

Frequently Asked Questions – Western Port, Mornington Peninsula Shire (Region 1)

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

What is the Future Foreshores project about?

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is undertaking a four-year project, Future Foreshores, to explore options to simplify management of coastal Crown Land Reserves (CLRs). Historically, many coastal reserves have been managed by volunteer committees of management (CoMs), local government and state government agencies such as Parks Victoria.

We recognise that the management of coastal CLRs is increasingly difficult due to complex environmental issues such as climate change as well as population growth, ageing infrastructure and changing community attitudes.

We want to improve the way coastal CLRs are managed and create long-term planning and financial stability.

We are proposing new management arrangements to establish well-resourced land managers that are efficient and sustainable and have the expertise to respond to future challenges.

What is a Crown Land Reserve (CLR)?

A Crown Land Reserve is public land that is set aside for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of Victoria. Examples include coastal foreshores, recreation reserves, public halls and rail trails.

Which reserves are included?

In Western Port in Mornington Peninsula Shire, there are nine foreshore reserves:

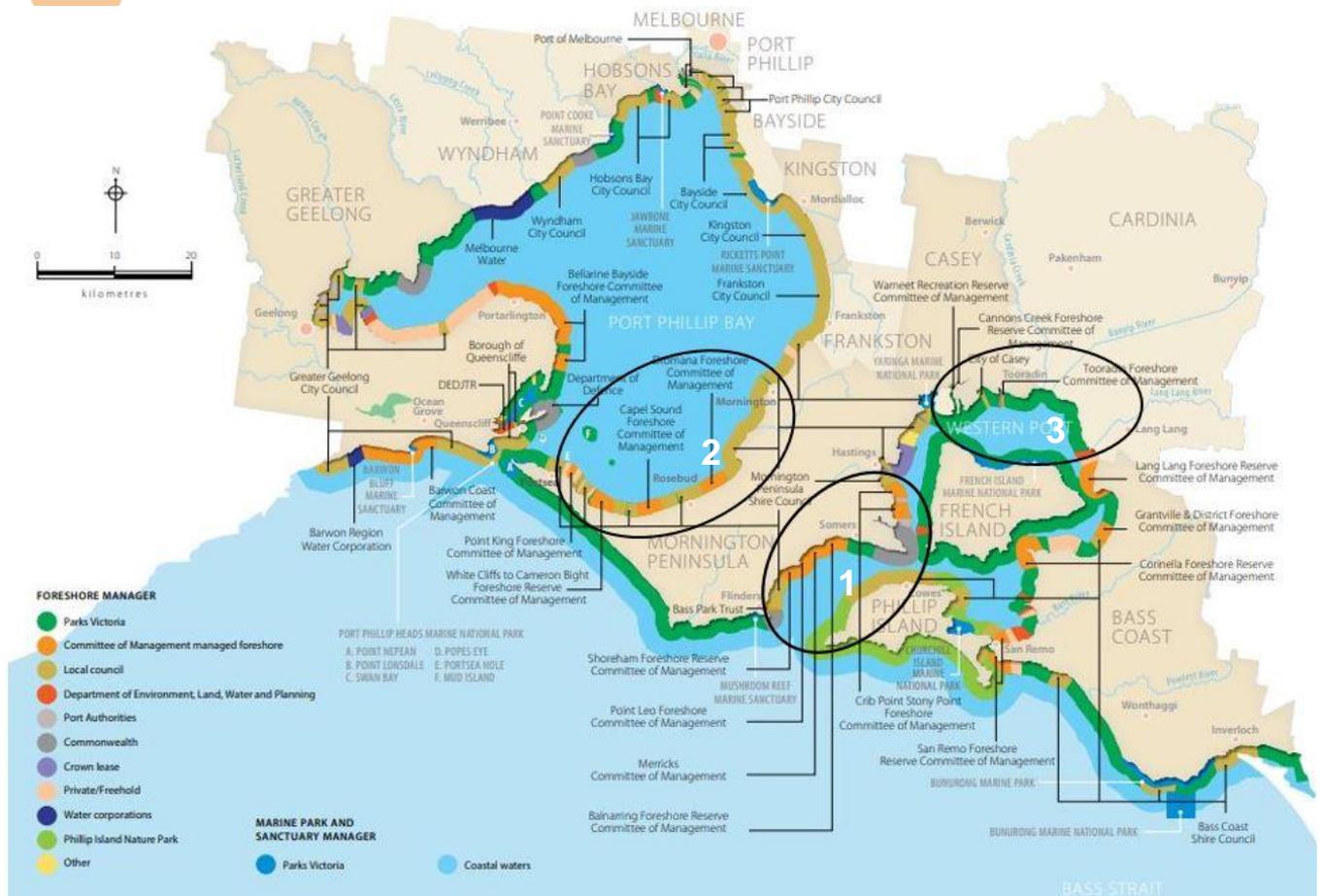
- Hastings Foreshore Reserve
- Crib Point / Stony Point Foreshore Reserve
- Somers Foreshore Reserve
- Balnarring Beach Foreshore and Parks Reserve
- Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve
- Point Leo Foreshore Park and Reserve
- Shoreham Foreshore Reserve
- Flinders Foreshore Reserve
- Bass Park (out of scope)

What regions are being piloted?

Three coastal regions have been chosen as pilot areas to examine options to improve the management arrangements for coastal CLRs. Future Foreshores is initially looking at the following coastal regions:

- Western Port in Mornington Peninsula Shire (Region 1)
- Port Phillip in Mornington Peninsula Shire (Region 2)
- Western Port in City of Casey (Region 3)

FUTURE FORESHORES



How were the three pilot regions chosen?

The locations for the pilot was chosen as these areas of coast faces multiple challenges these include:

- A complex arrangement of coastal and marine managers, with large variation of resources and skills
- Location experiencing increased permanent population growth as well as seasonal population growth
- Location is experiencing impacts of coastal hazards (a coastal hazard assessment has been completed for Western Port and currently being undertaken for Port Phillip)
- Location provides an opportunity to plan coastal management at the scale of a coastal compartment

How did this project start?

In 2018, the Victorian Government committed to a package of reforms to ensure our coastline is protected and managed. In response, DELWP implemented the Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Transition Plan. One of the actions required under the plan is to 'simplify management arrangements for coastal Crown land' to establish well-resourced land managers that manage marine and coastal Crown land on the scale of a coastal region.

Additionally in 2018, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) identified that DELWP had not taken strategic action to identify where CLR's could have more appropriate land managers. Nor had they identified

opportunities for amalgamations, made progress in realigning reserves to other government departments, or sought to understand whether the CoM model is suitable or effective.

In January 2019, DELWP initiated the CoM Reform Program and commissioned a review of the CoM framework. The outcomes of this review have been considered when developing the proposed options for each region.

More information is available at:

- [Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Transition Plan Fact Sheet](#)
- [VAGO Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets audit report](#) and [video](#)

What are the current challenges to the coastal CLRs?

Our coasts face many future challenges; it is important that we plan for these by ensuring our reserve managers have the capacity and expertise to deal with challenges. The [Marine and Coastal Act Consultation Paper](#) outlined the most pressing issues affecting our coastal and marine environment. These are:

- **Adapting to climate change** – planning for and responding to sea level rise, more frequent and extreme storms, more severe erosion, increased land and water temperatures, altered rainfall and ocean acidification.
- **Managing population growth** – Victoria's population is expected to increase to an estimated 10.1 million by 2051, mostly in fast-growing local government areas adjacent to marine and coastal areas. Population growth will drive more recreational use and activities, and competing demands for marine and coastal resources.
- **Maintaining ageing coastal infrastructure assets** – coastal infrastructure assets (such as seawalls and groynes to manage erosion) need to be maintained, replaced or enhanced because of increased erosion and inundation. Resourcing these works continues to be a key challenge.

What is the project approach?

Through the Future Foreshores project DELWP first sought to understand the impact that management variations have on the ability of the CoMs to deliver their obligations and management of the coastal CLRs. Then a co-design of financially sustainable and efficient management models for the reserves will be undertaken.

In September 2019, the Future Foreshores Project commissioned Grosvenor Performance Group to review the activities of the CoMs within the three pilot coastal regions (refer to map) including their accountabilities and responsibilities, their capacity, skills and resourcing.

There are two key deliverables for this project:

1. [Current State Analysis Reports](#) for three regions to outline a shared understanding of the current CoMs and funding models, and resourcing of coastal land managers, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
2. [Draft Options Paper](#) to provide management and financial model options for the three coastal regions that considers governance, financial and asset management, and volunteer involvement.

CROWN LAND RESERVES MANAGEMENT

Who is currently managing the Western Port Region reserves?

The nine reserves in this region are run by a combination of local government, Parks Victoria (temporarily), and category two voluntary Committee of Management.

- Hastings Foreshore Reserve (MPSC)
- Crib Point / Stony Point Foreshore Reserve (CoM category 2)
- Somers Foreshore Reserve (Parks Victoria)
- Balnarring Beach Foreshore and Parks Reserve (CoM category 2)
- Merricks Beach Foreshore Reserve (CoM category 2)
- Point Leo Foreshore Park and Reserve (CoM category 2)
- Shoreham Foreshore Reserve (CoM category 2)
- Flinders Foreshore Reserve (MPSC)
- Bass Park (Bass Park Trust) (*out of scope*)

How are the voluntary Committee of Management categories defined?

A Categorisation Framework has been developed by DELWP whereby CoMs are allocated across four categories based on standard criteria, with each category having a tailored oversight and support regime. Whilst the focus of this framework is the local volunteer CoMs, bodies with a broader role can be appointed as CoMs, for example, local councils, Parks Victoria and water corporations.

[Find out more about Committee of Management.](#)

What is a Committee of Management (CoM)?

Committees of Management (CoM) operate under the Crown Land Reserves Act (1978); their role is to 'manage, improve, maintain and control' an allocated CLR for the purposes for which it is reserved. The committee is accountable for its actions and decisions to the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.

[Watch this video](#) to learn more about the CoM.

What is the role of DELWP in managing CLR's?

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) oversees and supports committees of management on behalf of the Minister.

DELWP provide information or referrals on general matters, such as:

- fire protection
- environmental works, including the conservation and protection of flora and fauna, land restoration, and pest and animal control
- current grants programs
- native title
- insurance
- freedom of information
- conservation and protection of cultural heritage.

CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS REPORT

What is the Current State Analysis Report?

In September 2019 the Future Foreshores Project commissioned Grosvenor Performance Group to undertake a review on the activities of the CoMs within the region.

The purpose of the [Current Analysis Report](#) is to synthesise desktop review, data and consultation findings to present to DELWP and CoMs, relating to:

1. Financial sustainability analysis – reviewing financial records (cash flow, income, expenditure, fees and charges, leases and licences, planned upgrades and maintenance, funding streams, grants etc.)
2. Reserve management responsibilities – management plans, number and role of employees, availability of volunteers and committee members, current contracts, risk management
3. Assets – number, type, current state and upgrades required, including ability of CoM to have appropriate revenue streams and resources to replace and maintain coastal protection and infrastructure assets
4. Review Victorian Environment Assessment Council coastal reserve maps to get an indication of the values and uses of the coastal reserves.

The reports consider the recommendations from the [CoM Framework](#) review undertaken and builds upon rather than re-prosecutes the issues raised in the [VAGO audit reports](#) and other reports relating to Crown Land and Committees of Management.

The report presents findings on a regional level with more detailed findings for each CoM in the attachments.

What were the findings of the Current State Analysis?

The Current State Analysis includes a high-level analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Western Port, Mornington Peninsula Shire region. Key findings are summarised below:

Strengths

- Passionate CoMs with local expertise and community relationships that contribute a range of skills
- Significant social capital generated through CoM and volunteers
- Overheads are low and achieving value through local contracting
- Community identity and needs are addressed under the current structure
- In some instances, CoM have self-organised to support each other across boundaries

Weaknesses

- Difficult to recruit members and volunteers for many CoMs, there is risk of volunteer being burnout and ageing
- Ineffective risk and asset management approaches
- Asset repair and upgrades dependent on financial situation, lacking long term strategy

- Local priority setting can be disruptive and inefficient when addressing common issues such as including land care
- Financial positions between CoMs differ greatly resulting in inequitable maintenance
- CoMs are not equipped to deal with the increasing complexity of environmental issues

Opportunities

- Plan for foreshores across larger regions to achieve greater consistency and efficiency
- Create new shared services across neighbouring CoMs
- Establish training and common policy, procedures and tools to achieve minimum standards across areas
- Consider efficient ways for CoM to tap into centralised specialist skills
- Consolidate some or all CoMs to achieve better economy of scale

Threats

- Better Boating Policy may significantly impact Crib Point revenue
- Four CoMs are highly dependent on camping fees creating a single failure point should any policy change occur
- CoM and volunteers ageing and burnout risks the current model becoming unsustainable
- Changes to current model may deter some volunteers and deteriorate social capital
- Commercial and income generating activities can introduce greater amenity and management costs and environmental risks
- Risk of public safety as a result of poor asset management practices

DRAFT OPTIONS FRAMEWORK AND PAPER

What is the Options Framework?

An Options Framework is applied to the regions and designed to be used across the State should this pilot be scaled. It is comprised of:

- Options criteria – which is based on the CoM Outcomes Framework
- Rating scale – applying a score to assess and compare options
- Change continuum – detailing varying levels of change from incremental through to transformational change which are mapped along continuums of impact and difficulty (of implementation)
- Modules – which set out six lenses through which to explore potential management arrangements. These are later customised for each region and the modules are uniquely combined to form the options each region.

What is the Draft Options Paper?

Based on the evidence presented in the [Current State Analysis Report](#), Grosvenor Performance Group developed a [Draft Options Paper](#) for each region to provide draft management and financial model options. The options are based on the Options Framework and consider governance, financial and asset management, and volunteer involvement. The Current State Analysis Report should be used in conjunction with the Draft Options Paper.

The paper provides an Options Framework that is applied across the three coastal regions within the scope of the Future Foreshores pilot project.

It also presents the options for each region. It contains an overview of the modules and the combination of these modules; which form the options specific to this region. The application of each option is discussed in greater detail, with implementation considerations flagged.

Each option is then assessed against the Options Criteria and high-level comparative analysis is provided.

How were the management options developed?

The draft management options for each region have been developed from research including desktop reviews and interviews with representatives from each of the CoM.

When will the Draft Options Paper be available?

Commencing in early June, we will be emailing stakeholders the Draft Options Paper and details of an online briefing to provide an overview of the project and to present the draft options for the region. Throughout June, we will be seeking feedback on the options via an online survey and phone interviews. We encourage you to share the project information with your communities to ensure they provide their feedback. The feedback received will assist DELWP to refine the options for each region.

Why is DELWP undertaking engagement?

DELWP is inviting feedback on the management options for the region from stakeholders and their communities.

The feedback from the engagement will assist DELWP to decide on the most sustainable funding model and effective resourcing for the region.

In early August, we will present the findings from the engagement and seeking additional feedback from stakeholders to refine the options and determine the most suitable approach for the region.

Who will make the final decision?

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change is responsible for decisions under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. DELWP would like to come to a mutual position with key stakeholders on the best management option for the regions, considering feedback received from stakeholders during this engagement. If a mutual position cannot be reached by DELWP and key stakeholders, DELWP will ensure that management options that are financially sustainable and most suitable in responding to future challenges along with all feedback from stakeholders, are made available in the final decision-making process.

When will the improved management be implemented?

There will be an improved management arrangement and funding structure for coastal Crown Land Reserves Western Port Mornington Peninsula Shire Council region by late 2020.

GIVE FEEDBACK

How can I be involved and provide feedback?

We have prepared two online briefings. We encourage you to watch the online briefings while reading the project information. The online briefings provide an overview of the project and presents the draft options for the region. You can view the online briefings here:

[Part 1: Current State Analysis](#)

[Part 2: Draft Future Management Options](#)

We also encourage you to read the Current State Analysis Report and Draft Options Paper.

Once you have viewed the online briefing, we invite you to provide your feedback via the [survey](#). The survey will be available from Monday 8 June to Sunday 5 July 2020. Please contact the project team if you would prefer to provide your feedback via a phone call.

We encourage you to share the project information with your communities to ensure they provide their feedback.

Where can I find out more?

Please contact the project team on phone +61 3 902 106 72 or email westernportmornington@capire.com.au for further information. We will get back to you within three business days.

What if I have trouble accessing the online briefing or survey?

Please contact the project team if you have any trouble accessing the online briefing, survey or if you would prefer to provide your feedback via a phone call. Contact us at +61 3 902 106 72 or email westernportmornington@capire.com.au.

We will get back to you within three business days.

How can I obtain information in other formats or languages?

Please contact the project team on phone +61 3 902 106 72 or email westernportmornington@capire.com.au to discuss your information needs. We will get back to you within three business days.

Why are Capire Consulting Group involved?

Capire Consulting Group (Capire) have been appointed by DELWP to design and deliver engagement for the three coastal regions based on the Current State Analysis and Draft Options Paper presented by Grosvenor Performance Group.

The objective of the engagement is to proactively inform, build knowledge and awareness amongst key stakeholders and of the analysis and options, and to involve them in the decision-making process.