

THE FUTURE OF SURF LIFE SAVING IN SURF COAST SHIRE

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FOREWORD

The beautiful and dangerous shores of Surf Coast have defined the landscape and its inhabitants for thousands of years. Wathaurong and Gadubanud Aborigines lived in and belong to the Surf Coast region.

With the arrival of Europeans, coastal settlements established and were dependent on shipping for commerce and communication. Ships were wrecked frequently on the rocky Bass Strait coast, and communities were often engaged in rescues. As swimming and surfing became more popular in the twentieth century, surf life saving clubs formed to provide a rescue service on Surf Coast's beaches.

A Torquay Life Saving Club started in 1922, followed by Lorne the next year, and Anglesea in 1929. Surf board riders were often closely associated with the life saving clubs. Life Saving competitions and championships were popular during the 1920s and 30s.

The post-war years saw rapid growth of the Surf Coast as a holiday destination. The Torquay Surf Life Saving Club re-formed in 1946, and Lorne in 1947. Anglesea followed in 1952, with Fairhaven in 1957 and Jan Juc in 1963. Greater household incomes and the popularity of surfing and the beach experience continued to drive new residential development, in addition to caravanning and camping.

Surf Coast has over 3,000 businesses in an economy worth almost \$1 billion annually. Its beaches and National Parks attract 1.8 million visitors each year, spending \$500 million annually. Surfing provides over a quarter of the jobs and economic activity in this growing regional economy.

Two Torquay SLSC members established *Rip Curl*, and were followed by *Dive'n'Surf*, *Piping Hot* and *Quiksilver*, along with other surf related industries. These companies continue to provide employment locally, and help to give Surf Coast the reputation as the Home of Australian Surfing.

The annual Rip Curl Pro event at Bells Beach Coastal Reserve is now a well-established event on the international calendar, and attracts competitors from all around the world, as well as thousands of domestic and overseas visitors.

At the same time, Surf Coast residents who responded to this report's consultation process want to ensure that surf life saving facilities do not impact on the environment or cultural heritage sites. While the existing facilities are in modified environments and have been there for decades, there was a clear message that the natural coastal environment is highly valued and there is a strong community desire to protect and maintain these sensitive and vulnerable areas.

Surfing, and surf life saving, are embedded in the Shire's culture, not just its name. Community research conducted for the Strategy revealed that over a third of Surf Coast households have someone who has been or is currently a member of a surf life saving club. Support for the various activities of surf life saving clubs is also shown to be very high. 98% of respondents stated that surf life saving clubs were either 'extremely beneficial' or 'quite beneficial' to the local community.

Research conducted for the Australian government has found that in Surf Coast, the 'critically important factors in choosing beaches for residents, day-trippers and tourists' was 'safe swimming' and 'life saving patrol'. Tourism Research Australia reports that 71.2% of visitors to Surf Coast Shire in 2014 went to the beach.

Life saving clubs on the surf coast have a vibrant and growing membership base made up of junior, adult and senior community members. With over 6,754 members recorded in the five clubs for the 2014/15 season, the clubs demonstrate a healthy blend of gender and age diversity (48% of members are female, over 33% are aged 5-15 years).

Importantly, the clubs provide an essential community life saving service that sets them apart from all others. In 2014/15 the five clubs performed a range of volunteer based activities that provided significant benefit to the community, with one key result being the rescue of 35 members of the community who were identified as at risk of drowning.

Each club – Torquay, Jan Juc, Anglesea, Fairhaven and Lorne – has a unique demographic and culture, some with high local resident membership and others with high holiday maker membership.

The surf life saving clubs are an important portal for the visitor population to connect with full time residents. Clubs provide a unique opportunity for visitors and residents to develop a sense of community regardless of where they live.

This represents an enormous advantage to Surf Coast in its efforts to develop a diverse and resilient community, through an altruistic activity that develops leadership and spans all age groups.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


Introduction

The purpose of the Future of Surf Life Saving project is to prepare a strategic framework to guide the future provision, use, management and investment in the development of surf life saving and associated clubs, facilities and services in Surf Coast Shire, that is agreed to by all key stakeholders and agencies.

The project is a collaboration between five contributing agencies: Surf Coast Shire; Great Ocean Road Coast Committee; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Justice; and Regional Development Victoria.

Vision and objectives

The following Vision for the project was developed through the Vision and Objectives Workshop:



We support a well-managed, inclusive and adaptable surf life saving movement, connected to the community, helping to respect, understand and enjoy our coastal environment.

The following project Objectives were also developed:

1. Simplify and clarify roles, accountabilities and governance arrangements.
2. Build robust and productive relationships between Life Saving Victoria, the Clubs, stakeholders, and the wider community.
3. Deliver diverse and safe beach experiences through an adaptable and responsive life saving service.
4. Promote the way surf life saving contributes to the health and wellbeing of the Surf Coast community, culture, environment and economy.
5. Develop a sustainable revenue capability and investment model for an effective surf life saving service.
6. Plan collaboratively for life saving buildings, infrastructure and resources to meet the needs of the Surf Coast community.

Consultation process

The project sought feedback from the community and agencies to an Issues and Opportunities Paper through a broad consultation process.

The consultation process ran from November 2014 to February 2015, and involved:

- The establishment of a Community and Agency Reference Group;
- Development of an Issues and Opportunities Paper for the consultation;
- Advertisements and articles in the Surf Coast Times;
- An Agency Workshop, two Focus Groups and two Open Houses;
- Community Research – 203 residents interviewed by phone;
- A Community Survey using the same questions from the Research interview;
- A Project website established with OurSay and linked to the Council website;
- Written submissions; and
- A Vision and Objectives Workshop with stakeholder representatives.

Over 400 Surf Coast residents have been directly involved in the consultation process.

Key overall findings from the consultation

Broadly accepted guiding principles:

Through the course of developing this strategy, some key understandings have emerged. The following statements are broadly accepted by all five government organisations and the surf life saving movement, and appear to enjoy the support of the wider Surf Coast community.

- Surf life saving clubs are central to the culture, experience and community life of Surf Coast Shire.
- As recognised in legislation and supported by the community, surf life saving clubs should continue to be located on coastal Crown land, subject to mandated environmental controls including coastal vulnerability.
- The coastal environment of Surf Coast is highly valued by residents and visitors alike, and it must be protected.
- The government agencies, Life Saving Victoria and the clubs are all committed to strong and cooperative relationships to support a well-trained, inclusive and adaptable life saving movement.

- The number of surf life saving clubs currently developed on coastal Crown land is sufficient, at least up to 2025.
- Currently there is not sufficient support for any new club location for this to be actively considered by the managing agencies. This position could be re-evaluated at any time approaching the ten year horizon, but would require detailed justification on the basis of risk, demographics and community support.
- The emphasis over the next ten years should be on consolidating, resourcing and possibly expanding outpost services with decisions made collaboratively between the agencies, clubs, and Life Saving Victoria, on a risk management basis.
- With the Shire's population forecast to grow from 28,810 in 2015 to 43,763 in 2036, it is anticipated that demand for life saving services will increase in future.
- Government agencies and the clubs agree that Surf Coast clubs do not have the infrastructure or beach environment to support mega-events such as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.
- However, many other smaller events such as international, national and state competitions and events such as the Lorne Pier to Pub are, and should continue to be supported to the benefit of clubs, local residents and visitors.

Key findings on governance:

- Current legislation governing Crown land tenures is reasonably effective, but very difficult for clubs to follow and negotiate;
- Outside of a major review of Crown land legislation, there is no opportunity to reduce the number of stakeholder agencies involved with surf life saving;
- However, with agreement and cooperation, clarification and simplification of accountabilities is possible;
- DELWP could recommend legislative amendments to simplify provisions; and to merge the *Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967* into the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*;
- While the principles of the Victorian Coastal Strategy are relatively straightforward, there is a lack of clear detailed policy to guide the future development and management of surf life saving facilities;
- A short sharp policy document clarifying current leasing/licensing arrangements would be welcomed by most parties;
- There is very strong general community support for locating surf life saving clubs and their facilities on coastal Crown land;

- However, several submissions point out that coastal Crown land is a precious and limited resource, and surf life saving use must be balanced against social and environmental factors.

Key findings on safe beach experience:

- Surf life saving clubs play a key role in the provision of emergency services in Victoria;
- The provision of a beach rescue service through the patrolling of popular swimming beaches is a highly valued function in the community;
- There are opportunities to modernise in several areas, particularly mobile communications;
- Access for vehicles to beaches and even surf life saving club buildings must be considered when clubs facilities are redeveloped;
- However, clubs are limited in their ability to modernise by lack of funds;
- The current paid lifeguard service is heavily dependent on the life saving movement volunteer base, facilities, equipment, resources, and the leadership and community development strengths within the Clubs.

Key findings on community health and wellbeing:

- Surf life saving activities are strongly supported by the Surf Coast community;
- There are opportunities for surf life saving clubs to strengthen existing relationships with local communities.

Key findings on economic benefit:

- Surf life saving brings economic benefits to local and broader community;
- Surf life saving clubs could be available for broader community use which does not limit clubs in their primary goal of saving lives;
- The current leasing arrangements, quality, suitability and appropriateness of other uses, varies across surf life saving facilities, restricting the ability of some facilities to be used for broader purposes;
- The hosting of major events offers opportunities for clubs and the broader community, but a significant number of constraints also currently exist;
- Surf Coast does not have the beach space or community infrastructure to support an event as large as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.



Key findings on environment and culture:

- The coastal environment is highly valued by the Surf Coast community, and is a sensitive and vulnerable asset deserving of protection;
- Surf life saving facility developments in new locations are generally not supported without strong justification;
- No new surf life saving club locations are justified in the next ten years;
- Future works to existing facilities must be contained within the existing footprint, minimize environmental impact, be environmentally sustainable and responsive to their location;
- Relocation of some life saving facilities further inland may be required in the future in planning for climate change.

Key findings on funding and investment:

- Surf Coast residents believe that local and state governments have a role to play in the funding of essential surf life saving services, including facilities, equipment and lifeguards;
- Government agencies have limited resources to assist in supporting services and buildings and facilities;
- Many of the current buildings and facilities are outdated and in major need of upgrade;

- Non-core programs and activities could be funded through other fundraising and commercial avenues;
- Clubs are currently restricted in their ability to generate revenue through other sources;
- There are many constraints on normal surf life saving activities on the foreshore.

Key findings on plan for buildings and resources:

- Surf life saving services will need to be responsive to population growth;
- Expansion of surf life saving services does not necessarily mean new clubs or facilities, rather innovation in how future services are delivered;
- While the key life saving roles of Clubs have not changed, the way they are delivered certainly has.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the future of surf life saving

The purpose of the Future of Surf Life Saving project is to prepare a strategic framework to guide the future provision, use, management and investment in the development of surf life saving and associated clubs, facilities and services in Surf Coast Shire, that is agreed to by all key stakeholders and agencies. It is intended to improve the understanding and interactions between clubs and community.

The project is a collaboration between five agencies: Surf Coast Shire; Great Ocean Road Coast Committee; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Justice; and Regional Development Victoria.

Project roadmap

Stage	Description	Timing	Outcome
1	Project initiation Develop plans for the delivery of the project	Sept 2014	
2	Issues and Opportunities Prepare Issues and Opportunities Paper based on situation and gap analysis	Sept – Oct 2014	Issues and Opportunities Paper
3	Community engagement Consultation and engagement with the community on Issues and Opportunities	Nov 2014 – Jan 2015	Involved and engaged community
4	Develop draft Strategy Develop Draft Strategy and Event Facility Assessment	Feb – Mar 2015	Draft Strategy
5	Community engagement Consultation and engagement with the community on Draft Strategy	Oct 2015	Involved and engaged community
6	Finalise Strategy Develop and complete final Strategy	Nov – Dec 2015	Final Strategy

A more detailed description of the Project Roadmap is in Appendix 1.

Vision and objectives workshop

Following the Stage 3 Community Engagement, the Project Control Group sponsored a workshop in May 2015, involving some key community leaders, including the Surf Coast Mayor and Chief Executive, the Chair of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, representatives of Emergency Management Victoria, and the Chief Executive of G21. (G21 – the Geelong Alliance – is the formal alliance of government, business and community organisations working together to improve the lives of people within the Geelong region.)

Using the inputs from the consultation, this workshop developed the following Vision and Objectives for the Draft Strategy:

Vision

We support a well-managed, inclusive and adaptable surf life saving movement, connected to the community, helping to respect, understand and enjoy our coastal environment.

Objectives

1. Simplify and clarify roles, accountabilities and governance arrangements.
2. Build robust and productive relationships between Life Saving Victoria, the Clubs, stakeholders, and the wider community.
3. Deliver diverse and safe beach experiences through an adaptable and responsive life saving service.
4. Promote the way surf life saving contributes to the health and wellbeing of the Surf Coast community, culture, environment and economy.
5. Develop a sustainable revenue capability and investment model for an effective surf life saving service.
6. Plan collaboratively for life saving buildings, infrastructure and resources to meet the needs of the Surf Coast community.

The agencies

Regional Development Victoria (RDV):

Regional Development Victoria is the Victorian Government's lead agency in developing rural and regional Victoria through a focus on building stronger economies and communities through employment, investment and infrastructure.

Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning (DELWP):

DELWP is responsible for the stewardship of Victorian coastal Crown land and the tenants that occupy this highly valued land. DELWP's responsibilities include the direct and delegated management of public land and issuing consent for the use or development of coastal Crown land under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*. DELWP must give effect to the Victorian Coastal Strategy and take into account environment, social and economic factors in issuing consent under the Act.

Department of Justice (DoJ):

Provides funding and support to volunteer organisations such as Life Saving Victoria as a component of delivery of Victoria's emergency services.

Life Saving Victoria and affiliated surf life saving clubs:

Water safety – saving lives, preventing injury, enjoying the water – prevention of aquatic related death and injury in all Victorian communities with a vision that all Victorians will learn water safety, swimming and resuscitation and be provided with safe aquatic environments and venues.

Each surf life saving club in Surf Coast Shire has a unique demographic and culture, some with high local resident membership and others with high holiday maker membership. The Life Saving Victoria priority is 'Clarify our future and delivering total integration' and refers to linking with the community.

Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC):

GORCC is a Committee of Management appointed by and responsible to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change for the management of 37 kilometres of coastal Crown land reserves along the Great Ocean Road between Torquay and Lorne. Each of the surf life saving clubs in Surf Coast Shire are located on this land. GORCC contributes funding for professional lifeguards over the summer period in conjunction with Surf Coast Shire and the State Government. GORCC's mission is to 'Ensure appropriate use and effective management of the GORCC managed coast through advocacy and action'. GORCC is the land manager for all surf life saving clubs in Surf Coast Shire.

Surf Coast Shire (SCS):

SCS has land management responsibility adjacent to DELWP and GORCC managed land however does not have a policy position to guide decision making in regard to surf life saving clubs. The surf life saving clubs are important community buildings and community places linking communities together for the purpose of life saving. The Shire supports Life Saving Victoria through an annual allocation of funding for professional life guard services over the summer period and supports the clubs through the staging of their major events such as carnivals and fundraising activities.

G21 – Geelong Region Alliance

G21 is the formal alliance of government, business and community organisations working together to improve the lives of people within the Geelong region across five municipalities – Colac Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast.

G21 works as a forum to discuss regional issues across interest groups and municipalities resulting in better co-ordinated research, consultation and planning. G21 supports the delivery of projects that benefit the region across municipal boundaries and is a platform for the region to speak with one voice to all levels of government.

Structure of the Draft Strategy

Using the Issues and Opportunities Paper, the Consultation and Engagement feedback, and the objectives developed by the Vision and Objectives Workshop, the Draft Strategy has been structured around the following chapters, corresponding to the Objectives above:

1. Governance
2. Safe beach experience
3. Community health and wellbeing
4. Revenue and investment
5. Plan for buildings and resources

Objective 2 – Build robust and productive relationships between Life Saving Victoria, the Clubs, stakeholders, and the wider community – has been incorporated into Chapter 3 Community Health and Wellbeing.

Review of this Strategy

The Strategy was finalised and released in 2016. The Strategy has been developed with a ten year planning horizon. It is intended that the Strategy actions will be reviewed after three years and six years, with a more comprehensive review after ten years.

The Strategy is available on the Surf Coast Shire website <http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/>.

For any enquiries, please contact the Surf Coast Shire Office on (03) 5261 0600.



THE STRATEGY

Overview

Early history of the Surf Coast

Wathaurong and Gadubanud Aborigines lived in the Surf Coast region for thousands of years before European settlement. Middens show that the coastal environment was occupied and productive, with shellfish, eels, ducks, cape barren geese and seals as part of a varied diet.

Early European settlers were typically involved in agriculture, timber, whaling and sealing. Coastal settlements established and were dependent on shipping for commerce and communication. Ships were wrecked frequently on the rocky Bass Strait coast, and communities were often engaged in rescues. By the 1900s, roads started to connect the coastal settlements.



Surf Life Saving in Surf Coast Shire

Prior to 1911, daytime swimming and bathing was restricted in many parts of Victoria. However, the popularity of beaches in hot weather and the health benefits of swimming saw these restrictions gradually abandoned. As a result, swimming clubs and life saving clubs started in many coastal locations, in response to the increased risk of drownings.

A Torquay Life Saving Club started in 1922, followed by Lorne the next year, and Anglesea in 1929. These clubs were initially affiliated with the Royal Life Saving Society, and subsequently with an offshoot, the Victorian Surf Bathers Association. Surf board riders were often closely associated with the life saving clubs. Life Saving competitions and championships were popular during the 1920s and 30s. However, many clubs lapsed through the Depression and World War 2.

The post-war years saw rapid growth of the Surf Coast as a holiday destination. The Torquay Surf Life Saving Club re-formed in 1946, and Lorne in 1947. Anglesea followed in 1952, with Fairhaven in 1957 and Jan Juc in 1963. Greater household incomes and the popularity of surfing and the beach experience continued to drive new residential development, in addition to the traditional caravan and camping ground summer accommodation.

With the advent of the Bells Beach Carnival in the 1960s, board riding became even more popular, and surf life saving club membership numbers suffered as a consequence. The greater availability of cars and better roads, along with smaller lighter boards made it easier for young people to find their own beach recreation activities beyond the structure and discipline of life saving clubs.

However, to this day the five clubs continue to thrive and provide a paid and volunteer life saving service on the Shire's beaches.

Surf Coast economy

Inevitably, the Surf Coast spawned its own surf industry. Two Torquay SLSC members established *Rip Curl*, and were followed by *Dive'n'Surf*, *Piping Hot* and *Quiksilver*, along with other surf related industries. These companies continue to provide employment locally, and help to give Surf Coast the reputation as the Home of Australian Surfing.

The annual Rip Curl Pro event at Bells Beach Coastal Reserve is now a well-established event on the international calendar, and attracts competitors from all around the world, as well as thousands of domestic and overseas visitors.

A report prepared in 2014 for the Shire¹ estimates that in 2013 the surf industry supported a quarter of the economic activity in Surf Coast Shire's economy. The industry provided \$217 million in industry value added activity (of a total \$819.8 million across all industries in Surf Coast Shire) and more than 2,000 FTE jobs (of a total of 7,561 FTE jobs in Surf Coast Shire).

¹ AEC Group 2014 *The Economic Value of the Surf Industry to Surf Coast Shire*.

Surf Coast and the beach experience

Surf Coast today is one of the most attractive semi-natural coastal environments in the world. With the backdrop of the Great Otway National Park and rolling hills, the sandy beaches and coastal towns nestle in next to the Southern Ocean. It is a beautiful and evocative coastal landscape. It has attracted people to live close by for thousands of years, and in even larger numbers today.

Surf Coast is partly defined by its surfing culture, and partly by its long tradition of surf life saving. But it is certainly defined by the beach experience it offers. On top of a Surf Coast Shire resident population of 28,282 (2013), there were 1.8 million tourism visitors in 2014. Of these, 57% were day trips, with 41% domestic overnight stays, and 2% international overnight stays. The Economic Value report quotes research that shows 71.2% of visitors to Surf Coast Shire visit the beach. Just on 10% of visitors go to the beach to surf, and the rest for a mix of swimming, walking and paddling and other beach activities.

In addition, community research for this Future of Surf Life Saving Strategy project revealed that 35% of households have at least one person who is, or has been, a member of a surf life saving club.

Public consultation for the Strategy revealed very strong community support for surf life saving in Surf Coast Shire. The community research showed overwhelming support for surf life saving clubs to occupy coastal Crown land. Over 90% of respondents supported not only life saving activities, but also social facilities, additional storage, surf life saving events, cafés or restaurants, and accommodation.

However, across many submissions, there was recognition that surf club facilities occupy precious coastal Crown land and that this public resource should be protected from further expansion.

These figures paint a very strong picture of a community focussed around their coastal experience. Residents and visitors highly value the relatively unspoilt coastal environment, and in large numbers enjoy the beaches and surf activities. The Shire's identity is completely recognised in its name – the Surf Coast Shire.

The need for this Strategy

Surf life saving clubs are located in community facilities and are a hub of community activity. However there are gaps in strategic planning and policy across the agencies that support surf life saving in SCS to guide decision making relating to surf life saving clubs.

There are significant policies and legislation that relate to surf life saving clubs including the Victorian Coastal Strategy and Crown Land (Reserves) Act. However these can be complex and potentially confusing. There has been change over time with emerging trends for surf life saving clubs, agencies and the community resulting in strategy and policy gaps.

It is understood that organisations are reviewing aspects of their arrangements and involvement with surf life saving.

All the government agencies recognise that through the passage of time, no single organisation has emerged with clear responsibility for planning, managing and supporting life saving activities on the Surf Coast.. Therefore, the five agencies are cooperating to:

- Develop a strategic plan for the future of surf life saving in Surf Coast Shire;
- Develop a sound basis for future cooperation;
- Clarify roles and responsibilities;
- Set out a ten year action plan to give some certainty for the future.



Broadly accepted guiding principles:

Through the course of developing this strategy, some key understandings have emerged. The following statements are broadly accepted by all five government organisations and the surf life saving movement, and appear to enjoy the support of the wider Surf Coast community.

- Surf life saving clubs are central to the culture, experience and community life of Surf Coast Shire.
 - As recognised in legislation and supported by the community, surf life saving clubs should continue to be located on coastal Crown land, subject to environmental controls including coastal vulnerability.
 - The coastal environment of Surf Coast is highly valued by residents and visitors alike, and it must be protected.
 - The government agencies, Life Saving Victoria and the clubs are all committed to strong and cooperative relationships to support a well-trained, inclusive and adaptable life saving movement.
 - The number of surf life saving clubs currently developed on coastal Crown land is sufficient, at least up to 2025.
 - Currently there is not sufficient support for any new club location for this to be actively considered by the managing agencies. This position could be re-evaluated at any time approaching the ten year horizon, but would require detailed justification on the basis of risk, demographics and community support.
- The emphasis over the next ten years should be on consolidating, resourcing and possibly expanding outpost services with decisions made collaboratively between the agencies, clubs, and Life Saving Victoria, on a risk management basis.
 - With the Shire's population forecast to grow from 28,810 in 2015 to 43,763 in 2036, it is anticipated that demand for life saving services will increase in future.
 - Government agencies and the clubs agree that Surf Coast clubs do not have the infrastructure or beach environment to support mega-events such as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.
 - However, many other smaller events such as international, national and state competitions and events such as the Lorne Pier to Pub are, and should continue to be supported to the benefit of clubs, local residents and visitors.



1.0 Governance

Objective:

Simplify and clarify roles, accountabilities and governance arrangements.

Discussion

This project has been supported by five government agencies (the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Department of Justice; Department of Regional Development, Surf Coast Shire Council and the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee) with a strong interest in the coast and in surf life saving. However, none of these agencies has clear and authoritative responsibility for the majority of issues raised during this project. It is beyond the scope of this Strategy to recommend changes to organisation responsibilities, but it is possible for the Strategy to clarify accountabilities (see Appendix 3 Agency Roles), to recommend simplifying legislation and administration, and to suggest streamlining in decision-making.

Currently clubs can secure tenure of Crown land in three main ways: through the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, the *Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967*, or the *National Parks Act 1975* (no clubs in Surf Coast Shire are currently located in National Parks). Although the CLR Act can be used quite effectively to grant tenures for surf life saving clubs, it is widely acknowledged as unnecessarily complicated, and hard for non-experts to follow. Many clubs opt for the relative simplicity of the LSLSA Act, although it is restrictive of commercial activity, and in fact could be easily merged with the CLR Act.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy sets out the principle of coastal dependency – that is, uses should generally only be located on the coast if they are dependent on a coastal location. However, although coastal management principles may be clearly expressed in the Victorian Coastal Strategy, their interpretation in each situation can cause frustration at club level. This was expressed on several occasions by club members who had been involved in lengthy discussions about redevelopment proposals and leasing matters.

The community survey showed generally strong support for surf life saving clubs to be allowed to occupy coastal Crown land. Over 90% of respondents supported not only life saving activities, but also social facilities, additional storage, surf life saving events, cafés or restaurants, and accommodation.

However, surf club facilities occupy precious coastal Crown land and there is a need for broader community use of these facilities as well as protection of environmental values from unlimited development.

DELWP has indicated that following the Department's *Life Saving Clubs on Public Land Discussion Paper*, released in 2012, it intended to publish a short sharp policy statement to assist in clarifying matters around use and management of surf life saving tenures on coastal Crown land. This work will be released soon.

Key findings on governance:

- Current legislation governing Crown land tenures is reasonably effective, but very difficult for clubs to follow and negotiate;
- Outside of a major review of Crown land legislation, there is no opportunity to reduce the number of stakeholder agencies involved with surf life saving;
- However, with agreement and cooperation, clarification and simplification of accountabilities is possible;
- DELWP could recommend legislative amendments to simplify provisions; and to merge the *Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967* into the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*;
- While the principles of the Victorian Coastal Strategy are relatively straightforward, there is a lack of clear detailed policy to guide the future development and management of surf life saving facilities;
- A short sharp policy document clarifying current leasing/licensing arrangements would be welcomed by most parties;
- There is very strong general community support for locating surf life saving clubs and their facilities on coastal Crown land;
- However, several submissions point out that coastal Crown land is a precious and limited resource, and surf life saving use must be balanced against social and environmental factors.



	Governance actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
1.1	Convene a Surf Life Saving Round Table which meets at least six-monthly, to progress actions in this strategy and other matters of mutual interest, including governance; development; activities and event; and season reviews.	SCS; GORCC; DELWP; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
1.2	Advocate for Leasing and licencing arrangements to be clarified between clubs and governing agencies.	LSV	•		
1.3	Advocate for legislative amendments to simplify provisions of the <i>Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967</i> and the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> .	LSV	•		
1.4	Through the Round Table, review progress on proposed legislative amendments.	LSV	•	•	•

2.0 Safe beach experience

Objective:

Deliver diverse and safe beach experiences through an adaptable and responsive life saving service.

Discussion

Population growth and social change

Surf life saving services will need to be responsive to population (both tourism and permanent) growth into the future. Torquay will feel this demand most keenly. With the Shire's population forecast to grow from 28,810 in 2015 to 43,763 in 2036 it is anticipated that demand for life saving services will increase in future. As well as the resident population, there were 1.8 million tourism visitors in 2014. Of these, 57% were day trips, with 41% domestic overnight stays, and 2% international overnight stays.

In addition, the projected growth of Melbourne² (4.3m to 5.9m by 2031) and Geelong³ (231,453 in 2015 to 320,791 by 2036) will place increasing pressure on Surf Coast. The centre of Melbourne is only 90 minutes away from Torquay. Surf life saving clubs that have traditionally looked to a community immediately around the clubrooms are already responding to a wider community from the suburbs of Melbourne.

New residential developments, particularly around the growth areas of Torquay and Jan Juc, attracting families and an increase in beach visitation from multi-cultural communities will result in greater demands on life saving patrol services and training and education programs. As patrolled beaches get busier, beachgoers spread to un-patrolled locations, increasing safety risks. The community will continue to demand safe, swimming beaches and life saving services of a high standard.

Tourism Research Australia reports that 71.2% of visitors to Surf Coast Shire in 2014 went to the beach⁴. The percentage of beach-going visitors was even higher for both domestic overnight (73.9%) and international (86.4%) visitors.

Anecdotally, clubs have reported that an increasing number of rescues are of unskilled swimmers or surfers who are unfamiliar with local conditions. Although there are no statistics to support this proposition, the increasing number of tourists to Surf Coast could exacerbate this issue. Beach safety, along with a community perception of beach safety, are important issues for the positioning of Surf Coast as a beach and surfing destination.

Emergency services

The Emergency Management Manual Victoria contains policy and planning documents for emergency management in Victoria. Life Saving Victoria is tasked with provision of both professional and volunteer beach based patrolling, as well as other support and communications roles. Life Saving Victoria, through the Clubs, plays a front line role in emergency response in Surf Coast Shire.

A 'community emergency response' model currently operates between Ambulance Victoria and surf life saving clubs in Surf Coast Shire. In emergency situations such as cardiac arrest or drowning, surf life saving club members are on site and can provide the primary response until paramedics arrive.

There are, however, opportunities to improve the current despatch system. Life Saving Victoria has an existing radio communications network in use and is currently contributing to the development and implementation of a new digital network. Mobile phone black spots exist along the Great Ocean Road, and communication from members of the public calling for assistance can be difficult in some areas.

Access for vehicles to beaches and even Surf Life Saving Club buildings is difficult on busy summer days. Although the Great Ocean Road is tightly constrained in many places, access issues must be considered when clubs facilities are redeveloped.

Training provided through surf life saving clubs is at a National Competency level and is overseen by Life Saving Victoria. Opportunities exist to share facilities for such activities as training programs. The use of surf life saving club facilities in other emergency or bushfire response is also possible.

² http://www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/131492/Fact-Sheet-Plan-Melbourne-by-Numbers-May-2014.pdf

³ <http://forecast.id.com.au/geelong/home>

⁴ TRA (2014). National and International Visitor Surveys Online Database. Tourism Research Australia, Canberra.

The idea of paid lifeguards completely replacing volunteers was raised during the consultation. Although this reflects the issue of increasing demands on Clubs, it would also be prohibitively expensive. Strong feedback from Clubs suggested that the current paid lifeguard service is heavily dependent on the life saving movement volunteer base, facilities, equipment, resources, and the leadership and community development strengths within the Clubs. In addition, the volunteer activities of the clubs are fundamental to the clubs' connection to their communities.



Key findings on safe beach experience:

- Surf life saving clubs play a key role in the provision of emergency services in Victoria;
- The provision of a beach rescue service through the patrolling of popular swimming beaches is a highly valued function in the community;
- There are opportunities to modernise in several areas, particularly mobile communications;
- Access for vehicles to beaches and even Surf Life Saving Club buildings must be considered when clubs facilities are redeveloped;
- However, clubs are limited in their ability to modernise by lack of funds;
- The current paid lifeguard service is heavily dependent on the life saving movement volunteer base, facilities, equipment, resources, and the leadership and community development strengths within the Clubs.

	Safe beach experience actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
2.1	Continue to support and nurture the surf life saving clubs and Life Saving Victoria to enable them to carry out paid and volunteer life saving services, highly valued by the community.	SCS; GORCC; DoJ	•	•	•
2.2	The emphasis for the next ten years should be on consolidating and resourcing, and possibly expanding, outpost services, with decisions made collaboratively between the agencies, clubs, and Life Saving Victoria, on a risk management basis.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
2.3	Through the proposed Surf Life Saving Round Table, collaboratively consider issues, directions and innovations for the delivery of surf life saving services in Surf Coast Shire.	GORCC; SCS; DELWP; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
2.4	Continue to have Life Saving Victoria represented on Council's Municipal Emergency Committee.	SCS	•	•	•
2.5	By the ten year horizon, consider an expanded life saving service in response to population growth, safety and other relevant issues, subject to evaluation at the time.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; RDV; Clubs; LSV			•

3.0 Community health and wellbeing



Discussion

Community connections

The consultation process revealed the value of strong relationships between surf life saving clubs and the wider community in:

- fostering a sense of belonging;
- developing social networks for all ages;
- offering the opportunity to learn life skills;
- overcoming social isolation;
- generating revenue for clubs;
- fostering the volunteerism ethic; and
- increasing the number of people who are able to undertake patrols.

Other community benefits included beach safety, the development of life, leadership and vocational skills, health, fitness and wellbeing, community resilience, and use of club facilities as an alternative meeting place for community groups. Community benefits arising from surf life saving are many and varied, some of which are more tangible than others, and extend even wider than the Surf Coast community.

Surf life saving offers one of the most effective ways to develop community volunteerism, and is deserving of greater support for this quality alone. Acknowledging the differential between a life saving club and a sporting club, for context it is valuable to note that some sporting clubs in the community may pay some of their competitors. All life savers self-fund their membership, including payment for their own training in order to provide a service to the wider surf coast community.

Further support for these community benefits were provided by the results of the community research in which 98% of respondents stated that surf life saving clubs were either 'extremely beneficial' or 'quite beneficial' to the local community.

Community cohesion

The involvement of many stakeholder organisations with varied mandates and accountabilities has potential to divide communities. This can be counter-productive, and make it difficult to achieve the objectives of any one of these organisations. This could easily be the situation for surf life saving.

However, Surf Coast has the advantage that surf life saving is strongly supported by the local community. The community survey conducted for this strategy reveals that most activities of surf life saving clubs are strongly supported by at least 90% of the community. Over a third of the community has a household member who is or has been a member of a surf life saving club. This is a great starting point for the development of even stronger linkages within communities.


Each club has a different demographic and culture. For some clubs, a proportion of the membership is non-resident, resulting in some non-member full-time residents feeling that the club is not part of the community and that clubs are 'elitist'. A different view is that surf life saving clubs offer the best opportunity for permanent and non-permanent residents to join together in productive community activities. There are many examples of this in the five clubs.

Some clubs are actively attempting to develop even stronger community relationships by encouraging club members to also be members of other community groups, pursuing local residents to be members, and developing reciprocal membership arrangements with other local community clubs. There is also an opportunity for clubs to engage more with the local surfing community.

Value of surf life saving

The value of coastal life saving services to the Victorian public has been estimated at \$235 million per year⁵. While saving lives is the central activity and the most economically valuable to Victoria, it is local club activities and events that have the potential to drive significant economic benefit into regional economies. Surf life saving events and activities help to fill accommodation, restaurants and provide economic activity for local service providers.

⁵ PWC 2011 *What is the economic contribution of Surf Life Saving in Australia*.



The surf life saving clubs in Surf Coast Shire also represent an important portal for the visitor population to connect with residents, and create a rare blend of communities. In the case of the Fairhaven club, seasonal visitors from Melbourne and Geelong are a large part of the foundation of the club. In other locations, this is less so, but clubs provide a unique opportunity for visitors and residents to develop a sense of community regardless of where they normally reside. This represents an enormous advantage to Surf Coast in developing a diverse and resilient community, in an altruistic activity that spans all age groups.

Of the 57 clubs listed in the Life Saving Victoria Annual Report 2013/14, the five Surf Coast clubs are all in the top 17 memberships. Anglesea has 1980 members, the largest in Victoria. Over a thousand are active members.

Over 85% of community research respondents indicated support for broader community use of surf life saving club facilities. Possible shared facilities include toilets, showers, kiosk/café, restaurants and change rooms, and meeting and function rooms. Some of these shared use activities have potential to generate modest revenue, but some would be an unfair cost burden for Clubs, and may inhibit the primary life saving function of the buildings.

Economic benefit

There was broad agreement across the feedback forums that, at a local level, businesses in the tourism, accommodation and hospitality industries were key beneficiaries of the existence of surf life saving activities and events. The community research indicated that 11% of respondents identified surf life saving activities as 'beneficial' to the local economy and 9% as 'bringing in tourists'.

The report to Surf Coast Shire Council⁶ shows that the surf industry is a key contributor to the local Surf Coast Shire economy, both directly and indirectly, supporting around one quarter of the Shire's industry value added (\$217.0 million) and local jobs (2,034 full-time equivalent jobs). Surf life saving is a subset of this activity, with the added major economic benefit of saving lives and reducing injury.

At a broader level, feedback indicated that the general community derived economic benefits through the provision of essential life saving services. Approximately 800 surf rescues occur annually in Victoria, 300 of which occur within the Surf Coast Shire. At a notional cost of approximately \$3 million per life, this equates to a significant financial benefit to the broader Victorian community each year.

A study undertaken by Bond University for the Australian Commonwealth Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency⁷ sought to improve the understanding of beach recreation values to assist coastal decision makers. The study considered economic values associated with beach and surf recreation and tourism at four case-study locations including the Surf Coast in Victoria.

The study produced estimates of the 'annual value of resident beach recreation and tourism' (non-market value) for Surf Coast of \$6m pa. In addition the annual value of tourist expenditure related to beaches was worth \$107m for the Surf Coast. When compared to Gross Regional Product the value of beach recreation for Surf Coast as a percentage of GRP was 13%. To place this in some perspective, the value of GRP for the other locations in the study including the Sunshine Coast (Qld) and Margaret River (WA) were only 2-3% of GRP.

In addition and significantly for this report the study found that the 'critically important factors in choosing beaches for residents, day-trippers and tourists' in Surf Coast was 'safe swimming' and the built attributes of 'life saving patrol'. Close car parking and adjacent open space were also highly rated.

The study findings support the other findings in the Strategy in that the presence of attractive coastal assets and the use of these assets by locals and tourists where the use is also made safe by surf life saving is a key factor in continued economic prosperity and of critical importance to Surf Coast.

⁶ AEC Group 2014 *The Economic Value of the Surf Industry to Surf Coast Shire*.

⁷ Raybould 2013 *Beach and Surf Tourism and Recreation in Australia: Vulnerability and Adaptation*.

Leasing arrangements

There are different leasing arrangements that operate for life saving club venues around Victoria meaning that some clubs are more restricted than others in their ability to offer their facilities for other purposes. It was acknowledged that, ideally, a mix of both club and other uses/purposes would be desirable.

Both commercial and community uses were suggested by respondents. The responses were qualified by the requirement that the primary purpose of saving lives must not be impacted from this broader use. Outside of the peak summer period, club facilities are often underutilised and are therefore well placed to broaden usage for other purposes. However, the quality of the facilities varies, so too their suitability and appropriateness for other uses such as events.

Events

Events must be seen in the broader context of wider community economic benefit, and encouraged on that basis. Surf life saving clubs may require more support to host events that bring these wider benefits.

93% of community research and 62% of survey respondents supported the hosting of large scale events, whilst 95% of community research and 62% of survey respondents supported clubs occupying beach areas for life saving club activities, including events and carnivals.

A significant number of constraints on the hosting of major events were identified, including the number of agencies involved, joint permit processes, lease restrictions, compliance requirements, logistics (such as accommodation, parking, access), availability of financial and human resources, saturation of events during peak season, weather, difficulties of event coordination and planning, availability of facilities and space, general surf conditions and the presence of significant reefs.


Opportunities identified in the hosting of major events included the alternating of event locations in order to spread the benefits across the clubs, collaboration between clubs to run fewer but larger events and applying to the Surf Coast Shire grants program to assist in the funding of events within the Shire. Surf Coast Shire is also working to spread events outside the peak summer season, in order to broaden the economic benefit but also minimise the impact on residents and community facilities and infrastructure.

Proposals have been put forward recently to host the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships ('The Aussies') in Surf Coast Shire. An assessment of possible sites, a detailed review of the Surf Life Saving Australia Event Criteria, and discussions with experienced surf life saving members indicate that it is virtually impossible to meet the site requirements to host The Aussies in Surf Coast Shire. With approximately 7,000 competitors and 20,000 spectators, beach areas are simply not large enough to contain competition and back-of-house areas. Traffic congestion around surf life saving club sites and loss of beach area for two weeks would make it difficult to meet event logistics criteria at any of the clubs in Surf Coast.

Environment and culture

The feedback across the various consultation activities was reasonably consistent in the desire to ensure that surf life saving facilities do not impact on the environment or cultural heritage sites. Whilst it was acknowledged that many of the existing facilities are in modified environments and have been there for decades, there was a clear message that the natural environment was not to be further modified through the creation of new buildings or extension of existing building and facility footprints. The natural coastal environment is highly valued and there is a strong community desire to protect and maintain these sensitive and vulnerable areas.

Some members of one club raised the issue of the growth of vegetation impeding views of the beach from the patrol tower. It was suggested that it was impossible to get the managing agencies to consider removal of vegetation to improve safety response between tower and beach. Removal of vegetation is possible if undertaken by a managing agency, with a planning permit. This is a matter for negotiation between the club and the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee.



It was also suggested by the club members that there was a need for a change in the balance between public safety and environmental management. As this broader policy matter concerns statewide vegetation legislation and controls on public land, it is outside the scope of this strategy.

Results of the community research suggested that, while 71% of respondents supported building facilities at new sites, 70% said that the five existing clubs were 'about right' for the Shire, and 94% supported facility redevelopment within existing footprints. Mainly through the project website, there was also clear and strong opposition to new developments or extension of existing footprints.

In planning for redevelopment or refurbishment works at existing sites, community feedback stressed the need for sustainable design, minimal impact to vegetation and sympathetic architectural design that integrated with the coastal environment.

Planning for climate change could require that future facilities only accommodate essential life saving facilities on the beachfront, with the remaining facilities located further inland. Existing facilities may in the future be subject to erosion, flooding and sea level rise. Furthermore, climate change effects may be felt in terms of the frequency, level and nature of life saving services that can be provided.

During the consultation, Life Saving Clubs expressed willingness to move buildings and facilities in the future, should they be threatened by erosion, flooding or sea level rise. Land managers should provide relevant and timely information on any threats on an ongoing basis, so that negotiations over adaptation actions can be undertaken in an informed and measured way.

Key findings on community health and wellbeing:

- Surf life saving activities are strongly supported by the Surf Coast community;
- There are opportunities for surf life saving clubs to strengthen existing relationships with local communities.

Key findings on economic benefit:

- Surf life saving brings economic benefits to local and broader community;
- Surf life saving clubs could be available for broader community use which does not limit clubs in their primary goal of saving lives;
- The current leasing arrangements, quality, suitability and appropriateness of other uses, varies across surf life saving facilities, restricting the ability of some facilities to be used for broader purposes;
- The hosting of major events offers opportunities for clubs and the broader community, but a significant number of constraints also currently exist;
- Surf Coast does not have the beach space or community infrastructure to support an event as large as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.

Key findings on environment and culture:

- The coastal environment is highly valued by the Surf Coast community, and is a sensitive and vulnerable asset deserving of protection;
- Surf life saving facility developments in new locations are generally not supported without strong justification;
- No new surf life saving club locations are justified in the next ten years;
- Future works to existing facilities must, as far as practical, be contained within the existing footprint, minimize environmental impact, be environmentally sustainable and responsive to their location;
- Relocation of some life saving facilities further inland may be required in the future in planning for climate change.

	Health and wellbeing actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.1	Recognise and promote the various roles and value of the surf life saving movement (water safety, emergency management, education, sporting, health and wellbeing, community leadership development, community cohesion) to improve community understanding.	LSV; DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs	•	•	•
3.2	Support the community development aspect of Clubs, to develop groups and individuals with transferable skills in emergency management and community leadership.	SCS; GORCC; DoJ; RDV	•	•	•
3.3	Build the important role of surf life saving clubs into the Surf Coast Shire narrative.	SCS	•	•	•
3.4	Recognise active pursuits related to Surf Life Saving as a legitimate sport and active recreation activities alongside its emergency management role.	SCS	•		
3.5	Promote and support community relationships and encourage more interaction with like organisations.	Clubs	•		
3.6	Develop formal agreements with other community organisations to provide community facility access arrangements consistent with life saving requirements.	Clubs	•		

	Economic benefit actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.7	Promote and recognise the direct economic value of surf life saving (through the saving of lives, prevention of drowning and education programs) and indirect value through support of local businesses.	LSV; SCS; Clubs;	•	•	•
3.8	Through the Round Table, advocate for investment in the redevelopment of club facilities as a positive investment in the economy and community of Surf Coast Shire.	SCS; GORCC; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.9	Recognising the primary purpose of surf life saving buildings and facilities, encourage appropriate community use particularly during the off season, through lease documents or other agreements.	DELWP; GORCC; LSC; SCS Clubs	•	•	•
3.10	If required, clarify to interested community groups that the Clubs do not have the beach space or infrastructure to support an event as large as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.11	Continue to support and develop surf life saving events, such as various state and national championships, and events like the Lorne Pier to Pub, to attract visitors and revenue to the coastal communities in the Shire.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.12	Use the event assessment framework as an agreed decision making framework for event attraction and hosting, particularly to extend events from peak season to shoulder season.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•

	Environment and culture actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.13	Provide each club with information on lease and licence boundaries, as well as information on significant vegetation and areas of cultural heritage sensitivity.	GORCC; DELWP; LSV	•		
3.14	Review carparking adjacent to Club buildings, and plan with clubs for more efficient carparking with reduced environmental impact.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•		
3.15	Investigate other access options such as public transport and park and ride schemes.	SCS; Clubs	•	•	•
3.16	Provide regular and timely information about impacts of climate change and other environmental issues to surf life saving clubs.	DELWP; GORCC	•	•	•
3.17	Improve environmental management such as stormwater, energy use, recycling and waste disposal within lease and licence boundaries.	Clubs	•	•	•



4.0 Revenue and investment

Objective:

Develop a sustainable revenue capability and investment model for an effective surf life saving service.

Discussion

Operating costs

Annual operating costs in the vicinity of \$100-150,000 for each club, just for life saving, provide constant challenges for clubs to remain operational. Clubs already have a strong focus on fundraising through a wide range of sources, including membership fees, cafes and commercial hiring, fundraising events, grants and sponsorships. State and local government and GORCC currently fund the summer paid lifeguard service through Life Saving Victoria at a cost of \$180,000.

However, to a large extent, clubs raise their own funds for all volunteer based operational activities, facility and equipment maintenance, training and purchase of life saving resources and equipment.

State and local government have historically contributed towards buildings and facilities, and have provided grants for equipment.

There was agreement across all feedback forums that local and state governments have a key role to play in supporting life saving, although opinions as to the appropriate level of this support varied. For many, the recognition that clubs provide an essential life saving service justifies government funding of 'big ticket items' such as facilities, equipment and lifeguards.

Clubhouse redevelopments

Feedback from the five surf life saving clubs indicated that there was no desire to establish any further clubs on new sites in Surf Coast Shire over the next ten years. Instead, the emphasis for the next decade should be on consolidating and resourcing, and possibly expanding, outpost services.

However, four of the five club buildings are at least forty years old. Although all clubs are well equipped to provide a quality life saving service, all have current proposals to renew or redevelop their current buildings and facilities. Whilst costs will vary at each location, it is clear that facility upgrades or redevelopment will require significant funds.

Given that the clubs are community based and operate on minimal budgets, capital works like this cannot be financed solely through club resources. Complete redevelopment of club buildings in line with the LSV *Clubhouse of the Future* document is likely to be in the vicinity of \$5m. This of course can vary with different ground conditions and operational requirements.

Feedback from the clubs during the development of the strategy confirmed the importance of community connections for the future of surf life saving. Many club members are already active in a wide range of community organisations, and this helps place surf life saving clubs at the centre of their communities. Clubs already share facilities with other community groups, and it would be valuable to extend this even further to strengthen the clubs and their relationships. However, it has to be recognised that there are security issues around sensitive equipment, communications and medical supplies. Clubs must be enabled to maintain surf life saving as the clear primary purpose for their facilities.

Community research results supported the funding of lifesavers and site redevelopments as key roles of state and local governments. However, this is challenging given the contraction in federal and state government funding programs, and local government rate capping, to be introduced in the 2016/17 financial year.

In the past, club buildings have been constructed largely through the efforts and fundraising undertaken by the clubs themselves. However, with the understanding of the importance of surf life saving in Surf Coast Shire, and increasing demands for life saving services, specialised equipment, training and membership, clubs will need to look for supplementary sources of revenue. Should clubs seek major government capital funding for buildings, the following criteria could be considered as a starting point:

- That any re-design or redevelopment must be in sympathy with the coastal environment and in line with the Victorian Coastal Strategy;
- That as far as practical, any redevelopment is contained within the existing footprint or equivalent area;
- That membership and usage data is provided, outlining current or future growth trends in need and usage of facilities and beach areas;
- That consideration of all other options such as usage of other infrastructure has been fully explored; and
- That the club is willing to provide access for other groups to use the facility, including but not limited to hiring. An EoI process could be undertaken to establish interest in sharing the facilities.
- Such community use should ultimately be formalised in the lease agreement.

Constraints on surf life saving activity

Constraints on surf life saving activity included a complex regulatory environment with a multitude of agencies involved, lack of planning, policy and strategy, lease restrictions and environmental impacts. Emergency management and response is far more professional than it was forty years ago, and rising compliance costs are a significant issue for clubs.

Leasing arrangements under the *Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967* restrict clubs in their ability to offer their facilities for other services. Under the more contemporary *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* leasing provisions, these restrictions do not apply, allowing the clubs to develop a business model to support their operations. Currently, the Anglesea SLSC is the only club in Surf Coast Shire under a Crown Land (Reserves) Act lease.

The need for:

- improved technology and updated mobile equipment;
- more education and training programs;
- recruitment and retention of patrol volunteers;
- infrastructure and facility upgrades to better use existing sites;
- better access and parking arrangements;
- relocation of some functions to locations further inland; and
- the delivery of joint programs across clubs;

were all mentioned during the consultation process as areas in need of funding.

The suggestion that life saving could be run on a 'fee for service' model was raised during the consultation. However, this would be particularly challenging for volunteer clubs to resource, and would be a major change of direction for Life Saving Victoria. It was also suggested that access to funding impacts directly on clubs' level of service offer to the community. Restrictions on clubs' ability to generate additional revenue through commercial activities and other initiatives, was highlighted as an issue.

Grants were also identified as a potential funding source with the suggestion that life saving should be considered, not only as an emergency service, but also as a sport and, therefore, be able to access the range of sporting grant programs as other sports currently do. Although some events generate revenue, the costs associated with running these events are also substantial.

Key findings on funding and investment:

- Surf Coast residents believe that local and state governments have a role to play in the funding of essential surf life saving services, including facilities, equipment and lifeguards;
- Government agencies have limited resources to assist in supporting services and buildings and facilities;
- Many of the current buildings and facilities are outdated and in major need of upgrade;
- Non-core programs and activities could be funded through other fundraising and commercial avenues;
- Clubs are currently restricted in their ability to generate revenue through other sources;
- There are many constraints on normal surf life saving activities on the foreshore.

	Funding and investment actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
4.1	Through the Round Table, develop an integrated feasibility assessment for the partial or complete redevelopment of four surf life saving club facilities over the next ten years.	LSV; Clubs GORCC; SCS; DELWP	•		
4.2	Through the Round Table, assist clubs to prioritise and sequence works into an overall investment strategy for the next ten years.	LSV; Clubs GORCC; SCS; DELWP	•		
4.3	Support Clubs to plan innovative ways to deliver services and generate revenue.	LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
4.4	Stakeholder agencies and clubs should work together to improve community access to surf life saving club facilities for casual beach users, pro-bono users; and fee-paying hirers.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•

5.0 Plan for buildings and resources

Objective:

Plan collaboratively for life saving buildings, infrastructure and resources to meet the needs of the Surf Coast community.

Discussion

Surf life saving services will need to be responsive to population (both tourism and permanent) growth into the future. Torquay will feel this demand most keenly. New residential developments attracting young families together with an increase in beach visitation from multi-cultural communities will result in greater demands on life saving patrol services and training/education programs. As patrolled beaches get busier, beachgoers spread to un-patrolled locations, increasing risks to personal safety. The community will continue to demand safe, swimming beaches and life saving services of a high standard.

70% of respondents to the community research indicated that the current number of clubs in the Shire was 'about right', although 25% of community research respondents suggested that there were 'not enough'. The ability of clubs to be more responsive and adaptable to changing community demands was highlighted.

Options include establishment of outposts, updated and mobile equipment, improved technology, more education/training programs, recruitment and retention of patrol volunteers, infrastructure and facility upgrades to enable better utilisation of existing sites, alternative ways to accommodate parking needs, relocation of some functions to locations further inland and the delivery of joint programs across clubs.

A strong theme across the feedback forums was for increased resources to enable the delivery of expanded facilities/services in order to meet growing community demands. This is problematic with the contraction in funding programs under federal and state government, and rate capping for local government.

While key life saving roles have not changed significantly, the way these roles are performed certainly has. More focus is now being put to training and education, promotion, advertising and commercial enterprises. Furthermore, clubs are required to operate more professionally and to higher standards.

Key findings on plan for buildings and resources:

- Surf life saving services will need to be responsive to population growth;
- Expansion of surf life saving services does not necessarily mean new clubs or facilities, rather innovation in how future services are delivered;
- While the key life saving roles of Clubs have not changed, the way they are delivered certainly has.

	Buildings and resources actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
5.1	While there is no demonstrated need for new club building locations in the next ten years, stakeholders will need to monitor the impacts of population growth and respond accordingly.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
5.2	In designing and approving site redevelopments, 'best practice' models such as Surf Life Saving Victoria's Clubhouse of the Future Development Guidelines (2011), and the Victorian Coastal Council's Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998) should be used.	LSV; Clubs; SCS; DELWP	•	•	•
5.3	When club buildings are being redeveloped, or when leases are being negotiated, potential community use or shared use arrangements should be considered, in line with government policy, and subject to the operational surf life saving needs of Clubs.	Clubs; DELWP; GORCC; SCS; LSV	•	•	•
5.4	In parallel with club redevelopment processes, all surf life saving operational limitations should be addressed, including but not limited to beach access, emergency services access, telecommunications and road management issues.	Clubs; DELWP; GORCC; SCS; RDV; LSV	•	•	•
5.5	Ensure redevelopment proposals are contained as far as possible within existing development envelope, and environmental and cultural impacts minimised. Any increased footprint must be justified according to demonstrated need.	LSV; Clubs	•	•	•

Further information

Additional background information on the Future of Surf Life Saving project is available on the Surf Coast Shire website www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au

For any enquiries, please contact the Surf Coast Shire Office on (03) 5261 0600.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of actions

	Governance actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
1.1	Convene a Surf Life Saving Round Table which meets at least six-monthly, to progress actions in this strategy and other matters of mutual interest, including governance; development; activities and event; and season reviews.	SCS; GORCC; DELWP; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
1.2	Advocate for Leasing and licencing arrangements to be clarified between clubs and governing agencies.	LSV	•		
1.3	Advocate for legislative amendments to simplify provisions of the <i>Land (Surf Life Saving Association) Act 1967</i> and the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> .	LSV	•		
1.4	Through the Round Table, review progress on proposed legislative amendments.	LSV	•	•	•

	Governance actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
2.1	Continue to support and nurture the surf life saving clubs and Life Saving Victoria to enable them to carry out paid and volunteer life saving services, highly valued by the community.	SCS; GORCC; DoJ	•	•	•
2.2	The emphasis for the next ten years should be on consolidating and resourcing, and possibly expanding, outpost services, with decisions made collaboratively between the agencies, clubs, and Life Saving Victoria, on a risk management basis.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
2.3	Through the proposed Surf Life Saving Round Table, collaboratively consider issues, directions and innovations for the delivery of surf life saving services in Surf Coast Shire.	GORCC; SCS; DELWP; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
2.4	Continue to have Life Saving Victoria represented on Council's Municipal Emergency Committee.	SCS	•	•	•
2.5	By the ten year horizon, consider an expanded life saving service in response to population growth, safety and other relevant issues, subject to evaluation at the time.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; RDV; Clubs; LSV			•



	Health and wellbeing actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.1	Recognise and promote the various roles and value of the surf life saving movement (water safety, emergency management, education, sporting, health and wellbeing, community leadership development, community cohesion) to improve community understanding.	LSV; DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs	•	•	•
3.2	Support the community development aspect of Clubs, to develop groups and individuals with transferable skills in emergency management and community leadership.	SCS; GORCC; DoJ; RDV	•	•	•
3.3	Build the important role of surf life saving clubs into the Surf Coast Shire narrative.	SCS	•	•	•
3.4	Recognise active pursuits related to Surf Life Saving as a legitimate sport and active recreation activities alongside its emergency management role.	SCS	•		
3.5	Promote and support community relationships and encourage more interaction with like organisations.	Clubs	•		
3.6	Develop formal agreements with other community organisations to provide community facility access arrangements consistent with life saving requirements.	Clubs	•		

	Economic benefit actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.7	Promote and recognise the direct economic value of surf life saving (through the saving of lives, prevention of drowning and education programs) and indirect value through support of local businesses.	LSV; SCS; Clubs;	•	•	•
3.8	Through the Round Table, advocate for investment in the redevelopment of club facilities as a positive investment in the economy and community of Surf Coast Shire.	SCS; GORCC; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.9	Recognising the primary purpose of surf life saving buildings and facilities, encourage appropriate community use particularly during the off season, through lease documents or other agreements.	DELWP; GORCC; LSC; SCS; Clubs	•	•	•
3.10	If required, clarify to interested community groups that the Clubs do not have the beach space or infrastructure to support an event as large as the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.11	Continue to support and develop surf life saving events, such as various state and national championships, and events like the Lorne Pier to Pub, to attract visitors and revenue to the coastal communities in the Shire.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
3.12	Use the event assessment framework as an agreed decision making framework for event attraction and hosting, particularly to extend events from peak season to shoulder season.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•	•	•

	Environment and culture actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
3.13	Provide each club with information on lease and licence boundaries, as well as information on significant vegetation and areas of cultural heritage sensitivity.	GORCC; DELWP; LSV	•		
3.14	Review carparking adjacent to Club buildings, and plan with clubs for more efficient carparking with reduced environmental impact.	GORCC; SCS; LSV; Clubs	•		
3.15	Investigate other access options such as public transport and park and ride schemes.	SCS; Clubs	•	•	•
3.16	Provide regular and timely information about impacts of climate change and other environmental issues to surf life saving clubs.	DELWP; GORCC	•	•	•
3.17	Improve environmental management such as stormwater, energy use, recycling and waste disposal within lease and licence boundaries.	Clubs	•	•	•

	Funding and investment actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
4.1	Through the Round Table, develop an integrated feasibility assessment for the partial or complete redevelopment of four surf life saving club facilities over the next ten years.	LSV; Clubs GORCC; SCS; DELWP	•		
4.2	Through the Round Table, assist clubs to prioritise and sequence works into an overall investment strategy for the next ten years.	LSV; Clubs GORCC; SCS; DELWP	•		
4.3	Support Clubs to plan innovative ways to deliver services and generate revenue.	LSV; Clubs	•	•	•
4.4	Stakeholder agencies and clubs should work together to improve community access to Surf Life Saving Club facilities for casual beach users, pro-bono users; and fee-paying hirers.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•

	Buildings and resources actions	Agency	1-3yr	4-6yr	7-10yr
5.1	While there is no demonstrated need for new club building locations in the next ten years, stakeholders will need to monitor the impacts of population growth and respond accordingly.	DELWP; DoJ; SCS; GORCC; Clubs; LSV	•	•	•
5.2	In designing and approving site redevelopments, 'best practice' models such as Life Saving Victoria's Clubhouse of the Future Development Guidelines (2014), and the Victorian Coastal Council's Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998) should be used.	LSV; Clubs; SCS; DELWP	•	•	•
5.3	When club buildings are being redeveloped, or when leases are being negotiated, potential community use or shared use arrangements should be considered, in line with government policy, and subject to the operational surf life saving needs of Clubs.	Clubs; DELWP; GORCC; SCS; LSV	•	•	•
5.4	In parallel with club redevelopment processes, all surf life saving operational limitations should be addressed, including but not limited to beach access, emergency services access, telecommunications and road management issues.	Clubs; DELWP; GORCC; SCS; RDV; LSV	•	•	•
5.5	Ensure redevelopment proposals are contained as far as possible within existing development envelope, and environmental and cultural impacts minimised. Any increased footprint must be justified according to demonstrated need.	LSV; Clubs	•	•	•

Appendix 2: Project roadmap

Roadmap for the project

The diagram below outlines the road map for the project showing the current stage.

Stage	Description	Timing	Outcome
1	Project initiation Develop plans for the delivery of the project	Sept 2014	
2	Issues and Opportunities Prepare Issues and Opportunities Paper based on situation and gap analysis	Sept – Oct 2014	Issues and Opportunities Paper
3	Community engagement Consultation and engagement with the community on Issues and Opportunities	Nov 2014 – Jan 2015	Involved and engaged community
4	Develop Draft Strategy Develop Draft Strategy and Event Facility Assessment	Feb – Mar 2015	Draft Strategy
5	Community engagement Consultation and engagement with the community on Draft Strategy	Oct 2015	Involved and engaged community
6	Finalise Strategy Develop and complete final Strategy	Nov – Dec 2015	Final Strategy

Project planning started in September 2014, followed by the development of an Issues and Opportunities Paper, released for public comment in November 2014 as Stage 3 of the project.

Stage 3, the first of two Community Engagement steps, ran from November 2014 to January 2015. It sought to inform the community, and encourage thoughts and ideas using the Issues and Opportunities Paper. Stage 3 involved various consultation activities, including two Focus Group meetings in December 2014, which were open to all members of the public as well as groups interested in the project. There were also two Open Houses during January 2015.

Throughout this period, a website (linked to Council's website) had up-to-date details about the project, and provided continuing opportunities to contribute to the process. In addition, community research was conducted with 203 Surf Coast Shire residents in December 2014. The table in Appendix 3 summarises the feedback mechanisms used during the consultation process.

In May 2015, the Project Control Group and key leaders from stakeholder organisations met for a Vision and Objectives workshop, which provided useful input in the development of the Draft Strategy.

Community feedback has assisted in developing this Draft Strategy, which is Stage 4 of the project.

Stage 5 was the second Community Engagement step, and gave the community an opportunity to respond to the Draft Strategy, in the light of the Issues and Opportunities identified earlier.

Stage 6 was the development of the final Strategy.

Appendix 3: Community consultation

Consultation on the Issues and Opportunities Paper – How it was done

Feedback mechanism	Details
Community and Agency Reference Group (CARG) Workshop	A broad Project Reference Group of agency and community representatives established as a communication forum for discussion and ideas and to enable agencies and community members to hear firsthand the opinions of others.
Agency workshop	A workshop involving agencies who play a role on the Victorian coast and attended by representatives from Parks Victoria, Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, Torquay Marine Rescue, Surf Coast Tourism, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Life Saving Victoria and Regional Development Victoria.
Focus groups	The purpose of the Focus Groups was to provide an opportunity for already involved members of the community to have a more in-depth discussion on the themes raised in the Issues and Opportunities Paper. The focus Groups were aimed primarily at members of clubs and other community groups, but were also advertised and open to other individuals in the community.
Open houses	An informal event designed to allow people to drop in and obtain information at their convenience.
Focus group/ open house survey	Offered to all Focus Group and Open House attendees (including Agency, CARG and community members). The survey questions asked were the same as those asked in the Community Research.
OurSay	An online platform for interested parties some of whom don't live locally or don't wish to or aren't able to participate in other consultation activities.
Community research	A sample of 203 residents of the Surf Coast Shire was interviewed via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The sample was randomly selected from suburbs and postcodes within the Shire and respondents residing outside of the municipality were screened out of the sample. Age and gender quotas were monitored and some screening was applied to ensure representation across age and gender sub-groups. With a total Shire population of 19,339 people aged 18 years and over, a sample of 203 yields a confidence interval of ± 6.8 at the 95% confidence level.
Written submissions	A traditional feedback approach in which interested parties submit their comments on the project by email or letter.

Appendix 4: Current agency roles

Role of Agency	SCS	GORCC	DELWP	RDV	SRV	DoJ	LSV	SLSCs
Land owner			•					
Land manager		•						
Landlord		•	•					
Tenant							•	•
Occupier								•
Planning authority	•							
Responsible authority	•							
Planning applicant							•	•
Interested party to planning applications		•	•	•	•	•		
Environmental management responsibility		•	•					•
Current funder of surf life saving	•	•				•	•	•
Potential funder of facilities	•			•	•		•	•
Policy maker	•	•	•		•	•	•	
Strategic planner	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Program deliverer	•	•		•	•		•	•
Recreation planner	•				•		•	•
Community developer	•			•	•		•	•
Emergency manager (* recovery only)	*	•	•			•	•	•
Event authoriser	•	•					•	
Event supporter	•	•		•	•		•	•
Event manager							•	•

Appendix 5: Event assessment

incorporating

Feasibility of Hosting National Standard Surf Life Saving Events for Surf Coast Shire

This discussion has been required by the Project Brief in order to consider the scale of National Standard Surf Life Saving Events possibly occurring in Surf Coast Shire. It is not intended to replace existing agency event assessment frameworks.

Introduction

Surf life saving clubs on the Surf Coast have a long history of event management associated with Surf Life Saving activities. Each year 4300 people swim the 1.2 kilometre course of the Lorne Pier to Pub Ocean Swim. Over the past 20 years this particular ocean swim event has grown in size and status and now claims centre stage of a three-day program that includes the Mountain to Surf Fun Run and the Summer of Surf series events managed by Life Saving Victoria. The event started as an informal challenge among Lorne Surf Life Saving Club members and is now in its 36th year.

Event context

Surf Life Saving events are a showcase for surf life saving across Australia. Clubs develop juniors through to elite athletes, who compete in a variety of carnivals and competitions throughout the year. These carnivals and competitions are principally organised to practice surf life saving techniques as a component of training and development. Training for and participation in sporting events in a surf life saving context are also critical in providing lifesavers with ongoing maintenance of fitness levels critical to the provision of life saving services.

Event management generally only differentiates between major and minor events. A Major event generally occurs annually, biennially or is a one-off, is world, regional, national or state recognised, has major infrastructure and event management infrastructure requirements impacting both positively and challengingly to local communities attracting significant crowds from outside the local area. A Minor event is one that is locally arranged and largely community driven, generally run by volunteers and attracts local crowds.

Over and above major and minor events, there are also Mega events. Such surf life saving events are categorized as National standard competitions, such as the annual Australian Surf Life Saving Championships incorporating youth, masters and open national championships. The 'Aussies' involves over 7,000 surf lifesavers from 311 surf clubs competing across two kilometres of beach in over 400 events across nine days. In addition to the competitors, the event utilizes over 500 officials and attracts over 10,000 spectators. It is the largest event of this kind in the world and surpasses the International 'Rescue' series in scale.

Event criteria

Event criteria for 'the Aussies' (Mega event) is well documented unlike many other smaller scale surf life saving events. Table 1 outlines the event criteria from Surf Life Saving Australia, who advertised an Expression of Interest in 2014 for hosting the Aussies event up to 2022. Surf Life Saving Australia has also specified criteria for the 'Interstates' with the Expression of Interest also having closed in 2014 for event hosting through to 2017.

In analysing the criteria it would be difficult to see the Surf Coast area being able to meet the criteria required for hosting 'the Aussies'. Specifically the criteria that Surf Coast venues currently do not meet include:

- Beach width of at least 40 metres at high tide for all arenas;
- Adequate beach access points; and
- Back of house crowd and infrastructure capacity.

From the criteria listed, only the clubs closest to Geelong cover the bulk of the requirements, with the exception of the items above.

The Surf Life Saving Australia criteria is more achievable for the Australian 'interstates' (Major event) with 25 metres of usable beach at high tide and with Surf Coast venues being able to adapt to meet the specifications pending available resources, desire and assessment.

In 2016, Torquay is host venue for the Interstates. This event will coincide on the same weekend as the Lorne SLSC Pier to Pub and Life Saving Victoria Summer of Surf Carnival at Fairhaven SLSC, providing a full weekend of activities.

Key to the success for these events is the ability to meet the following criteria:

- Beach width of at least 25 metres at high tide
- Adequate network of accommodation, road and transport services.

Triple-bottom-line cost/benefit

Saving lives is a key component surf life saving and it is this component that has been evaluated in terms of its direct and indirect economic benefits. The sporting and events component of surf life saving was a key positive component of social benefit research conducted by UTS and although the sporting and events component has not been evaluated in terms of economic benefit, it is sporting activity and events that do drive significant economic, social and cultural benefit into regions (Tourism Australia, 2013). Simply from participation, let alone spectators, surf life saving activity and events fulfil active and healthy lifestyles, fill accommodation venues, restaurants and provide a range of consumers.

Victoria has not benefitted in the same way that its counterparts in Queensland and New South Wales have in hosting Surf Life Saving events. Victorian beaches have not hosted national titles since Point Leo in 1984-85 and although arguably the first International Surf Life Saving Event was held in 1956 at Torquay to coincide with the Melbourne Olympics, the international event has only returned to Victoria once – Lorne in 2006 with Rescue'06.

Events have been determined as one of the main drivers of regional tourism. In research published by Tourism Research Australia in 2013, regional event attendance and in particular, investment in spectator sport, music, food and wine, as well as cultural activities were seen as providing the greatest impact in increasing regional visitation.

On the flip side, traffic management, parking management, access, toilets and other service amenities, set-up or bump in and out days/hours, sound, signage, environmental concerns, waste management, community safety, emergency services and evacuation, security and public safety, food and beverage, structures, and community angst are all direct and potential costs that are weighed up by accountable land managers in required event permit applications. These direct associated costs are often also augmented by payments, sponsorships and grant gifting for event attraction.

Land managers in Surf Coast have particular concerns about environmental impact and traffic and parking infrastructure associated with surf life saving events and look to event organisers to weigh up the benefits of off-peak scheduling and longer term planning for multiple and major events.

Whilst it is not plausible to conduct a full cost/benefit analysis on mega and major surf life saving events at Surf Coast venues given the lack of recent hosting and data, it remains evident through research undertaken by Price Waterhouse Coopers, UTS and the AEC Group that the

surf culture, industry and surf life saving club activity in the Surf Coast Shire is a significant economic, social and cultural benefit outweighing costs; but also highlighting important infrastructure needs of road, parking and traffic management. In addition the community market research conducted for this study resulted in an overwhelming 93% of those surveyed supporting surf life saving events. 25% of the respondents who agreed that surf life saving was good for the community, suggested that this was because of the Surf Life Saving events and activities that are staged.

Event assessment

In the background research undertaken for this Strategy, it is apparent that the work by City of Melbourne represents best practice. An Event Assessment policy and procedure was introduced at City of Melbourne to minimise risk and ensure consistency, transparency and capability.

Another process worthy of comment for the purposes of this Strategy was the Event Application Guidelines and Requirements document for the City of Stirling in Western Australia.

A shared Event Assessment policy and procedure for land managers and event organisers would meet the desires of hosting events along with the support and concerns raised.

Conclusions

1. Surf Coast Life Saving Clubs have a proven track record in the hosting of major and minor events and their participation in hosting should be encouraged.
2. Criteria around major and minor events either already exist or are being developed.
3. GORCC and Surf Coast Shire already have event assessment processes, and these should continue to be used for decision making for hosting and managing events.
4. Further improvements and continued cooperation between agencies should focus as far as possible on streamlining and simplification.
5. Surf Coast Shire in association with GORCC and Life Saving Victoria should consider event infrastructure upgrades for 'fit for purpose' venues and the development of one of the surf life saving clubs as an 'event centre'.

This Strategy was prepared by a Project Control Group with representation from Surf Coast Shire; the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee; the Department of Justice; the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Regional Development Victoria; and Life Saving Victoria.

The Project Control Group engaged Richard O'Byrne Community Environment Planning, in conjunction with Brett Cheatley Consulting and Jennifer Lilburn of Kismet Forward, to consult the Surf Coast community and develop the Strategy.

