THE BAY

Context

The Bay is located to the extreme south of the municipality and consists of the area between Western Port and Baxter-Tooradin, Lynes and Hardy’s Roads. Within this area are the coastal settlements of Tooradin, Cannons Creek, Warneet and Blind Bight. There are also extensive coastal reserves managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The Bay forms a strategic link between two of Victoria’s outstanding tourist destinations, Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island.

The Bay is noted for its ecological diversity in terms of its terrestrial and marine species, some of which are protected by international agreements to which Australia is a party. The Bay also has extensive areas of uncleared coastal vegetation. Farming land near Tooradin is noted for its versatile agricultural soils.

The township of Tooradin is one of the few areas where the South Gippsland Highway meets the waters of Western Port. Coastal landscapes in this region have been recorded by the National Trust.

The coastal settlements have well established communities despite the lack of infrastructure and the remoteness of the townships from established activity centres.

Objectives, strategies and implementation

Objectives

- To protect the natural ecosystems of Western Port from the impact of urban growth, especially polluted runoff, increased recreational pressure, loss of native vegetation and despoliation of coastal landscapes.
- To protect farm land with high quality agricultural soils from inappropriate development.
- To create local employment and business investment opportunities.
- To improve connectivity between the coastal settlements to encourage the sharing of community facilities and infrastructure.
- To contain urban development (including rural residential) within the existing boundaries of coastal settlements.

Strategies

- Provide sewerage to all coastal settlements, with high priority given to Tooradin.
- Retain or reinforce existing subdivision controls and native vegetation removal controls for non-urban zones.
- Encourage development that has low environmental impact and which complements the landscape characteristics of Western Port.
- Encourage the revegetation of coastal areas using coastal native vegetation.
- Protect coastal areas with identified landscape significance.
- Encourage residential and commercial development to locate within established rural settlements and planned commercial nodes.
- Develop Tooradin township as a centre for tourism, taking advantage of its proximity to Western Port and high volumes of tourist traffic along South Gippsland Highway.
- To discourage isolated commercial development along South Gippsland Highway, Baxter-Tooradin Road and Western Port Highway.
- Encourage recreational boating to the extent that it does not compromise the ecological values of Western Port.

**Implementation**

These strategies will be implemented by:

**Use of policy and exercise of discretion**

- Using Western Port Coastal Policy to recognise the need for sympathetic development to conserve the environmental and scenic qualities of the Western Port coastal areas (Clause 22.04).

**Application of zones and overlays**

- Applying the Environmental Rural Zone to protect and conserve the sensitive coastal areas under private ownership.
- Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to protect and conserve the natural environment of the coastal areas under public ownership.
- Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay to protect and conserve areas of designated zoological, biological and botanical significance.
- Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay 2 (SLO2) to protect and conserve areas of identified landscape significance.
- Applying Commercial 1 Zone to the Tooradin Township to reflect the designation of this town as a centre for tourism based activities.

**Further strategic work**

- Preparing an Urban Villages Strategy for the Coastal Villages
- Developing a strategy for the Western Port foreshore.

**Other actions**

- Identifying land within the Kooweerup Flood Mitigation District and Devon Meadows/Cannons Creek Drainage Strategy Area subject to inundation/flooding as the basis for introducing a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay.