



BELLARINE PENINSULA
DISTINCTIVE AREA
AND LANDSCAPE

Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of the Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy?

The published Draft Bellarine Peninsula Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) is a consultation draft.

Public consultation on the draft SPP commenced on Tuesday 29 June 2021 and will close 5.00pm Friday 20 August 2021.

The SPP and supporting documents can be found at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula>.

This is an opportunity for you to have your say. We want to know what you think about the draft SPP for the Bellarine Peninsula declared area.

Submissions are invited during this time and can be lodged through Engage Victoria:
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula>.

How has the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP been prepared?

DELWP has prepared the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP together with Traditional Owners, the Wadawurrung, the Borough of Queenscliffe, the City of Greater Geelong, other government agencies and authorities. This document has been informed by two phases of public engagement, the Queenscliffe and Greater Geelong planning schemes and strategic planning work of councils and further technical studies undertaken by DELWP.

The technical studies and summaries of previous phases of engagement can be found at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula>.

Why was the Bellarine Peninsula declared a 'distinctive area and landscape'?

The iconic Bellarine Peninsula is renowned for its pristine coastlines, unique habitats, rural landscapes, boutique wineries and artisan producers, historic villages and its relaxed coastal lifestyle. From busy towns like Ocean Grove and Drysdale to the small laidback villages of Queenscliff and Indented Head, the Bellarine Peninsula is a place where Victorians can live or holiday and enjoy coastal views and locally grown produce.

The characteristics that make the Bellarine Peninsula such a desirable place to live and visit, however, are under threat from over-development, increased visitation and climate change impacts.

On 29 October 2019 the Borough of Queenscliffe and parts of the City of Greater Geelong were declared as a 'distinctive area and landscape' under Part 3AAB of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act).

The Act outlines for an area to be declared a 'distinctive area and landscape', it must contain a concentration of unique attributes of state and/or national significance that are under threat from significant or irreversible land use change. These might include environmental, landscape, geological, water, cultural heritage, natural resource, agricultural and strategic infrastructure features.

For further information about the declaration process and the assessment of the Bellarine Peninsula declared area please read the [Bellarine Peninsula declaration report](#).



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Why has an SPP been prepared?

Part 3AAB of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) provides for the protection of 'distinctive areas and landscapes'. The objectives are:

- to recognise the importance of distinctive areas and landscapes to the people of Victoria and to protect and conserve their unique features and special characteristics
- to enhance the conservation of the environment in declared areas including unique habitats, ecosystems and biodiversity
- to enable the integration of policy development, implementation and decision-making through Statements of Planning Policy
- to recognise the connection and stewardship of Traditional Owners.

Declaring an area triggers the requirement for an SPP to be prepared and implemented. This ensures that the area is protected and enhanced for current communities and generations to come.

What are the benefits of a SPP for the community?

The SPP sets out a 50-year vision with policy objectives and strategies that responsible public entities (RPE) must have regard to when making decisions in relation to the declared area. This provides the highest level of planning protection through state legislation. This protection ensures the significant landscapes, environmental and cultural values of declared areas will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations, while providing certainty for investment.

What does an SPP do?

The purpose of an SPP is to create a framework for the future use and development of land in the declared area for the next 50 years to ensure the protection and conservation of the distinctive attributes of the declared area.

It provides the tool for coordinating decision makers across government and the community, achieving integrated management, infrastructure and development outcomes.

An SPP contains three main components:

- a 50-year vision which identifies the values and attributes that the community wants to protect
- policy objectives and strategies to achieve the vision
- a declared area framework plan that specifies areas for conservation, long-term protected settlement boundaries, and areas for change within established areas.

What settlement boundaries does the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP propose?

The draft SPP proposes protected settlement boundaries for all townships on the Bellarine Peninsula, except for Queenscliff which is geographically constrained for any outward expansion. This includes Barwon Heads, Drysdale/Clifton Springs/Curlewis, Indented Head, Leopold, Ocean Grove, Point Lonsdale, Portarlington and St Leonards. Settlement boundaries are consistent with the existing boundaries of townships identified in Clause 21.14 of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. However, changes are proposed to two settlement boundaries:

- **Portarlington:** The existing settlement boundary of Portarlington is proposed to be extended to include the residential area along Ramblers Road. This is considered an anomaly and is included given the land is currently zoned for residential use and development. Extending the settlement boundary here clearly delineates the urban extent of Portarlington.



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- **Ocean Grove:** Land at the corner of Shell Road and Banks Road is proposed to be excluded from the existing settlement boundary. This land is in a Farming Zone. While it was included in the existing settlement boundary to accommodate a potential future tourism related development in 2007, further technical work has revealed that development would likely erode the state significant Bellarine Peninsula Southern Coast landscape. The proposed settlement boundary will protect the green (non-urban) break and rural gateway to the township and landscape character of Shell Road and Banks Road. Banks Road is considered to be a more logical boundary.
- Land at the southern end of Bonnyvale Road is proposed to be excluded. This land is not suitable for urban development given it is adjacent to the state significant Bellarine Peninsula Southern Coast landscape and environmentally significant Buckley Park Foreshore Reserve. The area is also at risk of flooding and bushfire. Bonnyvale Road is considered to be a logical boundary.

How have the proposed protected settlement boundaries been designated?

All townships, except Queenscliff, have existing settlement boundaries designated in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. These settlement boundaries were informed by significant local strategic planning work including structure planning and reviews by independent planning panels.

Further technical work has occurred in preparing the draft SPP to ensure the existing boundaries were consistent with the objects of Part3AAB of the Act and supported by current planning policy and the feedback received during the previous phases of public engagement. The existing land supply was also taken into account, which shows there is sufficient land available for development on the Bellarine Peninsula to meet its growth requirements (See *Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020*).

How does the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP affect land in urban Geelong bordering the declared area?

The draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP identifies the need for a protected settlement boundary for areas of urban Geelong bordering the western boundary of the declared area, including Moolap and the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area. This will ensure long-term protection of the green (non-urban) break between Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula.

The *Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020* includes an action to undertake a review of the settlement boundaries of urban Geelong, this includes Moolap and the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth areas. The finalisation of this boundary will be informed by strategic planning work led by the City of Greater Geelong in collaboration with the Wadawurrung, DELWP, and other relevant agencies and authorities.

What is the difference between a settlement boundary and a protected settlement boundary?

In accordance with section 46AV of the Act, a declared area framework plan that forms part of an SPP may specify settlement boundaries, or it may designate specified settlement boundaries as protected settlement boundaries. Section 3 of the Act defines:

- a settlement boundary: in relation to a plan of an area, as the boundary marking the limit of urban development in that area
- a protected settlement boundary: a settlement boundary in a declared area that is protected under an SPP. A protected settlement boundary can only be amended via ratification of an approved planning



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scheme amendment by both Houses of Parliament giving them the highest level of legislative protection. This is similar to the process for amending Melbourne’s Urban Growth Boundary.

How does the Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020 impact on the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP?

Greater Geelong’s Settlement Strategy 2020 was implemented into *the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme* on 6 May 2021 via amendment C395ggee. The strategy informed the development of the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP.

The strategy presents a significant policy shift in redirecting the majority of housing growth away from the Bellarine Peninsula to the northern and western growth areas of Geelong. This was taken into account in proposing the long-term settlement boundaries included within the draft SPP.

How does the City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016–36 impact on the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP?

The *City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-36* was implemented into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme on 30 May 2021 via amendment C393ggee. The strategy provides a technical analysis of Greater Geelong’s retail network, with changes to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme to support growth in the retail sector within planned and existing retail centres. As it relates to the Bellarine Peninsula, the report identifies ongoing demand in Ocean Grove and Drysdale/Clifton Springs where population growth is being experienced. However, the strategy notes that plans are already in place in these areas of high population growth and no new centres are required. The strategy’s findings have informed development of the draft SPP.

How does the draft SPP interact with government’s ‘Green Wedges and Agricultural Land’ project?

Government’s Green Wedges and Agricultural Land (GWAL) project seeks to protect rural land within 100km of Melbourne’s CBD to ensure its ongoing productivity and to avoid irreversible changes to land use. This includes land within the Bellarine Peninsula.

Like the draft SPP strategies, it seeks to protect non-urban breaks and agricultural land within the declared area. The outcomes of the project will be implemented alongside the SPP once approved.

How does the draft SPP interact with government’s ‘River of the Barwon Action Plan’ project?

The lower reaches of the Barwon River and estuary are located within the Bellarine Peninsula declared area. When released, the Rivers of the Barwon River Action Plan seeks to ensure the Barwon River catchment can thrive and be enjoyed as a natural treasure for many years to come. This will be achieved in partnership with the Traditional Owners, the Wadawurrung, by enacting best-practice water management practices. This includes developing new master plans to outline the vision and strategic directions of the region’s waterways to guide future land use and development along and adjoining the river corridor.

The action plan will work alongside the implementation of the Bellarine Peninsula SPP.

How does the draft SPP interact with government’s Water Plan?

The SPP recognises the importance of providing water security for residents and businesses on the Bellarine Peninsula. The demand for water in the declared area is increasing as the population grows and agricultural production and other uses expand. However, available surface and ground water in the region is declining due to the ongoing effects of climate change (i.e. reduced rainfall). Securing current and future water resources for the area is therefore key.



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The draft SPP aligns with the Victorian Government's 2016 *Water for Victoria* Plan that seeks to better manage current and future water resources. This long-term plan aims to ensure Victoria's water system is modern and efficient, innovative, future-focused and affordable. This includes supporting agricultural businesses with infrastructure to access increased amounts of recycled water and helping them adapt to new methods of production.

How will significant landscapes be protected on the Bellarine Peninsula?

The Bellarine Peninsula declared area includes landscapes of regional and state significance. The draft SPP proposes a range of strategies to better protect these landscapes of significance.

A significant portion of state significant land is reserved for public use. Public land in the declared area is subject to a range of existing legislative requirements, such as the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and *Parks Victoria Act 2018*. It is also subject to planning scheme provisions, such as the Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ), that outline protection and conservation of areas and values of significance, including landscapes.

In implementing the SPP, including through relevant planning schemes, DELWP will consider the advice of technical experts and apply the most appropriate planning provisions and/or other measures to ensure effective protection of the landscapes. DELWP will commence work on revising the landscape protections for public land with relevant responsible public entities and stakeholders after the SPP is finalised.

Are existing planning permits impacted?

Existing approved planning permits are not impacted by the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP.

You can continue to apply for a planning permit through your local council while the Victorian Government is consulting on the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP. The Borough of Queenscliffe and City of Greater Geelong are the responsible authorities for determining planning permit applications in accordance with their planning schemes.

Once the Bellarine Peninsula SPP is approved it will be operational immediately and councils must consider the SPP in making decisions on planning permit applications.

Where will future housing growth be directed within the declared area?

The recently approved *City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy 2020* sets a clear policy direction to direct the majority of housing growth away from the Bellarine Peninsula.

In the Bellarine Peninsula most urban development will be accommodated in the district towns of Drysdale / Clifton Springs, Leopold and Ocean Grove. These district towns provide employment, regional community services and facilities for residents, workers and visitors to the Bellarine Peninsula. Other towns on the Bellarine Peninsula are proposed to accommodate minimal or moderate urban development to preserve their unique landscape setting and township character.

Urban development will be sustainably managed through a combination of infill and greenfield development within designated settlement boundaries. All new development in each settlement will be required to respond to the township and coastal character and landscape setting.



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How will the township character of settlements be protected?

The relaxed, coastal, and rural character of settlements in the declared area is highly valued by the community. The draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP proposes that settlements retain a strong connection with their heritage, environmental and coastal and rural landscape setting, through the dominance of vegetation, the visibility of the natural contours of the land and views of the coast and the high-quality design of new developments.

The draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP is intended to guide built form outcomes and provide the policy direction for future planning scheme amendments.

Housing change areas have been designated across the Bellarine Peninsula to ensure character is protected, while allowing for some urban development and change in designated areas (see below).

What is meant by substantial, incremental, and minimal housing change areas?

The draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP proposes three housing change areas for townships on the Bellarine Peninsula: minimal, incremental, and substantial.

The proposed housing change areas identify the level of future housing development that might be expected given the need to protect the coastal and landscape character of Bellarine Peninsula settlements.

Once the Bellarine Peninsula SPP is approved, further work will occur to give effect to the housing change areas through the Queenscliffe and Greater Geelong Planning Schemes.

What does minimal change area mean?

Minimal change areas are generally not suitable for providing future housing development and have special neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics that warrant protection. These areas have highly valued landscape, heritage and/or coastal characters, which new development must ensure is preserved.

The character of these areas is protected, and new development has a low-rise built form set in well-landscaped gardens so that the surrounding vegetation is the dominant feature. This includes areas such as Queenscliff's heritage precinct and Barwon Heads' semi-bush significant landscape area.

No changes are proposed to the current zoning and building height limits in these areas.

What does incremental change area mean?

Incremental change means that housing development may occur within the context of the preferred township character of the settlement. These areas are suitable for moderate urban consolidation, and provide housing diversity while respecting coastal and landscape character with low rise built form set in well-landscaped gardens.

All towns and villages on the Bellarine Peninsula have established residential areas that are being proposed as incremental residential change areas. The Increased Housing Diversity Areas (*Greater Geelong Housing Diversity Strategy 2007*) located in Barwon Heads, St Leonards and Portarlington are also identified as incremental change areas.

The proposed implementation actions seek to allow building heights of up to a maximum of two storeys or nine metres (three storeys in identified Increased Housing Diversity Areas). A review of the planning requirements for landscaping, building site coverage, private open space and permeability to provide enough space for landscaping and large canopy trees is also proposed.



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What does substantial change area mean?

Substantial change means that more housing development is likely to occur, which may result in a different scale and density of housing compared to other settlements on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Development of higher-density housing can occur, with the highest typically adjacent to the commercial core of the area and the lowest at the edge of the area. While change should be expected, new development must still respect the coastal and landscape character.

The proposed implementation actions seek to allow building heights of up to a maximum of three storeys or 11 metres and to review the planning requirements for landscaping, building site coverage and permeability to provide enough space for landscaping and large canopy trees.

For further information on setting change areas, please refer to [Planning Practice Note 90](#). It outlines that substantial change areas reflect a different degree of change in different built form contexts. A substantial change area in an outer urban and regional context may more closely resemble an incremental change area in an inner urban context.

How can I find out more about the draft SPP?

DELWP is continuing to deliver the Victorian Government's Distinctive Areas and Landscapes program while responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We propose holding in-person and online public information sessions and will be guided by the Victorian Government's public health advice. At these sessions, held during the public consultation period, the community and stakeholders can hear about the proposals and ask questions.

Visit <https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula> for dates, times and locations of the sessions.

All landowners and occupiers within the Bellarine Peninsula declared area will be notified by mail and invited to make written submissions.

What happens after submissions close?

Following the close of submissions, DELWP will review all submissions and prepare a report to the Minister for Planning for consideration.

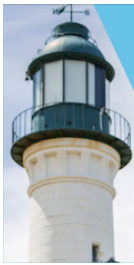
The SPP will be finalised and provided to responsible public entities and Ministers responsible for those entities for endorsement in accordance with section 46AX of the Act.

Once endorsed, the SPP will be submitted to Governor in Council for approval. It will become effective on the date a notice is published in the government gazette.

Will submissions be referred to the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Standing Advisory Committee?

The Minister for Planning has not asked the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Standing Advisory Committee to review submissions received on the draft Bellarine Peninsula SPP at this stage. The Committee was set up to advise on any matters that the Minister deemed necessary.

The Minister and DELWP are open to hearing all views of community members and interested stakeholders.



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How will the Statement of Planning Policy be monitored and reviewed?

A SPP must be reviewed at least every 10 years.

Any proposed changes (other than minor editorial corrections) must be consulted on and requires endorsement by responsible public entities, Ministers responsible for those responsible public entities and approval by the Governor in Council. It can be reviewed earlier than this, however, an earlier review will only be considered if further strategic planning work has been completed.

A review may reassess the location of a settlement boundary if there are compelling reasons to do so. Any proposed change to a settlement boundary in an SPP must be strongly supported by evidence and requires a rigorous strategic planning process involving community consultation.

The monitoring and review process will be led by DELWP on behalf of the Minister for Planning in collaboration with Traditional Owners, local councils, other government agencies and authorities, and the broader community.

What community engagement has happened so far?

Phase one public engagement

Phase one public engagement was held between 14 May and 15 July 2019. Engagement consisted of five community open house sessions as well as an online survey and mapping activity. This was an important input for the declaration assessment and will help inform the initial policy development for the SPP. During the engagement, approximately 2,900 people were reached by the project either online or through participation in-person engagement activities. Two hundred and seven people participated in community open house sessions, 175 submissions were received, 585 comments were mapped and 2,700 people visited our website throughout phase one community engagement.

The engagement sought community feedback on:

- what is most valued about the Bellarine Peninsula
- what threats there are to these values
- ways we could protect what is valued
- the vision for the future of the Bellarine Peninsula.

To read more about the findings of each phase engagement, visit <https://engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bellarine-peninsula>

Phase two public engagement

Phase two public engagement was held between 17 April and 14 June 2020. Engagement consisted of two planning workshops for the community, one planning workshop for responsible public entities and one information session for City of Greater Geelong residents, as well as an online survey. The feedback received through this phase of engagement will help to inform the preparation of a draft SPP.

DELWP sought community feedback on a draft vision statement and policy directions for the following themes:

- environmental risks and resilience
- landscape
- environment and Biodiversity
- aboriginal Cultural Heritage



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- historic Heritage
- visitor economy, agriculture and natural resources
- strategic infrastructure
- settlements

The findings have informed the draft SPP.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Declared Area	<p>A 'Declared Area' is an area to which an order under section 46AO of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> applies.</p> <p>Declaring an area indicates that it contains a concentration of distinctive attributes that are under threat of significant or irreversible land use change that would affect the environmental, social or economic value of the area.</p> <p>Declaring an area triggers the requirement for a Statement of Planning Policy to be prepared.</p>
Declared Area Framework Plan	<p>A declared area framework plan provides a spatial framework for decision-making in relation to the future use and development of land. It integrates environmental, social, cultural and economic factors for the benefit of the community, encourage sustainable development and identifies areas for protection and conservation. It may also specify settlement boundaries and/or protected settlement boundaries.</p>
Green break (non-urban break)	<p>Rural land located in between settlement boundaries that may comprise a variety of non-urban land uses (such as agriculture, hobby farms and agritourism businesses).</p>
Increased Housing Diversity Area	<p>As identified in Greater Geelong City Council's Housing Diversity Strategy 2007, a location within an urban area where a mix of high, medium and conventional density housing is encouraged, with the density of development highest within the commercial core of the area and lowest at the edge of the area.</p>
Incremental change area	<p>An area where housing growth occurs within the context of existing or preferred neighbourhood character. See Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for Housing (PPN90) for further details.</p>
Minimal change area	<p>An area with neighbourhood, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics that are sufficiently special to a municipality, metropolitan Melbourne or Victoria to warrant protection. Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for Housing (PPN90) has further details.</p>
Protected settlement boundary	<p>A settlement boundary in a declared area that is protected under an SPP. Any amendment to an SPP that seeks to change a protected settlement boundary must have an approved planning scheme amendment ratified by both Houses of Parliament.</p>



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	A protected settlement boundary is a long-term settlement boundary intended to protect the valued attributes of the rural hinterland surrounding the settlement by containing its growth.
Responsible public entity	<p>An agency or body responsible for managing land in the declared area. In the context of a declared area, a responsible public entity (RPE) is any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Secretary (within the meaning of the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987</i>) • the water corporation responsible for the area in which the declared area is located • a municipal council whose municipal district contains land in the declared area • Parks Victoria • the Victorian Planning Authority • a catchment management authority for a catchment and land protection region that contains land in the declared area • the Roads Corporation of Victoria • Victorian Rail Track • any committee of management or trustees in relation to land in the declared area • any Traditional Owner Land Management Board in relation to land in the declared area • any other public entity prescribed to be a RPE in relation to the declared area.
Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)	Statement of Planning Policy means a Statement of Planning Policy approved under Part 3AAB of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> in relation to a declared area. It will be reviewed every 10 years and may be amended accordingly.
Substantial change area	An area where housing intensification will occur that results in a substantially different scale and intensity of housing compared to other areas of a municipality, including an area in and around an activity centre or along a public transport corridor and a strategic development area. Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for Housing (PPN90) has details.
Traditional Owners	An Aboriginal group with Country in a declared area. The Wadawurrung are the Traditional Owners of the Bellarine Peninsula declared area.