

Bells Beach

**SURFING RECREATION
RESERVE COASTAL
MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-25**

**SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES THE WADAWURRUNG
PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE BELLS BEACH
SURFING RECREATION RESERVE.**

CONTENTS

1. Executive summary	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Vision, principles, values and goals	4
1.3 Enacting the vision	5
1.4 The life and structure of the plan	6
1.5 Three-year business plan	6
1.6 Implementation, evaluation and review	6
2. Introduction	7
2.1 About Bells Beach	7
2.2 Purpose and basis of this Coastal Management Plan	8
2.3 Land status and management responsibility	9
2.4 The planning and consultation process	10
3. A new vision for Bells Beach	12
3.1 Principles and core values	13
3.2 Management goals	13
3.3 Enacting the vision: principles, values and outcomes	14
4. Protecting and respecting the natural environment	15
4.1 Values	15
4.2 Issues raised	17
4.3 Management actions–Natural environment issues	18
5. Protecting and respecting our indigenous heritage	19
5.1 Values	19
5.2 Issues raised	19
5.3 Management actions–Indigenous heritage issues	20
6. Protecting and respecting our surfing culture	21
6.1 Surfing culture	21
6.2 Issues raised	22
6.3 Management actions–Surfing culture issues	23
7. Addressing other key values	25
7.1 Recreational	25
7.2 Historical	26
7.3 Economic values	27
8. Management issues and actions	28
8.1 Management and Governance	30
8.2 Events management	31
8.3 Infrastructure management	33
8.4 Traffic management	35
8.5 Enforcement and management	37
8.6 Carrying capacity	38
9. Three-year business plan	39
10. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	43
11. References	44
12. Appendices	45
12.1 Acts and regulations	45

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 48-hectare Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve is located within a two-kilometre stretch of coast south-west of Torquay-Jan Juc. Due to its significant natural, indigenous and cultural values, the reserve has become an internationally-renowned surfing and tourist destination facing pressures from increasing visitor numbers.

Surf Coast Shire Council is responsible for managing the reserve to the high water mark, with the offshore areas managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Parks Victoria. Under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, Council is required to develop a Coastal Management Plan detailing how the reserve will be managed to ensure its core values are protected while allowing for compatible use and enjoyment.

The process of developing the Coastal Management Plan requires consultation with local communities, user groups, relevant government agencies and other stakeholders to ensure their needs, experiences and aspirations are, as far as possible, reflected in the plan. With this in mind, Council appointed a Community Visioning Task Force in late 2013 to advise Council on engaging the community in various aspects of the plan's development, including its vision, key issues, potential ideas and solutions.

More than 1,000 people participated in the first community engagement phase, contributing ideas via an online forum, written submission and public hearing process, which resulted in a draft vision. This was released for further comment before Council adopted it in September 2014.

A series of workshops in October and November 2014 enabled stakeholders to provide input to the key issues to be addressed by the plan, which helped shape its overarching management goals, outcomes and actions. Draft coastal management and implementation plans were released for public comment on 9 April 2015. A further public session on the management of events also took place. When submissions closed on 31 May 2015, nine groups or individuals had made written submissions and were subsequently invited to present their views to the Task Force at a hearing in June 2015.

The final plans have considered the views and information received during the entire visioning and coastal management planning process. In general, there were many areas of agreement. Where there were differing points of view, these were considered during deliberations by the Task Force before it reached a recommended way forward. More information about the community engagement process is available in the Task Force Report to Council (October 2015).



1.2 VISION, PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND GOALS

The plan focuses on the following vision:

**TO RESPECT AND PROTECT THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, INDIGENOUS
HERITAGE AND SURFING CULTURE OF
BELLS BEACH.**

At the same time it also aligns with the vision articulated in the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014* of:

**A HEALTHY COAST, APPRECIATED BY
ALL, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.**

Two **guiding principles** – respect and protect – and three **core values** – natural environment, indigenous heritage and surfing culture – underpin the plan’s vision, goals, actions and outcomes. The following goals provide a clear direction in relation to the reserve’s future management:

1. Protect and enhance ecological and geophysical values
2. Protect and promote indigenous archaeological, social, cultural and historic values
3. Recognise the Wadawurrung people’s long association with the reserve, including the interconnections between land, people and biodiversity
4. Recognise the unique surfing heritage and the importance of surfing, and continue to cater for surfing and surfing events, including the Rip Curl Pro
5. Continue to cater for activities consistent with the vision
6. Ensure risks are minimised, recognising that the reserve is a natural place and risk cannot be eliminated
7. Minimise buildings and infrastructure
8. Protect existing waterways and minimise the site impacts of stormwater runoff, and
9. Acknowledge the importance of the setting within a rural hinterland landscape.

1.3 ENACTING THE VISION

The following provides an overview of the guiding principles, values and outcomes, including how these respond to the range of issues raised via the community engagement process.



Natural environment

RESPECT

- Reserve retains its unique natural character through effective infrastructure management (eg minimal car parks, signs, buildings, fences)
- Visitors are informed about the reserve's environmental values without additional onsite interpretation
- Infrastructure fits its purpose, has a consistent look and feel, and is visually sensitive to its location
- Reserve retains its rural hinterland landscape setting
- Strong relationships are maintained with community environment groups

PROTECT

- Erosion is effectively managed through the application of best practice erosion protection principles and practices, noting erosion will occur as part of an ever changing coastal landscape
- Stormwater management is improved when consistent with other values such as aboriginal heritage protection
- Events are managed in a way that prevents negative impacts on the reserve's natural and built assets
- Remnant vegetation is protected, restored and improved via effective vegetation management



Indigenous heritage

- Ongoing cooperation and collaboration with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (the Registered Aboriginal Party)
- Visitors are informed about the reserve's indigenous heritage values without additional onsite interpretation activities

- Reserve's indigenous values, including significant sites, are protected through effective cultural heritage management practices (eg heritage approvals obtained, toilet wall mural maintained)



Surfing culture

- Reserve recognised for its significance in Australia's surfing history and culture
- Visitors are informed about the reserve's cultural values in relation to surfing
- Young surfers have access to opportunities to develop their skills
- Surfers are aware of surfing etiquette and 'Spirit of Surfing' principles
- Strong relationships are maintained with the surfing community in reserve management

- Reserve's cultural values related to surfing, including artefacts such as the wave sculpture and 'Spirit of Surfing' plaque, are protected in line with Victorian Heritage Register requirements
- Surfing and other events are managed in a consistent way that minimises their impacts on the reserve's values and reserve users
- Revenue raised through licensing, event fees and other means is re-invested into protecting the reserve's values



A healthy coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future

- The community understands the Coastal Management Plan's vision for the reserve and is actively involved in its realisation
- Infrastructure management enables people to safely use the reserve without damaging its natural and cultural assets
- Traffic management facilitates safe movement within the reserve's car parks and roads
- Event management focuses on activities appropriate to the reserve's core values (refer to Event Management Policy)
- Sensitive interpretation educates people about the reserve's history and values without additional impacts on the reserve itself
- Local law enforcement protects the reserve's core values without detracting from people's enjoyment



1.4 THE LIFE AND STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The plan is a high-level strategic document developed through an extensive community engagement process. Its vision and goals set the direction for the reserve's management for the next 10 to 15 years.

Detailed management actions planned for the coming three years are contained within a companion document: the *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan 2015-25*. To have an in-depth understanding of the reserve's management, it is important to consider the information provided in both plans.

1.5 THREE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan is based on actual and projected income and expenditure for preceding and successive three-year periods. This information will be used to guide Council's budgeting process in relation to recurrent needs, capital works and applications for grant funding. It is subject to changes reflecting Council's other potential obligations and the availability of grant funding.

Each year the cost of managing the reserve exceeds revenue. Council will continue to look for funding opportunities, particularly grants associated with required infrastructure.

1.6 IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Coastal Management Plan is a long term plan that will be updated and endorsed every three years and with a full review in 10 to 15 years time. The accompanying three-year Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually by the Bells Beach Committee.

The committee review will focus on progress towards implementing agreed actions identified in the Implementation Plan and ensure the actions are consistent with the vision and management goals outlined in the Coastal Management Plan. The committee will provide advice on the content of the subsequent Implementation Plan.

2. INTRODUCTION



2.1 ABOUT BELLS BEACH

The Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve is located within a two-kilometre stretch of coastline south-west of Torquay-Jan Juc in Victoria, Australia. It comprises 48 hectares of coastal heathland, limestone cliffs and sandy beaches, and borders the eastern edge of the Great Otway National Park.

Surf Coast Shire Council manages the reserve, which extends to the high water mark. Below the high water mark, the offshore areas are managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Parks Victoria.

The reserve has been visited by the Wadawurrung people for thousands of years and their connection with the reserve continues to this day. The surf breaks offshore are

renowned for their quality, as evidenced by an association with the Rip Curl Pro Easter surf contest spanning more than 50 years. The reserve's car parks and walking tracks provide access to a number of high quality and consistent surf breaks while also serving as important meeting places for surfers whenever conditions are favourable. The reserve is also valued for its walking paths, hang gliding launch site, viewing platforms and access to adjoining national parks.

The Bells Beach area has become an internationally-renowned surfing and tourist destination. It is fiercely loved, by its regular local users and is a destination of choice for visitors with an interest in surfing or those seeking spectacular ocean views.



2.2 PURPOSE AND BASIS OF THIS COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Coastal Management Plan (CMP) is a strategic planning document, which identifies:

- the values of coastal Crown land
- potential threats to these values, and
- opportunities and actions to protect and enhance core values while providing for compatible use and enjoyment.

Coastal management plans are prepared in accordance with the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014*, and require consultation with local communities and relevant government agencies. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for endorsing a CMP prior to it being approved by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, as directed by Section 32 of the *Coastal Management Act 1995*.

The *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Coastal Management Plan 2015-25* documents an agreement between Surf Coast Shire Council, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, and the community on how the reserve will be managed. It builds on an understanding of the reserve's values, threats to these values, and opportunities to enhance the coastal environment and how locals and visitors alike experience it.

The local community's values and interests were an important consideration in the plan's development, along with state, national and international interests.

This document meets the objectives of a Coastal Management Plan, which include:

- providing a vision for the reserve's future management in accordance with the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014*
- identifying the area's environmental, heritage and recreational values
- setting objectives and strategies to protect and enhance these values
- providing a prioritised list of actions
- identifying resources and/or possible sources of income/ grants to complete priority actions, and
- defining the roles and responsibilities of those involved in managing the reserve and implementing the actions.

(Source: DELWP website)

It is proposed that the plan's high-level vision, principles, goals and outcomes be reviewed in 10 to 15 years' time, while its strategic actions – along with the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan 2015-25* – be subjected to review after three years and the plan amended accordingly.

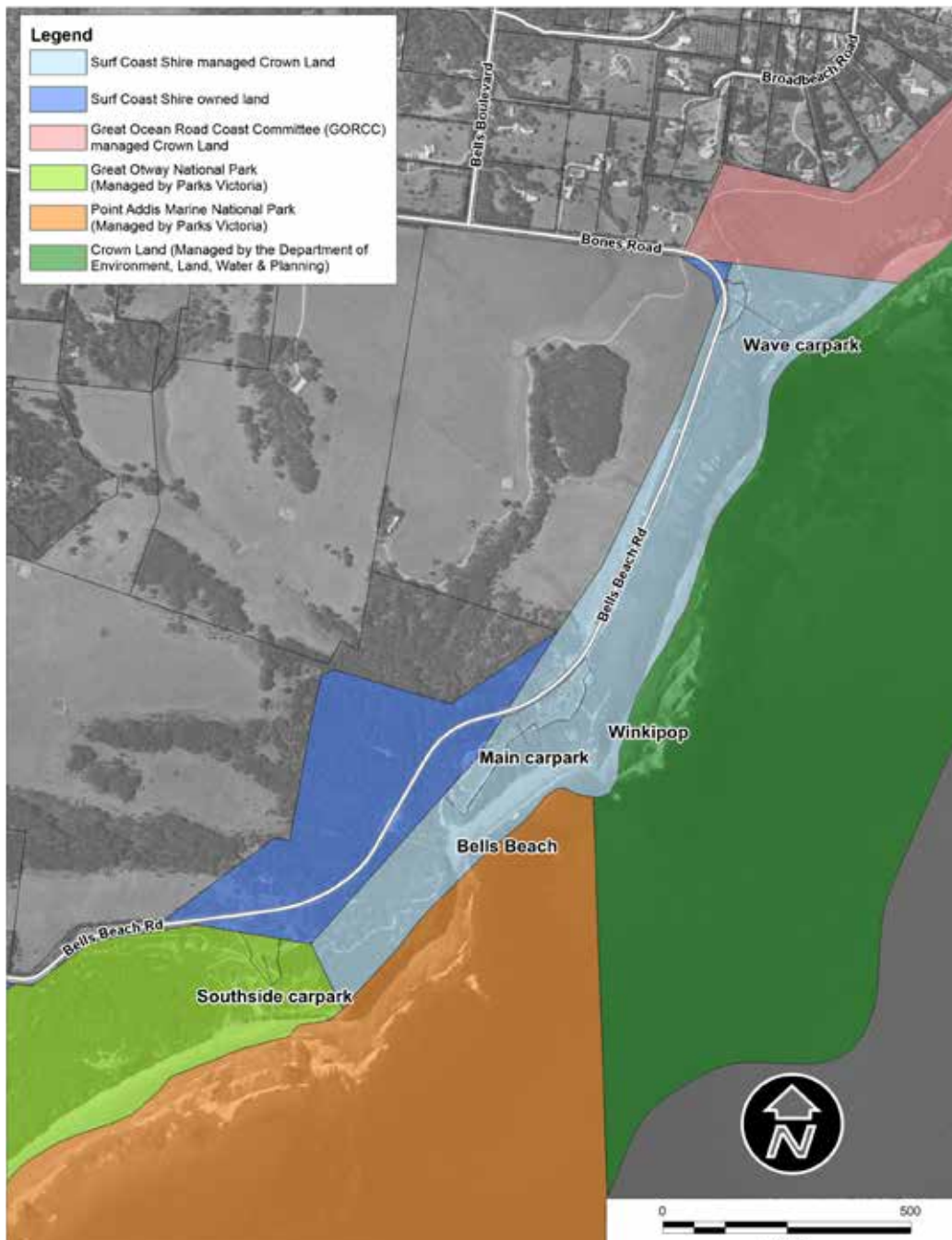
2.3 LAND STATUS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

As shown in Figure 1, the reserve is partly Crown land managed by Surf Coast Shire Council and partly Council freehold land. The reserve adjoins the Point Addis Marine National Park and the Great Otway National Park, both managed by Parks Victoria, and coastal Crown land to the north managed by the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee.

Bells Beach Road passes through the reserve. VicRoads manages Bells Beach Road up until the Southside car park entrance but beyond this point Council manages the road.

The reserve is in Wadawurrung country. The Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party for Crown land within the reserve. The corporation advises Council on any works within the reserve beyond routine maintenance activities.

Figure 1: Bells Beach land status and management responsibility



2.4 THE PLANNING AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

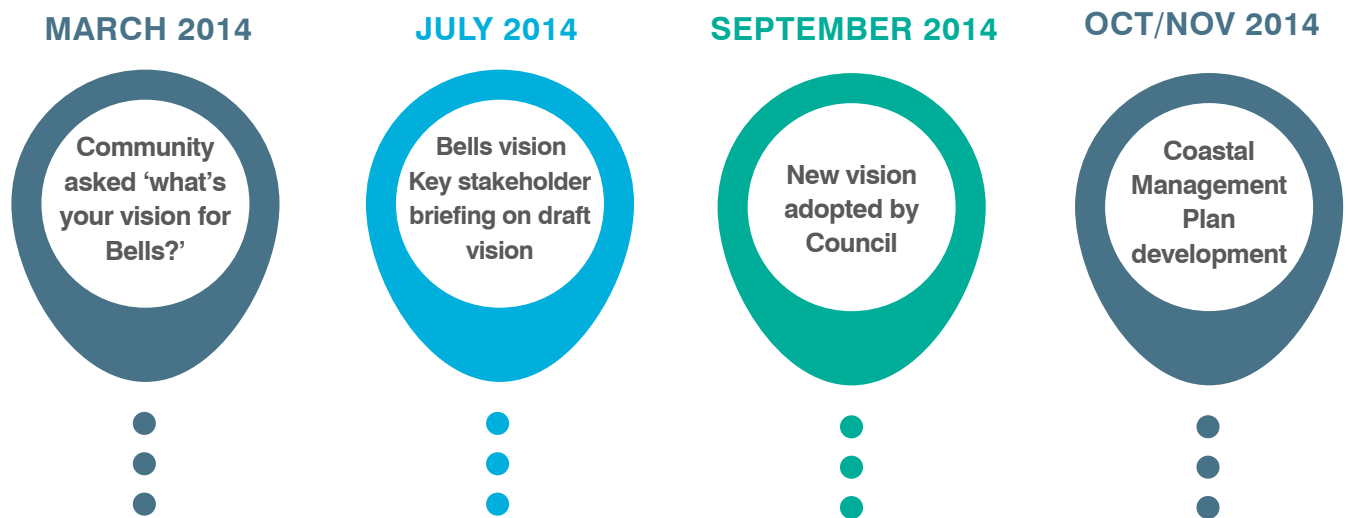
The process of developing the plan initially involved reviewing the previous plan and determining the need for greater community involvement. This resulted in the appointment of the Bells Beach Community Visioning Task Force in late 2013 to advise Council on engaging the community in developing a vision for the reserve's future management.

Through an extensive community engagement process – involving an online forum, public hearing and public submission process – more than 1,000 people provided ideas and input, which helped the Task Force develop a draft vision. This was released for further comment before being adopted by Council in September 2014.

A series of workshops in October and November 2014 provided additional opportunities for the community to be involved in detailed discussions around the key issues to be addressed by the new Coastal Management Plan. The outcomes of these discussions helped shape the overarching management goals, outcomes and actions articulated in these pages and the accompanying implementation plan. Each workshop was attended by between 15 and 25 people, with some locals able to attend all three workshops.

The plan was released in draft form for public comment between 9 April and 31 May 2015. As part of this consultation, two further facilitated workshops were held.

BELLS BEACH VISIONING AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Our Say online forum:
77 voting ideas,
442 people voting,
20 written submissions

Hearing of submissions
31 March 2014
Live stream on Our Say
– 9 submissions

Draft vision
released for public
comment July 2014

Our Say online forum:
16 voting ideas,
35 people voting,
4 written submissions

Public workshops (3)
15 - 25 people attending
each workshop

TASKFORCE MEETINGS

17/4/14

5/5/14

12/6/14

11/8/14

5/11/14

8/12/14

The first provided stakeholders with the chance to understand the plan's main components and to ask questions of clarification. The second focused solely on events management and aimed to bring together people with differing views to see if a common ground could be reached. There was also an open house session at the Australian National Surfing Museum on the day the plans were released.

By the close of the submission period, nine submissions had been received: five from organisations/user groups and four from individuals. All submitters were offered the opportunity to present their views to the Task Force at a hearing of submissions in June 2015. Five submitters appeared at this hearing.

Common ground was found on most issues; however, differing views remained on the nature and number of surfing events and on the details relating to the proposed governance arrangements at the reserve. The Task Force considered all views at a meeting in July 2015 and provided advice to Council on the final plan's content, including a recommendation on these two unresolved issues. This advice focused on ensuring:

- consistency with the new vision for the reserve
- protecting and respecting the site's core values, and
- balancing different users' needs.

9 APRIL-31 MAY 2015



21 MAY 2015



11 JUNE 2015



OCTOBER 2015



Released for public comment

9 written submissions on draft plans (Key stakeholder workshop on draft plan 8 April 2015)

Hearing of submissions

5 submissions presented at hearing

Release of final Coastal Management and Implementation Plans

23/2/15

11/6/15

2/7/15

31/8/15

3. A NEW VISION FOR BELLS BEACH

THE VISION STATEMENT REPRESENTS A KEY OUTCOME OF THE TASK FORCE'S WORK AND REFLECTS MAJOR THEMES EMERGING THROUGH THE INITIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS. IT WAS ADOPTED BY COUNCIL ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2014.



TO RESPECT AND PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, INDIGENOUS HERITAGE AND SURFING CULTURE OF BELLS BEACH.

This statement provided the foundation for defining the plan's guiding principles and core values, and for articulating its overarching management goals and outcomes. As the plan must also align with the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014*, this plan also identifies a series of outcomes related to the strategy's vision of:

A HEALTHY COAST, APPRECIATED BY ALL, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

3.1 PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

The vision statement for Bells Beach encapsulates:

- two **guiding principles**: respect and protect, and
- three **core values**: natural environment, indigenous heritage and surfing culture.

Table 1 shows how these will be enacted through the plan's outcomes.

3.2 MANAGEMENT GOALS





The Bells Beach Community Visioning Task Force also reviewed the management principles for the reserve and developed the following management goals:

1. Protect and enhance ecological and geophysical values
2. Protect and promote indigenous archaeological, social, cultural and historic values
3. Recognise the Wadawurrung people's long association with the reserve, including the interconnections between land, people and biodiversity
4. Recognise the unique surfing heritage and the importance of surfing, and continue to cater for surfing and surfing events, including the Rip Curl Pro
5. Continue to cater for activities consistent with the vision
6. Ensure risks are minimised, recognising that the reserve is a natural place and risk cannot be eliminated
7. Minimise buildings and infrastructure
8. Protect existing waterways and minimise the site impacts of stormwater runoff, and
9. Acknowledge the importance of the setting within a rural hinterland landscape.

3.3 ENACTING THE VISION

The following provides an overview of the links between the vision (as expressed here in the principles and core values) and the plan's outcomes.

Table 1: Principles, values and outcomes

	RESPECT	PROTECT
 <p>Natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve retains its unique natural character through effective infrastructure management (eg minimal car parks, signs, buildings, fences) Visitors are informed about the reserve's environmental values without additional onsite interpretation Infrastructure fits its purpose, has a consistent look and feel and is visually sensitive to its location Reserve retains its rural hinterland landscape setting Strong relationships are maintained with community environment groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erosion is effectively managed through the application of best practice erosion protection principles and practices, noting erosion will occur as part of an ever changing coastal landscape Stormwater management is improved when consistent with other values such as aboriginal heritage protection Events are managed in a way that prevents negative impacts on the reserve's natural and built assets Remnant vegetation is protected, restored and improved via effective vegetation management
 <p>Indigenous heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing cooperation and collaboration with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (the Registered Aboriginal Party) Visitors are informed about the reserve's indigenous heritage values without additional onsite interpretation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve's indigenous values, including significant sites, are protected through effective cultural heritage management practices (eg heritage approvals obtained, toilet wall mural maintained)
 <p>Surfing culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve recognised for its significance in Australia's surfing history and culture Visitors are informed about the reserve's cultural values in relation to surfing Young surfers have access to opportunities to develop their skills Surfers are aware of surfing etiquette and 'Spirit of Surfing' principles Strong relationships are maintained with the surfing community in reserve management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserve's cultural values related to surfing, including artefacts such as the wave sculpture and 'Spirit of Surfing' plaque, are protected in line with Victorian Heritage Register requirements Surfing and other events are managed in a consistent way that minimises their impacts on the reserve's values and reserve users Revenue raised through licensing, event fees and other means is re-invested into protecting the reserve's values
 <p>A healthy coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community understands the Coastal Management Plan's vision for the reserve and is actively involved in its realisation Infrastructure management enables people to safely use the reserve without damaging its natural and cultural assets Traffic management facilitates safe movement within the reserve's car parks and roads Event management focuses on activities appropriate to the reserve's core values (refer to Event Management Policy) Sensitive interpretation educates people about the reserve's history and values without additional impacts on the reserve itself Local law enforcement protects the reserve's core values without detracting from people's enjoyment 	

4. PROTECTING AND RESPECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 VALUES

The reserve's natural environment values encompass:

- terrestrial ecosystems
- cliffs and seascape
- marine ecosystems, and
- rural hinterland landscape.

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Aerial photographs dating from 1947 show much of the reserve's vegetation has been affected by land clearing for agriculture, beach access, parking, camping, event management and other human activities.

This was first noted as a concern during the late-1960s, which marked the start of ongoing rehabilitation and improvement works. In 1971 for example, the Australian Surfriders' Association required *Conservation Contest* competitors to plant a tree to obtain entry. Since forming in 1988, Surfers Appreciating the Natural Environment (SANE) continues work voluntarily to preserve the reserve's natural values, helping to turn a serious degradation issue into an environmental success story.

The reserve supports vegetation belonging to three Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC): Coastal Alkaline Scrub (Endangered) and Coastal Headland Scrub (Vulnerable), mainly on the cliff tops on the southern side of Bells Beach Road; and Shrubby Dry Forest, mainly to the north of the road (the nationally significant Glenelg Pomaderris is found in this EVC). The vegetation is home to the state-listed (Vulnerable) Rufous Bristlebird, along with a diverse range of other native fauna, such as the Sugar Glider, Echidna, Wedge-tailed Eagle, White-lipped Snake and Gould's Wattled Bat. Maintaining the vegetation in good condition ensures that it is able to provide quality habitat for local fauna.

Weeds are an ongoing threat to the quality of the reserve's remnant vegetation. High-threat weeds include Boneseed, Serrated Tussock, Chilean Needle-grass, African Weed-orchid and a wide variety of woody weeds, as documented in the *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan for the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve 2009*. This plan provides more information on the biodiversity values and guides vegetation management activities within the reserve.

CLIFFS AND SEASCAPE

The reserve's cliffs and seascape regularly feature in photographs and tourism campaigns promoting the region to domestic and international visitors. Due to natural erosion pressures (ie from wind, rain and surf), ongoing climate change impacts, loss of vegetation and other effects of human settlement, the cliffs remain vulnerable to erosion rates over and above natural background levels.

More recently, significant work has gone into protecting the cliffs, including regenerating native vegetation along the cliff tops, which has helped to prevent large, premature cliff failures while also benefiting local ecology. Gradual improvements in controlling and managing car park stormwater has also reduced erosion risks, although ongoing work is needed to lift the standard of stormwater management to best practice levels.

Annual geotechnical inspections started in 2004 to review recent works and determine the need for further works. A consolidated review of the reserve's condition between 2005 and 2014 recently found an overall improvement to areas of concern since detailed assessments started. While infrastructure on the cliff tops will be stable for the short to medium-term, rising sea levels may require future changes, such as the retreat of car parking areas or altered beach access points. Ongoing geotechnical monitoring will assist in identifying assets at risk.

Climate change impacts are likely to drive future changes. According to the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's *Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Study* (SKM, 2012), different inundation patterns, storm erosion and beach recession will place increasing pressures on the reserve's cliffs and dunes. Surf breaks are also likely to experience changes, with some breaks predicted to become less reliable.

MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

While this plan does not cover offshore marine areas, activities within the reserve have the potential to impact these areas. Such impacts have therefore been considered in developing the plan's strategic outcomes and actions.

The significance of offshore areas is recognised by their inclusion in the Point Addis Marine National Park. The park was declared to give enhanced protection to the wide sandy beaches (including the Bells Beach intertidal zone), rock platforms and small limestone reefs occurring in the area. The subtidal waters are known for their rhodolith beds (aggregations of coralline red algae), coloured sponge gardens, and a high diversity of invertebrate and fish species. Further information on the marine park can be found in the *Point Addis Marine National Park, Point Danger Marine Sanctuary and Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary Management Plan* (Parks Victoria, 2005). This plan recognises the iconic importance of Bells Beach, as evidenced in one of its management directions: "Bells Beach will remain a surfing icon, protected and accessible for recreational and competitive surfers".

RURAL HINTERLAND LANDSCAPE

Approaching the reserve from any direction offers sweeping views of the rural hinterland, featuring farm paddocks with clumps of trees and mobs of grazing kangaroos set against the ocean in the background.

This landscape creates a sense of space around the reserve while providing a transition to the Bells Beach and Great Otway National Park landscapes. Its importance to the reserve itself is recognised in the *Surf Coast Planning Scheme* with a Significant Landscape Overlay applying to all privately owned land in the area.

At the same time however, the recent *Surf Coast Planning Scheme Review Report 2014* found the Bells Beach planning controls could be strengthened in relation to appropriate uses and the area to which the overlay applies. The review recommended an expansion of the area to include the Rural Conservation Zone rather than just the viewshed area covered by the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Work is underway to address these findings, which will result in a review of the Local Planning Policy Framework.

4.2 ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PHASE

The reserve's natural environment is widely recognised as its most significant value, as evidenced by the high number of people expressing support for keeping "Bells as it is... a natural place".

Concerns about negative impacts of infrastructure development – existing and potential – attracted the highest number of comments. Most of the existing infrastructure exists to manage the general use of the reserve and ensure minimal damage to the reserve's natural assets.

The previous Coastal Management Plan proposed various infrastructure improvements, including a second public toilet block in Winki Pop car park, new showers and onsite interpretation. There was little or no support for these.

Stormwater management remains an improvement opportunity despite recent advances (eg connecting existing toilet block to the town sewer system, installing litter traps). These were recognised as positive steps forward with further improvement work supported (eg updated kerbing following water-sensitive urban design principles).

Other improvement opportunities included signs (number and diversity with many using styles, colours and materials at odds with the coastal location), memorial plaques and car parking. Different car parking options were considered without attracting any clear support for major changes.

Maintaining current viewing areas and stabilising and formalising, in a low key manner, the former helicopter landing area attracted general support. The condition of the toilets, while cleaner than previously, remains an ongoing concern.

The issue of protecting privately owned rural hinterland was also discussed during the workshops. The Significant Landscape Overlay in the *Surf Coast Planning Scheme* will assist in strengthening the existing protections against inappropriate development in the Bells rural hinterland.



4.3 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS–NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

Strategic management actions for natural environment values are shown in Table 2. Please refer to Section 3.1 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken during the next three years.

Table 2: Actions to respect and protect natural values

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
RESPECT		
Reserve retains its unique natural character through effective infrastructure management (eg minimal car parks, signs, buildings, fences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain infrastructure for public safety purposes and to manage visitation impacts (eg ensure people keep to pathways) b) Retain the existing car park footprint 	Community concerns about negative infrastructure impacts on reserve's natural character and a desire to "leave Bells the way it is"
Visitors are informed about the reserve's environmental values without additional onsite interpretation	c) Explore and develop options for making information about the reserve's terrestrial and marine ecosystems available onsite via new technologies (eg phone apps, QR scanning) and at suitable offsite locations (eg Australian National Surfing Museum)	Strong community desire for no new onsite interpretation
Infrastructure fits its purpose and is visually sensitive to its location (eg signs have a consistent 'look and feel')	d) Use materials and colours sympathetic to the reserve (eg earthy tones) and natural materials (eg timber and iron) where possible	Community concerns about the visual impacts of essential infrastructure
Reserve retains its rural hinterland landscape setting	e) Improve the protection of the Bells Beach landscape in the upcoming Rural Hinterland Strategy Review	Concerns about protecting the reserve's rural hinterland landscape
Strong relationships are maintained with community environment groups	f) Support community weeding and revegetation activities by groups such as SANE and corporate environmental activities such as Rip Curl Planet Day and Clean Up Australia Day	Concerns about the condition of native vegetation
PROTECT		
Erosion is effectively managed through the application of best practice erosion protection principles and practices, noting some erosion will occur as part of an ever changing coastal landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) Continue to undertake annual geotechnical inspections to assist in understanding erosion issues and public safety management risks, and consider how climate change may impact the reserve and management decisions h) Undertake additional geotechnical assessments, if considered prudent after significant weather events 	Ongoing concerns about natural erosion
Stormwater management is improved when consistent with other values such as aboriginal heritage protection	i) Undertake further stormwater management works in conjunction with other protection measures (eg aboriginal heritage protection)	Ongoing concerns about stormwater management impacts
Events are managed in a way that prevents negative impacts on the reserve's natural and built assets	j) Ensure event management plans for approved events in the reserve are consistent with the environmental outcomes expressed in the Coastal Management Plan	Community concerns about the impacts of major events (eg Rip Curl Pro)
Remnant vegetation is protected, restored and improved via effective vegetation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k) Continue to implement the <i>Integrated Vegetation Management Plan for the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve 2009</i> l) Ensure infrastructure maintenance, event management and public use is managed to provide for protection and enhancement of the condition of native vegetation within the reserve m) Ensure reserve management is consistent with Parks Victoria's <i>Point Addis Marine National Park, Point Danger Marine Sanctuary and Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary Management Plan 2005</i> n) Improve knowledge of fauna occurring within the reserve 	Recognised need to preserve and restore reserve's remnant vegetation



5. PROTECTING AND RESPECTING INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

5.1 VALUES

The reserve's indigenous history represents traditions going back thousands of years, connecting the Aboriginal people who would have passed through Bells Beach on their walks to and from Tasmania.

For the Wadawurrung people, the area became a significant gathering place as evidenced by the many Aboriginal objects and places documented through recent investigations. These attest to long occupation of the reserve and its surrounds by the Wadawurrung people

Today Bells Beach endures as a special place for the Wadawurrung people as traditional owners and other indigenous people. Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party for this area, with its members regularly consulted on planning and works in the reserve (above routine maintenance).

Corporation members provided advice and input to many aspects of this plan, including Chair Bryon Powell who met with Council officers and attended a community workshop to discuss and share his people's views about the reserve's future management.

5.2 ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PHASE

Acknowledging, respecting and protecting the reserve's indigenous heritage values emerged as a very strong theme during the community visioning and consultation phases.

Bells Beach is an old place and has seen many changes. Its status as a surf break, for example, only emerged several decades ago and its landscape will change again in the future. For the Wadawurrung people, it is important that their long association with the reserve continues to be recognised and respected.

The reserve's natural and indigenous values must be nurtured, protected and managed in a way that ensures compatible use and enjoyment by all people. Aboriginal people appreciate surfers love Bells and clearly state the reserve is for everyone's enjoyment, not just the surfers.

5.3 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS–INDIGENOUS HERITAGE ISSUES

Strategic management actions for indigenous heritage values are shown in Table 3. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken during the next three years.

Table 3: Actions to respect and protect indigenous heritage values

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
RESPECT		
Ongoing cooperation and collaboration with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (the Registered Aboriginal Party)	a) Involve the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation in reserve management, which could include developing a Memorandum of Understanding	Strong desire to respect and honour indigenous people's long association with the reserve
Visitors are informed about the reserve's indigenous heritage values without additional onsite interpretation	b) Work with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation to develop and tell the Bells Beach story in relation to its indigenous heritage c) Look for opportunities to link indigenous heritage activities with other relevant events (eg Indigenous Surfing Titles, NAIDOC Week) d) Explore and develop options for making information about the reserve's indigenous heritage available onsite via new technologies (eg phone apps, QR scanning) and at suitable offsite locations (eg Australian National Surfing Museum)	Strong community desire for no new onsite interpretation
PROTECT		
Reserve's indigenous values, including significant sites, are protected through effective cultural heritage management practices (eg heritage approvals obtained, toilet wall mural maintained)	e) Protect all Aboriginal places within the reserve by implementing the approved <i>Cultural Heritage Management Plan</i> and obtaining heritage approvals for works beyond routine maintenance g) Work with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and Heritage Victoria to develop a plan to maintain and improve the toilet wall mural in line with Victorian Heritage Register requirements h) Work with the Wathaurung and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority to appropriately name the unnamed creek at Bells Beach	Concerns about protecting the reserve's indigenous heritage values



6. PROTECTING AND RESPECTING SURFING CULTURE

6.1 SURFING CULTURE

Bells Beach is named after local landholders the Bell family and was first surfed in the 1930s. It has since acquired a mythology, among the local and worldwide surfing community, making it the stuff of legend. The combination of its unique geography and local weather conditions produces a world class wave, highly valued by surfers.

The reserve is listed on Victoria's Heritage Register and is part of the federal listing of the Great Ocean Road as a National Heritage Place due to its surfing values, natural history, spectacular views and for being part of an exemplar coastal drive. The National Heritage Place listing also recognises the reserve as:

- having strong links to the surf industry and technological innovations (eg board design and composition)
- the location of the world's longest, consecutive international surfing competition, and
- the first site to be officially named a surfing reserve (in 1971).

Torquay's surf industry shares a strong connection with Bells Beach. Local companies such as Rip Curl and Quiksilver were initially set up by local surfers as small shopfront or backyard operations, growing to become global corporations. Their involvement in and sponsorship

of local surfing contests have similarly seen an event like the annual Easter rally develop over the years into the major international sporting event that is today's Rip Curl Pro.

Surfing culture is also a key element of Surf Coast's sense of place with many residents choosing to live in the municipality to be close to quality surf breaks such as Bells Beach. Community groups like the Torquay Boardriders Club engender this connection through their local surfing competitions and other activities. One of the club's values, for example, is to "protect the Bells Beach spirit of surfing by respecting the ocean, respecting the land and respecting each other".

Bells Beach has provided a stage for the development of Australia's surfing culture, from its early beginnings last century through to the present day, and will continue to play a key role in its ongoing evolution in future. The Australian National Surfing Museum located in Torquay is an important place to visit to better understand the profound links between Australian surfing culture and Bells Beach.

Rising sea levels are a future threat to the quality of the surfing conditions at the reserve. With the prime breaks at Bells being reef-based, performing best at low tides, if sea levels rise significantly as predicted, favourable surf conditions may be impacted.

6.2 ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION PHASE

The need to recognise the role of Bells Beach in Australia's surfing heritage and culture represented another dominant theme raised during the community consultation. There was a strong desire to see this role more actively promoted and acknowledged.

Current management planning and decision-making processes and practices also emerged as key concerns, particularly in relation to events and other commercial activities. Surfing contests comprise the majority of events occurring in the reserve with people expressing concern about their number, organisation and impacts on regular users.

While some argued for reducing the number, others pointed out the value of surfing contests in developing local surfers and juniors. Many surfers are uncomfortable delineating between competitive and recreational surfers because they see themselves purely as surfers who surf for the love of the experience.

There was general consensus that non-surfing events (eg Bells Bash) passing through the reserve were acceptable but there was no support for weddings or other similar commercial or cultural activities. It is recognised that, from time to time, paddle-outs in memory of surfers who have passed away may occur independently of Council. People also wanted to see revenue raised through licensing, event fees and the like expended directly on the reserve rather than going into general Council revenue.



6.3 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS–SURFING CULTURE ISSUES

Strategic management actions for surfing culture values are shown in Table 4. Please refer to Section 3.2 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 4: Actions to respect and protect surfing culture values

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
RESPECT		
Reserve recognised for its significance in Australia’s surfing history and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Retain the name Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve b) Continue to acknowledge the significant role of surfing in shaping Surf Coast’s sense of place, including the special connection between Bells Beach and Australia’s surfing culture 	Strong desire to acknowledge the reserve’s unique surfing heritage
Visitors are informed about the reserve’s cultural values in relation to surfing without additional onsite interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Explore and develop options for making information about the reserve’s surfing culture available onsite via new technologies (eg phone apps, QR scanning) and at suitable offsite locations (eg Australian National Surfing Museum) 	Strong community desire for no new onsite interpretation
Surfers are aware of surfing etiquette and ‘Spirit of Surfing’ principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Actively promote surfing etiquette and ‘Spirit of Surfing’ principles 	Concerns about anti-social behaviour
Strong relationships are maintained with the surfing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Ensure surfing interests are represented on the new Bells Beach Committee f) Seek opportunities for surfing interests to partner with events to promote improved environmental outcomes and cultural awareness 	Desire to ensure the needs of surfers are considered during management decisions
All surfers using the reserve are recognised as stakeholders when making decisions that potentially impact surfing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) Design community engagement strategies to include all surfers 	Concerns that surfers aligned with different surfing groups will be treated unequally
PROTECT		
Reserve’s cultural values related to surfing, including artefacts (eg wave sculpture, ‘Spirit of Surfing’ plaques), are protected in line with Victorian Heritage Register requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Maintain the wave sculpture and ‘Spirit of Surfing’ plaques in line with Victorian Heritage Register requirements 	Concerns about protecting the reserve’s surfing heritage and culture



7 ADDRESSING OTHER KEY VALUES

7.1 RECREATIONAL

While surfing represents the dominant recreational activity undertaken at Bells Beach, the reserve offers opportunities for other compatible social and recreational activities, including hang gliding, walking, cycling and sightseeing. The Surf Coast Walk passes through the reserve, providing hundreds of residents and increasing numbers of visitors with an off-road link to Bells Beach from Torquay-Jan Juc and other coastal townships.

Hang gliders have used the cliffs north of the Winki Pop car park since the early 1970s with the site offering a natural launch pad. This use is restricted to advanced pilots and contingent on strong east to south-east wind patterns. With these conditions being fairly uncommon, the site is only used approximately 10 to 15 days a year. Pilots set up on

the west side of Bells Beach Road and walk across the road to launch. Council formalised this use in 2012 by granting a licence to the Hang Gliding Federation of Australia.

ISSUES RAISED

Access represented the key issue for recreational users, including access to surf breaks during major events, to the hang gliding launch site and to car parking.

In the past some reserve users have had their dogs unrestrained on the reserve's beaches.

Dogs are not permitted off-lead on beaches within the Point Addis Marine National Park. There will be an increased effort to ensure dogs are kept restrained within the reserve.

7.1.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS–RECREATIONAL ISSUES

Table 5: Actions to support recreational values

 **Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future**

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
Infrastructure management enables people to safely use the reserve without damaging its natural and cultural assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain infrastructure such as pathways and fencing to allow continued safe visitor access (refer <i>Section 8.3 Infrastructure</i> for more detail) b) Continue to enable hang glider use of the licensed launch area north of Winki Pop in accordance with the licence conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for recreational use to not adversely impact reserve's key values Recognition of unique opportunity launch site provides for journeys to Apollo Bay
Traffic management facilitates safe movement within the reserve's car parks and roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Improve the line marking, parking arrangements and bus licence requirements to maintain and improve public safety within the reserve's busy car parks (refer <i>Section 8.4 Traffic Management</i> for more detail) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about public safety in the reserve's busy car parks
Local laws enforcement protects the reserve's core values without detracting from people's enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Undertake local laws enforcement to ensure unlicensed buses, unrestrained dogs, camping and litter do not damage the reserve's values or reduce users/visitors' enjoyment (refer <i>Section 8.5 Management and Enforcement</i> for more detail) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns that some users' actions are threatening the reserve's values or spoiling others' experiences



Spectators at the 1976 Rip Curl Pro
 (www.surfcoastimages.com.au) ©Joliphotos

7.2 HISTORICAL

Following European settlement, the land in and around the reserve was farmed from the 1840s onwards with several families using it as part of their pastoral run. Elias Harding’s Mount Pleasant Run, for example, included land from Torquay to Point Addis but the Steele and McVean families also held part of this run at different times.

These larger runs were later split into smaller allotments with William Bell acquiring the land adjoining Bells Beach in 1857. D. Cyril Lewis purchased the land in 1899 and then sold it to John Calvert Bell in 1905. Mr Bell and his

family leased the adjoining foreshore (now the reserve) for grazing from 1905 until 1940-41, using it to run sheep.


Detailed historical information is contained in *Farmland, Forest and Surf, Environmental History: Surf Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2b* (Kellaway, 1998) and *Barrabool: Land of the Magpie* (Wynd, 1992).

ISSUES RAISED

The need to acknowledge the reserve’s pastoral heritage, alongside its indigenous and surfing heritage, was raised as a minor issue to be considered within the plan’s overall development.

7.2.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS–HISTORICAL ISSUES

Table 6: Actions to support historical values

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
 Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future		
Sensitive interpretation educates people about the reserve’s history and values without additional impacts on the reserve itself	Explore and develop options for making information about the reserve’s pastoral history available onsite via new technologies (eg phone apps, QR scanning)	Desire for the reserve’s early pastoral history to be recognised

7.3 ECONOMIC VALUES

Bells Beach carries significant economic value as a quality destination for surfing and non-surfing tourists. This value underpins the local surfing industry, Surf Coast Shire's most significant industry sector.

The value of this sector to the local economy is evidenced by the outcomes of a recent study commissioned by Council. This found that:

- Surf Coast Shire's surfing industry represents 29.6 per cent of total full-time employment locally
- direct employment accounts for 1,532 full-time equivalent positions, over 500 more than the next biggest sector (construction)
- the industry generates 26.5 per cent of industry value-add activity in the municipality
- direct industry value-add contributions total \$155 million, 50 per cent higher than the next biggest contributor (ownership of dwellings)
- the surf industry accounts for more than 28 per cent of all incomes generated in Surf Coast Shire
- wholesale trade and retail trade are the biggest contributors to the surf industry, and
- excluding Quiksilver and Rip Curl, approximately 79 per cent of goods and services are sold locally, 12 per cent nationally, five per cent regionally and four per cent internationally.

In terms of surfing-related tourism, around 140,000 people from outside the Surf Coast and Geelong regions visited the municipality in 2014 to go surfing, contributing close to \$50 million to the local economy. This confirms the value of local surf breaks like Bells Beach to the shire's economy, compared to use of the reserve by large tourist coaches whose contribution tends to be more at the state level.

Surf Coast Shire is also home to:

- Australian National Surfing Museum (formerly Surf World), the only accredited surfing museum in the world
- Surfing Victoria, one of the world's oldest surfing administration organisations and Victoria's largest state sporting organisation based outside Melbourne, and
- Torquay Boardriders Club, one of Australia's largest, most successful and active boardriding clubs.

These organisations share a direct link to Bells Beach that supports their activities and/or economic viability. In addition, the reserve is used for major events such as the Rip Curl Pro and Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race, providing direct and indirect significance to the value of local, regional and state economies.

ISSUES RAISED

Minimising tourism impacts on the reserve's environmental, indigenous heritage and surfing culture values represented a major concern for many. While most people supported tourists visiting Bells Beach, the preference was for managed, sustainable tourism rather than large coaches packed with day-trippers. The significance of the travelling surfer making the pilgrimage to Bells was also recognised as valuable to the local economy and seen as highly compatible with the reserve's other values.

The need to ensure management of the reserve continues to support the staging of the Rip Curl Pro formed part of the discussions. The event's standing as the world's longest, continuously-held surfing event is an important part of the reserve's history.

There was general support for providing visitors with an appreciation of the reserve's key values in a way that doesn't involve onsite interpretation. This could be addressed via offsite interpretation at the Australian National Surfing Museum and use of technology (eg phone apps, QR codes) to minimise onsite interpretation impacts. Other suggestions for a stronger connection between the reserve and the Australian National Surfing Museum included a shuttle bus, bike hire and walking tours.

7.3.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS—ECONOMIC ISSUES

This plan deals with land use and management issues directly associated with the reserve. It is beyond its scope to recommend offsite actions, such as measures to support the surf industry within the shire. These are however indirectly addressed by management actions listed in other sections, specifically those relating to events and surfing culture, which take into account the need to:

- protect all the reserve's values over the long-term
- provide for sustainable tourism opportunities, and
- support the staging of an agreed type and number of surfing events that assist in maintaining the local surf industry's stature.

More information on the value of surfing to Surf Coast Shire's economy is available in the recently released *Economic Value of the Surf Industry to Surf Coast Shire: Final Report, December 2014*.



8. MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND ACTIONS

- GOVERNANCE
- EVENTS
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- TRAFFIC
- ENFORCEMENT



8.1 MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The term 'governance' relates to how reserve management decisions, including stakeholder engagement, are made and delivered in accordance with the relevant legislation, policies and strategies.

Council has been appointed under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to act as the Committee of Management for the Crown land portion of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve. Council also manages its privately owned land in the reserve in a similar way. More information about the reserve's status and legislative framework is contained in Appendix 12.1.

As land manager, Council's association with the reserve goes back to the former Shire of Barrabool, which started undertaking works when public access was improved in the early 1960s. This arrangement was formalised in 1971 when

Council was appointed as the Committee of Management. Since then, Council has worked to involve local community members and event organisers in the reserve's management via sub-committees, advisory committees and the recent community consultation process associated with developing the Coastal Management Plan.





This confirmed a desire for the community and other stakeholders to continue to be involved in the reserve's ongoing management, preferably via a well-supported, formal committee comprising Council representatives and those representing environmental, indigenous, surfing and other community interests.

Council has committed to retaining its Committee of Management responsibilities for the Crown land and to engaging with stakeholders on how this occurs.

8.1.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS – MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Strategic management actions for governance issues are shown in Table 7. Please refer to Section 3.4 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 7: Actions to address governance issues

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future		
 <p>The community understands the Coastal Management Plan's vision for the reserve and is actively involved in its realisation</p>	<p>a) Re-establish a committee – to be known as the Bells Beach Committee and comprising members with knowledge and experience in environmental management, indigenous heritage and surfing – to advise Council on the plan's implementation</p> <p>b) Appoint an independent chair to the Bells Beach Committee</p> <p>c) Allocate adequate Council resources to support the committee's proper functioning</p>	<p>Desire for community members to have an ongoing role in reserve management</p>
RESPECT		
 <p>Ongoing cooperation and collaboration with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (the Registered Aboriginal Party)</p>	<p>d) Include a Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation representative on the Bells Beach Committee</p> <p>e) Continue to work with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation on management of the reserve</p>	<p>Desire for ongoing aboriginal input into reserve management</p>
 <p>Strong relationships are maintained with the surfing community</p>	<p>f) Include a Surfing Victoria representative on the Bells Beach Committee</p> <p>g) Encourage surfers who regularly use the reserve to participate in the Bells Beach Committee</p>	<p>Need to have surfers and event managers involved in reserve management</p>
 <p>Strong relationships are maintained with community environment groups</p>	<p>h) Include community representatives on the Bells Beach Committee with knowledge, skills and experience in environmental management relevant to the Bells Beach environment.</p> <p>i) Continue to support community environmental activities in the reserve</p>	<p>Desire for local environmentalists to advise on reserve management</p>



8.2 EVENTS MANAGEMENT

The majority of events occurring in the reserve are competitive surfing events including:

- Rip Curl Pro, an annual international surf contest, which has been run at Bells Beach during Easter since 1962 (the Surfing Rally of 1961 was not an official contest)
- Surfing Victoria national and state-level competitions, and
- Three Torquay Boardriders Club contests, which give local community members an opportunity to compete at Bells Beach.

Other non-surfing events generally pass through the reserve (eg Bells Bash and other distance running events using the Surf Coast Walk). Event organisers are required to apply for and obtain a permit from Council setting out the conditions under which the event is to be staged. These events must not have detrimental impacts on the values of the reserve, including the natural environment, cultural heritage and reasonable access for surfers.

As land manager, Council receives numerous requests to use the reserve for various other commercial and non-commercial events and activities, including filming, photography, weddings and memorial services. These are generally assessed on a case-by-case basis against existing

Council policy before a decision is made whether to issue a permit or not. There has been a 'no weddings' policy in place for a number of years.

It is recognised that, from time to time, paddle outs in memory of surfers passed away are likely to be arranged independently of Council. As these events occur in the water outside the reserve boundary, Parks Victoria and DELWP approval may be required for these events.




The community consultation raised a number of issues regarding the type and management of events in the reserve. Private events (eg weddings) and non-surfing commercial events were not supported. There was also consensus about ensuring any events taking place in the reserve did not impinge on recreational surfing activities, with concerns raised about various aspects of the Rip Curl Pro (eg duration of bump in/bump out period, event infrastructure).

Section 6 – Protecting and respecting surfing culture details other issues relating to events at the reserve along with a series of broad strategic actions. An updated events policy is included as an attachment to the implementation plan, which details specific management actions relating to events.

8.2.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS—EVENTS MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Strategic management actions for events management issues are shown in Table 8. Please refer to Section 3.5 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 8: Actions to address events management issues

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
PROTECT		
 Surfing and other events are managed in a consistent way that limits their impacts on the reserve's values and reserve users	a) Implement the new events policy and associated guidelines, and work with event organisers to ensure compliance b) Improve the sustainability of events and links with other reserve users c) Investigate ways of improving the bump in/bump out periods associated with the Rip Curl Pro d) Promote better knowledge of upcoming events and communicate more effectively e) Continue to retain access to surf breaks in the reserve during competitive surfing events in line with Council's new events policy	Concerns about the impacts of events on the reserve's values and regular users in the absence of a publically available events policy Desire to enable surfing events catering for surfers of all levels Need to offer surfing opportunities during events for people not competing Desire for event dates to be known well in advance
 Revenue raised through licensing, event fees and other means is re-invested into protecting the reserve's values	f) Expend revenue raised through licensing, event fees and other revenue-raising activities at Bells Beach on reserve maintenance and improvement costs	Desire to see revenue raised from activities in the reserve spent on its maintenance and protection
RESPECT		
 Young surfers have access to opportunities to develop their skills	g) Identify strategies to cater for young surfers' development needs via discussions with key groups (eg Surfing Victoria, Torquay Boardriders Club, schools)	Desire to foster young surfing talent



8.3 INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

The reserve's infrastructure includes signs, car parks, lookouts, toilet block, memorial plaques, fences, stormwater drains, pathways and other built assets. The general condition of most of this infrastructure enables it to perform its function although the following is noted:






- some signage is in poor condition, redundant or superseded
- bitumen car park surfaces show deterioration in some areas and concrete kerbing is ageing which, if not renewed, would begin affecting its ability to cope with stormwater flows
- established pathways work effectively to keep pedestrians and cyclists to designated areas but the gravel surfacing is steep in some sections, leading to erosion risks and increased risk to the public of injury from slips and falls
- some concerns remain about the visual impact of the stormwater outfall to the southern end of the beach
- the Victorian Heritage Register-listed toilet wall mural is starting to deteriorate
- the toilet block's interior design and fittings are dated and the subject of regular public complaints
- reserve furniture (eg picnic tables, bollards) is a mix of ages, materials and styles, including treated pine bollards and barriers showing clear signs of age, and other ageing or redundant fencing requiring replacement or removal, and
- while safe, aesthetically-pleasing lookouts have been constructed at various vantage points, the planting of vegetation may start to restrict viewing opportunities.



8.3.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS – INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Strategic management actions for infrastructure management issues are shown in Table 9. Please refer to Section 3.6 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 9: Actions to address infrastructure issues

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
RESPECT		
 Reserve retains its unique natural character through effective infrastructure management (eg minimal car parks, signs, buildings, fences, etc.; no new memorial plaques; obsolete fencing and gates removed)	a) Minimise infrastructure within the reserve/confine infrastructure to existing modified areas b) No additional buildings including no second toilet block c) Remove obsolete infrastructure and memorial plaques d) Close the northern part of the overflow car park (except during the Rio Curl Pro)	Community desire to keep Bells in a natural looking state
 Infrastructure fits its purpose and is visually sensitive to its location (eg signs have a consistent 'look and feel')	e) Maintain infrastructure so it performs its intended function f) Implement the recommendations of the new <i>Sign Style Guide</i> and <i>Park Furniture Style Guide</i> to ensure consistency in colours, materials and designs	Belief that the appearance of the reserve can be improved through the use of a consistent set of materials that are sympathetic to the reserve's location and history
PROTECT		
 Erosion is effectively managed through the application of best practice erosion protection principles and practices (noting some erosion will and should be allowed to occur as part of an ever changing coastal landscape)	g) Base erosion management actions on expert advice received as part of the annual geotechnical inspection h) Factor potential climate change impacts into erosion management decisions	Concerns with how erosion will be managed
 Stormwater management is improved when consistent with other values such as aboriginal heritage protection	i) Install additional litter baskets in the drainage pits in the main car park areas and undertake regular servicing of all litter baskets j) Look for opportunities for further stormwater improvements as part of general infrastructure maintenance (eg kerb and channel maintenance and replacement)	Desire to improve stormwater management
 Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future		
Infrastructure management enables people to safely use the reserve without damaging its natural and cultural assets	k) Include public safety considerations in infrastructure management decisions l) Maintain infrastructure to keep visitor activities within approved/suitable areas	Need to manage risks and manage high visitor numbers



8.4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Population growth and increasing independent, non-commercial tourist numbers continue to place added pressure on traffic management and parking in the reserve. As well as the Wave, Winki Pop, Bells and Hammerhead car parks, vehicles also use what is known as the 'overflow' parking area to the west of Bells Beach Road. This area is used for parking during major events and occasionally by the hang gliders.

While the introduction of *Victorian Public Land Tour Operator and Activity Provider Licences* in 2012 has helped reduce the number and impacts of large tourist coaches, some unlicensed companies continue to use the reserve. Council will alter traffic signage to enable the *Road Safety Act 1986* to be used to enforce the requirements for commercial buses to have a licence.

Other traffic management issues include:

- non-commercial long vehicles (eg vehicles with trailers or caravans) in the reserve's car parks where there are restricted opportunities for parking, turning and reversing safely
- capacity of car parks to cater for growing visitor numbers and potential to reduce congestion by encouraging people to access the reserve by bike or foot, with potential to explore the viability of running a shuttle for casual visitors from Torquay
- on high quality surf days, cars parking within the car parks and along Bells Beach Road in a manner that is not compliant with road safety rules
- safety concerns related to the steep gradient, high pedestrian numbers and vehicle speeds, and
- the need for bike racks.

8.4.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Strategic management actions for traffic management issues are shown in Table 10. Please refer to Section 3.7 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 10: Actions to address traffic management issues

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future		
 Traffic management facilitates safe movement within the reserve's car parks and roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to offer through a competitive allocation process, a restricted number of licences (8) for tour operators to bring long vehicles into the reserve (restricted to 22 seats pr less) b) Investigate sustainable and innovative tour operators offering services such as a shuttle bus from the Australian National Surfing Museum to the reserve c) Continue to allow non-commercial vehicles to enter the reserve's car parks d) Retain the Hammerhead car park and existing pedestrian crossing in the Bells Beach car park but minimise related signage; install bicycle racks in the Winki Pop car park 	Concerns regarding the functioning of the car parks and their use by commercial operators
 Local laws enforcement protects the reserve's core values without detracting from people's enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Alter traffic signage within the reserve to enable enforcement under the <i>Road Safety Act 1986</i> of the requirement for commercial buses to hold a licence f) Undertake regular patrols by local laws staff to deter and fine unlicensed commercial vehicles g) Ensure the licence conditions for commercial tour operators minimise the impacts of commercial operations on other reserve visitors h) Enforce road safety regulations in relation to parking within the car parks and along Bells Beach Road to assist with the management of visitor numbers and improve safety 	Frustration with unlicensed buses entering the reserve car parks

8.5 ENFORCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Managing the reserve and enforcing compliance with regulations to effect positive outcomes, for the reserve itself and its users, requires:

- environment and event planning staff
- on-ground cleaning, maintenance, waste collection and vegetation management staff
- staff involved in engineering design, planning and implementation for capital works projects, and
- local laws enforcement officers.

The presence of Council staff in the reserve was regularly raised during the community consultation, specifically in relation to enforcing Council regulations pertaining to:

- unlicensed buses
- overnight camping and sleeping in vehicles
- parking infringements
- litter (including toilet paper from people using the Winki Pop car park island as a toilet), and
- dogs (Bells Beach is a dog-free zone due to the beach being part of the Point Addis Marine National Park), with dogs being left off-leash and unsupervised while their owners surf being a common problem.

In addition, the following management activities were also recognised as critically important to the reserve's ongoing maintenance:

- vegetation management works (eg weed removal)
- litter pick-up and waste management
- improved toilet cleaning, and
- improved fence, track and sign maintenance.




During the consultation process, there was broad community support for having a full-time ranger in the reserve. This approach, trialled in the past, occurred when there were large numbers of commercial tour operators coming into the reserve daily in large coaches, which required a range of management interventions. With the introduction of commercial tour operator licences, these large commercial coaches are no longer allowed into the reserve. A team-based approach currently applies to the day-to-day management and maintenance of the reserve, involving local laws officers responsible for patrol and enforcement, a nature reserve crew and a toilet cleaning contractor. This enables a wide variety of tasks to be completed by appropriately skilled people.

Community members have also contributed significant time and effort to reserve management activities. This includes ongoing conservation works and clean-up days undertaken by SANE volunteers and those involved in the annual Rip Curl Planet Days. This work is greatly appreciated by Council.

8.5.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS – ENFORCEMENT AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Strategic management actions for enforcement and management issues are shown in Table 11. Please refer to Section 3.8 of the accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* for detailed actions to be undertaken over the next three years.

Table 11: Actions to address enforcement and management issues

Outcomes sought	Strategic actions	Responds to
Healthy Coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future		
 Infrastructure management enables people to safely use the reserve without damaging its natural and cultural assets	a) Improve regulation messages to reserve users as part of implementing the <i>Sign Style Guide</i>	Concerns that users are disregarding or not informed about regulations relating to dogs, parking, litter and camping
 Local laws enforcement protects the reserve's core values without detracting from people's enjoyment	b) Provide sufficient Council resources to enable the reserve to be effectively managed in accordance with this plan, including the enforcement of regulations	Desire for greater Council enforcement presence
 The community understands the Coastal Management Plan's vision for the reserve and is actively involved in its realisation	c) Facilitate community involvement in management activities (eg working bees, community education activities)	Desire for reserve users to be involved in on-ground management activities, including education campaigns

8.6 CARRYING CAPACITY

The issue of the reserve's carrying capacity was raised during consultation, with people questioning the number of users/visitors Bells Beach can support without significantly impacting on the reserve.

Before Council implemented a range of access control measures (eg sealing car parks, installing extensive fencing and pathways), degradation of natural and historic values was clearly visible. This included areas denuded of vegetation, erosion of cliffs and dunes, and the impacts of unrestricted access to culturally significant sites (eg middens). Infrastructure is now used to encourage people to stay within designated areas.

Beyond the reserve boundaries, concerns were raised about the carrying capacity of the surf breaks (ie their ability to provide quality surfing experiences when there are a high number of surfers in the water).

Over recent years, the City of Gold Coast Council has undertaken several studies into the carrying capacity of local surf breaks and is in the process of preparing a Surf Management Plan (to be released during 2015). While the findings suggest just under 50 per cent of surfers feel there are carrying capacity problems, they also indicate there are no easy solutions. Options looked at to address overcrowding include raising car parking costs, a beach tax and building artificial surf breaks. These options are not being considered for the reserve.

The Western Coastal Board has the role of providing strategic guidance for the management of Victoria's western coast. In its draft *Western Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2020*, it recognises population pressures and increased tourism visitation as a key challenge. The Board recommends a regional approach to understanding and planning for these pressures, and has nominated itself as the lead agency to develop a visitation demand framework to assist decision-making and management. The framework is to be completed by 2018.

8.6.1 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS – CARRYING CAPACITY ISSUES

The plan makes many recommendations aimed at improving the resilience of the reserve's core values to withstand user/visitor pressures. Actions such as maintaining vital infrastructure (eg fences and pathways) to high standards, managing erosion-prone areas and undertaking weed removal and revegetation works will help to manage potential impacts. Other recommendations will assist in managing visitor numbers (eg events management conditions, tour operator licences, enforcement of parking restrictions and road safety regulations).

Through its multi-pronged approach, the plan aims to facilitate a degree of self management of visitor numbers and their expectations. The current restrictions on bus licences, for example, have during the past two years demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of strategy in impacting positively on the experiences of regular reserve users and one-off visitors. In the future, the Western Coastal Board framework may assist by providing regional strategies to address visitation pressures.

9. THREE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN



The *Coastal Management Act 1995* requires this plan to include a three-year business plan outlining past income and expenditure over recent years, and projected income and expenditure for the next three years. This business plan will be used to guide Council's budgeting process in relation to recurrent needs, capital works and applications for grant funding. It is subject to change, reflecting Council's other potential obligations and the availability of grant funding.

Council will continue to look for funding opportunities, particularly grants associated with high-cost infrastructure, such as the maintenance of beach access stairs. All infrastructure assets within the reserve are mapped and inspected on a regular basis to assist with expenditure planning.

COMMENT ON FINANCIAL CAPACITY AND FUNDING SOURCES

Each year the cost of managing the reserve exceeds revenue. Funding sources for works in the reserve include those shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Key funding sources

Funding source	Description
Council	Council contributes funding to the reserve through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recurrent contributions to wages and plant, and operating budgets for activities such as toilet cleaning and parks maintenance, and 2) A Developer Contributions Plan (DCP) under the <i>Surf Coast Planning Scheme</i>, which provides funds for the renewal or development of the reserve in accordance with the approved Coastal Management Plan (varying funds available between 2011 and 2032). The DCP will be amended to reflect the actions in the CMP.
State Government Grants	Examples of grant opportunities in this area include Regional Development Victoria projects, the Coastal Risk Mitigation Program and Communities for Nature grants. These programs may contribute funds to projects such as new infrastructure, beach access structures and revegetation works.
State Government Agency Grants	Coastal Tender grants fit this category and enable environmental restoration works.
Federal Grants	Main example is Caring for our Country grants for cultural and ecological projects.

Table 13: Past income and expenditure within the reserve**Income and expenditure from 2012-14**

Item	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Income			
Rip Curl Pro licence fee–cash component	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
Rip Curl Pro licence fee–sponsorship component	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$70,000
Hang glider licence fee		\$125	\$125
Tour operator licence fees		\$2,000	\$3,900
One-off contribution Surfing Victoria and Rip Curl for reserve management*			\$50,000
Regional Development Victoria grant for improved signage at Bells on 50 th anniversary of Rip Curl Pro	\$12,000		
Regional Development Victoria grant for Bells Beach Master Plan works – connection to sewer, new potable water line, car parking changes	\$100,000		
Department of Environment and Primary Industries Coastal Risk Mitigation grant for rock wall extension			\$29,050
Total	\$189,000	\$79,125	\$163,075
Expenditure (recurrent)			
Council staff, including nature reserve crew, planning, local laws and infrastructure, and vehicles**	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
Toilet cleaning contract	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Expenditure (variable capital)			
Bells Beach Master Plan works – connection to sewer, new potable water line, car parking changes	\$14,000	\$323,000	\$11,000
New sandstone entrance sign	\$18,000		
Cultural heritage investigation for entrance sign	\$7,000		
Rock wall extension		\$1,000	\$36,000
Midden fencing and Hammerhead fencing changes			\$8,636
Geotextile and revegetation of Hammerhead cliff top		\$2,000	
Task force support, visioning process			\$11,000
Total	\$189,000	\$486,000	\$227,000

Notes

* This was a one-off contribution by Surfing Victoria and Rip Curl for on-ground works.

** This is the minimum cost of having the nature reserve crew in the reserve two to three days each week, regular local laws patrols and input from specialist Council staff such as planners and engineers. The cost may be higher some years depending on the planning, engagement and works undertaken.

Table 14: Projected income and expenditure within the reserve

The accompanying *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Implementation Plan* contains detailed actions for implementation and estimated costs, and should be referred to for more detail in relation to this business plan.

Income	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Tour operator bus licences	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Rip Curl Pro cash component of licence	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Rip Curl Pro sponsorship component of licence	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
Rip Curl Pro donation carried forward	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
Hang gliders annual licence	\$125	\$125	\$125
Events other than Rip Curl Pro	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total	\$136,125	\$86,125	\$86,125
Expenditure (as outlined in the implementation plan)			
Natural environment protection and enhancement	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Indigenous heritage and surfing culture	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Governance and management of the reserve	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$45,000
Events management	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Infrastructure renewal	\$181,000	\$121,000	\$186,000
Traffic management	\$15,000	\$0	\$0
Total	\$346,000	\$271,000	\$336,000
Profit/Loss	-\$209,875	-\$184,875	-\$249,875



10. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Coastal Management Plan gives strategic management direction for the next 10 to 15 years. The accompanying three-year Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually by the Bells Beach Committee. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed at the end of each three-year period.

The committee review will focus on progress towards implementing agreed actions identified in the Implementation Plan and ensure the actions are consistent with the vision and management goals outlined in the Coastal Management Plan.

11. REFERENCES

Bells Beach Task Force 2015, *Report to Council on the Development of the Coastal Management and Implementation Plans for the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve 2015-25*, Torquay.

Ecology Partners Pty Ltd 2008, *Integrated Vegetation Management Plan for the Bells Beach Recreation Reserve*, Torquay, Victoria.

Fitzgerald Frisby Landscape Architecture Pty Ltd 2010, *Revised Final Draft Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Coastal Management Plan and Masterplan September 2010*, Docklands, Melbourne.

Kellaway, C (Revised by Rowe, D) 2009, *Farmland, Forest and Surf: Environmental History Surf Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2B*, Surf Coast Shire and Heritage Victoria, Melbourne.

Parks Victoria 2005, *Point Addis Marine National Park, Point Danger Marine Sanctuary and Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary Management Plan*, Parks Victoria, Melbourne.

Sinclair Knight Merz 2012, *Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation, Report for the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee*, Torquay.

Surf Coast Shire 2009, *Surf Coast Shire Heritage Study Stage 2B: Statements of Significance*, (based on work by Rowe, D and Jacobs, W), Torquay, Victoria.

Terraculture Heritage Consultants 2011, *Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve, 300 Bones Road, Bells Beach: Cultural Heritage Management Plan Number 10062*, Northcote, Victoria.

Victorian Coastal Council 2014, *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014*, Victorian Coastal Council, Melbourne.

Western Coastal Board 2015, *Western Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2020 (Draft)*, Western Coastal Board, Geelong, Victoria.

Wynd, I 1992, *Barrabool: Land of the Magpie*, Barrabool Shire, Torquay, Victoria.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 ACTS AND REGULATIONS

There are a number of State and Commonwealth Acts that control or influence how the reserve is managed. The following describes the most relevant documents.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

The Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 enables the reservation of Crown land, the creation of management regulations and the setting of licensing provisions. It is under this Act that Council has been appointed the Committee of Management for the reserve.

Crown land within the reserve is permanently reserved for public purposes and protection of the coastline under this Act. In Victoria, an Act of Parliament is required to revoke the reservation of permanently reserved Crown land. This means that there is a high level of protection for the site and any proposed change would be subject to parliamentary and public scrutiny.

While it is not currently possible to reserve Crown land in Victoria for surfing purposes, in 1971 the land was assigned the name 'Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve' under the *Survey Co-ordination Act 1958* (today Victorian place names are assigned under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*). This name recognises the importance of the reserve for surfing.

Regulations for the care, protection and management of the reserve were updated in 1993. They are a consistent set of regulations for all coastal Crown land reserves between Portarlington and Aireys Inlet, and outline approved activities, permit requirements and offences. These regulations are made under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Coastal Management Act 1995

The *Coastal Management Act 1995* aims to ensure a coordinated approach to strategic planning and land management along Victoria's coastline, and establishes a separate approvals process (Coastal Management Act Consent) for use and development approvals on coastal Crown land. The *Victorian Coastal Strategy* is prepared under this Act and the preparation of Coastal Management Plans for coastal Crown land in Victoria is provided for under this Act.

Victorian Coastal Strategy (2014)

The vision for coastal management in Victoria is 'A healthy coast, appreciated by all, now and in the future'. The *Victorian Coastal Strategy* is a strategic planning document that sets out a hierarchy of principles to achieve the stated

vision as shown on the following page.

Western Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2020 Draft

The purpose of this plan is to guide implementation of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* in the western coastal region and is considered a coastal management plan as defined under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*. The plan seeks to implement the vision of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* by protecting regional biodiversity, ensuring sustainable developments, and identifying areas where residential and tourism infrastructure are best sited. The plan recommends a number of actions related to visitation, foreshore management, and flooding and erosion. The recommended actions will be implemented over the coming five years and will have implications for coastal management in Surf Coast Shire.

Victoria's Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007

This act and regulations provide for the protection of Aboriginal heritage within the reserve. The Act and Regulations enable the appointment of a Registered Aboriginal Party (Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation in the case of Bells Beach), outline cultural heritage management plan requirements and detail the approval processes for works or uses that potentially impact upon aboriginal heritage values.

The Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) was prepared for the reserve in 2011 under the provisions of this Act. Site-specific cultural heritage management plans are required for locations that have not been covered in detail in this plan. The approved CHMP provides guidance for reserve management decisions. Council discusses works beyond maintenance with the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation and then follows the Regulations to prepare site-specific cultural heritage management plans as required.

Heritage Act 1995

In regard to surfing values, the reserve is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H203), established under the *Heritage Act 1995*. Inclusion on the VHR reflects the iconic status Bells Beach has for Australian surfing culture, its location as the world's longest continuous running surf competition and its impacts on surfboard and wetsuit technology in Australia. The register specifically includes the wave sculpture, the toilet block mural and the three 'Spirit of Surfing' sandstone markers.

Source: *Victorian Coastal Strategy (2014)*

Hierarchy of Principles

Managing the coast now and in the future requires responses to the many ongoing pressures we face.

To assist with this, previous strategies have introduced a Hierarchy of Principles.

This strategy continues a Hierarchy of Principles and recognises that the foundation of coastal planning and management is a healthy coastal and marine environment.

The Hierarchy of Principles gives effect to the directions in the *Coastal Management Act 1995* and is included in the State Planning Policy Framework and in planning schemes across Victoria. Planning and decision-making on the coast needs to be guided by and consistent with the Hierarchy of Principles.

The policies and actions in the strategy have been grouped into three sections that align with the Hierarchy of Principles:

VALUE & PROTECT	1. Ensure the protection of significant environmental and cultural values
	The starting point is recognising and protecting what we value on the coast, based on identification and sound understanding of coastal and marine features and processes, vulnerabilities and risks.
PLAN & ACT	2. Undertake integrated planning and provide clear direction for the future
	This highlights the importance of having integrated policies, plans and strategies that respond to the major issues affecting coastal and marine environments, provide clear direction for protection, management and sustainable development, and involve coastal stakeholders and the broader community.
USE & ENJOY	3. Ensure the sustainable use of natural coast resources
	This emphasises that natural coastal resources are a limited and valuable public resource, and if developed or used, this should be done wisely and deliver proven new community and public benefits for current and future generations. Only when the above principles have been considered and addressed:
	4. Ensure development on the coast is located within existing, modified and resilient environments where the demand for development is evident and any impacts can be managed sustainably
	This aims to ensure that development on and adjacent to the coast is of high quality design, sensitively sited, suitable and sustainable over the longer term. Development on coastal Crown land must have a demonstrated need to be located on the coast and a demonstrated public benefit.

At a national level, the reserve was a 'Listed Place' on the Register of the National Estate (place identification 103928). The listing recognised "...the special place of surfing and Bells Beach in Victorian social history". However, this register is no longer a maintained statutory list. Protection provided by the listing was restricted to the control or guidance of potential adverse actions undertaken by Commonwealth agencies. It is now considered more appropriate for the protection of sites of state and local significance to be protected by state and local government.

OTHER RELEVANT VICTORIAN ACTS

Protection of natural values is provided for under a variety of Victorian legislation such as the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (which includes native vegetation clearance requirements), the *Wildlife Act 1975* and the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (which sets out pest plant and animal obligations). Offshore waters that are included in the Point Addis Marine National Park are protected under the *National Parks Act 1975*.





SURF COAST SHIRE COUNCIL 1 Merrijig Drive (PO Box 350) Torquay Victoria 3228
PHONE 5261 0600 | **EMAIL** info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au | **www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au**