

Mrs Nina Earl

11 November 2019

Ms Janine Haddow (Chairperson)
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Melbourne

veac@delwp.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Haddow

SUBMISSION ON ASSESSMENT OF VICTORIA'S COASTAL RESERVES DRAFT REPORT OCTOBER 2019

Once again, at glance, VEAC has presented a comprehensive report. However, it is my regret that I have had little time to explore the content. Nevertheless, please find below my brief comments on any assessment of Victoria's coastal reserves:

1. The growing climate emergency, yet to be arrested with unstoppable warming on track, has and is directly impacting coastal environments—rising seas, more extreme weather events of high winds, storm surges, inundation or drying heat—causing coastal erosion, loss of soil-binding vegetation and habitat and thus depletion of coastal flora and fauna species, and damage to built features. Climate mitigation must be actioned now by all levels of government, businesses and citizens—greenhouse gas emissions reduced by less consumption overall, less fossil fuel travel and cartage, less land clearing for development or changed use, more reforestation, more reducing, reusing, recycling.
2. Paramount is conservation of the Victorian *natural* coastal landscape—for its ecosystems, biodiversity, habitats, support of marine and aquatic waters, aboriginal heritage, climate mitigation, protection of the hinterland, and for landscape vistas.
3. Improve acknowledgement, respect and involvement of First Peoples in conservation of Victoria's natural coastal reserves and its waterways, because we have much to learn from their traditional ways of working with the land, and First Peoples would better connect with their lands if that is their wish.
4. Priority given to allowing natural coastal processes to occur, rather than engineered coastal defenses that interfere with natural coastal processes and marine or aquatic life, and can cause erosion at end points and depletion or buildup of sediments.
5. Priority given to retaining and maintaining or restoring natural inlets and waterways wherever possible, rather than engineered ones, including Mordialloc Creek upstream of the harbour.
6. New developments or infrastructure placed well back from the coast, inlets or waterways, and relocation of buildings and infrastructure over time—bathing boxes, life-saving or boat buildings, entertainment or eating venues, paved roads and paths, etc.
7. Better litter and pollution controls of waterways and stormwater systems, and better public education on protecting marine and aquatic waters.
8. Better controls on invasive flora and fauna species in marine and aquatic waters and on or near coastal reserves, and better public education on invasive species, eg. Pacific sea-star hoiked out but native sea-stars left alone, goldfish/carp or other invasive creatures not released into waterways for 'kindness' or later harvesting.
9. Better controls on fishing lines and hooks that harm wildlife that has become worse with the increase in recreational fishing with few controls and decrease in commercial fishing with more controls.

As a local conservation volunteer, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on our precious coastal reserves.

Yours sincerely,

Nina Earl