

Bass Coast

Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy (BURT)



Acknowledgement of Country

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledge the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore.

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Communities in their diversity.

Bass Coast Shire Council will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Report prepared by Urban Enterprise and reviewed by Bass Coast Shire Council following public exhibition and comprehensive consultation.

Urban Enterprise

Urban Planning, Land Economics, Tourism Planning & Industry Software
Level 1 / 302-304 Barkly St, Brunswick VIC 3056
(03) 9482 3888
urbanenterprise.com.au

Authors

Urban Enterprise: Mike Ruzzene, Nancy Yoo, Agathy Patsouris
Reviewed by Glenn Musto of Bass Coast Shire

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Acronyms

BCSC	Bass Coast Shire Council
BURT	Bass Coast Unlocking Rural Tourism Strategy
DALS	Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Strategy
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. The department was formerly the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).
DMP	Destination Management Plan
GDMP	Gippsland Destination Management Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MPS (MSS)	Municipal Planning Strategy (formerly the Municipal Strategic Statement)
NCR	Nature Conservation Reserve
PINP	Phillip Island Nature Parks
PPF	Planning Policy Framework
PSVES	Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy
RLUS	Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy
SA2	Statistical Area 2
SPP	Statement of Planning Policy
TEVE	Victoria's Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy Research Unit
TR	Tourism Region
VEP	Visitor Economy Partnerships
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives

Glossary

Agritourism	Agritourism (also known as agrotourism or farm tourism) includes commercial activities that link agricultural production with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.
Ecotourism	Similar to nature-based tourism, ecotourism describes sustainable tourism activities with low impact on natural environments. Ecotourism focuses on providing nature-based experiences and fosters environmental and cultural understanding, and appreciation for and conservation of nature.
Nature-based Tourism	Tourism activities or experiences where the natural environment is the primary attraction or setting.
Tourist Park	A commercial facility that includes various forms of inexpensive accommodation, such as campsites, cabins, caravan or RV parking. Often used interchangeably with Holiday Park or Caravan Park.
Rural Tourism	Rural tourism is simply defined as tourist activities taking place in rural or non-urban areas. The most common types of rural tourism include agritourism, nature-based tourism and ecotourism.
Victoria's Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE)	Victoria's Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) research unit analyses and collates a range of research and statistics relating to tourism in Victoria. Their publications include visitation, expenditure, economic contribution, and tourism forecasts.

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Executive Summary

Project Background

Bass Coast Shire Council (Shire), in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), has engaged Urban Enterprise to undertake a land use study for Bass Coast Shire's Rural Tourism Precincts. The initial purpose of the study is to investigate the reason for the limited tourism investment within the rural areas of Bass Coast Shire, particularly the "Rural Tourism Precincts" identified in the Bass Coast Planning Scheme (Scheme). The report investigates the environmental and planning context with an intention to unlock tourism opportunities that are a sympathetic and symbiotic with the areas rural land uses and environmental features.

The Rural Tourism Precincts currently identified within the Scheme are:

- 1003 Bass Highway, The Gurdies (Former 'Fantasia' Site).
- Land between Corinella, Coronet Bay, and Tenby Point (Waterline Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- Land between Inverloch and Cape Paterson (Bunurong Road Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- Land between Massie Road and Bass Highway in Bass (Bass Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- Land to the North and West of Sunset Strip on Phillip Island (Five Ways Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- Land between Pyramid Rock Road and the Phillip Island Racetrack (Racetrack Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- Land between Surf Beach and Samuel Amess Drive, Newhaven on Phillip Island (Newhaven Rural Tourism Precinct).

With the exception of land in Newhaven, all of these precincts are within the Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) in the Scheme.

Strategic Context

There is strong strategic policy support from local, regional and State government organisations for tourism development and investment in the Shire.

The outcomes of this study will address key objectives initially outlined in the Council Plan. The study will:

- Ensure land use planning and economic development are aligned and supporting business investment, the creation of new jobs, diversifying the visitor economy and facilitating holistically sustainable economic resilience.
- Protect and enhance our environment and landscapes including vegetation and native wildlife protection initiatives.

Key guiding documents for tourism in the Shire are the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy (PSVES) and Gippsland Destination Management Plan (GDMP).

The PSVES highlights tourism product gaps that would be suited to rural areas, such as regional food and wine experiences, ecological and luxury accommodation with restaurant, spa and wellness experiences, rural retreats and farm or rural tourism experiences. It also recommends changes to the Local Planning Policy in the Scheme that may have restricted tourism investment. The PSVES proposes new rural tourism objectives to be applied to the Farming Zone (FZ), the Municipal Planning Strategy and Local Policy Framework, these include:

- Encouraging a viable, ongoing, farming and rural industry.
- Encouraging small scale accommodation, roadside food stalls, value-adding to primary production for tourism consumption and events that allows for more sustainable farming operations through alternative revenue streams.

These objectives are somewhat achievable within the current Scheme, however most of the identified tourism gaps are not deliverable by these objectives because they limit opportunities to small scale operations that have a direct nexus with agricultural activities.

The GDMP states that the Shire is projected to experience large increases in visitation over the next ten years which will stimulate demand for the following land uses:

- Increased stock of high-quality and branded accommodation.
- New hotels, conference facilities and related amenities for business events.
- Elevated regional food and wine product and experiences.

The GDMP emphasises that in order to drive visitation, it is necessary to facilitate high-quality, large-scale investment and 'destination products' that align with the Gippsland brand themes. Key themes identified for the Shire include:

- A Destination Restaurant.
- The Pinot Coast Wine Region Project.
- Ocean and Paddock Product.

There is no existing product development strategy that covers the entire region or brings together the needs of visitors from both Phillip Island and mainland. It is necessary for this Strategy to identify the localised as well as the consistent tourism desires of visitors right across the Shire.

Planning Scheme Review

There are four rural land zones currently applied across Bass Coast Shire including Farming Zone (FZ), Rural Activity Zone (RAZ), Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) and the Rural Living Zone (RLZ). The RAZ and FZ are the most predominant zones in Bass Coast Shire for rural tourism development.

The purpose of the RAZ is to facilitate agriculture and other land uses compatible with agriculture - conditionally allowing tourism uses including leisure and recreation activities, restaurants, hotels and other group accommodation.

The RAZ is impacted by local planning provisions, particularly:

- The schedule to the RAZ specifies that development must be small scale, have a rural or coastal appearance and maintain lot density.

- Local tourism planning policy further restricts activities to be ancillary or directly integrated with agricultural uses, prohibiting many permitted uses.

The FZ also facilitates non-agricultural uses but is subject to far fewer local policies, which means that the capacity for tourism types of development in the RAZ is potentially more restricted than the FZ, ostensibly reducing a key reason why the Shire introduced a RAZ into the Scheme.

The Scheme also has capacity to establish a Special Use Zone over land that accommodates tourism land uses. The SUZ can be used to facilitate larger scale tourism proposals, and to be associated with a Schedule and development plans to ensure that surrounding land uses are protected, integrated and enhanced by the tourism activity.

There is a clear discrepancy between the tourism product demand identified in strategic documents and current local tourism policy. Local planning policy often prescribes location specific tourism land uses without consideration of market demand, which is crucial factor for successful investment attraction.

Key tourism land use and strategic policy gaps include:

- Appropriately zoned land that can facilitate mid to large scale tourism development and provide significant economic and employment opportunities.
- Limited strategic policy and a Rural Land Use Strategy that has not facilitated adequate tourism outcomes for rural areas outside the key recognised tourism nodes. A comprehensive review of the Rural Strategy can address this gap.
- Detailed and up to date strategic work is required to determine into the productivity of agricultural land across the Shire. A comprehensive review of the Rural Strategy can address this gap.
- Limited strategic work in terms of Australian indigenous heritage assets and values and post European contact heritage assets.

Bass Coast Visitor Economy

The Shire captures 3.1 million visitors per annum. Bass Coast Shire's tourism sector is a significant contributor to the broader region's economy, worth approximately \$730 million in Gross Regional Product (GRP) and supporting over 7,000 jobs in the 2018/19 financial year.

The majority of visitors to the Shire are day trippers. Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, the Shire was experiencing positive growth of its domestic overnight market. Benchmarking shows that overall growth is not at the same levels as similar nearby tourist regions.

Noticeable characteristics for the visitor economy include the skewed spatial distribution of visitors, as well as a highly seasonal visitation patterns with a summer season focus. Phillip Island attracts more than twice the number of visitors (2.1 million visitors per annum) than the mainland (1.0 million). Although visitation on the mainland is moderately high, it is dominated by the “visiting friends and relatives” market, (VFR) which typically spend less, particularly on tourist activities.

Shire visitation dropped 54% between 2019 and 2020. Forecasting predicts an immediate post-pandemic recovery, with strong visitation growth over the next ten years. The midpoint growth scenario predicts that visitation will increase by 1.3 million (42%) by 2032. Of this growth, Phillip Island is predicted to receive 0.8 million visitors (62%).

Outcomes that land use and other policies will need to facilitate to deliver sustainable tourism developments, include:

- Sufficient tourism infrastructure in rural areas, particularly accommodation, with the scale and capacity to meet growing demand, while complying with environmental and landscape policies and ensuring that wider urban development does not gradually eventuate outside of recognised permanent settlement boundaries.
- The Shire will need to facilitate and coordinate tourism industry investment toward rural areas as a means to provide viable alternatives or to compliment current key destinations and attractions such as Cowes, Penguin Parade and Inverloch.
- Contemporary, attractive and sustainable rural tourism products, with a focus on the Bass Coast mainland, that have the capacity to attract holiday/ leisure visitors and improve yield from the existing VFR market base.
- Facilitate the diversity of events, products and experiences that will facilitate year-round tourist visitation and develop the night-time economy.

Investment in Rural Areas

Bass Coast has key strengths in nature based, wildlife, marine and events tourism. These products leverage off the natural attributes of the region.

Phillip Island has the most well-developed tourism product, with demand for nature-based tourism seeing continual investment in the Phillip Island Nature Parks and in particular the Penguin Parade. Assessment of past planning applications highlights that most tourism applications were on Phillip Island, reflective of both market demand and also opportunities for development.

Food and wine, arts, culture, spa and wellness are emerging areas of strength and opportunity, leveraging the regions strengths in agriculture and natural amenity. Investment should be directed to these areas because they align to the Shire's unique assets, as well as align to the market expectation for higher quality, contemporary food, drink, accommodation and cultural experiences.

The major hot springs development at Phillip Island, presents an opportunity for the Shire to grow as a premium wellness and nature-based destination. The Shire would benefit from obtaining advice and knowledge from similar local governments that have successfully managed and enhanced these industries, particularly Mornington Peninsula and Hepburn (Daylesford) Councils. Diversifying with these types of tourism products in the region will attract a higher return market. This could result in higher levels of visitor yield, increased lengths of stay and encourage greater off peak visitation.

An assessment of historic tourism development planning applications highlight that the majority of tourism proposals were located in the FZ, outside of the previously identified Rural Tourism Activity Precincts (59 permits or 87%). Only 6 tourism related land use permits were in the RAZ, highlighting that the rural precinct approach has not been facilitative of tourism investment or met market demand for investment in certain destinations. This assessment is contextualised by the recognition that a significantly higher percentage of rural land in the Shire is zoned FZ (approximately 85% of all land in the rural zones).

Agricultural Land Assessment

Most of the rural land in the Shire is in the FZ. There is a low supply and availability of land for tourism development in the RAZ.

Bass Coast Shire has some of the highest value agricultural land in Victoria. Generally, the region benefits from excellent soil quality and high rainfall. However, issues such as steep terrain and coastal-related dryland salinity cause some areas (particularly Phillip Island) to be unsuitable for broadacre soil-based farming.

Nearly 60% of agricultural land is currently used for broad acre livestock grazing, particularly beef cattle grazing (39%). Only a small proportion (less than 1%) of land is being used for vineyards and other more intensive production commodities. Broad acre farming technology changes have led to larger farming operations extending over numerous lots. These "super farm" operations lead to a better economy of scale for producers and they also create minimal non-agricultural human activity (less families and smaller communities) across the wider farming hinterland. This outcome reduces the opportunity for the development of natural entrepreneurial ideas, including potential tourism ventures, across the broad acre agricultural areas of the Shire. Future potential tourism opportunities could benefit from the Shire taking steps to strengthen potential relationships between agricultural property owners and tourist entrepreneurs.

There are important implications for balancing agricultural and rural tourism land uses in Bass Coast. There is very limited opportunity for ancillary tourism uses for livestock grazing land, when an agricultural nexus is currently a key requirement for rural tourism development in the Scheme. If the current macroeconomic conditions persist and this land use trend continues, Council may need to consider changes to zonings and local policies to facilitate rural tourism investment.

Existing State wide land use policies heavily focus on the retention of what is traditionally considered agricultural land, maintaining low lot density and minimising all other development. In the current legislative environment the Shire is not in a position to facilitate a reassessment of minimum lot sizes in the FZ however there is opportunity to assess minimum lot sizes in the RAZ, which could unlock more tourism opportunities.

With growing evidence of climate volatility and urban growth continuing to add pressure on agricultural land, land use policy has the opportunity to support farmers to sustain their land through diversification, creating multiple streams of revenue and reducing risk. With appropriate policy shifts, tourism opportunities can facilitate this opportunity.

Environmental Assessment

Bass Coast Shire contains several State declared environmentally significant areas, that are habitats to native wildlife and play an important role in conserving ecosystems. These areas protected by various organisations including the Shire, DEECA (formerly DELWP), Phillip Island Nature Parks and Parks Victoria.

The Bass Coast Planning Scheme applies numerous planning overlays that prevent adverse impacts of development on the natural environment. It is vital that future tourism developments in the Shire protect and enhance these environmental values whilst also allowing for appropriate development that both protects and enhances our environmental assets. This could be achieved by rewording provisions and policies in the Scheme to allow for a consideration of tourism development if it complements, protects and enhances surrounding environmental values.

Land within the current RAZ tourism precincts overlap with several environmental and land management overlays which require consideration for any tourism development. Most of these overlays enforce controls related to built form and design, while other such as the Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) can limit the types of tourism activities to be developed on the land or in some cases include requirements that are financially prohibitive. The appropriateness of the current RAZ land needs to be considered in the context of these overlays and other environmental requirements. Decisions on any rezoning of land to RAZ should also consider the wider capacity for permit permissible development, including tourism developments, to be realistically delivered. The Scheme could also provide mechanisms to unlock tourism opportunities in areas of the FZ where there are minimal or no environmental restrictions and considerations. This could be achieved holistically in the preparation of a new Rural Land Use Strategy for the Shire.

On Phillip Island, tourism development has been a key driver for positive conservation outcomes and improvement in access to natural environments and the increase of supporting infrastructure. This success demonstrates how diversification through rural tourism uses can support retention and sustainability of existing land uses and can be used as an example for future potential rural tourism opportunities with an environmental protection nexus and conditional requirements.

The Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy (DAL) is currently being prepared by the State government Planning Department (DEECA), which aims to protect State declared landscapes through changes to policy and limiting settlement growth. The outcomes of the SPP may restrict the land capacity, population base and infrastructure development required for significant tourism investment outside of the DAL recognised permanent settlement boundaries (townships). The recognition of significant landscapes does also present an opportunity for tourism in the Shire in that it assists in the protection of the natural and rural hinterland which are key tourism attractors in their own right. There is an opportunity for Scheme provisions and policies to be changed to establish a nexus between an appropriate tourism activity that complements, protects and enhances the surrounding landscape values. This could be, for example, via an environmentally sensitive development nestled appropriately within a key landscape, or the location of a larger development closer to a settlement boundary and utilising existing infrastructure and reducing wider environmental costs. An assessment of appropriate areas will need to occur once the DAL project is completed and thus can be delivered as part of a new Rural Land Use Strategy.

There is an opportunity for tourism activity to be developed sympathetic to existing Post European Contact and Australian Indigenous heritage assets and values. Recognising a complementary nexus between a tourist development and heritage in the RAZ and FZ could allow for the protection and enhancement of these assets and values. This would require a suite of heritage work to be completed as part of a new Rural Land Use Strategy.

Conclusions

Tourism is a key cultural activity in Bass Coast and facilitating the activity in the rural suite of zones requires comprehensive land use consideration to ensure its ongoing viability and capacity for sustainable and appropriately located growth. There are a number of reasons why the rural zones and the identified Rural Tourism Precincts have not been able to deliver tourism and activity at the levels previously envisaged. These include:

- Rural Tourism Precincts do not reflect demand for investment or visitation patterns, for example Phillip Island has the greatest demand for rural tourism uses, however there is limited RAZ land on the Island.
- The RAZ Schedule and associated tourism and other policies create substantial limitations on investment.
- Current broadacre land uses such as large lot cattle farming are not conducive to agri-tourism uses and owners have little interest in establishing a tourism enterprise. There is also no significant levels of growth (or applications) for more bespoke agricultural activities that tourism would more naturally complement.
- A number of tourism development proposals have received significant community concern, which has led to some private sector cautiousness and investment reticence.
- Generally, there has not been a significantly high number of tourism planning permit applications in recent years.

Another impediment for tourism investment is the lack of strategic and policy direction in the Scheme currently around supporting development of tourism uses on Phillip Island as the focus of tourist interest in the Shire. Phillip Island attracts 67% of all visitation to Bass Coast and almost all international visitors. The development of a Rural Land Use Strategy that recognises appropriate tourism development locations could assist in this regard.

There are prohibitive Scheme interpretation difficulties when assessing tourism based development planning permit applications in the rural zones, as these zones clearly support agricultural land uses over tourism uses, even within the designated Rural Tourism Precincts. With Local Planning Policy also directing that tourism use be in-conjunction or ancillary to

agricultural land use, as well as other interpretation ambiguities, many tourist activities would likely not be able to be permitted, even if they were appropriate in all other ways. Making changes to the requirements in these zones and policies should be considered.

The Local Planning Policy could be improved by extending the need for the nexus between agriculture and tourism, to also include environmental protection and enhancement, significant landscape protection and enhancement, or the recognition, protection and enhancement of Australian indigenous or post European contact heritage assets and values.

Bass Coast has some of the highest quality agricultural land in Victoria and highly versatile soils that should be protected. Consideration, however, should be made where appropriate to support tourism uses as a primary use of land where agricultural productivity is limited, and the existing land use patterns support further tourism investment.

There is a need for the Scheme to better reflect the demand for contemporary tourism uses aligned to projected growth, target markets, current land use patterns, environmental considerations, heritage values and agricultural land use.

Strategy

Vision

Bass Coast Shire will be regarded as a leading rural tourism destination acclaimed for its excellence in ecotourism agritourism and coastline tourism.

The rural areas will support investment in contemporary and high-quality tourism businesses that are sympathetic to, and enhance the protection of Bass Coast's environmental assets, landscapes, heritage values and agricultural activities.

Objectives

1. Attract appropriate rural tourism investment
2. Improve geographic and seasonal dispersal of visitors
3. Grow visitor yield year around
4. Facilitate a sustainable and resilient rural tourism economy
5. Environmental protection and enhancement
6. Effective integration with agriculture, other rural land uses, significant landscapes and heritage values.

Strategic Directions

- *Subregional approach* - Identify and apply subregions for rural tourism development across Bass Coast Shire that separate areas in the context of geography, environmental factors, current land use types and tourism opportunities.
- *Rural nexus* - Recognise a nexus between tourism and other rural land uses that support the productive and environmentally sensitive use of rural land.
- *Environmental nexus* - Recognise a nexus between tourism uses and protection of the natural environment that supports and enhances environmental values.
- *Zone for tourism as the major land use* - Support the application of the Special Use Zone in site specific locations where tourism is logically the primary and majority land use.
- *Appropriate design outcomes* - Utilise a Design and Development Overlay to create positive design and built form tourism development outcomes that are sympathetic to environmental, landscape and heritage considerations and requirements.
- *Improving the evidence base* - Build an evidence base to facilitate appropriate future rural tourism land uses, including demand and supply for all rural land uses, infrastructure capacity, land use capability assessments and macro-economic assessments.

Recommended Actions

A1 Undertake a rural tourism focused Planning Scheme Amendment to Bass Coast Planning Scheme that addresses the following:

- 1.1 Replacing the 'Rural Tourism Precincts' as currently applied across Scheme with the following 'Rural Tourism Subregions' (Figure 22, page 87) to guide and facilitate tourism investment:
 - Phillip Island and San Remo (largest tourism focus, key areas of environmental value, heritage, coastal and rural landscapes);
 - Bass Hinterland (key agricultural areas with associated tourism);

- Waterline and Bass River Precinct (key environmental and landscape values with passing trade and agricultural tourism opportunities); and
- Bunurong Coast (key environmental and coastal and rural landscape values and agricultural uses with strong coastal tourism opportunities).

1.2 Include the Strategies vision and objectives as well as the directions and land uses identified in each 'Rural Tourism Subregion' into the Municipal Planning Strategy and any other necessary areas of the Planning Scheme.

1.3 Investigate the potential to rezone land in the RAZ to Farming Zone in situations where tourism and other activities directly related to the intended use of the RAZ have not, nor appear likely, to occur. Further, investigate areas in the Farming Zone where there is potential, and it is appropriate to, rezone the land to RAZ.

1.4 Include a definition in the Scheme for 'Nature Based Tourism Development'.

1.5 Review local planning policies and provisions in accordance with Recommended Action 2 below.

A2 Review Local Planning Policies and Provisions

2.1 Investigate amending existing Local Planning Provisions regarding rural tourism development including the following suggestions:

Clause 14.01-2L-02 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Farming Zone:

Suggest replacing the Strategy:

"Discourage non-agriculture uses other than those that support agriculture"

with:

"Discourage non-agriculture uses that have a detrimental impact on agricultural production, particularly in areas recognised as having high agricultural production value".

Suggest replacing the tourism reference in the Policy Guidelines (encouraged uses) from:

"Tourism facilities that complement or are associated with the agricultural use of land..."

with:

"Tourism facilities that complement, are associated with or do not detrimentally impact the agricultural use of land, nor change the rural nature of the landscape, or areas of environmental, ecological or heritage value..."

Clause 14.01-2L-03 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Rural Activity Zone:

Suggest replacing the tourism reference in the Policy Guidelines (encouraged uses) from:

"Tourism facilities in association with, or that complement agriculture..."

with:

"Tourism facilities that complement, are associated with or do not detrimentally impact the agricultural use of land, nor change the rural nature of the landscape, or areas of environmental, ecological or heritage value..."

Clause 15.01-6L Development in the Rural Activity Zone:

Review to clearly articulate the development expectations for tourism uses with respect to site densities, definition of "small scale" expectations in various areas and other built form guidelines. Discussion on appropriate built form can be ventilated with the community and key stakeholders through the proposed Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study 2014 review (Recommended Action 5).

Clause 17.04-1L Facilitating Tourism:

Comprehensively review to broaden the considerations of where and how tourism activities are appropriate. The revised clause should:

- Ensure that tourism uses are not only appropriate when complementary with or connected to agricultural uses in the rural zones, but also appropriate when complementary with the landscape, ecological, environmental and heritage protection and enhancement;

- Recognise that location based focus areas to attract investment must not hinder the potential for tourism development and assessment in wider rural areas; and
- Recognise the need for tourism development to be located in areas that provide contiguous connection to appropriate services and infrastructure and/or to upgrade those services or provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the requirements of the site and surrounding areas.

2.2 Investigate and reword other local policy and provisions in the Scheme to allow for tourism development that contributes to a broader range of rural land use objectives, including:

- Restoration and conservation of natural systems.
- Preservation of heritage assets or areas with cultural significance.
- Enhancing other rural industry (such as forest-based industry, mineral-based industry).
- Ensuring the ongoing preservation of appropriate rural, coastal, environmental, indigenous heritage and landscapes.

A3 Rural Activity Zone (RAZ): Further Investigation and Potential Planning Scheme Amendment

- 3.1** Undertake discussions with DEECA to determine an appropriate mechanism, such as an additional clause in Schedule 1 to Clause 35.08, that could establish “Accommodation” as a potentially permit permissible use only when associated with an appropriately located and scaled tourism use.
- 3.2** Undertake discussions with DEECA regarding Schedule 1 to Clause 35.08 to determine if it is appropriate for the ‘Minimum subdivision area’ annotated in table 1.0 to be retained between 40 And 260 hectares (depending on the area), given that it is beyond that which is generally required in the FZ as well as the current prevailing lot sizes all of the currently existing RAZ areas. If it is determined that these minimum subdivision areas do not facilitate the ultimate intent of the RAZ, including the provision of tourism, then a Planning Scheme amendment should be progressed.

3.3 Investigate the potential to rezone land in the RAZ to Farming Zone in situations where tourism and other activities directly related to the intended use of the RAZ have not been, nor appear likely to occur. Further, to investigate areas in the Farming Zone where there is potential, and it is appropriate to, rezone the land to RAZ.

3.4 Further develop local planning policy that will facilitate and guide appropriate tourism development for land remaining in this zone.

A4 Special Use Zone Investigation

4.1 Undertake consultation with landowners and further technical investigation to establish the potential to rezone land from RAZ and FZ to Special Use Zone (SUZ) for existing and future proposed medium to large scale developments where tourism is the primary and majority land use. These zones can become areas where tourism is the key focus, allowing for appropriate infrastructure and service investment, providing security and financial incentives for tourism operators of all size and potentially facilitate the co-location of appropriate tourism business ventures.

A5 Review Rural Land Use Study and prepare a new Rural Land Use Strategy.

5.1 Undertake a comprehensive review of the Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study 2014, with the purpose of establishing an up-to-date and clearly articulated Strategy. The strategic work will begin with a detailed Agricultural Land Assessment for Bass Coast Shire.

The Strategy shall include:

- A survey of agricultural land use across Bass Coast Shire.
- Assessment of the macroeconomic trends in the agricultural industry.
- Identifying high quality, productive agricultural land that require protection.
- Identifying areas of lower agricultural land values and opportunities for facilitating additional land uses in these areas, including tourism.

- Identifying the types of commodities suitable for agricultural land and opportunities for diversification.
- Appropriate management of land uses that can facilitate sustainable agricultural practices, ecological and biodiversity protection and enhancement, landscape protection and tourism activity.
- Policy recommendations and guidance on the application of zones in relation to agriculture.
- Recommendations on biosecurity measures and incentives to facilitate financially and ecologically sustainable agricultural practices.
- Identify opportunities for the region to obtain biosecurity and food safety related certification to give the industry a competitive edge in production and trading.
- Assessment of areas of biodiversity value, existing landscape, environmental and heritage overlays and investigating areas to be considered for future protection and enhancement.
- Prepare an Indigenous Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Cultural Values Assessment.
- Identification of infrastructure, service and community facility provision and provide recommendations on necessary provisions and upgrades.

The strategy will be prepared with the community, government and key stakeholders to inform and guide the management and protection of areas of significant agricultural value as well as future areas of wider integration with other land uses, including tourism. The strategy will need to be reviewed every five years.

A6 Integration with Organisations, Studies and Strategies

- 6.1** Work with the relevant governance bodies to incorporate the findings of this strategy into future work which impacts rural tourism including the State government departments (including DEECA), local infrastructure management authorities, all registered

Aboriginal party(s), all internal local government departments, as well as ensuring ongoing alignment with other Strategic Planning Department documents, the Council Plan, the Bass Coast Economic Development Strategy and Phillip Island San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy reviews.

- 6.2** Work with Phillip Island Nature Parks to guide tourism development and create a holistic vision for rural land development on Phillip Island, to include:
- Identifying areas for conservation / ecological restoration / wildlife corridors.
 - Identifying areas of high quality agricultural land to be protected.
 - Identifying rural areas suitable for tourism land uses.
- 6.3** Work with Parks Victoria to investigate ways to sympathetically improve tourism opportunities at Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve, including a works program to improve signage and access.
- 6.4** Work with economic agencies and supporters, community groups, other local governments and tourism industry stakeholders to:
- Realise opportunities to facilitate the development of appropriate new tourism ventures.
 - Facilitate the use of tourism and other local government and community facilities, particularly during off peak periods, to assist in establishing a more consistent tourism economy within the Shire.
 - Understand and accumulate knowledge about the successful management and enhancement of potential new or growing tourism activities, such as the spa and wellness industry and the wine industry.

Recommendations by Subregion

Subregion and Strategic Theme	Strategic Need	Recommended Uses / Product Gaps	Recommended Zone & Policy
Phillip Island and San Remo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting long term visitation growth to Phillip Island; Encouraging uses that support increase in visitor yield; Encourage uses targeted to international visitor markets; Encourage uses that can support positive environmental outcomes including vegetation and wildlife corridors; Encourage uses that support year round visitation. Encourage uses that deliver contemporary product and experiences targeted to Lifestyle Leader segments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot springs resort (underway) 5 Star accommodation with coastal views Wellness retreats Destination restaurants in a rural and coastal setting Farm gate and rural tourism experiences Eco/nature based accommodation Environmental and eco experiences and tours Golf course Gardens Winery and cellar doors Distillery and cellar door Visitor attractions Walking and cycling experiences Art galleries Artist studios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)
Waterline and Bass River Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging off the visitation growth to Phillip Island and Inverloch Encourage visitors to stop, slow down and spend time on the way to and from their destination Food and agri business related destination Encourage visitor dispersal from key tourism nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm gate Agri tourism experiences Artisan produce Small to mid scale accommodation Provedore experience Farmstay Winery, cellar door and restaurant experience Outdoor and adventure activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)

Subregion and Strategic Theme	Strategic Need	Recommended Uses / Product Gaps	Recommended Zone & Policy
Bass Hinterland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the hinterland as a destination leveraging from visitors to Phillip Island and Inverloch Encourage agri tourism, food related tourism, arts and culture Focus on small scale and boutique tourism opportunities Food and agri business related destination Encourage visitor dispersal from key tourism nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art galleries Artist studios Farm gate Farmstay accommodation Farm experiences e.g. tours, education Touring Food experiences Destination distillery or brewery Small scale accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)
Bunurong Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging off visitation to Inverloch, Cape Patterson and Kilcunda Providing nature based and agri tourism experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature based eco accommodation Tourist parks in appropriate locations Outdoor events facilities Farmstay accommodation Experiential accommodation e.g. tiny home or glamping Farmgate produce Environmental and eco experiences and tours Walking and cycling experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)

Introduction

Project Background

Bass Coast Shire Council (Shire), in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), has engaged Urban Enterprise to undertake a land use study for the “Bass Coast Tourism Precincts” as shown in the Bass Coast Shire Planning Scheme (Scheme).

The Shire covers an area of approximately 800 square kilometres and has an estimated residential population of just under 40,800 (ABS, 2021). Bass Coast Shire’s tourism sector is a significant contributor to the broader region’s economy, worth approximately \$730 million in Gross Regional Product (GRP) and supporting over 7,000 jobs in the 2018/19 financial year. The Shire, which includes the nationally significant Phillip Island, experiences an annual visitation of over 3.1 million people.

The Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy, adopted in 2014, introduced the Rural Activity Zone (RAZ) to several areas across the municipality, providing opportunity to facilitate non broad acre types of rural based land use activities, including tourism, whilst protecting the environmental values of the rural landscapes and opportunities for agriculture. Since its implementation into the Scheme, these provisions have facilitated a small amount of tourism development as well as provided an adequate operational and management tool for existing and significant tourism based activities, such as Phillip Island race track.

Taking into consideration the existing strategies, tourism environment and product mix, visitor markets, competitive strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for visitor attraction, this document will provide clear planning policy recommendations to clarify and improve the current framework, address inconsistencies in Scheme interpretation and remove any unnecessary barriers, with a goal to facilitate tourism activity in appropriate locations and further encourage tourism investment in the community.

Objectives

The key objectives to be addressed through the Strategy include:

- Review, identify and address any data or knowledge gaps in existing strategic documents and policy.
- Assess the current real and perceived barriers to rural tourism investment and development.
- Develop a vision for rural tourism alongside key stakeholders.
- Provide recommendations to:
 - Resolve key land-use issues and infrastructure barriers;
 - Implement changes to Council processes and policies, future capital investment or strategic work, to support rural tourism;
 - Assist in Council’s advocacy to state and federal governments for funding opportunities and legislative changes to support the rural tourism industry; and
 - Ensure consistency between relevant strategic policies including environmental, landscape and heritage recognition, protection and enhancement.
- Where required, present robust strategic justification for recommended changes to the Planning Scheme to support a Planning Scheme amendment.

Report Structure

The report for the Bass Coast Unlocking Tourism Strategy is structured as follows:

Part A – Strategy and Policy Context

- **Strategic Context:** review of strategic tourism documents that provide direction of the role and development of rural tourism and land.
- **Planning Scheme Review:** analysis of Scheme policy relating to rural tourism land use planning including the municipal planning strategy, local policy framework, zones, overlays and schedules.

Part B -Tourism Assessment

- **Overview of Tourism Investment in Rural Areas:** includes a tourism product profile of the rural areas addressing current tourism investment projects in development as well as an analysis of tourism planning permit activity.
- **Profile of the Bass Coast Visitor Economy:** overview of the economic contribution of tourism to the local economy, visitation trends, visitor profile and an overview of key market segments.

Part C - Agriculture, Environment and Landscape Assessment

- **Agricultural Land Assessment:** includes rural land supply assessment, analysis of agricultural land uses and other land characteristics.
- **Environmental Assessment:** includes an overview of significant environments and landscapes, a review of the governance and current policy mechanisms in place to protect these environments.

Part D - Strategy and Recommendations

- **Conclusions and Recommendations:** overview of key findings, issues to be addressed and recommended actions to deliver comprehensive, sustainable, appropriate and effective rural tourism outcomes in the Shire.

What is Rural Tourism?

Rural tourism is simply defined as tourist activities taking place in rural or non-urban areas. The most common types of rural tourism include agritourism, nature-based tourism and ecotourism.

Common Types of Rural Tourism

Agritourism

Agritourism (also known as agrotourism or farm tourism) includes commercial activities that link agricultural production with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors, and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

Key agritourism business products include visitor accessible production of wine, craft beer and spirits, gourmet foods (cheese, olives, condiments, and confectionary), fruit, vegetables, nuts, and using animals for food. Agritourism activities are many and diverse and examples include direct shop front outlets with produce tastings, regional markets, farm and winery tours, cooking classes, food and wine festivals, farm stays, restaurants sourcing local produce, self-picking experiences and farm gate sales.

Nature-based tourism

Tourism activities or experiences where the natural environment is the primary attraction or setting. Examples include birdwatching, photography, stargazing, camping, hiking, animal hunting, fishing, and visiting parks.

Ecotourism

Similar to nature-based tourism, ecotourism describes sustainable tourism activities with low impact on natural environments. Ecotourism focuses on providing nature-based experiences and fosters environmental and cultural understanding, and appreciation for and conservation of nature.

Rural Tourism in Land Use Planning

Four rural land zones in the Scheme currently applied across the Shire:

- Farming Zone (FZ),
- Rural Activity Zone (RAZ),
- Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) and
- the Rural Living Zone (RLZ).

The RAZ and FZ have featured the predominant amount of rural tourism development and analysis in this report focuses on land within these two zones, whilst providing recommendations that do not exclude the RCZ or RLZ.

Rural Tourism Precincts

The Scheme as well as the 2014 Rural Land Use Strategy identify a number of precincts where rural tourism is appropriate:

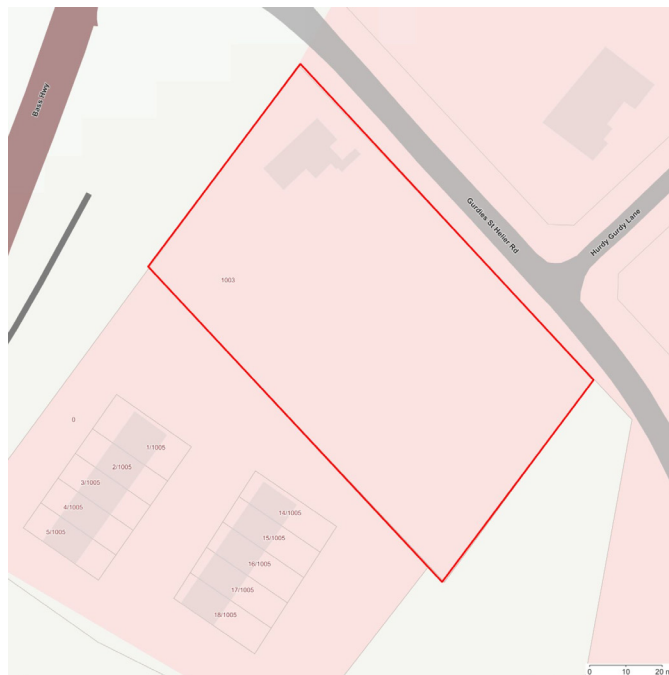
These include:

- A. 1003 Bass Highway, The Gurdies (Former 'Fantasia' Site).
- B. Land between Corinella, Coronet Bay and Tenby Point (Waterline Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- C. Land between Inverloch and Cape Paterson (Bunurong Road Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- D. Land between Massie Road and Bass Highway in Bass (Bass Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- E. Land to the North and West of Sunset Strip on Phillip Island (Five Ways Rural Activity Zone Precinct).
- F. Land between Pyramid Rock Road and the Phillip Island Racetrack (Racetrack Rural Activity Zone Precinct), and
- G. Land between Surf Beach and Samuel Amess Drive, Newhaven on Phillip Island (Newhaven Rural Tourism Precinct).

With the exception of land in Newhaven, these precincts are in the RAZ.

F1 Overview of Rural Tourism Precincts

A. Former Fantasia Site



B. Waterline Rural Activity Zone Precinct



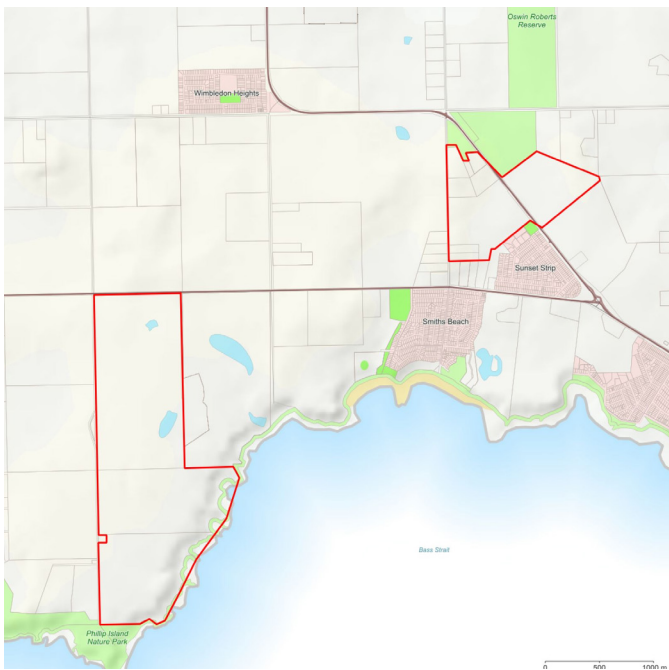
C. Bunurong Road Rural Activity Zone Precinct



D. Bass Rural Activity Zone Precinct



E. Five Ways Rural Activity Zone Precinct & F. Racetrack Rural Activity Zone Precinct



G. Newhaven Rural Tourism Precinct



Rural Tourism Subregions

Four rural tourism subregions have been identified as a means to differentiate and target different rural tourism opportunities and activities:

- Phillip Island and San Remo.
- Bass Hinterland.
- Waterline and Bass River Precinct.
- Bunurong Coast Precinct.

The subregions have been designed by recognising areas of alignment and similarity in terms of geographic connectivity, distinctive landscapes, existing and expected tourism products, as well as visitor market expectations.

Phillip Island and San Remo

Phillip Island and the mainland growth area of San Remo, is an internationally recognised and iconic destination with significant environment and landscapes, tourism, cultural heritage and agricultural values:

- Environment and landscape: Important bird and marine habitat at Rhyll Inlet and Rhyll Swamp and at the island's south-western coast, Ramsar-listed wetlands, Churchill Island Marine Park, the reserves managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks, The Nobbies (Round Island), Pyramid Rock and Cape Woolamai.
- Tourism: The island attracts the largest number of visitors in the Shire and is a hub for international tourism. The Penguin Parade and the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit are two vital attractors to the tourism economy and Cowes (as well as other settlements) are key accommodation and service centres for tourism.
- Cultural heritage: The area contains significant sites of importance to the Bunurong people as well as key cultural indigenous values. There are also sites of significant post European contact heritage value as well as a continuing surf culture. Continued and detailed work is required to identify, respect, protect and enhance significant cultural assets and values.
- Agriculture: Some agriculture exists on the island with the existence bespoke agricultural activities linked with tourism. Broad scale and large operation agricultural activity is limited.

Waterline and Bass River Precinct

The precinct includes most of Western Port Bay area and the natural features and agricultural activity within close proximity to the Bass River. The eastern border matches the border the administrative water catchment border between State government agencies: Westernport Bay Catchment Management Authority and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The precincts is characterised by its unique environment and landscape features and tourism opportunities:

- Environment and landscape: Internationally recognised Ramsar-listed wetlands, the Bass River catchment, the Bass Hills and the views along the Bass Highway corridor, the Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), the Hurdy Gurdy Creek NCR, the Grantville NCR and the Reef Island and Bass Mouth NCR.
- Tourism: The precinct is a major thoroughfare to both Phillip Island and Inverloch, there are a number of tourism / commercial operators that leverage from commuter trade. Agri-tourism is a growing strength in the region, with value adding to produce that leverages from tourism trade.
- Cultural heritage: The area contains significant sites of importance to the Bunurong people as well as key cultural indigenous values. There are also sites of significant post European contact heritage value. Continued and detailed work is required to identify, respect, protect and enhance significant cultural assets and values.

Bass Hinterland

The precinct features significant natural landscapes and the signature broad-acre agricultural hinterland of the Shire:

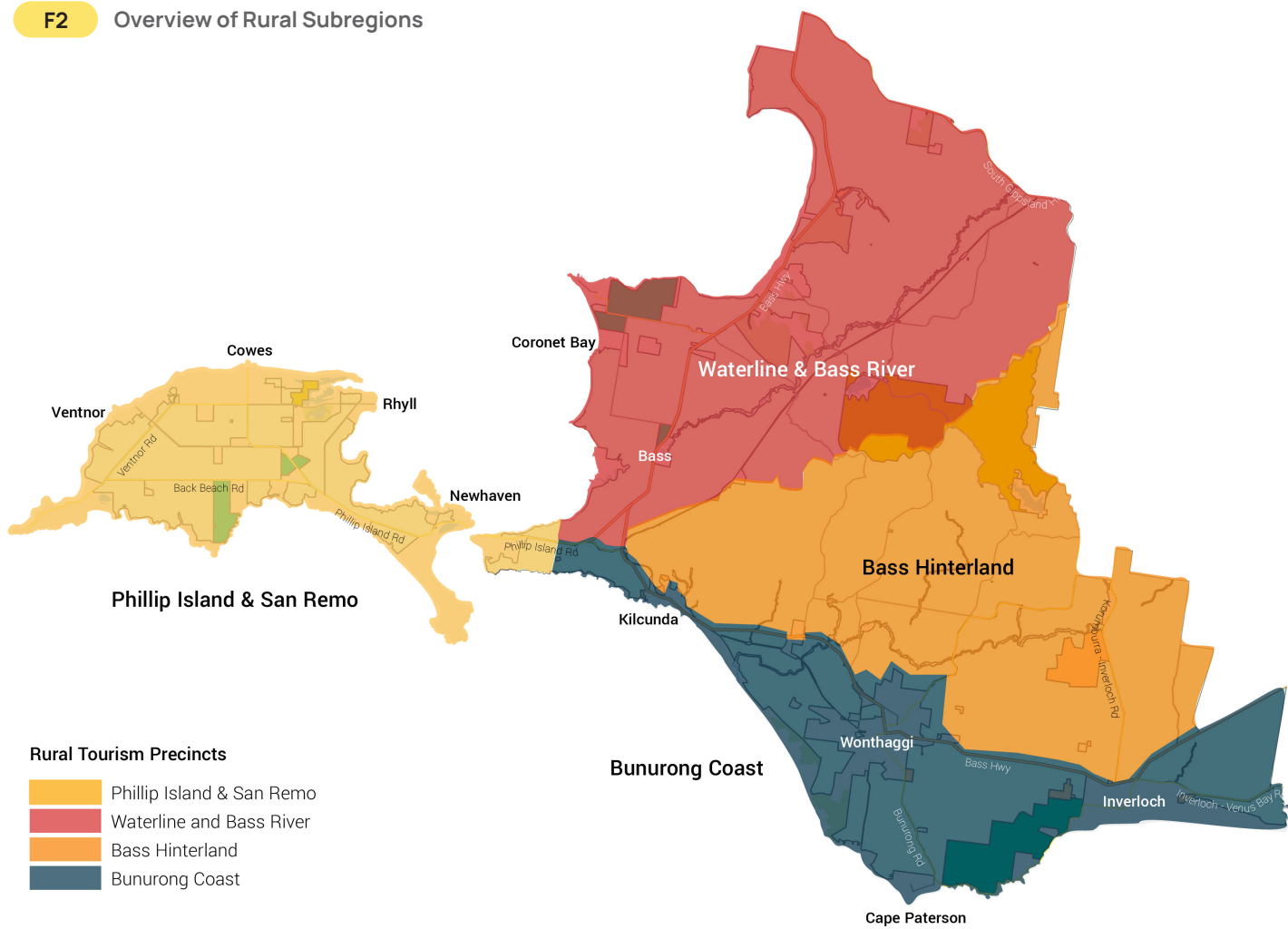
- Agriculture, environment and landscape: The steep, rolling, cleared hills of the Strzelecki Ranges; and Powlett River, which runs through the high-quality agricultural land of the Powlett River valley, which has significant flood storage capacity during flooding events. The area is highly productive from an agricultural perspective and has high levels of versatility.
- Tourism: The Bass Hinterland has some agri tourism and arts related activity. The scenic countryside and connections through to South Gippsland provide opportunity for hinterland touring.
- Cultural heritage: The area contains significant sites of importance to the Bunurong people as well as key cultural indigenous values. There are also sites of significant post European contact heritage value and agricultural cultural value. Continued and detailed work is required to identify, respect, protect and enhance significant cultural assets and values.

Bunurong Coast Precinct

The Precinct features the unique and largely protected southern coastline, and takes in key settlements and destinations: Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Cape Paterson and Kilcunda. The precinct is characterised by unique and significant environments and landscapes, tourism opportunities, agriculture and vital cultural heritage considerations:

- Environment and landscapes: The future Yallock Bullock Marine and Coastal Park and important intertidal habitats; Powlett River and its floodplain, Bourne Creek, Wreck Creek and Screw Creek, all of which provide habitat for endangered birds species and breeding grounds for fish and eels; state-significant landscapes and geological features (such as Eagles Nest).
- Agriculture: Predominantly broadacre beef cattle grazing however the area is considered to have high levels of versatility with high natural rainfall and high-quality soils.
- Tourism: There is limited tourism investment in the rural areas, however the region has some of the key destinations in the Shire including Kilcunda, Cape Paterson and Inverloch. The broad hectare nature of farming and the predominance of cattle farming has not yet been conducive to agri-tourism investment.
- Heritage: The area contains significant sites of importance to the Bunurong people as well as key cultural indigenous values. There are also sites of significant post European contact heritage value including the Bourne Creek Trestle Bridge at Kilcunda and the Amazon shipwreck. Continued and detailed work is required to identify, respect, protect and enhance significant cultural assets and values.

F2 Overview of Rural Subregions



Part A: Strategy and Policy Review

Strategic Context

This section provides the strategic policy context relevant to the use and development of rural land for tourism and commercial purposes. The policy context provides a framework for this project to build upon and ensures that the project aligns with existing strategies and policy.



There is strong strategic policy support from local, regional and State government organisations for tourism development and investment in the Shire. Key guiding documents for tourism are the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy (PIVES) and Gippsland Destination Management Plan (DMP).

The PIVES highlights a number of tourism product gaps that would be suited to rural areas such as regional food and wine experiences, eco and luxury accommodation with restaurant, spa and wellness experiences including rural retreats, and farm or rural tourism experiences. It also recommends changes to the Scheme's Local Planning Policy in an attempt to enable a higher level of tourism investment. There is no existing tourism development document that considers the entire Shire.

The PIVES proposes new rural tourism objectives to be applied to the FZ (notably not other rural zones) through the Municipal Planning Strategy and Local Policy Framework, including:

- Encourage a viable, ongoing, farming and rural industry.
- Encourage small-scale accommodation, roadside food stalls, value-adding to primary production for tourism consumption and events that allows for more sustainable farming operations through alternative revenue streams.

These objectives limit tourism development to require a nexus with agriculture, and because of the broad acre nature of most of the agricultural hinterland in the Shire, it almost exclusively

generates small scale tourist activity. These types of activities have a benefit not impacting the industrial, and potentially noxious, processes of some large farm operators, and is in keeping with the existing environment and landscapes, however it often does not lead to long term sustainable tourism outcomes and is a key reason why rural tourism has not grown in the broad acre agricultural areas of the Shire.

The Gippsland DMP highlights that the Shire is projected to experience large increases in visitation over the next ten years that will stimulate demand for the following land uses:

- Increased stock of high-quality and branded accommodation.
- New hotels, conference facilities and related amenities for business events.
- Elevated regional food and wine product and experiences.

The DMP emphasises that in order to drive visitation, it is necessary to facilitate high-quality, large-scale investment and 'destination product' that aligns with the Gippsland brand themes. Key themes and hero experiences identified for Bass Coast Shire include:

- A Destination Restaurant.
- The Pinot Coast Wine Region Project.
- Ocean and Paddock Product.

Tourism Governance

Bass Coast Shire is located within two tourism regions - Gippsland and Phillip Island/San Remo. Phillip Island, widely acknowledged as one of Victoria's premier tourist destinations, has significant domestic and international tourism markets and is the focus of national and State tourism strategies. Whilst Phillip Island/San Remo come under the regional development area of Gippsland, for tourism planning it sits separately from the Greater Gippsland region and has its own Regional Tourism Board known as Destination Phillip Island.

Destination Phillip Island and Bass Coast Shire Council have developed their own Destination Management

Plan (PIVES) to recognise the special nature of tourism to the area. PIVES sets out the strategies for tourism growth.

Other State government bodies that provide support through advocacy and funding include Regional Development Victoria - Gippsland.

Destination Gippsland is guided by the Gippsland Destination Management Plan completed in 2019.

Visit Victoria provides destination marketing activity for Victoria, and Victoria's Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy Research Unit (TEVE) supports investment facilitation for tourism.

F3 Tourism Governance Structure

Organisation	Key Roles	Key Strategic Documents
Bass Coast Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate investment, Visitor services, Industry development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Development Plan 2013 Rural Land Use Strategy 2014 Bass Coast Shire Economic Development Plan
Destination Phillip Island Tourism Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry development, Destination marketing, Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phillip Island Strategic Tourism Plan 2014 to 2019, adopted 2014 Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035, adopted 2016
Destination Gippsland Tourism Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry development, Destination marketing, Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Destination Management Plan 2030, adopted 2019
Regional Development Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding support, Facilitating investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025
Visit Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination Marketing, Product Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy & Action Plan 2016-2020
Victorian Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy Research Unit (TEVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating tourism investment, Advocacy on infrastructure projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy & Action plan 2016-2020 Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan 2020

State Government Policy

Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy Action Plan 2016 to 2020

The Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy, released by the Victorian Government on 26 July 2016, sets the overall direction and framework to grow Victoria's visitor economy over the next ten years. It sets a goal of increasing visitor spending to \$36.5 billion by 2024-25 and identifies the following nine priorities to achieve:

- More private sector investment.
- Build on the potential of regional and rural Victoria.
- Improved branding and marketing.
- Maximise the benefits of events.
- Improved experiences for visitors from Asia.
- Better tourism infrastructure.
- Improved access into and around Victoria.
- A skilled and capable sector.
- More effective coordination.

This Action Plan has been developed to outline the key actions required to implement the Strategy over the short to medium term:

- Allocating \$101 million to a new Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, \$48.2 million was allocated to the redevelopment the Phillip Island Nature Parks infrastructure.
- Allocating an additional \$20 million over four years for a new Regional Events Fund.
- Provide targeted support to smaller regional events that have the capacity to attract interstate visitors, including possible seed development of events.
- Support the development of community owned indigenous tourism businesses that leverage local land and cultural assets
- Regional Development Victoria and Visit Victoria will continue to have an important role in the \$1 million Wine Growth Fund, which aims to increase wine tourism and cellar door sales.
- Support growth in food and wine tourism, and collective marketing, includes supporting targeted food and wine tourism initiatives as part of a greater focus on increasing tourist visitation to regional Victoria.

- Continue to support the development of tailored transport, accommodation, and Chinese food options at key tourist locations.
- Prioritise government investment in infrastructure at key visitor attractions such as the Great Ocean Road and the Penguin Parade at Phillip Island Nature Park.

Gippsland Regional Plan 2020 to 2025

The Gippsland Regional Plan is the long-term strategic plan for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for the Gippsland region.

The Plan looks towards 2040 for its vision and goals, and specifically identifies the priority actions and initiatives required in the coming five years to 2025.

The Plan is centred on 6 strategic themes including: Collaborators & partners, Carers of our Country, environment & natural assets, Creators of a new economy, A connected Gippsland, Highly educated & skilled people, lifelong learners, and A healthy, happy & inclusive community. Key actions relevant to this project include:

- Review and update policy, planning and regulatory settings to enable.
- Climate change readiness, including updated riverine and coastal flood modelling.
- Sustainable agriculture, settlement and land use planning, and protection of distinctive and fragile environments.
- Protection of and Aboriginal cultural heritage and realisation of cultural rights.
- Environmentally sustainable design principles.
- Large and small-scale renewable and clean energy.
- Embedding circular economy and resource recovery principles and requirements.
- Support delivery of Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan by advocating for regionally significant tourism destinations and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism.

Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan 2021

The Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan (the plan) provides a framework for industry and the State government to work together to restore and grow the Victorian visitor economy.

The Vision for the Plan is outlined as follows:

Victoria's visitor economy and tourism industry quickly recovers from the combined impacts of bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic by growing and rebuilding its domestic visitor economy market share and preparing for growth and resilience when international borders reopen.

Themes focus on supply and demand pillars and core enablers of the visitor economy.

Supply: facilitate the development of visitor economy experiences, products and infrastructure through:

- Investment in developing tourism experiences through delivery of key flagship and stimulus projects, including the Gippsland Tourism Recovery Package (creating a vibrant destination of choice for visitors, including providing more options for visitors to get close to nature) and the Phillip Island Brewing Rusty Water Brewing Experience.
- Industry Strengthening through funding of \$8 million to support businesses to improve their digital and business capabilities and undertaking a workforce planning and skills audit to provide funding to implement tailored local workforce plans.

Demand: attracting more international, interstate and local visitors to Melbourne and regional Victoria through:

- Destination marketing including funding of \$58 million for Visit Victoria's marketing targeted to Melbourne, interstate and existing major international markets.
- \$44 million Travel Voucher campaign including 160,000 vouchers in regional Victoria.
- Attracting events with investment of \$152 million over four years into Victoria's major events calendar.

These supply and demand actions are enabled through strategic collaboration and planning, transitional regional tourism boards to visitor economy partnerships with businesses, and utilising data and insights to inform wiser tourism and marketing decisions.

2017-2021 Victorian Wine Industry Development Strategy

This strategy aims to recalibrate the Victorian wine industry, setting it on a pathway to sustainable prosperity. It has been structured around four core strategic platforms with a series of programs is proposed to fulfil the strategic aim of each platform:

- **Adapt**: Support adaptation to a new industry operating environment.
- **Visit**: Increase visitation and expenditure within Victorian wine regions.
- **Trade**: Develop profitable and sustainable export markets.
- **Lead**: Strengthen industry structure and coordination.

The Wine Growth Fund has been established by the State government to develop and grow the industry. Projects funded in 2016-17 have a total value in excess of \$3 million, with government contributing \$750,000 and industry in the order of \$2.3 million. The fund will support the development of export markets, marketing and tourism initiatives, improvement in wine production, new infrastructure developments and job creation.

Regional and Local Government Strategy

Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035

PIVES, adopted in 2016, sets out the strategies for tourism development specific to the Island. The stated vision for the region is:

Phillip Island (including San Remo) is recognised nationally and globally as a world leading sustainable tourism destination, where tourism is embraced by the community.

The strategy identifies the following product and experience gaps that will need to be addressed to meet growth market needs by 2035:

- Spa/Wellness experiences including rural retreats.
- Food and wine related activities and events.
- Eco/luxury accommodation with restaurant.
- Farm / rural tourism experiences.
- Year-round events calendar (particular focus on cultural events).
- Events infrastructure to host events (including sporting facilities).
- Walking and cycling trails, marine events and experiences, motorsport precinct activities and new golf courses.
- Touring Loops.
- Eco-education facilities / gardens.

The following principles are proposed to enable Strategy success:

- Clear vision, leadership, cohesion and communication between State government, local government the tourism industry and the community.
- A tourism oriented planning framework with training and a rural tourism policy.
- Identification of priorities and focus investment in those areas.
- Design guidelines to balance infrastructure with destination appeal.
- Advocacy of Phillip Island and San Remo as 'investment ready'.

- Support for entrepreneurs and investors (reduce hurdles).
- Diversity of products to reduce risk from market shifts and unplanned events.

To help facilitate the tourism objectives, the Strategy proposes major changes to the Scheme, the following was recommended:

1. Include an expanded tourism policy in the Scheme, incorporating the new vision, targets, recognising infrastructure constraints and rural tourism opportunities. Specifically, it recommends the MPS include key principles to guide future tourist development, including::

- Support for tourism that protects and enhances the regions natural environment through sustainable development and management principles.
- Encourage tourism events, marketing and developments that enhance the lifestyle of the local community through the creation of employment, supporting community facilities, enhancing conservation and supporting community events.

Consideration must be given to how rural areas can support investment where tourism is the primary land use. In order for many of the needs identified within PIVES to be delivered in a rural zone, the current requirement for a nexus to exist exclusively between a proposed tourism use, with an agricultural use, would need to be changed.

- Seek to foster tourism activities that grow visitor markets which support local jobs, workforce retention and demand for people with high quality skills.
- Actively encourage tourism activities that shift the peak demand periods and that attract visitors more likely to stay and spend time (and money) in the region.
- Attract investment by supporting year-round visitation and dispersal of visitors.

2. Encourage Rural Tourism through a Rural Tourism Policy

It is recommended that a LPP for tourism, including rural tourism be added to the MPS covering all areas currently zoned 'Farming' in Phillip Island and San Remo to encourage rural and ecotourism tourism opportunities for farmers and to recognise the following objectives:

- Encourage a viable, ongoing farming and rural industry, including on Phillip Island, that protects the visual qualities of the landform.
- Support rural tourism uses including small-scale accommodation, roadside food stalls and events that value-add to primary production while meeting the planning controls used to preserve the appeal of rural areas, improves environmental conditions and allows for more sustainable farming operations through alternative revenue streams and promotion of rural industries.
- Provide a Farming Zone that allows for diversification into rural tourism, supported by a wide range of business support programs.

It is also recommended to include rural tourism in the proposed tourism policy to encourage diversification of economic activities in the rural zone and help the industry thrive.

Towards 2030 - Gippsland Destination Management Plan

Destination Gippsland | 2020

Vision: Gippsland's natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit.

The Gippsland Destination Management Plan, adopted August 2019, is the guiding strategic tourism document for the Gippsland region and identifies the unique offerings that lie within the region that can be leveraged to support tourism and facilitate economic growth and employment to 2030.

The plan sets out the goal of the region to:

"Grow the value of tourism to Gippsland by increasing the number of visitors, length of stay and spend in region"

The seven strategic priorities to guide tourism development are:

1. Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community.
2. Strengthen Gippsland's appeal as a destination through brand awareness and co-ordinated marketing.
3. Develop Gippsland's experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend.
4. Invest in diverse and exciting regional events.
5. Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy.
6. Revitalise visitor servicing across the region.
7. Create industry partnerships to foster and grow the Gippsland visitor economy.

Each strategy has a suite of actions identified that aim to increase leadership, visitation, average length of stay, yield, customer satisfaction, and repeat / referral visitation throughout the year and into the future.

The plan identifies key infrastructure gaps and investment opportunities that need to be met to encourage visitors to stay longer:

- Accommodation is a key growth consideration - without enough stock of high quality (and potentially branded) accommodation, the region will be unable to keep up with the demand and it will not be able to compete with other destinations.
- Gippsland has deep roots and connections with the agricultural sector, particularly dairy, beef and lamb production. A significant opportunity exists to elevate the regional food and wine as a unique Gippsland experience that cannot be easily replicated in other areas of regional Victoria.
- Business events also offer strong growth opportunity given its proximity to Melbourne and the variety of experiences on offer. Suitable accommodation and conference facilities will be required to support this market.

The Shire is projected to experience large increases in population over the next ten years due to their relative proximity to Melbourne and the Cardinia Employment Corridor, with new residents settling within commuting distance to metropolitan workplaces. This growth is expected to increase demand for leisure and recreation

facilities and services and to stimulate demand for new hotels, conference facilities for business events, visitor services, experiences (including events and festivals) and related amenities.

New Brand and Experience Themes

Focused and coordinated implementation of the new brand and experience themes for Gippsland is essential to build awareness and preference for Gippsland, that lead to bookings, more visitors and increased spend in the region. This will need to be driven by the creation of new and exceptional experiences within each of the five established experience themes:

Projects identified for the region include:

Hero Experiences

- **George Bass Coastal Walk:** The southern Gippsland Coast between Phillip Island and Inverloch has the potential to be one of the great coastal experiences in Australia leveraging existing accommodation in local towns and villages as well as showcasing the proposed Yallock-Bulluck Marine and Coastal Park.
- **Destination restaurant in Gippsland:** A destination restaurant is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw customers from beyond its community and create demand from both domestic and international markets. As an example, a world class architectural showpiece somewhere on the Gippsland Coast would attract the Lifestyle Leader market.

Supporting Experiences

- **The Pinot Coast:** The Pinot Coast project is creating a competitive and recognised brand and visitor experience around a 'one wine tourism proposition' that is single minded in its marketing focus on Pinot Noir and is aiming for a leadership position for this variety in the world market. While having such well recognised wine produced in the region, the region is not well known in the market, nor considered a wine destination.
- **Paddock and ocean produce:** Gippsland's produce is world class - a growth in products from the food grown in Gippsland would see a value add and a likely increase in return on investment for farmers as well as creating a significant experience across the region for visitors and residents alike. One element of showcasing Gippsland's produce is to hold an annual event bringing the chefs of Australia and the world to Gippsland and connect food producers with chefs and consumers.



Strategic work does not identify specific rural tourism gaps and needs for the Bass Coast mainland. Unlike Phillip Island, the directions from the Gippsland Destination Management Plan are for a much larger region and do not provide detailed guidance on rural land uses.

Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study 2014

In 2010 Bass Coast initiated the preparation of the Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study (BCRLUS), triggered by the translation of the new suite of rural zones to the Bass Coast Planning Scheme in 2006 and completion of a number of Council studies.

The BCRLUS sets out a long term vision for the Shire's rural areas that aims to:

- Protect the opportunity for agriculture.
- Protect rural landscape and maintain green breaks between towns.
- Provide for rural based tourism.
- Ensure that environmental values are protected and enhanced.
- Protect the liveability of Bass Coasts' rural areas.

The BCRLUS identifies Tourism Investigation Precincts for consideration of rural based tourism. They were assessed and appropriate locations for the application of the RAZ were identified at: Coronet Bay – Corinella, The Gurdies, Inverloch-Cape Paterson and Phillip Island.

The preferred mix of uses in the RAZ in these localities are:

- Agriculture
- Tourist and recreational activities
- Accommodation.

However the suite of permissible uses in the RAZ must follow State government requirements.

All development was recommended to be:

- Of modest scale, relevant to the land size, surrounding uses and the ability to nestle into the landscape.
- Subservient to the landscape so as not to detract from the quality of the landscape.

- Capable of net gain environmental outcomes.
- Self-sufficient in the provision of relevant infrastructure and associated development costs.

While this section of the Strategy has clearly articulated the preferred approach to tourism in rural areas of the municipality, it is acknowledged that there may be one-off proposals of a substantial size not associated with agriculture that may have significant regional benefits. Such proposals would be subject to a rezoning proposal.

The Strategy recommended that the:

- RAZ is retained in locations where it currently applies.
- RAZ be applied to land in Coronet- Bay / Corinella (Figure E2), The Gurdies (Figure E3), Newhaven (Figure E4) and Cape Paterson / Inverloch (Figure E5) to provide for agriculture and rural based tourism.
- Minimum lot size for subdivision within proposed Rural Activity Zone precincts vary by locality:
 - Coronet Bay – Corinella 40 ha
 - The Gurdies 40 ha
 - Newhaven 40 ha
 - Inverloch to Cape Paterson 260ha

A local policy is prepared to provide additional guidance on subdivision, dwellings and tourism facilities and activities in the Rural Activity Zone.

Bass Coast Shire Council Plan 2021 to 2025

The Bass Coast Shire Council Plan 2021 to 2025 commits Council to a strategic direction and guides decision making over four years. The Vision for the Council Plan is adopted from the Bass Coast Community Vision 2041.

The Plan is centred around six strategic objectives. Protecting our natural environment, Healthy communities, Our Places, Growing our Economy, Sustainable Development and Leading for our Community

Directions and actions related to tourism and rural land use development include:

- Ensure Council's planning instruments protect the environmental assets of the Bass Coast.

- Support the creation of new jobs through the development of local businesses, activity centres and business innovation.
- Take a Shire-wide approach to enhancing and diversifying our visitor economy and attraction.
- Facilitate economic resilience and diversity so industry can succeed in local, national and global markets.
- Partner with key stakeholders to grow and deliver signature events that showcase Bass Coast.
- Support our agricultural and farming industry and facilitate biodiversity conservation and transitions to regenerative farming practices.
- Ensure land use planning and economic development are aligned to facilitate business investment.
- Promote environmentally sustainable and universal design principles as standard.
- Build partnerships that enhance service provision, infrastructure delivery and funding opportunities.



The Rural Land Use Strategy is silent on the land use planning needs for rural Phillip Island. It is highly focused towards protecting farming as the primary activity across Bass Coast, without acknowledging the important role of tourism as the key economic driver in the rural areas of Phillip Island. In addition, the Study relies on dated agricultural quality mapping, which is difficult to interpret.

Bass Coast Shire Economic Development Strategy 2016 to 2021

The Bass Coast Shire Economic Development Strategy provides a framework to promote and facilitate sustainable economic development in Bass Coast.

The Strategy clearly identifies the importance of the visitor economy to Bass Coast Shire and promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourist and events destination.

The Strategy highlights how agriculture and farming will remain a significant economic driver in the economy and that land use policies and regulations will have important ramifications for future directions in agriculture and tourism and events.

Strategic directions provided in the Strategy include:

- Council's existing land use planning policy should be supported to ensure retention of good quality agricultural land.
- The potential to diversify agricultural output, taking advantage of high-quality soils and innovations in technology and smart and sustainable farming practices. Other innovations such as agri - and eco -tourism are also emerging.
- Supporting farmers in shifting to more environmentally sustainable farming practices and to consider innovations that will add value, such as intensive cropping and agri-tourism.



Many of the local and regional strategies relating to tourism highlight the importance of promoting year-round visitation. The peaks and troughs of the tourism sector create issues for business sustainability and there is opportunity to strengthen the use of assets and infrastructure in the off peak season.

The promotion of rural tourism uses, including nature based, agri-tourism and other attractions in the rural areas present the strongest opportunity to encourage year-round visitation. Rural tourism outcomes like farm gate, wineries, arts and culture and destination and experiential accommodation investment would assist year round visitation.

Planning Scheme Review

This section includes an overview and assessment of the Scheme in relation to rural tourism development.



There are four rural land zones currently applied across the Shire including Farming Zone (FZ), Rural Activity Zone (RAZ), Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) and the Rural Living Zone (RLZ).

The RAZ and FZ are the most predominant zones in Bass Coast Shire for rural tourism development.

The purpose of the RAZ is to facilitate agriculture and other land uses compatible with agriculture – conditionally allowing leisure and recreation activities, restaurants, hotels and other group accommodation. The RAZ is further controlled by numerous local planning provisions, including:

- The schedule to the RAZ specifies that development must be small scale, have a rural/coastal appearance and maintain lot density.
- Local tourism planning policy further restricts activities to be ancillary or directly integrated with agricultural uses, thus prohibiting most uses allowed under the usual RAZ.

The FZ also facilitates non-agricultural uses but is subject to far fewer local policies. As a result, the RAZ in some aspects, can be more restrictive than the FZ.

Analysis shows a disconnect between the tourism product demand identified in strategic documents and the local tourism policy.

Key land use policy gaps include:

- Appropriately zoned land that can facilitate mid to large scale tourism development and provide significant economic and employment opportunities.
- Limited strategic policy and a Rural Land Use Strategy that has not facilitated adequate tourism outcomes for rural areas outside the key recognised tourism nodes. A comprehensive review of the Rural Strategy can address this gap.
- Detailed and up to date strategic work is required to determine the productivity of agricultural land across the Shire. A comprehensive review of the Rural Strategy can address this gap.
- Limited strategic work in terms of Australian indigenous heritage assets and values and post European contact heritage assets.

T1 Overview of Bass Coast Planning Scheme Rural Tourism Policy

Municipal Planning Strategy

Municipal Planning Statement

Strategic Framework

Local Planning Policy

Natural Resource Management

- LPP 14.01-2L-02 Sustainable agricultural land use in the Farming Zone
- LPP 14.01-2L-03 Sustainable agricultural land use in the Rural Activity Zone

Built Environment and Heritage

- LPP 15.01-6L Development in the Rural Activity Zone

Economic Development

- LPP 17.01-1L Diversified economy
- LPP 17.04-1L Facilitating tourism

Zones

Rural Zones

- Rural Activity Zone (RAZ)
- Farming Zone (FZ)
- Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ)

Other Zones

- Special Use Zones (SUZ)

Municipal Planning Strategy

Vision

The Bass Coast Shire's Council Plan 2021-2025 provides the following vision:

From its flowing hills to its wild unspoiled coastlines, the Bass Coast is a source of celebration for all who live in and visit the region.

Our townships are vibrant, rich with culture and full of life, each with its own distinct character. Drawing on our creativity, innovation and resilience we've created a thriving and diverse economy that supports sustainable agriculture and industry.

We live proudly on Bunurong Country, and build on learnings from our First Peoples and their knowledge. We coexist in harmony with our environment, and are prepared for future challenges and changes.

We are the people of the Bass Coast. Experience our cultures and history, and contribute to our story.

This is supported by six objectives that shape Council's vision for land use planning

1. Protecting our natural environment: Building resilience and protecting and enhancing our natural assets.
2. Healthy Community: An inclusive community that embraces its lifestyle and supports health and wellbeing.
3. Our Places: Strengthening the connection between people and the public places they share.
4. Growing our Economy: Progressing opportunities for visitor economy and business growth in harmony with our natural environment and sustainable values.
5. Sustainable Development: Prepare for growth while ensuring the intrinsic values and character of Bass Coast are retained.
6. Leading for our Community: Demonstrating leadership through good governance, transparency and accountability.

Settlement

Council seeks to:

- Maintain a separation between townships.
- Support agriculture and rural landscapes in maintaining distinct non-urban breaks between towns.
- Discourage urban development that encroaches or impacts on significant environmental features.

Environmental and Landscape Value

Council seeks to:

- Protect areas of environmental, landscape, agricultural, cultural or recreational significance such as rural, coastal and hinterland landscapes.
- Protect locally significant views and vistas that contribute to the character of the region.
- Protect the undeveloped character of the coastal strip

Natural Resource Management

Agriculture

Council seeks to:

- Support the retention of productive agricultural land by restricting development within agricultural areas.
- Limit the fragmentation of rural land through the creation of small rural lots within the Farming Zone, the Rural Activity Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone.
- Support the retention of agricultural land for the cost-effective production of food and raw materials.
- Prevent unplanned rural living development from displacing agricultural production or impacting on the viability of farm businesses by impeding on their 'right to farm'.
- Prevent land use conflicts in agricultural areas by discouraging uses in rural areas that are not directly related to or that have an adverse impact on current and future agricultural opportunities.
- Support a mix of uses in the Farming Zone that supports agricultural activities and associated rural industries and facilitates the retention of productive agricultural land.

- Support a mix of uses in the Rural Activity Zone that provide for agriculture and other uses that are compatible with the rural, environmental and landscape values of an area.

Economic Development

Diversified Economy

Council seeks to:

- Grow and diversify the local economy by supporting rural activities, home based business, tourist development and other commercial enterprises.
- Support business services that cater to both residents and visitors.

Agriculture

Council seeks to:

- Protect the economic viability of rural areas.
- Support the diversification of the agricultural industry and the development of value-adding rural industries.
- Support innovative rural activities that implement sustainable land management practices and contribute to the economic diversity and viability of local and regional produce.

Tourism

Tourism is the pillar of the Bass Coast economy with internationally recognised tourism destinations such as Phillip Island and the coastlines of Western Port and Bass Strait.

Nature plays an important role in tourism in the Shire. A range of accommodation, food premises and shops also contribute to the visitor's experience and to the economy by providing job opportunities, investments and facilities for residents to enjoy.

Tourism is broadening its focus and seeking to capitalise on a wider product-base around the agricultural, environmental and landscape values of the rural hinterland.

There is a growing demand for environmentally sustainable tourism development and, more recently, for large-scale tourism development.

Key tourist areas within Bass Coast include:

- Cowes.
- Fiveways, Phillip Island.
- Newhaven.
- Inverloch.
- Rhyll.
- San Remo.
- Bass.

Similarly, rural-based tourism areas include:

- Coronet Bay.
- Corinella.
- The Gurdies 'Fantasia Site'.
- Inverloch-Cape Paterson.

Council seeks to:

- Support well-designed tourist development in identified locations, that respond to market demands, as well as the coastal and landscape character, and the environmental significance of the area.
- Support tourism in rural areas provided it does not come at the expense of their landscape, amenity, liveability, environmental, social and agricultural values.
- Encourage diversity in tourist accommodation and attractions



The local policy relating to rural based tourism is restricted to "rural tourism precincts" only and falls silent on the needs and opportunities on Phillip Island and the Bass Coast Hinterland.

Local Planning Policies

Natural Resource Management

14.01-2L-02 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Farming Zone

This policy applies to all land within the Farming Zone.

Objectives

- To identify and support a preferred mix of land uses.
- To minimise conflict with existing agricultural land uses.

Strategies

- Discourage non-agricultural uses other than those that support agriculture.

Policy Document

- Consider as relevant: Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (RMGG, 2014)

Policy Guidelines

- Encourage the following uses:
 - Agriculture.
 - Primary produce sales.
 - Tourism facilities that complement or are associated with the agricultural use of land such as wine tasting and farm gate sales.
 - Rural industry that complements agriculture.
- Discourage the following uses:
 - Convenience shop.
 - Dwelling other than in association with agriculture or tourism.
 - Equestrian supplies.
 - Industry that has no association with agriculture.
 - Motor racing track.
 - Hotel.
 - Caravan Park.
 - Landscape gardening supplies.
 - Store.
 - Bar.

- Trade supplies.
- Residential hotel.
- Service station.
- Sawmill.
- Warehouse.



The local policy for Sustainable Agricultural in the Farming Zone actively discourages uses that do not 'support' agriculture. This is also reflected in the Policy Guidelines effectively ruling out tourism uses that have no link to agricultural activity.

14.01-2L-03 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Rural Activity Zone

This policy applies to all land in the Rural Activity Zone.

Objective

- To identify and support a preferred mix of land uses.
- To minimise conflict with adjoining land uses.

Strategies

- Support the use and associated development of land for agriculture, tourism, recreational activities and to a lesser extent, accommodation.
- Support tourism use and associated development that supports the region's tourism strengths and identified market demand.

Policy Document

- Consider as relevant: Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (RMGG, 2014)

Policy Guidelines

- Encourage the following uses:
 - Accommodation such as farm stays and host farms.
 - Tourism facilities in association with, or that complement agriculture such as wine tasting and farm gate supplies.
- Bed and breakfast.

- Recreation activities such as trail rides and golf courses.
- Uses associated with the operation of the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit.
- Discourage the following uses:
 - Convenience shop.
 - Dwelling not in association with agriculture or tourism.
 - Equestrian supplies.
 - Motor racing track unless associated with the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit.
 - Intensive animal husbandry.
 - Hotel.
 - Landscape gardening supplies.
 - Store.
 - Bar.
 - Trade supplies.
 - Residential hotel.
 - Service station.



Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Rural Activity Zone highlights that there is support for tourism use and development, however the Policy Guidelines primarily supports tourism facilities in association with or that complement agriculture. Again, reinforcing the primary role of “Rural Tourism Precincts” in Bass Coast are for farming and not tourism.

Built Environment and Heritage

15.01-6L Development in the Rural Activity Zone

This policy applies to all land in the Rural Activity Zone.

Objectives

- To protect the visual and environmental qualities of rural and coastal landscapes.
- To support development that complements the existing and desired future character of rural and coastal areas.

Strategies

- Support tourism development that is complementary to rural activities and facilitates the region’s tourism strengths and identified market demand.
- Site and design development (including development associated with the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit) to minimise any adverse impact on surrounding agricultural land, and the environmental and landscape values of the area.
- Minimise any adverse impact on the visual qualities of the site and surrounds through design, siting, materiality, colours and landscaping.
- Design development to be of a small scale with a rural or coastal appearance to complement the character of the area.
- Provide site densities that reflect the rural or coastal character of the area.
- Design development to be self-sufficient in the provision of relevant on-site infrastructure.
- Minimise impacts on water catchments and water quality by incorporating wastewater treatment systems.
- Maintain a scale of development between Inverloch and Cape Paterson that preserves the significant landscape values of the area including the long views along the coast.



Local Policy relating to Built Environment and Heritage has a number of directions that are ambiguous. Firstly, the strategy for tourism development highlights the need to ‘support rural activity’, however rural activity can refer to any use undertaken in the rural area. Secondly, the strategy specifies that development be small scale. However, ‘scale’ is relative to the location and is a subjective term. In order to appropriately protect landscape, built form guidelines need to consider the location, siting, use, architectural form and the setting.

Economic Development

Clause 17.04-1L Facilitating Tourism

Location Based Strategies

- Support the location of tourist development in the tourist areas identified in Clauses 02.03 and 02.04 [Cowes, Fiveways, Phillip Island, Newhaven, Inverloch, Rhyll, San Remo, Bass, rural-based tourism areas - Coronet Bay-Corinella, The Gurdies Inverloch-Cape Paterson]
- Encourage tourist, recreational activities and primary produce sales and tasting that are ancillary to agricultural activities in RAZ and areas identified for this purpose in strategic framework plans at Clauses 11.01-1L.
- Integrate tourism-related development with existing settlements and existing tourist and urban infrastructure.
- Discourage tourist development from establishing intermittently along major tourist routes, unless identified as a tourist area.
- Discourage tourist or recreation-based development on high-quality or productive agricultural land and in areas of high environmental and landscape quality.

Diversification Strategies

- Encourage tourist facilities and services that are compatible with and add value to the existing built and natural attractions
- Support tourist development that will contribute and reinforce the municipality as an all-year round tourist destination.
- Facilitate development of integrated recreation, cultural heritage and tourist development at locations identified for these uses.
- Encourage development that is innovative, conducive to overnight stays or leads to new tourist products and promotion.

- Location specific diversification strategies:
 - Corinella, Coronet Bay, Grantville, San Remo, Cowes and Inverloch. Encourage the development of short-term tourist accommodation such as holiday units and cabins.
 - Cowes, San Remo, Wonthaggi, Grantville and Inverloch - Encourage a diverse range of restaurants and entertainment facilities.
 - Coronet Bay-Corinella - Encourage small scale rural-based tourist development with an accommodation component.
 - The Gurdies 'Fantasia Site' - Encourage the use and development of land in the Gurdies 'Fantasia Site' for high-quality boutique accommodation and food and drink premises linked to cellar doors, wineries and other local food produce, and nature-based tourism development.
 - Inverloch-Cape Paterson - Support small-scale accommodation and nature-based tourism development that complement the surrounding high quality environment



The location-based strategies for Facilitating Tourism act as a significant barrier to investment. The policy only supports development in the “tourist areas” or Rural Activity Precincts and encourages tourist and recreational uses that are ‘ancillary’ to agricultural uses.

There is very little consideration in the Local Planning Policy for rural tourism uses such as nature based, environmental, and wellness that have no connection to agricultural, but are legitimate uses of rural land and support strong environmental and landscape outcomes.

In general, tourism uses identified in the Local Policy do not consider contemporary approaches to tourism investment and the need for some rural land to support tourism uses that have no linkage with agriculture.

Overview of Rural Zones

The following table provides an overview of the existing Rural Zones currently applied in the Bass Coast Planning Scheme.

T2 Overview of Rural Zones - RAZ

Zone	Rural Activity Zone
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for the use of land for agriculture. To provide for other uses and development, in appropriate locations, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics of the area.
No Permit Required Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed and Breakfast (Max Capacity of 10) Informal outdoor recreation Primary produce sales
Permit Required Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bar Camping and caravan park Convenience shop Group accommodation Hotel Host farm Leisure and recreation Market Place of assembly Restaurant Service station
Prohibited Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation (not listed above) Cinema based facility Nightclub Retail premises (not listed above)
Permit Required for Subdivision	Yes
Minimum Subdivision Requirements	Specified in Schedule to the Zone
Schedule No.	Schedule 1 to Clause 35.08 Rural Activity Zone
Schedule Purpose or Statement of Significance and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support rural based tourism Retain dominance of pastoral landscape/coastal views Maintain the current lot density Avoid large buildings, minimise the visibility of buildings, ensure development is 'tucked into' the landform Maintain green breaks between settlements Ensure development is small scale with a rural/coastal appearance Enhance environmental values, increase indigenous vegetation Achieve environmental outcomes to improve biodiversity and linkages
Minimum Subdivision Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Precincts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coronet Bay – Corinella: 40 hectares The Gurdies 'Fantasia Site': 40 hectares Inverloch - Cape Paterson – 260 hectares All other land: 40 hectares

T3 Overview of Rural Zones - FZ & RCZ

Zone	Farming Zone	Rural Conservation Zone
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide for the use of land for agriculture. To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land. To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological, scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values. To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.
No Permit Required Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed and Breakfast (Max Capacity of 10) Informal outdoor recreation Primary produce sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bed and Breakfast (Max Capacity of 10) Informal outdoor recreation
Permit Required Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping / caravan park Freeway service centre Group accommodation Host farm Leisure and recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Place of assembly Residential hotel Restaurant Winery
Prohibited Tourism Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation (not listed above) Cinema based facility Nightclub Retail premises (not listed above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group accommodation Host farm Market Primary produce sales Residential hotel Restaurant Winery
Permit Required for Subdivision	Yes	Yes
Minimum Subdivision Requirements	If unspecified in a Schedule to the Zone, 40 hectares.	If unspecified in a Schedule to the Zone, 40 hectares.
Schedule No.	Schedule 1 to Clause 35.07 Farming Zone	Schedule 1 to Clause 35.06 Rural Conservation Zone
Schedule Purpose or Statement of Significance and Values	None	Conservation Values: Protection of water catchments, and areas of significant environmental quality
Minimum Subdivision Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainland (Wonthaggi-Inverloch SA2): 80 hectares Phillip Island: 40 Hectares 	All land: 40 hectares

Overview of Special Use Zones

The Special Use Zone is currently applied to select areas and rural tourism facilities in Bass Coast, including the Phillip Island Motor Racing Track, RACV Resort Inverloch and Silverwater Resort in San Remo.

The following table provides an overview of the existing Special Use Zones currently applied in the Bass Coast Planning Scheme

T4 Overview of Special Use Zones

Zone	Schedule 1 To Clause 37.01 Special Use Zone - Phillip Island Motor Racing Track (SUZ1)	Schedule 5 To Clause 37.01 Special Use Zone - Inverloch RACV Resort (SUZ5)	Schedule 6 To Clause 37.01 Special Use Zone - Silverwater Resort, San Remo (SUZ6)
Purpose	To provide for the use or development of a motor racing track and associated activities.	To allow a mix of uses to recognise and support sustainable tourism activity and accommodation opportunities at the RACV Inverloch Resort	To provide for a mix of uses to recognise and support sustainable tourism activity and accommodation opportunities at the Silverwater Resort, San Remo.
Tourism Land Uses: Permit not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed and breakfast • Carnival • Circus • Informal outdoor recreation • Motor racing track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camping and caravan park • Carnival • Circus • Informal outdoor recreation • Restaurant • Restricted recreation facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation (other than Caretakers house, Residential hotel, Camping and caravan park, Corrective institution, Dependent person's unit, Host farm, Residential building, Residential village, and Retirement village) • Informal outdoor recreation • Restaurant • Restricted recreation facility
Tourism Land Uses: Permit required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation (other than Dependent person's unit and Dwelling) • Equestrian supplies • Leisure and recreation (other than Informal outdoor recreation and motor racing track) • Place of assembly (other than Carnival and Circus) • Retail premises (other than Shop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation (other than Camping and caravan park, Dwelling, and Residential hotel) • Retail premises (excluding Adult sex product shop, Department store, Manufacturing sales, Restaurant, Restricted retail premises, Supermarket and Trade supplies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail premises (excluding Adult sex product shop, Department store, Manufacturing sales, Restaurant, Restricted retail premises, Supermarket and Trade supplies)
Tourism Land Uses: Prohibited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cinema based entertainment facility • Shop (other than Convenience shop and Equestrian supplies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department store • Restricted retail premises • Supermarket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department store • Restricted retail premises • Supermarket
Subdivision Requirements	A permit is required to subdivide land.	<p>A permit is required to subdivide land.</p> <p>An application must be accompanied by a report which explains how the proposed subdivision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the purpose of this zone. • Supports the decision guidelines for this zone. 	<p>A permit is required to subdivide land.</p> <p>An application must be accompanied by a report which explains how the proposed subdivision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the purpose of this zone. • Supports the decision guidelines for this zone.

Case Study: Green Wedge Zone

The Green Wedge Zone (GWZ) is applied to non-urban land in Metropolitan Melbourne outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The zone has been a key factor in facilitating successful rural and regional tourism economies including the Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra Valley.

The purpose of the GWZ is to protect non-urban land for its agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape or recreational values, or mineral and stone resources.

As shown below in the table, the zone provides opportunity for all agricultural uses and tourism uses to those that either support **agriculture, natural environments or other rural industries**, that cannot locate in urban areas for amenity and other reasons.

The zone more appropriately reflects the broader range of rural land types that exist in the region (i.e. beaches, forests, hills, heritage sites) and

thus enables a greater variety of tourism activities and better protects its rural assets.

Similar to other successful tourism regions, Bass Coast Shire has a diverse range of rural land types. Current zoning assigns farming as the primary use of land for much of these areas, potentially inhibiting the best use of land.

The Green Wedge Zone cannot be applied to Bass Coast Shire as it is classified as a regional local government area. However, there is opportunity to adopt similar land use policies seen the GWZ into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme.

T5 Examples from the Green Wedge Zone Land Use Tables

Land Use Type	Permit Requirement	Conditions
Function Centre	Permit Required	Must be used in conjunction with Agriculture, Natural systems, Outdoor recreation facility, Rural industry or Winery. The number of patrons present at any time must not exceed the number specified in a schedule to the zone or 100 patrons, whichever is the lesser. The lot on which the use is conducted must be at least the minimum subdivision area specified in a schedule to this zone. If no area is specified, the lot must be at least 40 hectares.
Restaurant	Permit Required	
Place of Assembly (Carnivals & Festivals)	Permit Required	Must not be used for more than 10 days in a calendar year.
Group Accommodation	Permit Required	The number of dwellings must not exceed the number specified in a schedule to the zone or 40 dwellings, whichever is the lesser. The lot on which the use is conducted must be at least the minimum subdivision area specified in a schedule to this zone. If no area is specified, the lot must be at least 40 hectares.

Discussion of Planning Constraints on Tourism Uses

Local Policy Constraints

A highly agriculture-oriented 'tourism' policy

The MPS is generally in favour of preserving agriculture and farming land uses over supporting rural tourism development.

Section 02.03-4 of the Municipal Strategic Directions strongly supports the retention of agricultural land, restricting development within agricultural areas and actively discourages tourism uses in rural areas that do not directly relate to agriculture.

Ambiguous and undefined terminology

Several strategic directions and terminology throughout the local policy are unclear or undefined.

For example, Clause 17.04-1L, specifies 'nature-based tourism development' in the Inverloch-Cape Paterson area. However, 'nature-based', is not properly described or defined anywhere in the Planning Scheme.

It is mentioned throughout several local policies to 'discourage tourist or recreation-based development on high-quality or productive agricultural land'. However, no detailed and up to date strategic work has been completed into the productivity of agricultural land to help guide statutory planners and investors. The latest land suitability studies for Bass Coast are:

- An assessment of agricultural quality of land in Gippsland. Authored by Swan, I and Volum, A in 1984; and
- A land suitability assessment in Melbourne's Green Wedge and Peri-Urban Areas, published by Deakin University in 2018.

Strategic land use directions that conflict with tourism demand

Highly specific location-based tourism land uses have been supported that do not facilitate tourism product gaps identified in strategic tourism documents.

This is demonstrated in Clause 17.04-1L 'Facilitating tourism':

- Coronet Bay-Corinella - Encourage small scale rural-based tourist development with an accommodation component.
- The Gurdies 'Fantasia' Site - Encourage the use and development of land for high-quality boutique accommodation and food and drink premises linked to cellar doors, wineries and other local food produce, and nature-based tourism development.

In order to attract significant investment and ensure new tourism product is financially viable, it important that policy direction and zoning aligns more closely with the identified tourism opportunities and needs.

Limited land supply for mid-to large-scale development

Several policy directions in Clause 17.04-1L 'Facilitating Tourism' restrict the supply of land available for rural development, including:

- Supporting tourist development mostly within the tourist areas identified in the Scheme.
- Integrate tourism-related development with existing settlements and urban infrastructure.
- Discouraging tourist development from establishing intermittently along major tourist routes, unless identified as a tourist area.

The existing rural tourism precincts and other areas allocated for tourism uses are located next to very small settlement areas with low population bases and limited infrastructure. It will be difficult for these areas to accommodate larger scale investment without causing disruption to these rural communities. If appropriately managed and conditioned, large tourism ventures could present an opportunity to significantly upgrade wider infrastructure for these communities.

Whilst it is important to discourage 'ribbon' patterns of development, it must also be considered that major tourist routes are often areas most conducive to development as they are best positioned to capture passing travellers. There is opportunity to facilitate tourism development along these routes where adverse impacts to landscape character can be mitigated through setback and built form controls.

Farming Zone Constraints

Purpose of Zone

The FZ assigns the primary use of land for agriculture, to encourage retention of productive agricultural land, and to ensure that non-agricultural uses do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture. Rural tourism uses are secondary in this zone.

Land use policy in the Farming Zone is constrained by additional local planning provisions

The FZ permits land uses other than agriculture – conditionally allowing for uses such as a Caravan Park or Leisure and Recreation. This is contradicted by Clause 14.01-2L- 02 which specifies to 'Discourage non-agricultural uses other than those that support agriculture' and encourage 'tourism facilities that complement or are associated with the agricultural use of land', thus prohibits many uses that are generally allowed.

The schedule to the Farming Zone enforces a large minimum subdivision area of 80ha for the Bass Coast mainland in compliance with State wide government requirements. This is often not always facilitate rural tourism activities, which most often do not need large areas of land.

Tourism policy is applied with a blanket approach

The LPP's (Clause 14.01-2L- 02) enforce a blanket approach for the FZ without consideration of agricultural land quality, tourism demand and location. There is no differentiation between the Phillip Island and the mainland in land use policy.

Rural Activity Zone Constraints

Purpose of Zone

The RAZ assigns the primary use of land for agriculture, and to provide for other uses and development, in appropriate locations, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics.

Rural tourism uses are secondary in this zone.

Inconsistent phrasing regarding tourism development in the Rural Activity Zone

Inconsistent wording and phrasing can be observed throughout the Scheme regarding development, such as:

- Clause 35.08 - Prescribes land 'uses which are compatible with agriculture'.
- Clause 17.04-1L - Enforces 'tourist activities that are ancillary to agricultural activities in RAZ'.
- Clause 15.01-6L - Says to 'support tourism development that is complementary to rural activities'.
- Clause 14.01-2L-03 - Specifies 'Tourism facilities in association with, or that complement agriculture'.

This can be difficult to interpret for stakeholders trying to apply this policy.

Land use policy in the Rural Activity Zone is highly constrained by additional local planning provisions

The RAZ facilitates land uses compatible with agriculture – conditionally allowing leisure and recreation activities, restaurants, hotels and other group accommodation. However, the RAZ is further constrained by the local planning provisions.

The schedule to the RAZ specifies small scale, low-key development, avoid large buildings with a rural/coastal appearance that builds on existing tourism activities (Schedule 1 and Clause 15.01 Development in RAZ).

The schedule to the RAZ also advocates to maintain current lot density and enforces large minimum subdivision areas. This can be observed requirements for the Inverloch-Cape Patterson rural tourism precinct, which enforces a minimum subdivision for Rural Activity Precinct of 260ha well beyond the FZ (which is an inappropriate application of the RAZ).

Local tourism planning policy further restricts activities to be ancillary or directly integrated with agricultural uses, thus prohibiting most uses allowed under the usual RAZ.

Part B: Rural Tourism Assessment

Profile of Bass Coast Visitor Economy

This section provides an overview of visitor economy, visitation trends, dispersal, profile, key markets segments and projected visitation.



The Shire captures 3.1 million visitors per annum and the tourism industry contributed \$730 million to the region's economy and over 8,300 jobs in 2018-19 financial year.

The majority of visitors are domestic and international day trippers. Prior to the COVID19 pandemic, the Shire was experiencing positive growth of its domestic overnight market. Although benchmarking shows that overall growth has not kept pace with comparable tourism regions.

Persisting issues for the visitor economy include the skewed spatial distribution of visitors and highly seasonal visitation patterns. Phillip Island attracts more than twice the number of visitors (2.1 million visitors per annum) than the Bass Coast mainland (1.0 million). Although visitation on the mainland has been moderately-high, it has primarily been driven by the VFR market. This is significant as this market type typically spends less and has lower participation in tourism activities.

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, Bass Coast saw a 54% drop in visitation from 2019 to 2020. However, visitation forecasting shows that the Shire will recover and continue to attract visitation growth over the next ten years. At the midpoint growth scenario visitation will grow by approximately 1,329,600 visitors by 2032 – with Phillip Island accommodating the majority of this growth (62%).

Outcomes that land use policy must achieve for sustainable tourism development include:

- Deliver sufficient tourism infrastructure in rural areas, particularly accommodation, with the scale and capacity to meet growing demand.
- Direct tourism investment to rural areas to relieve the pressure on overcrowded destinations and attractions such as Cowes, the Penguin Parade and Inverloch.
- Deliver contemporary and motivating rural tourism products, with a focus on the mainland, that will attract holiday leisure visitors and improve yield from the existing VFR market base.
- Improve the diversity of events, product and experiences that will facilitate year-round visitation and develop the night-time economy.

Data Regions

The information summarised in this section is based on Tourism Research Australia (TRA) survey data and Phillip Island Nature Parks visitation statistics over the five-year period between 2015 and 2019. Sub regions for Bass Coast data are:

- **Phillip Island** – refers to the Phillip Island SA2, which comprises Phillip Island including Churchill Island. It excludes San Remo.
- **Bass Coast Mainland** – refers to the Wonthaggi-Inverloch SA2 and includes the 'mainland' of Bass Coast Shire.

F4 Data Regions



Bass Coast Visitor Economy

Economic Contribution of Tourism

Along with agriculture, the tourism industry is a key driver of the Bass Coast Shire economy. Bass Coast is the most tourism reliant Local Government Area in Victoria, one of the most tourism reliant communities in Australia with significant local, national and international visitation.

Bass Coast Shire’s tourism sector is a significant contributor to the broader region’s economy, worth approximately \$730 million in Gross Regional Product (GRP) and supporting over 7,000 jobs in the 2018/19

financial year. The Shire, which includes the nationally significant Phillip Island, experiences an annual visitation of over 3.1 million people.’

Visitor Expenditure

As shown in Table 6, the average visitor spend per trip across all visitor markets is lower in Bass Coast Shire in comparison to Regional Victoria and other comparable Council areas. This may be in part due to the supply of tourism infrastructure which can constrain length of stay and subsequently yield.

T6 Average Visitor Expenditure Benchmarking

	Domestic Daytrip	Domestic Overnight	International
Bass Coast Shire	\$86	\$379/\$135	\$368/\$125
Surf Coast Shire	\$86	\$355/\$140	\$432/\$98
City of Greater Geelong	\$91	\$354/\$141	\$1,588/\$88
Regional Victoria	\$90	\$372	\$1,004

Source: TRA LGA Profiles and Regional Summaries, 2019. Figures are based on a four-year average from 2015 to 2019.

Visitation Trends

Visitation Summary

Bass Coast Shire is one top visitor destinations in Victoria. The region includes the nationally significant Phillip Island/Penguin Parade, which was the 5th most popular attraction in Regional Victoria in 2019.

Bass Coast Shire attracted 3.1 million visitors in 2019. 48% of visitors are domestic day-trippers, 25% are domestic overnight visitors and 17% are internationals.

The Shire has achieved moderate visitor growth at an average annual rate of 4.8% over the past 5 years – equivalent to around 575,000 additional visitors since 2015. Growth in overnight visitors has been highest and accounted for 48% of total visitor growth.

Figure 5 benchmarks the pre-COVID19 visitation growth rate of Bass Coast Shire with other comparable regions and the Regional Victoria average. Data shows that visitor growth in Bass Coast has not kept pace with other tourism regions, particularly when compared to regions such as the Mornington Peninsula which have been highly successful in attracting rural tourism visitation and driving growth to the hinterland areas.

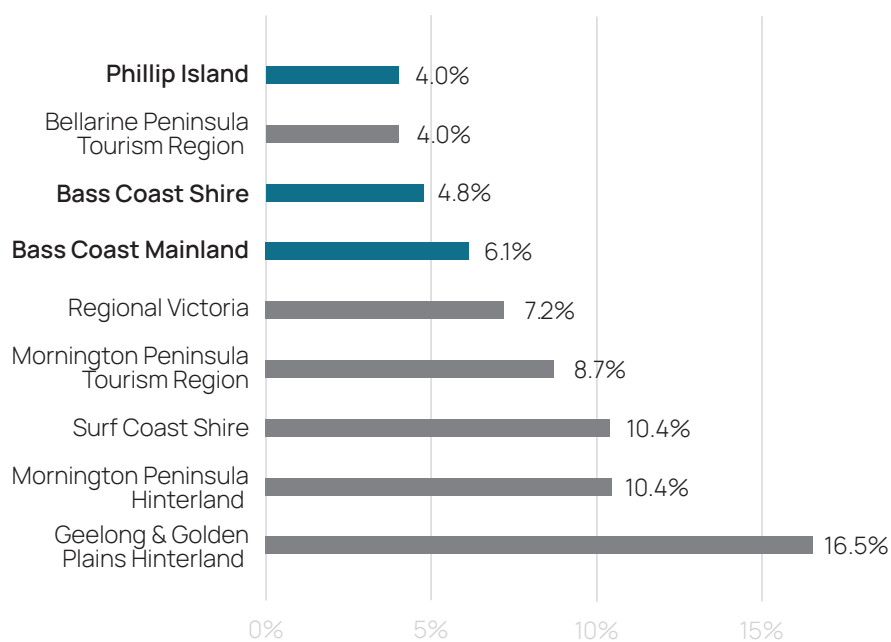
This data demonstrates there is a large existing market and strong demand for regional and rural tourism. This indicates the need for additional and renewed investment in existing rural tourism products and experiences to attract new and repeat visitation.

T7 Bass Coast Shire Visitation Summary

	No. Visitors 2019 (% of Visitors)	Growth Since 2015 (% of Growth)	5 Year AAGR
All Visitors	3,106,729	+574,673	4.8%
Domestic Daytrips	1,492,613 (48%)	+255,790 (45%)	3.8%
Domestic Overnight	1,077,953 (35%)	+280,524 (48%)	6.2%
International Visitors	536,163 (17%)	+38,359 (7%)	1.5%

Source: National and International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec, Phillip Island Nature Parks Annual Report, 2015 to 2019. Please note: International trips include both daytrip overnight visitors.

F5 Pre-COVID19 Average Annual Visitor Growth Rates



Source: National and International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec.

*Mornington Peninsula Hinterland includes the Flinders SA2 and Hastings-Somers SA2.

Visitor Dispersal

As expected, Phillip Island receives the majority of visitors to Bass Coast Shire, attracting 2.1 million visitors in 2019 (67% of total visitation) - over twice the number of visitors on the Bass Coast mainland (1.0 million). Although traditionally a daytrip destination, Phillip Island had achieved strong growth of its domestic overnight market pre-COVID19 which accounted for half of all total visitor growth since 2015.

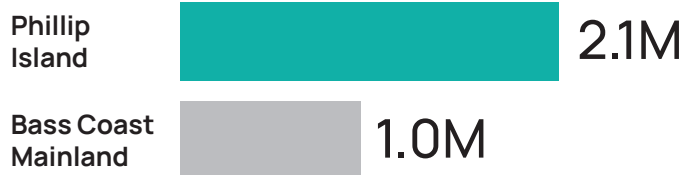
Phillip Island continues to attract most international travellers to Bass Coast Shire (98%). These visitors are typically one-time day-trippers who visit to see a specific attraction (i.e., the Penguin Parade or the Koala Conservation Centre).

Although achieving a lower level of visitation overall, the Bass Coast Mainland has experienced a higher rate of growth, averaging 6.1% per annum compared to Phillip Island (3.3% AAGR). The majority of the market are domestic daytrippers (62%). However, pre-COVID, growth in both domestic daytrips and overnight trips had been strong. The Bass Coast Mainland saw an increase of almost a 50% in overnight visitation in a short span of 5 years, equating to an additional 124,000 visitors.

Figure 6 illustrates the average annual traffic volume along the main roads in Bass Coast Shire. Data indicates the areas that receive the most passing traffic include the northern stretch of the Bass Hwy and the towns of Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Cowes, and Newhaven.



Phillip Island attracts 67% of all visitors to Bass Coast and has the highest demand for tourism products, experiences and accommodation. The strength of demand for products and experiences, however is not reflected in Land Use Policy. There is limited rural land identified for tourism use, compared to Mainland Bass Coast.

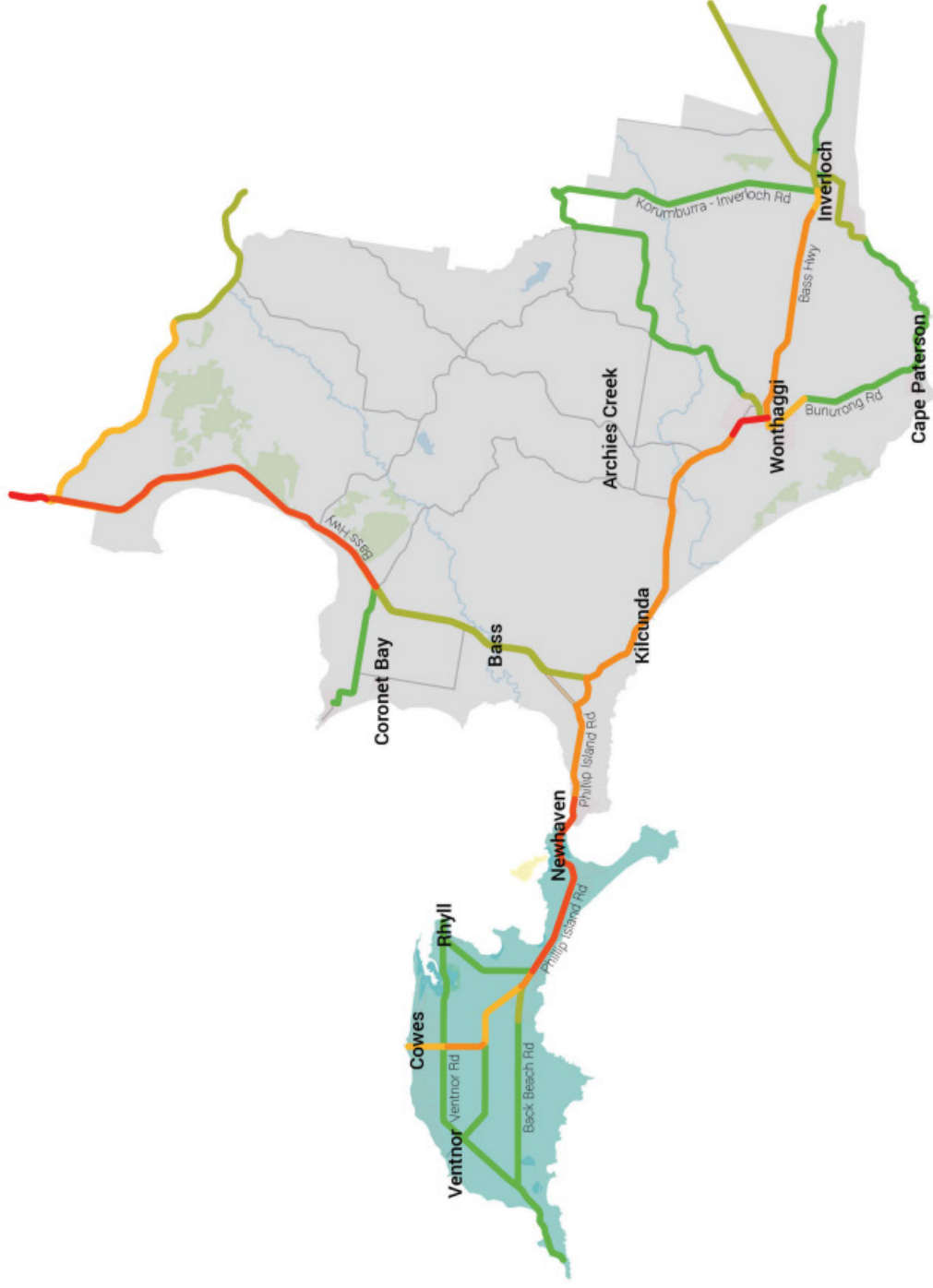
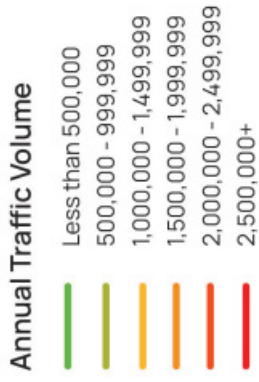


T8 Bass Coast Shire Visitation Dispersal

	Bass Coast Mainland	Phillip Island
2019 YE Dec	1,021,592 (33%)	2,090,166 (67%)
Growth Since 2015	+262,964	+315,486
5 Year AAGR	6.1%	3.3%
Market Type		
Domestic Daytrips	633,920 (62%)	858,693 (41%)
Domestic Overnight	378,009 (37%)	704,973 (34%)
International	9,663 (1%)	526,500 (25%)
Growth		
Domestic Daytrips	+136,815 (+28%)	+118,976 (+16%)
Domestic Overnight	+123,923 (+49%)	+160,378 (+29%)
International	+2,226 (+30%)	+36,133 (+7%)

Source: National and International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec, Phillip Island Nature Parks Annual Report, 2015 to 2019. Please note: International trips include both daytrip overnight visitors.

F6 Annual Traffic Volume 2019



Source: Traffic Volumes for Freeways and Arterial Roads, Department of Transport, April 2020

Visitor Profile

Purpose of Visit

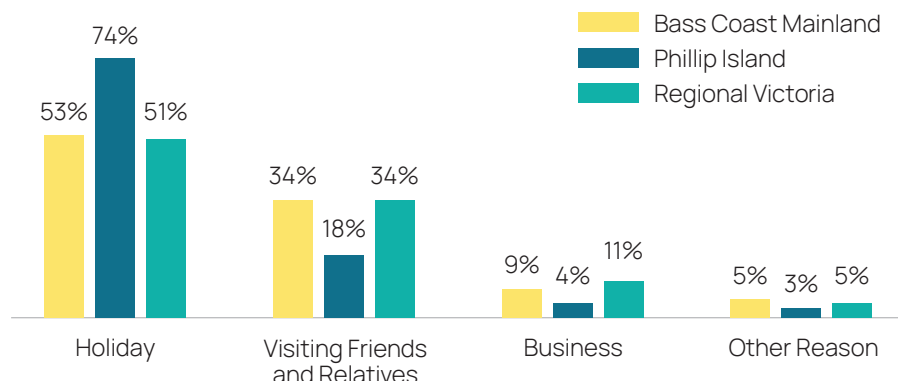
Figure 7 shows the purpose of visit for both domestic daytrip and overnight visitors to Bass Coast Shire benchmarked with Regional Victoria. Compared to Regional Victoria and Bass Coast Mainland, Phillip Island has a high proportion of holiday visitors (74%). A lower proportion of visitors are visiting friends and relatives (18%) and business visitors (4%).

Table 9 analyses the trends in trip purpose – which shows a divergence in the Phillip Island and mainland. Holiday/leisure continues to be the source of visitor growth on Phillip Island (75% of new visitors). In contrast, visitor growth on the Bass Coast mainland has been primarily driven by the Visiting Friends and Relatives market (87% of all new visitors).



Purpose of visit data highlights the need for strategies and policies on Phillip Island to reflect and support the importance of holiday leisure tourism on the island. This data reinforces that Phillip Island has substantially higher demand for holiday leisure activities than mainland Bass Coast. The data identifies the opportunity for Mainland Bass Coast to disperse and capture visitation through product development.

F7 Purpose of Visit



T9 Visitor Growth by Purpose of Visit - Change from 2015 to 2019

	Bass Coast Mainland	Phillip Island	Bass Coast Shire
Holiday	+29,528 (11%)	+209,850 (75%)	+239,378 (44%)
VFR	+227,601 (87%)	+12,686 (5%)	+240,287 (44%)
Business	-37,577 (-14%)	+31,171 (11%)	-6,406 (-1%)
Other reason	+43,530 (17%)	+25,646 (9%)	+69,176 (13%)

Visitor Survey, Tourism Source: National and International Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec

Seasonality

Visitation to Bass Coast Shire is highly seasonal, which reflects the strength of Bass Coast as a summer holiday destination. Visitation patterns for overnight visitors peak during the summer and Easter holidays. Peak months for overnight visitation are in January (17%), March (10%) and April (10%).

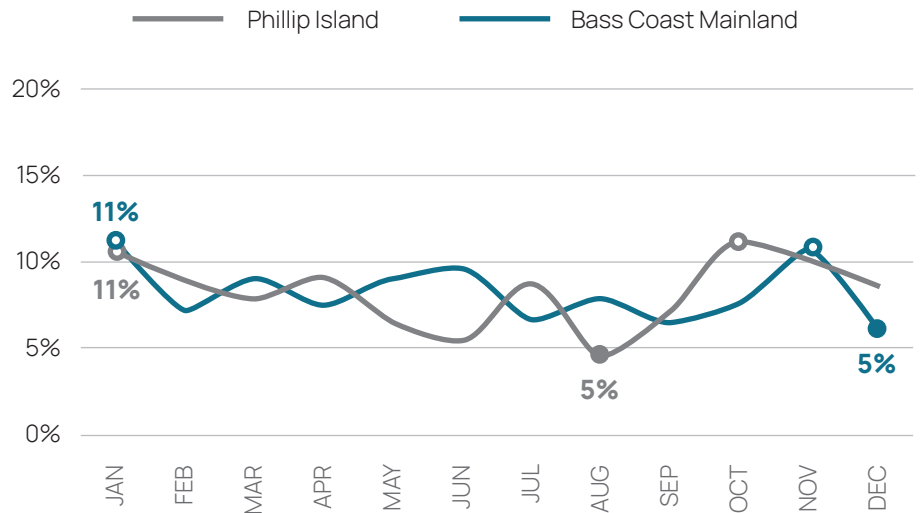
Phillip Island / Penguin Parade is generally busy with year-round, peaking at Christmas, Easter, Chinese New Year and school holidays. The lowest levels of daytrip visitation are during the May/June and August/September months

High fluctuations in visitation are often linked to issues such as lack of seasonal workers and worker housing, pressure on infrastructure, instability of income for businesses, inconsistent quality of tourism experiences, and overcrowding causing pollution issues.

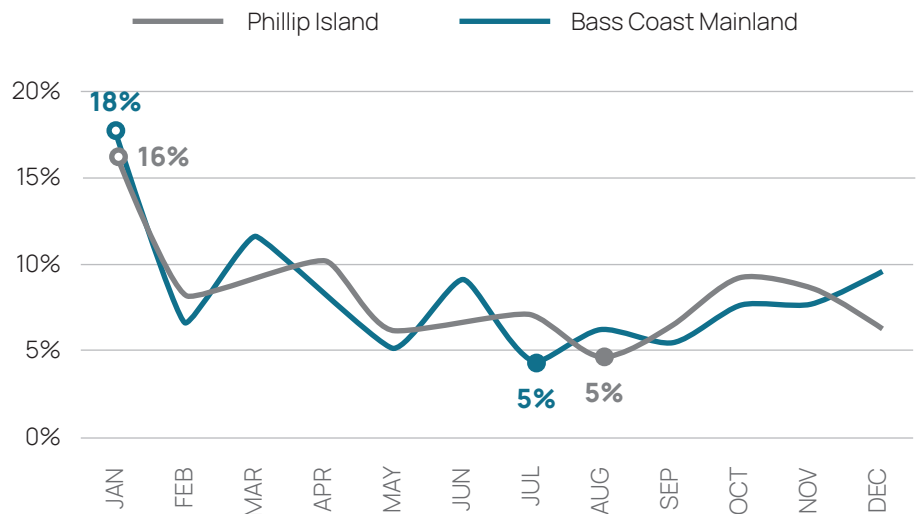


Planning policy will need to consider strategies to help encourage year-round visitation and help relieve the pressure on overcrowded destinations/ attractions through facilitating a diversity of attractions to attract different markets for different seasons and locations. Rural tourism development will support year-round visitation, strengthen visitor yield and visitor dispersal from coastal locations.

F8 Domestic Daytrip Visitor Return Month



F9 Domestic Overnight Visitor Return Month



Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec

Visitor Activities

The following tables show the top visitor activities for domestic visitors to Bass Coast Shire benchmarked against Regional Victoria.

Phillip Island Activities

Visitors to Phillip Island participate in higher degree of eating out, going to the beach, and sightseeing, reflective of Phillip Island strengths as an internationally significant summer destination.

T10 Phillip Island Top Daytrip Visitor Activities

	Bass Coast Mainland	Regional Victoria
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	60%	50%
Go to the beach	52%	14%
Sightseeing/looking around	33%	20%
Visit friends & relatives	23%	33%
Visit or stay on an island	11%	<1%
Go shopping for pleasure	10%	15%
Visit national parks / state parks	10%	8%
Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums	7%	1%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	7%	8%
Pubs, clubs, discos etc	6%	7%
Picnics or BBQs	6%	5%
Fishing	5%	2%
Surfing	5%	1%

T11 Phillip Island Top Overnight Visitor Activities

	Bass Coast Mainland	Regional Victoria
Go to the beach	69%	25%
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	62%	57%
Sightseeing/looking around	33%	27%
Visit friends & relatives	32%	43%
Go shopping for pleasure	19%	17%
Pubs, clubs, discos etc	19%	21%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	14%	16%
Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums	14%	<1%
Visit national parks / state parks	12%	14%
Go to markets	11%	8%
Visit or stay on an island	8%	<1%
Surfing	7%	2%
Picnics or BBQs	7%	6%
Fishing	6%	6%

Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec (5 Year Average).

Bass Coast Mainland Activities

The top activities of visitors to the Wonthaggi-Inverloch SA2 include going to the beach, visiting friends and relatives and eating out.

Overall, there is a low engagement in visitor activities, particularly amongst daytrippers, to the Bass Coast Mainland compared to Phillip Island. This reflects the low supply of tourism product and experiences in the area and also higher levels of visiting friends and relatives market compared to Phillip Island.

T12 Bass Coast Mainland Top Daytrip Visitor Activities

	Bass Coast Mainland	Regional Victoria
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	46%	50%
Visit friends & relatives	38%	33%
Go to the beach	34%	14%
Sightseeing/looking around	21%	20%
None of these	12%	10
Go shopping for pleasure	12%	15%
Pubs, clubs, discos etc	8%	7%
Go to markets	5%	3%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	5%	8%

T13 Bass Coast Mainland Top Overnight Visitor Activities

	Bass Coast Mainland	Regional Victoria
Go to the beach	59%	25%
Eat out / dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	59%	57%
Visit friends & relatives	43%	43%
Sightseeing/looking around	31%	27%
Pubs, clubs, discos etc	21%	21%
Bushwalking / rainforest walks	16%	16%
Go shopping for pleasure	16%	17%
Go to markets	12%	8%
Exercise, gym, or swimming	11%	7%
Visit national parks / state parks	9%	14%
Go on a daytrip to another place	8%	5%
Cycling	8%	3%
Fishing	7%	6%
Picnics or BBQs	7%	6%
Visit botanical or other public gardens	5%	4%

Rural Tourism Activities

Table 14 and 15 compare visitor engagement in rural tourism activities against other comparable regions such as Surf Coast, Mornington Peninsula and Geelong and the Bellarine. Overall, the proportion of visitors to Bass Coast Shire engaging in rural tourism activities is low compared to other regions.

Analysis shows that Bass Coast achieves higher levels of engagement for nature-based activities and attractions such as visit national parks, visiting wildlife parks, and guided tours. Most of this type of product offering is located on Phillip Island, again, indicated the lack of tourism product and experiences on the mainland.

T14 Rural Tourism Activities - Domestic Daytrip Benchmarking

	Bass Coast (S)	Surf Coast (S)	Geelong & Golden Plains Hinterland*	Bellarine Peninsula	Mornington Peninsula (TR)	Mornington Peninsula Hinterland	Regional Victoria
Visit national parks / state parks	7.4%	7.5%	29.7%	3.7%	5.8%	7.5%	8.1%
Visit farms	0.6%	1.2%	2.3%	0.4%	0.6%	1.5%	1.3%
See an aboriginal site / performance / aboriginal art	0.0%	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
Visit amusements / theme parks	0.7%	0.2%	4.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%
Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums	4.4%	0.2%	2.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.6%	1.1%
Go on guided tours or excursions	1.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%
Visit industrial tourist attractions / mines	1.8%	1.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.8%
Visit wineries	0.7%	0.9%	1.7%	4.9%	4.9%	12.5%	3.2%
Visit a health spa / sanctuary / well-being centre	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	3.4%	5.6%	0.7%
Visit breweries or distilleries	0.3%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1.0%	0.4%
Visit farm gates	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	0.3%
Visit food markets	1.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%

Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec (5 Year Average).



Lower levels of engagement are seen for agritourism activities including going to visiting farms, farm gates, visiting wineries and distilleries.

Other product and experience types underrepresented in visitor activities include health and wellbeing, and arts and cultural experiences.

Many of these uses are accommodated in the rural areas in the Mornington Peninsula, Surf Coast and Bellarine Peninsula.

T15 Rural Tourism Activities - Domestic Overnight Benchmarking

	Bass Coast (S)	Surf Coast (S)	Geelong & Golden Plains Hinterland*	Bellarine Peninsula	Mornington Peninsula (TR)	Mornington Peninsula Hinterland	Regional Victoria
Visit national parks / state parks	10.9%	15.4%	8.4%	7.3%	11.4%	11.6%	14.4%
Visit farms	1.4%	0.4%	3.0%	0.7%	1.4%	2.9%	2.1%
See an aboriginal site / performance / aboriginal art	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%
Visit amusements / theme parks	1.3%	0.7%	3.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.8%
Visit wildlife parks / zoos / aquariums	9.3%	0.5%	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%	1.2%	1.5%
Go on guided tours or excursions	1.9%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%
Visit industrial tourist attractions / mines	2.4%	1.1%	2.2%	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	1.3%
Visit wineries	2.7%	1.9%	2.1%	8.7%	11.4%	20.3%	5.9%
Visit a health spa / sanctuary / well-being centre	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	4.1%	4.4%	0.9%
Visit breweries or distilleries	11%	0.7%	0.0%	1.5%	1.8%	4.0%	1.4%
Visit farm gates	0.3%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	0.4%
Visit food markets	3.2%	2.4%	11%	3.0%	1.5%	1.8%	2.0%

Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia (TRA), 2015 to 2019 YE Dec (5 Year Average).

Key Market Segments

Tables 16 and 17 provide an overview of the key market segments for Phillip Island and the Gippsland region. These draw on direction taken from the Phillip and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy and Gippsland Destination Management Plan.

T16 Phillip Island Key Market Segments

Segment	Descriptors	Preferences	Objectives
The Fun-Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families and larger groups, usually including young to mid-teenage children Self-sufficient planners, either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visiting for a specific attraction, or having an itinerary in mind for a longer stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want a compact diversity of attractions and experiences that foster enjoyable, quality time. Insta-worthy, accessible activities that are fun for everyone Something new or changing each visit, while still have the favourites still on offer Prefer affordable but quality dining and accommodation options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore the Island beyond a single attraction or familiar destination To visit more often throughout the year To make Phillip Island their regular family/group destination
The Take-a-Breakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban couples and groups of friends, without children or grownup children Relaxed planners - they may have some activities booked, or in mind, but are also happy to go-with-the-flow Very comfortable venturing off-the-beaten track, but also like the finer things in life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An authentic, open, unmanufactured Island escape that offers a recharging balance of action and relaxation Want a varied product offering, not just the typical 'famous' attractions Expect a high standard of quality across all tourism product and experiences Nature is either the stage or the backdrop for their various activities More socially/environmentally aware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve awareness of the island 'lifestyle' experiences Invest their dollars in culinary, culture and learning experiences To stay longer and return more often
The Special Occasioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking for somewhere new, different and with a little 'extra' to host their event, function, group getaway or reunion, as well as the attendees and guests of the event Planning every detail - they have high expectations, specific objectives to achieve and time restrictions High yield - they may be one-off or irregular occasions, but they are high value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A unique Island locale and backdrop Quality accommodation, dining, venues and wellness facilities and the ability to see this online before visiting in person is a priority An easy way to see all the options available to them for every aspect of their event Professionalism, easy logistics and efficiency so the event can feel relaxed and uncomplicated for guests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore beyond their event and booked accommodation To extend their stay and bring family and friends to join them To share their experiences and encourage others to attend/ host events on the Island

Source: Phillip Island Communications Framework, 2021

T17 Gippsland Destination Management Plan Target Markets

Segment	Descriptors
Existing Markets	
Domestic Daytrip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to engage with this market while in region • Encourage a return visit, disperse through the region and stay longer.
Domestic Overnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most significant market • Refreshed and new products are necessary to grow the market • Interstate visitation is low • Appropriate product development needed to grow market • Active family market is an important and will continue to grow.
55+ Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 55 plus market is the largest travel group in Australia. • No longer just the grey nomads • Hold the majority of Australia's wealth. • Most likely to travel outside of peak periods
International Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small but high growth market • Developed further with specific products that appeal to them. • Current main markets : UK, Germany NZ and the USA. • The Asian market, is evolving rapidly, becoming more sophisticated in the experiences that are seeking. • Specifically Chinese and Indians visitors on their second or third trip to Australia or visiting family and travel in groups.
Visiting Friends and Relatives Market (VFR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to develop and implement a VFR campaign to increase yield from the VFR market, allowing local people to show off their own backyards.
Aspirational Markets	
The 'Real Seeker' or 'Lifestyle Leaders' Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle Leaders are based on a mindset, are found in all regions, ages and lifecycle groups. • Lifestyle Leaders are educated, professional and progressive individuals who enjoy seeking out new information and being the first to try new products. They have a higher level of discretionary expenditure than the general population so they can afford to indulge more often in travel, with a particular desire to escape city life and embrace nature/outdoors and new discoveries.

Projected Visitation

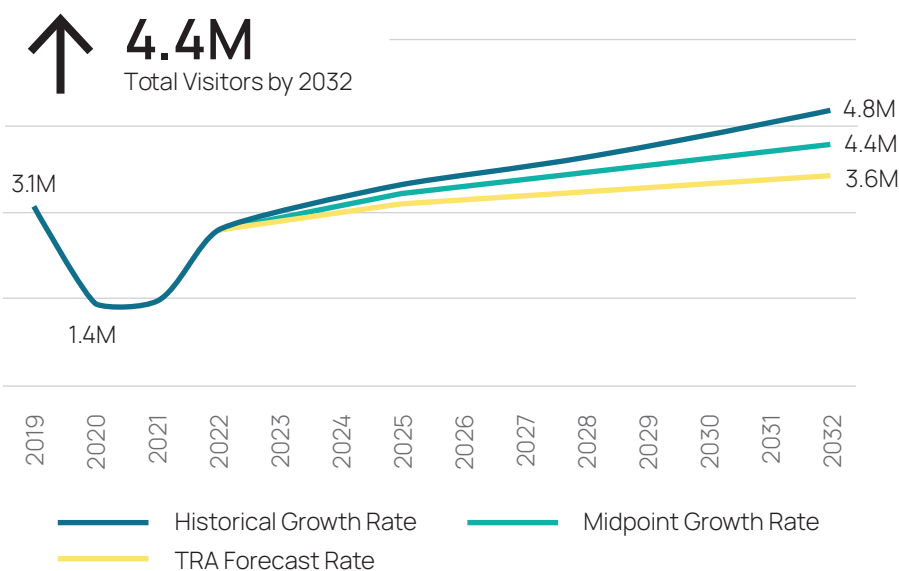
The following provides 10 year forecasts visitation to Bass Coast Shire, with consideration of:

- Historical Growth Rate (High Growth Scenario): 4.8% Based on the pre-COVID19 average visitor growth rate from 2015 to 2019
- Tourism Research Australia Forecast Growth Rate (Low Growth Scenario): 1.2% average annual growth rate, based on state-wide forecasts
- Adopted Midpoint Growth Rate.

For the purposes of this study, the midpoint growth rate has been adopted. These forecasts are based on pre-COVID19 tourism forecasts and require continued monitoring during the recovery phase.

Forecast visitation modelling estimates that Bass Coast Shire will attract 4.4 million visitors annually by 2032.

F10 Bass Coast Shire Visitor Forecast Scenarios - 2022 to 2032



T18 Bass Coast Shire Visitor Forecast Scenarios by Region - 2022 to 2032

	TRA Forecast Rate (Low)	Midpoint Growth Rate	Historical Growth Rate (High)
2019 (Pre-COVID19)	-	-	3,106,728
2020 (COVID19)	-	-	1,416,071 (-54%)
Forecast 2022	2,716,883	2,716,883	2,716,883
2027	3,317,707	3,576,048	3,834,390
2032	3,636,862	4,436,328	4,803,901
Forecast Change	+919,979	+1,719,445	+2,087,019
Forecast AAGR	3.0%	5.0%	5.9%
Forecast AAGR	4.1%	4.2%	5.0%

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2021

Table 19 provides visitor forecasts for the Shire broken down for Phillip Island and the Bass Coast mainland. The analysis utilises the following assumptions:

- Domestic visitation will return to pre-COVID levels in 2022.
- International visitation will return to pre-COVID levels by 2025.

Forecasts predict that Phillip Island will accommodate an additional 830,000 visitors – equivalent to 62% of total visitation growth above pre-COVID levels by 2032. Visitation will grow by almost half a million visitors on the Bass Coast mainland.



Land use planning must respond to projected demand. In the case for tourism uses, the Bass Coast Shire will need to support 1.3 million additional visitors between 2022 and 2032. These visitors will drive demand for accommodation, attractions and experiences. It is critical that rural areas of Bass Coast support well designed and environmentally sensitive development to meet projected visitor need.

T19 Bass Coast Shire Visitor Forecast Scenarios by Region - 2022 to 2032

	Bass Coast Mainland	Phillip Island	Bass Coast Shire
Visitation 2019	1,021,592	2,090,166	3,106,728
Visitation 2020	633,638 (-38%)	787,129 (-62%)	1,416,071 (-54%)
Forecast 2022	1,021,592	1,695,291	2,716,883
2023	1,059,264	1,867,543	2,926,807
2024	1,099,108	2,041,281	3,140,388
2025	1,141,269	2,216,569	3,357,838
2027	1,233,196	2,342,853	3,576,048
2032	1,516,269	2,920,059	4,436,328
Forecast Change 2022 to 2032	+494,678	+1,224,767	+1,719,445
Forecast Change pre-COVID to 2032	+494,677	+829,893	+1,329,600
Forecast AAGR	4.1%	4.2%	5.0%

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2021

Tourism Investment in Rural Areas

This section provides an overview of existing tourism product and key tourism projects currently in development in the rural areas of Bass Coast.



Bass Coast Shire has key strengths in nature based, wildlife, marine and events tourism. These products leverage off the natural attributes of the region.

Phillip Island has the most well-developed tourism product offer within the Shire, with demand for nature-based tourism seeing continual investment in the Phillip Island Nature Parks and in particular the Penguin Parade. It is important to note that nature-based tourism is only effective because of a holistic approach toward wider ecological and environmental protection and enhancement. This applies well beyond the site in which the tourist activity takes place and wider environmental consideration is an important factor for all future tourism proposals especially those with an environmental nexus, or in general proximity to existing areas of environmental conservation value. The removal of dwellings near the Penguin Parade is an example of this environmentally aware approach being highly effective as well as generating major economic benefits.

Assessment of past planning applications highlights that most applications were for tourism proposals on Phillip Island, reflective of both market demand and also opportunities for development. Food and wine, arts and culture, and spa and wellness are emerging areas of strength and opportunity, leveraging the regions strengths in agriculture and natural amenity. Investment should be directed to these areas that align to the Shire's strengths and unique assets, as well as align to the market expectation for higher quality, contemporary food, drink, accommodation and cultural experiences.

There is a potential new investment for a significant hot springs development at Phillip Island, which if considered appropriate culturally, environmentally and in terms of infrastructure and service requirements, could provide an opportunity for the area to develop as a premium wellness and nature-based destination. This may attract a higher yield market and increase the percentage of overnight and longer stay visitors, as well as encourage more off peak visitation.

An assessment of previous tourism development planning applications since the introduction of the RAZ highlight that the majority of tourism proposals were located in the FZ, outside of the previously identified Rural Tourism Activity Precincts (59 permits or 87%), this is caveated by the fact that approximately 95% of appropriate rural land in the Shire is zoned FZ. There have been 6 tourism related land use permits, which equates to 13%, occurred in the RAZ, and is approximately 5% of appropriate rural land. This statistic implies that that RAZ is somewhat effective, however on the basis of raw numbers (6 permits), there is market and community expectation that the RAZ would have been more effective in delivering tourism land uses, than it has been since its introduction.

Current Tourism Uses in Rural Areas

Table 20 provides an overview of tourism product strengths of Bass Coast Shire sub regions. This considers the comparative strengths of each sub region compared to each other and other destinations in similar proximity to Melbourne that are considered as competitor destinations.

The Bass Coast Shire has strengths in nature based, wildlife, marine and events tourism. These leverage off the natural attributes of the region, with Phillip Island having the most well-developed tourism product.

Areas that are emerging for Bass Coast Shire are food and wine, arts and culture, spa and wellness. In order for Bass Coast Shire to extract higher levels of visitor yield, increase length of stay and encourage off peak visitation, investment should be directed to these areas of emerging strength and opportunity.

T20 Product Strengths by Tourism Subregion

	Phillip Island and San Remo	Bass Hinterland	Waterline and Bass River Precinct	Bunurong Coast
Wildlife and Marine Tourism	Primary		Emerging	Secondary
Nature-based Tourism	Primary			Secondary
Food and Wine	Secondary	Emerging	Secondary	Secondary
Spa and Wellness	Emerging			Emerging
Arts and Culture	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
Heritage	Secondary			Emerging
Events	Primary	Emerging	Emerging	Emerging
Fishing and Boating	Primary		Secondary	Primary

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2021

Nature Based

Nature based tourism is a key product strength and the primary driver of visitation. The Shire has a diverse range of natural assets utilised for tourism purposes across the region:

- Wildlife and marine tourism: Phillip Island penguin parade, Maru koala and animal park, whale watching, koala conservation centre, seal watching cruises, Warrook farm and fauna Park and the Nobbies centre.
- Beaches and coastline: surfing, snorkelling and fishing are popular visitor activities at Bass Coast's many beaches including Smiths Beach, Sunderland Bay Beach, Forrest Caves Beach, Berrys Beach, Cape Paterson, Kilcunda and Inverloch.
- Walking and Cycling Trails: Bass Coast rail trail, Great Southern rail trail, Kitty Miller Bay walk, bush to bay trail, George Bass coastal walk and Cape Woolamai walk.
- Rivers & Coastal Drives: Bunurong coastal drive and Powlett Inlet.

Key tourism projects currently in development include:

- Bass Coast dinosaur trail masterplan: a new trail connecting the towns of San Remo, Kilcunda, Wonthaggi, Eagles Nest, The Caves and Inverloch. The trail will draw on the significance of the region's prehistoric heritage, educate users about the diversity of polar dinosaur fossils and the prehistoric fauna found in the region.
- Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park Access and Infrastructure Plan: The Victorian Government is creating the new Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park, which will combine existing parks and reserves along 40 kilometres of coastline between San Remo and Inverloch, on Bunurong Country. This will include extending and upgrading the George Bass coastal walk to link San Remo and Inverloch along the coast, providing a hero walk for the Shire.

These projects will create additional attractions and activities for visitors, providing opportunities to extend visitor length of stay and satisfaction. Continued investment in tracks, trails and nature-based experiences will allow local tourism businesses to leverage from interest.



Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park



Bass Coast Rail Trail



Phillip Island Seal Watching Cruise

Food and Agritourism

Food and agritourism is an emerging strength of Bass Coast Shire and the Gippsland region, having long been Victoria's 'food bowl'.

The region offers a diverse range of high quality producer, including cheeses, free range poultry and meats, truffles, organic fruits and vegetables and other speciality produce. Many of these goods are sold at a range of Farmers Markets across the Shire, with a limited farmgate and provedore experiences available.

In recent years, several rural townships along the Bass Highway have begun to emerge as gourmet food hubs, including the townships of Grantville, Bass, Glen Forbes and The Gurdies. This includes a range of small-scale speciality farms and wineries, such as Maccas Farm Café and Produce Store, Bassine Speciality Cheeses, Bass River Winery, Truffle Paddock (open during the Truffle Melbourne Festival), and The Gurdies Winery.

Aside from this corridor, there are limited food and wine experiences elsewhere in the region. Other key food businesses and wineries dispersed across Phillip Island and the Bass Hinterlands include The Cape Kitchen, Phillip Island Winery, Purple Hen Winery, Harman Wines, Wild Food Farm, and Phillip Island Chocolate Factory.

Bass Coast Shire in is the Pinot Coast Wine region. There is opportunity for Bass Coast to facilitate gourmet food and wine experience in the region that will attract high value traveller and encourage visitor dispersal.

Majority of the producers and food and beverage operators are small family run businesses, lacking the time, staff or financial resources for significant investment that will facilitate increased visitation and consumer awareness of their product. In addition, planning permit costs and time commitment has also inhibited the development of supporting product and experiences (e.g. restaurant or accommodation).



Bassine Speciality Cheeses, Glen Forbes



Phillip Island Winery



Macca's Farm, Cafe and Produce Store

Leisure & Recreation

There are a small number of leisure and recreation activities available in the Shire, which are mostly concentrated on Phillip Island, with little to no product available in the other rural areas.

Key attractions include:

- A Maze n Things
- Phillip Island Chocolate Factory
- Mini Golf
- Phillip Island Nature Park Penguin Parade
- PI Grand Prix Go-Karting
- Seal Watching Cruise
- Clip 'n Climb Phillip Island
- National Vietnam Veterans Museum
- Maru Koala and Animal Park

The majority of these products and experiences are targeted at the family market and have limited appeal to other markets, such as adult couples, friend groups and lone travellers. In addition, some of these experiences are slightly outdated.

There is a need to encourage a more diverse and contemporary product offer in the rural areas of the Shire, to encourage increased visitor length of stay and improve visitor yield.

There is infrastructure in place for boating and fishing recreational activities, however as a tourist attractor it is often overlooked and does not always receive appropriate funding in terms maintenance and infrastructure expansion. There exists an opportunity in a Shire which already has a existing wealth of land based tourist activities, for marine activities to expand and allow to grow and become a key income generator.

The Phillip Island Hot Springs is a major leisure and recreation project currently under construction in Newhaven. Stage 1 of the project will include a \$10 million new facility, including an additional restaurant, reception and apothecary room, and will boast 15 outdoor bathing pools. This will become a spa and wellness destination that will attract a new, high-yielding market to Phillip Island.



Maru Koala and Animal Park



A Maze n Things Phillip Island



Phillip Island Hot Springs Concept Imagery

Accommodation

The figures presented in the following section are summarised from the Bass Coast Shire Accommodation Study undertaken by Urban Enterprise in May 2022.

Please note: The findings of the report includes accommodation supply and demand forecasts for both urban and rural areas in Bass Coast Shire.

Existing Accommodation Stock

At the time of reporting, there are 99 commercial accommodation providers identified in the Bass Coast Shire, providing 1,381 rooms and 3,927 bed spaces.

The majority of accommodation stock in Bass Coast Shire is clustered on Phillip Island/San Remo or Wonthaggi/Inverloch.

The majority of accommodation stock available is in caravan parks, motels and motor inns, and self-contained homes, apartments or units (including Airbnb). There are limited boutique accommodation establishments, as well as few large-scale commercial accommodation establishments.

Despite growing visitation and demand, there have been no recent major accommodation investments in the Shire. The most recent accommodation investments include Silverwater Resort in San Remo (opened 2007), RACV Inverloch Resort (opened 2011) and Ramada Resort (opened 2013).

A number of small scale, boutique accommodation establishments targeted to the Lifestyle Leader market have been recently developed in the rural areas of Bass Coast, such as 5 Acres Luxury Cabins in Ventnor and the Inverloch Glamping Co.

RACV Resort Inverloch



5 Acres Luxury Coastal Cabins, Ventnor



Forecast Demand

Forecast visitation modelling estimates that Bass Coast Shire will attract 1.5 million overnight visitors annually by 2032. This is an increase in around 500,000 visitors from 2019.

Bass Coast Shire will require an additional 1,185 commercial accommodation rooms by 2032 - equivalent to around 119 new rooms per annum. Based on the current supply, there is greatest need to deliver experiential accommodation in Bass Coast Shire which will target families, couples and international markets.

Table 21 below shows the projected accommodation needs by establishment type. The most sought after accommodation types include experiential accommodation (400 rooms), serviced apartments (210 rooms), and luxury hotels (190 rooms).

Due to the land size or natural amenity required to accommodate these establishments, the majority of new establishments will need to be delivered in rural areas.

However, less than 50 commercial accommodation rooms have been approved and delivered across Bass Coast's rural areas since 2014.

There is strong opportunity for the rural areas to fill these market gaps, provided a variety of small to large accommodation types integrated with amenities, leisure and conference facilities that will help attract new markets to the mainland/rural areas.

T21 Projected Accommodation Needs by Type

Establishment Type	Description	Establishments	Rooms
Standard Hotel / Motel	Contemporary and high quality with breakfast included.	2	60
Experiential Accommodation	Inclusive of glamping, farm stays, glamping, spa and wellness resorts, eco-cabin and tiny home accommodation experiences, set in a nature-based location with facilities and amenities.	15 to 30	400
Guest house or Bed and Breakfast	Contemporary bed and breakfast or guesthouse accommodation with breakfast included.	2	40
Commercial Campground/Holiday Park	Contemporary tourist park with high-quality cabins located in a natural setting with potential for shared facilities.	2	130
Backpacker or Hostel	Backpacker or hostel targeted to youth, free and independent travellers with dorm style rooms and shared facilities.	1	30
Luxury Hotel	Contemporary, large-scale hotel with high quality amenities and facilities.	1	190
Resort	High quality resort accommodation in a nature-based setting with potential for ocean views.	2	125
Serviced Apartment	Large-scale serviced apartment hotel for families, larger groups and business travellers.	2	210
Total		27 to 37	1,185

Source: Bass Coast Shire Accommodation Needs Assessment, Urban Enterprise, May 2022

Festivals and Events

Bass Coast Shire hosts a range of major racing, surfing, music and marine events that attract more than 3.5 million visitors each year. Key events include:

- Australian Grand Prix Motorsport Championships, Ventnor;
- Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix, Ventnor;
- Phillip Island Pro QS1000, Cape Woolamai;
- San Remo Fishing Festival, San Remo;
- Island Whale Festival, Cowes;
- Island Festival of Stories, Cowes;
- Ocean Sound Music Festival, Churchill Island;
- NYE On The Hill, Kernot.

These events play a crucial role in growing awareness of the region and boosting visitation in the off-peak season. The motorsport events are a vital tourism attractor for the island and in some ways, the potential for spin-off tourism activity is not entirely realised. This is particularly because there is a lack of high quality and boutique accommodation, meaning that there is a lot of day trip and helicopter trip commuting on key race days, which has a flow-on effect of funnelling tourism activity away from Phillip Island and toward Melbourne.

There is opportunity for rural areas to grow their boutique events calendar, focusing on food and culture. The key rural event is NYE on the Hill, a three-day, two-night boutique music and camping festival that takes place in the picturesque rolling Hills of South Gippsland near Loch Village.



Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit

Arts, Culture and Heritage

The Shire has a limited arts, culture and heritage offering. Whilst there are significant aboriginal heritage sites, there is very little wider recognition, promotion or activation of these assets. Tourism activity in the region has also rarely engaged with indigenous cultural values to ensure that all of these values are respected and appropriately recognised.

Churchill Island is the Shire's key post European contact heritage site, being the site of the very first agricultural activities in the state, dating back to the mid 1800s.

The Vietnam Veterans Museum is a proposed investment slated for Newhaven, which will provide a new museum and major new attraction focused on military heritage.

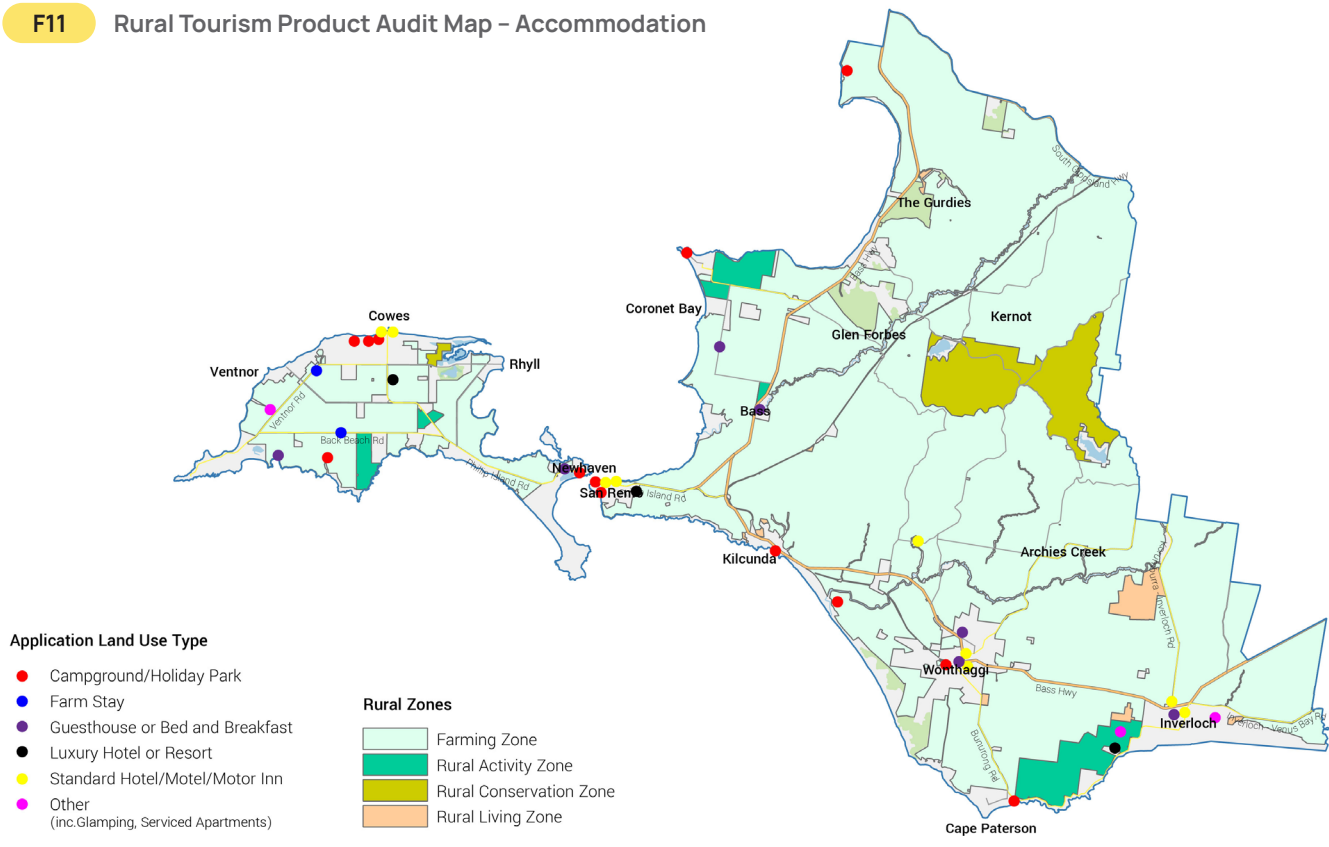


NYE On the Hill | Kernot

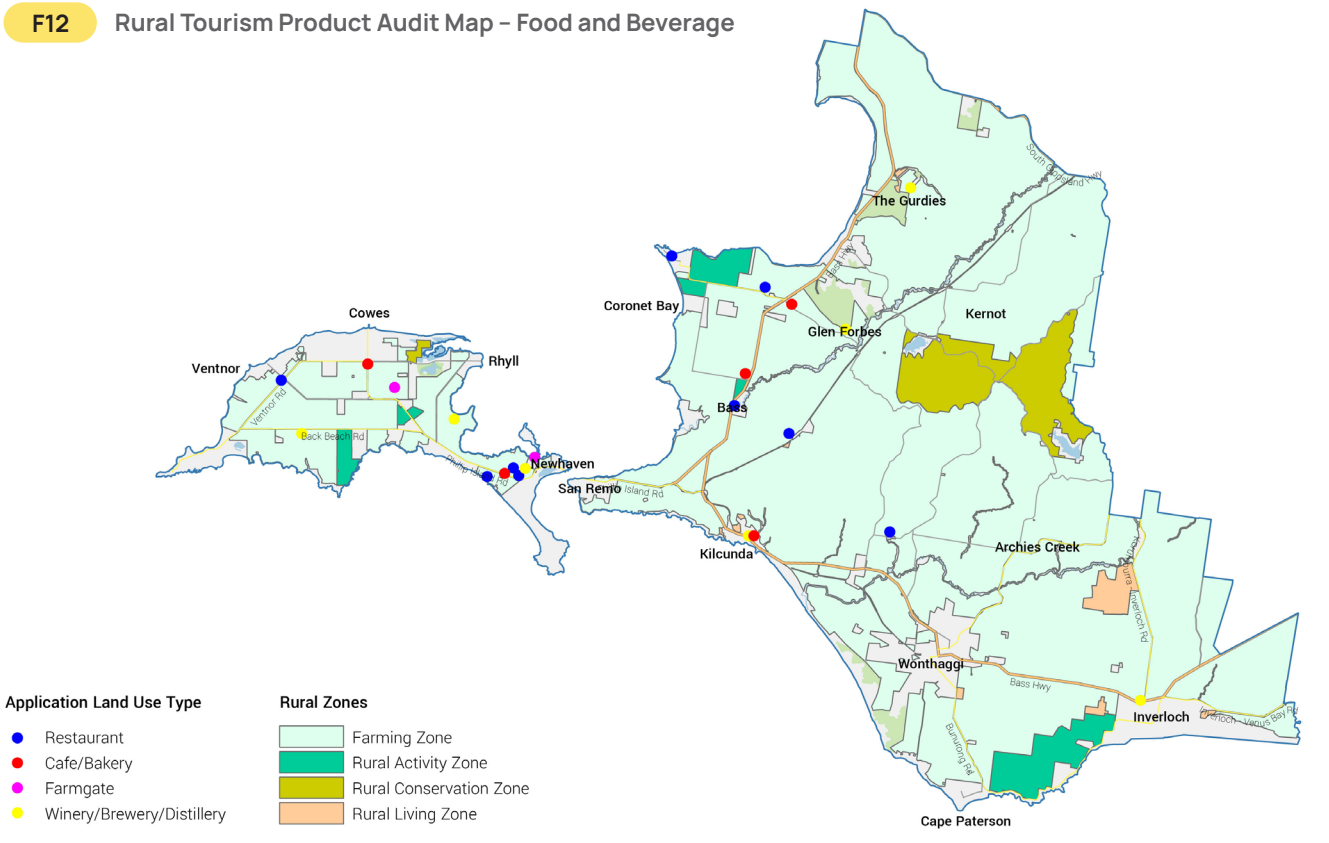


National Vietnam Veterans Museum

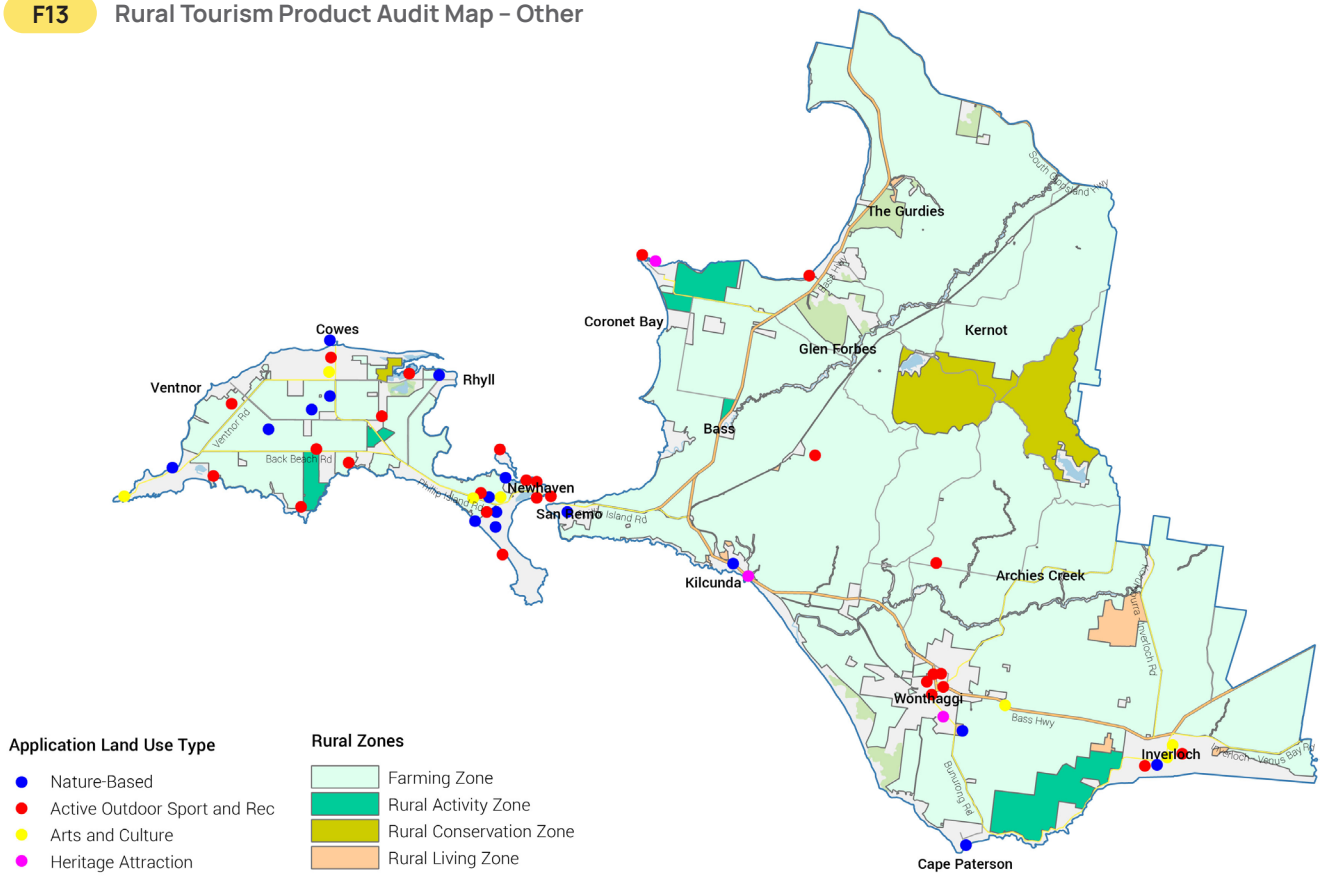
F11 Rural Tourism Product Audit Map – Accommodation



F12 Rural Tourism Product Audit Map – Food and Beverage



F13 Rural Tourism Product Audit Map – Other



Planning Permit Activity

The following provides an analysis of tourism related planning permit activity from July 2014 and 2021.

This is to assess the effectiveness of the rural tourism precincts in attracting tourism development since their implementation through the Bass Coast Rural Land Use Strategy (adopted 2014), as well as understand demand for rural tourism.

Tourism Permit Activity

Since 2014 to 2021, there were a total of 68 tourism applications lodged, with an average of 9 tourism permit applications per year. Of these applications, only 44 were granted a permit.

The majority of tourism proposals were located in the Farming Zone outside of the Rural Tourism Activity Precincts (59 permits or 87%). Only 6 tourism related land use permits were in the Rural Activity Zone.

Of the 6 applications located in the Rural Activity Zone, only 3 permits were issued and implemented, including:

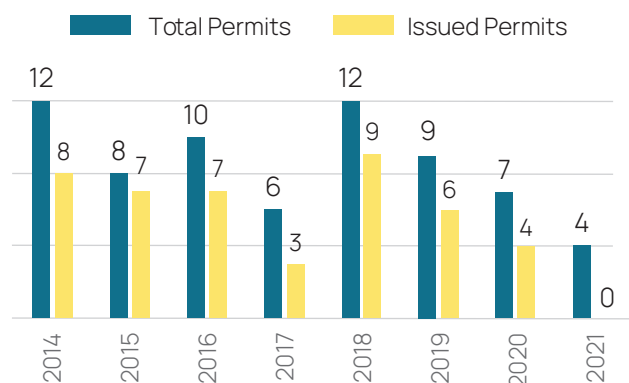
- 5 Luxury Glamping Units (Inverloch Glamping Co.)
- An outdoor rope and climbing course (A-Maze n Things)
- Additional rooms at the Phillip Island Adventure Resort

Tourism Land Use Type

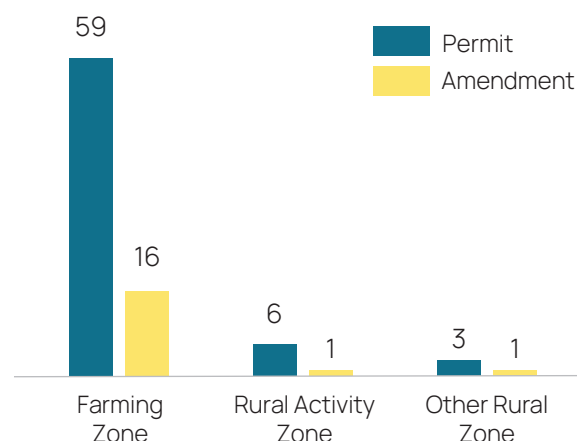
The most common tourism land uses were Accommodation (35% of all permits), Food and beverage (24%) and Place of Assembly for Functions and Events (15%).

The majority of accommodation proposals were for small scale accommodation types such as eco-lodges and cabins. A significant proportion of the food and beverage applications were for obtaining a liquor license.

F14 Tourism Permits by Year - July '14 to October '21



F15 Tourism Permit Activity by Zone



T22 Tourism Permit Activity by Land Use Type

Land Use Type	No. Permits
Accommodation	24 (35%)
Food and Beverage	15 (24%)
Place of Assembly (for Functions & Events)	10 (15%)
Festival / Event Permit (Temporary)	8 (12%)
Outdoor Recreation	7 (10%)
Winery or Brewery	3 (3%)
Health and Well-ness	1
Arts and Culture	1

Source: Bass Coast Shire Council Planning Permit Database, July 2014 to October 2021. Compiled by Urban Enterprise, 2021.

Case Study: Rural Activity Zone - Hotel Development Coronet Bay

In 2017, an application was received for a development site located at 92 Norsemens Road in Coronet Bay. The proposal was for a \$38 million mixed use facility including a 192-bed resort hotel, a 300-seat restaurant, function room capable of hosting 500 people, and parking for 330 private vehicles and 10 tourist buses.

The resort intended to promote local tourism through converting the significant international daytrip market into overnight stays and, if successful, would have brought an estimated 300 employment opportunities to the region.

The proposal received strong backlash from the community. A community groups called Our Line in the Sand (OLITS) was formed in response to the development proposal. In total, Council received 363 objections.

Key concerns voiced by the community included:

- Potential negative impacts on the local amenity- The development site was located on a property directly north of the Coronet Bay township – a settlement with a population of less than 1000. Residents were concerned that the large scale of the resort would overwhelm existing infrastructure.
- Adverse environmental impacts the development would have on Western Port Bay's environmentally sensitive areas i.e. bayside views, banksia forest, and lake.
- The appropriateness of the development within the Rural Activity Zone – The proposal was not in accordance with local planning provisions which calls for 'small scale rural-based tourist development' in the Coronet Bay area.
- Negative perceptions of external/foreign investment that brought no direct economic, cultural or social benefit to the community.

The community had previously successfully overturned a proposal to incorporate the culturally significant Homestead on Cutty Sark Road into the Heritage Bay Housing Development. It now operates as the Fig and The Bay Restaurant.

The application was withdrawn in late 2020. Since then, the site has reverted back to agricultural uses.



Artists Impression of the Proposed Resort Hotel in Coronet Bay | Bruce Henderson Architects

Location

Figure 16 shows all tourism planning permits located within rural zones across Bass Coast Shire from 2014 to 2021.

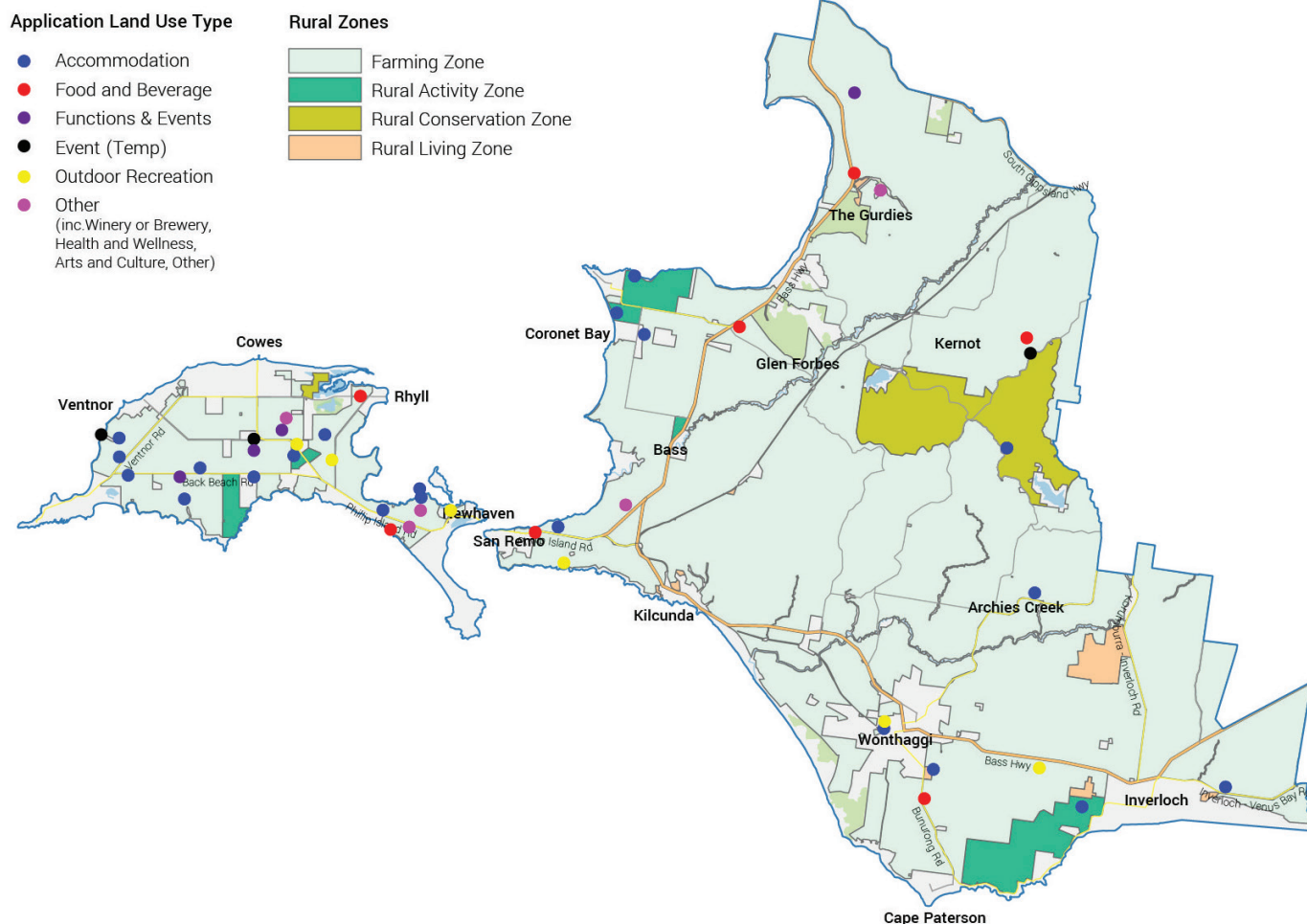
The mapping shows that most tourism applications were for proposals on Phillip Island, reflective of market demand.

On the mainland, tourism permits were generally dispersed throughout the Shire, showing that the land use policy has not been effective in keeping tourism development concentrated in the areas deemed suitable for rural tourism development as intended.



The dispersal of tourism planning applications in rural Bass Coast Shire highlights much higher levels of investor interest in Phillip Island than Mainland Bass Coast. Interestingly, there were very few applications in the designated Rural Tourism Precincts. It is critical for the Planning Scheme to adequately provide direction and policy support for tourism use in the rural areas of Phillip Island.

F16 All Tourism Applications in Rural Zones - July '14 to October '21



Rural Tourism Investment Needs and Product Gaps

This section identifies tourism gaps and opportunities for Bass Coast Shire tourism sub regions.

The investment opportunities draw on past strategy, align to the existing strengths of each area and consider the appropriateness of development types to the sub-regional location, landscape and rural amenity.

Subregion Product Needs & Opportunities

Phillip Island and San Remo

The rural areas of Phillip Island and San Remo, should consider supporting the following tourism uses that complement the existing visitation to the region and will meet unmet and future demand.

- Hot springs resort (underway)
- 5 Star accommodation with coastal views
- Wellness retreats
- Destination restaurants in a rural and coastal setting
- Farm gate and rural tourism experiences
- Eco/nature based accommodation
- Environmental and eco experiences and tours
- Golf course
- Gardens
- Winery and cellar doors
- Distillery and cellar door
- Visitor attractions
- Walking and cycling experiences
- Artist studios
- Art galleries

Precedent: Marnong Estate | Bankvale Run



Precedent: Jack Rabbit Vineyard



Bass Hinterland

The Bass Hinterland, should consider supporting the following tourism uses that complement the existing visitation to the region and will meet unmet and future demand.

- Art galleries
- Artist studios
- Farm gate
- Farmstay accommodation
- Farm experiences e.g. tours, education
- Touring
- Food experiences
- Destination distillery or brewery
- Small scale accommodation

Precedent: Never Never Distilling Co



Waterline and Bass River Precinct

The Waterline and Bass River Precinct should consider the following uses:

- Farm gate
- Agri tourism experiences
- Artisan produce
- Small scale accommodation
- Provedore experience
- Farmstay
- Winery, cellar door and restaurant experience
- Outdoor and adventure activities

Precedent: Milawa Cheese Complex



Bunurong Coast

Bunurong Coast should consider the following uses:

- Nature based eco accommodation
- Tourist parks in appropriate locations
- Outdoor events facilities
- Farmstay accommodation
- Experiential accommodation e.g. tiny home or glamping
- Farmgate produce
- Environmental and eco experiences and tours
- Walking and cycling experiences

Precedent: Kimo Estate



Part C: Agriculture, Landscape and Environment Assessment

Agricultural Land Assessment

The following section includes and analysis of the supply of rural land by zone and an introductory level agricultural land assessment, including the quality and distribution of agricultural land use.



Most of the rural land in the Shire is within the FZ. There is a low supply and availability of land for tourism development in the RAZ

The Shire features some of the highest value agricultural land in Victoria, featuring excellent soil quality and high rainfall. However, issues such as steep terrain and coastal-related dryland salinity cause some areas (particularly Phillip Island) to be unsuitable for broadacre soil-based farming.

Nearly 60% of agricultural land is currently used for livestock grazing, particularly beef cattle grazing (39%), which has become highly lucrative in recent years due to rising demand for grass-fed beef and changes in farming practices to the establishment of larger operation farm companies. Less than 1% of land is being used for vineyards and other commodities.

There is limited opportunity for ancillary tourism uses for livestock grazing land operated by large scale operators – making the agricultural nexus key requirement for rural tourism development very difficult to actualise. If the current macroeconomic conditions persist and this land use trend continues, Council may need to consider changes to zoning and local policy to effectively facilitate rural tourism investment.

Current State government land use policies and requirements heavily focuses on the retention of what is traditionally considered agricultural land, maintaining low lot density and minimising all other development including tourism activities. Facilitating change to support tourism will require advocacy with and support from the State government planning department.

Considering the accepted science regarding climate volatility and the potential establishment of settlement boundaries via the State governments Planning departments Distinctive Areas and Landscapes statement of planning policy, there is an opportunity for land use policy to support farmers sustaining and reducing the risk of their economic production, through diversification including tourism activity.

Supply of Rural Zoned Land

The majority of rural land is within the Farming Zone (75,829 hectares), followed by Rural Conservation Zone (3,417 ha), Rural Activity Zone (2,416 ha), and the Rural Living Zone (910 ha).

T23 Rural Activity Zone Lot Size Analysis

Zone	Hectares	Lots
Farming Zone	75,829.46	2,855
Rural Conservation Zone	3417.43	109
Rural Activity Zone	2,416.09	117
Rural Living Zone	910.05	297

Source: Urban Enterprise, November 2021



The low supply of lots available leaves few opportunities for new tourism investment in the designated tourism precinct. This issue is further demonstrated by the findings of the planning application analysis, which showed most planning applications were located in the Farming Zone.

Rural Activity Zone Precincts

There are only 117 lots totalling to 2,416.09 hectares of land in the Rural Activity Zone Precincts. This is particularly an issue on Phillip Island which only has 11 RAZ lots that have mostly been developed.

T24 Rural Activity Zone Lot Size Analysis

Location	Hectares	Lots
Corinella - Coronet Bay	604.30	62
Inverloch - Cape Paterson	1434.06	30
Bass	40.25	13
Sunset Strip (PI Adventure Resort)	83.71	8
Ventnor (Grand Prix Circuit)	252.97	3
Fantasia Site, The Gurdies	0.81	1
Total	2,416.09	117

Source: Urban Enterprise, November 2021

Agriculture Land Assessment

Land Use Type

The top agriculture land use types across Bass Coast Shire are summarised in Figure 17 which has been sourced from latest data available from Agriculture Victoria (2017). A spatial analysis of agricultural land uses is shown in Figure 18 below.

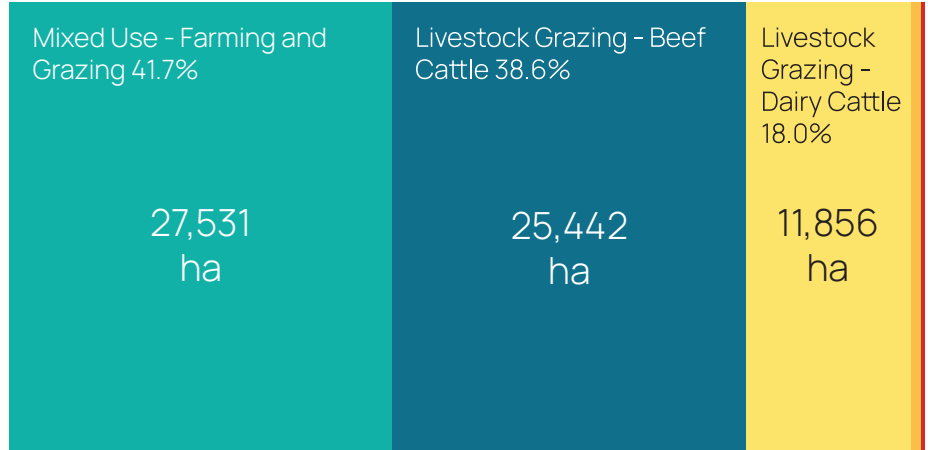
Approximately 76% of land in Bass Coast Shire is used for agricultural purposes, with a total agricultural holding area of 65,985 hectares.

The majority of land is used for Cattle Livestock Grazing (57%) - including Beef Cattle Grazing (39%), Dairy Cattle Grazing (18%). 42% is land used for mixed use farming purposes, e.g. cropping and grazing/livestock production. Vineyards and other commodities (such as peas, truffles, and eggs) make up less than 1% of agricultural in the Shire.



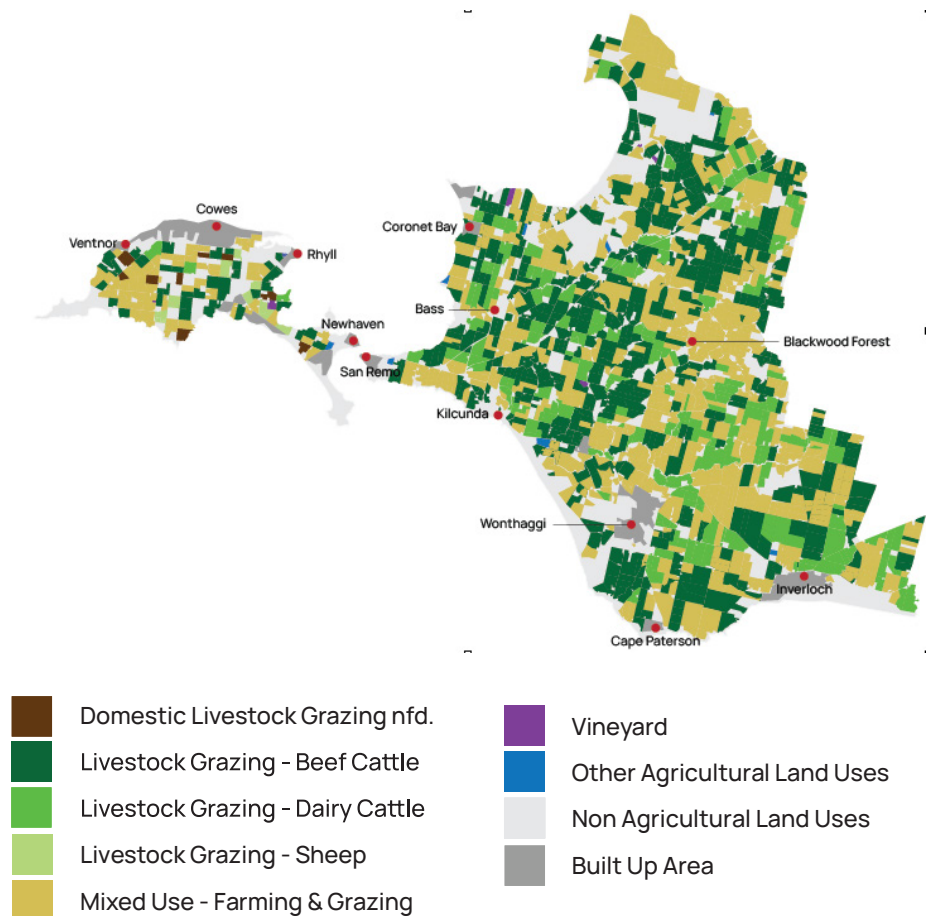
The land use data demonstrates this major shift away from dairy farming and towards beef cattle farming, which has become highly lucrative in recent years due to rising demand for grass-fed beef and the declining profitability of dairy commodities

F17 Agriculture Land Use Type



Other Livestock Grazing 1.3%, Other 0.4%

F18 Spatial Analysis of Agricultural Land Use in Bass Coast Shire



Source: Agriculture Victoria, 2017

Lot Size

Tables 25 and 26 provide a lot size analysis of land within the Farming Zone and Rural Activity Zone.

On Phillip Island, the average lot size in the Farming Zone is 9.6 hectares, showing a higher degree of fragmentation. Lots greater than 40 hectares comprise 64% of all land in the Farming Zone.

The average lots size for the Farming Zone is 29.6 hectares on the Bass Coast mainland. Lots above 40 hectares comprise 81% of all FZ land. Of these, lots above 80 hectares comprise 50% of all land and lots that 500 hectares or more represent 8% of total FZ land.

A minimum subdivision area of 80ha is currently enforced in the Farming Zone on the Bass Coast mainland in order to ensure the sustainability of dairy farms and other intensive farming uses which typically require in the order of 40 to 80 hectares.

Dairy farming has greatly declined in favour of beef cattle grazing, larger lot density should be preserved to ensure the carrying capacity of farms and maintain the reputation for high quality 'grass-fed' cattle that Gippsland is known for.

Although it is typically more desirable to maintain large lot sizes for farming, agriculture is diverse in its land needs and is constantly adapting to changing climates. Farm uses such as market gardens and hydroponics can be sustainable and financially viable on land between 4 to 10 hectares.

However, there are several risks that smaller lots must manage than their larger counterparts, including:

- Less distance between adjacent lots thus increasing the chance of conflicts with neighbours uses;
- Pollution and biosecurity risks that threaten the water quality and biodiversity – particularly if the adjacent land use is residential or tourism related;
- Native vegetation management.

T25 Farming Zone Lot Size Analysis

	Phillip Island	Bass Coast Mainland	Bass Coast Shire
Average Lot Size (Hectares)	9.6	29.6	25.4
Small Farms			
Less than 2 Hectares	416	758	1,174
2 to 9 Hectares	92	479	571
10 to 39 Hectares	63	406	469
40 to 79 Hectares	45	376	421
80 to 499 Hectares	12	202	214
Medium Farms			
500 to 999 Hectares	-	4	4
1000 to 2,499 Hectares	-	2	2
2500 to 24,999 Hectares	-	-	-
Total	628	2,227	2,855

T26 Rural Activity Zone Lot Size Analysis

	Phillip Island	Bass Coast Mainland	Bass Coast Shire
Average Lot Size (Hectares)	30.8	19.6	20.7
No. Lots			
Less than 2 Hectares	1	34	35
2 to 9 Hectares	5	39	44
10 to 39 Hectares	2	22	24
40 to 79 Hectares	2	8	10
80 to 499 Hectares	1	2	3
500+ Hectares	0	1	1
Total	11	106	117

Terrain

Figure 19 illustrates the terrain of Bass Coast Shire.

An overview of the distinctive landscape character of the subregions is summarised below:

The Bass Valley is characterised by a wide, open floodplain edged by undulating to steeply sloping hills. Some areas are subject to flooding and is a key consideration for development in this area.

The Western Port Bay has gently sloping shorelines and marine landscapes of significance including the Ramsar listed wetlands.

The Bass Hinterlands / Strzelecki Foothills extend from the north-east corner of the Shire to Anderson Peninsula /San Remo. The area comprise primarily farmland set on steeply sloping hills. Land stability issues related to the steep terrain makes the land less suitable for broadacre farming.

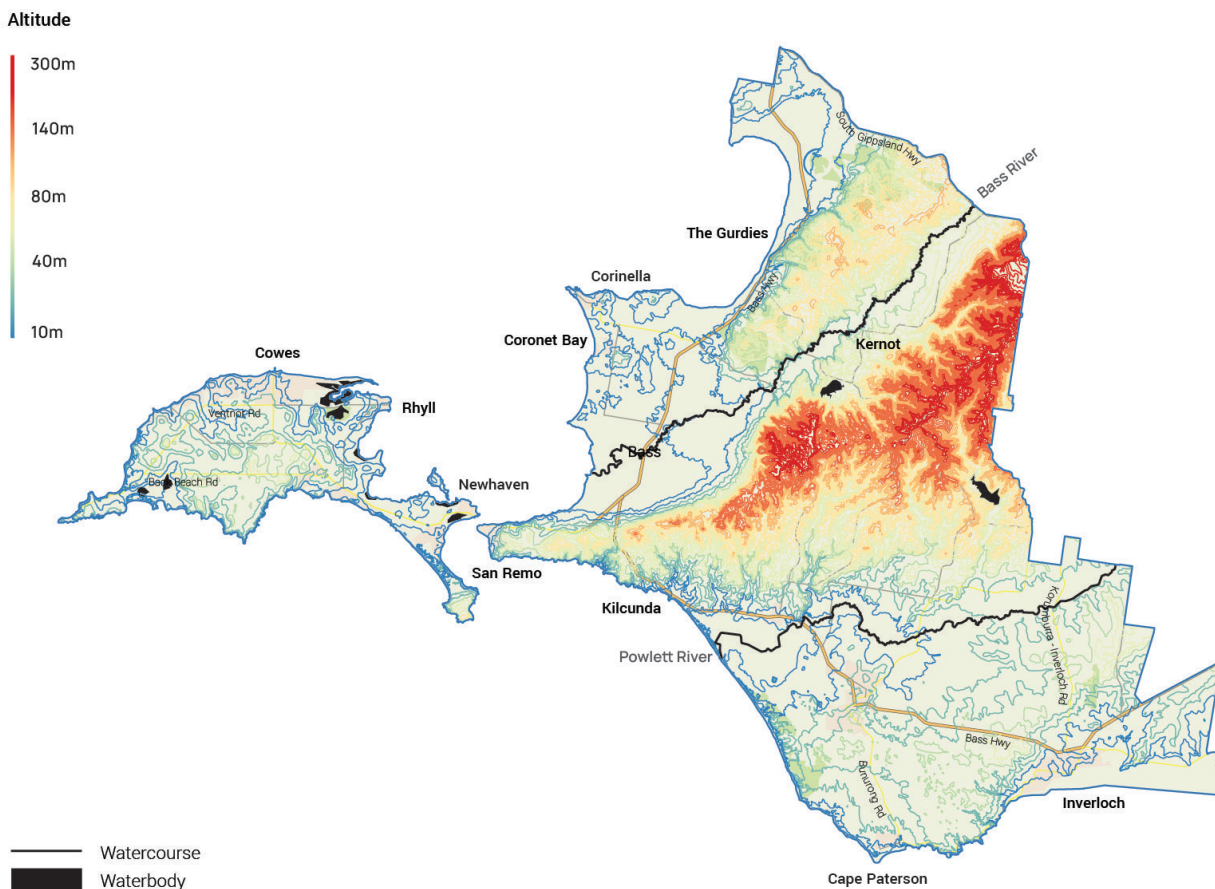
The Bunurong Coast is characterised by a rugged landscape of high cliffs, bays and spectacular rock stacks such as the Eagles Nest

The natural landscape of Phillip Island is gently undulating farmland. Around the edges are cliffs and bluffs, high dunes and sandy beaches with salt marsh and mangrove-fringed mudflats.



The rural areas of Bass Coast Shire are diverse in character and terrain. There is lack of strategic direction for rural areas outside of the key visitor nodes. Planning policy should be tailored to enhance the strengths of each area and ensure appropriate levels of tourism development.

F19 Terrain



Land Suitability

The following information is sourced from the Land Suitability Assessment in Melbourne's Green Wedge and Peri-Urban Areas undertaken at Deakin University in 2018. The study was commissioned by DELWP (now known as DEECA) to inform the Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land Strategy that is currently in development. The report presents an analysis of the potential for soil-based agriculture as it relates to climate change. The study area is defined as a 100km radius circle from the Melbourne CBD, which covers most of Bass Coast Shire, excluding the Wonthaggi-Inverloch region.

The assessment provides a strategic analysis of 'Land Suitability' through modelling the versatility of land for twelve key commodities under forecast climate changes in 2030, 2050 and 2070.



Assessment findings show that most of the land in Phillip Island, San Remo and Western Port areas will not be suitable for most traditional broadacre soil-based agricultural commodities in the long term. The Bass Coast inland area has much higher levels of suitability.

Table 27, summaries the land suitability assessment findings for Bass Coast Shire.

T27 Agricultural Land Suitability Assessment

CLASS	COMMODITY	SUITABILITY INDEX RATING		
		Phillip Island	San Remo / Western Port	Rural Inland Area
Crops	Canola	High Variability	High Variability	High Variability
	Winter Red Wheat	Medium	Not Suitable	Low/Very Low
Fruit	Cool Grapes	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Medium
	Warm Grapes	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Medium-High
	Pomme	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Medium
	Stone	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	High
	Lucerne	Low/Very Low	Not Suitable	Low/Not Suitable
Pastures	Ryegrass	Low/Very Low	Not Suitable	High
	Brassica	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	High
Vegetables	Lettuce	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Medium
	Tomato	Low/Very Low	Medium	Medium/High
Total Versatility	All Commodities	Not Suitable	Not Suitable	Low/Medium

Source: Land Suitability Assessment in Melbourne's Green Wedge and Peri-Urban Areas, Deakin University, 2018

Environmental Assessment

The following section provides an overview of the various planning mechanisms to protect the natural environments.



Bass Coast Shire contains several State-declared environmentally significant areas, that are habitats to native wildlife and play an important role in conserving ecosystems. These areas protected by various organisations including the State government Environment department, Phillip Island Nature Parks and the Shire.

The Scheme applies numerous planning overlays designed to prevent adverse impacts of development on the natural environment.

Land within the RAZ tourism precincts overlap with several environmental and land management overlays which must be considered and responded to by any tourism development. Most of these overlays enforce controls related to built form and design, while other such as the Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) limit the types of tourism activities to be developed on the land. Some of these costs can be prohibitive, which leads to a need to assess the appropriate of the RAZ in some areas and to investigate other areas with less overlay controls that may be suitable in the RAZ.

On Phillip Island, tourism development has been a key driver for positive conservation outcomes and improvement in access to natural environments and the increase of supporting infrastructure. The success of the organisation demonstrates how diversification through rural tourism uses can support retention and sustainability of existing land uses.

The Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) is currently in development which aims to protected state declared landscapes through changes to policy and limiting settlement growth. The outcomes of the SPP may restrict the land capacity, population base and infrastructure development required for significant tourism investment near existing rural settlements.

Governance and Strategic Context

There are multiple governing bodies and planning mechanisms that are responsible for the environmental management strategic direction and policy in Bass Coast Shire.

Bass Coast Shire contains several state-designated environmentally significant areas, that are habitats to native wildlife and play an important role in major ecosystems. These areas are under policy protections enforced by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) is responsible for conservation of nature reserves and the operation of ecotourism activities on Phillip Island. The PINP continually undertake strategic work and management planning for their areas.

These organisations work with the shire to incorporate their outputs into the Planning Scheme's strategic framework and planning overlays.

Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscape Assessment and SPP (Underway)

The SPP is a 50-year vision and land use strategy to better protect the unique features of the Bass Coast declared area. It will also designate long-term settlement boundaries for townships to provide greater certainty for current and future generations.

The SPP defines the following Precincts (shown in Figure 20):

- Waterline and Bass River Catchment Precinct
- Phillip Island Precinct
- Bass Hinterland Precinct
- Regional Centre Precinct
- Bunurong Coast Precinct

The DALs may restrict the land capacity, population base and infrastructure development required for significant tourism investment near existing rural settlements. The outcomes of the project will be an important consideration for the review of the Rural Land Use Strategy.

F20 Proposed Bass Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Precincts



Phillip Island Nature Parks

Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) is a non-for-profit organisation responsible for the management and conservation of over 1,805 hectares of Crown Land on Phillip Island including beaches, bushland and wetland reserves and the operation of complementary ecotourism experiences. The Land is managed on behalf of DEECA, who hold ownership over publicly zoned land.

The organisation is completely self-funded through tourism activities with all funds raised reinvested into vital research, conservation and education programs across Phillip Island Nature Parks. Nature Parks have successfully delivered large scale tourism projects including the Penguin Parade Centre and Nobbies Visitor Centre.

The PINP continually undertake strategic work and management planning for their areas. The PINP are required to apply for planning permits for any development works.

The organisation's success demonstrates how tourism development in Bass Coast has driven positive conservation outcomes, improvement in access to natural environments and the increase of supporting infrastructure. A focus on eco-tourism has also enabled greater preservation of natural environments through financing land buyback schemes and the greater protection of critically endangered species.



The Phillip Island (Millowli) Wildlife Plan has recently been released to manage abundant wildlife on the Island. The five-year plan was developed in response to the growth in populations of some species that are affecting the Island's environment and community through over-browsing of native vegetation and crops, damage to amenity and buildings, and interaction with cars.

The Plan defines management outcomes, strategies and actions to achieve a sustainable population of native wildlife that allows community, particularly farming activities to continue on Phillip Island.

The Plan provide direction to support opportunities for alternate and diversified options and incomes for farms on Phillip Island.



Phillip Island Penguin Parade Viewing Platform



The Penguin Parade Centre at Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Planning Overlays

Heritage Overlay

The Heritage Overlay is applied to conserve and enhance places of natural or cultural significance (see Figure 21).

- Application: The Heritage Overlay applies to Heritage Places listed in the Schedule to the overlay. Land subject to the HO with the Rural Precincts include:
 - HO23: House, 130 Cape Paterson-Inverloch Road, Cape Paterson
 - HO28: 1826 Settlement Point, Corinella
- Land Use Policy and Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. Removal or demolition of heritage protected assets is generally prohibited. Renovations and extensions are more complex with a Heritage Overlay and applications may require the assistance of a Heritage Consultant and/or Architect.

Environmental and Landscape Overlays

Figure 21 maps rural areas subject to Environmental and Landscape Overlays in Bass Coast Shire.

Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)

The purpose of Environmental Significance Overlay is to ensure that development with declared areas of environmental significance is compatible with identified environmental values.

- Application: There are currently three schedules under the ESO that apply to rural land that are tailored to for specific environmental assets, including:
 - Schedule 1: Coastal Wetland Areas
 - Schedule 2: Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance
 - Schedule 3: Significant Flora and Fauna Habitats: Apply to areas within Bass Coast generally located on Crown land.
- Land Use Policy and Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. Assistance from engineers, architects or environmental consultants may be required to ensure built form outcomes are in accordance with environmental protection and design guidelines.

Significant Landscapes Overlay (SLO)

The Significant Landscape Overlay is used to conserve and enhance the character of significant landscapes.

- Application: There are currently five schedules under the SLO that apply to rural areas that are tailored to the identified significant landscapes including:
 - Schedule 1 Strzelecki Foothills and Bass Valley
 - Schedule 2 Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast
 - Schedule 3 Phillip Island Eastern Coast
 - Schedule 4 Kilcunda to Inverloch Coast
- Land Use Policy and Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. Buildings of scale or bold design that do not 'fit in' with the existing landscape is generally prohibited. Assistance from an architect may be required to ensure built form outcomes are in accordance with design guidelines.

Land Management Overlays

Figure 22 maps rural areas subject to Land Management Overlays in Bass Coast.

Erosion Management Overlay (EMO)

The Erosion Management Overlay is applied to areas with land stability issues.

- Application: In Bass Coast, the EMO mostly applies to the Strzelecki Foothills that are characterised by a steep terrain and therefore is generally unsuitable for dense development.
- Land Use Policy & Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. A geotechnical report will be required to demonstrate that the development will not cause stability or land slip issues. Professional assistance may be required to prepare the application.
- Major Exemptions: A permit is not required for non-habitable outbuildings associated with agriculture and agricultural activities.

Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)

The Bushfire Management Overlay is applied to areas within proximity to a bushfire hazard.

- Application: The BMO applies to within and around forested areas including Wildlife Reserves on Phillip Island, Kilcunda - Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve and Nature Conservation Reserves in Grantville, The Gurdies, Wonthaggi, Lang Lang and other rural inland areas.
- Land Use Policy & Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. A bushfire management statement and plan will be mandatory. Approval from the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and other professional assistance is most often required to prepare the application.

Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO)

The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay areas that may be subject to significant flooding events. Due to a nearby water source, low altitude and drainage issues.

- Application: The LSIO is primarily applied to land surrounding the Bass and Powlett Rivers, as well as low lying areas along the Western Port Bay and Cape Paterson-Inverloch Coastline.
- Land Use Policy & Permit Requirements: A permit is required to carry out most buildings and works. Assistance from engineers, land surveyors, environmental consultants and relevant floodplain management authority will be required to ensure built form outcomes are in accordance with flooding and design guidelines.
- Major Exemptions: For land with a Rural Zone, a permit is not required for outbuildings, open agricultural and farm buildings, and works associated with horticulture, and sports grounds that are the ground level.

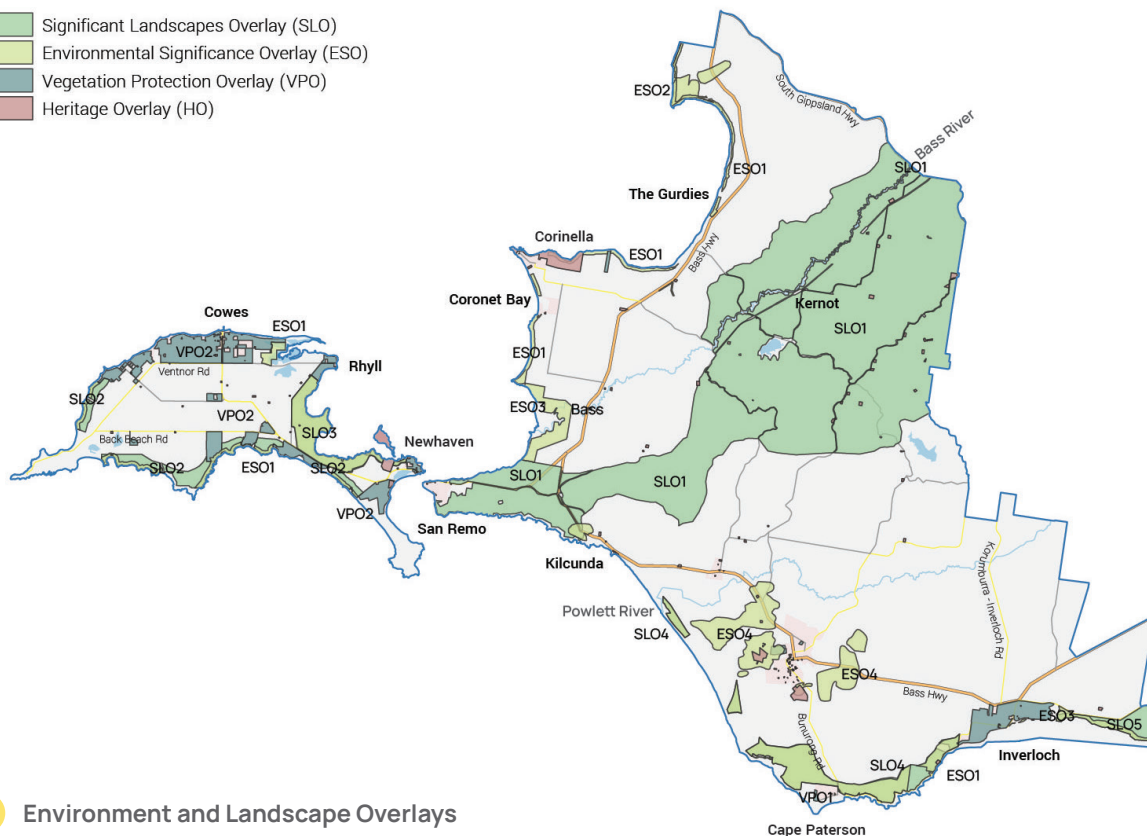
Other Overlays

Specific Controls Overlay (SCO)

The Specific Controls Overlay is applied to achieve a particular land use and development outcomes in special circumstances.

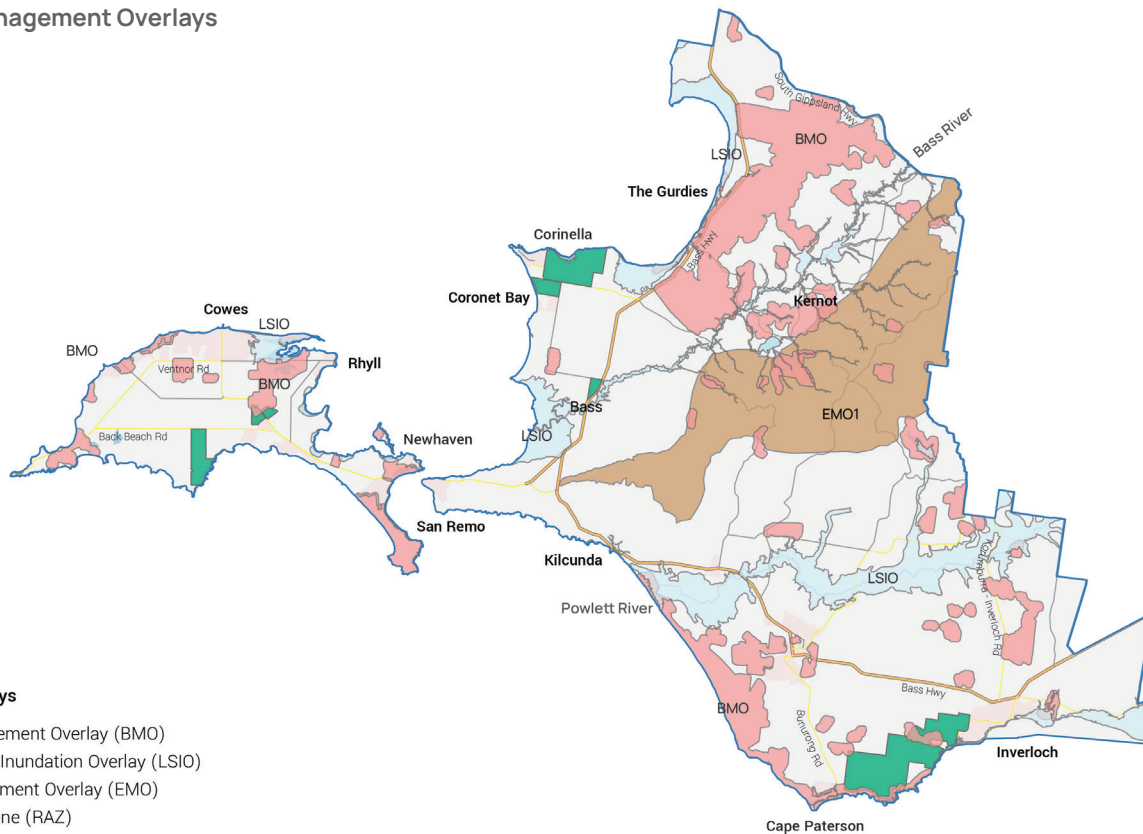
- Application: The Schedule to the SCO applies to the following areas:
 - SCO1 - 158 Gap Road, Cowes – Incorporated document published in January 2019
 - SCO2 - Ventnor Rural Tourism Precinct (Adjacent to PI Grand Prix Circuit) - Philip Island Grand Prix Circuit Associated Facilities Incorporated Plan published in 2006 (Still Current)
- Land Use Policy & Permit Requirements: Land identified in the Schedule must be developed in correspondence to the following incorporated documents:
 - 158 Gap Road, Cowes – To enable the use of part of the land for a materials recycling and transfer station.
 - Philip Island Grand Prix Circuit Associated Facilities Incorporated Plan published in 2006: To enable the development tourist facilities that complement the adjacent Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit, in particular an outdoor recreation facility (golf course) and associated residential hotel and group accommodation.

- Significant Landscapes Overlay (SLO)
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)
- Heritage Overlay (HO)



F21 Environment and Landscape Overlays

F22 Land Management Overlays



Land Management Overlays

- Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)
- Erosion Management Overlay (EMO)
- Rural Activity Zone (RAZ)

Summary of Environmental Constraints on Rural Tourism Precincts

The table below summarised the planning overlays and land use constraints for tourism development that apply to some or all areas within the existing Rural Tourism Precincts.

T28 Summary of Environmental Constraints

Location	Heritage and Built Form Overlays	Environment and Landscape Overlays	Land Management Overlays	Other	Key Constraints
Corinella - Coronet Bay	HO28	ES01	LSIO	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and works trigger requirements for technical assessment and flood management plans Assistance from engineers, architects or environmental consultants may be required to ensure application is in accordance with environmental protection and design guidelines.
Inverloch - Cape Paterson	HO23	ES01, SLO4	BMO	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance from engineers, architects or environmental consultants may be required to application in accordance with environmental protection and design guidelines. Building and works trigger requirements for bushfire hazard technical assessments and management plans
Bass	None	None	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Sunset Strip (PI Adventure Resort)	None	None	BMO	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and works trigger requirements for bushfire hazard technical assessments and management plans
Ventnor (Grand Prix Circuit)	None	ESO, SLO	None	SCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permit Land Uses Include: Golf Course, Group Accommodation and/or Residential Hotel Buildings of scale or bold design that do not 'fit in' with the existing land-scape is generally prohibited.
Fantasia Site, The Gurdies	None	None	BMO	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and works trigger requirements for bushfire hazard technical assessments and management plans

Conclusions

Demand for Tourism Uses in Rural Areas

Analysis of permit activity, current visitation trends and projected visitation highlights the need for rural areas to support some level of tourism use.

There are many tourism uses that cannot locate in urban settlements of Bass Coast due to constraints in land supply, the need to be linked with nature based assets and/ or agriculture and the importance of a landscape outlook, coastal or hinterland views. Examples of this include:

- Large scale resort developments with complimentary sports and leisure facilities.
- Golf courses.
- Tourist parks.
- Hot springs resorts.
- Race tracks.
- Wildlife parks and zoos.
- Wineries.
- Nature based eco accommodation.
- Equine facilities.
- Farm gate.

Analysis of planning permits shows that 68 tourism planning applications were made, the vast majority of which occurred on Phillip Island, highlighting a much higher demand for tourism investment in the rural area of Phillip Island than Mainland Bass Coast.

Analysis of visitation shows that Phillip Island captures 67% of all visitors to Bass Coast and attracts almost all international visitors.

Land use planning needs to consider past and future demand for tourism accommodation, product, activities and attractions to support projected visitation growth. Urban Enterprises modelling shows that Bass Coast will need to support an additional 1.3 million visitors between 2022-2032.

The rural areas are needed to support appropriate tourism investment that maintains and improves the natural environment and landscape of the region.

Rural Tourism Precincts

Since 2014 to 2021, there were a total of 68 tourism applications lodged, with an average of 9 tourism permit applications per year. Of these applications, only 44 were granted a permit.

The majority of tourism proposals were located in the FZ outside of the Rural Tourism Activity Precincts (59 permits or 87%) however this is caveated by the reality that 95% of rural land is zoned FZ.

There are a number of reasons why the Rural Tourism Precincts have not delivered any substantial tourism investment, these include:

- They do not consistently reflect the demand for investment or visitation patterns, for example Phillip Island has the greatest demand for rural tourism uses, however there is limited RAZ land on the Island.
- The RAZ Schedule and associated Local Planning Policy together create significant limitations on tourism development capacity.
- Current broad hectare land uses such as large lot cattle farming are not conducive to agri-tourism uses and owners have little interest in establishing a tourism enterprise.
- A number of proposals have received significant community concern that have sometimes led to developers not working with the community, the Shire nor go through a full Planning process with respect to potential tourism developments.

There would be benefit in investigating alternative approaches that provide specific direction on tourism uses in rural areas across the four identified sub regions, which have various levels of tourism focus, demand, agricultural activity and landscapes.

Planning Policy to Support Tourism Development

The purpose of the RAZ is to facilitate agriculture and other land uses compatible with agriculture – conditionally allowing leisure and recreation activities, restaurants, hotels and other group accommodation.

However, the RAZ is further constrained by the local planning policy, notably:

- The schedule to the RAZ specifies that development must be small scale, have a rural/coastal appearance and maintain lot density.
- Local tourism planning policy further restricts activities to be ancillary or directly integrated with agricultural uses, thus prohibiting most uses allowed under the usual RAZ.

The RAZ Schedule and Local Policy would be more effective if they were amended to support tourism uses that are appropriate to the various sub regions in Bass Coast.

The FZ also facilitates non-agricultural uses but is subject to far fewer local policies. As a result, the RAZ in practice is more restrictive than the FZ.

Overall, analysis shows disconnect between the tourism product demand identified in strategic documents and the local tourism policy. Local planning policy often prescribes location-specific tourism land uses without consideration to current market demand – which is crucial factor for successful investment attraction.

The FZ and RAZ are limited in their support of larger scale tourism development. In instances where a tourism use does not have any link with farming activity the Special Use Zone is best applied.

Local Planning Policy

Clause 17.04-1L Facilitating Tourism highlights areas for investment in tourism, however does not adequately include contemporary tourism land uses that need to be facilitated on larger allotments. In addition, tourism direction is only provided for the Rural Activity Precincts and largely neglects any direction for Phillip Island which has the highest pressure for tourism related investment in rural areas.

The Local Policy also highlights the need for tourism development to be used in conjunction or ancillary to agricultural activity however does not consider that a tourism use may be ancillary to nature and environmentally protected land or heritage assets and values or if tourism can be a legitimate primary use in the rural areas.

Nexus with Agriculture

The requirement for tourism uses to have a nexus with agriculture is found within the Local Planning Policy, whilst both the FZ and RAZ do not have this direction.

The Local Planning Policy reads as though tourism cannot be a primary use in rural areas, however there are a range of tourism uses that can only feasibly be facilitated in rural areas due to the need for larger landholdings, rural and coastal outlooks and connection with nature-based tourism or environmental tourism.

Productive use of rural land needs to be a consideration, in some instances, particularly on Phillip Island there are numerous landholdings that are largely unproductive for agricultural due to size, proximity to coastal saline conditions and poor soil quality. Tourism would provide a productive use for these sites and potential lead to improved land management outcomes. The Phillip Island Nature Park is an excellent example of an enterprise which has slowly increased its landholdings and transitioned farming land into improved environmental outcomes.

In the locations where agricultural productivity is low, alternative uses that have no link with agriculture should be considered more favourably and this can be recognised in a future piece of strategic work such as an updated Rural Land Use Strategy.

For Phillip Island in particular, where improved environmental outcomes can be demonstrated through tourism uses such as native revegetation to support Phillip Island's fauna this should be considered as a positive outcome for rural landscapes.

Part D: Strategy and Recommendations

Strategy

This section sets out the strategy for rural tourism development in Bass Coast Shire drawing on the research and analysis included in this report.

Vision for Rural Tourism

The Strategy will aim to fulfil the following vision for rural tourism in Bass Coast Shire:

Bass Coast Shire will be regarded as a leading rural tourism destination acclaimed for its excellence in ecotourism agritourism and coastline tourism.

The rural areas will support investment in contemporary and high-quality tourism businesses that are sympathetic to, and enhance the protection of Bass Coast's environmental assets, landscapes, heritage values and agricultural activities.

Rural Tourism Objectives

1	Attract Appropriate Rural Tourism Investment	Ensure the shire remains competitive as a rural tourism destination by attracting investment in rural tourism products that is sympathetic to and enhance the protection of environmental assets, landscapes, heritage values and agricultural activities.
2	Improve Geographic and Seasonal Dispersal of Visitors	Increase visitation in the shoulder and off-peak by providing key tourism attractors that are not reliant on warm weather.
3	Grow Visitor Yield Year Round	Increasing the yield from visitors and encourage overnight stays through the provision of more diverse, contemporary and high quality tourism products like food establishments, spa and well being and high quality accommodation.
4	Facilitate a Sustainable and Resilient Rural Tourism Economy	Provide amenity that benefits both visitors and residents. Support rural communities to sustain their economic activity through diversification, creating multiple streams of revenue and reducing risk through tourism investment.
5	Environmental Protection and Enhancement	Ensuring that tourism activity both protects and enhances the Shire's environmental assets as well as provides for environmental management and rehabilitation, particularly supporting native flora and fauna and enhancing biodiversity,
6	Effective Integration with Agriculture, Other Rural Land Uses, Significant Landscapes and Heritage Values	Ensuring that tourism products can be delivered in a manner that integrates with existing agricultural land uses while supporting other land uses, significant landscapes and protecting and enhancing heritage values. This can be achieved when tourism products can be effectively delivered through the Planning system in a way that also supports landscape, environment and heritage protection.

Rural Nexus

Recognise a nexus between tourism and other rural land uses that support the productive and environmentally sensitive use of rural land.

Existing local policy requires tourism uses in rural areas to have a nexus with agriculture. While protection of high-quality agricultural land should remain a top priority, there is a gap in the current policy to enable productive use of land that:

- Is low quality or unsuitable for farming uses;
- Has little to no connection with agriculture (heritage values or natural environments); or
- Is being used for a rural activity other than agriculture

In these areas, nexus with agriculture is not justified and planning policy should reasonably consider other uses.

The Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) business model clearly demonstrates there is opportunity for tourism to have nexus with land uses other than agriculture, in a way that is mutually beneficial for the involved activities and demonstrates a productive use of land as well as improved environmental outcomes.

The Scheme MPS and supplementary local policies need to be reassessed to ensure they incentivise tourism development that provides a wider nexus and contributes to a broader range of rural land use objectives. Other rural land uses that are compatible with tourism include:

- Protection, conservation, restoration and enhancement of natural systems.
- Preservation of heritage assets or areas with cultural significance.
- Enhance other rural industries (such as forest-based or mineral-based).

Zone for Tourism as the Major Land Use

Support the application of the Special Use Zone in site specific locations where tourism is logically the primary land use.

The existing Rural Zones in the Victorian Planning Scheme are generally designed to facilitate and preserve land for agriculture and are limited in their support of larger scale tourism developments. In instances where the available rural zones cannot reasonably support a larger scale tourism use or where the primary land use for tourism is justified, the Special Use Zone is best applied on a specific-site basis.

A number of preliminary investigation sites have been identified for potential rezoning to the Special Use Zone, including:

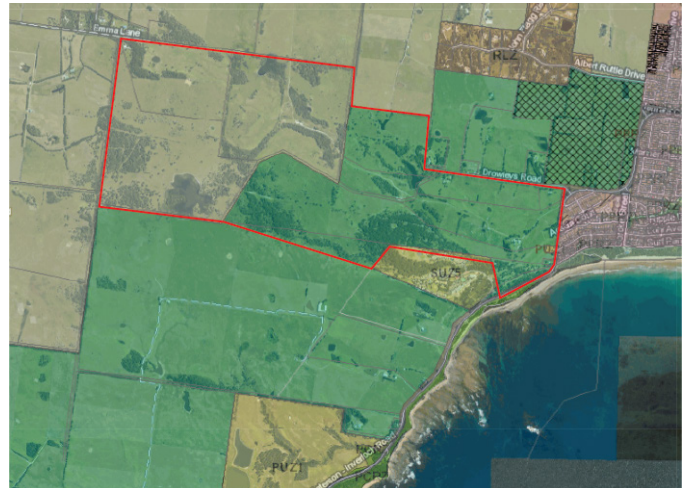
- Newhaven: Farming Zone Land south of Phillip Island Rd including the Former Airfield Site.
- Ventnor: Land West of the Grand Prix Circuit including 427 Back Beach Rd, Ventnor.
- Kitty Miller Bay: Areas surrounding the Kitty Miller Road Wetland, 1\PS340233 Kitty Miller Road, Ventnor.
- Inverloch: Parcels along Toorak Road and Drowleys Rd in Inverloch (West of the Inverloch township and behind the RACV Resort).

In lieu of a Tourism Zone, which is not possible to be created within the Victorian State Planning system, the Special Use Zone is the most appropriate application and should be applied with consideration of the criteria identified in Table T29.

F24 SUZ Investigation Area - Newhaven



F25 SUZ Investigation Area - Inverloch



F26 SUZ Investigation Area - Ventnor & Kitty Miller Bay



T29 Proposed Framework Criteria for Applying the Special Use Zone for Tourism Land Uses in Rural Areas
Land Use Planning Objectives

- An appropriate combination of the other available rural zones, overlays and local policies cannot give effect to the desired objectives or requirements
- Development potential to provide amenity that benefits visitors or residents that cannot be accommodated by urban areas or settlements
- The site provides adequate flexibility to cater for a wide variety of land uses. The complexity of planning requirements is reduced by keeping the number of zones used to a minimum.

Site Attributes

- Provides an attractive setting, either rural or coastal, and provides the opportunity for tourism development to capture significant rural or coastal views and vistas.
- Is elevated more than 5 metres above sea level with preference to areas which are not subject to predictable adverse environmental processes and effects including storm surges, river and coastal flooding or landslip.
- Does not affect the existing views and landscape, or the site allows for a potential tourism facility to be designed in a way which is discrete and sensitive to the existing environment.
- A significant area of the site is:
 - Deemed unsuitable for agriculture through technical site assessments due to factors including the size of land holding, poor quality soils, natural environmental processes or other significant land issues.
 - Land with limitations to sustained use that cannot be overcome at a currently acceptable cost
 - Allows for development not-disruptive significant vegetation and wildlife.

Access

- Has **direct access to a major sealed road** or touring route.

Relationship to Existing Tourism Product Strengths

- Is in close proximity to existing tourism product and infrastructure nodes or in a location which exhibits tourism development potential. For example undeveloped high quality natural attractions.
- Is in an area exhibiting existing tourist visitation and opportunity for increased tourism activity through further tourism product development.
- Provides opportunity for links to nature-based tourism, walks, waterways, State and National Parks or other man made attractions.
- Is within proximity to an existing township. This will ensure that any rural tourism development can draw on existing labour pools and existing local services.

Creating Positive Design Outcomes

Utilise a Design Development Overlay to create positive design and built form tourism development outcomes that are sympathetic to environmental, landscape and heritage considerations and requirements.

Existing policy often supports rural tourism developments to be of 'small-scale', which is then juxtaposed with a requirement for large minimum subdivision area sizes in the rural zones. These policies do ensure the minimisation of adverse impacts on landscape amenity, cultural heritage, and the environment, however it achieves it at a cost of making tourism development often impractical and in some circumstances, impossible.

While inappropriate development should be discouraged, the impracticality of these policies leads to a question as to whether the Scheme should simply make it clear that it effectively does not support tourism in the rural zones. Given that this non-support is not the intention of the wider strategic and policy framework with respect to tourism, the inconsistent policies need to be addressed and changed.

Investment barriers for new landowners looking to begin a tourism enterprise include:

- Higher upfront costs and risks associated with purchasing larger lots due to the inability to subdivide land.
- Capped capacity and inhibited growth potential due to limits to 'small scale' development.
- Inhibits potential to provide large scale amenities for both residents and visitors that cannot be accommodated by urban areas or settlements.

Implementation of a Design and Development Overlay for each tourism subregion should be considered with specific controls and setbacks for the significant landscape and natural environments unique to each area. Revision of built form and subdivision controls is required to redirect emphasis away from restricting scale and instead sets a high standard for sustainable design practices and a focus on innovative architecture that ensures buildings are well integrated into the environment.

Improving the Evidence Base

Build an evidence base to facilitate appropriate future rural tourism land uses, including demand and supply for all rural land uses, infrastructure capacity, land use capability assessments and macro-economic assessments.

Sustainable rural tourism governance needs to carefully balance environmental, agricultural and economic issues that are often complex, conflicting and continuously changing. Climate change, urban growth and volatile economic conditions will further complicate tourism development capacities in the future. Due to the diversity of tourism land uses, planning applications will inevitably require Council to exercise some discretion on a case-by-case basis. For this reason, it is essential that future planning decisions are underpinned by reliable data and clear strategic direction. It is recommended that further work is undertaken:

- Detailed and up-to-date technical analysis and mapping needs into the productivity of agricultural land across the Shire.
- Work with Phillip Island Nature Parks to guide tourism development and create a holistic vision for rural land development on Phillip Island.
- Environmental assessments to understand the impact of development on ecosystems.
- Assessments on infrastructure and utility service capabilities and upgrade functionality and potential within the rural suite of zones.
- Comprehensive rural land use supply and demand assessment.

This will support all stakeholders across the public and private sectors to make informed decisions and ensure an appropriate balance between agricultural, environmental and tourism uses.

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided as follows:

- **Overarching Recommendations:** Sets out the overarching recommendations and actions for future rural tourism land use policy for Bass Coast Shire.
- **Recommendations for Tourism Subregions:** Provides the strategic direction and recommended land uses for each subregion.

Overarching Recommendations

Recommended Action 1

Undertake a rural tourism focused Planning Scheme Amendment to Bass Coast Planning Scheme that addresses the following:

No.	Action
1.1	<p>Replacing the 'Rural Tourism Precincts' as currently applied across Scheme with the following 'Rural Tourism Subregions' (Figure 23, page 92) to guide and facilitate tourism investment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phillip Island and San Remo (largest tourism focus, key areas of environmental value, heritage, coastal and rural landscapes); • Bass Hinterland (key agricultural areas with associated tourism); • Waterline and Bass River Precinct (key environmental and landscape values with passing trade and agricultural tourism opportunities); and • Bunurong Coast (key environmental and coastal and rural landscape values and agricultural uses with strong coastal tourism opportunities).
1.2	<p>Include the Strategies vision and objectives as well as the directions and land uses identified in each 'Rural Tourism Subregion' into the Municipal Planning Strategy and any other necessary areas of the Planning Scheme.</p>
1.3	<p>Investigate the potential to rezone land in the RAZ to Farming Zone in situations where tourism and other activities directly related to the intended use of the RAZ have not, nor appear likely, to occur. Further, investigate areas in the Farming Zone where there is potential, and it is appropriate to, rezone the land to RAZ.</p>
1.4	<p>Include a definition in the Scheme for 'Nature Based Tourism Development'.</p>
1.5	<p>Review local planning policies and provisions in accordance with Recommended Action 2 below.</p>

Recommended Action 2

Review Local Planning Policies and Provisions

No.	Action
2.1	<p>Investigate amending existing Local Planning Provisions regarding rural tourism development including the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 14.01-2L-02 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Farming Zone: Suggest replacing the Strategy: “Discourage non-agriculture uses other than those that support agriculture” with: “Discourage non-agriculture uses that have a detrimental impact on agricultural production, particularly in areas recognised as having high agricultural production value.” Suggest replacing the tourism reference in the Policy Guidelines (encouraged uses) from: “Tourism facilities that complement or are associated with the agricultural use of land...” with: “Tourism facilities that complement, are associated with or do not detrimentally impact the agricultural use of land, nor change the rural nature of the landscape, or areas of environmental, ecological or heritage value...” • Clause 14.01-2L-03 Sustainable Agricultural Land Use in the Rural Activity Zone: Suggest replacing the tourism reference in the Policy Guidelines (encouraged uses) from: “Tourism facilities in association with, or that complement agriculture...” with: “Tourism facilities that complement, are associated with or do not detrimentally impact the agricultural use of land, nor change the rural nature of the landscape, or areas of environmental, ecological or heritage value...” • Clause 15.01-6L Development in the Rural Activity Zone: Review to clearly articulate the development expectations for tourism uses with respect to site densities, definition of “small scale” expectations in various areas and other built form guidelines. Discussion on appropriate built form can be ventilated with the community and key stakeholders through the proposed Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study 2014 review (Recommended Action 5). • Clause 17.04-1L Facilitating Tourism: Comprehensively review to broaden the considerations of where and how tourism activities are appropriate. The revised clause should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that tourism uses are not only appropriate when complementary with or connected to agricultural uses in the rural zones, but also appropriate when complementary with the landscape, ecological, environmental and heritage protection and enhancement; • recognise that location based focus areas to attract investment must not hinder the potential for tourism development and assessment in wider rural areas; and • recognise the need for tourism development to be located in areas that provide contiguous connection to appropriate services and infrastructure and/or to upgrade those services or provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the requirements of the site and surrounding areas.
2.2	<p>Investigate and reword other local policy and provisions in the Scheme to allow for tourism development that contributes to a broader range of rural land use objectives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration and conservation of natural systems. • Preservation of heritage assets or areas with cultural significance. • Enhancing other rural industry (such as forest-based industry, mineral-based industry). • Ensuring the ongoing preservation of appropriate rural, coastal, environmental, indigenous heritage and landscapes.

Recommended Action 3

Rural Activity Zone (RAZ): Further Investigation and Potential Planning Scheme Amendment.

No.	Action
3.1	Undertake discussions with DEECA to determine an appropriate mechanism, such as an additional clause in Schedule 1 to Clause 35.08, that could establish "Accommodation" as a potentially permit permissible use only when associated with an appropriately located and scaled tourism use.
3.2	Undertake discussions with DEECA regarding Schedule 1 to Clause 35.08 to determine if it is appropriate for the 'Minimum subdivision area' annotated in table 1.0 to be retained between 40 And 260 hectares (depending on the area), given that it is beyond that which is generally required in the Farming Zone as well as the current prevailing lot sizes all of the currently existing RAZ areas. If it is determined that these minimum subdivision areas do not facilitate the ultimate intent of the RAZ, including the provision of tourism, then a Planning Scheme amendment should be progressed.
3.3	Investigate the potential to rezone land in the RAZ to Farming Zone in situations where tourism and other activities directly related to the intended use of the RAZ have not been, nor appear likely to occur. Further, to investigate areas in the Farming Zone where there is potential, and it is appropriate to, rezone the land to RAZ.
3.4	Further develop local planning policy that will facilitate and guide appropriate tourism development for land remaining in this zone.

Recommended Action 4

Special Use Zone Investigation.

No.	Action
4.1	Undertake consultation with landowners and further technical investigation to establish the potential to rezone land from RAZ and FZ to Special Use Zone (SUZ) for existing and future proposed medium to large scale developments where tourism is the primary and majority land use. These zones can become areas where tourism is the key focus, allowing for appropriate infrastructure and service investment, providing security and financial incentives for tourism operators of all size and potentially facilitate the co-location of appropriate tourism business ventures.

Recommended Action 5

Review Rural Land Use Study and prepare a new Rural Land Use Strategy

No.	Action
5.1	<p>Undertake a comprehensive review of the Bass Coast Rural Land Use Study 2014, with the purpose of establishing an up-to-date and clearly articulated Strategy. The strategic work will begin with a detailed Agricultural Land Assessment for Bass Coast Shire.</p> <p>The Strategy shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of agricultural land use across Bass Coast Shire. • Assessment of the macroeconomic trends in the agricultural industry. • Identifying high quality, productive agricultural land that require protection. • Identifying areas of lower agricultural land values and opportunities for facilitating additional land uses in these areas, including tourism. • Identifying the types of commodities suitable for agricultural land and opportunities for diversification. • Appropriate management of land uses that can facilitate sustainable agricultural practices, ecological and biodiversity protection and enhancement, landscape protection and tourism activity. • Policy recommendations and guidance on the application of zones in relation to agriculture. • Recommendations on biosecurity measures and incentives to facilitate financially and ecologically sustainable agricultural practices. • Identify opportunities for the region to obtain biosecurity and food safety related certification to give the industry a competitive edge in production and trading. • Assessment of areas of biodiversity value, existing landscape, environmental and heritage overlays and investigating areas to be considered for future protection and enhancement. • Prepare an Indigenous Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Cultural Values Assessment. • Identification of infrastructure, service and community facility provision and provide recommendations on necessary provisions and upgrades. <p>The Strategy will be prepared with the community, government and key stakeholders to inform and guide the management and protection of areas of significant agricultural value as well as future areas of wider integration with other land uses, including tourism. The strategy will need to be reviewed every five years.</p>

Recommended Action 6

Integration with Organisations, Studies and Strategies

No.	Action
6.1	Work with the relevant governance bodies to incorporate the findings of this strategy into future work which impacts rural tourism including the State government departments (including DEECA), local infrastructure management authorities, all registered Aboriginal party(s), all internal local government departments, as well as ensuring ongoing alignment with other Strategic Planning Department documents, the Council Plan, the Bass Coast Economic Development Strategy and Phillip Island San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy reviews.
6.2	Work with Phillip Island Nature Parks to guide tourism development and create a holistic vision for rural land development on Phillip Island, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying areas for conservation / ecological restoration / wildlife corridors. • Identifying areas of high quality agricultural land to be protected. • Identifying rural areas suitable for tourism land uses.
6.3	Work with Parks Victoria to investigate ways to sympathetically improve tourism opportunities at Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve, including a works program to improve signage and access.
6.4	Work with economic agencies and supporters, community groups, other local governments and tourism industry stakeholders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realise opportunities to facilitate the development of appropriate new tourism ventures. • Facilitate the use of tourism and other local government and community facilities, particularly during off peak periods, to assist in establishing a more consistent tourism economy within the Shire. • Understand and accumulate knowledge about the successful management and enhancement of potential new or growing tourism activities, such as the spa and wellness industry and the wine industry.

Recommendations by Subregion

T29 Recommendations by Subregion

Subregion and Strategic Theme	Strategic Need	Recommended Uses / Product Gaps	Recommended Zone & Policy
Phillip Island and San Remo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting long term visitation growth to Phillip Island; • Encouraging uses that support increase in visitor yield; • Encourage uses targeted to international visitor markets; • Encourage uses that can support positive environmental outcomes including vegetation and wildlife corridors; • Encourage uses that support year round visitation. • Encourage uses that deliver contemporary product and experiences targeted to Lifestyle Leader segments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot springs resort (underway) • 5 Star accommodation with coastal views • Wellness retreats • Destination restaurants in a rural and coastal setting • Farm gate and rural tourism experiences • Eco/nature based accommodation • Environmental and eco experiences and tours • Golf course • Gardens • Winery and cellar doors • Distillery and cellar door • Visitor attractions • Walking and cycling experiences • Art galleries • Artist studios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment, Nature Based and Wellness and Events 		
Waterline and Bass River Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveraging off the visitation growth to Phillip Island and Inverloch • Encourage visitors to stop, slow down and spend time on the way to and from their destination • Food and agri business related destination • Encourage visitor dispersal from key tourism nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm gate • Agri tourism experiences • Artisan produce • Small to mid scale accommodation • Provedore experience • Farmstay • Winery, cellar door and restaurant experience • Outdoor and adventure activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gourmet Food and Wine 		

Subregion and Strategic Theme	Strategic Need	Recommended Uses / Product Gaps	Recommended Zone & Policy
Bass Hinterland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the hinterland as a destination leveraging from visitors to Phillip Island and Inverloch Encourage agri tourism, food related tourism, arts and culture Focus on small scale and boutique tourism opportunities Food and agri business related destination Encourage visitor dispersal from key tourism nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art galleries Artist studios Farm gate Farmstay accommodation Farm experiences e.g. tours, education Touring Food experiences Destination distillery or brewery Small scale accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)
Bunurong Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging off visitation to Inverloch, Cape Patterson and Klicunda Providing nature based and agri tourism experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature based eco accommodation Tourist parks in appropriate locations Outdoor events facilities Farmstay accommodation Experiential accommodation e.g. tiny home or glamping Farmgate produce Environmental and eco experiences and tours Walking and cycling experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Activity Zone (with appropriate policy and Schedule changes)

Final draft Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy

March 2025

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of the Bunurong land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partnering and meaningfully engaging with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Description of artwork



Aaron (Gunaikurnai) 'Movements Between the Five Clans' 2019, acrylic on canvas.

'The tracks are going between the five clans of the Gunaikurnai and the hands are the symbols of my spirit travelling around the campsites.'

This artwork was created through programs provided by the Torch. The Torch provides art, cultural and arts industry support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria. The Torch aims to reduce the rate of re-offending by encouraging the exploration of identity and culture through art programs to define new pathways upon release.

Photo credits

Visit Victoria

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ISBN TBC (Print)

ISBN TBC (pdf/online/MS word)

Citation

Department of Transport and Planning (2025). *Final draft Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy*. State of Victoria, Melbourne, March 2025.

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Introduction

About Bass Coast

The Bass Coast declared area has many places of cultural heritage, outstanding natural beauty and environmental, economic and social significance. The declared area has been under the safe stewardship of the Bunurong people for millennia and is rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The challenge facing the Victorian Government and community is managing the growth of metropolitan Melbourne and the state’s regional settlements while conserving and enhancing Aboriginal cultural heritage, significant landscapes, the environment, biodiversity, historic heritage and the unique local characteristics of settlements. The distinctive attributes outlined in the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) must be conserved and enhanced while also achieving sustainable economic development and the provision of adequate housing and strategic infrastructure. Development should be sensitively designed, scaled and responsive to its local context.

Simultaneously, attributes which make these areas thrive must be recognised, protected and enhanced. This includes productive rural land and natural resources, local businesses, sustainable tourism, and transport and essential services infrastructure.

Table 1: Attributes qualifying the Bass Coast declared area as a distinctive area and landscape

ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
1	Outstanding environmental significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– State, national and international areas of biodiversity significance, including Phillip Island Nature Park, Bunurong Marine National Park, Churchill Island Marine Park, Western Port Ramsar Wetland, Churchill Island, Powlett River Mouth and Anderson Inlet and tributaries.– Parks, river corridors, beaches, wetlands and remnant woodland areas, including the Western Port Woodlands, which are home to remnant vegetation, provide habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors.– An integrated catchment system of river corridors and coastal waterways (estuaries and wetlands) and a unique marine environment with diverse habitats and important feeding areas.
2	Significant geographical features, including natural landforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The Bass Hills and Strzelecki Foothills provide a backdrop to landscapes throughout the shire and are highly visible from main road corridors.– The San Remo to Kilcunda coastline contains open pastoral landscapes edged by rocky cliffs and slopes to Bass Strait.

ITEM	ATTRIBUTE	DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Kilcunda to Inverloch coastline (the Bunurong Coast) is recognised for its rock formations, dune systems, dramatic cliffs and rock stacks. Eagles Nest is a dominant feature in the landscape and a site of national and geomorphological significance. – Phillip Island has distinctive landscapes, including rocky cliffs, outcrops of volcanic origin (such as the Nobbies and Pyramid Rock), surf beaches and dune systems.
3	Heritage and cultural significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Areas of significant cultural, spiritual and heritage value for the Bunurong people include the coastal sand dune systems, Western Port and Bass Strait, the Bunurong Coast, the Coronet Bay area, Bass Hills, Powlett River and the western and southern foreshores of Phillip Island. – Important post-contact heritage sites significant to Victoria's economic development include the State Coal Mine and associated mining heritage and Churchill Island, the location of the first European farm in Victoria. – A rich surfing history with several beaches recognised as National Surfing Reserve.
4	Natural resources or productive land of significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The area is a nature-based tourism destination of national significance, with tourism assets including Phillip Island, the Bunurong Coast and major events facilities. – Extractive industries are of state significance, particularly for their contribution to Victoria's supply of sand. – Agricultural land is high quality, particularly the Powlett River Valley and Gippsland dairy industry land.
5	Strategic infrastructure or built form of significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Victorian Desalination Plant and associated pipeline are significant public infrastructure for Victoria. – Phillip Island Road and Bass Highway form a significant transport corridor essential to the region's functioning.

About the declared area

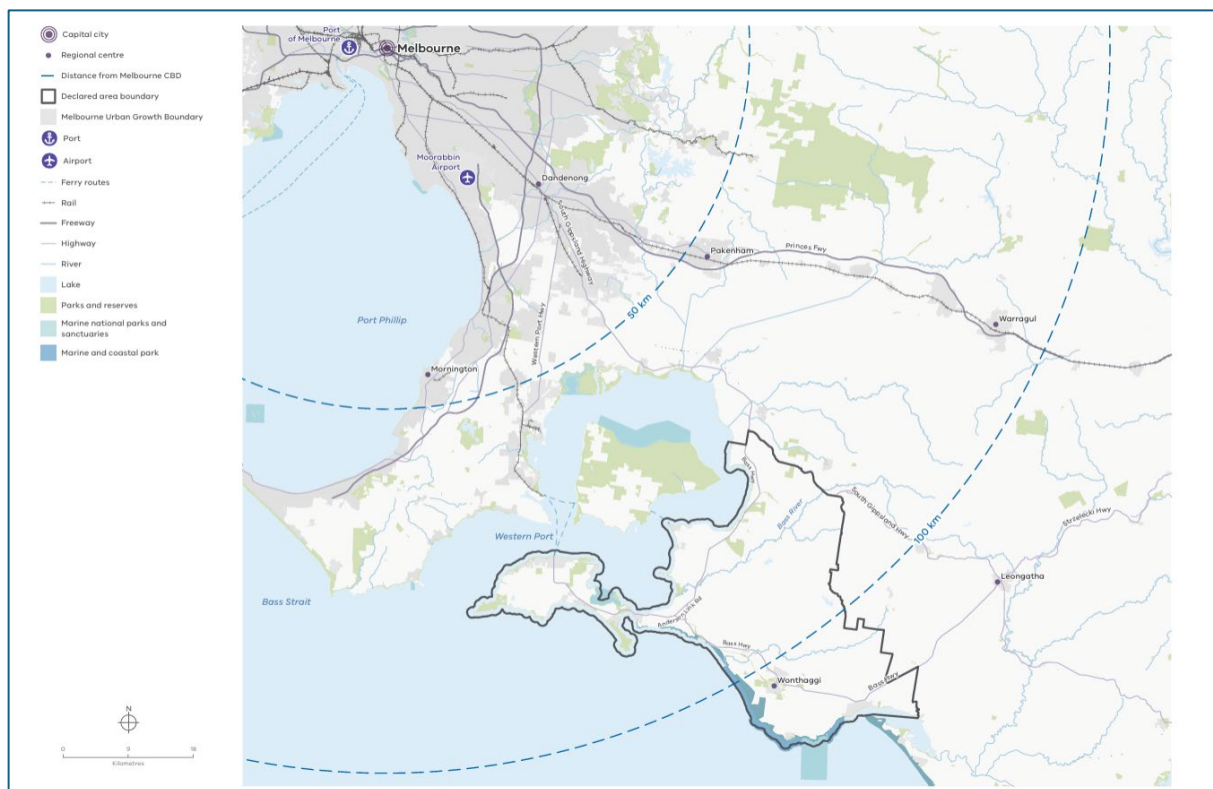
The Victorian Government has legislated to protect and enhance distinctive areas and landscapes for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

On 29 October 2019, Bass Coast Shire was first declared a distinctive area and landscape under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (the PE Act) by order of the Governor in Council (GiC) published in the Victoria Government Gazette No. S 430. Since that initial declaration, Bass Coast Shire has been declared and redeclared several times due to various factors that caused delays in the preparation of the Bass Coast SPP. The most recent redeclaration occurred on 8 October 2024, and it came into effect on 9 October 2024, allowing the Bass Coast SPP to be finalised, endorsed and approved.

Under the PE Act, an area of Victoria can be declared a distinctive area and landscape if it has a majority of the attributes section 46AP of the PE Act. Table 1 lists the attributes required under section 46AP of the PE Act that the Minister for Planning must consider to declare the Bass Coast Shire as a distinctive area and landscape.

Additionally, **Table 1** highlights attributes at risk of significant or irreversible land use changes that would impact the environmental, social or economic value of the area.

Map 1 shows the Bass Coast declared area in relation to the Melbourne Central Business District, the regional City of Latrobe, the metropolitan centres of Dandenong, Mornington and Pakenham, and the regional centres of Leongatha and Warragul within the South Gippsland and Baw Baw shires respectively.



Map 2 shows the declared area’s boundary aligns with the Bass Coast Shire boundary and extends 600 metres seaward of the low-water mark.



About the Bass Coast Statement of Planning Policy

Under the PE Act, the Minister for Planning must prepare a SPP for a declared area. The purpose of the SPP is to guide future use and development of land within the declared area to ensure the protection and conservation of its distinctive attributes. The PE Act also specifies requirements for the contents, consultation, endorsement, approval, commencement and amendment of an SPP.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has prepared the Bass Coast SPP in partnership with the Bunurong people and in collaboration with the Bass Coast Shire Council and other relevant government agencies and authorities. Extensive engagement on the preparation of the Bass Coast SPP was undertaken with the Victorian community.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

DTP supports the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and is committed to ensuring its policies reflect these goals. The Bass Coast SPP will help to deliver on the goals, which provide a framework to achieve a sustainable future.

While the integrated delivery of all 17 goals applies to the declared area, the goals shown in **Figure 1** are most relevant and provide a foundation for the Bass Coast SPP vision, objectives and strategies.

Figure 1: Selected United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

3	Good health and well-being The SPP aims to support active transport and healthy communities that have access to clean air and a healthy environment	6	Clean water and sanitation The SPP aims to protect water quality by reducing run-off and improving water management
11	Sustainable cities and communities The SPP aims to provide certainty about the valued attributes to be protected while indicating preferred locations for potential long-term growth	12	Responsible consumption and production The SPP aims to support the protection and sustainable management of natural resources
15	Life on land The SPP aims to support the conservation and improvement of biodiversity values	17	Partnership for the goals The SPP aims to support governments working together with stakeholders to implement its objectives and strategies
8	Decent work and economic growth The SPP aims to support sustainable economic growth and the visitor economy	9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure The SPP aims to protect infrastructure
13	Climate action The SPP aims to support mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts	14	Life below water The SPP aims to recognise the importance and support the conservation of marine life

Implementation of the Statement of Planning Policy

Effective implementation of the Bass Coast SPP will require a concerted effort by governments, public land managers, the Bunurong people, businesses, industries, residents, visitors and the community.

Collaboration, shared knowledge, expertise and resources are needed to support the long-term vision for the declared area.

Implementation through planning schemes

The Bass Coast SPP takes effect immediately after approval and forms part of the Victoria Planning Provisions. Planning scheme amendments will be progressed to implement it into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme to provide a consistent approach to land use planning and development.

The Bass Coast Shire Council must consider the Bass Coast SPP as the planning authority to prepare planning scheme amendments and as the responsible authority to administer and enforce the planning scheme.

In reviewing planning decisions, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal must also consider the Bass Coast SPP.

Implementation by responsible public entities

Responsible public entities (RPEs), as agencies or bodies responsible for managing land in the declared area, must implement the Bass Coast SPP (refer to Box 1).

The PE Act requires a responsible public entity must not act in a way that is inconsistently with any provision of the Statement of Planning Policy that is binding on it. This applies when the responsible public entity is performing its function, duties or exercising its powers in relation to the declared area. Therefore, RPEs must not act inconsistently with the objectives of the Bass Coast SPP when developing or implementing policies, programs or decisions in relation to the declared area, including when performing their regular functions or duties.

An RPE should endeavour to integrate the objectives and strategies relevant to its responsibilities into its policies, programs and decision-making in the declared area. An RPE should balance any conflicting strategies in favour of an outcome which best promotes the intent of the Bass Coast SPP for the benefit of current and future generations.

In addition, the PE Act provides guidance for an RPE when developing or implementing policies or programs or making decisions in relation to the declared area.

This will:

- Better coordinate decision-making for land use and development across the declared area to achieve integrated management, environmental, infrastructure and development outcomes.
- Ensure proposals for land use changes and development are consistent with the protection of the declared area's significant landscapes and with significant environmental, economic and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.
- Guide the sustainable use of natural resources in keeping with the declared area's significant landscapes and environmental and cultural values.
- Reinforce the importance of building community resilience to environmental risks and climate change, including the potential effects of natural hazards (such as bushfires and flooding).
- Provide greater certainty for current and future residents and businesses.

Monitoring and review

To provide long-term certainty for the declared area, the Minister for Planning must ensure a review of the Bass Coast SPP occurs no later than 10 years after it commences.

An SPP may be reviewed earlier than 10 years if there are compelling reasons to do so supported by strategic planning and technical studies (such as biodiversity, landscape and settlement assessments).

Following a review, an SPP may be amended or a new SPP prepared. The Minister for Planning must prepare a new or amended SPP in accordance with the PE Act requirements and engage with Traditional Owners, RPEs and the wider Victorian community.

Box 1: Responsible public entities for the Bass Coast declared area

Bass Coast Shire Council	San Remo Recreation Centre Inc.
Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management	Secretary to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Gippsland Ports Committee of Management	South-East Water
Grantville Recreation Reserve Committee of Management Inc.	South Gippsland Water
Head, Transport for Victoria	Southern Rural Water

Inverloch Recreation Reserve
Committee of Management Inc.

Lang Lang Foreshore Reserve
Committee of Management Inc.

Melbourne Water

Parks Victoria

Phillip Island Nature Parks Board of
Management Inc.

San Remo Foreshore Committee of
Management Inc.

Ventnor Recreation Reserve
Committee of Management

Victorian Planning Authority

VicTrack

West Gippsland Catchment
Management Authority

Westernport Region Water
Corporation

Woolamai Recreation Reserve
Committee of Management

Bunurong Statement of Significance

The following statement sets out the significance of Bunurong Country and the declared area to the Traditional Owners.

We the Bunurong People are the Traditional Custodians of this Country, it's alive with our stories. These sands of the Bass Coast contain the footprints left behind by our ancestors in every cultural way.

The responsibility for the caring of our Country belongs to us as its custodians. She is our Mother and Bunjil our Father.

Our Country has always given us our physical means to flourish and survive, food, water and air. We are saltwater people, and the rivers that run into the sea are our Country, and where these rivers meet the sea have always been important places to our people.

Our Country will continue to preserve us and our values into the future, as we will continue to preserve our Country and protect our past and persist within these modern spaces. We have been here since the beginning and will be here until the end.

These places hold our stories, culture and our Ancestors physically as well as spiritually, and it is by the Lore of Bunjil we protect, love and look after her.

Our vision

The vision for the Bass Coast declared area is for the next 50 years. It identifies the values, priorities and preferences of the Victorian community in relation to the declared area's distinctive attributes, including preferences for future land use, protection and development.

The vision will be achieved by implementing the objectives and strategies under each policy domain, which are represented on the declared area framework plan.

By 2075 the vision for the Bass Coast declared area is that the Bunurong people (represented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation), governments, public land managers, businesses, residents and visitors ensure the declared area's distinctive attributes — the things people love about the declared area and value it for — are protected and enhanced for current and future generations. The Bass Coast continues to be a diverse, sustainable and thriving regional area. Part-time and permanent residents are proud of the Bass Coast and work together to achieve common goals.

The declared area's landscapes, highly valued views, environmental and biodiversity values, Aboriginal cultural heritage, and historic heritage, and each settlement's uniqueness are protected in perpetuity.

Bunurong cultural heritage: The Bunurong people's rights to self-determination and their aspirations for their Country, water and culture are realised through the self-determined transfer of relevant decision-making powers. Bunurong traditional and living knowledge, culture and practices inform planning and management decisions to better protect the declared area's distinctive attributes. The community highly values Aboriginal cultural heritage and sites, and it respects the declared area as Bunurong Country.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation: There are net-zero emissions in the declared area. Extensive revegetation of landscapes and transformed agricultural practices support large-scale carbon sequestration. Investment in public and active transport alongside zero-emissions private vehicles has led to a zero-emissions transport sector. The declared area continues to adapt to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, inundation and flooding, polluted run-off and bushfires. The built environment has been highly adapted to climate change impacts. Water is conserved, and there is sufficient water for the environment and consumptive uses. Sustainable economic development and strategic infrastructure support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Landscape: The declared area's significant landscapes and character — with its many views, panoramic seascapes, rugged coastlines, tranquil wetlands, elevated rural hinterland and idyllic pastoral landscapes of rolling rises and gullies — are protected and enhanced. The declared area's scenic beauty is valued and recognised for its importance for the community's health and wellbeing, environment and biodiversity, heritage and the local economy.

Environment and biodiversity: Native vegetation cover is increased, and remnants are protected from clearing and fragmentation. Revegetation on public and private land helps mitigate urban heat, sequester carbon and increase ecological values in urban and rural areas. Native plants and animals flourish within a natural environment that is safeguarded, managed and highly valued by local communities and visitors, particularly the habitat of endangered, threatened and vulnerable species. The health, function and biodiversity values of important riverine, wetland, remnant woodland, coastal and marine areas are protected and restored.

Historic heritage: The declared area's rich tangible and intangible palaeontological, maritime, sealing, early settlement, convict, agricultural, mining, industrial and leisure heritage is protected, and the relationships between the Bunurong people and our colonial heritage are understood by those living within and visiting the declared area.

Strategic infrastructure: The provision of new community infrastructure — for transport, water supply, waste and resource recovery, energy, telecommunications, education, health and wellbeing, sport and recreation — is timely, integrated and in sequence with development. Investment in public and active transport alongside zero-emissions private vehicles has led to a zero-emissions transport sector. Waste is reduced to close to zero, and very little waste goes to landfills: most is reused, repurposed or recycled. Infrastructure is resilient to climate change impacts and is sensitive to the declared area's distinctive attributes.

Sustainable economic development: The declared area's growing economy is supported by its distinctive landscapes, environment and Aboriginal cultural and heritage value. The economy is based on sustainable tourism, innovation and environmentally sustainable business practices (particularly in the agriculture, natural resources and manufacturing industries). The declared area uses renewable sources to generate energy, and Bass Coast is a net exporter of renewable energy to other regions. The economy is resilient to climate change impacts, having transitioned to net-zero carbon and beyond. Bass Coast is a leader of regional economies in sustainable economic development.

Settlements: Urban settlements are well-planned and responsive to safeguarding the declared area's unique features and special characteristics, including its coastal vistas and ridgelines, high-quality agricultural land, natural resources and the natural

environment. The unique character of settlements is maintained and enhanced by maintaining visible green breaks between them. Wonthaggi is one of Victoria's preeminent regional centres, providing diverse housing, employment, education and health services. Across the declared area, revitalised town centres provide for the economic and social needs of the community.

The Bass Coast is a diverse, sustainable and thriving regional area.

Declared area framework plan

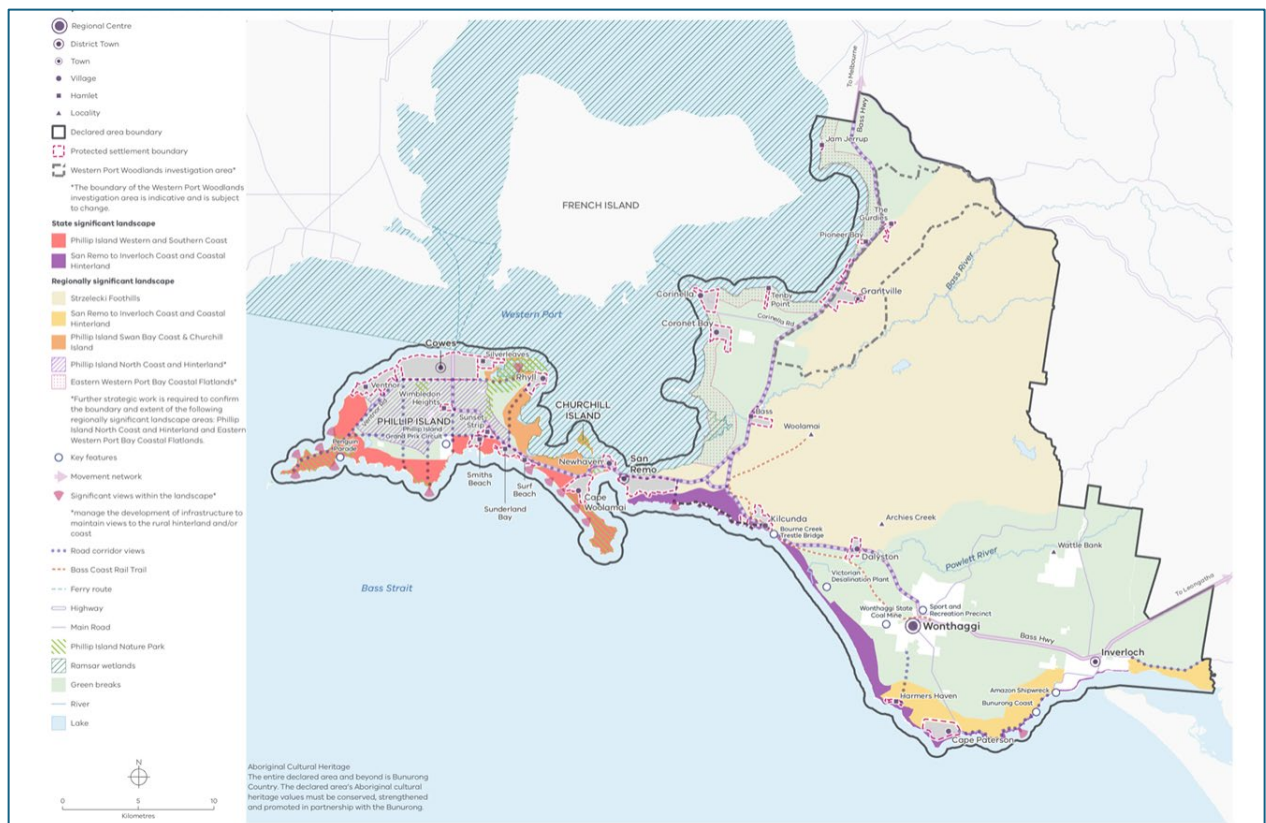
The Bass Coast declared area framework plan spatially represents the strategies for achieving the SPP’s vision and objectives, which aim to encourage long-term, sustainable development within the declared area. The plan identifies areas for protection and conservation and for potential change, subject to planning processes. It shows how environmental, social, cultural and economic factors are integrated for the benefit of the community.

Map 3 shows the Bass Coast declared area framework plan.

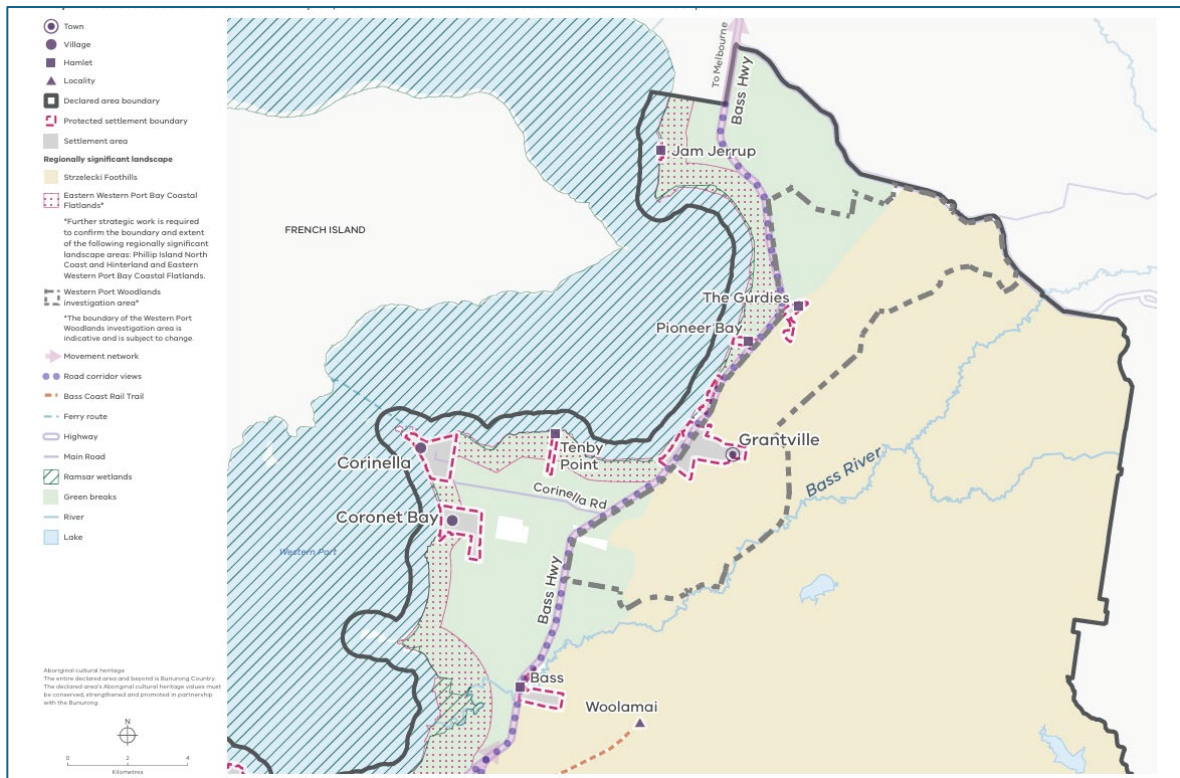
Map 16 to Map 35 form part of the framework plan and show the protected settlement boundaries for settlements in the declared area.

The declared area framework plan must be read in conjunction with the vision and policy domains. Maps provided in the policy domains other than the settlement maps in the Settlement policy domain do not form part of the framework plan, and they are published only to provide context.

Map 3: Bass Coast declared area framework plan.



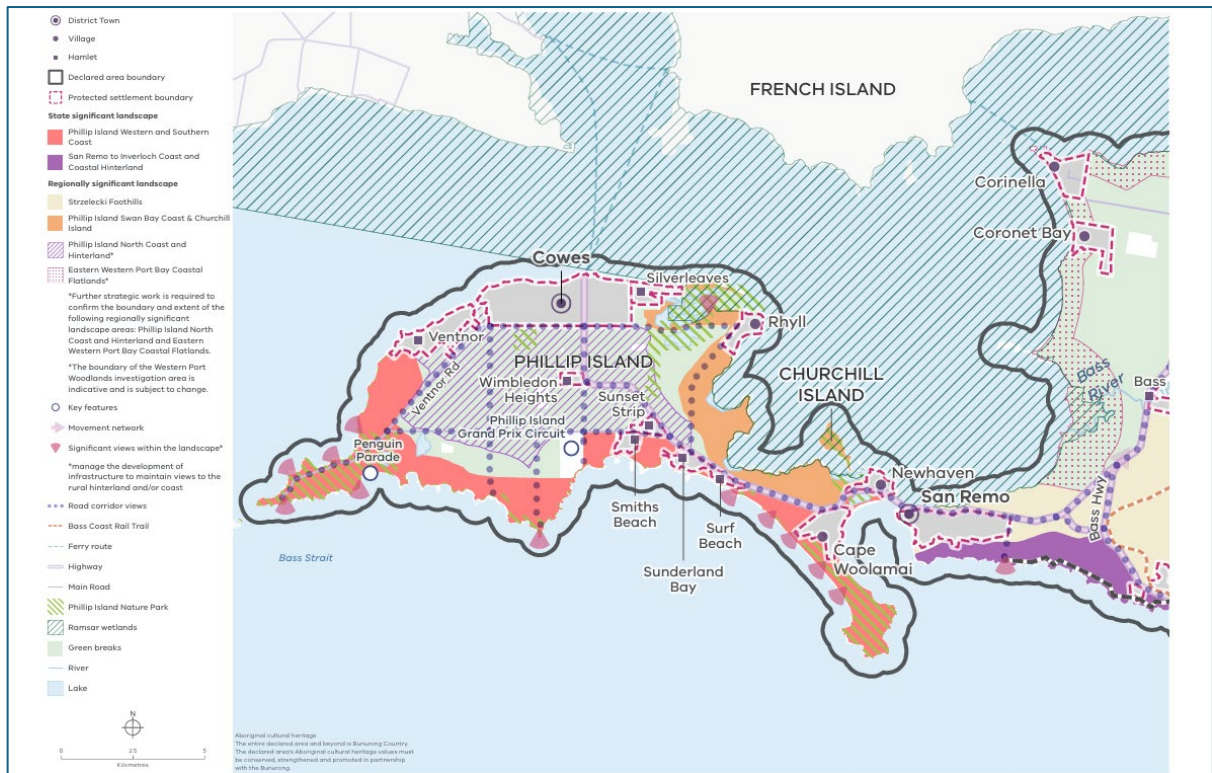
Map 4: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's north-west aspect.



Map 5: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's southern and inland aspects.



Map 6: Bass Coast declared area framework plan, with a focused overview of the declared area's western aspect, including Phillip Island.



Policy domains

Table 1 lists the distinctive attributes that qualified the Bass Coast declared area as a distinctive area and landscape under the PE Act. These attributes interact in complex ways, and action is required for each of the policy domains set out in this section to uphold their value and address the threats they face.

Together, the policy domains set out the long-term needs and other considerations to integrate decision-making and planning for the declared area. They provide a framework for achieving sustainable development and land management outcomes.

The policy domains are:

- **Bunurong cultural heritage**
- **Climate change mitigation and adaptation**
- **Landscapes**
- **Environment and biodiversity**
- **Historic heritage**
- **Sustainable economic development**
- **Strategic infrastructure**
- **Settlements.**

Objectives specified in the policy domains are binding on RPEs. RPEs must have regard to the specified strategies to achieve the objective when performing a function or duty or exercising a power in relation to the declared area.

Bunurong cultural heritage

The Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, whose ancestors have occupied the Bass Coast declared area for more than 35,000 years, are its Traditional Owners. The area is just a part of the complex and broader Aboriginal cultural landscape. The Bunurong people have a deep connection with all aspects of the environment, including the earth, sea, rivers and sky. Over millennia of custodianship, the Bunurong people have developed a complete understanding of how to care for and manage Country.

The Bunurong people's connection to Country has been devastated by colonisation. Land-clearing for agriculture and development has destroyed aspects of tangible Aboriginal cultural heritage. It continues to do so, although the Bunurong people are working to preserve and protect their sacred places, traditional cultural practices and stories.

The Bunurong people value the declared area's coastal landscapes as a food source (such as shellfish). They once established campsites near rocky platforms and where there was access to freshwater. They occupied coastal areas in the warm and hot seasons, travelling along the coast to find food-rich sites. In the colder periods, the Bunurong people likely occupied upland and inland areas: mainly flat areas on ridgelines and hilltops. Inland areas provided different seasonal food resources and shelter.

There are 640 Aboriginal places within the declared area recorded on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. Known places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance are concentrated along the coast, and they include stone artefact scatters, shell middens, burial sites and culturally modified trees: these provide evidence of long-term Aboriginal occupation.

The area would undoubtedly have Aboriginal cultural heritage sites yet to be identified and protected. Much of the area has not been thoroughly investigated, and dunes, sand ridges, freshwater sources, former swamplands, floodplains and areas of remnant native vegetation indicate areas of potential Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.

Loo-ernn

Stories about the land highlight the cultural significance of the coastal landscapes of Bunurong Country. One such story is the story of the Loo-ernn, a gigantic, being-like blackfellow who lived on the Yarra. While baking eels in a ground oven on the Yarra flats, he spotted a swan's feather being carried by the south wind. He traced it to its source, where he found flocks of swans resting on Western Port. After a time, the swans flew off to the east, and Loo-ernn followed them to the Corner Inlet at Wamman (the Bunurong name for Wilson's Promontory).

— Bunurong Land Council

The Bunurong people are the custodians of the declared area and have a deep connection to Country. Aboriginal cultural heritage must be acknowledged, and Aboriginal knowledge and practice protected by enabling the Bunurong to heal and strengthen their Country. A holistic approach to managing the declared area sees oral histories, cultural practices and values shared and understood, as culturally appropriate. This approach will contribute to resilient communities and help increase understanding, respect for and appreciation of the area's rich Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 1

To recognise, conserve, strengthen and promote the declared area's Aboriginal cultural heritage values and work in partnership with the Bunurong people in caring for Country.

Strategies

- 1.1 Acknowledge Bunurong values, cultural practices and knowledge in decision-making about land use, development and land management.

- 1.2 Actively involve the Bunurong people in identifying, protecting, managing and enhancing Aboriginal cultural heritage places and tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

- 1.3 With the Bunurong people, promote and improve community education, awareness and understanding of Bunurong values, Aboriginal cultural heritage, language and cultural practices.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Current and future climate change hazards and their impacts are an existential threat to the Bass Coast declared area and Victoria, and sustained action and greater community resilience is needed.

In coming years, the area is forecast to experience higher average temperatures, more extreme heat events, less rainfall, longer droughts, more frequent extreme storm and flood events and rising sea levels. This will increase coastal erosion, coastal inundation and flooding, and bushfire risk, as well as decrease water security and degrade water and soil quality.

Effective, sustained actions to mitigate climate change — to slow and then stop global warming and to better live with the effects of climate change — need all levels of government, the private sector, non- government organisations and communities to work together. Planning policies and other planning controls are essential tools to achieve these goals.

The response to climate change must be global. In 2015, 196 parties (including Australia) to the 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted the Paris Agreement. The primary goal of the agreement is to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. The agreement came into effect in November 2016.

To implement the Victorian Government’s support for the Paris Agreement, the *Climate Change Act 2017* sets a long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. *Victoria’s Climate Change Strategy* sets out the strategies to achieve this target.

Bushfire risk management

There is a need to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfires through risk-based planning which prioritises protecting human life over all other policy considerations.

Much of the declared area has been cleared and is mostly grassland across a mix of flat ground, undulating hills and smaller areas of steeper topography. These areas generally have a lower fuel load, but areas of unmanaged grass vegetation are vulnerable to ember attack and fast-moving, wind- driven fires. There are also some areas with higher bushfire risk (such as coastal parks, reserves and foothill areas), where the vegetation is denser, and fire behaviour is likely to be more intense and unpredictable.

Land use planning is key to managing and minimising bushfire risk in the declared area now and in the future, and it helps communities prepare for bushfire events. Settlement planning and development activities should direct development away from high-risk areas and include bushfire protection measures to reduce risks.

In planning settlements, careful consideration must be given to the need to protect vulnerable communities and larger populations in bushfire- affected areas, and it must link to emergency management planning.

As well as threatening human life and the environment, bushfires have significant economic consequences. Tourism businesses and destinations may need to close when bushfire risk is high, and agricultural businesses can lose land, stock and infrastructure. Businesses need emergency management and bushfire risk mitigation planning and actions to minimise these risks.

Bushfire risk management that integrates scientific expertise with Traditional Owners' fire management knowledge can protect and enhance biodiversity values, mitigate bushfire risk and other climate change impacts and deepen peoples' appreciation of and respect for Country.

Coastal erosion

The declared area's beaches, cliffs, mudflats, coastal wetlands and estuaries are increasingly exposed to rising sea levels, storm surges and erosion. These climate change impacts alter the natural patterns and rates of erosion and longshore drift: the movement and deposition of sand, sediment and other material along the shore by waves. Coastal modifications (such as dredging, stormwater disposal, coastal protection structures and harbours) can have positive and negative effects on the coast.

Infrastructure (such as recreational facilities and buildings), particularly in low-lying areas, are at high risk of damage from coastal erosion. Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage sites are also threatened. The Bunurong people are saltwater people, and many Aboriginal cultural heritage sites are on or near the coast.

Changing erosion patterns along coastlines force marine and coastal plants and animals to migrate inland. Estuary and wetland vegetation (such as mangroves) will naturally migrate inland to areas less threatened by rising sea levels and permanent inundation. Hard infrastructure (such as seawalls and settlements) close to aquatic vegetation are barriers to the natural inland migration process. More visitors and greater use of beaches may damage dune vegetation and affect erosion if not managed adequately.

Coastal inundation and flooding

Coastal inundation and flooding occurs before high waters damage assets (such as infrastructure and agricultural land) on surrounding floodplains. However, if these assets are under imminent threat, an estuary may need to be artificially opened to prevent damage. There are severe environmental risks with artificially and reactively opening estuaries, including mass fish deaths due to low oxygen levels, exposure of acid sulfate soils and disturbances to wetlands.

Floods often accelerate the erosion of river channels and damage nearby infrastructure and the natural environment. This is particularly so in areas cleared of plants that protect the soil. Low-lying urban and non-urban areas around waterways are at greater risk of flooding. More areas near water bodies and coastal reserves will be unavailable for existing uses at times due to inundation, and the ecology of these areas will change due to flooding and storm events.

Water security

To ensure its future water security, the declared area must plan for declining surface water and groundwater availability and greater demand for water. Demand for water in the declared area is increasing as its population grows and demand from agricultural uses increases, but the amount of available surface water and groundwater is declining.

Run-off-fed reservoirs are the traditional source of water for communities. Alternatives (such as stormwater harvesting and reuse, water sensitive urban design, passive irrigation and recycled water) must be pursued in new development to provide water security in established urban centres and agricultural areas. Additionally, water infrastructure (such as the Victorian Desalination Plant) must be safeguarded within the declared area to better prepare it for climate change. The Strategic infrastructure policy domain also addresses water security infrastructure.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 2

To protect and enhance environmental assets and ecosystem services and support their resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts and natural hazards.

Strategies

- 2.1 Avoid locating new development and retreat existing development from areas with significant biodiversity and/or high bushfire risk to increase resilience.

- 2.2 Utilise Bunurong biocultural knowledge and practices to better manage bushfire risk.

- 2.3 Retain and enhance the declared area's valued biodiversity, landscape character, vegetation and canopy cover (to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk) to sequester carbon and reduce heat island effects in urban areas.

- 2.4 Ensure coastal infrastructure is designed to respond to future climate change impacts and has minimal effect on existing environmental features, including vegetation, natural landforms and natural water flows.

- 2.5 Minimise the disturbance of coastal acid sulfate soils, particularly around Western Port, Anderson Inlet and the Powlett and Bass river mouths.

- 2.6 Minimise the need for artificial estuary openings by mitigating flood risks with alternative methods.

- 2.7 Use best practice water sensitive design and alternative water sources to reduce potable water consumption and protect and improve the health of waterways, wetlands, beaches and the marine environment.

Objective 3

To ensure communities are prepared and places designed to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of rising sea levels and coastal erosion.

Strategies

- 3.1 Avoid locating new development and take a pathway approach to managing existing development and sensitive land uses in areas adjacent to waterways and estuaries or at risk of coastal and riverine flooding and coastal erosion.

- 3.2 Ensure coastal erosion mitigation strategies and approaches restore and preserve natural systems, allow for wetland migration and reduce negative impacts on coastal environments.

-
- 3.3 Ensure coastal and waterway infrastructure is located and designed to minimise impacts on existing environmental features including vegetation, habitat, natural landforms and natural flows of water.

Landscapes

The coastal and rural landscapes of Bass Coast are of outstanding natural beauty. Residents and visitors highly value the declared area's beaches and bays, rugged coastlines, rock platforms and formations, seascapes and bush for the diverse enjoyment opportunities they provide. There are countless panoramic seascapes and views across Western Port and along the Bass Strait coastline. Moving inland, rolling, pastoral hills and a patchwork of paddocks and native vegetation give way to the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges, known locally as Bass Hills, which form an iconic backdrop to the rural hinterland.

The coastal and rural landscapes are important to the region's Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage: there are many reminders of the declared area's agricultural, industrial and maritime past.

The declared area's landscapes are at risk of incremental, cumulative and irreversible damage from human impacts and climate change.

Human impacts can include urban development and encroachment, visitation and trespass, water contamination from pollutants and run-off, vegetation removal and other damaging land management practices. Climate change impacts can include rising sea levels, flooding, storm surges, changes in ocean temperature, erosion and bushfire. Long-term planning for the declared area can help to address these issues and safeguard its landscapes for current and future generations.

The declared area's landscapes are defined by both their character and significance. 'Landscape character' is different from 'landscape significance':

- **Landscape character** is the interplay of geology, landform, vegetation, water form and other natural features, combined with the effects of land use and built development, that makes one landscape different from another (refer to **Map 7**).
- **Landscape significance** is based on the visual values of a landscape (that is, its scenic beauty, with consideration of other values such as Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage and environmental values) and less- tangible values (such as memories or associations) (refer to **Map 8**).

Landscape character

With respect to landscape character, the declared area comprises:

- **Landscape types** are areas with a generally similar landscape character
- **Landscape areas** within the landscape types are separate geographical units with varying local conditions.

The declared area's four landscape types — South Gippsland Coastal Plains, Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs, Strzelecki Highlands and Western Port Localised Flatlands — and the landscape areas within each, are outlined in **Map 7** and the following narrative overviews.

South Gippsland Coastal Plains

The South Gippsland Coastal Plains landscape type, which comprises the coastal and coastal hinterland areas of Gippsland that extend east to around Lakes Entrance, is shown in **Map 7**. In the declared area, this landscape type has four landscape areas: Westernport and Bass River Lowlands, Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland, Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands, and Inverloch and Anderson Inlet.

Westernport and Bass River Lowlands

The Westernport and Bass River Lowlands landscape area is mainly rural, low-lying and flat to gently undulating. It has two areas abutting the eastern edge of Western Port: the northern area, and an area east of Jam Jerrup between the Bass and South Gippsland highways. The larger part of the area takes in the relatively flat coast and coastal hinterland further south, extending from Corinella to Woolamai, a small settlement at the base of the Bass Hills.

Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland

The Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape area is on the Phillip Island north coast, between Coghlan Road at the eastern edge of Cowes to the west beyond Ventnor, around Davie Lane. The area extends inland, taking in central Phillip Island's rolling, rural landscape. The north coast is a sandy, mostly low-energy coastline adjoining Western Port and is elevated in parts. The hinterland features a patchwork of paddocks separated by long, straight roads running mostly north-south that are draped across the landscape.

Native animals, including little penguins, whales, koalas and kangaroos, are major tourist attractions to the declared area, particularly at sites managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands

The Bunurong Coast and Powlett River Lowlands landscape area includes the diverse, rugged Bunurong Coast between the southern edge of Kilcunda and The Caves to the west of Inverloch and a largely cleared, rolling, pastoral hinterland that extends inland to the Strzelecki Foothills. High dunes, sea cliffs, rocky headlands, rock stacks, and beaches are valued landscape features along the Bass Strait coast. The immediate hinterland is largely undeveloped, and in places it supports intact coastal banksia woodland communities and large swathes of coastal heathland vegetation.

Inverloch and Anderson Inlet

The Inverloch and Anderson Inlet landscape area is centred on Anderson Inlet, a shallow, sandy estuary where the Tarwin River meets Bass Strait. The landscape extends inland to take in the slightly steeper and more undulating hinterland to the south of the Powlett River flats, and it extends from the declared area's eastern boundary to west of Inverloch.

Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs

The Bass Strait Coastal Cliffs landscape type occurs in two parts of Gippsland: **Map 7** shows the part in the declared area. The type comprises a basaltic volcanic geology — the Mornington Volcanic Group — which also covers the Mornington Peninsula and French Island. At its interface with Bass Strait, winds and waves have shaped this geology into a varied, dramatic landscape of rugged headlands, sea cliffs and dunes. In the declared area, this landscape type has one landscape area: Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs.

Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs

The Phillip Island Coastal Cliffs landscape area is on the southern side of Phillip Island between Cape Woolamai and around Davie Lane southwest of Ventnor. The area is a varied, dramatic coastline of sea cliffs, granitic headlands and rocky platforms, with an elevated hinterland of rolling hills. Some beaches are small and sheltered, while others (such as Smiths and Woolamai) stretch out in long crescents with surf breaks that attract residents and visitors year-round.

Strzelecki Highlands

Map 7 shows the Strzelecki Highlands landscape type, which comprises the steep, dissected, rugged Strzelecki Ranges and its shallower foothills. The landscape type stretches between San Remo in the west to around Longford in the east and inland to the Latrobe River. In the declared area, this landscape type has two landscape areas: the Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast, and The Gurdies Hills.

Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast

The Bass Hills and Kilcunda Coast landscape area comprises the most prominent landforms within the declared area: the westernmost part of the Strzelecki Ranges, which rises steeply from the surrounding coastal plains, and the dramatic coastline between San Remo and Kilcunda. The coastal hinterland is elevated and pastoral, with the Bass Hills further inland consisting of rolling, cleared pastures.

The Gurdies Hills

The Gurdies Hills landscape area also forms part of the Strzelecki Ranges. It is located at the ranges' westernmost edge and separated from the Bass Hills area by the Bass River Valley. The hills are lower and more undulating, and large areas of remnant forest

and woodland cover parts of them. Within the declared area, they stretch from the shire boundary in the north to just south of the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve.

Western Port Localised Flatlands

Map 7 shows the Western Port Localised Flatlands landscape type, which comprises flat, coastal areas of intertidal mud and sand flats, marshes and wetlands characteristic of this part of Western Port and its extensive tidal range. The landscape type is adjacent to or forms part of the Western Port Ramsar site, a wetland of international significance. In the declared area, this landscape type has two landscape areas: Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats, and Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands.

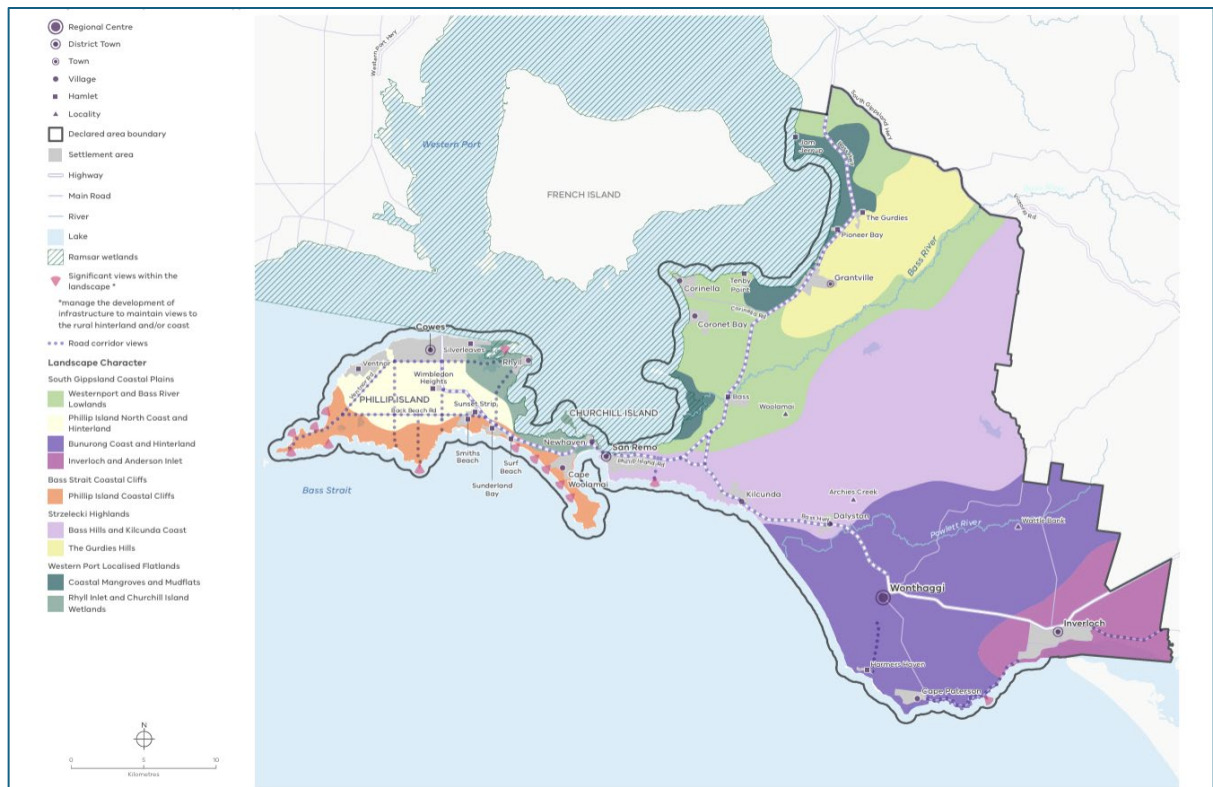
Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats

The Coastal Mangroves and Mudflats landscape area occurs in two locations on the eastern edge of Western Port. The northernmost location hugs the smaller bay on which Grantville is situated, and the other is centred on the Bass River estuary. Both locations have intertidal mangroves, mudflats at their coastal edges and a flat, low-lying, rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks.

Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands

The Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island Wetlands landscape area is on the eastern coastal edge of Phillip Island, and it hugs the low-energy, south-western side of Western Port. It is a tranquil, low-lying landscape comprising wetlands and a rural hinterland and includes Rhyll Inlet and Churchill Island.

Map 7: Landscape character types and areas.



Landscape significance

All landscapes have a character, but not all landscapes are significant. Significant landscapes are areas of land that are valued for their natural, cultural, and/or aesthetic qualities. They can be categorized as having either state or regional significance. State significance indicates that higher levels of protection and management are required.

Map 8 shows the declared area's six significant landscapes, which are the:

- Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, which is of state significance
- San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, which is of state and regional significance
- Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island, Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands, Strzelecki Foothills, and Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscapes, which are of regional significance.

Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast (state significance)

The Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape includes the coast and coastal hinterland generally between Cape Woolamai and the south-western edge of Ventnor, including the Summerland Peninsula and Seal Rocks. It is a varied, dramatic coastal landscape of stunning sea cliffs, granitic headlands, rocky offshore reefs, basalt stacks and high dunes. Some sandy coves are small and sheltered; others (such as Woolamai and Smiths beaches) form long crescents pounded by sought-after surf breaks. The landscape's well-known and highly valued views are of regional and state significance.

Bass Strait's high-energy winds and seas have shaped this dynamic and picturesque coast, its exposed position further contributing to its untamed character. The landscape includes numerous visually and geologically significant features, including the seamed, granitic stack of Cape Woolamai, the multisided columns of The Colonnades, the craggy Forrest Caves and Pyramid Rock's black basalt stack.

Cat Bay and adjacent coves on the north-western Western Port coast are no less spectacular and rugged, with high, grassy dunes, rocky spills, black platforms and stunning offshore basalt stacks and islands. The nightly Penguin Parade at Summerland Bay attracts over 700,000 visitors annually, and Seal Rocks is home to one of Australia's largest Australian fur seal colonies.

The elevated landscape edge and hinterland give rise to spectacular coastal views from the many lookouts and access points: there are far-reaching panoramas along the coastline and out to sea. While quite accessible to visitors, the western and north-western parts of the landscape beyond Smiths Beach have a particularly wild,

undeveloped character. To the southwest, it is open ocean between here and Antarctica.

San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland (state and regional significance)

The San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape is state-significant, and the coastal hinterland beginning slightly east of Kilcunda is regionally significant. The highly valued views along the coast are varied and include views of state significance.

The landscape's coast is one of stunning contrasts and iconic features. The high sea cliffs between San Remo and Kilcunda (where the Strzelecki Foothills meet Bass Strait) include jagged headlands and rock shelves — exposed to and battered by Bass Strait seas — interspersed with sandy coves and isolated beaches. The George Bass Coastal Walk from San Remo to Kilcunda offers commanding views of the dramatic coastline and Bass Strait.

The coastal edge between Kilcunda and west of Inverloch is just as visually arresting, with elevated cliffs and dunes, the iconic Cape Paterson headland and nearby offshore rock formations. Eagles Nest, between Cape Paterson and Inverloch, is a particularly notable sandstone formation protruding from the shore platform high out of the water. South of Kilcunda, the large, scenic estuary of the Powlett River meets the coast; there is a hinterland of intact and significant coastal banksia woodland communities to the north and south. There are also views of iconic structures in the landscape (such as the Kilcunda Trestle Bridge and the Wonthaggi Wind Farm turbines).

As the coastline approaches Inverloch from the west, the elevation of the coastal topography steadily declines, merging into tidal sand flats and the low-energy Anderson Inlet landscape. This shallow, dynamic river mouth, edged by broad, sandy beaches and low, grassy dunes, provides important habitat for endangered migratory birds and other animals.

Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island (regional significance)

The Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape is a tranquil, low-lying landscape along the northeastern coastline of Phillip Island. The landscape has valued views of local and regional significance.

Rhyll Inlet provides a rich diversity of habitat for coastal plants and animals, and it is accessible along boardwalks through coastal woodland and paperbark forest to intertidal mudflats and mangroves. There are expansive views from Conservation Hill across the inlet to Western Port.

Churchill Island is more undulating than the adjacent coastal flats. The island's cleared, rolling landscape is hillier on its northern side, supporting an ancient Moonah forest. The land then climbs to a central high point with historic farm buildings. There were once

several islands off the Phillip Island coast (such as Cape Woolamai and The Nobbies), but Churchill Island is now the only one. Views directly to the east across Swan Bay of Churchill Island are particularly noteworthy: the island appears to float on the still waters of the sheltered cove.

Beyond this landscape's marshy, intertidal coastal edge is a rolling, rural hinterland with indigenous vegetation and exotic shelterbelts. From here, the topography slopes up to a ridge that partially encircles the landscape, providing shelter and a quiet stillness to this significant part of Phillip Island.

Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands (regional significance)

The Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape is a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. The Bass River estuary is a unique estuarine saltmarsh environment in the southernmost part of the landscape. The low-lying landscape has a serene, secluded quality, affording expansive views across this sheltered part of Western Port to the heavily vegetated eastern side of French Island.

White mangrove mudflats are a spectacular feature of this landscape, and they are sensitive to changes in the duration and frequency of inundation, changes forecast as a result of rising sea levels. They provide a vital breeding ground for fish and are an important habitat for shorebirds. There are intact areas of coastal saltmarsh immediately inland of the marine and estuarine tidal flats, beyond which is a backdrop of indigenous coastal shrubs and grasses. Reef Island, a tertiary volcanic outlier joined to the coast by a basalt rubble ridge, is another remarkable feature. Beyond the landscape's intertidal coastal edge is a flat, low-lying rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks with linear eucalypt reserves and exotic shelterbelt planting.

The Corinella Peninsula is more undulating and elevated than the rest of the landscape, and it has a variegated and visually interesting coastal edge. There are 15-metre cliffs at Settlement Point and a substantial ironstone plane (known as the Corinella Fault), which has resisted erosion to project out above the level of the beach. Other coastal-edge features of the peninsula include protected, sandy coves scattered with rocks, substantial bushland reserves right up to the shoreline and small offshore stands of white mangroves.

Strzelecki Foothills (regional significance)

The Strzelecki Foothills landscape incorporates the Bass Hills, The Gurdies Hills and the picturesque Bass River Valley that separates them. These features are some of the most defining of the declared area, particularly the Bass Hills that rise steeply from the surrounding coastal plains, providing a distinctive and highly visible backdrop to the Western Port lowlands.

The Bass Hills are a mostly cleared, pastoral landscape of bucolic rises and gullies. The foothills are steep and incised in some areas and more rolling in others. Exotic shelterbelts divide patchworks of paddocks, inclines and falls, and remnant native vegetation lines roadsides and waterways. By contrast, The Gurdies Hills on the other side of the Bass River Valley are lower and less visually arresting than the Bass Hills. They undulate beneath large areas of remnant forest and woodland, particularly on the western side, providing a heavily vegetated edge to the Bass Highway and a bushland backdrop to the hamlets of Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies.

The Bass River meanders between the hills, creating a fertile valley floor with a serene, rural character. Remnants of riparian forest line the river, alongside which the railway line once ran. There are picturesque, pastoral views from within the dale, framed by the valley walls. The adjacent hills also provide many opportunities for panoramic views out over the grids of roads and shelterbelts of the pastoral plains to Western Port and French and Phillip islands.

Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland (regional significance)

The Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape is a picturesque, rolling, rural landscape with a low-energy frontage to Western Port. Volcanic activity has shaped the island, and its basaltic geology forms an undulating hinterland punctuated by hillocks.

The topography is draped with long, straight roads and is overlaid with a patchwork of cleared paddocks. There are corridors of remnant native vegetation adjacent to roadsides, and swathes of Swamp paperbark populate waterways and depressions. Rows of Cypress pines act as windbreaks and form iconic shapes on elevated horizons. There are numerous brick and iron chicory kilns in the hinterland, many ramshackle and abandoned. They are reminders of an important industry in the past.

The north coast comprises a series of dune-backed beaches separated by rocky headlands, some high cliffs and wide basalt reefs that extend offshore. Red Rock Point is a particularly compelling feature of the Western Port coast, comprising stunning red basalt outcrops that contrast with the adjacent muted sand. Further west, McHaffie Point is likely an eruption centre from the Older Volcanics geological period and comprises 10–12-metre cliffs cut in hard, red volcanic tuffs. Rather more tranquil are the lower reaches of Saltwater Creek, an intermittent stream that is frequently sand-blocked; it is the only valley open to the sea on Phillip Island's north coast.

Objective and strategies

Objective 4

To protect and enhance the declared area's significant landscapes, including their distinctive characters, physical features and cultural values.

Strategies

- 4.1 Ensure landscape and seascape features sensitive to change and threats to them are identified and addressed early in strategic planning processes.

- 4.2 Contain urban growth within protected settlement boundaries, and maintain green breaks between settlements.

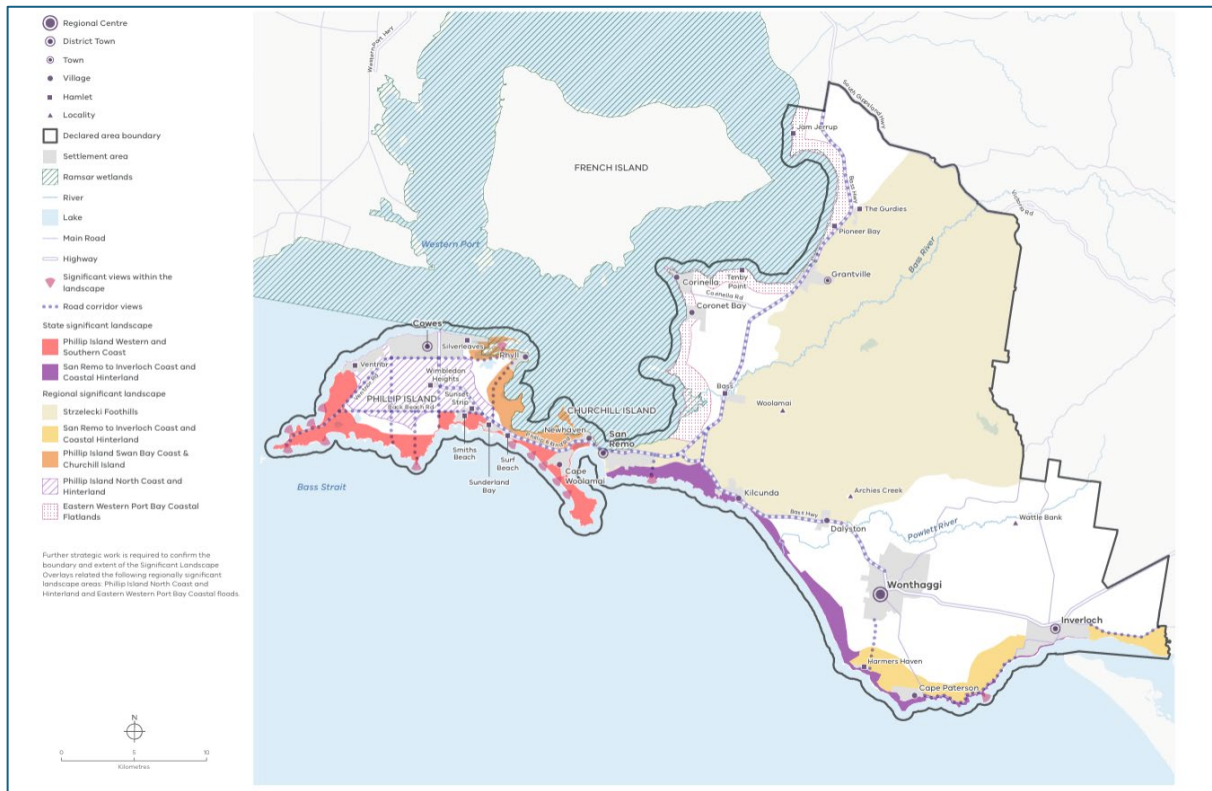
- 4.3 Ensure development responds to the surrounding landscape character and maintains the visual dominance of the natural landscape by:
 - being sited so that works and buildings are tucked into the landscape and use established vegetation or new vegetation buffers to screen development when viewed from the public realm
 - providing substantial setbacks from road corridors and publicly accessible land
 - using building forms, design detailing, materials and colours that immerse buildings within the landscape so they are not visually dominant.

- 4.4 Ensure development is located away from and does not protrude above hilltops and ridgelines, so the natural contours and vegetation remain visible.

- 4.5 Manage land use, development and infrastructure to ensure that the dominance of significant landscapes, views and vantage points is conserved and enhanced by:
 - retaining the rural outlook from inland, main road corridors, particularly the scenic panoramas available of the Bass Hills from the Bass Highway
 - retaining views to the coastline and water from scenic coastal drives (such as the Bunurong Coastal Drive between Wonthaggi and Cape Paterson, and Cape Paterson and Inverloch)
 - retaining and planting native and indigenous vegetation.

- 4.6 Retain and enhance remnant native vegetation in coastal reserves, along road and waterway corridors and on private land (for example, in shelterbelts, along fence lines and on steep agricultural land), where appropriate and to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk.

Map 8: Landscape significance.



Environment and biodiversity

The declared area's natural environment, biodiversity and habitat — its healthy marine and terrestrial environments and native vegetation — provide many social, economic and cultural benefits. They are integral to the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Bunurong people, who, over countless generations, developed extensive biocultural knowledge and practices to manage habitat and biodiversity values.

The main refuges for biodiversity in the declared area are:

- Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park, which combines the Bunurong Marine National Park, Bunurong Coastal Reserve and other coastal and foreshore reserves and adjacent Crown land.
- Western Port Woodlands, which includes the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve, Grantville Bushland Reserve, The Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve, Hurdy Gurdy Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, Lang Lang Proving Ground and Lang Lang Education Area, and private land between these areas.
- Churchill Island Marine National Park.
- Land managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Its biodiversity-rich wetlands — the wetlands of the Western Port Ramsar site and the nationally important wetlands of the Powlett River mouth and Anderson Inlet — are sustained by rainfall on the steep slopes of the Strzelecki Ranges and Bass Hills, which flows into the Bass and Powlett rivers, Bourne Creek and other waterways.

Biodiversity

Native animals, including little penguins, whales, koalas and kangaroos, are major tourist attractions to the declared area, particularly at sites managed by Phillip Island Nature Parks.

The Western Port Woodlands includes a string of reserves that contain remnant native vegetation, providing habitat for threatened species, including the Strzelecki gum, tea-tree fingers, thick-lip spider orchid, southern brown bandicoot, giant Gippsland earthworm, swift parrot, lace monitor and powerful owl.

The wetlands of the Western Port Ramsar provide habitat for threatened species, including the bar-tailed godwit, curlew sandpiper, eastern curlew, lesser sand plover, red knot, Australian fairy tern and Australian grayling. Anderson Inlet and its tributaries provide habitat for species listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, which protect migratory birds in danger of extinction. The risk of extinction is exacerbated by climate change, which

threatens habitat by increasing coastal erosion and inundation, reducing rainfall and polluting waterways.

The Bunurong Marine National Park is characterised by its extensive intertidal rock platforms and subtidal rocky reefs. It provides habitat for diverse marine plants and animals, many of which are of national, state or regional significance. They include:

- Species-rich algae communities (such as rhodoliths)
- Conservation-listed seabirds and shorebirds (such as the southern giant- petrel and white-faced storm-petrel)
- Threatened and critically endangered species (such as the blue whale, southern right whale and intermediate egret)
- The greatest diversity of intertidal and shallow subtidal invertebrate animals in eastern Victoria.

Other endangered or vulnerable species to which Bass Coast is home include the swift parrot, orange-bellied parrot, red-necked stint, grey-headed flying fox, river blackfish and southern brown bandicoot.

Revegetation

Revegetation is essential for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation and mitigating the effects of climate change. As most of the declared area's native vegetation has been cleared since colonisation, there needs to be a focus on revegetation to protect and enhance the environment, as well as prepare for climate change. There are various revegetation approaches, each with its purpose and focus. Three approaches are explained below.

The facilitation of biolinks: A biolink is a connection between two habitat areas that can provide native animals (such as the nationally significant eastern barred bandicoot) with safe transit routes and access to food and water. Biolinks also help improve the genetic diversity of populations and the resilience of native plants and animals to threats including climate change impacts, and they also sequester carbon and help reduce emissions.

Enhancing vegetation on agricultural land: Agricultural and revegetation activities on public and private land can contribute greatly to revegetation, as about 76% of the declared area's land is used for agriculture. Increasing vegetation and retaining significant vegetation on land used for agriculture sequesters carbon and helps achieve net-zero emissions in the declared area.

Increasing vegetation cover in urban areas: Maintaining and increasing vegetation in urban areas can help reverse urban heat island effects and consequent risks to people's health. Vegetation growth in urban areas can be supported by water sensitive urban design and passive irrigation.

What is carbon sequestration?

Carbon sequestration is the process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in soil, vegetation, other materials or underground. Carbon sequestration and net-zero emissions are the main approaches to reducing the overabundance of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Carbon sequestration occurs naturally through photosynthesis: plants remove carbon from the air and store it as carbon in their trunks, branches, foliage and roots and as dead organic matter in forest debris. Revegetation and reforestation increase the amount of carbon plants can sequester. Minimising land-clearing maintains the ability of plants to do so.

'Blue carbon' is when carbon sequestration occurs within coastal ecosystems and marine environments. Mangroves, seagrasses and tidal salt marshes are particularly good at sequestering carbon because the oxygen-poor soil in which they grow prevents the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. As a result, carbon builds up in the soil, layer by layer, with time. Environments with these vegetation types are called 'blue carbon ecosystems'. Blue carbon ecosystems can remove and store carbon from the atmosphere and provide habitat for many marine and coastal species.

Science informs geoengineering methods of sequestering carbon, including carbon capture and storage. Farmers have also sequestered carbon for centuries by creating biochar — a carbon-rich substance made by partly burning crop waste — to enrich the soil.

Water and soil quality

Since colonisation, clearing native vegetation and increasing the extent of nonpermeable surfaces have reduced environmental health and functioning by increasing run-off and reducing water quality.

Clearing native vegetation makes the land less able to withstand rainfall events and filter water. In sloping areas, vegetation clearing increases the risk of soil erosion and agricultural run-off, which washes nutrients into waterways and wetlands, potentially creating algal blooms and damaging aquatic ecosystems. In urban areas, replacing vegetation with nonpermeable surfaces increases run-off that can wash household chemicals, fertilisers, litter and other pollutants into waterways and waterbodies. The consequences for marine and coastal habitats can be devastating: the runoff can disrupt the delicate balance of marine and coastal ecosystems, cause detrimental algae blooms and harm aquatic life.

Permeable surfaces, ground cover and canopy vegetation build the capacity of soil to hold and distribute nutrients. They filter water and reduce run-off as stormwater and pollutants are absorbed and treated in situ. They also mitigate the urban heat island effect in urban areas, providing shade and evapotranspiration that help make living cooler.

Development and more intensive agricultural production can increase run-off that pollutes water flowing into waterways and wetlands. More intense rainfall events can also make this pollution worse.

Managing stormwater is a priority for settlements around Western Port, as stormwater run-off directly threatens the health of the Ramsar wetlands. Stormwater must be redirected in some places, so it filters naturally before flowing into wetlands.

Acid sulfate soils — soils saturated with water, are almost oxygen-free and contain iron sulfide crystals — are harmless if not disturbed, but floods and increased urbanisation can disturb them. If disturbed, these soils can form sulfuric acid that can trigger the release of other toxic elements harmful to plants, animals, waterways and human-made structures. The acid can also contaminate drinking water. Acid sulfate soils are particularly prevalent in wetlands around Silverleaves, Newhaven, Coronet Bay and Grantville; at the mouths of the Bass and Powlett rivers; and at Anderson Inlet.

Urban expansion

Urban expansion, native vegetation removal and climate change impacts threaten the declared area's environment, ecology and biodiversity. Wetlands, coastal environs and waterways are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, stormwater run-off, changes to tidal flows, visitation and trespass and increased nutrient loads and salinity. Hard infrastructure (such as seawalls and settlements) can change wetland and coastal processes by creating barriers and limiting natural adaptation (such as wetland migration and natural beach replenishment).

Expansion of urban areas must be carefully planned to limit stormwater run-off and restore and maintain water quality and salinity levels, particularly near sensitive wetlands and coastal areas. As the climate becomes hotter and drier, bushfire risk also increases in and near settlements.

Agricultural and urban stormwater management, increased vegetation cover and biolinks will improve the area's ecological value.

Responsible management of the Western Port Woodlands

The Western Port Woodlands is an area parallel to Western Port generally extending from Lang Lang in the north to Bass in the south. It includes private freehold land and public conservation and bushland reserves. The woodlands' boundary is undefined and recognised as extending beyond the Bass Coast declared area within the Bass Coast Shire into the Cardinia and South Gippsland shires. While some areas of the Western Port Woodlands are designated as conservation reserves, the overall area does not have formal conservation status. Remnant native vegetation within the Western Port Woodlands provides habitat for threatened species, and there are long-standing

community concerns about the potential impacts of expanded extractive industry activity on the biodiversity values of the Western Port Woodlands.

It is important to balance protecting Victoria's unique biodiversity and environment with the safeguarding of extractive resources essential for meeting the housing, infrastructure and employment needs of Victoria's growing population. These goals need not be mutually exclusive.

Western Port Woodlands Investigation

There is a need to identify and confirm if there are areas with high biodiversity value within the Western Port Woodlands to help conserve them and inform land use planning, including planning for managing strategic extractive resources.

Further investigative work is needed to understand the intrinsic values of the woodlands and the efficacy of current protections. The investigation may include:

- A strategic environmental assessment to determine the geographical extent and significance of biodiversity within the woodlands
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the protection of high biodiversity values under the existing planning and extractive industry regulations. It would address the work authority and planning approvals processes. Consideration would be given to best practices regarding biodiversity and extractive industry planning and whether new or revised regulations (such as planning controls or other interventions) are required to better protect areas of high biodiversity values within the woodlands to ensure a balance with the development of extractive resources to support Victoria's growth.

Any investigation would need to be carried out in collaboration with Traditional Owners. It would involve engagement with landowners and occupiers, community groups, industry and other relevant stakeholders.

It is important to balance protecting Victoria's unique biodiversity and environment with the safeguarding of extractive resources essential for meeting the housing, infrastructure and employment needs of Victoria's growing population

Objectives and strategies

Objective 5

To protect, conserve and enhance the declared area's significant biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Strategies

- 5.1 Utilise Bunurong biocultural knowledge and practices in managing habitat and biodiversity values.

- 5.2 Improve habitat quality and quantity, particularly for endangered animal species, by increasing indigenous vegetation and retaining and enhancing remnant native vegetation to the extent practicable, having regard to bushfire risk (for example, in shelterbelts, along fence lines and on steep agricultural land).

- 5.3 Establish and maintain strategic biolinks, particularly along waterways and coastlines, to enhance habitat and better connect areas of high environmental, biodiversity and ecological value.

- 5.4 Prioritise ecological restoration works in areas of high environmental, biodiversity and ecological value.

- 5.5 Minimise the impacts of weeds and pests on biodiversity values by undertaking best practice land management.

- 5.6 Utilise revegetation to address erosion in coastal and undulating landscapes.

- 5.7 Encourage regenerative agriculture and environmental practices that increase soil health, diversity in food production and carbon sequestration.

Objective 6

To protect and enhance the health and function of the declared area's integrated water system, particularly the significant wetlands and marine and coastal environments.

Strategies

- 6.1 Reduce soil erosion in steep areas through revegetation, undertaking appropriate groundwork and fencing off waterways, particularly in the agricultural areas of the Strzelecki Foothills.

- 6.2 Reduce the agricultural run-off impacts of fertilisers, pesticides and effluent, especially in river catchment areas (such as by revegetating them).

-
- 6.3 Minimise the impacts of high-risk invasive weeds (particularly capeweed, cordgrass and emerging salt-tolerant weeds) by developing and implementing best practice land management and prioritising areas abutting or adjacent to significant habitat and biodiversity.
-
- 6.4 Reduce urban stormwater run-off impacts of household chemicals, fertilisers, litter and other pollutants, especially in locations subject to inundation or near wetlands.

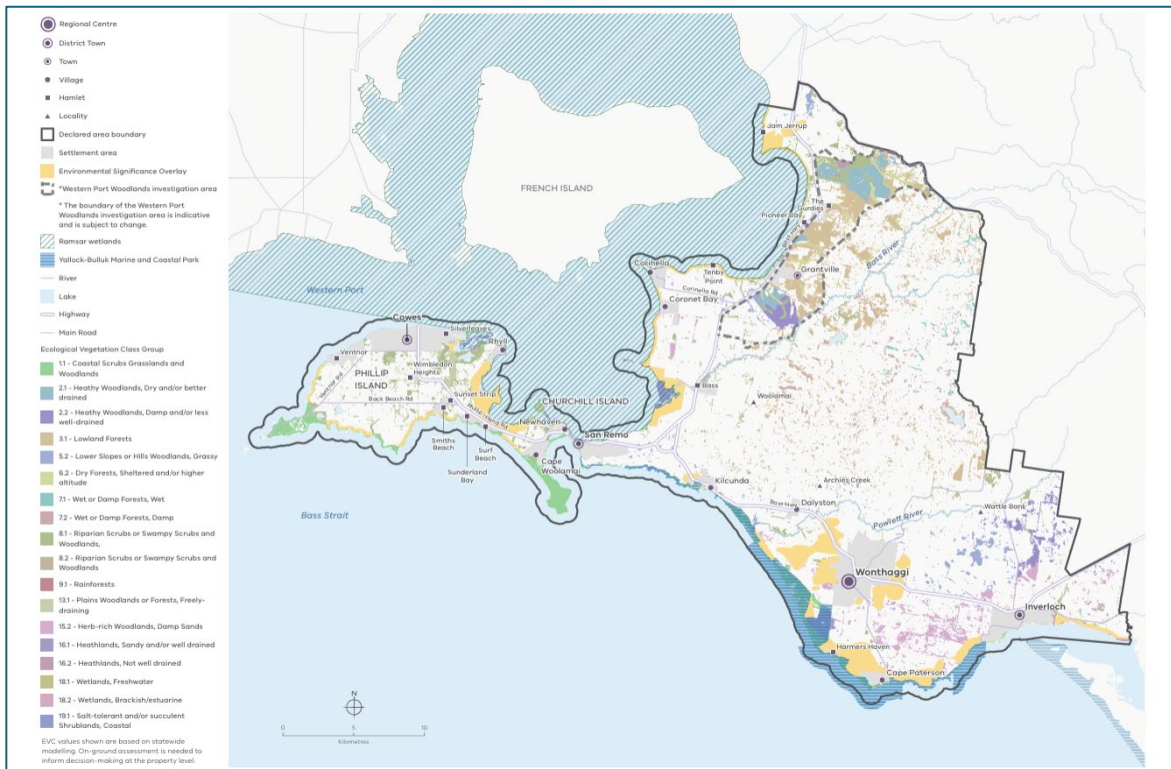
Objective 7

To avoid and minimise human impacts and the effects of urban land uses and development on the declared area's environmental and ecological values.

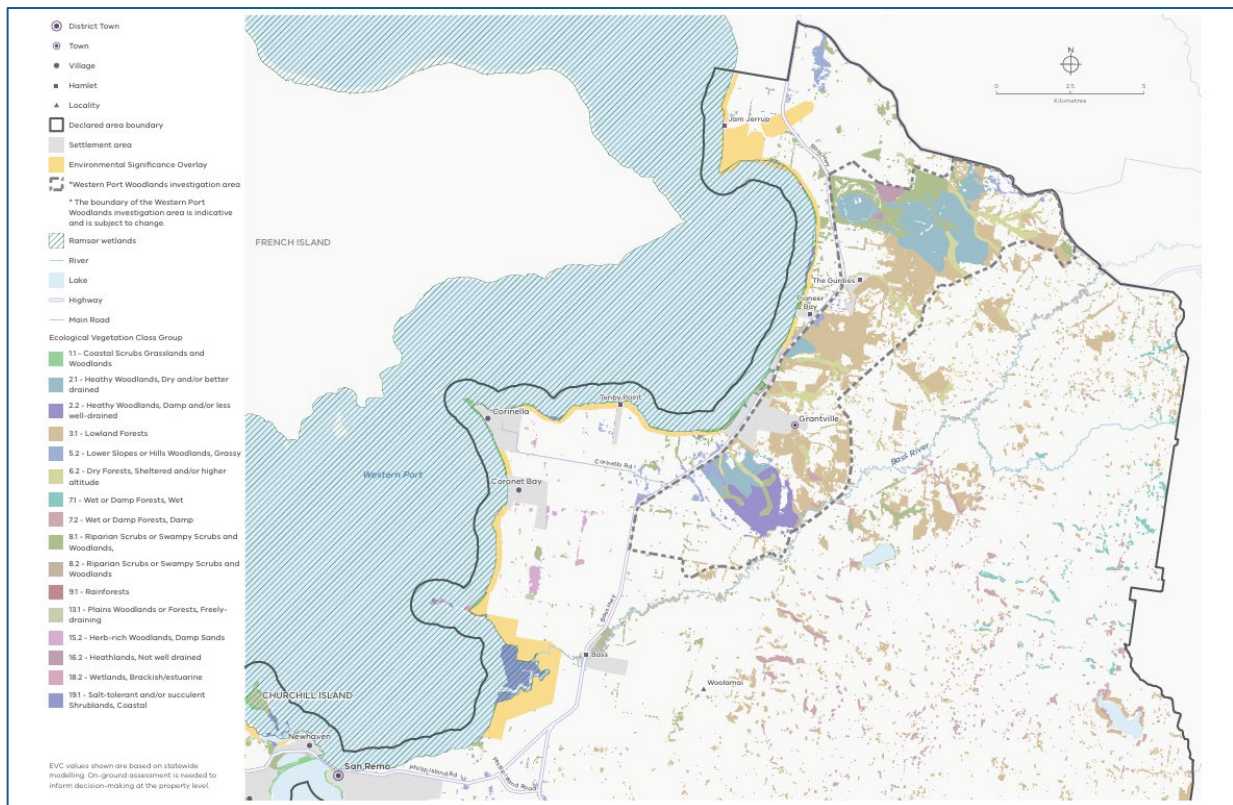
Strategies

- 7.1 Reduce the impacts of land use, development, human trespass, noise and light pollution on marine environs and areas of ecological significance, especially those vulnerable to climate change impacts.
-
- 7.2 Encourage tourism practices to minimise the impacts of increased visitation on the declared area's distinctive attributes.
-
- 7.3 Facilitate sustainable public access to and minimise direct human impacts (such as from trespass and fishing) on sensitive sites and their surrounds.
-
- 7.4 Ensure waste collection, storage and disposal activities do not affect sensitive or significant environs.

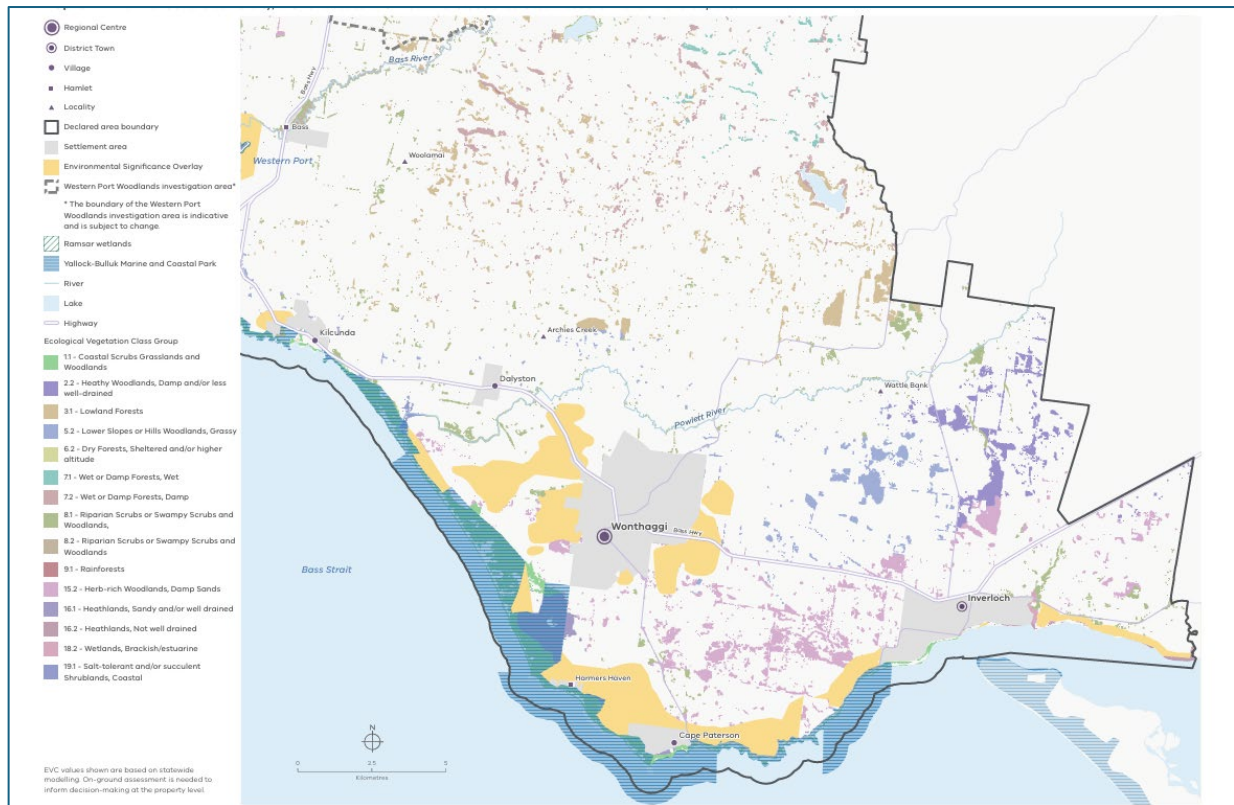
Map 9: Environment and biodiversity.



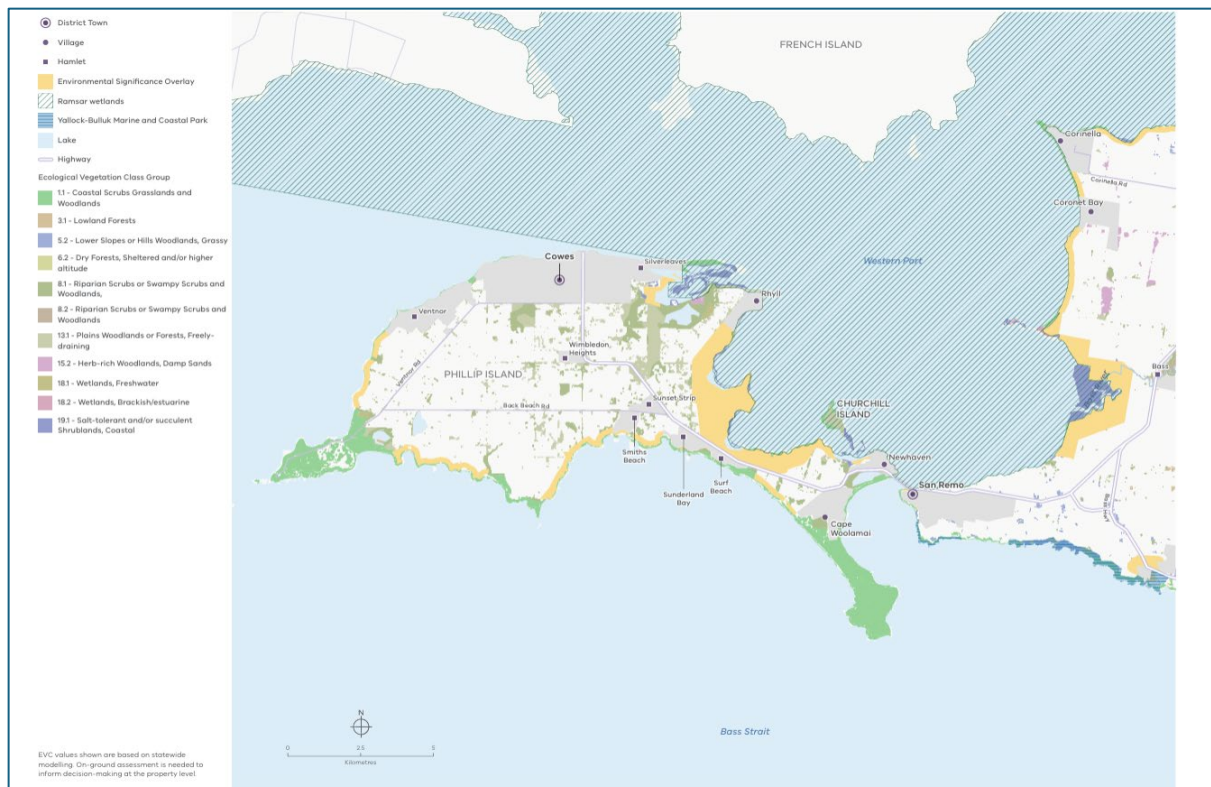
Map 10: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area's north-east aspect.



Map 11: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area's southern and inland aspects.



Map 12: Environment and biodiversity, with a focused overview of the declared area's western aspect, including Phillip Island.



Historic heritage

The declared area offers a window into the colonisation of Victoria. Its many palaeontological and archaeological sites reflect a rich fossil, maritime, early settlement, agricultural (including chicory farming), mining, industrial, convict and leisure heritage.

The declared area, particularly along the coastline near Inverloch and Kilcunda, contains dinosaur fossils and continues to be a highly valued palaeontological research area. Eagles Nest is the site of Australia's first-documented dinosaur fossil discovery, and many fossils have been uncovered: the fossils of two dinosaur species are found exclusively in the area.

The declared area's colonial maritime heritage began with the arrival of sealers and explorers (such as George Bass, after whom the area is named) around 1800. This was the start of the conflict with the Bunurong people in the area and their displacement. The many historic shipwrecks along the coastline evidence the declared area's extensive maritime history. Part of the hull of the mid-19th century wreck of the Amazon is buried on the beach at Inverloch and can be seen when the sand level is low. The main wreck site is located in the intertidal zone at Flat Rocks and is sometimes visible at very low tide. It is the only well-preserved, wooden-barque shipwreck in Victoria, which is described in the Victorian Heritage Register as a rare example of an international wooden trading ship.

Churchill Island was the site of Victoria's first colonial agricultural pursuit in 1801. Agriculture is an important part of the area's history and continues to be an important industry.

As early as 1826, rich coal deposits were identified in the area. The State Coal Mine in Wonthaggi was Victoria's most important black coal mine, and it operated from 1909 to 1968, providing fuel for Victoria's industries and railways. Remnant elements include mine shafts and tunnels, tram rails visible on Cape Paterson beach and the Kilcunda Bridge, built in 1911 on the Woolamai–Wonthaggi railway. The mine's operation also shaped the establishment and growth of surrounding settlements: the early miners built coastal shacks, groups of which, over time, evolved into formalised settlements.

For generations, Phillip Island, San Remo and the many smaller coastal settlements have been synonymous with weekend getaways and school holidays for Victorian families. The declared area has several well-known surfing spots, and the southern coast of Phillip Island was named Victoria's first national surfing reserve. This connection with holidaying and leisure is important to the declared area's tangible and intangible heritage values.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 8

To protect, strengthen and promote the declared area's historic heritage values.

Strategies

- 8.1 Ensure significant historic heritage places are identified, protected, enhanced and sustainably managed.

- 8.2 With the community, promote the declared area's rich historic heritage values, including its aesthetic, historical, scientific and social values.

- 8.3 Conserve and enhance historic heritage through responsible tourism development and practices.

- 8.4 Minimise the impacts of buildings and works on historic heritage places by designing and siting development to respect their distinct cultural characters and values.

- 8.5 Acknowledge, interpret and promote significant historic heritage values in the planning, design, development and management of land use and development.

Map 13: Historic heritage.



Strategic infrastructure

The social, economic and environmental resilience of communities depends on providing, maintaining and upgrading transport, essential services and other community infrastructure. Growing numbers of residents and visitors add to demand for this infrastructure, which must be managed to protect and enhance the declared area's distinctive attributes. There is a need to respond to existing and emerging community needs by providing infrastructure in sequence with development. New and upgraded infrastructure must seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where possible and be resilient to natural hazard impacts as climate change increases their frequency and severity.

Energy

Renewable energy generation is essential for energy security and emissions reduction. Stationary energy — electricity, LPG bottled gas, mains gas and firewood — is the declared area's largest source of emissions. The plan is to transition the area from an energy system reliant on fossil fuels to one powered by renewable energy and for Bass Coast to become a net exporter of renewable energy.

Many renewable energy sources are emerging economic opportunities for the area: wind, solar, small-scale hydroelectricity, bioenergy and marine energy, including wave, tidal and offshore energy.

Transport infrastructure

Good transport networks are essential for economic prosperity and community wellbeing, providing access to jobs, markets, services and recreational opportunities. Land use and transport planning must be integrated for settlements to grow sustainably.

The Bass Highway is a key transport corridor that connects the declared area to Melbourne. Phillip Island Road (including the bridge at San Remo) and the Bunurong Coastal Drive are popular tourist routes affected by peak-visitor-period congestion. They need careful planning to ensure they are resilient to climate change impacts and natural hazards (such as bushfires and flooding). Ferry services between Phillip Island, French Island and the Mornington Peninsula are also essential connections for residents, businesses and visitors.

As motor vehicles are the main mode of transport in the declared area, a more environmentally sustainable future requires a shift to the greater use of active transport, public transport and low- or no-carbon transport alternatives. To make this shift, the

declared area needs ongoing investment in sustainable transport infrastructure and services.

Water security infrastructure

With anticipated erratic weather patterns and less rainfall due to climate change, water security is vital. In the immediate future, integrated water management approaches and the protection of water infrastructure are crucial to improving water security.

The Victorian Desalination Plant, located close to Wonthaggi, is essential for the state's water security; it can provide up to one-third of Melbourne's water needs. The plant separates salts from seawater and produces high-quality drinking water. The water is then distributed across Victoria via a transfer pipeline. The plant and associated pipeline infrastructure must be protected for the long term to make the declared area and Victoria more resilient and better prepared for climate change.

Community infrastructure and essential services

The social, economic and environmental resilience of Bass Coast communities depends on the provision, maintenance and upgrading of community infrastructure and essential services. This includes water supply, waste and resource recovery, electricity, renewable energy and telecommunications, schools, sporting facilities, libraries and health services.

As settlements within the declared area grow, there is a need for governments and the private sector to respond to existing and emerging community needs by providing infrastructure that is in sequence with development and resilient to natural hazards and climate change impacts.

The delivery of infrastructure and services across the declared area's dispersed settlements should be managed in line with the Bass Coast settlement hierarchy and networks (shown in **Table 2**). Wonthaggi is the municipality's regional service centre, and it is expected to accommodate much of the declared area's future population and employment growth as well as its health, education, civic and retail services. Cowes, Inverloch and San Remo are categorised as district towns, with Cowes continuing to service Phillip Island's residents, businesses and visitors in conjunction with San Remo.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 11

To ensure the integrated and timely provision of transport, essential services and community infrastructure that meets community needs and increases resilience to natural hazard and climate change impacts.

Strategies

-
- 11.1 Protect infrastructure in sequence with development to meet the needs of communities, local businesses and visitors.
-
- 11.2 Design infrastructure sensitively to:
- be sympathetic to landscape character and the preferred character of settlements
 - minimise the impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage and environmental attributes
 - maintain view lines from existing and new transport corridors
 - retain remnant native vegetation and increase indigenous vegetation.
-
- 11.3 In consultation with the Bunurong people, ensure the provision, maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure that conserves and enhances Aboriginal cultural heritage values.
-
- 11.4 Ensure transport projects minimise impacts on landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values
-
- 11.5 Ensure the provision of infrastructure that adjoins or abuts significant environmental areas enables habitat connectivity, providing for the safe passage of wildlife.
-
- 11.6 Ensure land use and development within the vicinity of the Victorian Desalination Plant does not impact on its operations including pipeline infrastructure.

Objective 12

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to stationary energy and transportation, facilitating an orderly and rapid transition to an energy-efficient renewable energy community.

Strategies

-
- 12.1 Ensure transport networks within and between settlements consider safe and accessible active transport modes (including walking, cycling and public transport).
-

- 12.2 Encourage the provision of sustainable infrastructure that supports sustainable modes of travel.

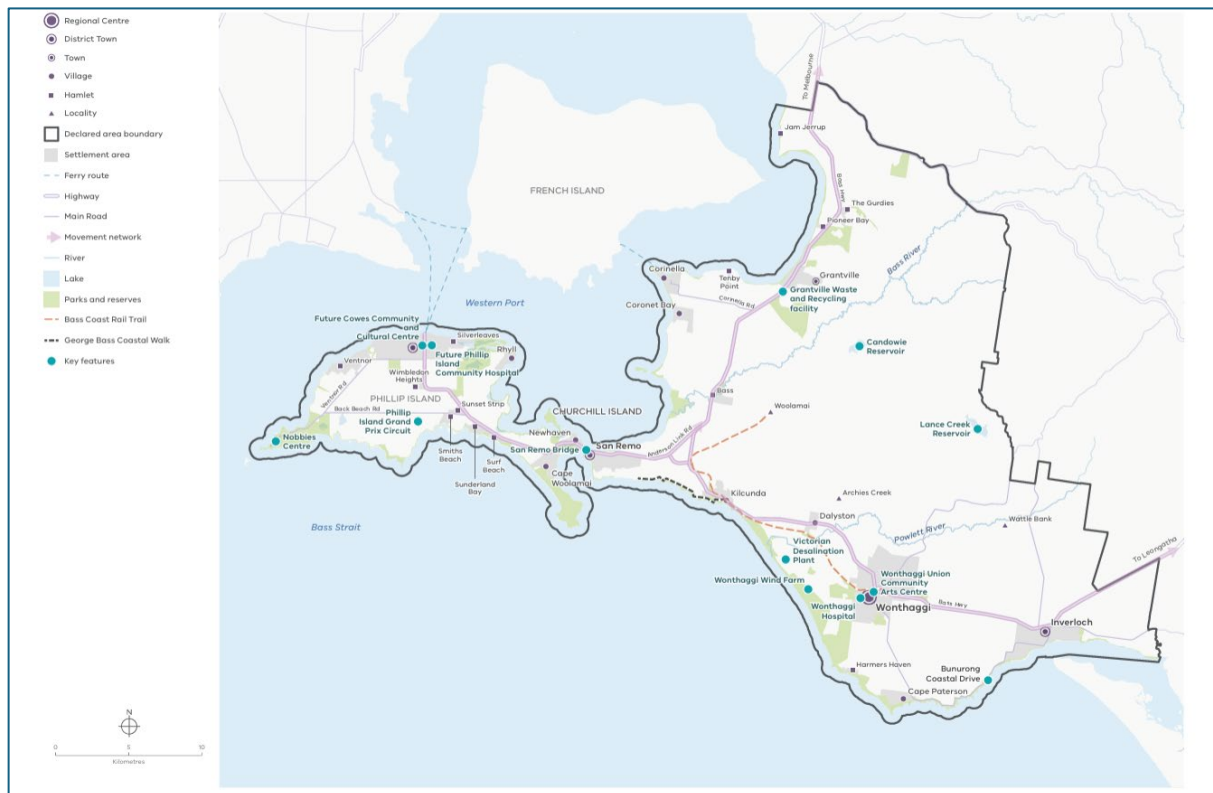
- 12.3 Encourage mixed-use, walkable neighbourhood and town centres that provide for daily needs and are accessible by active transport to reduce the need to use motor vehicles.

- 12.4 Plan for more renewable energy generation and distribution in the siting and design of development.

- 12.5 Encourage the provision of infrastructure that utilises or manages alternative sustainable energy sources.

- 12.6 Encourage the development of renewable energy facilities in locations where they will not adversely affect the declared area's environmental, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage and landscape values.

Map 14: Strategic infrastructure



Sustainable economic development

Bass Coast Shire is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in regional Victoria. It has become a popular location to live, work and invest due to its unique natural environment, relaxed coastal lifestyle, natural resources and opportunities for economic growth. The Shire is close to Melbourne's south-east growth corridor, and it has strategic transport and communications networks and a growing regional centre with various commercial and community services.

Tourism

The tourism industry is one of the main drivers of the Bass Coast economy and a major employer. The area boasts world-class, nature-based tourist attractions, pristine surf beaches and major events (such as the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit) that attract millions of visitors a year.

There is a need to provide for a sustainable, year-round visitor economy. The number of visitors to the region is projected to double from 1.85 million in 2015 to 3.4 million and be worth upwards of \$1.1 billion by 2035.

Nature-based tourism is one of the declared area's key drivers of visitations. By capitalising on its diverse natural assets for tourism purposes in an eco-friendly way, the declared area can:

- Increase public awareness of its environmental conservation values.
- Attract investment in infrastructure for nature-based experiences (such as tracks and trails).
- Extend the length of visitors' stays by providing more varied tourism offerings.
- Support local businesses that benefit from increased visitation.

The establishment of the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park with a new walking trail between Inverloch and San Remo will increase tourism opportunities and highlight the Bunurong people's connection to and stewardship of Country. There are opportunities to increase the diversity and quality of visitor experiences within the declared area through agritourism, arts and culture and recreational and educational experiences celebrating the area's Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage.

More visitors, seasonal fluctuations in visitation and climate change impacts will increase the demand for local infrastructure (such as increasing road use) and put pressure on the environment that attracts visitors to the region. Infrastructure must be designed, maintained and improved so tourism growth is sustainable and the area's

Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage, environment and landscapes are preserved and protected.

The declared area's coastal assets and attractions (such as the Phillip Island Penguin Parade) are major tourism drawcards threatened by climate change impacts, particularly rising sea levels and extreme storm events. To protect the local economy, managing these assets and attractions must include rehabilitating habitat, revegetating, controlling weeds, monitoring the health of wetlands and managing bushfire risk.

The sustainable growth of the tourism industry within the Bass Coast, requires the preferred locations for tourism development to be identified to ensure the declared area's distinctive attributes are safeguarded. This will be informed by local strategic planning led by the Bass Coast Shire Council in collaboration with Traditional Owners, the Victorian government, other stakeholders and local communities.

Agriculture

Farming is a mainstay of the Bass Coast economy, with about 76% of land in the declared area used for agriculture. The climatic conditions are ideal for food production and winemaking. The areas located to the east of the Bass Highway contribute greatly to Gippsland's dairy industry. The open, rural farming landscape is an important contributor to the area's landscape setting and amenity, and it is important for agricultural businesses and tourism.

Farmers must be supported to adapt to climate change impacts and to innovate and embrace new technologies for sustainability, water reuse, value-adding and agritourism.

The declared area must protect its high-quality agricultural land and agricultural operations from encroachment by incompatible land uses. High-quality agricultural land generally has all or most of the following traits:

- Access to quality water that is reliable and affordable
- Sized to support large-scale agricultural uses into the future
- Located on high-quality soil that supports a range of agricultural uses
- Well-located with access to markets
- Part of or close to other industries, forming a cluster.

Natural resources

The declared area's natural resources are strategically important to Victoria. Bass Coast is a critical supply area for the raw materials needed for construction and infrastructure development. The area has active quarries (particularly sand quarries) and Extractive Industry Interest Areas, which indicate the land is likely to contain extractive resources (such as sand, hard rock and gravel) that may be considered for extraction in the future.

Extractive industries require appropriate buffers during operation and rehabilitation at the end of their operating life in a way suitable to the surrounding landscape character, thereby providing a net community benefit. As remnant native vegetation is scarce in the declared area, new industries (including extractive industries) should be directed to areas of lesser environmental significance.

Renewable energy technologies — wind, solar and small-scale hydroelectricity — are live, readily scalable technologies that deserve investment and community support. Emerging renewable technologies — bioenergy and marine energy, including wave, tidal and offshore energy — provide potential economic opportunities for the region and are important ways to reduce emissions.

Building a thriving circular economy

Reducing the amount of waste created and recycling waste reduces the environmental impacts of production and consumption, while enabling economic growth through more productive use of natural resources. Transitioning to a circular economy diverts waste from landfills, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and retains valuable materials in the economy.

Victoria is forecast to create 40% more waste in 2046 than now. Victoria's waste and recycling system must expand to maximise the amount of material recovered for recycling and safely manage the remaining waste. Victoria's planning system can facilitate the expansion of waste and resource recovery infrastructure to ensure facilities are where they are most needed and developed in line with regional priorities.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 9

To build a sustainable, responsible, year-round visitor economy that builds on or complements the declared area's significant landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.

Strategies

-
- 9.1 In partnership with the Bunurong people, facilitate culturally responsive tourism and related economic development that encourages the community to recognise, understand and celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage, rights and authority.
-
- 9.2 Facilitate sustainable tourism and recreation related land uses and development sensitive to the area's landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.
-
- 9.3 Encourage infrastructure design and development that is adaptable to climate change impacts and reduces visitors' impacts on the declared area's landscape, environmental and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.
-
- 9.4 Encourage tourism and commercial development to include net-zero carbon infrastructure (such as electric vehicle charging stations).
-
- 9.5 Improve gateways to settlements and points of interest by avoiding the introduction of intrusive signage and promoting features that enhance significant views and improve the visitor experience.
-
- 9.6 Ensure tourism development is located in preferred areas and is sensitively designed to minimise the impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage, environment, historic heritage, landscape character and significance and natural resource values.

Objective 10

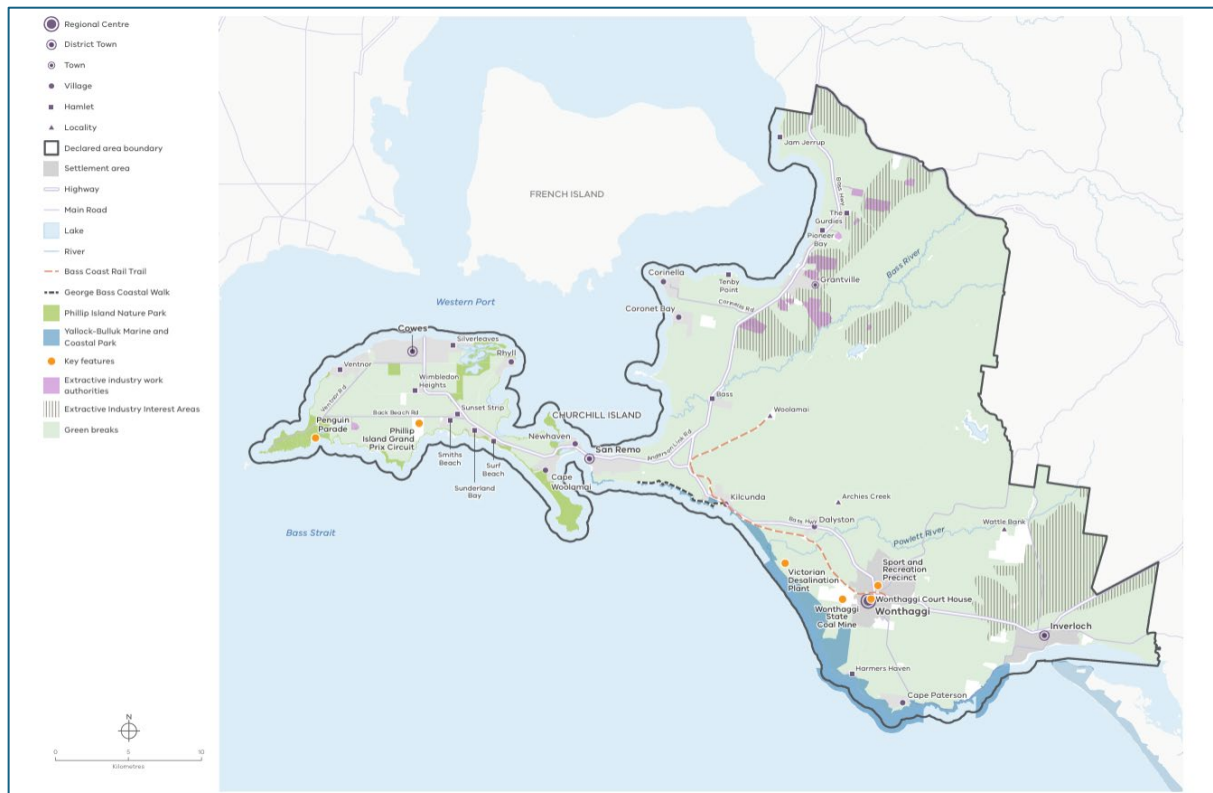
To facilitate a diverse, resilient, circular economy that reduces waste and promotes innovation in the productive use of rural land, natural resources and value-adding activities.

Strategies

-
- 10.1 Protect and manage extractive resource areas from encroachment by incompatible land uses and inappropriate development.
-

-
- 10.2 Ensure extractive industries adhere to best practice measures to minimise impacts on the declared area's attributes.
-
- 10.3 Protect and manage high-quality agricultural land and agricultural operations from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
-
- 10.4 Encourage innovation in agricultural practices (such as regenerative agriculture, sustainable farming, water reuse and efficiency, carbon sequestration and new technologies).
-
- 10.5 Encourage innovation in development practices (such as including recycled materials) in the design and construction of buildings and infrastructure.
-
- 10.6 Restrict the supply of rural living land in rural locations to conserve and protect agricultural practices, natural resources and related activities, and other rural land uses.
-
- 10.7 Encourage practices that reduce waste to landfills including reusing, repurposing and recycling.
-
- 10.8 Encourage the development of facilities, services and innovative practices that support a circular economy that does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental, historic heritage, landscape and natural resource values.
-

Map 15: Sustainable economic development.



Settlements

There are 29 settlements within the declared area, located along the coast or nestled among the vast rural hinterland. The character of settlements and the lifestyles they offer make them highly desirable places to live, work and visit. As a result, the Bass Coast Shire is one of regional Victoria's fastest-growing municipalities.

In 2023, Bass Coast had an estimated 42,729 residents, forecast to increase to 47,408 residents by 2036. Projections indicate a need for about 9,800

additional dwellings in the Bass Coast Shire between 2021 and 2036. The growing population will also need a greater diversity of housing types and tenures for different household types, including for older people, smaller households and people with a disability.

The growing visitor population will also drive the demand for housing, other accommodation and services. In 2021, about 27% of dwellings in the declared area were used for holiday rental or holiday home purposes, and the proportion in coastal settlements is higher. The demand for coastal homes is expected to increase.

To achieve the long-term vision for the declared area, settlements must be carefully planned and managed so development respects their existing or preferred character and unique features.

Decision-makers must recognise, conserve, strengthen and promote the declared area's Aboriginal cultural heritage and work in partnership with the Bunurong people in caring for Country.

The declared area must have an adequate supply of well-serviced residential, commercial and industrial land, good access to active transport, jobs and community infrastructure. It is also essential to protect and enhance the native, indigenous and riparian vegetation that contribute so much to the declared area's character and the canopy cover within settlements that helps mitigate heat island effects.

Settlement hierarchy and networks

Table 2 identifies and describes the hierarchy of settlements — designated as a regional service centre, district town, town, village, hamlet or locality — within the declared area.

Settlements clustered together function as networks, offering housing diversity and shared services. Networked settlements include:

- Cape Paterson, Dalyston, Hamers Haven,

- Inverloch, Kilcunda and Wonthaggi
- Cape Woolamai, Newhaven, San Remo, Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach
- Cowes, Silverleaves, Ventnor and Wimbledon Heights
- Corinella, Coronet Bay, Grantville and Tenby Point

Table 2: Bass Coast settlement hierarchy

SETTLEMENT	DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
Wonthaggi	Regional service centre	A settlement with a substantial and diverse population, employment and housing base. A regional service centre provides all essential services, higher-order goods, education at all levels and access to a large hospital and diverse medical facilities. It can accommodate substantial and incremental housing change and has strong relationships with all types of surrounding settlements.
Cowes	District town	A settlement with a substantial and diverse population. It usually has a dominant town centre. Most essential services are available, including a post office, schools, emergency services, medical and hospital facilities, retail services and accommodation options. There is some reliance on the regional service centre for employment and higher-order services. A district town can accommodate substantial and incremental housing change and has strong relationships with smaller, nearby settlements, providing them with some higher-order services. District towns on the coast are popular visitor destinations. All are connected to reticulated water, electricity and sewerage. They provide diverse housing, services and employment to support residents and visitors
Inverloch		
San Remo		
Grantville	Town	A settlement with a population size varying in line with general service provision and the diversity of housing stock. Services include a post office, supermarket, school, police station and basic medical facilities. There is some reliance on larger, nearby settlements for employment and higher-order services. Towns on the coast are popular visitor, retirement and lifestyle destinations. Towns are connected to reticulated water and electricity, and most to sewerage.
Cape Paterson	Village	A small settlement with moderate population levels that fluctuate seasonally. Basic services are

SETTLEMENT	DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
Cape Woolamai		available, including a general store and basic retail facilities. Most have postal services. A village has strong relationships with larger, nearby settlements and relies on them for services and employment. Villages on the coast have moderate-to-high levels of holiday home ownership. Most are connected to reticulated water, and some to sewerage
Corinella		
Coronet Bay		
Dalyston		
Kilcunda		
Newhaven		
Rhyll		
Bass	Hamlet	A very small settlement with low population levels that fluctuate seasonally. Reticulated water and sewerage connections are generally not available. Hamlets on the coast have high levels of holiday home ownership and some small-scale visitor accommodation.
Harmers Haven		
Jam Jerrup		
Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies		
Silverleaves		
Smiths Beach		
Sunderland Bay		
Sunset Strip		
Surf Beach		
Tenby Point		
Ventnor		
Wimbledon Heights		
Archies Creek	Locality	A small cluster of houses with various lot sizes within the rural hinterland. A locality relies on larger settlements for services. Reticulated water and sewerage connections are generally not available.
Wattle Bank		
Woolamai		

Future development

Most of the declared area's residential growth will be concentrated within the regional service centre and district towns by developing vacant lots, infill and greenfield areas. It will be planned and designed to respect the unique identities of settlements, including their highly valued landscapes, environmental, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values and coastal characters.

Housing change areas

Each settlement will accommodate housing differently, in line with its designation in the settlement hierarchy and its unique features and character.

Planning for housing growth should address the following principles.

- **Environmental hazards, ecology and heritage:** Housing should be located in areas that avoid environmental hazards and sensitive places with high biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.
- **Neighbourhood and landscape character:** Housing should be designed to protect the unique characters of settlements, including their landscape settings.
- **Urban infrastructure and connectivity:** Housing should be located close to services and infrastructure and have good connections to surrounding areas. Where feasible, opportunities to consolidate and redevelop existing urban areas should be prioritised over developing greenfield areas.
- **Diversity and affordability:** Housing should be diverse, considering the existing and future demographics of the area.

Protected settlement boundaries

Every settlement within the declared area, excluding localities, will have a protected settlement boundary to contain urban growth and provide long-term protection for the settlement's distinctive attributes and environs. **Map 16 to Map 35** show the location of each protected settlement boundary. The protected settlement boundaries for Inverloch and Wonthaggi are yet to be defined and are subject to further strategic planning work and public consultation.

Green breaks

Maintaining green breaks between the declared area's settlements is important. As shown on **Map 3**, the green breaks together with the protected settlement boundaries will help conserve landscape, environmental and cultural heritage attributes, strategic infrastructure (such as water utilities), agricultural land and other natural resources from encroachment by urban development.

Green breaks help to establish a sense of arrival and a unique identity for each settlement area by containing their outward growth and avoiding settlement areas coalescing. Development at the periphery of settlements has the potential to impact environmental and cultural heritage attributes and the rural land uses contained within the green breaks. It can greatly change the character of the surrounding landscape and must be carefully designed to achieve a successful urban-rural interface. Subject to addressing bushfire risks, providing for a soft-edge transition between urban and rural areas may be achieved through the siting, scale and appearance of development.

Within the declared area, green breaks are mostly rural land zoned as Farming Zone, Rural Conservation Zone, Public Conservation and Recreation Zone or Rural Living Zone.

Objectives

Objective 13

To plan and manage the sustainable development of the declared area's settlements, to ensure the protection and enhancement of the area's landscape significance, Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage, environmental and biodiversity values, and consistent with the unique character and hierarchy designation of each settlement.

Strategies

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 13.1 | Direct urban development to a hierarchy of settlements identified for growth by designating housing change areas and protected settlement boundaries. |
| 13.2 | Support protected settlement boundaries for each settlement identified in the Bass Coast settlement hierarchy, excluding localities. |
| 13.3 | Limit the expansion and intensification of settlements in high-risk locations, actively reducing the risks associated with natural hazards. |
| 13.4 | Ensure the design of development respects the identities, coastal characters and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritages of settlements and their environs. |
| 13.5 | Ensure development at the periphery of settlements is designed to transition to the surrounding landscapes, integrating development with its environs, landscape character and features, subject to addressing bushfire risks. |
| 13.6 | Ensure development in settlements maintains and enhances views of the rural hinterland, to and from the coast and foreshore, and other significant landscapes. |
| 13.7 | Ensure development in settlements achieves best practice environmentally sustainable design and development for the full life of the development. |
| 13.8 | Provide an adequate supply of well-serviced commercial, industrial, community and other employment land in settlements to support local and regional jobs and services. |
| 13.9 | Encourage the voluntary and proactive use of Aboriginal cultural heritage management plans. |
| 13.10 | Ensure affordable and social housing is located close to town centres and services. |

Settlement planning and management

Regional service centre

Wonthaggi

Wonthaggi is the declared area's primary service and employment centre. There are opportunities for the large-scale expansion of residential, commercial, community and industrial land uses.

Growth will be accommodated within designated growth areas (such as the Wonthaggi North East precinct) and through infill development within the settlement area. Housing change will occur within and around the commercial centre.

Wonthaggi needs a protected settlement boundary to protect the distinctive attributes surrounding the settlement and ensure future residential development is not located in areas of environmental risk. The resolution of the location of the future protected settlement boundary will be informed by strategic planning work undertaken in collaboration with the Bunurong people and relevant government agencies and authorities. This work will also involve public consultation.

District towns

Cowes

Cowes is a vibrant, coastal district town. It is Phillip Island's largest settlement and its primary commercial and community service centre for residents and visitors. It supports a large seasonal visitor community and has a significant foreshore precinct.

The district town's area is elevated and undulating, and the main street, with its activity and avenue of cypress trees, provides a sense of arrival and entry. Residential neighbourhoods on either side of the main street and town centre have an established grid of large, regular-shaped blocks.

Growth will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 16**.

Map 16: Cowes protected settlement boundary



Inverloch

Inverloch is a coastal district town and a popular lifestyle and holiday destination. Its town centre provides commercial, community and recreational services, with residents depending on nearby Wonthaggi for higher-order services.

Inverloch's character is shaped by its setting on Anderson Inlet and the Tarwin River estuary and the coastline of broad beaches, tidal flats and dunes. Areas southwest of the town have dense canopies of trees and coastal shrubs.

Inverloch adjoins the state-significant and regionally significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, characterised by its low-energy coastline within Anderson Inlet (a shallow, dynamic river mouth edged by broad, sandy beaches and low, grassy dunes) and a mostly cleared, rolling, pastoral hinterland. The Inverloch Surf Beach is highly dynamic and has experienced significant erosion of the dunes and coastal vegetation. There are extensive areas of non-developed grassland at the edge of the settlement.

Growth will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant land within the existing settlement area.

Development should have a distinct coastal character. In areas of minimal housing change, development at Inverloch will occur on larger lots with wide frontages. Buildings should be casually sited on lots with low site coverage, providing space for boats, other recreational pursuits and vegetation. Street spaces should be generous and well-vegetated and have informal pedestrian environments.

A protected settlement boundary is planned for Inverloch to protect the distinctive attributes surrounding the settlement and to ensure future residential development is not located in areas of environmental risk. The location of the future protected settlement boundary will be informed by strategic planning work undertaken in collaboration with the Bunurong people and relevant government agencies and authorities. This work will also involve public consultation.

Inverloch's character is shaped by its setting on Anderson Inlet and the Tarwin River estuary and the coastline of broad beaches, tidal flats and dunes.
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San Remo

San Remo is a district town. It is a residential and holiday visitor settlement with a small commercial centre.

Located at the edge of the Anderson Peninsula (where the Bass Hills terminate) and the entrance to Phillip Island, San Remo offers panoramic outlooks: the settlement is prominent and exposed in views across Western Port. Views towards the water are framed and captured by the local street network.

Most of San Remo is within the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, characterised by the undeveloped, rolling Bass Hills, clusters of remnant native vegetation and expansive views to Western Port. Part of San Remo is within the state-significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, a highly valued coastal landscape of stunning contrasts and iconic features, which can be appreciated from the George Bass Coastal Walk: the walk provides commanding views of the dramatic coastline and Bass Strait.

Development should be sensitively designed in relation to the topography, coastal outlook and environs. The foreshore setting of San Remo's town centre is the settlement's main focus. Streetscapes should utilise distinctive native vegetation.

The strategic planning of the growth area and the design of development should address:

- Aboriginal cultural heritage values by engaging with the Bunurong people.
- The state-significant and regionally significant landscapes within which San Remo is located, including the scenic journey along Phillip Island Road by:
 - Protecting the ridgeline that forms the westerly extent of the Bass Hills and the Anderson Peninsula.
 - Using external materials that reduce the visibility of buildings.
 - Transport, drainage and other infrastructure requirements to the satisfaction of the relevant authorities.

Map 17: San Remo protected settlement boundary



Town

Grantville

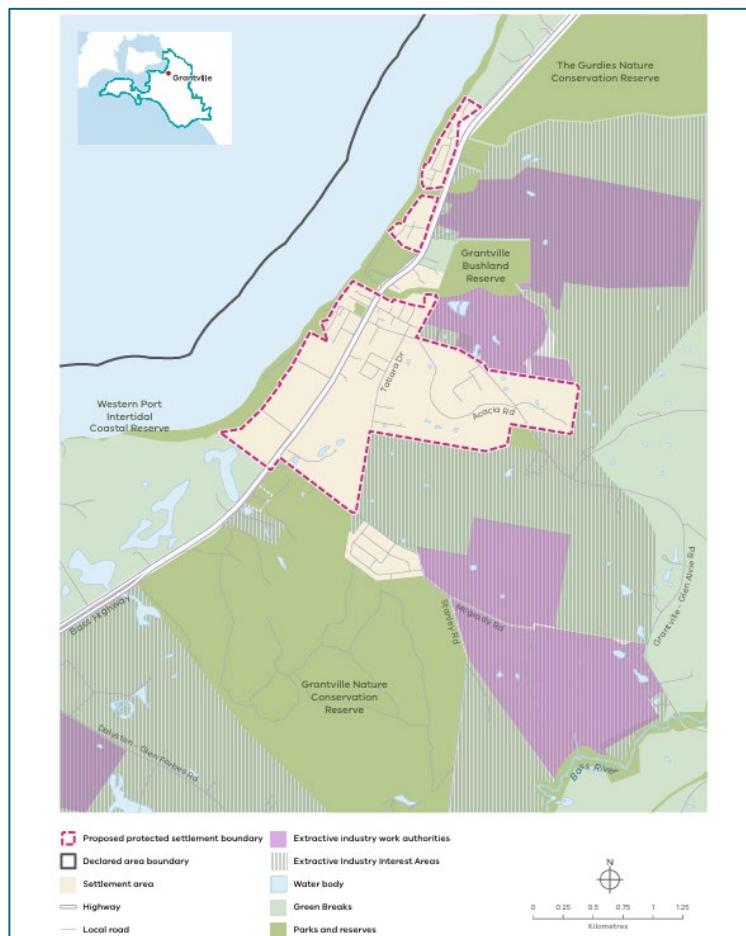
Grantville is a town serviced by a small commercial strip along Bass Highway with retail, community and industrial uses on either side of the highway. It has widely spread residential areas and nearby vacant land and extractive industry.

The part of Grantville between the Bass Highway and Western Port is within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff. The part east of the highway is within the Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which is regionally significant.

Growth will be accommodated by developing infill and greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 18**.

The foreshore precinct should be clearly connected to the town centre. Development within the northernmost precinct at Stewart Street, Malcolm Court and Panoramic Drive should build on the heavily vegetated foreshore character, such as through landscaping the streetscape.

Map 18: Grantville protected settlement boundary.



Villages

Cape Paterson

Cape Paterson is a village that is a popular holiday and recreation destination. Its few commercial facilities mostly service the local population.

Cape Paterson, Wonthaggi and Inverloch are within convenient commuting distance of each other. Cape Paterson relies on Wonthaggi and Inverloch for higher-level and local-scale services (such as retail, commercial, education and health services).

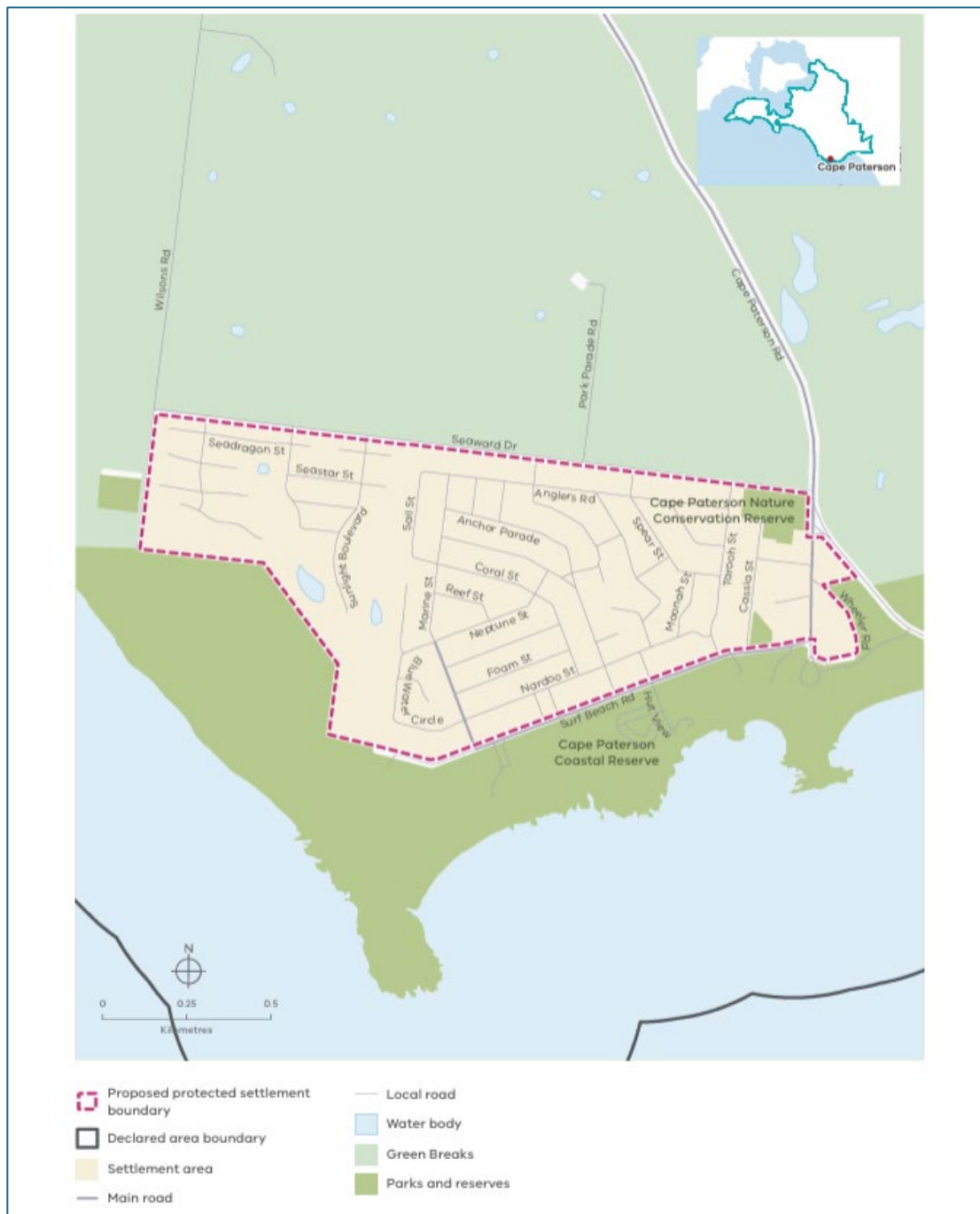
The settlement is located within the state-significant and regionally significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape. This is a well-known, highly valued landscape of stunning contrasts and iconic features, including Cape Paterson headland, nearby sea cliffs and offshore rock formations (such as Eagles Nest).

The settlement's residential character is evolving in stages. Older areas have a modified grid of mainly unsealed roads with vegetated verges and much coastal vegetation. Newer development on land rising to the north is more diverse, while still influenced by existing development and the coastal character.

Growth will be accommodated through development within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 19**.

Development should respect the coastal character of the established areas: there are generous open spaces, native plantings, minimal hard surfaces, and water sensitive urban design treatments. Streetscapes should be informally designed and pedestrian and cyclist-friendly. The built form, materials and colours should respect and complement the landscape setting.

Map 19: Cape Paterson protected settlement boundary.



Cape Woolamai

Cape Woolamai is a village that sits behind a fragile dune on the south-east tip of Phillip Island. It is mainly residential with a small commercial area.

Cape Woolamai is adjacent to the state-significant Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, characterised by a varied, dramatic coastline of sea cliffs, granitic headlands, rocky platforms and beaches and by its elevated, gently rolling hinterland.

The settlement is generally uniform in character, with a grid of consistently sized lots and houses of a similar style. The streets are narrow, with coastal trees and vegetation. It is strongly related to its fragile coastal environmental setting with defined and sensitive pedestrian connections to beaches and foreshores.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 20**, which will provide long term protection for Cape Woolamai's environs.

Development should utilise building materials and colours that reinforce the coastal setting.

Map 20: Cape Woolamai protected settlement boundary.



Corinella

Corinella is a historic coastal village located at Settlement Point at the head of a prominent peninsula with views to French Island and Phillip Island. It comprises mainly residential uses and relies on other settlements for commercial and community facilities.

Corinella is located within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. The internationally significant Ramsar wetland borders both sides of the settlement.

Corinella's informal street layout is a modified grid, reflecting its location on a headland. It is clearly separated from Coronet Bay to the south.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 21**, which will protect the green break between Corinella and Coronet Bay and the hinterland. It will also prevent further linear development along the Western Port coastline.

Development should be designed to be sympathetic to its surrounds. Lot sizes should be consistent with those in the established residential areas, except in the Heritage Bay estate, which has smaller lots and more intense development.

Dwellings should fit in with the coastal character, with choices of materials and colours reflecting coastal themes.

Coronet Bay

Coronet Bay is a residential village located on the eastern shore of Western Port. It has a small commercial centre servicing local needs, a community hall and a reserve in the town centre.

Coronet Bay is located within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, characterised by intertidal mangroves and mudflats at its coastal edge and a flat, low-lying rural hinterland of cleared, marshy paddocks. The village also fronts the internationally significant Ramsar wetland.

Development extends from the shore to a nearby ridge and adjacent farmland. Streets on the western side of Agar Road are in a grid pattern and on the eastern side are more diverse: larger lots provide for low-density residential development.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 22**. This will prevent further linear development along the Western Port shoreline and protect the green breaks south of the settlement between Coronet Bay and Corinella.

Development should be designed to be sympathetic to its surrounds and the village's distinctive character. Development should utilise materials and styles that respect and complement the village's low-rise, coastal, holiday feel.

Development east of Agar Road should be differentiated from the established area, and create a new sense of entry to the village, reinforced by urban design treatments.

Map 22: Coronet Bay protected settlement boundary.



Dalyston

Dalyston is an inland village surrounded by farmland, and it relies on nearby Wonthaggi for most services.

It adjoins the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which takes in the Bass Hills and The Gurdies Hills: the Bass River Valley lies between them. The landscape is characterised by the undeveloped, rolling Bass Hills, clusters of remnant native vegetation and expansive views to Western Port.

Limited development will be accommodated by developing vacant land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 23**.

Map 23: Dalyston protected settlement boundary.



Kilcunda

Kilcunda is a coastal holiday and residential village with some commercial uses and community facilities. Residents rely on nearby Wonthaggi for most services.

Kilcunda sits in an elevated, undulating landscape, with development on both sides of the Bass Highway. Most of Kilcunda is within the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, characterised by rolling hills and clusters of remnant native vegetation. Part of Kilcunda is within the state-significant San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape, characterised by exposed headlands and rock shelves with the spaces between forming sandy coves and beaches.

As well as its stunning and contrasting natural beauty, Kilcunda offers views of iconic structures in the landscape (such as the Kilcunda Trestle Bridge and the turbines of the Wonthaggi Wind Farm).

Limited development will be accommodated on vacant residential land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 24**.

Kilcunda's foreshore, community gathering space, residential hinterland and rural landscape setting should be safeguarded and enhanced through development and streetscapes designed in keeping with the topography and retaining a sense of spaciousness.

Map 24: Kilcunda protected settlement boundary.



Newhaven

Newhaven is a village on the eastern tip of Phillip Island on Western Port, and it is the island's arrival and departure gateway over the Phillip Island Bridge.

Newhaven is distinguished by its narrow, treed, informal foreshore road that follows a series of small coves and promontories.

Part of the village is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, which is tranquil and low-lying and comprises wetlands with a rural hinterland.

Newhaven's growth will be accommodated by developing infill and greenfield areas within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 25**.

The settlement mostly comprises development in garden settings, conveying a relaxed holiday destination. Land close to the coast subject to inundation and a rising sea level is unsuitable for conventional development.

Phillip Island Road provides a sense of arrival to Phillip Island.

Map 25: Newhaven protected settlement boundary.



Rhyll

Rhyll is a village with panoramic outlooks over Western Port and a strong relationship to its foreshore. It sits on a hill, and its extent of tree cover and coastal vegetation reinforces its character. Many streets are unsealed and have grassed, vegetated verges.

Rhyll is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, characterised by a marshy, intertidal coast and a rolling hinterland with patterns of indigenous riparian vegetation and exotic shelterbelts.

Limited development will be accommodated on vacant residential land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 26**.

Rhyll should retain a strong visual contrast between its built environment and the adjacent rural landscape. Streetscapes should have an informal feel and incorporate water sensitive urban design.

Map 26: Rhyll protected settlement boundary.



Hamlets

Bass

Bass is a historic hamlet located at the junction of the Bass River and Bass Highway. It has few services and relies on San Remo and Wonthaggi for most services.

Parts of Bass sit within the regionally significant Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which contains the Bass Hills and The Gurdies Hills, with the Bass River Valley between them. The landscape adjoining Bass is flat to gently undulating and includes a largely cleared, rural, coastal hinterland.

Limited development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 27**. Bass may accommodate residential development east of Statter Mission Road within the protected settlement boundary.

Map 27: Bass protected settlement boundary.



Harmers Haven

Harmers Haven is a coastal hamlet with no services and limited infrastructure; residents rely on nearby Wonthaggi for their services.

Harmers Haven sits high above Bass Strait and is sheltered by dense foreshore vegetation. Housing in the settlement is diverse, and development transitions into the agricultural landscape to the north.

The hamlet is located within the regionally significant part of the San Remo to Inverloch Coast and Coastal Hinterland landscape. The hinterland is a mostly open, elevated pastoral landscape with commanding views of the coastline and beyond. The hamlet borders the state-significant part of the same landscape, characterised by exposed, jagged headlands and rock shelves battered by the powerful Bass Strait seas.

New development will be carefully accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 28**.

Development south of Viminaria Road should retain a coastal, rural-hamlet character, with varied dwellings well set back from the street among established coastal vegetation. This character contrasts with the area to the north, which has larger dwellings on larger, less-vegetated lots.

Map 28: Harmers Haven protected settlement boundary.



Jam Jerrup

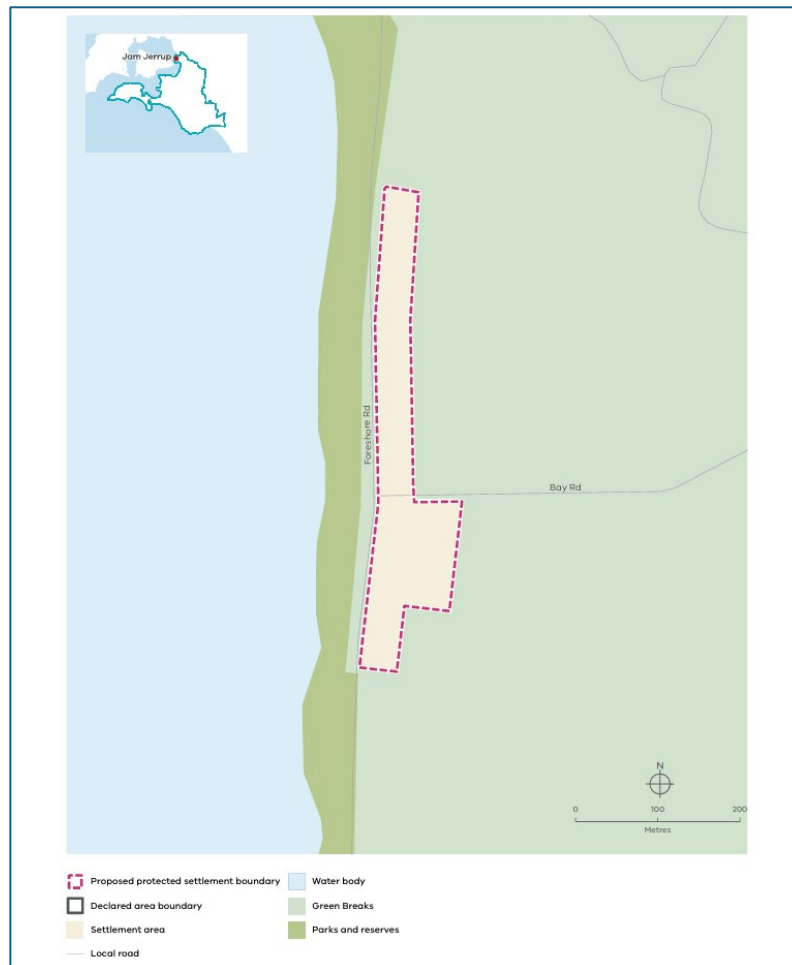
Jam Jerrup is a residential hamlet fronting the Western Port coast. It has no services or facilities.

Jam Jerrup sits within the regionally significant Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, a low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliffs. It is located on an escarpment and has informal, well-vegetated streets. Many dwellings are oriented to and have an outlook over the foreshore reserve and the eastern reach of Western Port.

New development will be carefully contained within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 29**.

Development should respect Jan Jerrup’s distinctive character as a small, ‘hidden’ residential hamlet. It should be kept in scale and height with existing buildings and facilitate views over Western Port. Foreshore Road defines the westernmost extent of development and protects the foreshore. Any enhancement of the road reservation should retain a sense of coastal informality and rely on natural (rather than engineered) systems and treatments.

Map 29: Jam Jerrup protected settlement boundary.



Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies

Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies are residential hamlets with no commercial or community facilities; residents rely on Grantville for services.

Pioneer Bay is located between the Bass Highway and Western Port and is bounded by a vegetated ridge. The Gurdies follow this ridge inland to the north-east. The surrounding landscape of Pioneer Bay includes a reserve and a well-vegetated foreshore area. Pioneer Bay has an informality to its street network.

Pioneer Bay sits within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff. The Gurdies is set back from Western Port within the Strzelecki Foothills landscape, which is regionally significant because of the landform features of the Bass Hills and The Gurdies Hills.

New development will be contained within the protected settlement boundaries shown on **Map 30**.

The built form should be low-scale and fit in with the coastal setting and nearby nature conservation reserves.

Map 30: Pioneer Bay and The Gurdies protected settlement boundary.



Silverleaves

Silverleaves is a coastal hamlet located immediately east of Cowes. It is a sensitive, highly vegetated residential area.

Silverleaves adjoins the Phillip Island Swan Bay Coast and Churchill Island landscape, which is of regional significance due to its marshy intertidal coast, rolling hinterland with cultural patterns of indigenous riparian vegetation and exotic shelterbelts, and visual contrasts.

New development will be accommodated through infill development and by developing vacant greenfield land within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 31**.

Development at Silverleaves should retain and enhance its distinctive, highly vegetated, bush residential character in an informal setting. Development should be sited to maintain the existing coastal and tree canopy vegetation.

Map 31: Silverleaves protected settlement boundary.



Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach

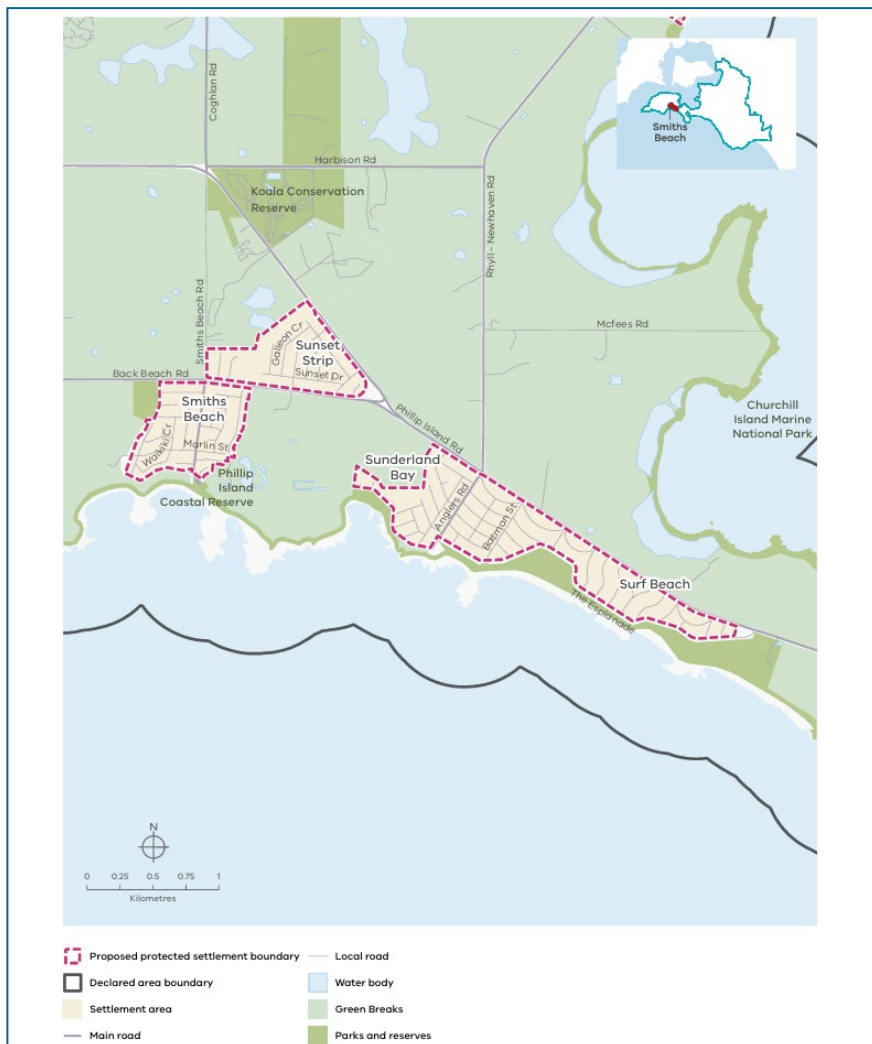
These four, close-by hamlets are located along a section of Phillip Island's southern coastline renowned for its excellent surf beaches. Residents rely on nearby Newhaven, San Remo and Cowes for most services.

Smiths Beach, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach adjoin the state-significant Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast landscape, characterised by its gently rolling hinterland adjoining volcanic cliffs and headlands 30–50 metre high above rocky shore platforms and beaches. Sunset Strip is within the regionally significant Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape, in the undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and has various vegetation.

The protected settlement boundaries shown on **Map 32** will contain the four hamlets' growth.

The streetscapes should be informal, with soft edges and verges and minimal fencing.

Map 32: Smiths Beach, Sunset Strip, Sunderland Bay and Surf Beach protected settlement boundaries.



Tenby Point

Tenby Point is a coastal hamlet with a narrow strip of dwellings extending along Bayview Road, which terminates at a headland and the foreshore. There are no services: residents rely on surrounding settlements for them.

The hamlet is within the Eastern Westernport Bay Coastal Flatlands landscape, which is regionally significant due to its low-energy coastline of intertidal mangroves interspersed with shallow, sandy beaches and areas of low, eroding sandstone cliff.

It is characterised by deep, regularly shaped lots, with native vegetation surrounding dwellings that distinguish the settlement from the surrounding agricultural landscape.

New development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 33**.

Tenby Point's structure and character are defined by Bayview Avenue, which terminates at the coastal foreshore. Development should respect the mainly low-scale dwellings by using simple building forms, pitched roofs and timber materials. The visual impact of development should be minimised by using sympathetic materials and generous front and side setbacks. Streetscapes should be well-vegetated and have an informal nature. Minimal fencing should allow for views through to dwellings and unstructured native gardens.

Map 33: Tenby Point protected settlement boundary.



Ventnor

Ventnor is a hamlet located immediately west of Cowes on the west coast of Phillip Island. It is mainly a holiday destination with limited commercial and community services due to its proximity to Cowes.

Ventnor is located within the Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape, which is regionally significant due to its contrasting combination of basaltic headlands, low-energy beaches, offshore rock platforms and undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and contains a variety of vegetation.

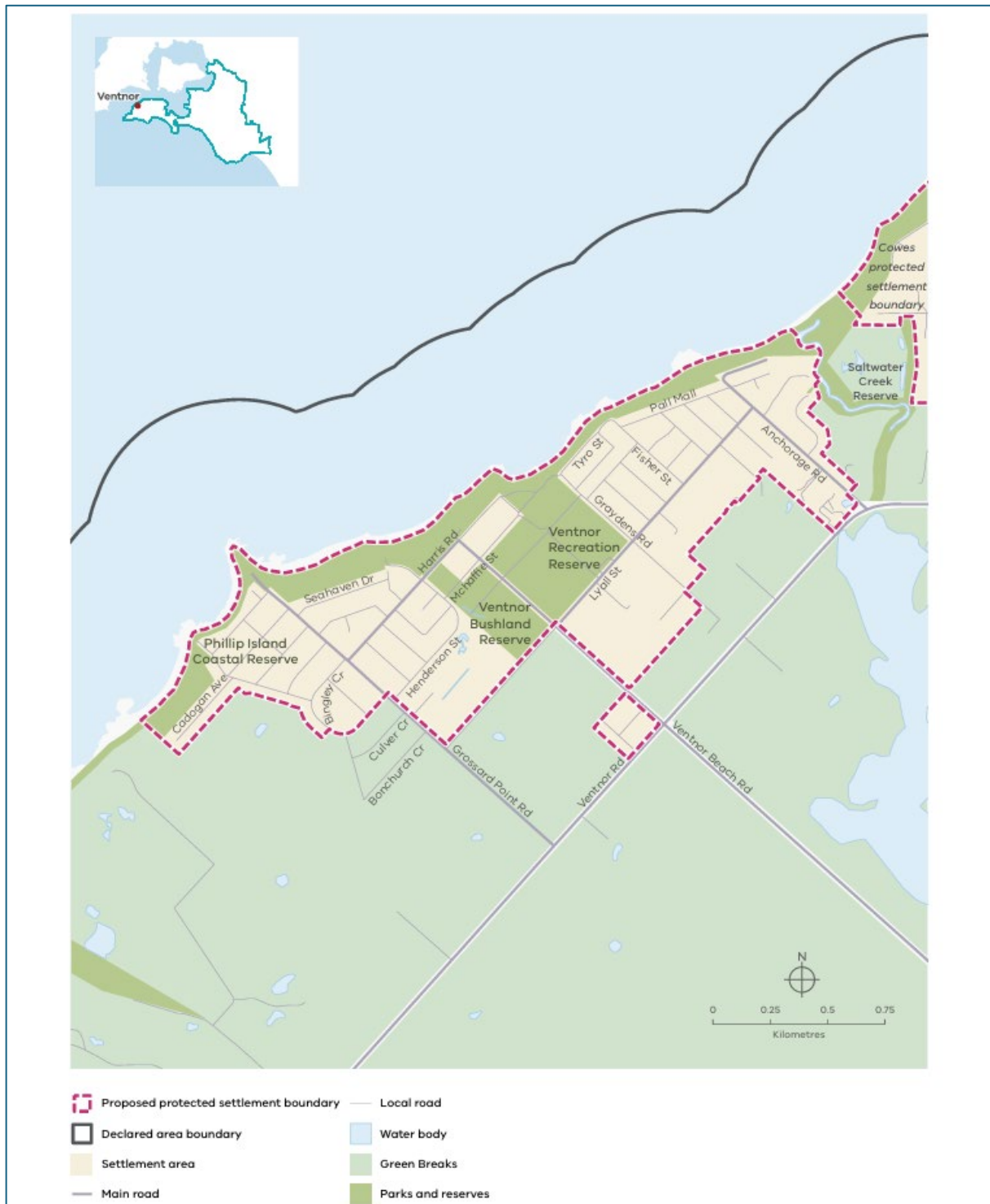
Ventnor Road is a non-urban corridor traversing the settlement and linking to some of Victoria's primary tourist attractions: The Nobbies, the Penguin Parade and the rugged coastline around them.

The hamlet has two distinct residential pockets screened by foreshore vegetation. Its grid of mainly unsealed streets has generous grassed, vegetated verges.

New development will be accommodated within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 34**.

Development should respect the existing built form with informally sited, simple, coastal dwellings.

Map 34: Ventnor protected settlement boundary.



Wimbledon Heights

Wimbledon Heights is a hamlet in the middle of Phillip Island with few services and facilities. Residents rely on Cowes for most services.

Wimbledon Heights is located within the regionally significant Phillip Island North Coast and Hinterland landscape area in the undulating hinterland, which is sparsely populated and has a variety of vegetation. The rural landscape around the settlement is an important aspect of the area's landscape character, and it forms part of an important green break between Phillip Island's settlements.

New development will be contained within the protected settlement boundary shown on **Map 35**.

Map 35: Wimbledon Heights protected settlement boundary.



Localities

The localities of Archies Creek, Wattle Bank and Woolamai are clusters of houses where new development will protect the area's landscape character, and environmental and biodiversity values.

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal cultural heritage	Tangible heritage — Aboriginal places, objects and ancestral remains — and intangible heritage — knowledge of or expression of Aboriginal tradition, including oral traditions, performing arts, stories, rituals, festivals, social practices, craft, visual arts and environmental and ecological knowledge (not including anything that is widely known to the public), as set out in the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> .
Agritourism	Tourism that brings visitors to rural areas and provides them with opportunities to experience and participate in activities related to food, food production and agricultural practices. Examples include visiting wineries and breweries and tours and fruit-picking at farms.
Biodiversity	All components of the living world: the number and variety of plants, animals and other living things, including fungi and micro-organisms, across land, rivers, coasts and oceans.
Built form	The combination of features of a building including its style, façade treatments, setbacks, height and site coverage.
Biolink	A set of linkages through a landscape joining two areas of ‘core habitat’: high- quality habitat essential for the survival and well-being of species. Biolinks are essential to maintaining landscape connectivity for many animal species.
Circular economy	A model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling materials and products for as long as possible. This extends the life cycles of products.
Coastal acid sulfate soils	Soils in low-lying coastal areas and the marine environment that contain high concentrations of iron sulfates. They are relatively harmless in their undisturbed (submerged) state but produce and release large quantities of sulfuric acid when exposed to oxygen through excavation, dredging or drainage, harming coastal and marine environments
Declared area	An area to which an order under the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> section 46AO applies. Map 2 shows the Bass Coast declared area.
Declared area framework plan	A plan required by the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> section 46AV(2) to provide a framework for decision-making in relation to the future use and development of land in the declared area.
Ecosystem services	The benefits people obtain from healthy ecosystems. These include provisioning services (such as food and water), regulating services (such as flood and disease control), cultural services (such as spiritual, recreational and cultural benefits) and supporting services (such as nutrient cycling that maintains the conditions for life on earth).

TERM	DEFINITION
Environmentally sustainable design	Design that maximises efficiency and sustainability with respect to water resources, stormwater management, transport, waste management and urban ecology.
Extractive Industry Interest Areas	An area established to raise awareness that extractive industry is a potential land use and to afford protection of the industry from competing land uses.
Green break	Mostly rural land located between settlement boundaries may have various non-urban land uses (such as agriculture, hobby farms and agritourism businesses).
Greenfield land	Undeveloped land identified for development, generally on the fringe of a settlement.
Habitat	The place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs.
Historic heritage	Historic types of heritage places, including archaeological sites and artefacts, buildings, structures, precincts, gardens, trees, cemeteries, cultural landscapes, shipwrecks and their artefacts and significant objects and objects associated with places. 'Historic' can refer to a range of periods or eras.
Indigenous vegetation	Vegetation local to the area.
Landscape character	The sum of the physical features of an area (such as its topography, geology, waterbodies, vegetation and urban development).
Landscape significance	The designation of a landscape as special or important due to its visual, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage, environmental, scientific, social and other values.
Marine and coastal environment	The outer limit of Victorian coastal waters and five kilometres inland of the high-water mark of the sea: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the land (whether or not covered by water) to a depth of 200 metres below the surface of that land b. any water covering the land referred to in paragraph (a) from time to time c. the biodiversity associated with the land and water referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).
Native vegetation	Plants indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.
Peri-urban area	The area beyond Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary and comprising local government areas with a mostly rural character, located all or partially within a 100-km radius of Melbourne.
Planning authority	Any person or organisation given the power to prepare a planning scheme or an amendment to a planning scheme. The Minister for Planning is a planning authority and may authorise any other Minister or public authority to prepare an amendment to a planning scheme.

TERM	DEFINITION
Protected settlement boundary	A long-term settlement boundary in a declared area intended to protect the valued attributes of the rural hinterland surrounding a settlement by containing its growth. Both Houses of Parliament must ratify any proposed amendment to a SPP to change a protected settlement boundary.
Ramsar (wetland, site)	An area subject to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, which was the first modern treaty between nations aimed at conserving natural resources. It was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 and came into force in 1975. The convention's mission is 'the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world'. Once a wetland is listed under the convention, a country agrees to maintain or improve its ecological character as it was when listed.
Regional service centre	<p>A pivotal town in Victoria's regional development, fostering economic activity and providing a key network of service hubs.</p> <p>The final draft Bass Coast SPP and <i>Plan for Victoria</i> both classify Wonthaggi as a regional service centre for the declared area.</p>
Responsible authority	The organisation that manages and enforces the planning laws for an area. This is usually the local council. It decides whether a planning permit application is approved or refused and ensures compliance with the planning scheme, permit conditions and agreements.
Responsible public entity (RPE)	<p>An agency or body responsible for managing land in the declared area. In the context of declared areas, responsible public entity means any of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Secretary (within the meaning of the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987</i>) - the water corporation responsible for the area in which the declared area is located - a municipal council whose municipal district contains land in the declared area - Parks Victoria - the Victorian Planning Authority - a catchment management authority for a catchment and land protection region that contains land in the declared area - Department of Transport - Victorian Rail Track - any committee of management or trustees in relation to land in the declared area - any Traditional Owner Land Management Board in relation to land in the declared area

TERM	DEFINITION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – any other public entity prescribed to be a RPE in relation to the declared area
Retreat	The decommissioning or relocation of existing structures, assets or uses away from areas that are or will be harmed by natural hazards. Retreat of natural systems may also be required. For example, saltmarsh habitat that would naturally migrate landward in response to rising sea levels may be obstructed by the built environment, and corridors of undeveloped land may be required to allow for the movement of species and functioning of habitats.
Settlement	An area comprising settlement- or urban-related land uses that includes housing, community facilities, commercial and industrial areas and other uses.
Settlement boundary	A boundary that marks the limit of urban development in an area.
State significance	A quality of environmental, landscape, economic and Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage value important to the State of Victoria.
Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)	A Statement of Planning Policy approved under part 3AAB of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> in relation to a declared area
Stationary energy	Electricity (including renewable energy generated and exported to the grid), LPG bottled gas, mains gas and firewood.
Traditional owners	An Australian Aboriginal group with Country in an area. The Bunurong people are the Traditional Owners of the Bass Coast declared area.
Urban heat island	An urban area significantly warmer than surrounding peri-urban areas, mainly because of land use changes — vegetation removal and development — that result in land absorbing more heat from the sun. Waste heat generated by energy use also contributes.

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