



# Wyndham Coastal Management Plan Issues & Opportunities Paper



August 2018

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# 1. Introduction

Council is developing a Coastal Management Plan (CMP) for the Wyndham coastline. The CMP will guide the future planning and development of coastal land from the Werribee River to the Point Cook Coastal Park. A map of the CMP area is outlined below. This Issues and Opportunities Paper is an important step towards the development of the CMP.

This discussion paper explores a wide range of coastal planning issues identified by Wyndham residents and visitors during community engagement activities hosted by Council in early 2018. The Paper also discusses a range of planning, environmental management and development issues affecting the coastline identified in various strategies and legislation including:

- The Victorian Coastal Strategy, 2014 (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, DELWP) identifies key issues that place pressure on the values of the coastal environment including natural and built assets.
- The Guidelines for the Preparation of Coastal Management Plans 2017 (DELWP).
- The Bay Blueprint, 2017 (Association of Bayside Municipalities) provides a framework for planning for climate change impacts in Port Phillip Bay.
- Wyndham Council's *Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan and Forest and Habitat Strategy*

Preparation of an Issues and Opportunities paper is a requirement of DELWP under the Guidelines for the Preparation of Coastal Management Plans.



**Wyndham Coastal Management Plan Study Area**

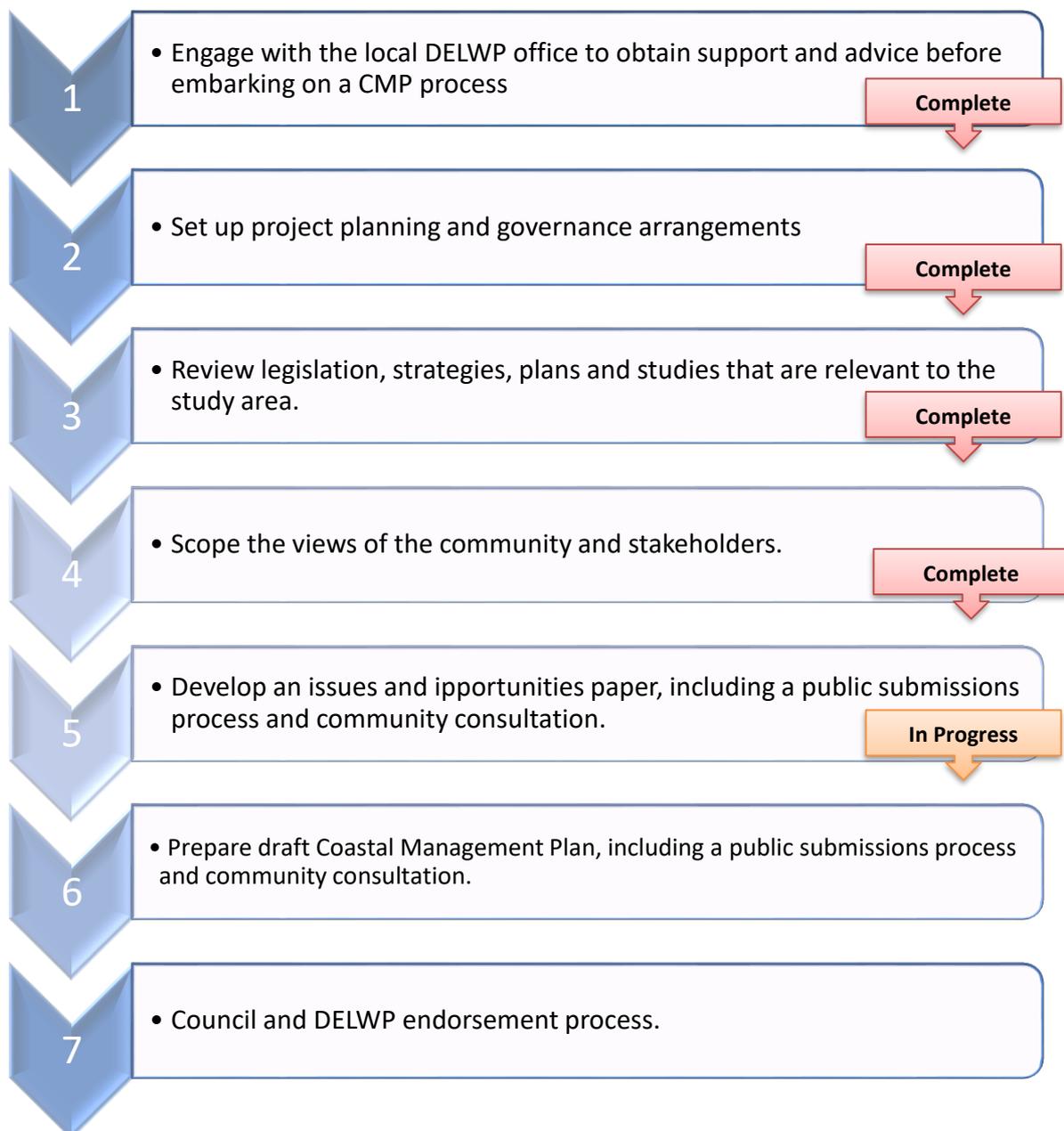
## What is a Coastal Management Plan?

A Coastal Management Plan provides direction for the future development and management of an area of coastal land. It maximises the benefits of available funds and resources through strategic planning and development. A CMP is intended to provide the community with a sense of what proposals are to be implemented and to provide a timeline for project implementation.

A CMP is prepared for a period of up to 10 years and must be reviewed and updated every three years. The Plan must contain a business plan for the extent of the plan and provide consent for low impact use.

## How are we progressing?

The following steps are required for the preparation of a Coastal Management Plan:



## 2. Project Governance and Guiding Principles

In October 2017, Council's Environment & Sustainability Portfolio Committee met to establish the governance structure for the development of the CMP. It was agreed that a sub-committee would oversee the development of the Plan and an expressions of interest process was undertaken. The sub-committee was formed including the Portfolio Committee Chair, several key staff and community representatives. It was agreed that the sub-committee would meet regularly and report back to the Portfolio Committee at critical project completion points.

At this meeting, the Portfolio Committee also established the following guiding principles for the project:

### *Protect What's Unique*

Ensure protection and recognition of the Wyndham Coast's unique habitat, agricultural, historic, marine sanctuary, indigenous and volcanic landscape values.

### *Good Planning*

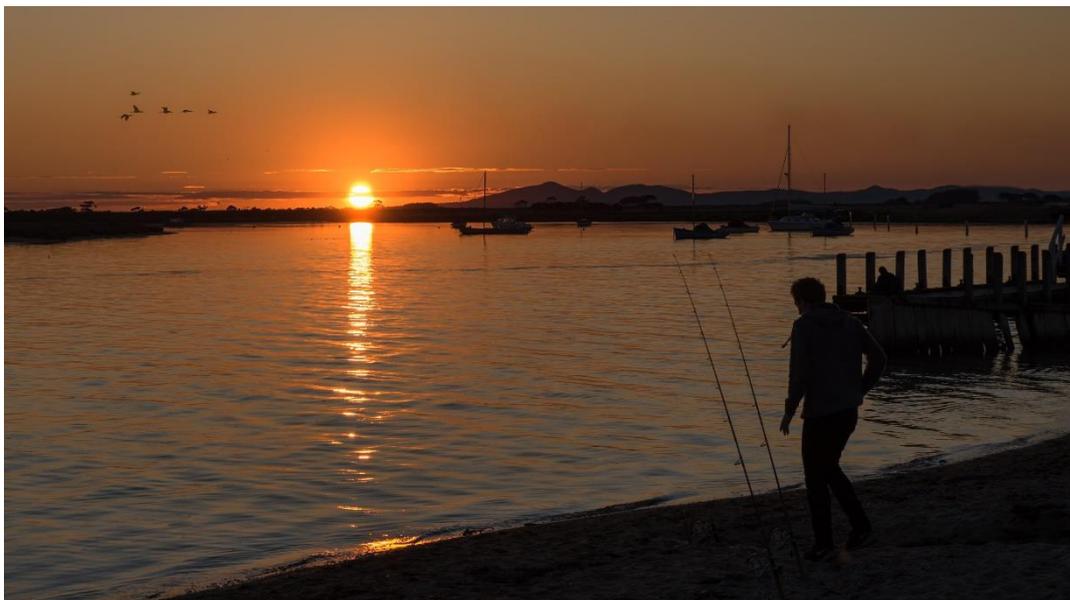
Develop an integrated planning framework, strategic partnerships and State Government advocacy priorities to facilitate future sustainable land use and development.

### *Use and Access*

To improve connectivity and coastal access for Wyndham's growing community to natural, wild places for children to play and for all people to enjoy and recreate.

### *Development*

Ensure coastal development protects against adverse environmental impacts, responds to anticipated sea level rises, activates key activity areas and facilitates community and tourism access to the Wyndham coastline.



### 3. Community Engagement Process

#### Overview

The CMP community engagement process commenced in February 2018 and included four pop up sessions, a range of online tools, as well as workshops with stakeholders.

The response to the community engagement process was overwhelmingly positive with many participants actively sharing what they value most and their ideas and aspirations for the Wyndham coastline. Over 450 comments were generated and several key themes for further consideration emerged for the development of the CMP.

A total of 152 surveys were completed, including 34 online and 118 at pop up events. Most comments were received in response to the following questions:

1. What is your big idea for the Wyndham Coast (122 comments)
2. What do you value or love most about the Wyndham Coast (119 comments)
3. Do you have any other comments about the Wyndham coast? (79 comments)

A total of 119 respondents identified what they love and value about the Wyndham Coast and the results included:

- More than 20% loved that the Wyndham coast was close to home and the City
- 18% Valued the natural, untouched environment
- 15 % Valued the beaches
- 12% Valued the peace and quiet
- 11% Valued the natural beauty and;
- 9 % love the fishing
- Respondents also loved that it was easy to get to, the parks, the birds and wildlife and the walking and cycling paths
- “Unique” was a word used often to describe the Wyndham coast

In June, 2018 a further pop up community engagement session was hosted at the National Disability Insurance Scheme Expo held in Wyndham. This provided an opportunity to discuss what would make the coast more accessible for people living with a disability. The outcomes of this research are discussed further on page 15.



*Station Place Werribee Pop Up Engagement Session on February 24, 2018*

## Emerging Themes & Issues

The following key themes emerged through the survey and place based activities, meetings and workshops with stakeholders:

- Walking and Cycling Trails
- Keeping the Coast Clean
- Safety
- Infrastructure and Facilities
- Environmental Management Issues including:
  - Climate Change and Adaptation
  - Water Quality
  - Habitat Values
  - Biodiversity & Native Flora & Fauna
  - Coastal Erosion
  - Strategic Planning
- Managing the Coastal Interface
- Building on Community Stewardship and Collaboration
- Social & Cultural Values
- Economic Development Opportunities

### QUOTES:

*“I value the uniqueness of the area, the river, estuary, red cliffs, the agricultural and cultural heritage, and the walking, bike path along the foreshore”*

*“The coastline is unique in that it is generally free from housing development and has a rural/almost pristine feel about it”*

*“I love and value the scenery. It is such a beautiful spot. I like going for walks and swimming in the water. The birdlife is fantastic and you see different kinds at different times of the year. The marine life is varied year-round and sometimes you can spot dolphins! I love it here!”*

*“Untouched area of great development opportunity. Nice quiet areas on the bay-not far from Melbourne city. Some areas it almost feels like no-one has ever been there.”*

## 4. Key Issues & Opportunities

### Walking and Cycling Trails

#### Issues

The most popular topic of discussion was connectivity. Over 70 comments were received identifying the need for new shared paths or connections between existing walking and cycling trails across Wyndham. These included requests for path connections between Werribee City Centre and Wyndham Harbour, as well as Sanctuary Lakes and Point Cook Coastal Park. There were many requests for a Bay Trail connection between Wyndham Harbour and Campbells Cove, linking Point Cook to the Cheetham Wetlands and beyond.

The merits of encouraging walking and cycling through good footpaths and connectivity, opportunities for physical activity, neighbourhood amenity, sustainability, accessibility, transport and community safety are well established.

Plan Melbourne outlines the State Government's plan for accommodating Melbourne's future population and employment growth. It supports walking and cycling in precinct plans for new suburbs and urban renewal precincts to promote greater walking and cycling activity. The National Heart Foundation has developed tools for better health and community wellbeing across a range of local government policy areas, including the *Healthy by Design* guidelines. Internationally, the World Health Organization's *Age Friendly Cities* guide reflects the movement towards embedding health and wellbeing principles in urban design.

The State Government's Open Space Strategy, *Linking People and Spaces 2010*, identified the missing Bay Trail Link between the Werribee River and Point Cook Coastal Park as a key strategic objective. The creation of a coastal Bay Trail and improved linkages between existing trails has been supported in State and Council's key strategic documents since the late 1980s. Council is currently developing a new municipal walking and cycling strategy which will also explore this opportunity.

There are currently a number of barriers to providing public access along many parts of the Wyndham Coastline. Council manages a Coastal Crown Land Reserve along part of the coastline and there is sufficient land to develop a shared path in some locations. However, in some areas, public access is not available due to steep topography, limited land within the Crown Land Reserve and the alignment of neighbouring boundary lines. This is particularly evident in some parts of Werribee South. Open irrigation channels restrict public access in some locations and the Point Cook RAAF Base and Melbourne Water Western Treatment Plan also limit public access. There are a significant number of locations where the coastline can be reached but limited linear access exists along continuous sections of the waterfront.

The existing on and off-road cycling network along the coastline is fragmented and difficult for cyclists and pedestrians to navigate. Existing shared paths are well used but are limited in their distance and ability to connect key destinations. There is strong community support to improve connections between existing trail networks, and to more clearly define travel routes between Werribee City Centre and Werribee South and along the Skeleton Creek to Point Cook.

#### QUOTES:

*“Improve the connection and access to the coast from the centre of Werribee- not just by car but via bike and other modes of transport”*

*“Can’t wait for the bay trail to be completed so that it connects all the way to Williamstown”*

*“I do think we need to fast track getting a walking track made which connects Pt Cook Coastal Park to Werribee (via Werribee South)”*

*“To have a footpath/cycle track extended, from Werribee Park down the west side of the Werribee River and crossing the river into the upstream end of Grahams Wetland Reserve at Werribee South, to join with the existing foreshore path at Bellin Reserve and the existing path extended to connect with existing pathways at Saltwater Coast Wetlands at Point Cook”*

#### Opportunities

Given the strong community interest in expanding Wyndham’s shared trail network and Council’s long term strategic commitment to the development of shared paths, it is considered that this work area could become a key investment and development priority under the Wyndham Coastal Management Plan and new Walking and Cycling Strategy. A preferred trail alignment should be established for the Bay Trail, connecting Werribee South to Point Cook Coastal Park. Planning should focus on maximising development opportunities within the Coastal Crown Land Reserve and in collaboration with neighbouring land owners and managers to achieve a continuous off-road walking and cycling connection.

Walking and cycling path planning should also prioritise on and off-road connections from the Wyndham Tourist Precinct including Werribee Mansion and Werribee Zoo to the Werribee City Centre and coastline. An integrated pathway network should connect local recreation nodes, retail and commercial areas, community facilities such as schools, recreation facilities and playgrounds, the future Werribee Employment & Innovation Cluster and the Werribee Health and Education Precinct. Planning should include consideration of shared paths, end of journey facilities, prioritised road crossings and wayfinding signage. It will be important to plan for the interface between coastal recreation activities and nearby farming to ensure both activities are supported and can thrive

Discussions should continue with Parks Victoria regarding their future plans for the Point Cook Coastal Park to ensure good integration between their pathway network, Council’s future Bay Trail connections and other proposed trail linkages. The future Aviators Field Precinct Structure Plan may also provide opportunities to improve trail linkages between Point Cook Coastal Park and the Werribee South coast. Discussions should be hosted with the Point Cook RAAF base to establish a suitable trail alignment through this section. Discussions should also continue with farm property owners adjoining the Crown Land Coastal Reserve in Werribee South to explore options for removing barriers to improving public access.

## Keeping the Coastline Clean

### Issues

The second most popular topic emerging from the community engagement process was keeping the coastline clean. Key areas of concern related to seaweed accumulations and their associated odour, rubbish dumping along the coast and the need to clean up beaches more regularly. There were also comments about keeping beaches clean for people to swim and requests for dog poo bags.

During February and March 2018, a large accumulation of seaweed washed up at Wyndham Harbour. Driven by southerly winds, the accumulation became trapped in the northern bay and on beach areas where it decomposed. The deposit of seaweed generated an extremely strong smell and was a major concern for many residents. A similar event occurred in January 2016, with seaweed accumulations known to occur every few years between Werribee South and Altona. Seasonal accumulations fluctuate depending on off shores growth and shedding, wind and tidal patterns. Since the recent accumulation, the developer of Wyndham Harbour has commenced work to remodel the shape of the bay. It is anticipated that this remodelling work will help prevent the seaweed from washing in and redirect it further along the coastline.

Council does not typically remove seaweed from beaches that fall under its management. Seaweed is considered part of the natural coastal environment and an essential part of the food supply chain for aquatic plants and animals in the marine environment.

Council receives a small funding each year from Parks Victoria for beach cleaning and rubbish removal at Werribee South however, this is a very small component of the budget expended by Council on beach cleaning annually.

Council manages rubbish on beaches and within waterways under the *Wyndham Waste & Litter Strategy 2016 - 2040* and the *Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan*. Council has recently trialled the installation of "Seal The Loop" bins at a number of beaches and popular fishing sites along the Werribee River, with the aim of reducing the amount of fishing litter such as hooks and lines being left behind. Council is very committed to reducing the amount of litter entering waterways through the use of gross pollutant traps on creeks and streams to capture litter before it enters waterways. In recent years, Council has installed hundreds of graded entry pits on drains to prevent litter from entering waterways from surrounding road site areas.

A number of community groups are extremely active in cleaning Wyndham beaches and waterways through regular clean-up activities including Beach Patrol 3030, the Werribee River Association, the Wyndham Boatshed Association, Love Our Street and Point Cook Open Spaces. Community based clean ups are attracting growing numbers of people and community organisations. Council supports these significant community efforts through the disposal of rubbish collected by volunteer groups.

### QUOTES:

*“Beach Patrol is great”*

*“Wyndham City Council should take a leadership role in creating consistent guidelines and an intervention plan, especially if there are multiple stakeholders involved in caring for the coastline. Guidelines could outline intervention considerations and triggers and provide a clear approach to the management of seaweed on beaches within the LGA, including Wyndham Harbour Marina”*

*“Keep the beaches clean, every time I come to the boatsheds I have to clean the beach”*

*“The area at the end of Cunningham’s Road has a huge problem with rubbish being dumped. As there are no facilities and it is isolated it would be better closing it off”*

*“Reduce rubbish....Seal the loop bins along the whole coast”*

### Opportunities

Works to re-shape the northern bay by the developer at Wyndham Harbour are intended to reduce the amount of seaweed accumulating in the area. The effectiveness of these efforts will be known in time but it is hoped that works will significantly reduce the size and smell of future seaweed accumulations. Hobsons Bay City Council has a policy that encourages community members to remove seaweed from local beaches for use as mulch and in garden composting. They also run seminars and guided coastal walks to instruct residents on how to use seaweed at home. These programs could assist in reducing problematic accumulations at Wyndham Harbour.

The continued implementation of Council’s *Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan* will see the installation of additional gross pollutant traps and graded entry pits on street drains to reduce the amount of litter entering local waterways in coming years. Monitoring is required to measure whether litter collection targets are being met.

Council’s *Waste & Litter Strategy 2016 - 2040* supports continued efforts to reduce litter and rubbish dumping. A coastal litter plan could be developed to better manage rubbish dumping along the coastline. This could consider the provision of more recycling bins and fishing waste bins in coastal park and dog poo collection bags in high use beach areas. The Plan could also establish levels of service for the removal of dumped rubbish along the coastline, and initiate a review of Local Laws rubbish dumping enforcement policies. Planning should also explore the merits in trialling new products and technologies such as Sea Bins and dog poo composting units in beach areas. Activating the coastline through increased public recreation opportunities is also a proven method to reduce illegal dumping and littering.

The benefits associated with community groups actively caring for the coastline extend far beyond the creation of cleaner beaches. The social benefits of these groups contribute significantly towards the creation of active, inclusive and connected communities. It is essential that Council continue to support the volunteer efforts of these groups through partnership efforts, capacity building and community grants programs. There are opportunities to work more closely with community groups caring for the coast to better understand how council can support their efforts to grow and expand their stewardship activities.

## Safety

### Issues

A large number of comments were received during the community engagement process regarding safety. These included concerns about feeling unsafe in isolated beach areas, antisocial behaviour and road safety along the coast.

Respondents indicated that the isolation of some of Wyndham's coastal sites made them feel unsafe, especially at Campbells Cove and the Point Cook Coastal Park.

The Wyndham Boatshed Association have indicated ongoing problems with building break ins and thefts at Campbells Cove and Baileys Beach. The organisation is currently working with Council to consider the installation of a CCTV camera to improve monitoring of the area.

Some survey respondents indicated that despite signs being installed informing the public that the beach is no longer clothing optional, there are still some nudists using the beach at Campbells Cove which creates a sense of unease for other users.

There were a few comments received regarding road safety including the need to trim trees and shrubs. Some of these comments included requests to make roads safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The poor quality of the road network leading to the coastline was a recurrent theme in engagement discussions. Discussions with the Werribee South Rate Payers Association and farmers from Werribee South have indicated that there are conflicts amongst some road users including cyclists and farming equipment. More detailed issues included mud on roads caused by farm equipment moving between paddocks, creating slippery road surfaces.

Council hosts a working group with local farmers to reduce road conflicts, including opportunities to address the mud on the roads issue.

#### **QUOTES:**

*"More police/safety presence – undesirable people"*

*"Try to minimise unsocial behaviour"*

*"Cycling on the road in Werribee South and South Point Cook is not safe. Roads are in poor condition on the edges and they are very narrow"*

## Opportunities

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a set of design principles used to discourage crime in public areas. The use of CPTED principles in master planning could improve the quality of coastal environments, minimise opportunities for crime and promote accessible places that feel safe for the community to use. These include:

- Surveillance – Maximise the visibility and surveillance of public spaces;
- Access, Movement & Sightlines – Provide safe movement, good connections and access;
- Activity - Maximise activity in public spaces;
- Ownership - Clearly define private and public space responsibilities; and
- Management & Maintenance - Manage public spaces to ensure they are attractive and well used.

In coastal areas affected by ongoing crime, master planning should include a design strategy that considers security fencing, lighting, security cameras and patrols, night time locking of public toilets and car parks.

Consideration could be given to the establishment of a community based Neighbourhood Watch Program in Wyndham’s Coastal areas. There are good examples of Rural Watch and Beach Watch Programs in Western Australia. Rural Watch encourages people in farming communities to know their neighbours, be vigilant and report anything suspicious to police. Beach Watch aims to prevent opportunistic crime by following simple crime prevention strategies such as keeping valuables in a safe area, out of sight and keeping a look out for suspicious behavior. Communities that are organized and committed to crime prevention, may act as a deterrent to potential criminals who will be aware that a Neighborhood Watch is in place.

Research to better understand seasonal and weekly road use patterns and conflicts may assist in developing a sharing the road strategy in some coastal areas. A sharing the road strategy may be useful in raising awareness about potential road use conflicts and support driver behaviour change through signage and other communication methods. A strategy to upgrade Council road access to Campbells Cove may also be beneficial in supporting a higher frequency of coastal use and access.



## Infrastructure and Facilities

Over 35 comments were received regarding the need for new facilities, and supporting infrastructure along the coast. Many people would like to see more cafes and restaurants, more developments similar to Wyndham Harbour, more toilets, barbeques, car parking and playgrounds.

### Issues

Infrastructure and facilities create opportunities for users to connect with and enjoy the coastline. Investment in recreation and visitor destinations is led through community and government development and private investment.

Council's *Sports Development Strategy* identifies a range of recreation facilities required to serve the Wyndham community by 2045. There is an identified need for future waterfront facilities for triathlon and fishing clubs, sea scouts and additional boat ramps for a range of water sports. The Werribee South Caravan Park, Coastguard and Werribee South Fishing Club facilities will require major refurbishment works in coming years. Recreation services, typically offered by commercial operators, are anticipated to grow to meet local demand including learn to sail, snorkel and drive experiences, as well as equipment hire for kayaks and other water based activities.

The development of Wyndham Harbour has been beneficial to the Wyndham coastline in providing a safe boating harbour, medium and high density residential development, new retail activity and a community meeting space. The Harbour was identified as one of the most accessible and frequently visited locations along the Wyndham coastline. The *Werribee South Green Wedge Action Plan* restricts further similar developments due to the State significance of surrounding farmland and the importance of local agricultural food production. Wyndham Harbour provides a unique opportunity for future coastal activation through coast based business development and visitor services.

Wyndham's population is growing rapidly and is anticipated to increase the demand and frequency of use of coastal infrastructure. The Aviators Field Precinct Structure Plan area proposed by the Victorian Planning Authority could substantially increase the population living near Campbells Cove.

Growing use of the Wyndham Coastline will create additional demand for park based facilities including shared paths, public toilets, shade, picnic and barbeque areas, playgrounds and car parking. Councils Disability Action Plan commits to improving the accessibility of the Wyndham coastline for all users including those living with limited mobility and disabilities.

#### QUOTES:

*"It needs to be developed. While the beach and coastline needs to be preserved, the local infrastructure needs to be developed such as better roads and facilities"*

*"The beach has been a hidden gem in the past but needs facilities to cater for growth"*

*"Around this beach have a sprinkle water park, add BBQ's and picnic areas/swings slides etc. not to forget adequate parking, toilet and bathroom facilities"*

*"Need more coffee shops, restaurants etc to create a destination at the harbour"*

## Opportunities

Council's Coastal Management Plan provides an opportunity to plan for future coastal infrastructure and facilities through the development of master plans at key nodes and visitor destinations. Master planning should examine future commercial and community facility needs to optimise recreation outcomes. Master planning would also allow existing waterfront based clubs to explore co-location opportunities to maximise long term facility use, viability and activation.

A recent engagement activity with residents living or caring for those with disabilities explored what would make the Wyndham coastline more accessible. Participants indicated that the following features or improvements would make coastal sites more accessible to them:

- Sealed paths (67%)
- Accessible public toilets (64%)
- Disabled car parking (50%)
- Gently graded paths (43%)
- Boardwalks or jetties (33%)
- Tactile Surface indicators (21%)
- All abilities playground equipment (15%)

Some survey respondents also indicated that beach matting, all terrain wheelchairs, information about the accessibility of coastal sites and a Changing Places public toilet would encourage them to engage in activities along the coastline more often. Survey results suggest that master planning should prioritise accessible infrastructure improvements to make coastal areas more accessible for all community members.

Parks Victoria is currently reviewing its master plan for Point Cook Coastal Park. There are opportunities to work with Parks Victoria to fully integrate shared paths and the Bay Trail into their trail networks. There are also opportunities to develop a long-term vision between Council and Parks Victoria, to maximise community access to a range of park based programs, services and facilities managed by both organisations.

There are many opportunities to activate the Wyndham coastline through Council and community led festivals and events. Wyndham Harbour hosts several annual events and have recently activated part of their marina with an outdoor pizza restaurant. It is considered that temporary programs such as food trucks, markets and community fishing competitions provide reasons to bring people together and to visit coastal areas more often. The ability to activate major activity nodes through events should be a major consideration in master planning exercises along the coastline. The activation benefits of cafes and other small businesses that contribute towards placemaking and improved amenity should also be explored through master planning exercises..

A range of State and Federal funding grants are available to Council to assist in the design and construction of community infrastructure projects. Development of a scheduled grants application process should form part of the Coastal Management Plan. This process will provide a structure for future implementation and funding opportunities based on needs, opportunities and priorities.

## Coastal Adaptation & Environmental Management

### Issues

Research and discussions with community stakeholders and State agencies have identified a range of environmental management issues to be addressed in the Coastal Management Plan. These include:

- Development of a response to climate change and adaptation issues including projected sea level rise, coastal and riparian erosion and storm surge events.
- The need to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological values within coastal landscapes, the marine environment and wetlands.
- Water quality and storm water management including the quality and quantity of storm water entering Port Phillip Bay and the Werribee River.
- Population change and urban encroachment and management of impacts on conservation areas and environmental values.

### Opportunities

A broad range of opportunities exist to develop responses to coastal environmental management issues. Council is an active participant in climate change adaptation planning activities and projects led by DELWP, the Association of Bayside Municipalities, Melbourne Water and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). This provides new climate change hazard assessment knowledge and improved modelling to better understand future risks of sea level rise and storm surge events. A geotechnical study of the entire Wyndham coastline would provide a better understanding of future erosion risks. Vegetation management plans for all coastal habitat areas, strategies for pest and weed management, and increased public use and access would expand current knowledge and improve long term environmental outcomes.

Wyndham's City Forest & Habitat Strategy commits to enhancing habitat corridors. The CMP will align with this strategy, improving habitat connectivity along the coastline and to inland areas.

As improved sea level rise hazard mapping becomes available, Council should undertake a climate adaptation assessment of all Council coastal infrastructure, low lying public open space areas and community assets to plan for future protection works and management strategies. Council should locate and design all new facilities to mitigate against long term climate change impacts in coastal areas. Master planning of key activity nodes would allow for climate change risks to be identified at a local level, and for suitable design and management responses to be developed. This could include increased floor levels for community buildings in low lying areas, consideration of plant species adaptation abilities to more saline growing conditions, coastal erosion mitigation options, beach renourishment opportunities and future storm water management improvements.

Wyndham's *Waste & Litter Strategy 2016 - 2040* and the *Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan* provide a strategic framework for managing litter and water quality entering the Werribee River and Port Phillip Bay. The collection of water quality data at targeted coastal sites would provide long term monitoring and evaluation information to measure the success of upstream intervention works. Trials of new litter management products and emerging water quality research undertaken by community organisations and academic institutions provides Council with ongoing opportunities to build knowledge and make progress in litter management and water quality issues.

## The Coastal Crown Land Interface

### Issues

Land ownership across the Wyndham coastline is complex, mixed and provides limited public access in some areas. Major land uses interfacing with the Crown Land Coastal Reserve include:

- The Werribee South Green Wedge intensive agriculture area;
- Wyndham Harbour;
- The Western Treatment Plant managed by Melbourne Water;
- The Point Cook Coastal Park managed by Parks Victoria; and
- The Point Cook RAAF Base managed by the Department of Defence

Planning and managing the integration of Coastal Crown Land Reserve with surrounding land uses is a significant planning challenge. Improving environmental values and increased community access to the coastline must be carefully considered, especially in areas adjacent to farmland properties, the Western Treatment Plant and the RAAF base where public access is not permitted.

### Opportunities

Discussions with adjoining land owners and State agencies have commenced, and a collaborative approach to managing shared boundaries and interface issues is being pursued. The outcomes of these discussions will significantly influence the strategic recommendations outlined in the Coastal Management Plan. Major opportunities for developing collaborative outcomes include:

- Building relationships with the farming community in Werribee South to support sustainable farming practices and to manage usage conflicts at the coastal edge. The Werribee South Green Wedge Policy and Management Plan recommends that the interface between activity in public coastal areas and the adjoining private agricultural and domestic coastal areas be carefully managed to minimise conflict between activities and to ensure that the coastal environment meets the needs of all users without adversely affecting adjacent agriculture.
- Continue to collaborate with the developers of Wyndham Harbour to support the area's emerging role as a major tourist destination, departure point for coastal recreation experiences and its growing residential community.
- Work with Melbourne Water to understand plans for the Western Treatment Plant especially in relation to its management as a RAMSAR site for significant bird life. Discuss ways of maximising future habitat outcomes on both sides of the Werribee River and at Grahams Wetland Reserve.
- Continue to work in partnership with Parks Victoria to ensure trail connections, recreation needs and community access is maximised between the Crown Land coastal sites and Werribee Park and Point Cook Coastal Park.
- Develop relationships with the Point Cook RAAF base to better understand their operations and management at the coastal edge and to discuss options for improved walking and cycling access between Campbells Cove and Point Cook Coastal Park.

## Community Stewardship

### Issues

Stakeholder discussions have revealed a significant level of community led stewardship exists on the Wyndham Coastline. Groups currently active in caring for coastal areas include:

- The Werribee River Association;
- Wyndham Boatshed Association;
- Beach Patrol 3030;
- Point Cook Open Spaces;
- Werribee South Volunteer Coast Guard;
- Community based clubs such as the Werribee South Fishing Club, and
- Werribee South Ratepayers Association

These groups currently lead significant beach clean-up, vegetation management, citizens science, search and rescue and other community led programs along the Wyndham Coastline, often in collaboration with Council, State agencies and academic institutions. The social networks and community development opportunities provided by these active community organisations is considered a significant social capital asset.

### Opportunities

There are a range of options for Council to support community led stewardship and activity on the Wyndham coastline including:

- Working with community based groups to better understand their needs and aspirations and to discuss how Council can best support their efforts and support for the formation of new stewardship groups based in coastal areas
- Inclusion of coast care groups in Councils Building Block Program and Green Living Series to encourage volunteer recruitment and leadership development
- Funding support through Council's community grants programs and letters of support for external funding grant applications led by community groups; and
- Council support of corporate partnerships opportunities such as the recent initiative led by the Beach Patrol 3030 with Hungry Jacks staff to raise awareness about littering and environmental impacts from high litter generating local businesses.



## Cultural Coastal Values

The Wyndham Coastal Management Plan provides an opportunity to explore Aboriginal cultural values in coastal areas and to better understand the significance of coastal sites for Aboriginal community members. A range of Aboriginal cultural assets can be found along the Wyndham coastline including scattered artefacts, landscape features, archaeological and geological formations. Protection of buildings, relics and areas associated with Aboriginal and European settlement ensures that links with the past are preserved and appreciated. Connecting with the past is considered important in such a rapidly growing urban area, where there is so much focus on new development.

### Issues

The Werribee River is the key waterway around which different Traditional Owner responsibilities and rights have been negotiated long before European settlement in Wyndham. On the western side of the River along the coastline, the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) that has a statutory role in the management of Aboriginal heritage values and culture, under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act, 2006.

For land east of the Werribee River along the coastline, including areas between Werribee South and Point Cook, three Traditional Owner organisations are recognised as having traditional connections to the land. Contemporary community organisations representing these groups include:

- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation;
- Boon Wurrung Foundation; and
- Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corporation

Together with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation, these organisations represent the interests of Traditional Owners of the Woiwurrung, Wadawurraung and Boonwarrung language groups. Historically, Aboriginal groups negotiated passage through and used the land, sharing its food, shelter and resources and sites of cultural significance. Each group holds distinct stories and connection to the land and its own interpretations of its cultural values and significance. Engagement with each Traditional Owner organisation will form a significant part of CMP.

There are a number of sites along the Wyndham Coastline with remnants of European settlement including those associated with the Chirnside family at Werribee Mansion and the Homestead at Point Cook Coastal Park. There is also a rich social and farming history at Werribee South.

### Opportunities

Understanding a range of Aboriginal cultural values held by different community members provides opportunities for a diverse range of views and values to be better understood and integrated into planning outcomes along the Wyndham coastline. The opportunity to develop several Aboriginal narratives will be explored through future community engagement initiatives with Traditional Owner organisations and local Aboriginal community members. Improvements to coastal infrastructure will also need to protect heritage landscapes and sites through Cultural Heritage Management Plans and other heritage management tools. Work with local historical organisations can also focus on identifying significant post European settlement, places, people and events to integrate opportunities to interpret local historical content into the implementation of the CMP.

## Economic Development Values

The Wyndham coastline presents a number of economic development issues and opportunities for coastal communities and business operators.

### Issues

Some recognised issues include the following:

- The Werribee South Intensive agriculture area is a significant local employer. It is a significant “Food Bowl”, producing 10% of vegetables grown in Victoria and 85% of cauliflowers consumed on Victorian tables each year. The review of the Werribee South Green Wedge Management Plan in 2017 committed to protecting farmland and agricultural practices. It is essential the future vision for the Wyndham coastline supports the long-term use and development of the agricultural precinct for high intensity agriculture.
- The Werribee Tourism Precinct including Werribee Open Range Zoo and the Werribee Mansion is a significant local employer. The development of Wyndham Harbour has contributed significantly to the tourism offering in recent years. There is a significant opportunity to broaden the audience, numbers and frequency of visitation to the Werribee Tourism Precinct by offering more services, attractions and destinations based on the Wyndham coastline.

### Opportunities

Increased use, development and access to the Wyndham coastline presents significant opportunities to attract new visitors, as well as encourage regular visitors to stay longer and to return more often to enjoy what the area has to offer. The following services are considered to have the greatest potential to increase tourism spending within local communities located along the Wyndham coastal line:

- Food and beverage businesses including those in the Werribee Tourism Precinct, Wyndham Harbour, local fish and chip shops and cafes
- Accommodation businesses which extend the time visitors spend in the local area including hotels, caravan parks and farm and home stays
- Retail providers who provide visitors with opportunities to buy meals and food products and supply locally produced farm and other products
- Providers of recreation experiences such as fishing charters, tours and ferry boat rides
- Fuel suppliers – filling the tank for the return journey

An increase in day visitors using walking and cycling paths is anticipated to generate repeat visits by encouraging visitors to return to experience other attractions at a later stage. Wayfinding signage located along linear trails has the potential to inform day visitors of other destinations and things to do which may encourage them to come back to explore the area further. Identifying opportunities to support local tourism development will form part of the Coastal Management Plan master planning process.

## 5. Conclusion

This document provides a summary of issues and opportunities to be examined under the Wyndham Coastal Management Plan. It has brought together a broad range of community ideas and aspirations, as well as State and Local strategic planning objectives to guide the future planning of the Wyndham coastline.

The community engagement process provided opportunities for residents to identify what they value most about the coast, as well as identify their priorities and preferences for its future use and development. This work has indicated that paths and trails, keeping the coast clean, safety and facilities and infrastructure should be key areas of focus in the development of Councils Coastal Management Plan. The Plan will allow for a range of environmental management issues affecting the coastline to be more fully explored including developing responses to predicted sea level rise, erosion, weed and pest management issues.

Council manages significant sections of the coastline as the Committee of Management for the Coastal Crown Land Reserve. The Reserve adjoins land managed by a range of State and federal government agencies and private land owners. The integrated planning of the coastline with interfacing land uses will be essential in achieving maximised public access outcomes and sustained surrounding land uses into the future.

The Wyndham Coastline is actively cared for by many hard working and committed volunteer groups, who have established long-term commitments to improving its environmental, aesthetic and habitat values. Supporting and encouraging coastal stewardship should be an integral part of the long-term use and development of the Wyndham Coastline. Opportunities to support volunteer groups to continue to connect people with nature, the unique Wyndham coastal environment and connections to our growing local communities should form a significant component of the Wyndham Coastal Management Plan.

