

A vision for the future

The Great Ocean Road Region will be vibrant, prosperous and beautiful. Its diverse natural and built environment will be universally recognised, protected and enhanced. It will continue to be a prime visitor destination with world-class standing. A strong, sustainably based economy will be the foundation for its continued prosperity. The changing lifestyle needs of the community will be acknowledged and accommodated.

Policies and initiatives

Direction 1. Environment

Protect the landscape and care for the environment

1.1 Strengthen protection for public land and parks

More than half of the Great Ocean Road Region is public land – state forest, national, state and regional parks, foreshore and other reserves, and coastal waters up to three nautical miles offshore (see map on page 22). This outstanding public legacy ranges from highly protected national parks to modified coastal reserves.

The parks and reserves, some long established, form part of an overall system of protection for some of the area's more significant land-based environmental features.

There are real opportunities to strengthen environmental protection of the parks and reserves, and accordingly, the government has announced its intention to phase out native forest logging in the Otways by 2008, and to link up a series of crown land reserves and the existing parks to create an exciting new Otway National Park. The Park will provide extra protection for some areas of the coastline and also for inland bush areas, including a range of wonderful waterfalls. The inclusion of the Great Ocean Road within the park will also be considered.



Initiatives

- 1.1.1** Create a continuous national park extending from Anglesea to Cape Otway.
- 1.1.2** Continue to undertake reviews of park management in accordance with Parks Victoria's review program.
- 1.1.3** Finalise management plans for marine parks and sanctuaries.
- 1.1.4** Provide additional park rangers and resources for managing pests, plants and animals in national parks, reserves and other public land.





The Twelve Apostles and Point Addis Marine National Parks are part of a chain of marine parks and sanctuaries established along the Victorian coast in November 2002.

These safeguard the state's marine plants and animals and their habitats in the same way that the components of land-based parks and reserves are protected.

The protection extends to cultural heritage and aesthetic values. It is supported by a comprehensive range of park and coastal management plans.

Growth in visitor numbers at national parks and coastal public land reflects the increasing popularity of the region.

'The Great Ocean Road Region is recognised as the world's best environmental destination.'

(a vision for the future from the Lorne stakeholders forum)

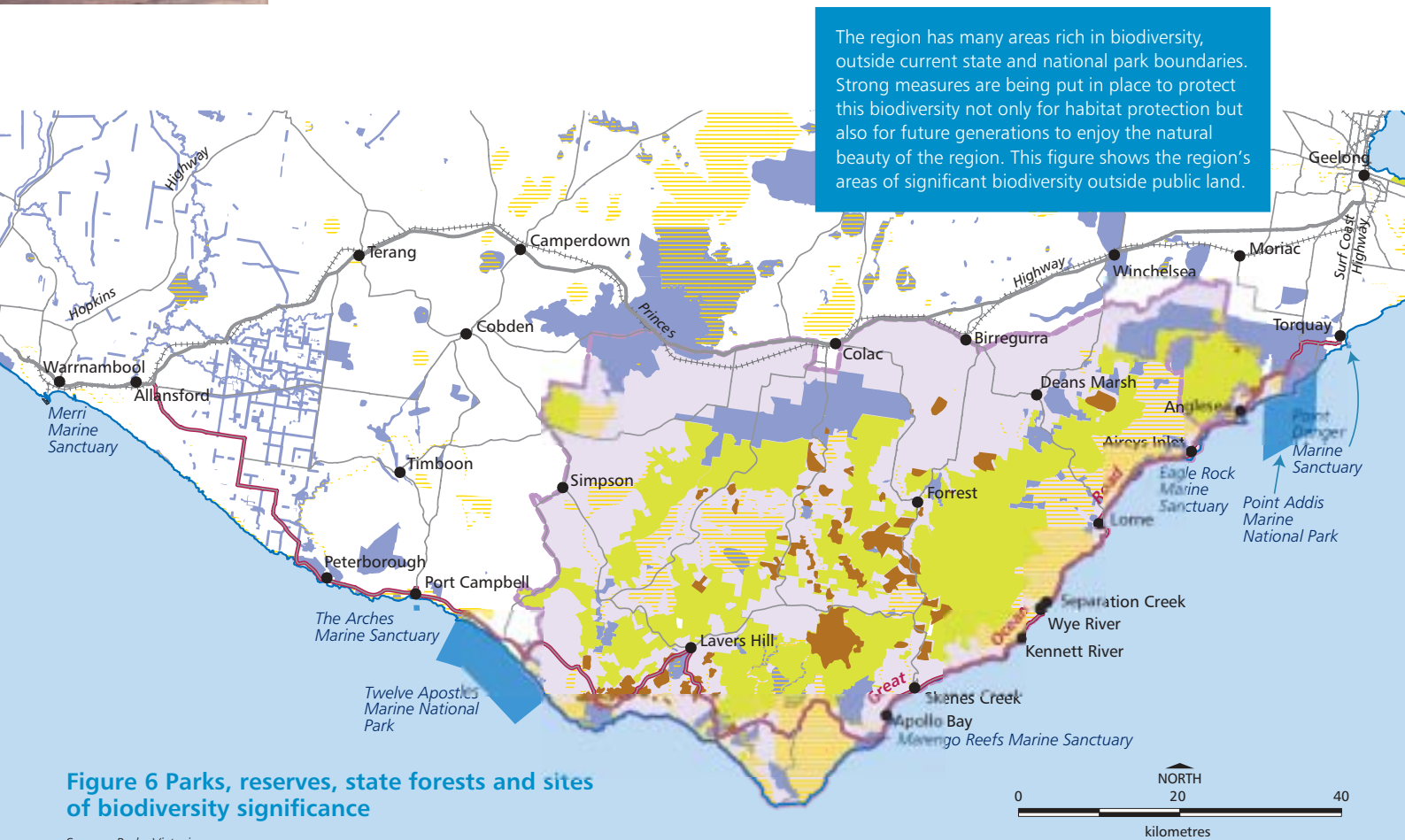


Figure 6 Parks, reserves, state forests and sites of biodiversity significance

Source: Parks Victoria

- Great Ocean Road
- Rail
- Parks and reserves
- Timber plantations
- Sites of biodiversity significance including habitat protection
- = Roads
- State forests
- VEAC study area
- Marine parks and sanctuaries

1.2 Protect significant landscapes

The high environmental quality of the region, and its areas of significant biodiversity and landscapes, make it one of Victoria's most significant natural resource areas.

However, it is under pressure from residential development and visitor growth. This trend is most evident along the coast. In the western part of the region, with coastal parks that are narrow and sensitive to adjacent activities, pressure for resource development is particularly strong. In the hinterland, changes are being driven by growth in dairying and plantation forestry, with pressure for expansion of urban living into farmland.

The *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002* is an important step which offers some protection along the coast while regional strategies such as the Central West Victoria Regional Coast Action Plan provide strategic direction for management of coastal areas. However, more specific measures are needed, such as siting and design guidelines for new developments in sensitive areas, special landscape protection, and more guidance for local councils. The aim is to protect the most significant landscapes through the planning system.

Scenic areas and vistas along the Great Ocean Road will be protected. Applications for wind energy facilities will be assessed using the *Policy and planning guidelines for development of wind energy facilities in Victoria*.

The Guidelines prohibit wind energy facilities in National Parks. This Policy protects all National Parks along the Great Ocean Road.

A comprehensive assessment of landscape character and its value to the whole region is currently under way. This is one of the keys to identifying principles for the nature of development that is possible for each of the region's very different landscape types.

Initiatives

- 1.2.1** Provide opportunities for protection of the most significant landscapes through the planning system.
- 1.2.2** Develop siting and design guidelines for new development in significant landscape areas.
- 1.2.3** Provide guidance to local government in relation to landscape issues.



1.3 Ensure effective protection of catchments and coastal areas

Despite existing plans, some aspects of the region's high environmental quality are under pressure from the service and infrastructure needs that accompany rapid growth of coastal communities, and from inappropriate land-management practices. Strain is apparent in both catchments and coastal areas.

The strategy will complement catchment and coastal management strategies and related natural resource management plans by better integrating planning schemes with these strategies and plans. This will ensure that the impact of land-use development activity is minimised.

Strategies for the Corangamite and Glenelg Hopkins catchments are being reviewed as part of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Salinity and Water Quality which involves 21 catchments around Australia. The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) covers most of the region, while Glenelg Hopkins CMA covers the western end of the region and beyond. This is a major opportunity for combined government and community action.



Initiatives

1.3.1 Ensure coordination, consistency and stronger integration between coastal and catchment management strategies and local government planning schemes by:

- requiring council planning schemes to incorporate and implement catchment and coastal planning initiatives
- implementing Coastal Action Plan initiatives
- promoting closer liaison between CMAs and local councils in their planning activities.

1.3.2 Improve the management of parks and other public land in catchment and coastal areas.

1.3.3 Improve information and education for council planners to help reduce the impact of development. This will include issues such as stormwater management, vegetation retention, water-sensitive urban design, water conservation, waste management and energy conservation.

Local government has the opportunity to work with CMAs to coordinate their strategies with its own Municipal Strategic Statements and land-use strategies, and to do the same for the relevant coastal action plans prepared in 2002. This enhanced implementation role is a positive step for local government in the region. The Corangamite CMA's recent employment of a municipal catchment coordinator, working within the Department of Sustainability and Environment, underlines this important step.

The importance of estuaries

Estuaries, where rivers meet the sea, are critical elements in the catchment. Their management is a key issue outlined in the South West Victoria Regional Coastal Plan (2002). Estuaries have inestimable value for their biological diversity and provide valuable commercial, recreational and tourism opportunities, but this value has not been recognised in the past, nor have they been well managed. The South West Estuaries Coastal Action Plan, prepared in 2001, sets out a regional planning framework and a range of management options to help restore and protect the environmental health of estuaries along Victoria's south-west coast, such as the Anglesea, St George and Barham rivers. This will include better management of stormwater outflows.



Catchments and councils

Interaction between local councils and regional CMAs has benefited from an initiative of the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Catchment Management Council. This involves the bodies working on land-use planning and catchment protection in 10 regions around Victoria in developing a planning framework that ensures a consistent approach to the way regional catchment strategies are applied. Workshops have been held, and expert advice made available on planning models. One aim is to ensure that councils consider catchment values, which are of paramount importance to the environment and sustainability, as they review their Municipal Strategic Statements.

1.4 Promote the region's environmental and cultural values

Residents and visitors value the region's environmental quality, history and culture. The region has a rich history and strong sense of community. However, more understanding, recognition and protection of the region's Aboriginal heritage is an important issue for the region. Opportunities exist for involving and working with Aboriginal communities in tourism projects. This has already occurred with projects such as the Point Addis Koori Cultural Walk and the upgrade of Marriners Falls in the Otways. Similarly the recognition of Aboriginal cultural values in areas where development is occurring is an additional opportunity.

Initiatives

- 1.4.1** Expand education, information provision and promotion of the region's environmental and cultural values, including its public land and parks on land and sea.
- 1.4.2** Recognise and preserve the Indigenous and European cultural heritage of the region and the Great Ocean Road.

Looking back to the age of sail

Set on a hillside above picturesque Lady Bay, Warrnambool's Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum is a drawcard at the western end of the Great Ocean Road Region. Established in 1975 and recently redeveloped at a cost of \$5.7 million, the museum includes an exciting night-time sound and laser show, 'Shipwrecked', a recreated maritime village with more than 30 buildings, an original 1859 lighthouse and keeper's cottage, and historic ships moored in the harbour.



Direction 2. Settlement

Manage the growth of towns

2.1 Direct urban growth to townships where it can best be accommodated

Most of the pressure for urban growth in the region is along the coast, but public consultation has revealed a strong desire to manage and limit future growth in towns, particularly coastal towns.

Incremental growth needs to be managed and directed to places that can best absorb change and protect character. Infrastructure capacity, land capability and land availability will also need consideration.

Both Torquay and Warrnambool, at either end of the Great Ocean Road Region, have a significant service role that extends beyond the Great Ocean Road Region. Both are currently experiencing rapid growth, and have the capacity for further growth. They also have a significant role as gateways to the region, particularly in relation to

tourism and accommodation – the strategy will further strengthen this role. Apollo Bay is centrally located along the coast and is the only other coastal settlement with the capacity for growth beyond its current boundaries (expansion is subject to detailed planning and resolution of key issues such as preserving the character of the town, assessing land capability, and water supply).

The outward growth of other coastal towns will be managed by setting clear town boundaries, within which residential development will occur on suitably zoned land. The hinterland towns of Colac, Camperdown and Timboon will play a role in absorbing expected growth. This will provide certainty to residents about the future of their towns, and to the development community about the extent and form of acceptable development.

2



Securing the water supply

Barwon Water supplies water across much of the Great Ocean Road Region. It has developed its Water Resources Development Plan in the light of its responsibility to ensure enough water is available to meet demand from current and future customers. The plan extends for the next 20 years. Development of the water resource will involve water conservation (a 15 per cent reduction in demand), use of alternative water sources, enhancement of the existing system, and research into new water resources (developing groundwater sources, linking reservoirs, interconnection with Melbourne). A measure of community support for this approach is the agreement, reached in January 2003, to introduce permanent water-saving measures.



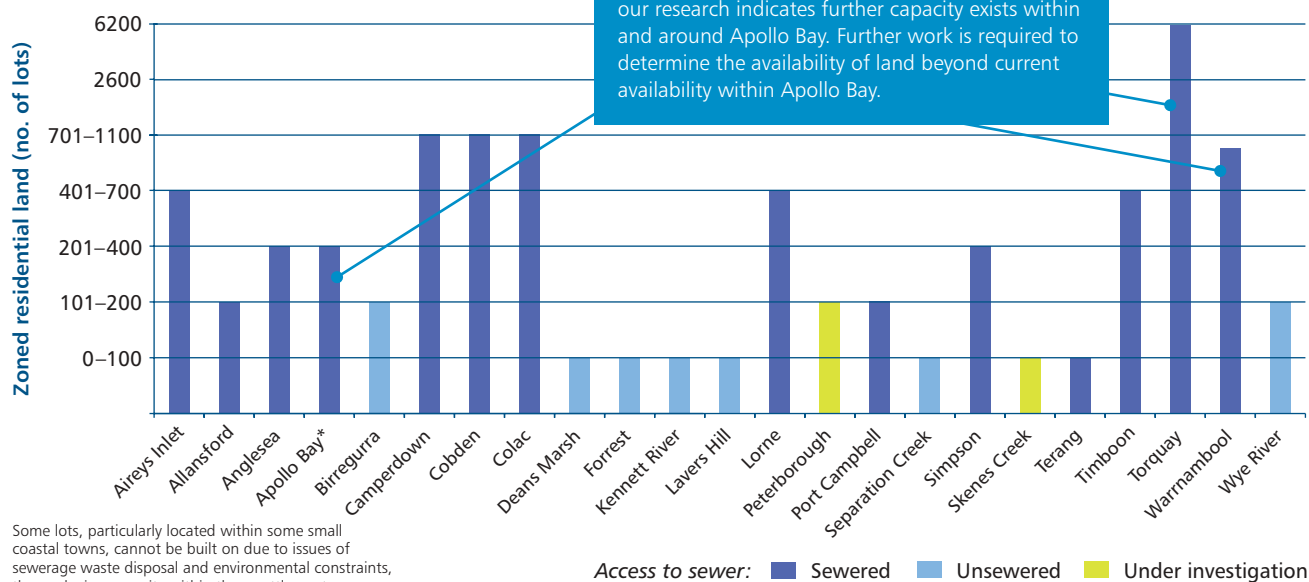
Improving control in landslip areas

Landslip is a significant concern in parts of the Great Ocean Road Region. This movement of soil, rock, earth or debris down a slope is usually triggered by heavy or prolonged rainfall or changes to the landscape. Susceptible areas include the Otway coast and the valleys of the Gellibrand and Barwon Rivers. The Colac-Otway Shire has completed a major study of landslip. It has produced *Land Stability Assessment Guidelines and Procedures* to manage the risk of landslip and to lower potential damage and costs associated with land instability. It also proposes to amend its planning scheme, incorporating the recommendations of its study, extending the Erosion Management Overlay and providing for more detailed investigative and approvals procedures. The study covers the whole Shire south of Colac, much of which is steep and forested.

Initiatives

- 2.1.1** Promote Warrnambool and Torquay as gateways to the region, and as coastal townships with the capacity for residential and visitor accommodation growth and community services.
- 2.1.2** Develop Apollo Bay as a preferred coastal township for residential and visitor accommodation growth and community services.
- 2.1.3** Work with council to facilitate the development of the structure plan for Apollo Bay to take into account the density, township boundary form, provision and timing of development and infrastructure servicing.
- 2.1.4** Work with councils to determine appropriate town boundaries and define these in planning schemes.
- 2.1.5** Establish principles for modifying established growth boundaries in coastal towns.
- 2.1.6** Promote Colac, Camperdown and Timboon as inland locations with potential for residential visitor accommodation and service hubs.
- 2.1.7** Support initiatives to ensure that future development is based on appropriate consideration of land capability, which will include the possibility of landslip, and significant Aboriginal heritage.

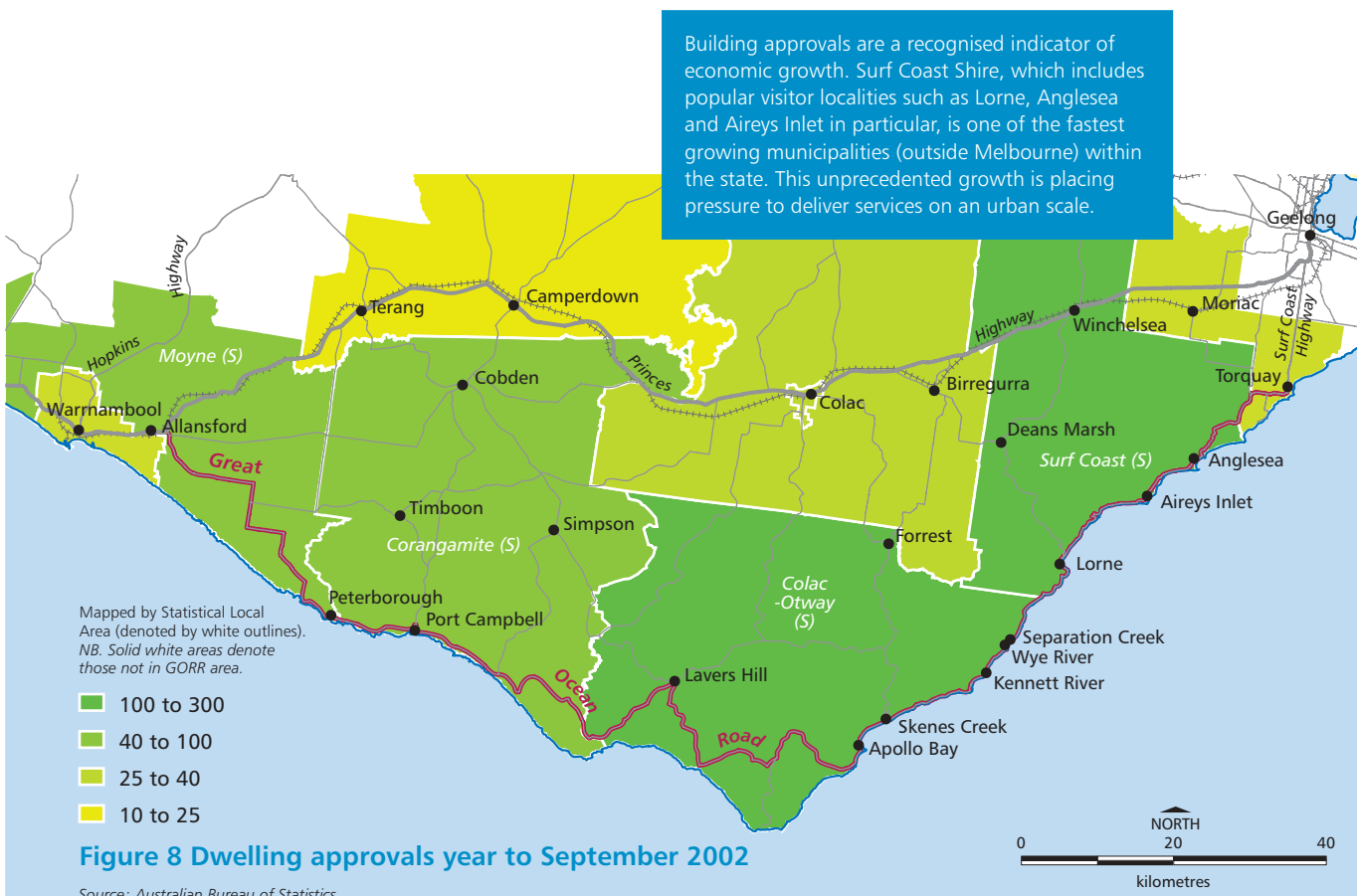
Figure 7 Undeveloped zoned residential land



Some lots, particularly located within some small coastal towns, cannot be built on due to issues of sewerage waste disposal and environmental constraints, thus reducing capacity within these settlements.

*Apollo Bay: Proposed expansion to water supply

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment



Torquay

Torquay is one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria, with an increase in population between 1996 and 2001 of 33.7 per cent, one of the highest growth rates in regional Victoria. Due to its coastal location and proximity to Geelong and Melbourne, Torquay is becoming more popular as a permanent settlement, with an increasing role as a commuter town and as a destination for the retirement market. This role will increase with road infrastructure improvement, including the western bypass of Geelong, and the establishment of the Grovedale railway station, which will improve access to both Torquay and the rest of the region.

With the capacity for further increases in residential and visitor accommodation, Torquay will be promoted as a centre for both urban and visitor growth. An adequate long-term supply of industrial land is an emerging need for Torquay. Surf Coast Shire has undertaken the North

West Outline Development Plan to support the future development of industrial land for Torquay. To ensure sustainable development, careful management of this growth is needed. Stronger planning, design and siting controls, such as the Surf Coast Shire's *Jump Start the Heart Strategy* and the Surf Coast Design Guidelines, will be important elements in managing this growth.

Torquay is an important tourist destination both in its own right, with a number of major events and attractions such as the Bells Beach Easter Classic and internationally renowned surf shops, and as the eastern gateway to the Great Ocean Road Region. This role will be further developed and promoted through tourism attractions such as the Point Addis Marine Park and the Surf Coast Walk. Like Warrnambool, Torquay will be a key priority in the provision of quality accommodation and tourism-related services and infrastructure.

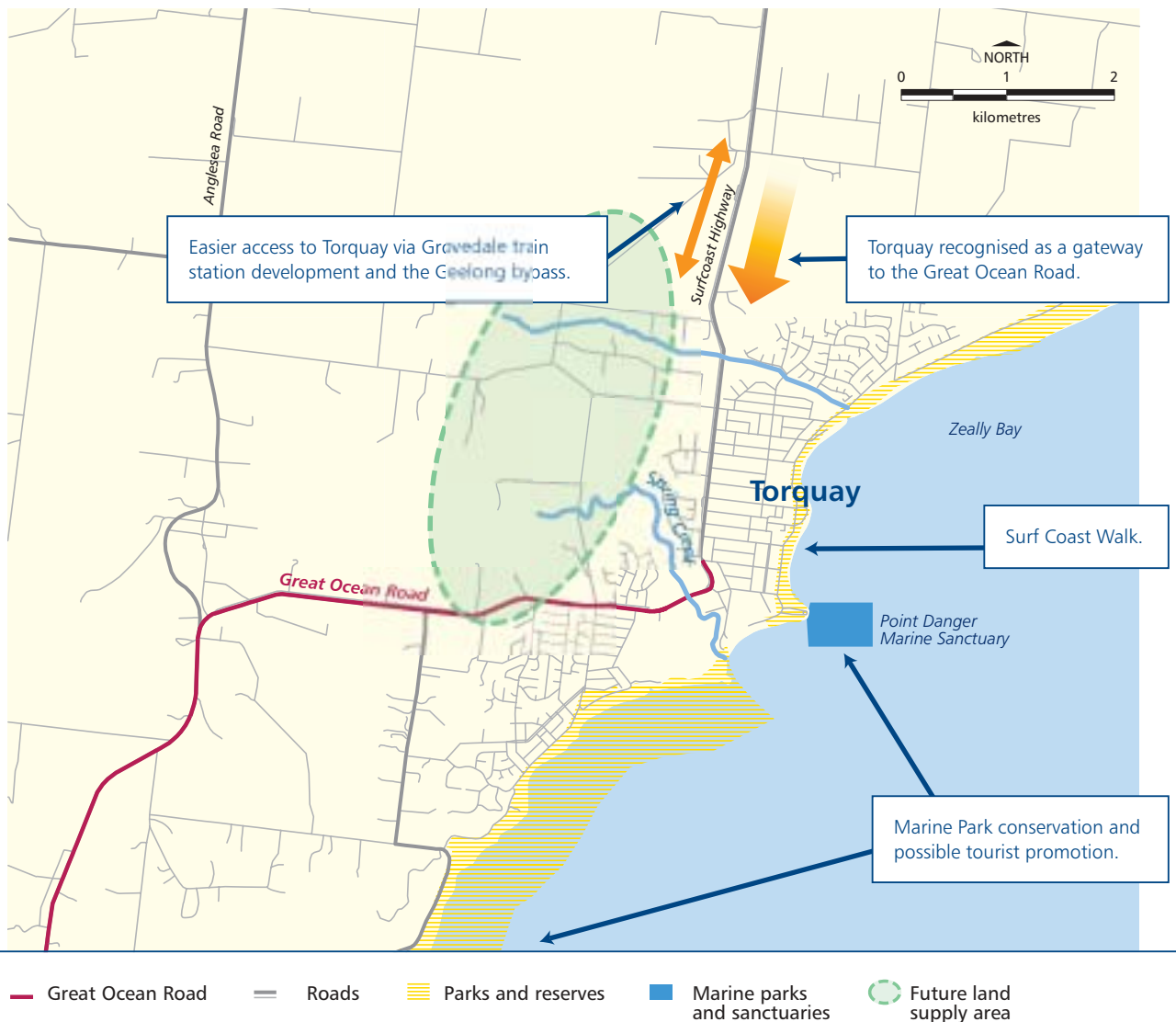


Figure 9 Torquay

Warrnambool

Warrnambool is a major regional centre for south-west Victoria whose role extends beyond the Great Ocean Road Region. It plays a significant role in supporting surrounding industries, such as dairying and agriculture, and their associated communities.

Warrnambool is currently one of the fastest growing centres in regional Victoria, with a 12.7 per cent increase in net population between 1991 and 2001. With its capacity for additional growth and the availability of services due to its role as a regional centre, Warrnambool is one of the coastal towns in the region that will be promoted as a centre for both urban and visitor growth. A key element in managing this growth will be the identification of land supply to accommodate future growth. Warrnambool City Council is undertaking a study of land supply to accommodate future growth.

As the western gateway to the Great Ocean Road Region, Warrnambool has a significant role for both community

and visitor access to the region. Upgrading the Princes Highway between Geelong and Colac, the Warrnambool station public transport interchange, the Warrnambool railway line, and potentially the Warrnambool airfield, will improve access both to Warrnambool itself and the broader region.

Warrnambool is an important centre for tourism in the region, particularly as a base for visitor accommodation – it has the largest number of significant hotels and motels of any area in south-west Victoria. Its role as the western gateway to the region will be further promoted, as will its role as a destination in its own right. With the need to increase the number of overnight stays by visitors, Warrnambool will be a key priority in the provision of quality accommodation and tourism-related services and infrastructure. The redevelopment of the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum has further enhanced Warrnambool's tourism role.

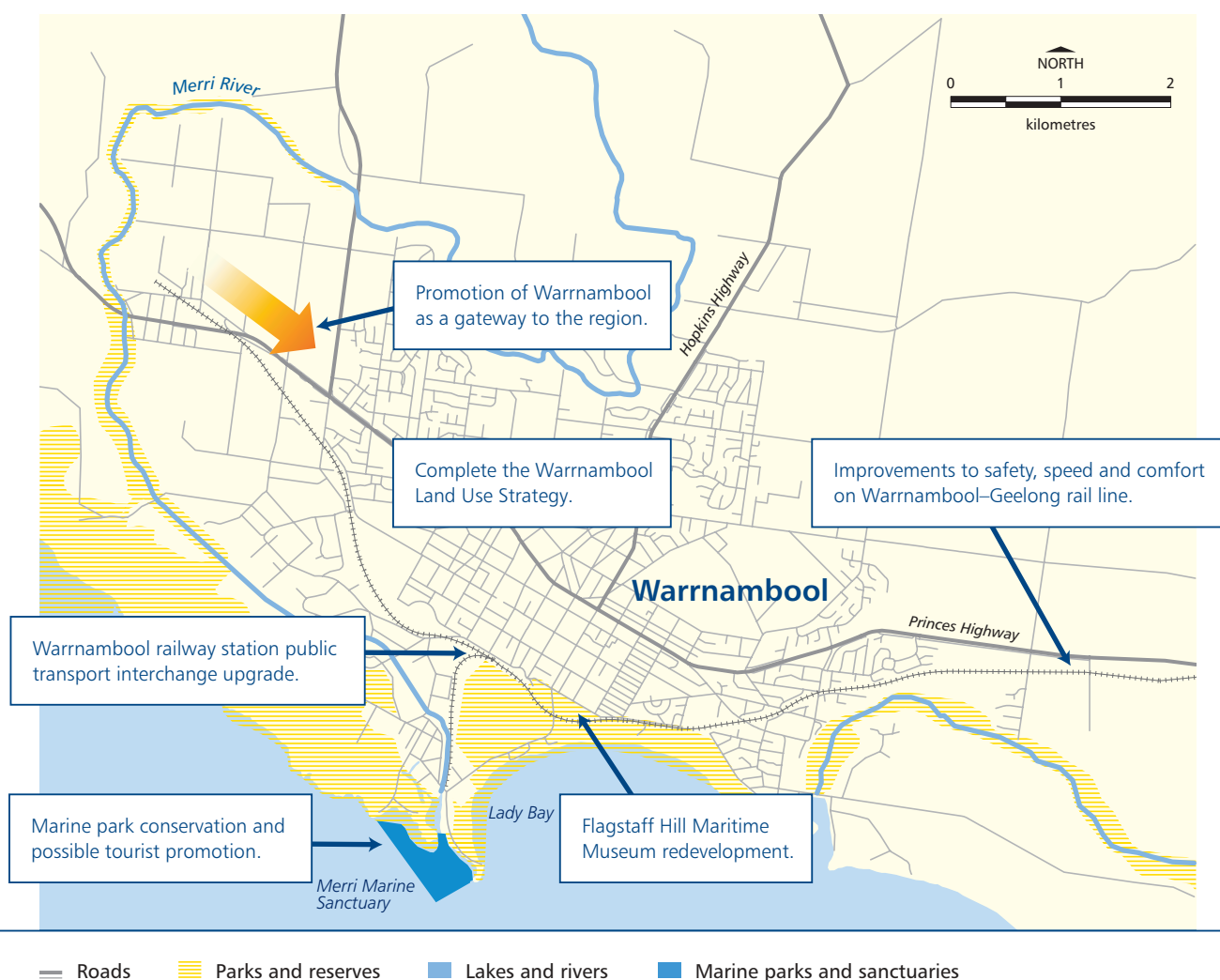


Figure 10 Warrnambool

Apollo Bay

Apollo Bay is the only other coastal settlement in the region, apart from Warrnambool and Torquay, with the capacity for growth beyond its current boundaries. However, any expansion will be subject to detailed planning and resolution of key issues such as preserving the character of the town, assessing land capability, and water supply. Investigations into extending the sewerage scheme to Skenes Creek and augmenting the water supply will inform any future growth and development. The Apollo Bay Neighbourhood Character Study (Colac-Otway Shire Council) and the Landscape Assessment Study (DSE) will ensure that development and growth is managed appropriately to retain the special character of the town and its place in the surrounding landscape.

Being centrally located along the coast, Apollo Bay is well-placed to capitalise on urban and tourism growth. The possible improvement of the north-south route, assessment of a new route through Apollo Bay, and the investigation of airfield capacity have potential to facilitate access to Apollo Bay and throughout the region for both the local community and visitors.

Apollo Bay is identified in the Victorian Coastal Strategy as a regional boating destination and activity centre. The potential development of the harbour as a regional recreational and tourism precinct, the Skenes Creek bicycle path project proposal, and the Great Ocean Walk project will enhance Apollo Bay's role as tourism node.

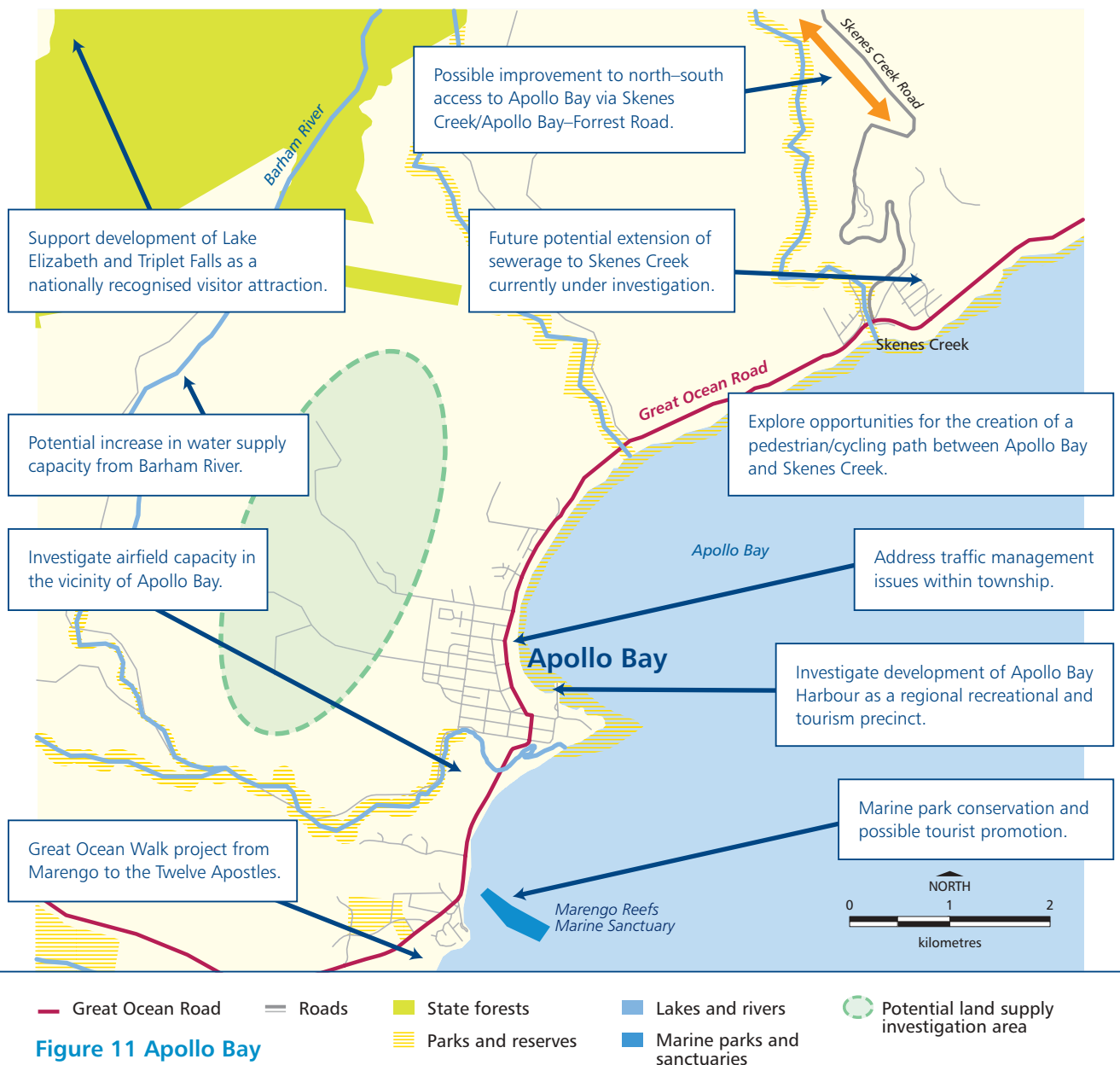


Figure 11 Apollo Bay

Colac, Camperdown and Timboon

Colac is a key industrial, commercial and service town for the region, with a population of approximately 10,000. Population is increasing due to an expanding economy and a growing number of non-resident property owners who enjoy the rural lifestyle on weekends and holiday periods. Colac is an important source of housing supply and visitor accommodation, with a number of key visitor attractions, such as Lake Colac. Being located on the Princes Highway, it is a natural hinterland access point to the region.

Timboon is located on one of the main north–south hinterland routes, and is both close to the coast and centrally situated within the region. Combined with a range of services, Timboon acts as a service centre for Port Campbell and the surrounding region.

Camperdown, located on the Princes Highway, is a medium-sized rural centre of approximately 3000 people, with an adequate land supply for future growth. Camperdown is rich in natural history, and is renowned for its many volcanic features, particularly a number of spectacular crater lakes.

Due to the high cost of housing for purchase and rent along the coast, Colac, Camperdown and Timboon are developing as alternative accommodation locations to the coast. With the availability of additional land supply and a greater range of services than other hinterland towns, Colac, Camperdown and Timboon have been identified as inland locations with growth potential, and will be promoted as such.

The hinterland will be developed as a recreation and visitor destination in its own right, with Colac, Camperdown and Timboon playing an important supporting role in the provision of services, accommodation and infrastructure. New projects such as the Old Beechy Rail Trail and the Timboon–Camperdown Rail Trail will increase the profile of these hinterland towns, building on established visitor attractions such as the Timboon Farmhouse Cheese Factory and the crater lakes.

Possible road infrastructure upgrades, including the Princes Highway West duplication between Waurin Ponds and Colac, and improvements to the north–south hinterland routes, will further support the role of these hinterland towns as potential growth areas.

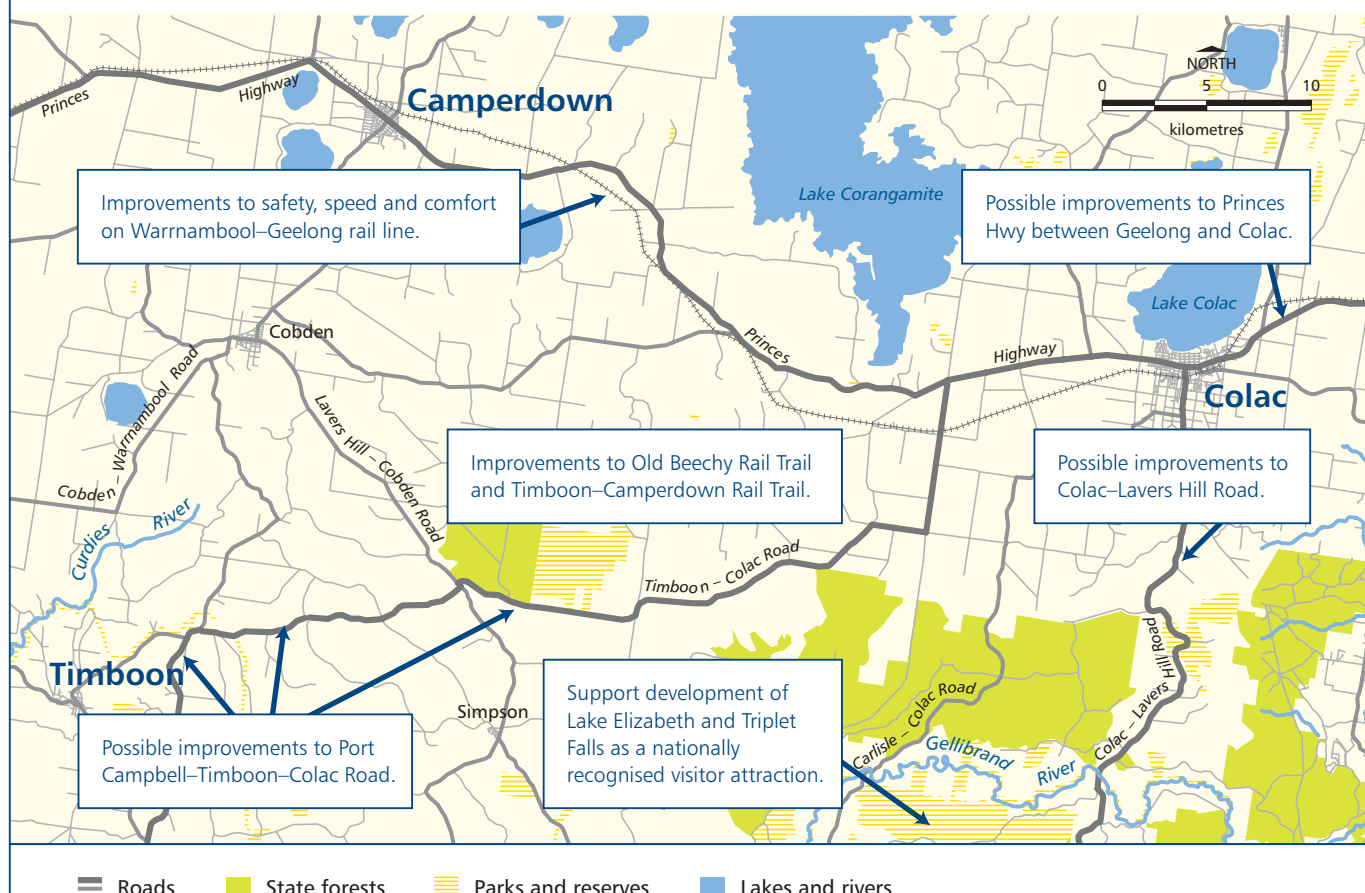


Figure 12 Colac, Camperdown and Timboon

2.2 Protect the character of coastal towns and promote best practice design for new development

Each town along the Great Ocean Road has its own identity, created through landscape character, heritage values and built form. Lorne, for example, is dominated by the sweep of Louttit Bay, and its towering eucalypts and neighbourhood beachfront shops. Peterborough is low-rise, visible from quite some distance away amid a backdrop of river flats and farmed hillsides.

In popular coastal towns, however, the limited supply of land means there is pressure for new development which may be different from existing development, and for services that may transform the appearance and character of town centres.

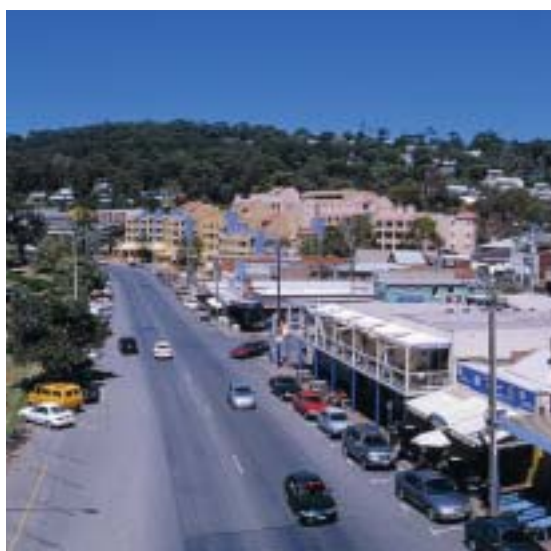
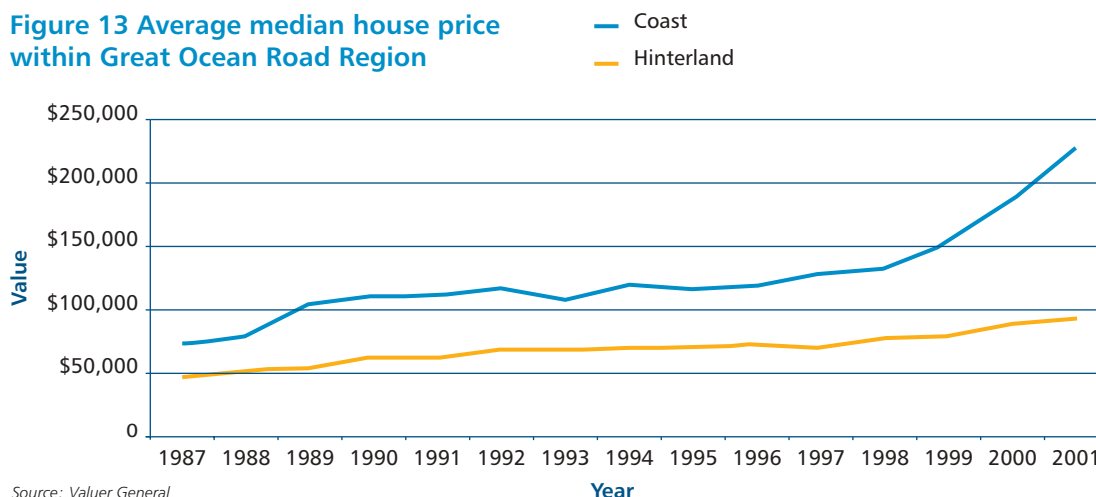
To protect the special characteristics of their coastal towns, some local councils are reviewing existing strategy plans, while some are developing neighbourhood character studies. These recognise the shape and layout of a place and assess its relationship to the landscape. They build on ResCode and other planning requirements to ensure that new development respects local character.



Initiatives

- 2.2.1** Work with local councils to undertake or finalise town character studies.
- 2.2.2** Use the planning system to protect the special character of coastal townships by:
 - working with councils to review and develop design guidelines for buildings on the coast
 - helping councils review and develop an urban design framework for key townships that is consistent with the sustainability principles of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy
 - working with councils to develop implementation plans for actions identified in these frameworks, as appropriate.
- 2.2.3** Monitor the implementation and success of management tools for protection of coastal character.

Figure 13 Average median house price within Great Ocean Road Region



Planning for Lorne's future

Lorne is one of the Great Ocean Road Region's most popular coastal towns. It is a key destination for domestic and international visitors to the region, and plays a major role in the branding of the Great Ocean Road. Lorne offers a quality lifestyle for residents, and it is a much sought-after location for people seeking to retire to the coast or establish a business. The provision of amenities such as health facilities is an important consideration, and the redevelopment of the Lorne Community Hospital will provide important benefits to surrounding communities and visitors. Lorne attracts considerable investment activity that results in commercial vitality and employment for the regional economy. Rising land prices and growing visitor numbers reflect its popularity and investment activity.

Lorne's physical setting along the coast and location adjacent to national parks will continue to shape its planning and development. Protection and development of sensitive foreshore areas and sensitive surrounding parks and landscapes are major considerations. Lorne will continue its role as a coastal activity node, providing recreational opportunities for large numbers of visitors and economic development opportunities for investors. A summary of current planning initiatives that are relevant for Lorne follows on page 36. Stronger partnerships will be forged between the agencies that are responsible for the initiatives to ensure coordination and the delivery of economic, social and environmental benefits for residents and visitors.

Lorne structure plan

Surf Coast Shire is reviewing its structure plan for Lorne to guide land use, development and resource management while giving residents some certainty about the way the town will evolve in the next 15 to 20 years. It will address important issues such as limits on Lorne's expansion, facilitating sustainable development and activity within the township, and parking and traffic management issues.



Improved foreshore planning and management

The Lorne Coastal Action Plan has provided the framework for development and management along the Lorne foreshore area. Significant investment has occurred in the foreshore area in recent years to better manage visitation and protect sensitive areas. This has included the redevelopment of Erskine House and the Lorne Surf Life Saving Club as well as coastal improvements. The Lorne Coastal Action Plan will be updated to provide a framework for continuing investment in improvements to the foreshore. This will include improving foreshore car parking, better signage and the provision of a new visitor information centre near the entrance to Lorne.

The government is reviewing the coastal management arrangements in the Surf Coast Shire. The review will ensure that all parts of the coast in the Shire are adequately resourced, managers are well positioned to perform their tasks and there is local community involvement. Options for delivering the best outcomes for the coastal environment, local residents and visitors are currently being examined. The review will involve targeted public consultation with local communities and stakeholders including representatives from existing committees of management.



Urban design in a coastal village

Peterborough's newly completed Urban Design Framework recognises the value of the town's peaceful coastal character and its immediate surrounds of dramatic natural scenery and rolling farmland.

The framework will guide future development for the next 10 to 20 years. Critical issues to be addressed during that time include:

- the imminent sewerage connection – this is likely to increase the demand for subdivision
- the ongoing popularity of the Great Ocean Road
- the need to review the town boundary
- maintenance of existing township character in the face of future development
- limitations of existing planning controls
- keeping Peterborough small-scale and family-friendly.



2.3 Protect the open areas between towns

Strategies for growth management within towns need to be complemented by strong protection measures for the non-urban areas between towns. These areas contribute to the distinct identity of the region, and have value in terms of land use as well as landscape quality. They are under pressure from urban expansion and inappropriate development.

Landscape character assessment (see Policy 1.2) will provide input to the development of measures to protect significant areas between towns while allowing opportunities for high quality or strategically important development. The work will complement other relevant work such as the Rural Zones Review.

Such protection measures aim to maintain landscape quality, stop linear development and inappropriate rural residential development, and protect productive agricultural land that contributes to the economy of the region. They will build on work completed for the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2002*. Appropriate development will be facilitated in accordance with strong design and siting controls.

‘The growth of villages is encroaching on the natural environment surrounding them, threatening the visual and spiritual quality of the area, which derives much of its value from the lack of human development.’

(comment from Anglesea community forum)



Initiatives

- 2.3.1** Identify significant landscapes and protect them through the planning system.
- 2.3.2** Improve the way the planning system is used, so that new development better responds to landscape character, and apply siting and design guidelines for development in significant landscapes.
- 2.3.3** Enforce defined town boundaries.
- 2.3.4** Implement the Rural Zones Review.

2.4 Encourage sustainability as the region grows

To ensure that the quality of the region is preserved for future generations, the strategy promotes sustainable development. This gives the Great Ocean Road Region the opportunity to lead in environmental management, by continuing to improve arrangements for services such as water supply, stormwater, sewerage and waste disposal, and in important areas such as energy conservation and retention of vegetation. The encouragement and promotion of development that demonstrates best practice in these areas is a means of providing leadership and sharing information.

Underpinning all activity with sustainability principles makes environmental, economic and social sense. Community support is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes on issues such as water supply, energy, waste management and biodiversity. The Anglesea Neighbourhood Environment Improvement Plan began in mid-2002 and already shows significant benefit for the community. Water supply in the Great Ocean Road Region has a more certain future, following the Barwon region's introduction in January 2003 of a new water conservation by-law that reflects the desire of local residents for permanent water-saving measures.

Forecast changes in the region's population are likely to affect the makeup of the community and expectations about services. Ageing is already apparent, for instance, with more retirees settling in the region's east. Commuters (to Melbourne and Geelong) are also bringing expectations of metropolitan-standard services and delivery to the towns where they are choosing to settle.

Housing, infrastructure (such as power, water and sewerage) and community service needs must be planned with these changes in mind. Provision of reliable power is an on-going priority for the region, particularly for some coastal communities such as Apollo Bay and Marengo.

Improved cooperation will be needed between the government and its agencies, service providers and local government, particularly in the use of a consistent approach to service planning. This is important because most townships in the region are not large enough to command a full range of social infrastructure within their own boundaries. The government's Victorian Rural Human Services Strategy, which aims to effectively align service provision in rural and regional Victoria with the needs and expectations of local communities, will be important in achieving this aim.





Anglesea community seeks sustainability

Residents of Anglesea give high priority to issues of environmental sustainability, so they were keen to be involved in a pilot Neighbourhood Environment Improvement Plan (NEIP) organised by the Surf Coast Shire with EPA Victoria. More than 200 locals, and businesses such as Alcoa Australia, are working to develop a sustainability plan for Anglesea. To date, this has involved awareness sessions, a planning workshop, and securing in-kind support from local agencies and organisations. Unlike most environmental programs that focus on restoring damaged environments, this project has a broader target. It aims to protect Anglesea's natural assets from increasing tourist pressure and to showcase sustainable living to its residents and visitors. It uses the ecological footprint model – a way of measuring human impact on natural systems – to make people aware of the effects of everyday living on the environment. Already, it is improving social networks in the town, with involvement from many new residents, including retirees.



Initiatives

- 2.4.1** Facilitate the introduction of sustainability initiatives through the land use and development system.
- 2.4.2** Support and promote development projects that demonstrate sustainability and best practice design in new housing development.
- 2.4.3** Improve coordination between government agencies that have responsibility for service and infrastructure provision.

Direction 3. Access

Improve management of access and transport

3.1 Enhance the Great Ocean Road as a world-class travelling experience

The Great Ocean Road is the major access route to the region. Around 66 per cent of residents and visitors use it. This strategy acknowledges its use by residents and aims to emphasise its role as a tourist route and enhance it as a world-class driving and touring experience.

Within the region, more than 90 per cent of travel is by car, a trend that is forecast to continue. Travellers generally seem to prefer self-drive and, beyond Torquay, car travel is significantly quicker than the alternatives.

The government is working to boost public transport usage around Victoria. For the Great Ocean Road Region, possible alternative travel solutions for the road will be more buses with connections to the Warrnambool rail line, or more cycling and walking opportunities.

Matters of cost, as well as environmental and aesthetic concerns, mean there is limited opportunity to improve the road's capacity particularly at the eastern end. Alternatives will be explored to accommodate and manage the traffic (particularly at peak times), and improve the experience of driving along the Great Ocean Road.

Improvement will centre on the road management measures such as parking, view points and interpretive information, and on planning matters such as preserving key vistas and investigating the inclusion of the road as part of the new national park. Traffic control and alternative access within towns will also be investigated and, at the same time, speed limits along the road will be examined.

Initiatives

- 3.1.1** Investigate the possible inclusion of the Great Ocean Road in the expanded national park.
- 3.1.2** Manage the Great Ocean Road in a way that recognises its role as a tourism road.
- 3.1.3** Seek to improve the tourism function of the Great Ocean Road by better management of litter and parking, by improving road safety and stopping areas and by improving interpretive information.
- 3.1.4** Preserve key vistas along the Great Ocean Road.
- 3.1.5** Improve travel information and signage along the Great Ocean Road, at each end and throughout the region.
- 3.1.6** Undertake traffic management studies in towns; implement seasonal traffic management measures.
- 3.1.7** Investigate alternative routes for through-traffic around Torquay and Apollo Bay.





3.2 Develop and promote inland routes

Alternative options for access to the region must be investigated to help cope with the anticipated higher volumes of traffic. The best option is the hinterland routes, which carry less traffic, offer direct connections to the coast and are scenic in their own right.

Presently, 73 per cent of visitor traffic uses the Great Ocean Road and 23 per cent chooses routes through the hinterland. A significant percentage of the region's industry traffic uses inland routes, particularly for uses associated with dairying, timber and gas. The Princes Highway carries much of this load.



Initiatives

- 3.2.1** Consider improvements to and increase the safety of north–south routes, such as the roads between Winchelsea–Deans Marsh–Lorne, Birregurra–Forrest–Apollo Bay, Colac–Lavers Hill and Colac–Timboon–Port Campbell, undertaking safety and performance audits for these routes commensurate with increased use, and implementing the recommendations.
- 3.2.2** Identify areas in the region where accident rates are high, and establish priority actions.
- 3.2.3** Develop a strategy for reducing traffic congestion on the Great Ocean Road (see Policy 4.2.7).
- 3.2.4** Along the north–south routes, work with regional tourism organisations to better promote the scenic, landscape and cultural values of the hinterland.