



Annual Report to the Victorian Coastal
Council

2016-17



Acknowledgement of Country and Indigenous Australians

The Gippsland Coastal Board respectfully acknowledges the original custodians of what is now known as Victoria; their rich culture, deep affinity with the land and spiritual connection to it.

Gippsland Coastal Board Annual Report 2016-17

1. The Gippsland Coastal Region

The Gippsland coastal region, from Anderson Inlet in the west to the New South Wales border in the east of the state, covers 700 kilometres. It is home to thousands of residents living in or near one of the many coastal towns and iconic Gippsland Lakes.

Gippsland's coastal region includes three municipalities: South Gippsland Shire Council, Wellington Shire Council and East Gippsland Shire Council.

The Gippsland coast remains in a largely natural state, being characterised by diverse natural environments, including important habitat for flora and fauna species protected by national parks, reserves and public foreshore land. Significant tourism and recreation destinations include Wilsons Promontory National Park, Gippsland Lakes, Corner Inlet and Ninety Mile Beach.

2. Operation of the Board

a. Membership

The following Board members were appointed on 22 September 2015 until 30 June 2018:

- Cr Dick Ellis – Chair
- Joanne Andrews
- Allan Bawden
- Michelle Dickson
- Susan Lloyd
- Paul Smith
- Rodney Thomas

b. Meetings

The Gippsland Coastal Board (GCB) has held six meetings in 2016-17.

Table: Board meeting dates

Meeting no.	Date
199	17 August 2016
200	3 October 2016
201	23 November 2016
202	18 January 2017
203	15 March 2017
204	10 May 2017

c. Resources

The board expended its 2016-17 operational budget of \$35,000. Staffing and resourcing has been an issue and the board feels it has reduced the effectiveness of their operations. The Trust Account balance is \$72,960.

3. Business Plan Progression

The board's three-year business plan reflects its objectives under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and includes the actions to implement the Gippsland Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2018. It identifies key priorities which have been the focus for the board's activities during the year.

The Priorities:

1. Contribute to the protection of priority coastal values

The GCB continues to advocate and engage with stakeholders for the protection and enhancement of Gippsland's natural, social, economic and cultural values. A GCB representative regularly participates in the quarterly Coastal Agencies Liaison meetings and Corner Inlet Partnership meetings.

2. Facilitate regional management of the coastal environment and infrastructure

The Gippsland, Central and Western regional coastal plans include actions to develop a visitation levels of service framework and identify where increased use of the coast can be encouraged or where areas are more vulnerable and demand needs to be managed or even reduced.

GCB took the lead in commissioning GeoDimensions to undertake a scoping report for this project. The consultants reviewed existing planning documents prepared by the GCB, Gippsland Ports and the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) and conducted interviews amongst key stakeholders to clarify potential users' needs and strategic objectives for the project.

The final report identifies the need to rank and map priorities for conservation, risk and for recreation supply and demand. Further findings on the gaps that need to be addressed to progress this project point to the need to focus on planning for visitor use of the coast. Parks Victoria have developed a Visitor Experience Framework that includes planning at a landscape scale and an approach to develop priority setting criteria. It provides a useful guide to working on this theme.

It should also be noted that DELWP put up an unsuccessful funding bid for this project and it is currently being progressed by the limited resources of Gippsland, Central and Western Coastal Boards.

3. Adapting to climate change and increased coastal hazards

The State Government's election commitment for a new and more integrated Marine and Coastal Act (MACA) formed a major focus for the board in 2016-17. In October board representatives participated in the DELWP hosted consultation sessions on the review, including sessions in Traralgon, Yarram and Lakes Entrance.

The board provided a submission to the MACA Consultation Paper as the review represented an important opportunity to provide clearer governance arrangements, consider a wide range of

impacts from climate change and address some longstanding coastal issues. Of particular concern was the potential loss of a strong regional presence in coastal and marine planning.

The GCB Chair attended the Ministerial Roundtable in March 2017 which provided an opportunity for the Minister to hear from key stakeholders about issues that they hoped the reform program would address.

A board member also attended the recent NCCARF Gippsland Coastal Adaptation Workshop.

4. Leading in supporting communities to care for the coast

The board co-hosted information sessions on the \$15 million 'Coastal protection infrastructure upgrade program' (seawalls, revetments and groynes) with DELWP in February 2017. The sessions considered co-investment opportunities, a statewide database and greater emphasis on risk assessment to prioritise protection projects. The sessions were held in two locations for Gippsland region stakeholders: Leongatha and Bairnsdale. Both sessions provided important feedback for development of a Coastal Protection Guideline (in prep) and ongoing involvement of communities to help monitor selected coastal sites.

The GCB is planning to host a two-day stakeholder forum in partnership with Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee in October 2017. The focus of this event is to inspire, inform, build coastal networks and highlight the key local issues along the Gippsland coast. The event will include several keynote speakers, field trips, presentations and panel discussions.

The GCB website has been improved during the year and new security measures put in place so that it can continue to provide a useful communication tool for the board, its stakeholders and community groups.

5. Practising good governance

The GCB submitted its three-year Business Plan to the VCC in 2016. It has submitted this year's Annual Report and held six meetings during the year. All members have adopted the DELWP model policies and guidelines for good governance.

4. Implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014

The Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) Implementation Plan (April 2017) provides a progress update compiled by DELWP on all actions in the VCS (see DELWP website). It shows that most actions in the Strategy are either complete or in progress.

The Regional Coastal Plan addresses many actions assigned to the regional coastal boards (RCBs) including developing a Tourism and Visitation Framework to provide strategic direction for how increasing tourism and visitation will be experienced and managed along the coast. The coastal action plans (CAPs) also implement the VCS in the region, particularly the Boating CAP with its focus on boating precincts that help identify investment priorities.

At a workshop to discuss the outstanding VCS actions it was noted that actions on wetlands and estuary management and on water quality hotspots assigned to the RCBs are addressed in more detail in other DELWP strategies and plans.

5. Implementation of RCP and CAPs

In June, 2016 the board convened a Regional Coastal Plan (RCP) Implementation Workshop to ensure that actions in the RCP were still relevant for partner agencies. Feedback from this session has been used to develop a reporting framework for the RCP. The board continues to implement actions in the Boating CAP and consider issues such as sewerage pump out and dredging. The review of the Boating CAP has been deferred to next year. The Estuaries CAP and Integrated Coastal Planning CAP provide a useful planning framework.

Table: Status of RCP and Coastal Action Plans 2016-2017

CAP Title	
Gippsland Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2020	Released 2015, Mid-year review due 2018
Gippsland Boating CAP (2012)	Review required
Gippsland Estuaries CAP (2006)	Reviewed 2011
Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland CAP (2002)	Reviewed 2011

6. Working with Stakeholders

The RCBs Partnership team continues to help co-ordinate the work of the three regional coastal boards and that of the VCC. DELWP provides briefings on key issues at board meetings and regular updates on statewide coastal activities.

The board's coastal liaison activities promote networking, knowledge exchange and community participation (see section 3.4). Board meetings are opportunities to gain local perspectives and over the past year the board scheduled its meetings in different locations across the Gippsland region including Lakes Entrance, Bairnsdale and Traralgon.

During November 2016, GCB hosted a joint meeting with the VCC to enhance relationships and highlight important issues facing the Gippsland area. Held in Lakes Entrance, the meeting included several field sites where speakers provided information on local issues.

The board has included a variety of stakeholders to present at their meetings including Stephen Chapple and Darren James from DELWP, Bob Atami and Andrew Marshall from GeoDimensions and Nick Murray from Gippsland Ports.

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