

21.05 LANDSCAPE AND BUILT FORM

09/02/2017
C140

21.05-1 Landscape: Overview

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Bass Coast has environmental and landscape values of regional and national significance, including Ramsar listed wetlands, marine parks and remnant native vegetation.

The coastal landscapes and hinterlands are highly valued by the community for their visual, environmental and cultural qualities, as well as being productive agricultural land. Many residents are attracted to this region by the rolling hills leading down to the coast. Building dwellings on ridgelines, to gain views over rural hills, to the water in the distance, has previously been a popular development trend. The municipality is host to several National Trust listed landscapes. The landscapes and views of the municipality need protection from inappropriate development.

Bass Coast Shire’s rural and coastal setting, historic development patterns, and residential architecture, combine to give the municipality its unique appearance and character. The Bass Valley, Phillip Island, Bass Highway and Bunurong Coastal Drive are locations and corridors where the rural farmed landscape and coastal views are key elements of the landscape character. Preventing ribbon development between towns, development at township and landscape edges and along corridors is critical to maintaining landscape character and values.

The majority of new residential subdivision estates within the municipality occur on the periphery of existing urban centres and at the interface between urban and rural land. New residential subdivision design should be responsive to environmental issues and habitat values, and the maintenance and protection of viable agricultural land.

21.05-2 Character Areas

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The coastal landscapes of the Bass Coast Shire are identified by six ecologically distinct Character Areas;

Ecologically Distinct Area	Key Attributes	Future Character Directions
Westernport Lowlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Character Area is located on the eastern edge of Westernport Bay. It is low-lying and mostly rural, with beaches, mangrove flats and coastal woodlands along a diverse coastal edge. The Character Area terminates in the south at the Anderson Peninsula, although it is likely to extend around Westernport Bay outside the study area for some distance to the north and west. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The northern half of this Character Area will become increasingly vegetated with local vegetation communities extending from bushland reserves along roadsides and watercourses into open rural land. In the south, open views will be protected and enhanced and development will be set long distances back from the Bass Highway.
Phillip Island Northern Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Character Area includes the majority of Phillip Island and is characterised by a rolling rural landscape adjoining a low-energy sandy and mud-flat coastline on the northern edge at Westernport Bay. Features include a cultural vegetation pattern of wind breaks and roadside vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of this Character Area will retain an open rolling rural character with cultural vegetation patterns associated with rural land uses and a few scattered homesteads and tourism facilities set among landscaped grounds. The settlements will be characterised by indigenous

Ecologically Distinct Area	Key Attributes	Future Character Directions
	<p>and extensive urban areas in three settlements at the northern coastal edge (Cowes / Ventnor / Rhyll). Rolling topography inland is largely undeveloped, offering open rural views with glimpses to Westernport Bay available in parts.</p>	<p>vegetation which extends in corridors between inland reserves and the natural coastal edge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing rural breaks between residential developments will be retained and development at the coastal edge will remain subordinate to vegetation and landform to a dominant natural coastal character and will reduce distant visibility.
<p>Bunurong Coast and Hinterland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This Character Area includes the diverse and rugged Bunurong coastline between Kilcunda and Inverloch and a largely cleared, rolling pastoral hinterland extending inland to the Strzelecki Range and east to Cape Liptrap (including the Bald Hills). ▪ Along the Bass Strait coast throughout much of this Character Area high sand dunes, sea cliffs, rocky headlands, rock stacks and beaches are valued landscape features. ▪ The immediate hinterland is largely undeveloped and in part supports native heathy vegetation in coastal reserves. Further inland, open grazing land is interspersed with corridors of native vegetation (especially riparian reserves and at roadsides), exotic windbreaks, farmhouses and settlements. ▪ Two major urban settlements (Wonthaggi and Inverloch) are within the Character Area, while Cape Paterson is a coastal holiday home location set atop the rugged coastline. ▪ This Character Area extends across the Bass Coast Shire and the South Gippsland Shire and is split into two parts, separated by the Tarwin Floodplain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Character Area will continue to be characterised by an open rural hinterland and an undeveloped coastal edge offering outviews to scenic coastal features free of built development. ▪ Development in the near-coastal hinterland will be restricted to the settlement of Cape Paterson or set a sufficient distance back from the coast to be nestled in topography and screened from views by landscaping and increased vegetation on the inland side of coastal viewpoints. ▪ An open and uncluttered hinterland offering occasional outviews to the Bass Hills, Mt Liptrap, Mt Hoddle and the Venus Bay dunes will be interspersed with native vegetation corridors. ▪ Extensions to existing urban areas will be sensitive to views from key viewing corridors, maintenance of open rural character and protection and enhancement of the wild, natural coastline.
<p>Phillip Island Southern Coast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The southern coast of Phillip Island between Cape Woolamai and McHaffie Point at Ventnor consists of volcanic landforms shaped by the high seas and winds of Bass Strait. ▪ A rugged and varied landscape valued by the community for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This Character Area will be characterised by contained coastal settlements set amongst indigenous vegetation, separated by extensive open rural landscapes and areas of native vegetation providing a wild and natural character at the

Ecologically Distinct Area	Key Attributes	Future Character Directions
	<p>undeveloped, rocky headlands, high sand dunes and beaches has resulted including regionally significant landforms such as Cape Woolamai, Pyramid Rock and The Nobbies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open vistas along the coast are available from numerous access points. Several townships have been developed along the coastal edge in the eastern half of the island (with substantial undeveloped breaks between) while inland rolling pastoral landscapes are contiguous with the Northern Coast Character Area. ▪ The landscape features in this Character Area are attracting growing demand for residential dwellings within and outside settlements sited to take advantage of views. 	<p>coastal edge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural breaks between settlements which provide a landscape of undeveloped coastal cliffs and headlands will be strictly maintained, and become increasingly vegetated with appropriate indigenous coastal species. West of Smiths Beach will be an open, undeveloped and increasingly vegetated rural landscape with a scattering of built elements set long distances back from the coast on lower slopes of inland topography and amongst substantial landscaping.
Anderson Peninsula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Between San Remo and Kilcunda is an elevated open pastoral landscape edged by dramatic rocky sea cliffs and slopes to Bass Strait and Western Port. ▪ The settlement of San Remo is set on sloping topography at the gateway to Phillip Island in the west, while Kilcunda has commanding outviews at the eastern edge of the Character Area. This area shares characteristics with the Bass Hills Character Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A rural character will dominate the Character Area outside the settlement of San Remo. ▪ The edges of this Character Area that are visible from outside the Area (including off shore) will continue to provide a rural backdrop in which development and landscape disturbance is avoided or sited and landscaped in such a way to retain a dominant undeveloped character. ▪ The coastal edge will become increasingly vegetated in character and continue to provide extensive scenic viewing opportunities largely free of development. ▪ Development will be sited low on inland slopes out of the viewshed from key viewing corridors and settlements.
Bass Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Bass Hills are a prominent and important landscape element throughout much of the Bass Coast Shire, particularly as the backdrop to landscapes surrounding Westernport Bay. ▪ The landform rises steeply from coastal plains and pastures and forms part of a near-continuous landform (the Strzelecki Highland Character Type) which stretches between San Remo in the west to Yarram in the east. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Bass Hills will retain an undeveloped cultural landscape character in which built form is sparsely located and does not dominate the rural character. ▪ Development on the western face viewed from the Bass Highway, settlements and other key viewing locations on the eastern side of Westernport Bay will continue to be restricted and carefully managed to retain the unbuilt character.

Ecologically Distinct Area	Key Attributes	Future Character Directions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inland of the coastal viewshed the Character Area is characterised by steeply undulating topography and limited viewing throughout. It is mostly cleared of indigenous vegetation although cultural vegetation patterns including roadside remnants and exotic shelterbelts are a feature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural vegetation patterns and native vegetation corridors will create contrasts with the historic cleared landscape character. Inland of the coastal viewshed, an open rural character will be maintained by ensuring built form is carefully sited low in slopes and native vegetation and exotic feature planting are used to soften buildings. Increased rural living and lifestyle developments as well as the majority of rural structures will be sited low on inland slopes out of the coastal viewshed.

Table 1: Character Areas

In addition to these character areas, specific coastal landscapes within the Shire have been determined to have either state or regional significance. These include the landscapes of:

- The Phillip Island Western and Southern Coast – State Significance;
- The Phillip Island Eastern Coast – Regional Significance;
- The Kilcunda to Inverloch Coast - Regional Significance; and
- The Venus Bay Peninsula and Anderson Inlet (part) - Regional Significance.

Development within these significant coastal spaces must respond appropriately to the landscape setting, maintain existing views and vistas and be subordinate to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character. Specific objectives and strategies have been developed to retain the Bass Coast landscape character for each of these character areas.

Key Issues

- Maintaining individual settlement identity.
- Protecting rural landscape.
- Maintaining green breaks between towns.
- Protecting coastal and hinterland landscapes and views.
- Managing the pressures to develop land in locations of high scenic value.

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Objectives and Strategies

- Objective 1** To ensure that development is subordinate to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character and significance.
- Strategy 1.1 Ensure that coastal related development responds appropriately to the landscape setting, character and desired future character directions.
- Strategy 1.2 Strongly discourage development that is unsympathetic to significant landscape areas.
- Strategy 1.3 Avoid linear coastal development beyond urban boundaries.
- Strategy 1.4 In open rural areas, set buildings back long distances from roads and/or group buildings together among substantial landscaping.

Strategy 1.5 Scale the height and form of new development at the coastal edge of settlements to be sensitive to surrounding development, the surrounding landform and the visual setting of the settlement, particularly when viewed from the foreshore.

Objective 2 To protect the undeveloped character of the coastal strip.

Strategy 2.1 Retain a dominant natural or undeveloped character, by setting development back from the coast, in flatter locations, avoiding loss of vegetation, and minimising the visibility and impact of pedestrian and vehicular access paths and site servicing on the coastal landscape.

Strategy 2.2 Ensure ridge tops and visually prominent hill faces are largely kept free of development, particularly slopes visible from the coast and coastal hinterland.

Strategy 2.3 Use existing landscape features where they exist (e.g. topography, vegetation coverage, vistas), to define edges to settlements and protect the surrounding landscape character.

Objective 3 To protect locally significant views and vistas that contributes to the character of the coastal and coastal hinterland region.

Strategy 3.1 Strongly discourage development from locating on hilltops and ridgelines.

Strategy 3.2 Ensure that development does not impact on existing walking trails, and that it enhances views to and from these walking trails.

Strategy 3.3 Protect scenic views in undeveloped landscape features along the coastline including views from public recreation areas, lookouts, and roads that abut, or terminate at the coast.

Objective 4 To minimise the impact of infrastructure on the landscape and viewpoints.

Strategy 4.1 Site infrastructure away from highly scenic locations, key views and near-coastal locations.

Strategy 4.2 Where possible, locate infrastructure services underground (including powerlines and other utility services).

Strategy 4.3 Locate power lines, access tracks and other infrastructure in areas of low visibility, and avoid the use of materials that contrast with the landscape.

Strategy 4.4 Use vegetation to screen infrastructure from key viewing corridors and public use areas.

Strategy 4.5 Relocate overhead powerlines underground within the town centres and along major collector roads.

Specific Implementation

Apply the Local Policy Hilltop, Ridgelines and Prominent Coastal Landform Protection Policy at Clause 22.02

21.05-4 Design and Built Form

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Overview

It is important that the valued aspects of the municipality's character are not lost through redevelopment.

Where the built form character of an area is established and valued (and the area has not been identified for substantial change), new development should respect this character and add to the overall quality of the urban environment. In areas where built form change will be more substantial, high quality and site responsive design should add to the diversity of the built environment, enhance the sense of place and incorporate the principles of Environmentally Sensitive Design.

The strategies and objectives outlined in this clause apply to all forms of development, including residential, commercial and industrial development. Housing, particularly in areas where there are increased housing densities, needs to respond to its context in terms of character, cultural heritage, natural features, surrounding landscape and climate.

Objectives and strategies

Objective 1 To achieve a high standard of architecture and urban design for built form and public spaces throughout the municipality.

Strategy 1.1 Encourage high quality buildings and public spaces that are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Strategy 1.2 Design and site development to complement the context in which it sits.

Strategy 1.3 Ensure the siting of buildings contributes positively to the public realm and respects the character of the area.

Strategy 1.4 Ensure a high quality of design in industrial estates.

Strategy 1.5 Development proposals should be assessed against the following requirements:

- All roof elements, including plant, lift over-runs, and other building services should be absorbed within the overall building form, or included as part of overall roof design.
- Visible service areas (and other utility requirements) of a building should be treated as an integral part of the overall design and fully screened from public areas.
- All visible facades (including the rear and sides of buildings) should provide a positive contribution to public areas and interact with the public realm.
- Long expanses of solid walls should be avoided.
- Buildings should incorporate design elements and a variety of materials that create articulation and visual interest.
- Development along main traffic routes should incorporate design elements that add visual interest to the front and rear of the buildings.
- Commercial, public or large residential developments should incorporate public art.
- The built form and materials used for development should reflect the coastal setting and coastal architecture (where relevant).

Objective 2 To maximise energy saving, water conservation, and the principles of Environmentally Sustainable Design.

Strategy 2.1 Ensure development considers energy, water and natural resource efficiency in the construction and operation.

Strategy 2.2 Encouraging passive solar design, especially where there are views to the north or south.

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Many of the towns within the municipality have unique settlement patterns and particular housing types. New residential subdivision estates should be designed to respond to, and enhance, the character of existing townships.

The State Policy Planning Framework provides clear direction for the design of new residential subdivision estate layouts. This clause should be read in conjunction with Clause 56 of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme (Residential Subdivision).

Large scale residential developments should contribute to the provision of physical infrastructure, including open space, road, bicycle and pedestrian links, reticulated services and public art.

Objectives and strategies**Objective 1 To encourage new residential subdivision estates to integrate with the existing community.**

Strategy 1.1 Ensure new residential subdivision estates recognise the surrounding context and township character.

Strategy 1.2 Ensure that new subdivisions maintain and enhance traditional street patterns of the locality.

Strategy 1.3 In addition to networks within subdivision estates, ensure that new residential subdivision estates improve wider pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular networks, and encourage safe pedestrian movements through urban areas.

Strategy 1.4 Ensure that subdivision plans nominate building footprints and a lot density that respond to, and reflect the character of surrounding neighbourhoods and any environmental constraints or features (where practicable).

Strategy 1.5 Discourage single entry subdivisions (where practicable).

Strategy 1.6 Avoid gated communities.

Objective 2 To protect and enhance the environmental value of the site and surrounding area.

Strategy 2.1 Minimise earthworks.

Strategy 2.2 Minimise soil relocation.

Strategy 2.3 Protect, establish and regenerate recognised wildlife corridors as part of new residential subdivision estates.

Strategy 2.4 Encourage new residential subdivision estates to provide permeable fencing or landscaping in areas adjacent to roads and reserves.

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Landscape architecture is an integral component of the built and urban environment. Good landscape design contributes to the character of an area and can enhance the quality of the

urban environment. Landscape architecture can also provide continuity and connectivity of local urban character.

When we plan our townships, greater consideration should be given to the value of landscape design.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To increase vegetation across the municipality.

Strategy 1.1 Increase landscaping within public areas.

Strategy 1.2 Identify and enhance the landscape values in urban areas.

Strategy 1.3 Encourage the use of local native plants in landscaping.

Objective 2 To ensure that development creates and maintains a high quality landscape setting.

Strategy 2.1 Minimise earthworks and vegetation removal.

Strategy 2.2 Consider landscape architecture as an integral part of an overall concept for development and provide opportunities to enhance the landscape features of the area.

Strategy 2.3 Respect and maintain the garden or landscape character of an area, where this is a dominant feature of the neighbourhood.

Strategy 2.4 Retain existing mature trees wherever possible. Where mature trees are removed incorporate suitable replacement planting.

Strategy 2.5 Ensure that long term management of existing vegetation, or areas of newly planted vegetation, is integral to the development of a site.

Specific Implementation

Request all applications provide the following information as appropriate:

- A landscape plan to ensure that landscaping is an integral part of the proposal.

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Cultural heritage

Overview

The protection of sites of heritage and cultural significance helps to provide character and identity to townships and landscapes and in certain situations contributes to the tourism potential of the municipality.

Heritage consists of archaeological sites such as Aboriginal sacred sites, scarred trees and artefact sites, and historic sites such as buildings, bridges and trees. In Victoria, all Aboriginal archaeological relics and sites are protected and the legal custodians of such sites should be consulted in the management of these sites. Rising sea levels have the potential to adversely impact areas of Aboriginal heritage.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1 To protect Aboriginal and post European settlement cultural heritage sites.

Strategy 1.1 Identify locations of important historical significance.

- Strategy 1.2 Manage development in culturally significant areas to lessen or avoid impact on sites.
- Strategy 1.3 Give consideration to the heritage context of sites which adjoin sites of heritage significance.
- Strategy 1.4 Encourage owners to protect, restore and maintain heritage sites.
- Strategy 1.5 Ensure the protection of sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage and, in this regard, give consideration to the Aboriginal cultural resource management grid maps and guidelines produced by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.
- Objective 2 To improve knowledge of the heritage significant sites and why they are important.**
- Strategy 2.1 Undertake mapping of areas of remaining Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Strategy 2.2 Recognise the significance of heritage buildings and sites in contributing to the character of townships within the municipality.

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Advertising Signs

Overview

Advertising signage has a significant visual impact on the built environment and rural landscape within the municipality. Advertising signage is often erected in locations that are inappropriate and have no physical relationship with the advertised material.

The visual clutter created by advertising signage is detrimental to the character of the municipality. It can also compromise the safety of road users.

Objectives and strategies

- Objective 1 To improve the appearance of advertising signage.**
- Strategy 1.1 Discourage the proliferation of advertising signage in rural areas, in locations with high scenic values and along major tourist routes.
- Strategy 1.2 Discourage signs that do not relate to the use or development of the land on which they are sited.
- Strategy 1.3 Encourage the consolidation and reduction in number of signs for businesses.
- Strategy 1.4 Limit the number of signs per shopfront to ensure equity to shop owners and to increase visibility.
- Strategy 1.5 Minimise the visual impact of signage, and avoid further visual clutter of signage across the landscape.
- Strategy 1.6 Discourage large, visually intrusive or brightly coloured signage, and advertising signage at settlement entrances and exits.
- Strategy 1.7 Discourage multiple advertising signs for rural tourism developments in locations with high scenic values and along major tourist routes.