Project update

The Surf Coast has been declared a distinctive area and landscape under the Planning and Environment Act (1987)

The Surf Coast is renowned for its excellent beaches, coastal biodiversity and a wealth of recreation and tourism opportunities. It is the gateway to the Great Ocean Road, a national heritage site. The region has experienced increasing urban development pressure, particularly in Torquay-Jan Juc. To ensure the region’s long-term sustainability, the Victorian Government must effectively balance growth while ensuring the retention of unique features and characteristics.

To protect the distinctive Surf Coast environment, landscape and lifestyle, an area of the Surf Coast has now been declared a distinctive area and landscape.

Phase One Community Engagement

As input for the declaration area and policy development, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) undertook its first phase of community engagement from 14 May 2019 to 14 June 2019.

The engagement sought community feedback on:

✓ What is most valued about the Surf Coast
✓ What threats there are to these values
✓ Ways we could protect what is valued
✓ The vision for the future of the Surf Coast.

The Declared Area

See full map at engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/surf-coast

A Snapshot of Community Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community open houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>Participants at open houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Online and written submissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>635</td>
<td>Mapped comments</td>
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<td>1659</td>
<td>Visitors online</td>
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engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program
Key findings

Beaches, Aboriginal heritage, township character, farms, natural landscapes and views were the most highly valued attributes in the Surf Coast

Participants felt that insensitive overdevelopment and increased population was threatening natural views and resulting in a loss of natural environments and biodiversity

Spring Creek, Bells Beach and Jan Juc were the most frequently mapped locations

Limiting development and planning mechanisms were frequently cited as important ways to protect what was valued about the Surf Coast

Participants’ vision for the Surf Coast lifestyle in 2070 was of an economically prosperous, vibrant community that features attractive natural environments and landscapes

Participants envisioned any new developments to be sensitive to the natural landscape and existing township characteristics

Where to from here...

A Statement of Planning Policy must be prepared for the area within one year of the declaration, unless an extension is granted. The Statement will include a Strategic Framework Plan to guide the future land use and development of the region.

Now the declaration has been made, work on the Statement of Planning Policy has begun. More opportunities for engagement will follow. Please keep an eye on our website and subscribe to project updates for more information.

What will be in the statement?

The purpose of a Statement of Planning Policy is to guide the future use and development of land in the declared area, making sure the distinctive attributes of the declared area are protected.

The Statement will also coordinate decision making for land use development, achieving integrated management, infrastructure and development outcomes. It will set out clear objectives and strategies that responsible public entities must have regard to when making decisions. This will provide the highest level of planning protection through state legislation.

This protection will ensure that significant landscapes, environmental and cultural values of declared areas will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

More information

For more information and to read the full Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Community Engagement Findings Report, visit engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/surf-coast