walkerville South, with the ruins of several kilns still evident at the base of the cliffs. The area is also notable for shipwrecks offshore, and the remains of many Aboriginal camps with middens containing shellfish, flints and charcoal. The fauna and flora of the area are also highly valued, with some 270 species of flowering plants, including 27 orchids and many threatened species.



Cape Liptrap to Waratah Bay



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Wilsons Promontory

Wilsons Promontory, or 'The Prom' to most Victorians, is an outstanding landscape of state significance (and potentially national significance in that context) for its dramatic landforms, wilderness qualities and spectacular views. It is the most southerly point on the Australian mainland and is a designated National Park.

The whole promontory is cloaked in dense and diverse vegetation, ranging from temperate rainforest to swamps and heathlands. The coastline comprises many and varied landscape features, from granite boulders tumbling into the sea, to the whitest of sandy beaches set in remote and secluded coves. Rugged mountains close to the coast offer stunning views back to the mainland and out into the wild waters of Bass Strait. For the surrounding coast, Wilsons Promontory is a looming presence providing a dramatic backdrop to views across Waratah Bay and Corner Inlet. As one of Victoria's earliest National Parks, the Promontory has remained almost entirely undeveloped and now offers a near wilderness experience for its many local and overseas visitors.

Wilsons Promontory and its thirteen offshore islands are listed on the Register of the National Estate for its landscape qualities and scenery. The light station at the southernmost tip of the promontory is particularly important for its complex of historical buildings that are grouped around a stone-walled space, with the lighthouse as the focus for this axis. There are also numerous middens and other significant Aboriginal sites in the area. The Prom, an iconic landscape, features widely in tourism publications, artworks and photography.



Wilsons Promontory

(Source: www.fernweh.de)



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Nooramunga Coast and Islands

The Nooramunga Coast and Islands landscape is of state significance for its visual qualities, including a jagged coastline of mangroves and mudflats, and a chain of sandy islands that protect the southern coast from the wild seas of Bass Strait.

The islands themselves are generally devoid of development, with campsites and walking tracks the only evidence of post-contact human presence. The 'untouched' nature of the offshore landscape adds to the significance of the expansive and scenic views that are available to surrounding features, including Wilsons Promontory.

The area is identified by the Ramsar Convention as an internationally significant wetland, and is on the Register of the National Estate for its coastal barriers, spits, sandy islands and extensive mudflats, as well as rare and endangered plant species. It is also protected as a marine and wildlife reserve, and is well known for its Aboriginal significance, evidenced by numerous shell middens along the coast.



Nooramunga Coast and Islands

(Source: <http://www.seakayakaustralia.com>)



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Ninety Mile Beach

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, 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 value 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. 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.



Ninety Mile Beach Coast



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of State Significance

Gippsland Lakes

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.

Lake Victoria and Lake 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, which are 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 found in the form of shell middens, flaked stone artefacts, scarred trees and other traditionally significant sites and places.



Gippsland Lakes



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of 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.



Cape Conran Coast



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of 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.



Croajingolong Coast



Gippsland Region: Coastal Landscapes of 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.



Mallacoota Inlet and Surrounds



3

Protecting and Managing the Character and Significance of Coastal Landscapes



3.1 Introduction

This study provides a landscape analysis of every stretch of the Victorian coast and its hinterland. It also provides development guidelines for all of these areas, with the intention that the guidelines should be formally adopted into local planning schemes. Other additions to the Local and State Planning Policy Frameworks are also proposed, with the aim of recognising the landscape importance of the entire coastline. These policies will be applied by Responsible Authorities when they consider whether to grant a permit, or whether to attach conditions to a permit. In some locations, changes to existing control frameworks are recommended to support the intent of the policies. These changes all recognise and respond to the high value attributed by the community to the visual qualities of the state's coastal landscapes.

3.2 State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) is standard for all councils across Victoria. Clause 15 relates to Environment, and Clause 15.08 deals specifically with Coastal Areas. The Objective relating to Coastal Areas is:

“... to protect and enhance the natural ecosystems and landscapes of the coastal and marine environment, ensure sustainable use of natural coastal resources and achieve development that provides an environmental, social and economic benefit enhancing the community's value of the coast.”

Clause 15.08-2, General Implementation, requires decision-making by planning authorities and responsible authorities to be consistent with the principles for coastal planning and management as set out in the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002*. The principles do not refer to aesthetic landscape character.

Clause 15.08-3, Geographic Strategies, includes objectives and strategies for planning for the Great Ocean Road region. These include:

“Protect the landscape and environment by:

- Protecting public land and parks and identified significant landscapes.*
- Ensuring development responds to the identified landscape character of the area.*
- Managing the impact of development on catchments and coastal areas.*
- Managing the impact of development on the environmental and cultural values of the area ...”*

There are also objectives and strategies for the Great Ocean Road Region relating to the growth of towns, the management of transport and access, and sustainable tourism and resource use.

There is clearly a gap in the SPPF relating to coastal landscape character and significance for the whole of Victoria. This issue can be addressed through implementation of the key whole-of-state findings and recommendations under Clause 15.08, including landscapes of state significance.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the following additions be made to the State Planning Policy Framework:

Insert a new section under Clause 15.08-3 'Coastal Landscape Character and Significance'.

Include words to the effect that planning for Victoria's coastal landscapes should:

- protect identified significant landscapes
- ensure that development responds to the identified landscape character of the local area
- protect identified significant views and vistas in coastal areas.



Include the *Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study* (Planisphere, 2006) as a Reference Document.

3.3 Landscape Management Guidelines

Landscape Management Objectives and Guidelines have been prepared for each of the identified Character Areas and are included in the relevant **Character Area Analysis Papers**. These papers provide further details and specific guidelines based on the preferred character to be achieved for each area.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the guidelines be included in the Local Planning Policy Framework of each municipality.

3.4 Best Practice Policies

At the 'whole of coast' or state level, a set of Best Practice Policy Statements has been prepared that can be applied to all Victorian coastal landscapes. These have been prepared following the detailed analysis of the character of the state's coastal landscapes, and in consideration of the principles of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* and the *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast* as they relate to visual landscape character.

The Best Practice Policies that have been developed to protect and manage the visual qualities of Victoria's coastal landscapes are as follows.

Vegetation

- Avoid the loss of indigenous vegetation.
- Where vegetation loss cannot be avoided, balance the loss of vegetation with rehabilitation on the site or nearby areas and replace indigenous trees lost due to development with indigenous trees that will grow to a similar size.

- Encourage the planting of indigenous vegetation for rehabilitation works.
- Landscaping around developments should use appropriate indigenous species or non-invasive native/exotic plantings that are already a feature of the area.
- Retain existing shelterbelts and exotic feature planting where it is a feature of the area.
- Where shelterbelts or exotic feature planting is lost, old, degraded or incomplete, replace with the same species or an alternative non-invasive species.

Key Views and Vistas

- Protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of coastal and coastal hinterland areas, including scenic vistas from publicly accessible locations (e.g. 'gateway' views at topographic rises along a road, roads that terminate at the coast, and formal scenic lookouts), and views from important viewing corridors (e.g. main roads and tourist routes, walking tracks and recreation trails).
- Development should be avoided in the foreground (e.g. up to one kilometre) of important scenic vistas and scenic lookouts, or designed and sited to retain the character and scenic qualities of the views from that location.
- Buildings, structures and other developments should be set back from important viewing corridors (outside settlements) and designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion (e.g. low building heights, appropriate colours and materials and integration with vegetation, where appropriate).
- Avoid incremental changing of views from coastal roads and other publicly accessible areas through the cumulative impacts of numerous inappropriately designed and sited developments.

All Settlements

- Ensure that settlements maintain their individual character and physical distance from each other.



- Ensure settlements have a definite visual edge, delineating the boundary between urban development and the natural/rural landscape beyond.
- Utilise existing landscape features (e.g. topography, vegetation coverage, vistas) to define appropriate 'edges' to settlements, protecting the surrounding landscape character.
- Carefully site buildings and structures at the settlement edges to integrate with existing topography/vegetation.

Coastal Settlements

- The height and form of new development at the 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 foreshore.
- Support a hierarchy of built form within coastal settlements, with lower buildings adjacent to the foreshore and higher buildings away from the foreshore.
- Prevent the privatisation of the foreshore by ensuring development adjacent to the coastal edge of settlements maintains public access.
- Overshadowing of the public foreshore of settlements should not be increased.

Ridges and Hill Slopes

- Where development cannot be avoided in steep locations or prominent hill faces:
 - site development in the lower one-third of the visible slope, wherever possible
 - set buildings and structures among existing vegetation, and/or establish gardens of locally appropriate species
 - design buildings to follow the contours or step down the site to minimise earthworks; and

- articulate buildings into separate elements, and avoid visually dominant elevations.

Between Settlements – Coastal Locations

- Retain the natural and undeveloped character of the coastal strip between settlements by avoiding or carefully siting and designing development.
- Outside settlements, buildings and structures should not be developed on the primary dune or in prominent locations overlooking the coast.
- Where development cannot be avoided (e.g. for public purposes), site development to minimise visibility from the foreshore and offshore and maximise the retention of coastal vegetation.
- In flatter locations (e.g. adjoining inlets), development should be substantially set back where possible, to minimise visual intrusion and retain a dominant natural character within 500 metres of the edge of the coast.
- Building design should respond to the natural setting in relation to siting, materials and colours. Use materials durable in the coastal environment, and colours that complement the coastal environment and minimise contrast with the surrounding landscape.
- In prominent and highly visible locations, minimise distant visibility of developments by avoiding the use of contrasting colours and/or highly reflective materials.
- Site servicing and access away from landscape features and areas of high visibility, and avoid the loss of vegetation.
- Minimise and clearly define pedestrian and vehicular access to the building through the coastal landscape.
- Prevent ribbon development along main roads and key touring routes.

Between Settlements – Hinterland Locations

- Locate buildings to minimise visibility from main road corridors and key public use areas.



- Avoid visual clutter (including buildings, structures and signage) along highways and key touring routes outside settlements.
- In open rural areas, set buildings back long distances from roads and/or group buildings in the landscape among substantial landscaping of indigenous or non-invasive exotic/native feature planting (including existing shelterbelts).
- Maximise the undeveloped area of a lot able to support vegetation. Use permeable surfacing for all unbuilt areas to minimise surface run-off and to support vegetation.
- 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.
- Use locally appropriate indigenous vegetation or native/exotic feature planting to delineate property boundaries, instead of fencing. If fencing is necessary, this should be of an open style and not visually obtrusive (e.g. post and wire style traditionally used in rural areas).
- Building design should strongly respond to the natural setting in relation to siting, materials and colours.
- In prominent and highly visible locations, construct buildings and structures of materials that reduce distant visibility and avoid the use of brightly coloured and/or highly reflective materials.
- Prevent ribbon development along main roads and key touring routes.

Signage

- Avoid large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage in vegetated and coastal areas.
- Group signage at particular locations to minimise visual impact, avoid signage clutter, and to maintain scenic outlooks.

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure should be sited to avoid highly scenic locations, key views and near-coastal locations or, in the case of powerlines and other utility services, be underground wherever possible.
- Locate powerlines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, preferably in previously cleared locations.
- Avoid the loss of vegetation in locations that create visual scars visible from key touring routes and other public use locations.
- Use materials that minimise contrast with the surrounding landscape and avoid distant visibility.
- Use vegetation to screen infrastructure from key viewing corridors and public use areas.
- All new infrastructure development should be accompanied by a landscape plan utilising appropriate plant species, and demonstrating how the affected area will be screened and remediated after development.

Cultural Heritage and Landscape

- Identify and preserve the attributes and setting of a landscape when associated with places of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.
- Ensure that the character of a landscape is sensitive to any relevant Aboriginal heritage values associated with significant places, by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.
- Respect, and avoid impact on the Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with significant places by setting back, avoiding or carefully designing buildings, structures and other landscape alterations.

Development Applications

- Require with planning permit applications:



- a detailed site evaluation which considers the existing landscape context including topography, vegetation (species, location and character), and views to the site from roads, settlements, publicly accessible waterways and recreation and tourism locations; and
- a landscape plan that demonstrates the use of locally appropriate species (e.g. indigenous or non-invasive native/exotic plants that are a feature of the character of the area) and how the affected area will be remediated after the development.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Best Practice Policy Statements be included in the Local Planning Policy Framework of each municipal planning scheme.

3.5 The Significant Landscape Overlay

As outlined previously, the determination of the relative significance of the landscapes was an important driver in the brief for this study. Assessing and rating landscapes for their relative significance has provided a sound strategic basis for effective targeting of planning controls, particularly where the community places strong emphasis on the protection of those landscapes and/or where existing planning controls are not achieving the desired outcomes.

It has been determined through previous work, and re-confirmed through this study, that the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) is the most appropriate tool for protecting and managing the character of significant landscapes. The SLO can be used to control buildings and works as well as the removal, lopping or destruction of vegetation. Detailed decision guidelines and performance standards have been incorporated into the development of the schedule relating to each SLO.

In order for the SLO to be applied, the landscape must be demonstrated to be of significance to the character of the area, and advice from Planning Panels

Victoria is that local significance is the minimal level required. As this study has set up a method and defined significant coastal landscapes across Victoria, the application of this overlay is justifiable.

Based on the advice from Planning Panels Victoria that local significance is the minimum level of significance required to justify SLO application, it is acknowledged that councils may wish to initiate Planning Scheme Amendments to apply SLOs to certain areas identified as locally significant by this study. This will, however, require councils to carry out further work beyond this study to justify the need for an SLO on any given landscape.

Some SLOs already exist in parts of the study area – these are assessed and commented on in the ***Municipal Implementation Toolkits***.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Significant Landscape Overlay be applied to the significant landscape areas identified by this study, and that the SLO maps and schedules as prepared be included in the relevant local planning schemes.

There are seven landscapes in South West Victoria that have been recommended for SLO coverage. These are:

- Glenelg River Estuary and Surrounds
- Bridgewater Lakes and Surrounds
- Cape Bridgewater and Cape Nelson
- Mount Clay and Narrawong Coast
- Yambuk Lakes to Port Fairy Coast
- Port Fairy to Warrnambool Coast
- Tower Hill and Environs

There are five landscapes on the Bellarine Peninsula that have been recommended for SLO coverage. These are:



- Lake Connewarre Escarpment
- Clifton Springs to Portarlington Coast
- Murradoc Hill
- Swan Bay and Surrounds
- Lake Victoria and Yarram Creek

There are fourteen landscapes in the Gippsland region that have been recommended for SLO coverage. These are:

- Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast
- Phillip Island Eastern Coast
- San Remo to Kilcunda Coast*
- Bass Hills and Strzelecki Foothills*
- Kilcunda to Cape Paterson Coast
- Venus Bay Peninsula and Anderson Inlet
- Cape Liptrap to Waratah Bay
- Corner Inlet Amphitheatre
- Ninety Mile Beach
- Gippsland Lakes
- Metung and Lakes Entrance Hills
- Lake Tyers and Surrounds
- Snowy River Estuary and Surrounds
- Mallacoota Inlet and Surrounds

* Already has an SLO, but schedule modifications are proposed.

3.6 Non-statutory Recommendations

Public Land Management

Legislation such as the *Crown Lands (Reserve) Act 1978*, the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, and the *National Park Act 1975* provides the appropriate framework and context for the management of public land, along with approved management plans which seek to manage these public assets relevant to the purpose for their reservation.

In order to provide a thorough coast-wide assessment, National and State parks have been included in the overall understanding of landscape character and assessment of significance across all study areas. This was undertaken in order to provide a comprehensive coastal analysis and in order to inform and provide a comparative level of significance against which to judge other landscapes.

It should be noted, however, that given the nature of protection established through specific legislation for various categories of public land, for the purposes of this study consideration of the application of Planning Scheme tools such as the Significant Landscape Overlay to further protect identified significant landscapes for these areas was not pursued. This is reflected through the Planning Scheme provisions in relation to specific zones relating to public land: Public Conservation and Recreation Zone (PCRZ) and the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

Notwithstanding, the study and its findings will provide valuable advice and information for Public Land Managers in managing the public land asset, and for future revisions to management plans and other guidelines.

Recommendation

Consideration of the landscape management practice and principles should be undertaken by public land managers to achieve an enhanced outcome and ensure consistency in application of this study.



With regard to coastal Crown land, the study and its recommendations should be taken into consideration in future reviews of various coastal management plans, coastal action plans and by public land managers.

The audit of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*, due in 2006-07, provides an opportunity to enhance the strategy's relationship with the management of coastal landscapes and protection of significant landscapes.

Other Recommendations

Outside the more formal mechanism of the planning system, there are other options available to municipalities to protect and manage coastal landscape character, and to further utilise the products produced as part of this study. Some of these initiatives could include:

- Reproduction of multiple copies of the **Character Area Analysis Papers** (including on council websites) as a resource for interested community members, and as a reference document for council decision-making.
- Facilitation of a community education program to disseminate information about the Landscape Character Areas defined in this study, and appropriate approaches to landscape-sensitive development that respond to landscape character.
- Ensuring that the study is available for viewing and purchasing by the general public.
- Ensuring that the council statutory planners are briefed thoroughly on the study and are skilled up, particularly in relation to assessment of permit applications in SLO areas or where the proposed local policy applies. Correct approaches to site analysis, knowledge about acceptable design solutions for particular landscape character types and consistency are all-important, and may be achieved through running a training session for example.
- Ensuring that adjacent municipalities liaise closely regarding implementation of this study to ensure consistent approaches and the same policies,

controls and overlay schedule contents for Character Areas and Significant Landscape Overlay areas that cross municipal boundaries.

3.7 Outside this Study

Council officer representation on the study's reference groups has meant that discussions could occur throughout the project regarding the best way of implementing the findings of the landscape assessment work. This has also ensured comprehensive resolution of a package of planning tools relating to coastal landscape character and significance.

Outside the recommendations of this study, councils will still have the right to propose Planning Scheme changes to protect coastal landscape character. However, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Minister for Planning are likely only to support such changes where they have a clear strategic justification in the terms established by this study, or demonstrate a material change in circumstance since this study was undertaken. The strategic justification would need to address:

- the level of landscape significance of the area
- the extent of threat to significant character
- the existence of a gap in controls.



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 DSE, DSE regions, local government, regional coastal boards, catchment management authorities, Heritage Victoria and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria. Each 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 the members of the reference groups are gratefully acknowledged.

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