



Barwon Coast Responses to Recommendations

This document outlines the Barwon Coast Committee of Management (BCCM) responses to the recommendations contained within the 'Barwon Coast Coastal Management and Beach Usage Research' report 2018 by CERDI, Federation University.

Recommendation 1

That work be undertaken within BCCM, involving both management and program staff to discuss concepts of community attributes and the role they play in the development of sense of place and community. This will provide the opportunity to build greater levels of understanding of the close links that exist between key coastal management challenges, the way in which they are resolved and perceived threats to characteristic attributes of community.

Our response

This study has highlighted factors which create a sense of place. This sense of place is of utmost importance to the community. We commit to considering these factors during any strategic planning or decision-making process. As always, our work will be guided by our key strategic document the Coastal and Marine Management Plan (CMMP) and relevant State policy. The findings of this report will add detailed information that will assist us in doing our work. Importantly, consistent with recommendations two and three, we will distribute all plans to the community for comment before implementation.

We acknowledge that the issue of dog management and dog access to beach areas was the most significant management challenge identified in the report. In partnership with the City of Greater Geelong we will be commencing a review of the current dog regulations in force on our coastal reserves in November 2018. Findings on this issue contained within this report will be considered as part of that review process. Further community engagement will be undertaken as part of the review.

Recommendation 2

That consideration be given to the adoption of the conceptual model provided within this research report to encourage public participation and collaboration between stakeholders in planning decisions.

Our response

The conceptual model which is outlined in the report reflects the mechanisms that our work is currently guided by. The central section of the model is achieved through our key strategic document – the CMMP. When we drafted the CMMP we undertook significant community consultation. This research report builds on that community information and will provide the detail we need to make better decisions with regard to community views and experiences.

Recommendation 3

That the current commitment within BCCM to communication and marketing within and across community be continued and expanded. This is an important strategy for building the knowledge and understanding of the work of BCCM and strengthening the potential for public participation in planning for effective and inclusive coastal management. Areas that need to be a focus within that communication and marketing approach include:

- Information sharing relating to the jurisdiction, authority and roles and responsibilities of BCCM, and of agencies working in the region in order to increase understanding and knowledge relating to compliance, opportunities for shared input and long term planning in the region;
- Marketing of the opportunities for education and community engagement offered by BCCM;
- The development of a structured communication plan with community to maximise community involvement in, and understanding of, a range of management and strategic priorities for the region into the future.

Our response

This recommendation aligns with our current commitment to communicate openly across the community on all our activities and the new draft CMMP; i.e. to strengthen investment in community liaison activities, communications, education and marketing. We are currently focussing on communicating the Share Our Shores program values of respect, rights and responsibilities for all users of public land.

Recommendation 4

That a mapping process be undertaken, using the data captured in this social research study, to identify and document priority areas for action. These should be classified into areas identified by community as viable solutions to identified problems, areas with potential for development and/or adoption into the future, and areas that are unlikely to be successful within the community without significant loss of community support and risk to the characteristic attributes of community. This mapping process will provide a resource for forward planning on key challenges in the region.

Our response

Our response to this recommendation is similar as to those for recommendations 1 and 2. Our key strategic document, the draft CMMP, guides our work. We will use the information from this study on community values and experiences to help implement the actions outlined in the CMMP. We value the extra detail this report provides on community views.

Recommendation 5

That current signage stock be reviewed to determine the extent to which the signage is meeting the community's goals of:

- Clarity and consistency
- Use of positive messaging
- Use of inclusive language
- Being in good repair

Our response

We commit to conducting a full audit and review of our signage in 2019. We currently review our signage as a matter of routine to ensure we meet our legal obligations and strive for continuous improvement. However, this study has highlighted some community dissatisfaction with signage, and we will take this feedback on board in efforts to meet community expectations of signage along the Barwon Coast.

Recommendation 6

That a strategy be developed for the capture and review of empirical data collection on issues such as car park demands at key points in time and measures of beach capacity across time points and locations.

Our response

We will seek partnership opportunities with the City of Greater Geelong to gather motor vehicle movement use data along the Barwon Coast managed foreshore. This data will support planning and advocacy for improved arrangements. A short internal trial study is underway to help guide our approach to assessments of car park usage throughout the coastal reserve this summer season. Dependent on budget allocations we also aim to undertake further beach car parking capacity analysis.

Recommendation 7

That the current commitment of BCCM to the use of inclusive educative strategies on a range of issues be maintained and/or expanded to ensure that a range of issues of relevance to the community be addressed. These include wildlife protection, rubbish management and dog regulations. It is acknowledged that significant work has been undertaken in this area and feedback on this has been positive. More work is needed on ensuring that the reach of this educative work is extended across the community. Consideration should also be given to strategies to better engage new residents and temporary residents/visitors to the region.

Our response

We place real value in education to assist in people's appreciation of the values of the coastal environment so that they may then support both management challenges we face on the Barwon Coast and the broader areas. We commit to reviewing our education strategy to ensure it encompasses all issues highlighted in this research report and identify new opportunities to expand.

Recommendation 8

That a strategy be developed to explore avenues to increase enforcement of regulations and strengthen levels of compliance. In line with community feedback this approach should not explore, as a first option, an increase in regulation. Rather there needs to be a strategy that increases

capacity for a series of enforcement cycles, using existing compliance tools such as fines, to shift current culture relating to non-compliance. This approach will need to take into consideration strategies for achieving a balance between compliance and the maintenance of flexibility and community connection and engagement, as outlined within the body of this report.

Our response

Our focus through the **Share Our Shores** campaign is to make all visitors to the Barwon Coast aware of the issues around respecting the rights of other users and acknowledging the responsibility of all to protect wildlife and habitat.

To build on this programs initiative we will partner with other authorities to manage behaviour that impacts on other beach users and wildlife values. Our priority partners moving forward are Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, City of Greater Geelong and Victoria Police. Our first steps will be to improve compliance with dog access controls and minimising sand dune intrusion impacts.

Recommendation 9

That the longitudinal research plan with Fed Uni ensure that consideration be given to the following study areas:

- Building an understanding which factors reinforce or might alter existing beach user behaviour to ensure compliance with coastal management regulations
- Investigating the impacts of urbanisation on social and environmental values in the context of place, space and community
- Investigating the community-level factors that lead to positive development in coastal communities in the face of change.
- Investigating the impact of domestic animals on environment and strategies to engage community in working to meet coastal management challenges

Our response

We look forward to working with the appointed PhD candidate who is chosen to work on the above research topic areas. We see this will be a valuable project that will significantly contribute to our work.