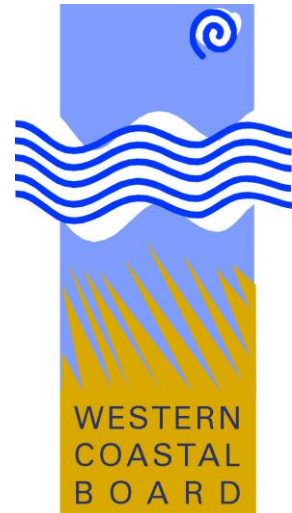


Ref: CO869/C.16

8 July 2015

Amanda Stajewski
Statewide Assessment of Public Land submission
VEAC



Dear Amanda,

Re: Statewide Assessment of Public Land

Thank you very much for extending your deadline to allow the [Western Coastal Board](#) to make a submission. Established under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, the Board's functions are to:

- (a) develop Coastal Action Plans for land within the western coastal region (Breamlea to the South Australian border)
- (b) advise the Minister and Victorian Coastal Council on coastal development
- (c) prepare and publish guidelines for coastal planning and management
- (d) facilitate the implementation of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 (on public and private land covered by the State Planning Policy Framework), Coastal Action Plans and approved coastal guidelines
- (e) facilitate public awareness of, and involvement in, the Victorian Coastal Strategy, Coastal Action Plans and guidelines
- (f) encourage co-operation of Government departments, municipal councils, public authorities, industry, community groups and management and planning bodies to develop strategic solutions to issues affecting the conservation and use of the coast.

We agree with the [Victorian Coastal Council](#) that coastal land (terrestrial and submerged) and coastal waters (marine and estuarine) should be considered in VEAC's Statewide Assessment of Public Land. Also, the Victorian Coastal Strategy's key issues of:

- Managing population growth
- Adapting to a changing climate
- Managing coastal land and infrastructure
- Valuing the natural environment
- Integrating marine planning

should be considered when reviewing existing public land categories. We also agree with asking the question, 'Does our current system of public land-use categories on the coast enable effective management and adequately address challenges faced by managers such as:

- Climate change
- Population and visitation pressures
- Competing demands for use of coastal public land and water?'

Also a 'fit-for-purpose' approach should be adopted to the categorisation of public land and waterways, as opposed to a 'one-size-fits-all' solution in that coasts vary in their characteristics, vulnerability and exposure to risks. They are also dynamic environments which change over time. The capacity of coastal managers to fund and manage public land varies widely also.

Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge to coastal land and infrastructure. However public land is categorised, ultimately changes to climate and sea-level will largely determine the characteristics of that land (e.g. vegetation, erosion) and indeed whether it continues to exist as 'dry

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land'. We acknowledge the possibility of different land categories in future, based on this dynamic environment and new science.

On a more immediate note, integration of land management is another major challenge on coastal land. Currently there are numerous foreshore managers in the western region:

- Parks Victoria
- Committees of Management
- Local councils
- Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
- Traditional Owners
- Port authorities or local port managers
- Private/freehold

who are responsible for different sections of coast. While there is a risk of conflicting aims around boundaries, there is also a risk that strategic, over-arching regional or state-wide aims are overlooked. The concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) aims to overcome these issues by promoting a collaborative approach among participants: Good management means working across land (and aquatic) boundaries where it is sensible to do so.

Resourcing must be adequate for the continued management and protection of public land and infrastructure. Currently, coastal managers vary widely in their capacity to address their local obligations due to the size and nature of the area they manage and their funding sources. We hope that the new Coastal & Marine Act will address these inequities.

We note that 96% of the western region coast is publicly-owned and that Parks Victoria manages most of the foreshore. We understand that Parks does not have management plans for the coastal reserves (and other deserving areas such as Tower Hill) and think this should be addressed. The Board questions Parks' perceived strategy of directing most of its resourcing effort toward pristine areas at the expense of the degraded areas (such as Tower Hill) and believes proper management planning would tackle this problem.

We did not observe any game reserves within your categories. Is there a particular reason for this?

However public land is ultimately categorised, the Board holds that any changes should not reduce the protection of natural values.

I invite you to continue engagement with the Board as the assessment progresses.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute.

Sincerely,



Cr. Jill Parker
Chair, Western Coastal Board 2012-15