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Dear Cr Parker

WESTERN REGIONAL COASTAL PLAN

Thank you for providing the Heritage Council ('the Council') with the opportunity to offer comment on the scope for the new Western Regional Coastal Plan. The Council recognises the importance of the Regional Coastal Plans in the management and development of coastal areas.

The Council made a submission on the draft Victorian Coastal Strategy (2013). Some of the points raised are included below, together with information specific to each region.

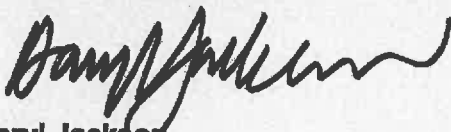
The following are key priorities for the Council:

- The identification of values is essential in setting priorities for coastal development. In relation to heritage, the Council would like the Regional Coastal Boards to use this opportunity to acknowledge the broadening of the concept of heritage – specifically the growing awareness of 'social significance' in addition to historical, aesthetic and archaeological significance, for example. This requires a more holistic approach than simply identifying a building or a site as 'heritage'.
- Development in coastal settlements and other factors such as climate change (including sea level rise) have the potential to affect the cultural heritage significance of places that are included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and the Heritage Inventory (HI). The recognition and management of these risks are critical for future coastal planning.

The attached document outlines other issues and information the Council believes is important and should be addressed in the development of the Regional Coastal Plan.

Once again, the Council would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. I look forward to reading the document.

Yours sincerely



Daryl Jackson
Chair

cc. Mr Tim Smith, Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA: PRIORITY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED FOR THE REGIONAL COASTAL PLAN ('Plan')

- The Heritage Council ('the Council') strongly believes that the Regional Coastal Plan should deliver a consistent message on the coastal values, which are first and foremost environmental, then cultural and social, then economic. Actions are predicated on understanding the value of the natural coastal environment and resources. The document should clearly identify the need for an integrated and holistic approach to maintaining a healthy and sustainable marine and coastal ecosystem and habitat in the first instance, and establish a hierarchy of principles.
- With the exploration and settlement of Victoria originating from the sea, coastal zones contain a range of important cultural heritage sites. The *Heritage Act 1995* ('the Act') is administered by Heritage Victoria and provides for the identification and protection of buildings, objects, landscapes, archaeological sites and shipwrecks. The Victorian Heritage Register lists cultural heritage places that have been assessed to date and found to be of state significance (except places that are significant solely because of their association with Aboriginal tradition, or Aboriginal traditional use). The Victorian Heritage Inventory is a list of all known historic archaeological sites in Victoria.
- The Act provides protection for historic shipwrecks in Victoria's rivers, lakes and enclosed bays such as Port Phillip and Westernport. The *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* (Commonwealth) provides protection for all other historic shipwrecks located in Victorian coastal waters and is also administered in Victoria by Heritage Victoria. It should be noted that works such as dredging in the coastal and offshore zone have the potential for submerged archaeological resources, including Aboriginal heritage sites and shipwrecks, to be impacted and requiring appropriate prior assessment.
- Victoria's maritime heritage is typically associated with shipwrecks however the coastline includes a range of infrastructure sites which have made a significant contribution to the State's economic and social development. In order to address gaps in the recognition of coastal cultural heritage the Council commissioned a number of reports on maritime infrastructure sites. The 'Jetties and Piers – a background history of maritime infrastructure in Victoria' report provided a thematic history of the development of maritime infrastructure across the state. The follow up Maritime Infrastructure Assessment Project created an inventory maritime archaeological infrastructure in northern Port Phillip, Maribymong and Yarra Rivers, Queenscliff, Geelong and western Victoria (Port Fairy and Warrnambool). This work helped to identify sites of cultural heritage significance and provide a valuable context for comparative assessment.
- The inclusion of cultural heritage in the Regional Coastal Plans should provide a summary of heritage site types found in the coastal and littoral zone, for example: heritage places include recreational assets, Aboriginal places, early settlement and contact sites, port and maritime infrastructure such as jetties and piers, shipbuilding yards, defence heritage sites, landscapes, navigational markers including lighthouses, and historic shipwrecks. It is important to include messaging regarding the value of heritage places, sites and objects in contributing to coastal community's sense of place, and in telling the story of the development of Victoria. A reference to the importance of heritage in defining the character of coastal settlements and the critical role played by heritage in driving regional tourism and development would also be welcomed.

- The Council advises against the separation of heritage into Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal categories. The term 'non-Aboriginal' heritage implicitly excludes Aboriginal people from participating in the general community's value for particular places, let alone places that have shared Aboriginal and post-contact heritage values. The term 'non Aboriginal heritage' should be avoided, and cultural heritage used as a general catch all in its place. If necessary an alternative to non-Aboriginal heritage is 'historic heritage'.
- As identified above, there is a strong link between cultural heritage and tourism. Significant numbers of visitors are drawn to the coast for nature and water based activities as well as heritage-focused activities. Coastal experiences connect visitors to a place and its culture, both past and present. The Heritage Council's submissions to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism in Victoria are attached for your information.

Western Region

- The South-West Historic and Maritime Archaeology Assessment Project provided information on historic and maritime archaeological sites in Moyne and Warrnambool. The Project was a continuation of the earlier Maritime Infrastructure Assessment Projects and provided a comprehensive dataset of previously unrecorded 19th century historic archaeological and maritime infrastructure sites.
- The Western Victoria coastal region is home to a range of places significant to the state of Victoria. Sites include:
 - Cape Nelson, Cape Otway and Split Point Lightstations
 - Moyne River Walls
 - Warrnambool Harbour
 - Proudfoots Boathouse, Warrnambool
 - Port Fairy Lifeboat Station
 - Griffiths Island, Port Fairy
 - Great Ocean Road (also on the National Heritage List)
 - A range of significant shipwrecks including *Eric the Red*, *La Bella* and *Loch Ard*.
- In addition to the sites mentioned above the Council has recognised significant coastal heritage sites in the Western district specifically for their social and historical values. By way of example, Bell's Beach in Jan Juc and the Convincing Ground near Portland were added to the VHR and the State of Significance for the Place recognises the social and historical significance of the place.
- A full list of sites on the VHR and VHI and their geographical mapping is available upon request.