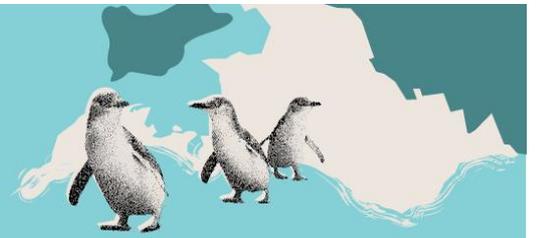


BASS COAST

Distinctive Area and Landscapes Project



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the objectives of declaring the Bass Coast a 'Distinctive Area and Landscape'?

The four 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.

What is the purpose of declaring the Bass Coast?

Declaring the Bass Coast is a major step in setting out a long-term vision and strategy on how land is used, protected and developed. The declaration aims to protect the environment, landscape and lifestyle of the Bass Coast.

What happens now that the area has been declared?

Now that the Bass Coast is declared a distinctive area and landscape, a draft **Statement of Planning Policy** is being prepared by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in partnership with Bass Coast Shire Council and the Bunurong Land Council and with significant community input.

What is a Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)?

An SPP provides the strongest level of planning protection and:

- Sets a **50-year vision** which identifies the values and attributes to be protected and enhanced.
- Sets out the **long-term needs** for the integration of decision making and planning for the declared area.
- Includes a **declared area framework plan** that integrates environmental, social, cultural and economic factors and may specify may settlement boundaries in the declared area or designate specific settlement boundaries in the declared area as protected settlement boundaries.

Once the SPP is approved it will be incorporated into the Bass Coast Planning Scheme and enforced through the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

How does the Statement of Planning Policy (SPP) benefit the community?

The SPP will set out clear policy objectives that responsible public entities must have regard to when making decisions and carrying out programs within the declared area. This will provide the **highest level of planning protection** through state legislation.

The SPP will ensure that the significant landscapes, environmental and cultural values of declared areas will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations. The SPP will achieve this through co-ordinated decision making for all land use and development.

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What criteria must be met for an area to be declared as a distinctive area and landscape?

For an area to be declared a 'distinctive area and landscape' it must firstly 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. These attributes are considered to have a positive social, environmental and economic impact on the lives of Victorians.

The degree to which these attributes are **under significant threat (from urban development and/or land use change)** that would affect the environmental, social or economic value of the area must also be assessed.

Why has the Bass Coast been declared?

The Bass Coast is renowned for excellent beaches, coastal biodiversity, wetlands of international significance and a wealth of recreation and tourism opportunities. The area has been experiencing increasing pressure from development and climate change impacts leading to threats to valued landscape and natural areas.

What area of the Bass Coast has been declared?

The Bass Coast declared area includes the entirety of the municipal area and extends around the coastline, including 600 metres seaward of the low water mark.

My property is in the declared area, what does this mean for me?

The declaration does not change the current planning scheme or your property rights. It defines the area for which a **Statement of Planning Policy** must be prepared.

The Statement will set out a long-term vision and strategies for the region and guides future land use and development decisions. The Statement will be developed in collaboration with the Bass Coast Shire Council, Bunurong Land Council, with input from local communities and other key stakeholders.

What is the role of the Bass Coast Shire Council in this project?

The Bass Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape project is being led by DELWP, who is working in collaboration with the Bass Coast Shire Council to develop the Statement of Planning Policy.

Does the declaration impact existing planning permits?

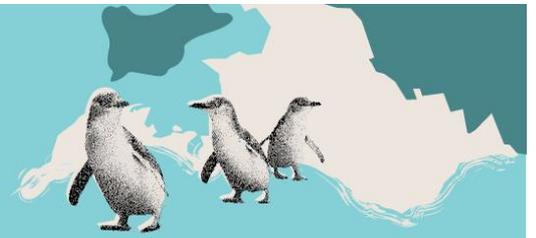
No, Councils will continue to assess and determine applications for planning permits based on the existing planning scheme provisions. Once the Statement of Planning Policy is approved and incorporated in the planning scheme, new applications will be considered having regard to the Statement of Planning Policy.

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

A *settlement boundary* means the long-term boundary marking the future urban limit of a settlement that includes settlement related land uses (e.g. residential and commercial areas, community facilities, parks etc.).

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A *protected settlement boundary* is a *settlement boundary* in a Distinctive Area and Landscape declared area that is identified as protected under a Statement of Planning Policy. Once approved a *protected settlement boundary* can only be changed via an approved planning scheme amendment being ratified by both Houses of Parliament, which is the same process for changing Melbourne's urban growth boundary.

How does this relate to the establishment of the Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park?

The Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park is another key election commitment being delivered in the region. The two projects are complimentary, and both seek to enhance the environmental and coastal values of the region. Further announcements about the establishment of the park are anticipated in the following months.

How does this project relate to the government's election commitment to establish a new junior secondary school in Bass Coast?

Following a separate consultation process, the government has announced that a new secondary school will be established in San Remo to service Phillip Island and coastal communities. DELWP will continue to work with the Victorian School Building Authority to ensure the two projects are aligned.

How does the declaration impact upon Bass Coast Amendment C136 which seeks to rezone land within the Cape Paterson settlement boundary from farming land to residential land?

Following a request from the Bass Coast Shire Council, the Minister for Planning has authorised Council to prepare Amendment C136 to the Bass Coast Planning Scheme. Amendment C136 seeks to rezone 53 hectares of land within the Cape Paterson settlement boundary from the Farming Zone to the General Residential Zone and apply a Development Plan Overlay to facilitate its integrated development over time. The amendment process will be led by Council and is a separate process to the preparation of a draft Statement of Planning Policy for the Bass Coast declared area. In authorising Council to prepare Amendment C136, the Minister for Planning has resolved that Council must have regard to the Bass Coast distinctive area and landscape project and, in particular, any impacts on settlement planning for Cape Paterson and the environmental and landscape significance of the land subject to the amendment.

Granting authorisation is not an indication of whether or not the amendment will be approved. The amendment process requires council to undertake public exhibition, which will enable the community to have a say on the amendment. Any submissions made to the amendment will need to be considered by Council and may be referred to an independent planning panel.

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What community engagement has happened so far?

A first phase of community engagement was held between 10 July and 12 August 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. 222 people participated in community open house sessions, 232 submissions were received and 1,896 people visited our website throughout phase one community engagement.

The engagement sought community feedback on:

- What is most valued about the Bass Coast?
- What threats there are to these values?
- Ways we could protect what is valued?
- The vision for the future of the Bass Coast?

To read more about the findings of phase one engagement, visit engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bass-coast.

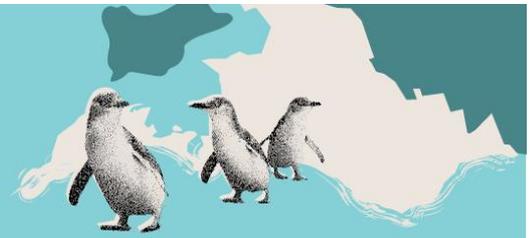
Will there be any further community engagement?

Yes. There will be **further community and stakeholder engagement** to capture the community's input into the long-term vision and direction for the declared areas. Phase one engagement has already been completed and there will be more opportunities for community consultation as the project progresses. Phase two engagement in March-April 2020 will further inform the **Statement of Planning Policy**. A third phase of community engagement will then seek written submissions on a draft Statement of Planning Policy in mid-2020.

For more information on the findings of phase one engagement as well as the full consultation program please visit engage.vic.gov.au/distinctive-areas-and-landscapes-program/bass-coast.

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Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Declared Area	<p>The 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 and is under threat. A Statement of Planning Policy will be developed for the declared area to protect and conserve its distinctive attributes.</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, encourage sustainable development and identifies areas for protection and conservation. It may also specify protected settlement boundaries.</p>
Low water mark	<p>The level reached by seawater at low tide.</p>
Protected settlement boundary	<p>A protected settlement boundary is a settlement boundary in a declared area that is protected under a Statement of Planning Policy. It is a long-term boundary designed to contain urban growth. Once approved, they can only be amended via ratification by both Houses of Parliament.</p>
Responsible Public Entity	<p>For the Bass Coast declared area, this includes the Bass Coast Shire Council, Parks Victoria, Regional Roads, Melbourne Water, South Gippsland Water, Southern Rural Water, Department of Transport, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority, Crown land managers and other entities defined under section 3 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>.</p> <p>Responsible public entities must endorse the Statement of Planning Policy and must have regard to the Statement of Planning Policy when developing their own policies or making decisions in relation to the declared area.</p>
Statement of Planning Policy (SPP)	<p>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, as amended from time to time.</p>