

ENVIRONMENT  
STRATEGY



Colac Otway  
SHIRE



*ABOVE: The Great Ocean Walk near Aire River estuary*

*FRONT COVER: The picture on the front cover shows blue-green algae forming on the stem of a plant. Although blue-green algae is a problem that occurs in waterways and is often caused by human activities it is also a naturally occurring phenomenon.*

*This picture is symbolic of the challenges we face in managing the environment because it highlights the need to understand and work with our complex natural systems.*

*Cover and inside cover image by Alison Pouliot*

*Contributing photographers:  
Jon Barter, Michael Rayner, Alison Pouliot,  
the Geelong Advertiser.*

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# FOREWORD



Cr Lyn Russell

*The Colac Otway Shire is fortunate to have a very unique and precious environment that provides the basis for a healthy and prosperous community.*

*The climatic conditions, the soils, the vegetation and the internationally recognised waterways and Great Ocean Road coastline all make this a place people want to live, work and visit.*

*Council is committed to working with the community to create a sustainable vibrant future. Achieving this vision relies heavily on protecting, enhancing and where possible restoring environmental values. Although Council is only one of many key stakeholders in environmental management it can control its own activities, strongly influence other activities and advocate on behalf of the community in relation to other environmental concerns.*

*The 2010-2018 Colac Otway Shire Environment Strategy sets ambitious targets for Council operations and identifies major issues the community want Council to try to address on their behalf. A target has been set for Council to be Carbon Neutral by 2016. This target highlights Council's commitment to sustainable environmental management and demonstrates the leadership required to tackle a major issue such as climate change.*

*The community will be provided with regular updates on the progress against the targets in the strategy and although Council is committed to achieving the targets we rely heavily on the community to achieve a sustainable vibrant future. Therefore the success of the strategy will ultimately depend on Council further developing and maintaining strong relationships with the community to protect, enhance and restore our environment.*

*Lyn E. Russell.*

Cr Lyn Russell  
Colac Otway Shire Mayor

MAIN IMAGE: A fern frond unfurls

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## TRADITIONAL LAND OWNERS

The Aboriginal people of the Colac Otway Shire region have existed on this land for thousands of years. They nurtured the environment for thousands of years, always acknowledging an inherent responsibility to care for country and an understanding that is vital to maintain a holistic relationship with country. In terms of environmental management, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures must genuinely engage with each other, learn from each other, and recognise the value of black and white knowledge in regards to the environment. Working side by side, we have a greater chance of responding appropriately to current environmental challenges. Involving Aboriginal people at all levels of environmental management will benefit the whole of the community.

## SUSTAINABILITY VICTORIA

In 2007 Council became a signatory of the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord (the Accord). The Accord is a partnership initiative designed to strengthen collaborative efforts by the Victorian State and Local Governments to create better environmental outcomes at the local level. To become a signatory, Council was required to develop a Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement (LESPPS). The development of an Environment Strategy was identified in Council's LESPPS as being the highest priority because setting priorities across business units at a project level is problematic in the absence of any overarching direction. Through this process Council was able to secure funding from Sustainability Victoria to develop an Environment Strategy.

## ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY STEERING COMMITTEE

The Environment Strategy Steering Committee (ESSC) was initiated to oversee the development of the document.

The broad function of the group was to:

- Bring knowledge and experience of environmental issues, threats and actions in the region;
- Make recommendations in relation to the scope and structure of the Strategy;
- Evaluate and integrate environmental issues and actions within the context of all south-western Victoria and beyond, along with other spheres of activity (economic and social);
- Promote and link the Strategy with existing and new strategies, policies, plans and community networks; and
- Prepare community networks, authorities and local government for active implementation of the Strategy.

The committee membership included representation from relevant environmental organisations and the community from across different geographical and social areas in the Shire. The group was comprised of:

### Colac Otway Shire

- Councillor (Chair)
- Manager for Environment and Community Safety
- Environment Officer (Executive Officer)
- Manager Capital Works
- Corporate Support Officer
- Recreation, Arts and Culture Manager
- Manager Planning and Building
- Manager Health and Community Services

### Government Agencies

- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Department of Primary Industry
- Parks Victoria
- Environment Protection Authority

### Statutory Organisations

- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority

### Non-government Organisations

- Upper Barwon Landcare Network representative
- Southern Otway Landcare Network representative
- Lismore Landcare Network
- Greening Australia

BELOW: Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree CENTRE: Water - a precious commodity



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The environment provides the basis for the social and economic integrity of the Colac Otway Shire community and has elements that are recognised at state, national and international level.

The Colac Otway Shire Environment Strategy (the Strategy) aims to protect and enhance the environment, promote sustainable use of natural resources, strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and build community capacity through environmental education and awareness raising programmes. The Strategy has an eight year lifespan (2010-2018) with a review to be undertaken in 2014.

In order to achieve the aim the Strategy sets targets and outlines a process for identifying the actions that need to be undertaken in order to achieve the targets. The Strategy is not an action plan.

The Strategy provides the foundation for actions to be developed over time that are based on current knowledge and are adapted to the current social, economic and environmental conditions.

The Strategy sets 41 targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely for four major areas:

- Council Managed Land;
- Planning and Regulations;
- Physical Works and General Services; and
- Education and Awareness Raising Programmes.

A sample of the targets set in the strategy for the four major areas is shown in the table below.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>COUNCIL MANAGED LAND</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Undertake detailed assessments of environmental assets and threats on all Council managed land of high value and moderate value by 2014. (e.g. Marengo Flora Reserve).                                      |
| Develop and begin implementation of site specific management plans for all high value roadsides by 2014. (e.g. Beac-Dreeite Roadside).                                                                      |
| <b>PLANNING AND REGULATIONS</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Review the municipal strategic statement by 2014 and ensure climate change, salinity, sustainable land use and acid sulphate soils are recognised appropriately and are managed through statutory controls. |
| Undertake audits of at least 20 properties with land management plans and 20 logging coupes every year with a target of 100% compliance by 2018.                                                            |
| <b>PHYSICAL WORKS AND GENERAL SERVICES</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Develop and implement a Council Environmental Sustainability policy to direct Council's programs, projects, processes and services by 2012 and undertake audits to ensure compliance.                       |
| Council to become Carbon neutral (zero net emissions) by 2016.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING PROGRAMMES</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
| Develop and promote a web based information package targeted at the general community and identify any specific training needs by 2011.                                                                     |
| Develop and implement an ongoing training programme for local business', industry and community by 2014.                                                                                                    |

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Council currently manages a number of parcels of land that have significant environmental value. Priority is given in the Strategy to areas of high environmental value and the protection and enhancement of the environmental values in these areas. Although the Strategy does not aim to restore significant environmental values on all Council Managed land, it recognises the need to manage areas that have significant threats present such as pest plants and animals, erosion, salinity and acid sulphate soils.

The administering and enforcement of the planning scheme and other relevant regulations provides Council with the ability to influence environmental management across the landscape. Although the planning scheme provides an opportunity for Council to significantly improve environmental management across the landscape, making changes to the planning provisions is not always within the complete control of Council.

Physical works and general services are carried out by Council on behalf of the community and include everything from road works to rubbish collection. Many works require significant amounts of resources and if not undertaken carefully can cause significant environmental degradation. Targets are set in the Strategy to minimise the impacts and maximise the benefits of Council works and services for the environment.

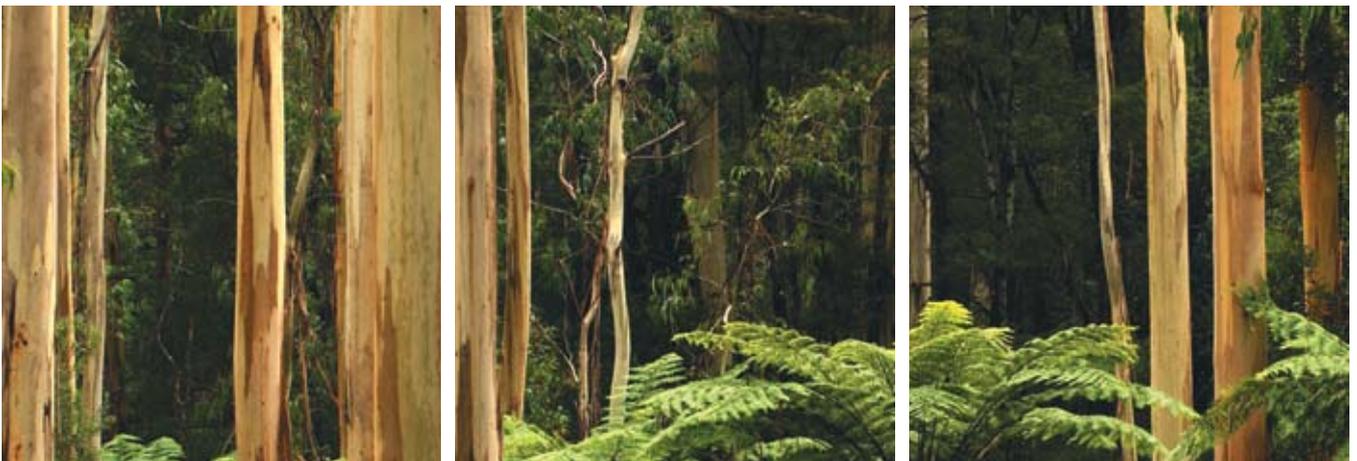
To create a community that is prepared to address the environmental challenges, Council must encourage environmental values and develop skills of the people that live and work in the Shire including Council staff.

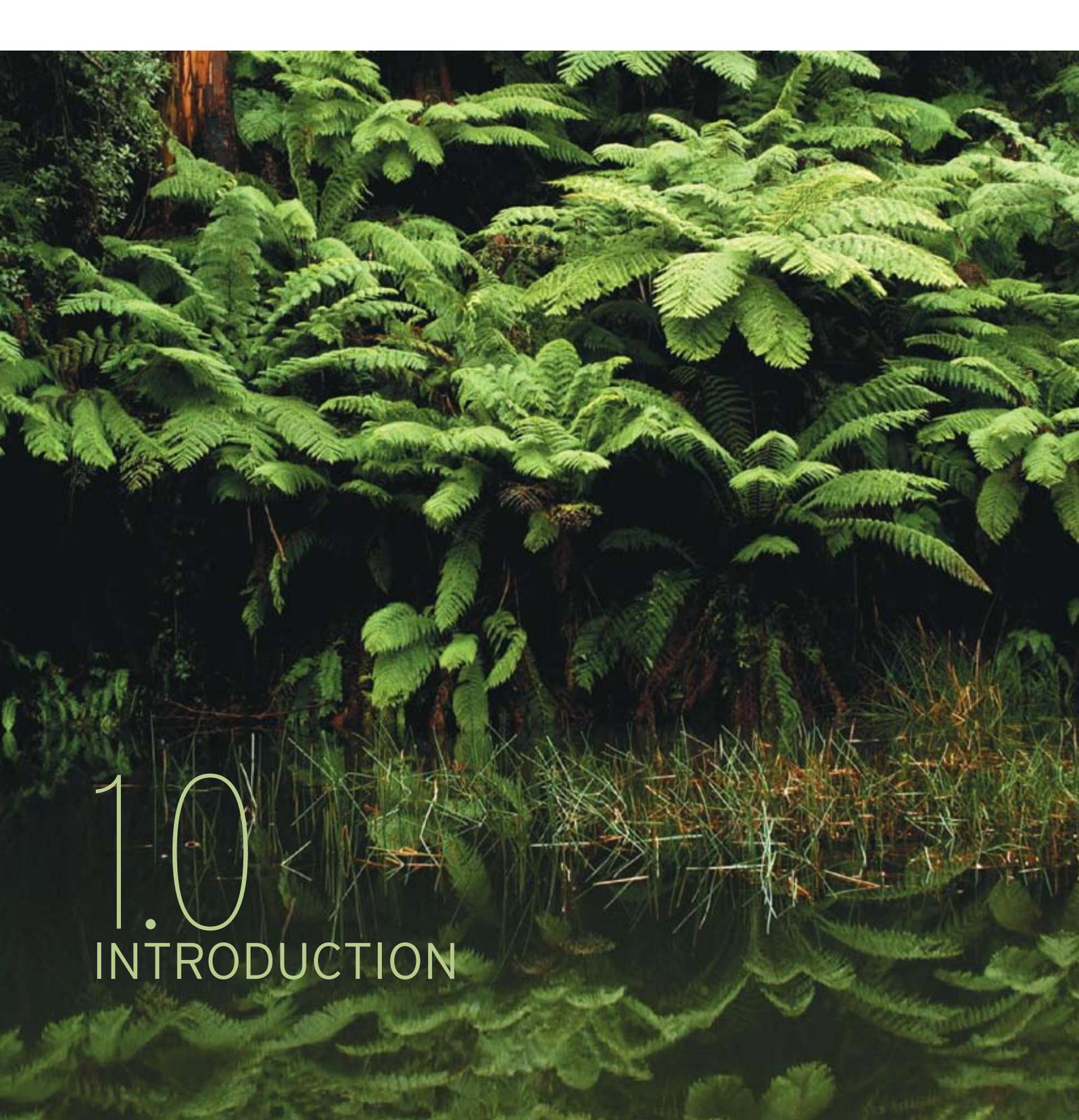
The Strategy seeks to ensure that education and awareness raising activities are integrated with other initiatives outlined in the Strategy and are tailored to the specific needs of this community.

The Strategy also recognises a number of issues that have significant implications for Council and the community, but for which Council has no direct responsibility or ability to control the outcome. Council recognises the importance of these issues and commits to advocating concerns and facilitating progress on behalf of the community with the relevant stakeholders.

Implementation of the Strategy will be achieved through the development of an action plan every two years. The two year action plan will identify priority projects and programmes that will address the targets presented in the Strategy. Progress against the targets in the Strategy will be monitored and reported on. After four years a detailed review of the objectives and targets in the Strategy will be undertaken to ensure that they remain appropriate.

BELOW: Manna gums at Lake Elizabeth





# 1.0

## INTRODUCTION

**Colac Otway Shire (the Shire) is regarded as one of the most environmentally diverse municipalities in Victoria.**

**It comprises spectacular coastal areas, lush rain forested hinterlands and vast open plains with rare native grasslands.**

The diverse environments of the Shire provide the basis for the social and economic integrity of the local community and have values that are recognised at state, national and international level. Therefore it is important that the environmental values within the Shire are protected from degradation and where possible enhanced and restored.

Since formation in 1994 the Colac Otway Shire Council (the Council) has demonstrated a strong commitment to the protection, enhancement and restoration of the environmental values in the Shire. This commitment was supported in the Council Plan 2009-2013, which states *“Council will protect and enhance the environment entrusted to us, demonstrate efficient use of natural resources and minimise climate change impacts”*.

ABOVE: Ferns reflect on the still surface of Lake Elizabeth

### 1.1 AIM

The Colac Otway Shire Environment Strategy (the Strategy) aims to protect and enhance environmental assets in the Shire, promote sustainable use of natural resources, strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and build community capacity through environmental education and awareness raising programmes.

In order to achieve this aim the Strategy sets objectives and targets and provides a process for identifying the actions that need to be undertaken in order to achieve the targets. The Strategy also outlines a monitoring and reporting process to allow progress against the targets to be assessed on a regular basis. The Strategy is not an action plan. The Strategy provides the foundation for actions to be developed over time that are based on current knowledge and are adapted to the current social, economic and environmental conditions.

### 1.2 SCOPE

As shown in *Figure 1* the Strategy focuses on areas that are within Council's direct control or where Council can have a significant influence.

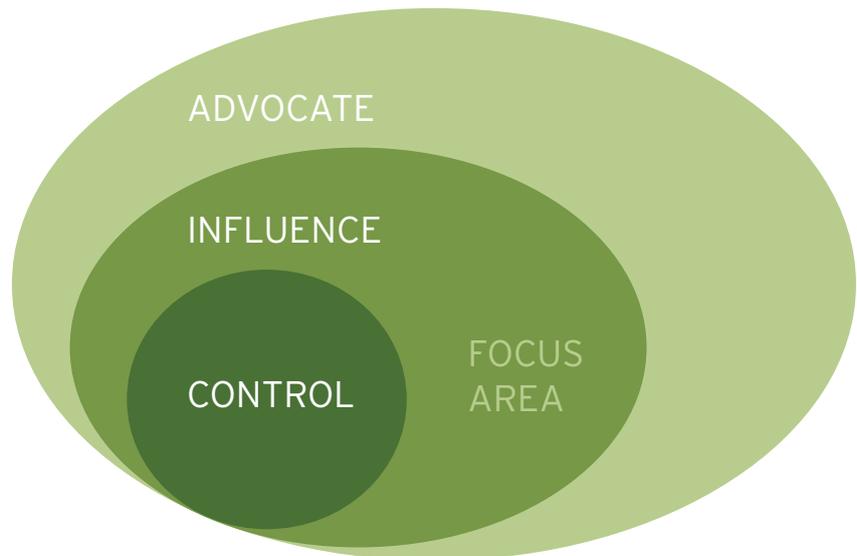
Accordingly, the Strategy sets targets for four major areas:

- Council Managed Land;
- Planning and Regulation;
- Physical and General Services; and
- Council Education and Awareness Raising Programmes.

The Strategy does not set objectives or targets for matters outside the focus area.

It is important to highlight that although the Strategy is not an aspirational document, issues of major concern to the community which Council has only a limited ability to influence will be acknowledged and addressed. These issues are identified in the section titled 'Advocacy and Facilitation'. *Figure 1* shows that areas where Council can only be an advocate are not within the focus area of the Strategy, therefore targets are not set in relation to the issues identified in the 'Advocacy and Facilitation' section of the Strategy.

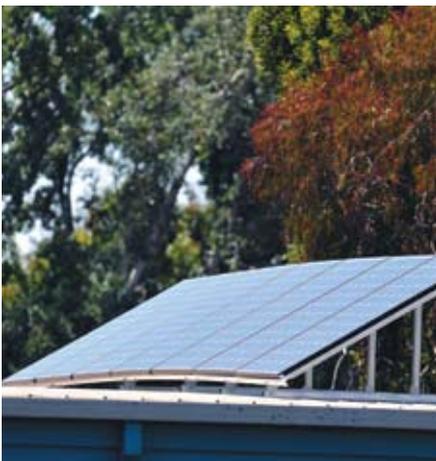
**FIGURE 1:**  
*Levels of influence*



*BELOW: Solar panel on the Colac Visitor Information Centre roof*

*CENTRE: Community planting along the Barham River*

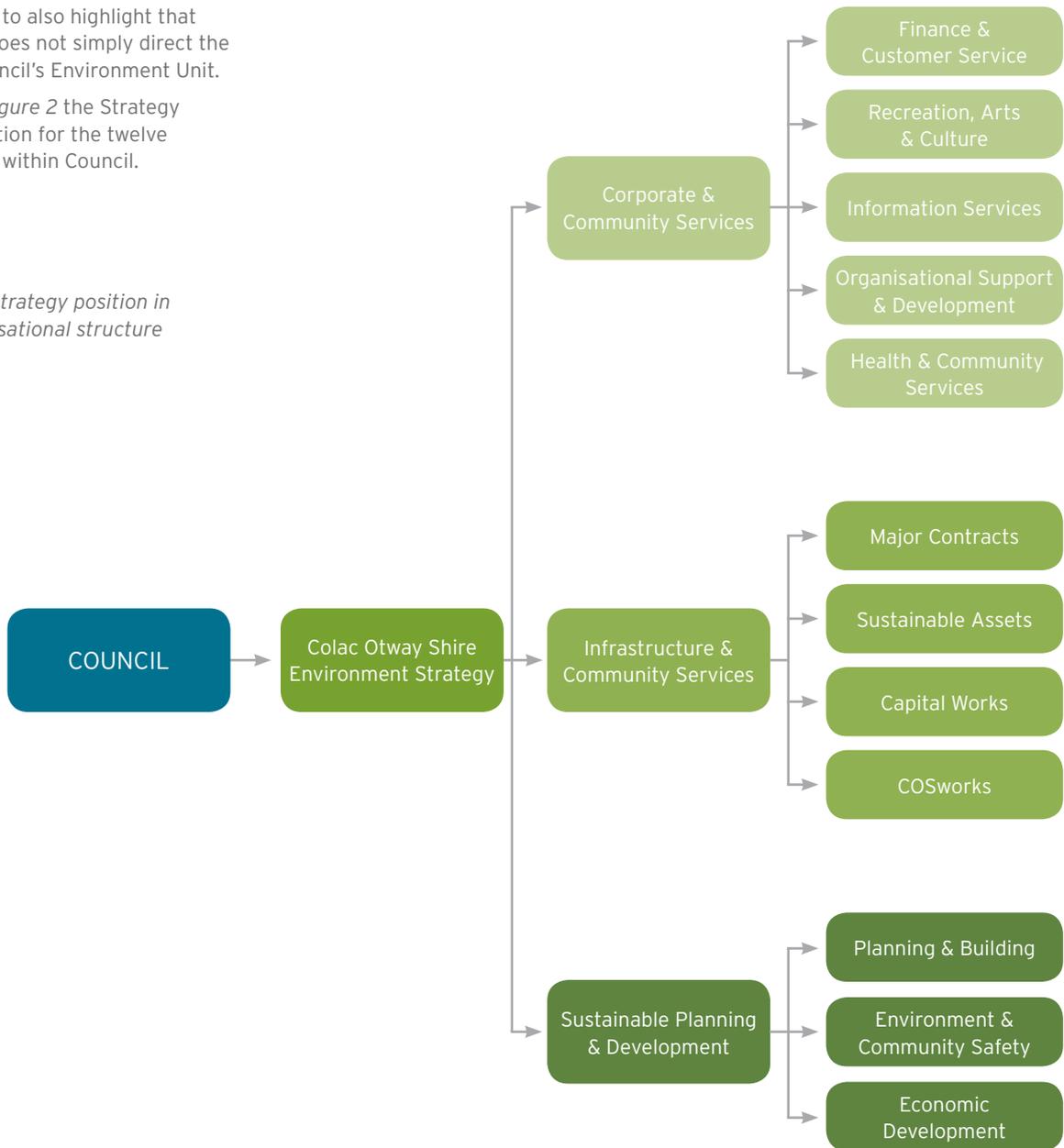
*RIGHT: Lake Colac*



It is important to also highlight that the Strategy does not simply direct the actions of Council's Environment Unit.

As shown in *Figure 2* the Strategy provides direction for the twelve business units within Council.

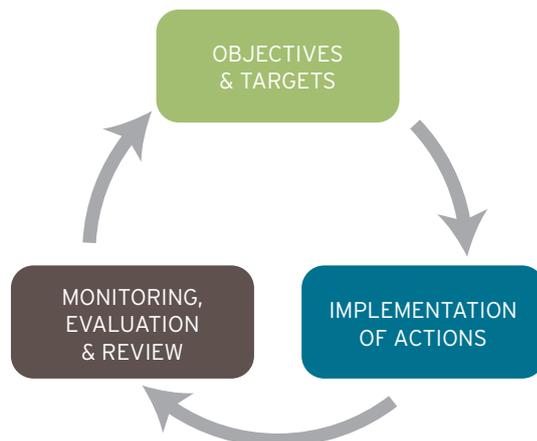
**FIGURE 2:**  
*Environment Strategy position in Council organisational structure*



**1.3. HOW THIS STRATEGY WORKS**

*Figures 3 and 4* show the framework for the Strategy that makes it work. *Figure 3* is a simplified model that depicts how the Strategy relies on three key elements operating in a loop. Objectives and targets direct implementation of actions which are followed by monitoring, evaluation and review (MER) processes. The MER process feeds back information to the objectives and targets element. This framework ensures that the Strategy is adaptable and resilient to change over its lifespan. The colours used to depict the three key elements in *Figure 3* correlate with the elements in the more detailed framework diagram shown in *Figure 4*.

**FIGURE 3:**  
*Framework Key Elements*



### 1.3.1 OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

As shown in *Figure 4* the Council Plan sets the overarching strategic direction for the Strategy. The Strategy has been developed to have an eight year lifespan (2010-2018) with a review to be undertaken in 2014 that aligns with the development of the next Council Plan. This will allow any new directions set by Council, plus information gathered through monitoring, to filter down and influence the strategic direction of Council's environmental management.

As previously stated the Strategy is focused on four key areas:

- Council Managed Land;
- Planning and Regulations;
- Physical Works and General Services; and
- Council Education and Awareness Raising Programmes.

For each of these areas the Strategy identifies recent achievements, objectives for improvement and targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART targets).

As previously explained there is an advocacy and facilitation section that identifies issues that Council cannot control and therefore cannot set targets for.

Although there are no objectives or targets set in this section, the issues identified will be considered in the implementation phase and actions identified to address them.

BELOW: Caldon Lyons, Andrew Barber and Tom McVilly enjoying Colac Otway Shire Council's environment program

RIGHT: Lookout at Maits Rest



### 1.3.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY

The Strategy does not identify actions. However, actions that contribute to the achievement of the targets set in the Strategy will be identified in a separate plan. Section eight of the Strategy sets out the process and standard requirements for the development of an Action Plan every two years. The actions identified in the plan will be included in Business Plans for the various business units across Council shown in *Figure 2*. This will ensure that the actions are budgeted for and carried out in a timely manner.

This approach allows new knowledge and experience to be used every two years to identify the most effective actions for achieving the targets in the Strategy. Identifying actions many years in advance (i.e. 4-8 years) in this document would be inappropriate, given that they would not have a guaranteed budget, and new knowledge and experience may identify actions that will achieve the targets more effectively.

Council's current Sustainability Working Group (SWG) will become the key committee in implementing the Strategy. Council's Environment Unit provides the executive support for this committee that is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer. As stated in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the SWG, the group's function is to plan for and aid implementation of Council's current and future environmental sustainability strategies and projects.

Although the SWG currently has a strong focus on energy and resource consumption, there is scope to revise the TOR to ensure that other environmental issues are covered. The memberships of the TOR will require adjustment to ensure appropriate representation from across Council's business units.

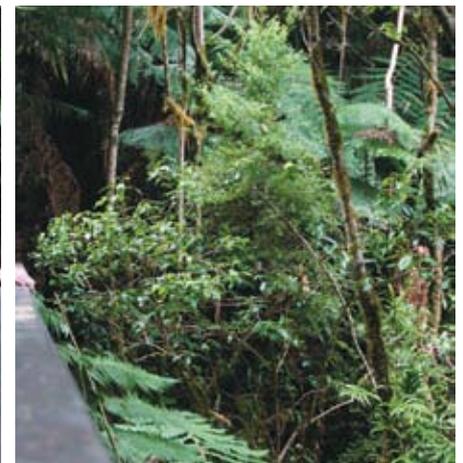


### 1.3.3 MONITORING AND REPORTING

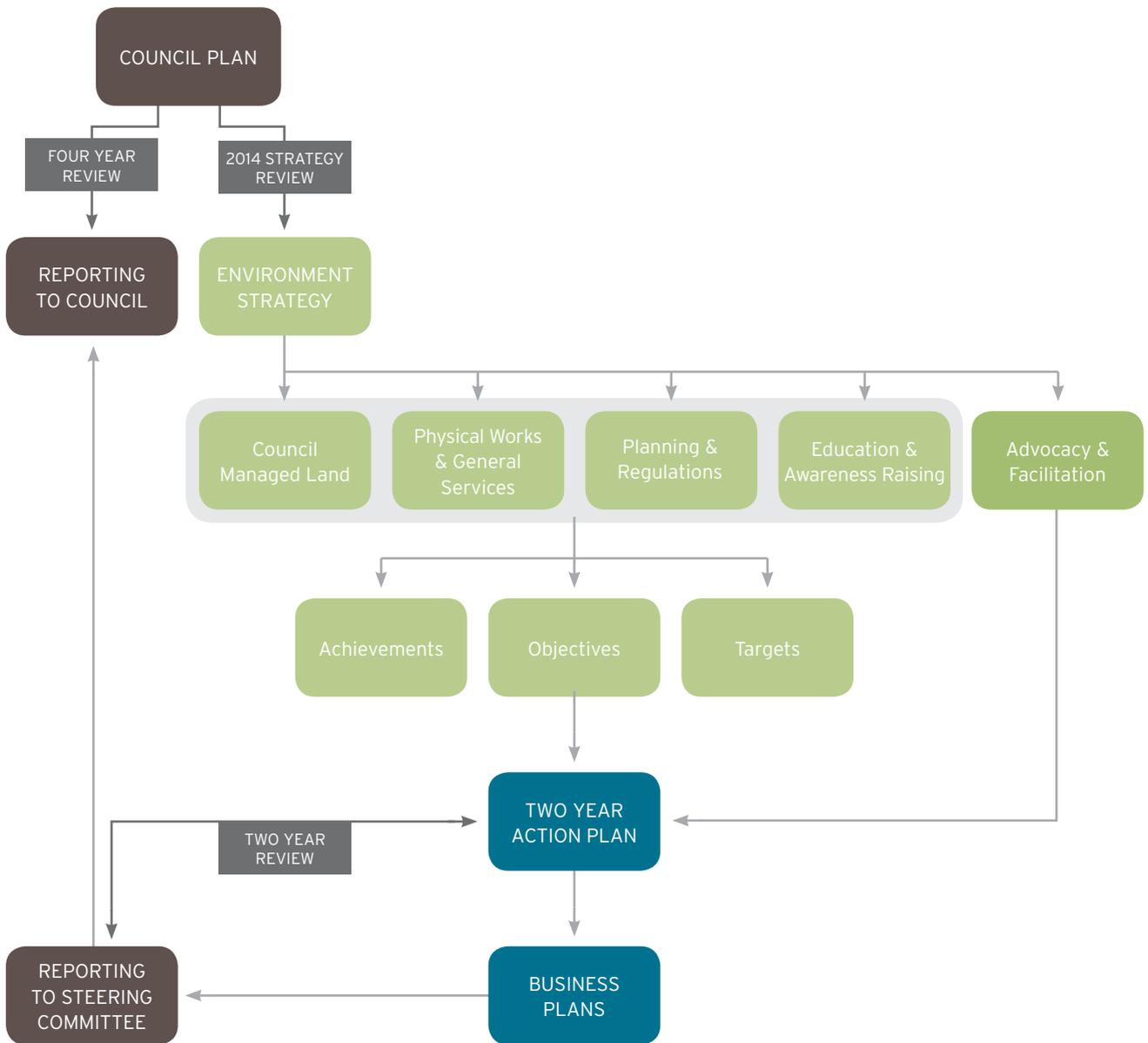
The Colac Otway Shire Council, like all Victorian local governments, is required under the *Local Government Act (1989)* to produce a Council Plan that lists objectives and goals over a four year period. Each unit in Council is required to produce an annual Business Plan that lists what actions will be undertaken to meet Council Plan objectives.

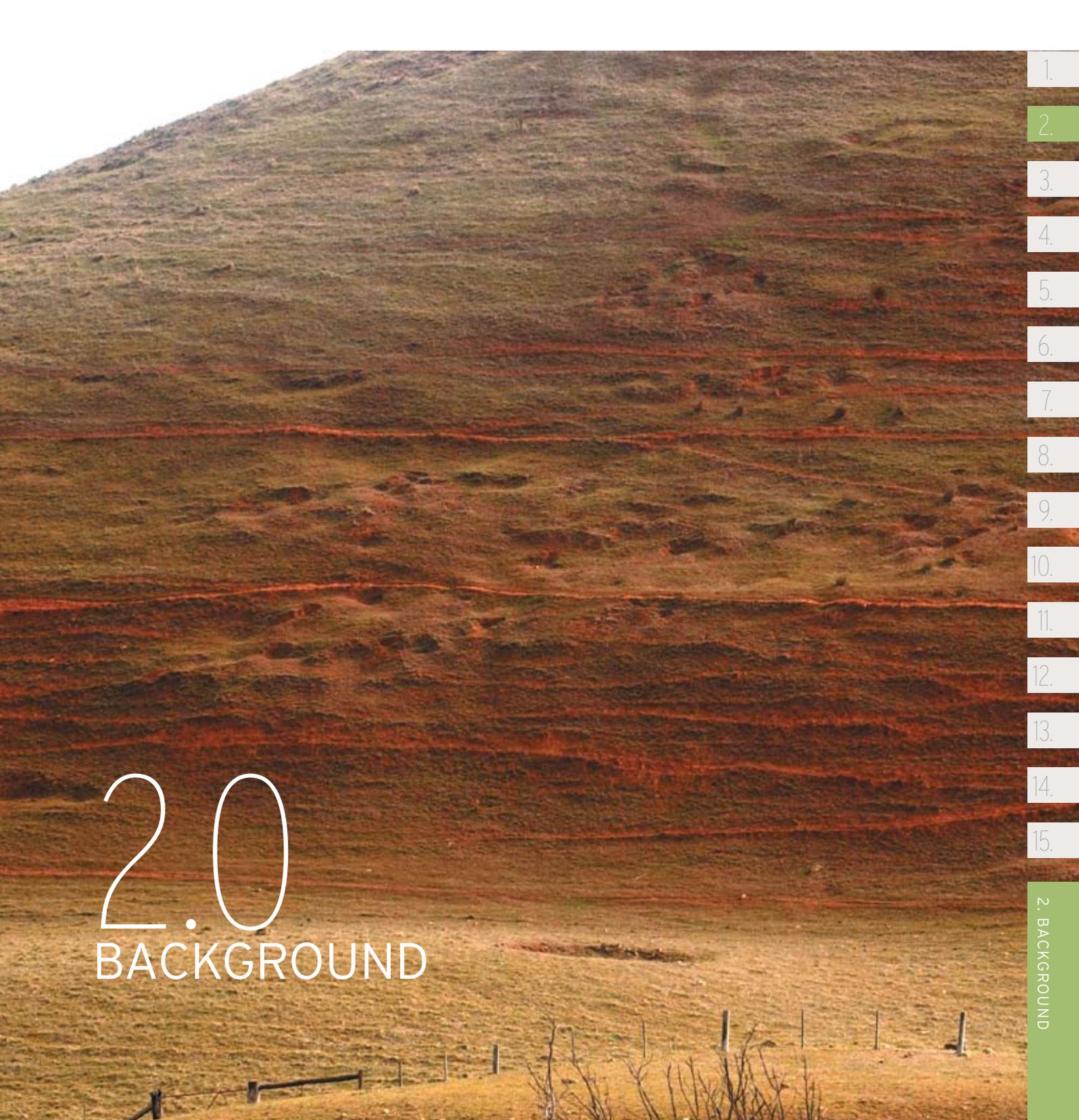
To monitor the progress of actions in Business Plans, each Council Officer is required to provide an update quarterly, through a computerised reporting system. The actions that are carried out, under the direction of the Strategy, will be reported on through this business planning reporting process. This will allow progress against the targets in the Strategy to be monitored and will also allow annual reporting to Council to be done in a clear and efficient manner.

As shown in *Figures 3 and 4* the reporting information gathered will inform the development of the next two year action plan and the four year review of the strategy.



**FIGURE 4:**  
Colac Otway Shire Environmental  
Strategy Framework





# 2.0

## BACKGROUND

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**To give context for the targets set in the Strategy, background information is provided in relation to the following areas:**

- 2.1 Development of the Strategy;
- 2.2 Basic demographics of the Shire;
- 2.3 Environmental Values of the Shire;
- 2.4 Environmental Achievements by Council;
- 2.5 Community Consultation Findings;
- 2.6 Environmental Challenges; and the
- 2.7 Environmental Management Sector.

ABOVE: Red Rock

## 2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

In 2007 Council became a signatory of the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord (the Accord). The Accord is a partnership initiative designed to strengthen collaborative efforts by the Victorian State and Local Governments to create better environmental outcomes at the local level. To become a signatory, Council was required to develop a Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement (LESPTS). The development of an Environment Strategy was identified in Council's LESPTS as being the highest priority because setting priorities across business units at a project level is problematic due to the absence of any overarching direction. Through this process Council was able to secure funding from Sustainability Victoria to develop an Environment Strategy.

## 2.2 BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SHIRE

Located in Victoria's south west, the Shire is diverse, with volcanic lakes, craters and plains in the north, and the hinterland forests of the Otway Ranges and the Great Ocean Road coastline in the south. The Shire encompasses a total land area of 3,400 square kilometres (sq km), of which a large proportion is National Park.

Colac is the key industrial, commercial and service centre for the Shire and surrounding region with a population of 11,093 people. Colac is situated on the southern shoreline of Lake Colac, on the Princes Highway, 138 kilometres (km) south west of Melbourne. Apollo Bay is the other major urban centre in the Shire with a permanent population of 1,000 that swells to over 15,000 people during the summer season. The current Shire population is approximately 20,000 people.

The Colac region supports a network of over 1,200 businesses and well over 800 farms. The main industries are dairy, beef, sheep, crops, specified pastures, horticulture and organic farming, timber, manufacturing and service, construction, retail and wholesale. Tourism, centering on the Great Ocean Road and the coastline, is becoming increasingly important.

## 2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES OF THE SHIRE

The Shire contains some of the most significant environmental assets found in Australia. Appendix 1 is a map showing the Sites of Biodiversity Significance in the Shire. The map illustrates the extensive network of water bodies, some of which are Ramsar listed (i.e. of international significance). Also shown are 15 sq km of habitat and vegetation protection areas that contain over 20 threatened species and plant communities. In addition, the Shire has over 300 km of very high conservation roadside reserves, as well as approximately 100 km of the internationally recognised Great Ocean Road. This spectacular coastal environment includes not only the coastal dunes and estuaries but also the marine environment.

*Table 1* lists environmental assets of state, national or international significance in the Shire under three categories: endangered vegetation communities; listed threatened species and high value aquatic systems. The majority of the vegetation in the Shire has been cleared since European settlement and although some areas of pristine vegetation remain in the Otways 29 of the 54 vegetation communities in the region are listed as endangered or vulnerable and only nine are not of concern.

The Plains Grasslands have recently been nationally listed under the *Environmental Protection and*

*Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* because only very small areas remain intact, the majority of which are on private land.

The environmental assets found in the Shire can be categorised by the Bioregions in which they are found. Bioregions reflect natural boundaries and relationships between biodiversity assets and natural resource based activities.

Appendix 2 shows that four Bioregions are found in the Shire:

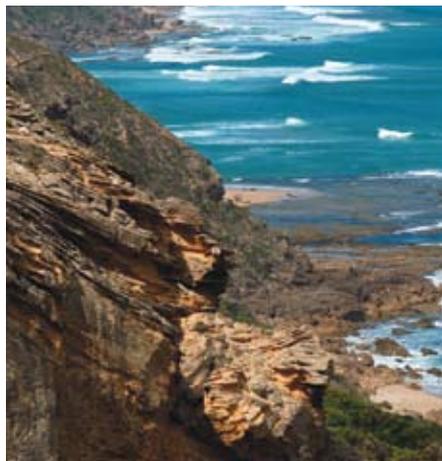
- Victorian Volcanic Plain;
- Warrnambool Plain;
- Otway Plain; and
- Otway Ranges.

### Victorian Volcanic Plain (VVP) Bioregion

Colac Otway Shire covers in excess of 900 square kilometres of the VVP that once supported large tracts of the Ecological Vegetation Community (EVC) Plains Native Grassland and Plains Grassy Woodland vegetation. These are now restricted to tiny areas on roadsides, the margins of the region's brackish and saline lakes and scattered small remnants (usually highly degraded) on private land.

These Endangered EVC's have been almost totally lost throughout their Victorian range, with only 2.3% of the original Plains Grassy Woodlands remaining (and most of that highly degraded by grazing and weeds), while less than 1.3% of Plains Native Grasslands still exist (DSE 2002). The recent listing of this EVC under federal legislation as a protected plant community indicates that the flora and fauna of this bioregion are some of the most threatened in Australia (Tonkinson 2007). The VVP also hosts internationally protected Ramsar Lakes supporting several rare and threatened waterbirds.

BELOW: Murray Street, Colac RIGHT: Coastline near the Aire River estuary



## Warrnambool Plain Bioregion

The Warrnambool Plain extends into a relatively small area of the Shire from the west and is often referred to as the Coastal Plain. The identifying features of the Warrnambool Plain are nutrient deficient soils over low calcareous dune formations. Much of the limestone has been overlain by more recent sediments, and between the limestone dunes, areas of swamplands are characterised by highly fertile peats and seasonal inundation.

## Otway Plain Bioregion

Similar to the VVP, the Otway Plain covers over 900 square kilometres of the Shire. This bioregion includes coastal plains and dunes, foothills with river valleys and swamps in the lowlands. The upper terrain supports Lowland Forest and Heathy Woodland ecosystems, whereas the floodplains and swamps predominantly contain Grassy Woodland and Floodplain Riparian Woodland. Much of this vegetation remains intact on private land and protected in Crown land.

**TABLE 1:**

*Environmental Assets in the Shire*

| ENDANGERED VEGETATION COMMUNITIES              |
|------------------------------------------------|
| Aquatic Herb Land/Plains Sedgy Wetland Mosaic  |
| Cool Temperate Rainforest                      |
| Damp Heath Scrub                               |
| Estuarine Wetland                              |
| Floodplain Reedbed                             |
| Floodplain Riparian Woodland                   |
| Grassy Forest                                  |
| Grassy Woodland                                |
| Plains Grassland                               |
| Plains Grassland/Plains Grassy Woodland Mosaic |
| Plains Grassy Wetland                          |
| Plains Grassy Woodland                         |
| Plains Sedgy Wetland                           |
| Scoria Cone Woodland                           |
| Sedgy Riparian Woodland                        |
| Swamp Scrub                                    |
| Swampy Riparian Woodland                       |
| Wet Heathland                                  |

## Otway Ranges Bioregion

The largest, and most protected, bioregion within the Shire is the Otway Ranges. Consisting of moderately steep slopes and moist gullies, this bioregion supports Shrubby Wet Forest and Cool Temperate Rainforest ecosystems on the higher slopes; and Shrubby Foothill Forest on the lower slopes. Large intact examples of these vegetation communities are found in the Shire and remain well protected as over 50% are found in the Great Otway National Park.

| LISTED THREATENED SPECIES |
|---------------------------|
| Spiny Rice Flower         |
| Otway Black Snail         |
| Long Nosed Bandicoot      |
| Spotted Tailed Quoll      |
| Swamp Antechinus          |
| Common Bent Winged Bat    |
| Corangamite Water Skink   |
| Growling Grass Frog       |
| Southern Brown Bandicoot  |
| Striped Legless Lizard    |
| Leafy Greenhood           |
| Short Water-starwort      |
| Satinwood                 |
| Wrinkled Buttons          |
| Broad-leaf Prickly Moses  |
| Brooker's Gum             |
| Dwarf Silver Wattle       |

## Environment Assets

The degradation of vegetation communities often results in individual species endemic to those areas being threatened with extinction. Due to the large amount of clearing there are a number of listed threatened flora and fauna species in the region. Some of the threatened species listed in *Table 1* are threatened in Victoria and some of them are also listed as threatened at the national level due to a greater likelihood of extinction (e.g. Spiny Riceflower).

This is only a snapshot of the listed threatened species in the Colac Otway Shire region.

*Table 1* also identifies a number of high value aquatic systems in the Shire. A large proportion of the Otway Ranges bioregion is protected by being in the Great Otway National Park. This ensures protection of many high value waterways that flow to the sea from the Otway Ranges.

However it is worth noting that the Ramsar Lakes located in the VVP bioregion are surrounded by farm land. Therefore these environmental assets face more significant threat of degradation than those located within the national park.

| HIGH VALUE AQUATIC SYSTEMS                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|
| Lake Beac                                         |
| Ramsar Lakes and Wetlands (e.g. Lake Corangamite) |
| Aire River                                        |
| Barham River                                      |
| St George River                                   |
| Wye River                                         |
| Kennett River                                     |
| Grey River                                        |
| Wild Dog Creek                                    |
| Skenes Creek                                      |
| Gellibrand River                                  |
| Barwon River                                      |
| Parker River                                      |

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2. BACKGROUND

## 2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS BY COUNCIL

As previously stated Council has displayed a strong commitment to environmental management. The numerous achievements Council has made are outlined briefly in the body of the Strategy against the relevant areas, whether it be Council Managed Land; Planning and Regulations; Physical Works and General Services or Education and Awareness Raising Programmes. Examples of the major achievements in these areas are outlined below.

### Council Managed Land:

Over the past two years over 10,000 indigenous plants have been planted along Barongarook Creek and Lake Colac in tandem with strategic weed control including the removal of large exotic trees. In addition to these works over 150 tonnes of Carp were removed from the creek in 2007-2008. These works have improved the overall health of the creek and the lake.

### Planning and Regulations:

Over the past two years Council has developed and implemented an auditing programme to ensure that the requirements of the Code for Private Forestry Operations is adhered to.

This initiative has been implemented alongside a programme to develop a web tool that will allow information required from the industry to be submitted to Council in a consistent and efficient manner.

### Physical Works and General Services:

Through implementation of the Greenhouse Action Plan, which lists energy reduction measures, Council has completed Milestone 4 of the Cities for Climate Protection Programme (CCP). The CCP Programme helps local governments address climate change through a strategic milestone framework that empowers councils to make an inventory of their greenhouse gas emissions, set reduction goals, plan and implement actions, and monitor their progress. The achievement of Milestone 4 has been made possible through the Sustainability Action Fund that has funded various activities including retrofitting of public toilets and implementation of more efficient lighting in Council facilities.

### Education and Awareness Raising:

Council has carried out many community events that raise awareness through direct involvement in environment projects. Close links have been forged with schools to give young people experience in protecting our environment. All the events and projects to date have been very successful and schools are using the environment days as part of their curriculum. The major events that are run each year are Clean Up Australia Day, World Environment Day, National Tree Day and National Threatened Species Day. In 2008/2009 over 1,000 school children planted over 21,000 plants through involvement in these events.

*"I'm excited by the possibilities of this Strategy"*

- Apollo Bay Forum Participant



LEFT: Carp in Lake Colac

CENTRE: Tubestock at Otway Nursery

BELOW: Alice Kavenagh of Sacred Heart Primary School enjoying Colac Otway Shire Council's environment program

## 2.5 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION FINDINGS

A community engagement programme, which comprised of four community forums and three open house sessions, was carried out by Council in September and October 2009 to ensure that the major issues and concerns of the community were addressed in the Strategy. Over 140 people were involved from across the Shire. The key findings are shown in *Tables 2 and 3* below. It is worth noting that a number of quotes obtained from community members are placed throughout the document where relevant.

**TABLE 2:**  
*Environmental Assets*

| KEY ASSET                       | NUMBER OF TIMES IDENTIFIED |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Forests/National Parks          | 38                         |
| Coast/beaches                   | 30                         |
| Lake Colac and surrounds        | 17                         |
| Water - plentiful, clean        | 15                         |
| Rolling Green Hills             | 14                         |
| Flora and Fauna                 | 13                         |
| Diversity of landscapes         | 11                         |
| Rainfall                        | 10                         |
| Undeveloped nature of the coast | 8                          |

**TABLE 3:**  
*Environmental Issues*

| KEY ISSUES                                                                             |                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Issues that Council can control and strongly influence                                 | Overdevelopment/inappropriate density/settlement boundaries               |
|                                                                                        | Planning scheme requirements                                              |
|                                                                                        | Access to Heathfield Estate                                               |
|                                                                                        | Weed management and use of chemicals                                      |
|                                                                                        | More recycling, less litter, more/cheaper rubbish collection              |
|                                                                                        | Lake Colac environment                                                    |
| Issues that Council can control on its land and advocate and facilitate in other areas | Weed management                                                           |
|                                                                                        | Sustaining biodiversity                                                   |
|                                                                                        | Feral animals                                                             |
|                                                                                        | Reducing fire risk (especially along roads)                               |
|                                                                                        | Degradation of waterways                                                  |
|                                                                                        | Maintenance of roads (especially dirt roads)                              |
|                                                                                        | Population pressure                                                       |
|                                                                                        | Diminishing local food production                                         |
| Lowering carbon emissions                                                              |                                                                           |
| Issues for which Council can advocate or facilitate Change                             | Reducing fire risk (especially fuel reduction and community preparedness) |
|                                                                                        | Water security                                                            |
|                                                                                        | Waterway and estuary health                                               |
|                                                                                        | Lack of community driven initiatives                                      |
|                                                                                        | Lack of integration across agencies                                       |
|                                                                                        | Management of parks (especially for weeds and fire risk)                  |

The results from the community engagement process were carefully considered by the ESSC and have been incorporated into the Strategy. Through the community engagement process it was possible to derive a Community Vision for the future of environmental management.

Although the Strategy is focused on what Council can control or strongly influence the aspirations of the community are recognised as the underlying intent.

## Community Vision

*"The Colac Otway environment is a diverse, pristine and beautiful area, with abundant and indigenous Flora and Fauna. Endangered species have returned and the sea is teeming with life. Weeds and rubbish exist no more. Lake Colac is revegetated and healthy with clean stormwater inflows and all waterways are crystal clean with improved aquatic biodiversity.*

*Residents of the Colac Otway Shire have a sense of pride in the environment in which they live. It is a place of sanctuary and a model for others to aspire to. Individuals assume responsibility for their own space; they are aware of the impacts of their actions, working together to deal with environmental challenges.*

*The healthier environment has contributed to improved community health. There is enough local food to meet the community's needs and there are no longer any concerns about water security because rainfall is used and stormwater stored.*

*The Shire Office is renowned for its Sustainability Centre - a centre of excellence, visited by people from around the world for the purposes of education and inspiration. Planning is less restrictive but targets specific needs. Plantation buffers have improved the aesthetics and wind protection of local surroundings. Diversity in land usage is encouraged and does not focus on one industry alone. There is a local Recycling Centre ('tip shop'), negating the need for a tip or transfer station. Tourism is sustainable and visitors come to the Shire, not for its amenities but for its natural and beautiful environment."*

BELOW: A Scotch Thistle grows on a fenceline at Elliminyt



## 2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The State of the Environment Report for Victoria 2008 highlights some important assumptions that provide the basis for the Strategy:

- Our wellbeing relies on a robust, healthy environment;
- Our way of life continues to be maintained and enhanced through the gradual degradation of our natural environment;
- All Victorians have a role to play in deciding what kind of future we will have; and
- The future cannot be an extension of the past.

Although the Strategy is focused on matters that are within Council's direct control or where Council can have a significant influence, it is important to recognise the major environmental challenges that we are faced with at a State, National and International level.

The State of the Environment Report for Victoria 2008 states that the key drivers of environmental degradation in Victoria are:

- Population growth and settlements;
- Economic growth and consumption; and
- Climate change.

As stated in the strategic snapshot which forms part of the 2009-2013 Council Plan, the major challenges faced by the local community are:

- Sustainable resource use and waste management;
- Pest, plant and animal control;
- Native plant, animal and habitat protection and enhancement;
- Waterway protection and enhancement;
- Coastal and marine protection and enhancement; and
- Climate change impacts.

Council has an important role to play in addressing all of these challenges; however it is not realistic for Council to set broad objectives and targets in relation to them that it cannot possibly monitor or meet. It is more realistic to consider how Council can work within the environment sector most effectively to address them at a Shire scale. Accordingly, the key Council challenges are:

- Protection of environmental values on Council owned and managed land;
- Protection of environmental values on private land through planning tools;
- Protection of environmental values in the Shire through sustainable resource use and waste management;
- Increasing the capacity of the community to improve environmental values through increased education and awareness;
- Advocating on behalf of the community on issues outside of Council's control;
- The scope of climate change issues and the limitations of Council's influence; and
- Working with key agencies to strengthen relationships to promote information flow for the decision making process.

The first five challenges are addressed in the major sections of the Strategy. Ways to manage the challenges associated with climate change and relationships are outlined for each of the three major sections in the Strategy under specific headings.

Climate change is a global issue that national governments are struggling to handle. Climate change is particularly difficult because it further complicates the way to best address the other key environmental challenges we are facing locally. For example, if annual rainfall is expected to reduce, what does this mean for the future of Lake Colac, will the lake dry out more often and if so, what are the implications for management?

A brief outline on Climate Change predictions for the region is provided on page 19.

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### 2.6.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared that climate change is 'unequivocal' and due, with a probability of greater than 90% to human activity. Climate change is affecting us already, with six of the hottest years on record in Victoria occurring since 1990, and annual rainfall over the last ten years has been well below the long term average (State of the Environment Report 2008).

The climate change projections for the Shire, based on analysis carried out by CSIRO on behalf of the Victorian Government (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2008), are as follows:

- Higher average temperatures (between 1.3-2.4 degrees by 2070);
- Lower average rainfall (between 6-12% less by 2070);
- More extreme fire danger days (11 extra days over 35 degrees each year by 2070);
- Flows in rivers and streams halved by 2070; and
- Storm surges of over two metres above sea level could be expected every five years by 2070.

Although the extent of environmental degradation that will occur from climate change is not known, it is widely accepted that moderate climate change projections will further stress the environment. For example it is predicated that these changes would result in loss of habitat, reduction in biodiversity, increased weed invasions and increased sea level. The Victorian Coastal Strategy suggests a precautionary strategy of planning for sea level rise of not less than 0.8m by 2100.

Although it is hard to predict what it will be like to manage the environment under climate change scenarios it is useful to consider that under current predictions Colac's average temperature would be similar to Horsham or Bendigo with an average rainfall more like Hamilton. This highlights the importance of society reducing carbon emissions to prevent more extreme predictions occurring but also the need to prepare for and adapt to climate change impacts.

Although climate change is a global challenge, the Victorian Climate Change Green Paper (2009) states: *"that Local Government plays a critical role because they deliver a wide range of programmes and administer regulations that influence climate change mitigation and adaptation. Regional development agencies, local councils and regional business and industry organisations have a major role to play in helping to design and deliver policies and programmes that have a particular regional and community focus. Local government also has an important role in monitoring the effects of national policies on local and regional communities and economies"*.

### 2.7 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SECTOR

The Council, like all local governments, is guided by a host of legislative requirements, policy frameworks and strategies that define how environmental management is undertaken. Within the environment management sector some of the legislation, policy and strategies are administered, or have been developed, by Council. However in most cases other organisations have the primary responsibility for administering legislation and developing strategies. This fact highlights the importance of Council developing strong relationships with other key agencies involved in environmental management.

The following information is a brief explanation of the agencies involved in environmental management that Council needs to work with, and the key legislation, policy frameworks and strategies as they relate to Council.



LEFT: Seals at Marengo Reefs Marine Sanctuary  
BELOW: Water - a precious commodity



### 2.7.1 AGENCIES

There are a range of environmental management agencies that are involved in addressing environmental issues within the Shire. *Table 4* shows some of the many government, statutory and non-government agencies involved at different levels. It is important to note that the government and statutory agencies have legislative responsibilities they are required to administer. However all of the agencies have their own set of priorities that are implemented through various plans, strategies and policies that all aim to improve environmental management.

The fact that Local Government is at the bottom of the government hierarchy is not a reflection of its importance in the environment management sector. Counter to intuition, the amount of complexity in the environmental management sector increases as it draws down to the local level because the legislation, strategies and plans set by all the other agencies in the sector need consideration. This makes managing the environment at the local level very complex and increases the importance of having strong relationships with all the relevant agencies. It is worth noting that many environmental issues do not respect municipal boundaries and therefore Council needs to work closely with neighbouring Shires to manage environmental issues effectively.

### 2.7.2 LEGISLATION

A recent inquiry by the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission into Victorian environmental legislation has found that a total of 41 Acts shown in *Figure 5* are responsible for the management and protection of environmental assets in Victoria. *Figure 5* does not include the Federal legislation (e.g. *Australian Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*) that also applies to the environment. Council is required to work within all of these legislative requirements that extend from weed and native vegetation management through to energy and resource use. Those that Council has a role in implementing (i.e. the *Victorian Local Government Act* and the *Victorian Planning and Environment Act*) and or have significant implications for the Council are discussed below.

#### ***Australian Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)***

*This Act* adopts an environmental assessment and approval process that will ensure activities that are likely to have significant impacts on the environment are properly assessed to provide for the protection of ecological assets. *The Act* aims to promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and to promote the conservation of biodiversity. *The Act* is administered by the Australian Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

#### ***Victorian Local Government Act (1989)***

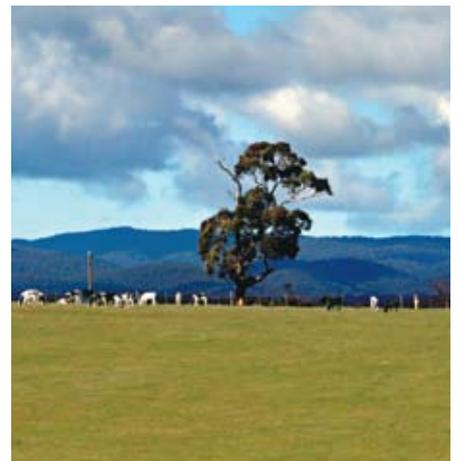
The purpose of this *Act* is to establish a legislative scheme that supports local government to provide leadership for the local community through advocacy, decision making and actions. The objectives of Council are to ensure the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district. This relates to Council utilising resources efficiently and effectively to best meet the needs of the community. Council plays a critical role in administering this act within the Shire through initiatives such as the development of this Strategy.

#### ***Victorian Planning and Environment Act (1987)***

The purpose of this *Act* is to establish a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.

The objectives of this legislation is for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land; and the protection of natural resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity. Council plays a critical role in administering this act within the Shire through implementation of the planning scheme.

BELOW: Otway Ranges near Gerangamete



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**TABLE 4:**  
Agencies in the Environmental Management Sector

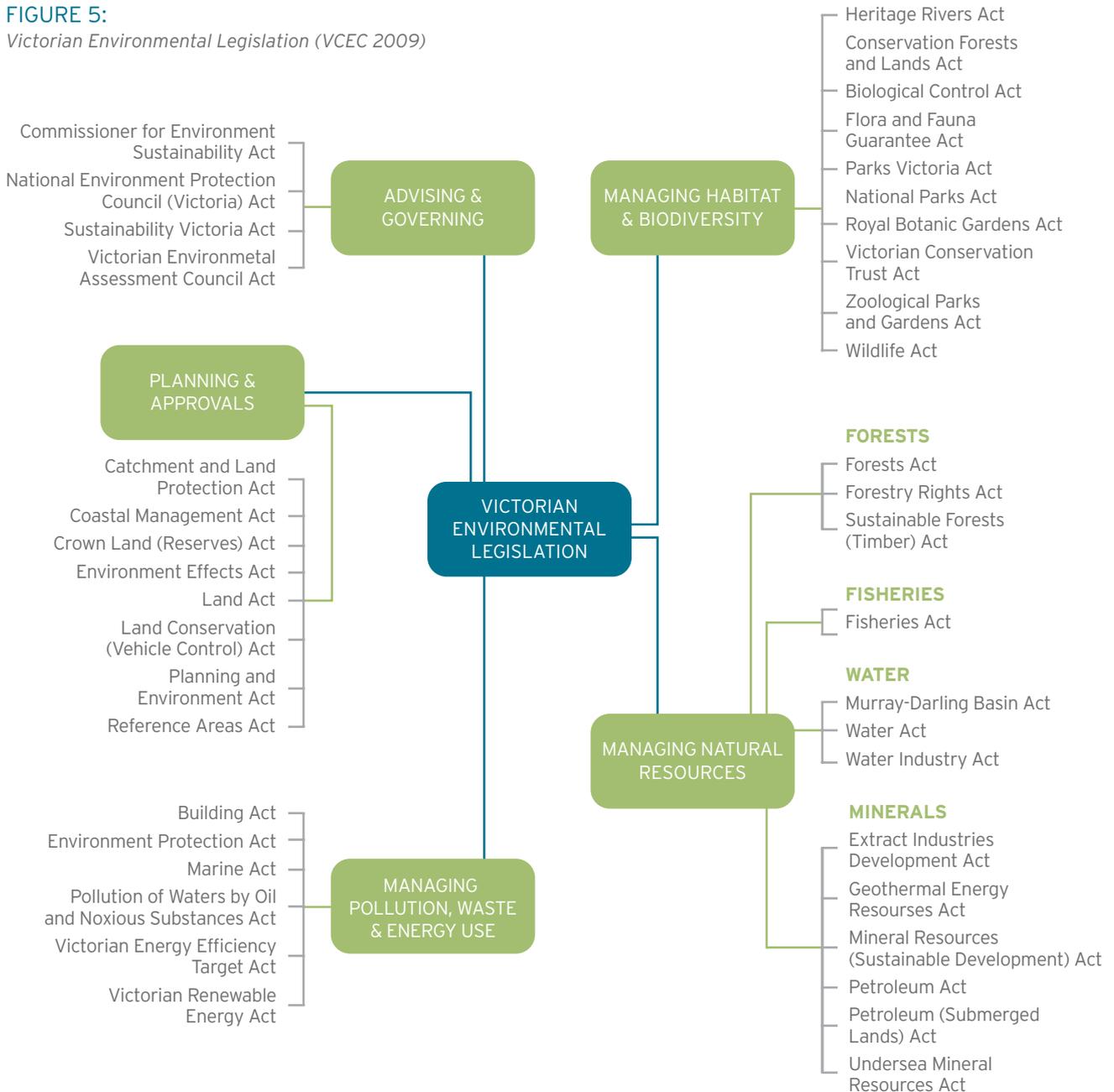
|                       | NATIONAL BODIES:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | STATE BODIES:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | REGIONAL BODIES:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | LOCAL BODIES:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GOVERNMENT/STATUTORY  | <br>Australian Government<br>Department of the Environment,<br>Water, Heritage and the Arts                                                                                                                     | <br>Victoria<br>The Place To Be<br><br><br>State Government<br>Victoria Department of<br>Primary Industries<br><br><br>State Government<br>Victoria Department of<br>Sustainability<br>and Environment | <br>CORANGAMITE CMA<br>HEALTHY CATCHMENTS<br>- HEALTHY WATERWAYS<br><br><br>Barwon<br>Water<br><br><br>WESTERN<br>COASTAL<br>BOARD<br><br><br>SOUTHERN<br>Rural Water | <br>Colac Otway<br>SHIRE<br><br><br>Corangamite<br>SHIRE<br><br><br>Surf COAST<br>SHIRE<br><br><br>GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE<br><br><br>CITY OF GREATER<br>GEELONG                                                    |
| NON-GOVERNMENT BODIES | <br>You make a difference<br>Conservation<br>Volunteers<br>Conservation Volunteers Australia<br><br><br>Greening Australia | <br>LANDCARE<br>VICTORIA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <br>FRAMLINGHAM<br>ABORIGINAL<br>TRUST<br><br><br>RURAL FIRE<br>AUTHORITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <br>BARWON<br>BIOSPHERE<br><br><br>VVP<br>biosphere<br><br><br>LIMBERLAND<br>PROTECTION GROUP<br><br><br>Upper Barwon<br>Landcare<br>Network<br><br><br>LANDCARE<br>SOUTHERN OTWAY<br>LANDCARE NETWORK |

**Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988)**

The purpose of this Act is to establish a legal and administrative structure to enable and promote the conservation of Victoria's native flora and fauna and to provide for a choice of procedures which can be used for the conservation, management or control of flora and fauna and the management of potentially threatening processes.

This Act places responsibility with Council to act in a way that conserves and protects Victoria's flora and fauna, protects their genetic diversity and manages potentially threatening process. This Act is administered by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment.

**FIGURE 5:**  
Victorian Environmental Legislation (VCEC 2009)



**Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act (1994)**

This Act sets up a framework for the integrated management and protection of catchments; to encourage community participation in the management of land and water resources; and to set up a system of controls on noxious weeds and pest animals. This legislation states that Council, like any private landowners, must undertake routine pest plant and animal control to ensure that property managed by Council remains pest free. The Act also gives rise to the development of a Regional Catchment Strategy that sets regional targets for natural resource management. This Act is administered by various organisations including the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) and the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

**Victorian Environment Protection Act (1970)**

The purpose of this Act is to create a legislative framework for the protection of the environment in Victoria having regard to the principles of environment protection. This Act establishes the Environment Protection Authority, which sets guidelines, quality objectives, regulations and management programmes for things such as air, surface and ground water, noise, waste and water pollution.

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### 2.7.3 PLANS AND STRATEGIES

There have been a significant amount of resources invested by Council and other organisations into developing plans and strategies that direct environmental management in the Shire. *Table 5* classifies relevant Council (internal) documents as either issue based or area based.

The documents have been developed for various reasons by various departments across Council. The Strategy will provide an overarching direction for implementing the actions in these documents.

It is important to highlight that there are also a number of other Council plans and strategies that although not specifically focused on environmental management do have a strong influence on how Council manages environmental issues. For example the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan and the Road Management Plan both have a community safety focus however the management of environmental impacts associated with this activity is recognised and therefore processes are required to ensure the objectives of this Strategy are considered when implementing these plans.

There are many other examples such as the Economic Development Action Agenda and the Colac Otway Recreation Strategy and the Festival and Events Strategic Plan which all make reference to specific environmental issues and make recommendations which are consistent with this Strategy's objectives and targets.

As previously stated the Strategy is focused on areas Council can control. Therefore implementation of Council's plans and strategies is the focus however it is also important for Council to recognise and, where possible align with other policies and strategies that aim to protect and enhance the environmental values in the Shire. *Table 5* shows a few of these external documents and demonstrates that they are developed by a range of organisations at a national, state and regional scale.

Those plans and strategies that have the strongest relationship with environmental management are discussed briefly below. The key thing to appreciate is that there are many plans and strategies that guide works that affect the environment and that strong relationships need to be established and maintained both internally and externally to ensure that activities are being carried out in a strategic manner.

### INTERNAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

#### Sustainable Water Use Plan (2007)

The Sustainable Water Use Plan identifies actions to reduce water consumption for all Council assets and facilities (e.g. sporting grounds and office buildings). The plan builds on existing water saving measures by identifying opportunities to explore new water saving initiatives, including improvements to Council operations and infrastructure, and also investigating alternative supplies to potable drinking water.

#### Greenhouse Action Plan (2007)

The Greenhouse Action Plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations and help reduce emissions from the Colac Otway community. The actions detailed in the Greenhouse Action Plan aim to reduce both Council's greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs for the future. Such actions are likely to provide for environmental, social and economic benefits for all residents of the Shire, now and in the future.

#### Lake Colac Management Plan (2002)

The Lake Colac Management Plan aims to provide a framework for the community, Local and State agencies to manage and promote ecologically sustainable development and land use practices for Lake Colac and its catchment.

#### Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (2005)

The Roadside Vegetation Management Plan is intended for use by Council staff and contractors, in conjunction with the roadside mapping, to enable them to determine high priority remnants and to support the protection of the same. The plan outlines the work methods and responsibilities required of contractors and all other persons undertaking work on roadsides. It is intended that this document will set the standard for environmental contract provisions, promoting best practice in the management of roadside vegetation.

BELOW: Rowing on Lake Colac



*"Lake Colac needs a vision!"*

- Colac Forum Participant



### **Weed Management Strategy (2000)**

The Weed Management Strategy identifies a list of environmental weeds in the Shire and a range of actions to improve weed management processes and the appropriate agencies responsible. Those species which have 'weedy' characteristics, but are not declared noxious weeds under the *CaLP Act*, are also listed in this document.

### **Municipal Fire Prevention Plan (2007)**

Councils in Victoria have a statutory obligation to have a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan that looks at fire risk environments, including agricultural, industrial, commercial, residential and natural and is audited by State appointed auditors every three years. Significant opportunities exist to carry out fire prevention works in such a way as to also improve environmental values in the shire.

For example ecological burns and weed control works can be undertaken that not only reduce risk of fire but also improve the condition of native grassland located along roadsides.

### **Road Management Plan (2009)**

The Colac Otway Shire has adopted a Road Management Plan to set reasonable standards in relation to the performance of its road management functions for the maintenance of its public roads and associated road-related assets.

The Road Management Plan has been developed to address requirements of the State Government's new *Road Management Act 2004* (the 'Act'). The Plan provides a framework for relevant standards and policy in relation to Council's road management responsibilities.

It provides a vision for how Council plans to manage its road network ensuring the community is provided with a road system that returns optimum economic benefit while recognising social, safety, environmental and user needs.

ABOVE: Kangaroo flees from a fire

**TABLE 5:**  
*Plans and Strategies*

|          | ISSUE BASED:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | AREA BASED:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INTERNAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse Action Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (2008)</li> <li>• Rural Land Strategy (2007)</li> <li>• Weed Management Strategy (2002)</li> <li>• Sustainable Water Use Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Waste Water Management Strategy (2002)</li> <li>• Municipal Fire Prevention Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Road Management Plan (2009)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Strategic Statement</li> <li>• Barongarook Covenant Property Management Plan (2006)</li> <li>• Poorneet Road Grassland Management Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Apollo Bay Structure Plan (2007)</li> <li>• Lake Colac and Barongarook Creek Revegetation and Weed Control Plan (2009)</li> <li>• Lake Colac Management Plan (2002)</li> <li>• Kennett River, Wye River and Separation Creek Structure Plans (2008)</li> <li>• Colac Structure Plan (2007)</li> </ul> |
| EXTERNAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Carbon pollution Reduction Scheme</li> <li>• Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework (2002)</li> <li>• Corangamite River Health Strategy (2002)</li> <li>• Victorian Pest Management Framework (2002)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy 2003</li> <li>• G21 Region Plan 2007</li> <li>• Draft Great Otway National Park Management Plan (2008)</li> <li>• Western District Lakes Ramsar Site Strategic Management Plan 2002</li> <li>• Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |

**EXTERNAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES**

**Victorian Native Vegetation Framework (2002)**

The Native Vegetation Management Framework was released in 2002. It was developed to implement the objectives of Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy and the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity. The Framework's main goal is to achieve an increase in the extent and quality of native vegetation across Victoria. The framework is administered by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

**Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (2003)**

The Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy provides long-term direction for managing the future of land, water resources, biodiversity and seascape of the Region, and provides a foundation for investment decisions to ensure improved natural resource outcomes. The strategy is administered by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.

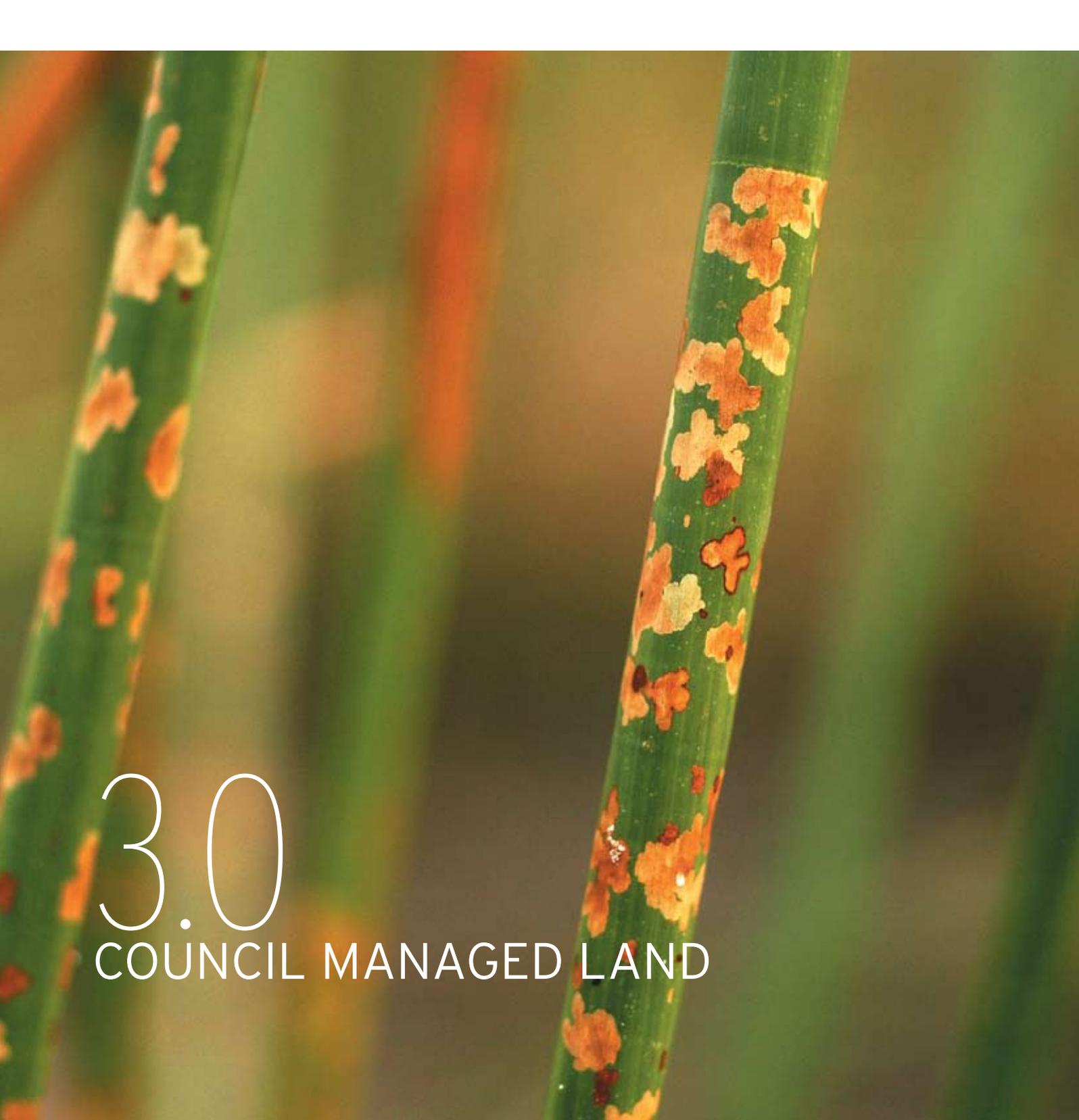
**Victorian Coastal Strategy (2008)**

The Victorian Coastal Strategy provides a comprehensive integrated management framework for the coast of Victoria. It is established under the *Coastal Management Act 1995*. The Act directs the Victorian Coastal Strategy to provide for long-term planning of the Victorian coast for the next 100 years and beyond.

The strategy is administered by the Victorian Coastal Board.



RIGHT: Fire is a natural part of our environment



# 3.0

## COUNCIL MANAGED LAND

**Council's current land asset database shows that there are 485 pieces of land that the Council owns freehold and 59 pieces of Crown land that are managed by Council.**

Many of these areas of land are less than one hectare; however there are a number of more substantial areas (e.g. Barongarook Covenant Property 8 ha). The total area of Council owned and managed land parcels equals 1,342 ha (850 ha are Council owned, 492 ha are Crown land managed through the Council either by Committee of Management or Advisory Committees). This does not include the roadside reserves managed by Council.

It is important to recognise that the vast majority of these parcels are dedicated to non conservation roles such as recreational purposes (e.g. parks and football fields), and as such have minimal environmental value.

However, there are a number that contain intact remnant vegetation with significant indigenous flora and fauna species.

ABOVE: *Typha* (commonly known as a rush)

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As identified in the *Road Management Act* (2004), Council is responsible for managing the roadside reserves for the 1,600km of roads. Although Council's primary responsibility under the *Road Management Act* is to make the roads safe it is important to recognise that roadside reserves can contain significant environmental values in terms of habitat corridors and threatened species. Roadside reserve management is difficult given the number of stakeholders involved in their management and the competing priorities.

Council has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Sustainability and Environment that aims to strike the balance between the maintenance that is required along roadsides for safety and the preservation of environmental values. However it is important to note that the responsibility of Council managing these reserves does not extend to the management of declared weeds listed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act* (1994). There has been ongoing debate over this interpretation of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act* and at the time of writing this document the issue has yet to be resolved.

Due to the amount of land Council is responsible for and the limited resources available, the Strategy uses an asset based approach to managing environmental values on Council managed land. This means that the priority is given to areas of high value and the protection and enhancement of the environmental values in these areas. The secondary priority is to identify areas that could become high value areas if efforts were made to increase their values (e.g. through revegetation or weed control).

Although the Strategy does not aim to restore significant environmental values on all Council Managed land, it recognises areas that have significant threats present such as pest plants and animals, erosion, salinity and acid sulphate soils.

Where significant threats are present, management actions may be required to ensure the threat does not increase. This may mean that a low value area of land (e.g. recreation park land) may be given priority but only where a significant threat is present (e.g. Ragwort).

### 3.1 SELECTION CRITERIA

A selection criteria was developed to identify Council managed land that contains important environmental assets. The selection criteria shown in *Table 6* includes a range of environmental aspects that can be applied to current Council managed land parcels as well as future land acquisitions when they occur.

Given that this assessment is based on current data it is important to note that the assessment could change when new data is acquired or where management actions are completed. More detailed on-site assessments of the threat status for Council managed land parcels and roadsides are required and therefore the list needs to be updated when new information is gathered and appropriate management actions applied. This highlights the need for re-assessing Council managed land every four years based on the latest data to ensure appropriate management actions are being implemented.

A significant amount of data needs to be analysed to properly apply the criteria. Accordingly, there are some assessment criteria that need to be clarified:

- As a default, the highest Ecological Vegetation Community (EVC) conservation status is applied to sites that contained more than one EVC;
- Adjoining roadsides that have not been surveyed were given a zero value; and
- The edge effect (the ratio of intact indigenous vegetation to exotic vegetation, determines the reserves vulnerability to weed invasion) was calculated on the vegetation identified in the aerial photographs, where this was not possible the whole parcel was included.

Classifying areas requires a threshold to be set that identifies a point at which the assets are not considered significantly valuable. This threshold has been set at a score of twelve for high value areas. The threshold for areas, considered to be moderately valuable has been set at eight. Areas considered to have a significant threat were identified to allow appropriate measures to be prescribed however a score was not attributed in such cases.

*Table 7* shows that based on current data eight land parcels were identified as high value areas, two land parcels were identified as moderate value and two were identified as having a significant threat present. The eight high value land parcels will be registered as environmental reserves on Council's land asset database. The location of these eight sites are shown in order of their significance score in *Appendix 4*. It is possible for a high or moderate value site to also have a threat status. For example the Heathfield Open Space site located along the Barham River has moderate value but due to the presence of Ragwort, a Regionally Controlled weed species, it also attracts a threat status. *Table 7* also shows whether detailed site assessments or a management plan have been completed or are whether they are still required for each of the high and moderate land parcels.

**TABLE 6:**  
Selection Criteria

| CRITERIA                                                                                                                                  | CATEGORY                                                 | SCORE   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 Ecological Vegetation Community                                                                                                         | Endangered                                               | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Vulnerable                                               | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Depleted                                                 | 3       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Rare                                                     | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Least Concern                                            | 0       |
| 2 National Conservation Status                                                                                                            | Presumed Extinct                                         | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Critically Endangered                                    | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Endangered                                               | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Vulnerable                                               | 3       |
| 3 Victorian Conservation Status                                                                                                           | Presumed Extinct                                         | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Endangered                                               | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Vulnerable                                               | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Rare                                                     | 3       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Poorly Known                                             | 2       |
| 4 Status under the FFG Act (1988)                                                                                                         | Listed as threatened                                     | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Nominated for listing                                    | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Rejected for listing                                     | 3       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Delisted as threatened                                   | 2       |
| Status under the EPBC Act (1999)                                                                                                          | Listed                                                   | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Nominated                                                | 5       |
| 5 Adjoining Roadside Conservation Status (from the roadside Biodiversity assessments)                                                     | Very High                                                | 3       |
|                                                                                                                                           | High                                                     | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Medium                                                   | 1       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Low/not application                                      | 0       |
| 6 Tenure of land within 200m (either the land itself or adjoining land within 200m, if multiple land tenures, count only highest score).  | National Park                                            | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Forrest Park                                             | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Private Land, forested                                   | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Private Land, agricultural                               | 0       |
| 7 Edge effect = site area (km <sup>2</sup> ) ÷ edge length (km). (*sites 1 ha or smaller are automatically 'high' irrespective of shape). | Low 0.5-0.2                                              | 3       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Medium 0.2-9.15                                          | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | * High < 0.15                                            | 1       |
| 8 Adjacent waterway or wetland                                                                                                            | Ramsar Wetland                                           | 10      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Declared waterway with a high index of stream condition. | 8       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Declared waterway                                        | 4       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Drainage lines                                           | 1       |
| 9 Environmental Overlays                                                                                                                  | VPO 1 & 2                                                | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | EMO                                                      | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | LSIO                                                     | 5       |
|                                                                                                                                           | ESO 2 & 4                                                | 5       |
| 10 Previous Investment                                                                                                                    | Weed Control Works                                       | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Revegetation                                             | 2       |
|                                                                                                                                           | Prescribed Burns                                         | 2       |
| 11 Pest Plants and Animals                                                                                                                | Fox or Rabbit infestation                                | Present |
|                                                                                                                                           | Emergent weed                                            | Present |
|                                                                                                                                           | Regionally controlled weed                               | Present |
| 12 Salinity, Acid Sulphate Soils or Erosion                                                                                               | Erosion                                                  | Present |
|                                                                                                                                           | Salinity                                                 | Present |
|                                                                                                                                           | Acid Sulphate Soils                                      | Present |

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**TABLE 7:**  
*Land Assessment Status*

| NAME                               | SCORE | STATUS                         | DETAILED ASSESSMENT | MANAGEMENT PLAN |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Barham River Confluence            | 33    | High Value                     | Required            | Required        |
| Lake Corangamite Bathing Boxes     | 30    | High Value                     | Complete            | Complete        |
| Barongarook Creek                  | 22    | High Value/Threat              | Complete            | Complete        |
| Marengo Flora Reserve              | 20    | High Value                     | Required            | Required        |
| Barongarook Covenant Property      | 19    | High Value                     | Complete            | Complete        |
| Beeac Grasslands                   | 18    | High Value                     | Complete            | Required        |
| Deepdene Road Reserve              | 18    | High Value/Threat              | Complete            | Required        |
| Lake Colac                         | 13    | High Value/Threat              | Complete            | Complete        |
| Wye River Drainage Reserve         | 11    | Moderate Value                 | Required            | Required        |
| Heathfield Open Space (Apollo Bay) | 8     | Moderate Value /Threat Present | Complete            | Required        |

To identify the roadside reserves status, the Strategy has utilised an existing biodiversity database that provides an assessment of the reserves by a qualified independent botanist. The method employed for this assessment, although similar, has distinct differences from the criteria above used for land parcels. The Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee (RCAC) method is used as it is specifically designed for assessing roadside reserves. It differs from the land parcel method as it does not consider the edge effect (given that these reserves are linear) or place significant weight with adjoining land status (given that the majority is modified private land).

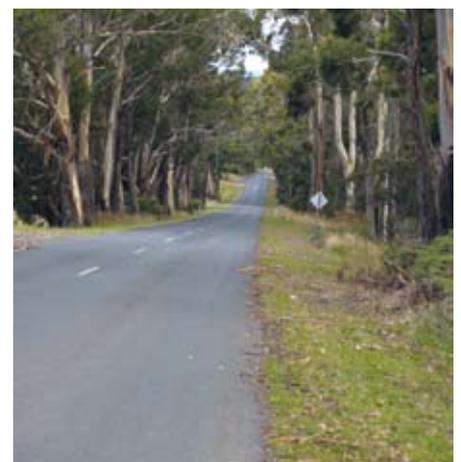
Figure 6 shows the conservation status lengths for Council roads: 212 km very high conservation, 110 km of high conservation; 280 km of medium conservation and 714 km of low conservation.

The very high and high conservation roadsides will be registered as sites of biodiversity significance and listed under a vegetation protection planning overlay. Although the asset based approach will be applied to managing the roadsides (i.e. protect the best) where there are significant threats, or a small section of low value roadside separating high value areas, then resources may be directed toward roadsides with low conservation status. It is important to note that detailed botanical assessments are still being carried out and once all 1600 km of roads are completed it is expected that there will be over 400 km of high and very conservation values roadside. Currently only Poorneet Lane has a specific management plan. However Council has a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan and roadside prescriptions that do provide guidance on how to protect the values of all roadside reserves.

**FIGURE 6**  
*Roadside conservation values*



LEFT: A Rosy Hyacinth orchid growing in a covenant property at Barongarook  
CENTRE: Colac Otway Shire's Stewart Anderson at the Barongarook covenant property  
BELOW: High conservation roadside at Barongarook



### 3.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

**TABLE 8:**

*Council Managed Land Achievements*

| COUNCIL MANAGED LAND ACHIEVEMENTS |                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | Installation of four Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT) in the Lake Colac Catchment.                                                             |
|                                   | Assessment and identification of environmental assets on Council managed roadsides.                                                       |
|                                   | Strategic weed management programme that protects the environmental assets of the Shire, for example Elm removal along Barongarook Creek. |
|                                   | Improved pest animal control including removal of 150 tonnes of Carp from Barongarook Creek.                                              |
|                                   | Revegetation along waterways to improve water quality; including Lake Colac and Barongarook Creek.                                        |
|                                   | Monitoring and recording of water quality in streams and creeks in the Lake Colac catchment and estuaries along the Great Ocean Road.     |
|                                   | Revegetation of the Deepdene Reserve through an offset arrangement with VicRoads.                                                         |
|                                   | Management Plans developed and implemented for high conservation areas, for example Lake Colac, Barongarook Covenant and Poorneet Lane.   |
|                                   | Fire management regimes that enhance environmental values, for example Poorneet Lane and Deepdene Reserve.                                |
|                                   | Signage installed along high conservation roadsides.                                                                                      |
|                                   | Grassland restoration research at the Beeac Grasslands.                                                                                   |
|                                   | Ecological burns carried out in partnership with the CFA on high value areas.                                                             |

### 3.3 OBJECTIVES

**TABLE 9:**

*Council Managed Land Objectives (CMLO)*

| COUNCIL MANAGED LAND OBJECTIVES (CMLO) |   |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CMLO                                   | 1 | Undertake on-site environmental asset and threat assessments on Council managed land considered to have environmental value, and develop management plans to direct appropriate actions. |
| CMLO                                   | 2 | Ensure the protection and enhancement of environmental values on Council owned and managed land parcels.                                                                                 |
| CMLO                                   | 3 | Ensure the protection and enhancement of environmental values on Council managed roadsides.                                                                                              |
| CMLO                                   | 4 | Improve management of environmental threats on Council managed roadsides through implementation of strategic management actions.                                                         |
| CMLO                                   | 5 | Protect the listed high value areas through development and implementation of strategic management plans.                                                                                |
| CMLO                                   | 6 | Enhance the listed moderate value areas through implementation of strategic management actions.                                                                                          |
| CMLO                                   | 7 | Develop and implement an Open Space Strategy that acknowledges environmental values when Council is acquiring new land.                                                                  |

### 3.4 TARGETS

TABLE 10:

Council Managed Land Targets (CMLT)

| COUNCIL MANAGED LAND TARGETS (CMLT) |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CMLT                                | 1  | Undertake assessments of environmental assets and threats on Council Managed roadsides by 2010.                                                                                                   |
| CMLT                                | 2  | Develop a policy to ensure that when acquiring land as part of a sub-division it will be assessed against a selection criteria and priority given to areas with more environmental value by 2011. |
| CMLT                                | 3  | Develop a policy to ensure that when acquiring any land consideration will be given to environmental management requirements by 2011.                                                             |
| CMLT                                | 4  | Review and update the current roadside vegetation management plan and the environmental weed strategy by 2011.                                                                                    |
| CMLT                                | 5  | Continue to implement Councils existing management plans for Council owned and managed land and review progress by 2014. (e.g. Lake Colac Revegetation and Weed Control Plan).                    |
| CMLT                                | 6  | Undertake detailed assessments of environmental assets and threats on all Council managed land of high value and moderate value by 2014. (e.g. Marengo Flora Reserve).                            |
| CMLT                                | 7  | Develop and begin implementation of site specific management plans for all Council managed land of high value and moderate value by 2014. (e.g. Barham River Confluence).                         |
| CMLT                                | 8  | Continue to implement Councils existing management plans for Council owned and managed roads and review progress in 2014. (e.g. Poorneet Lane Management Plan).                                   |
| CMLT                                | 9  | Develop and begin implementation of site specific management plans for all high value roadsides by 2014. (e.g. Beeac-Dreeite Roadside).                                                           |
| CMLT                                | 10 | Develop and begin implementation of site specific management plans for all medium value roadsides by 2018. (e.g. Dewings Bridge Road Gerangamete).                                                |
| CMLT                                | 11 | Ensure that all management plans for high value Council managed land and roadsides consider issues associated with adapting to climate change.                                                    |

### 3.5 CLIMATE CHANGE

In order to achieve the targets set in the Strategy it is important to acknowledge that measures will need to be taken to adapt to climate change. Current modelling suggests that the Shire will have higher temperatures, lower annual rainfall and more frequent extreme weather events, meaning more floods and more wildfires. These changes may have a significant impact on the value scoring associated with Council managed land.

For example, the number of threatened species may increase resulting in an increase in the number of areas listed as high value. These issues reinforce the need for re-assessing Council managed land every four years to ensure climate change implications are being accounted for. In addition, all new management plans developed for high value areas will have a section outlining measures that will help ensure preservation of values under climate change scenarios.

LEFT: Carp swim in the receding Lake Colac

CENTRE: Carp removal from Lake Colac

BELOW: Revegetation activities on the southern shoreline of Lake Colac





*ABOVE: Pelicans take flight from  
Lake Colac*

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### 3.6 RELATIONSHIPS

#### EXTERNAL

For each area of land Council manages there are a unique set of external stakeholders that Council needs to work with in order to protect, enhance or restore environmental values. However in general terms the external key stakeholders include:

- DSE (e.g. Crown Land Manager Lake Colac and Council Managed Roadsides);
- Parks Victoria (e.g. Committee of Management for Lake Colac);
- DPI (e.g. weed management on private land); and
- Adjoining land holders or land managers (e.g. private land owners adjoining roadsides).

To ensure strong working relationships are established each area needs to be treated differently. In some cases where there are complex land tenure arrangements and community expectations a consultative committee may be established, for example the Weeds Consultative Committee formed in 2002 to direct Council's weed control works. The committee is chaired by a Councillor and has membership from various government agencies and environmental groups. In other cases it may be appropriate to simply write letters to adjoining landholders informing them of the values in the area, the management actions being undertaken and who to contact if they have any questions (e.g. high conservation roadsides).

There are a number of high value areas of Council managed land that form part of a larger environmental asset. Lake Colac is an example of this where Council is the Committee of Management for less than 10% of the area. Other examples include land that is a part of Lake Corangamite and the Barham River Catchment. Due to the importance of these environmental assets Council will advocate to the relevant stakeholders the importance of integrated catchment management. Accordingly these areas have been identified in the Advocacy and Facilitation section of the Strategy. By advocating and facilitating action through community driven groups such as the Lake Colac Consultative Committee and the Otway Barham Reference Group more holistic benefits can be achieved for the environment.

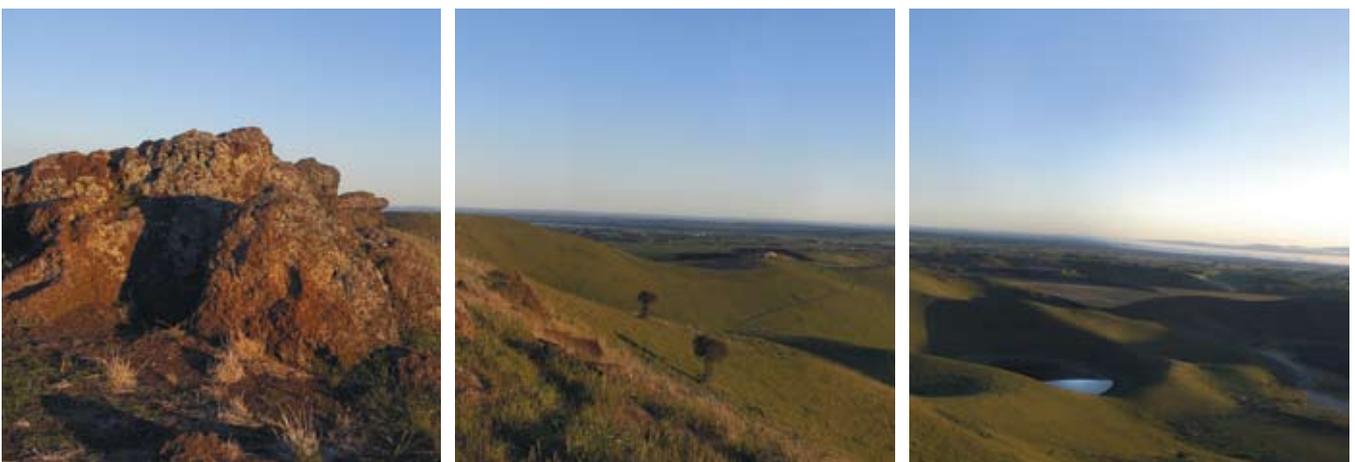
It is important to highlight that all new management plans developed for high value areas will be developed through consultation with key stakeholders. The plans will have a section outlining measures that will help ensure that the relationships with key stakeholders are strengthened to enable the best possible outcome.

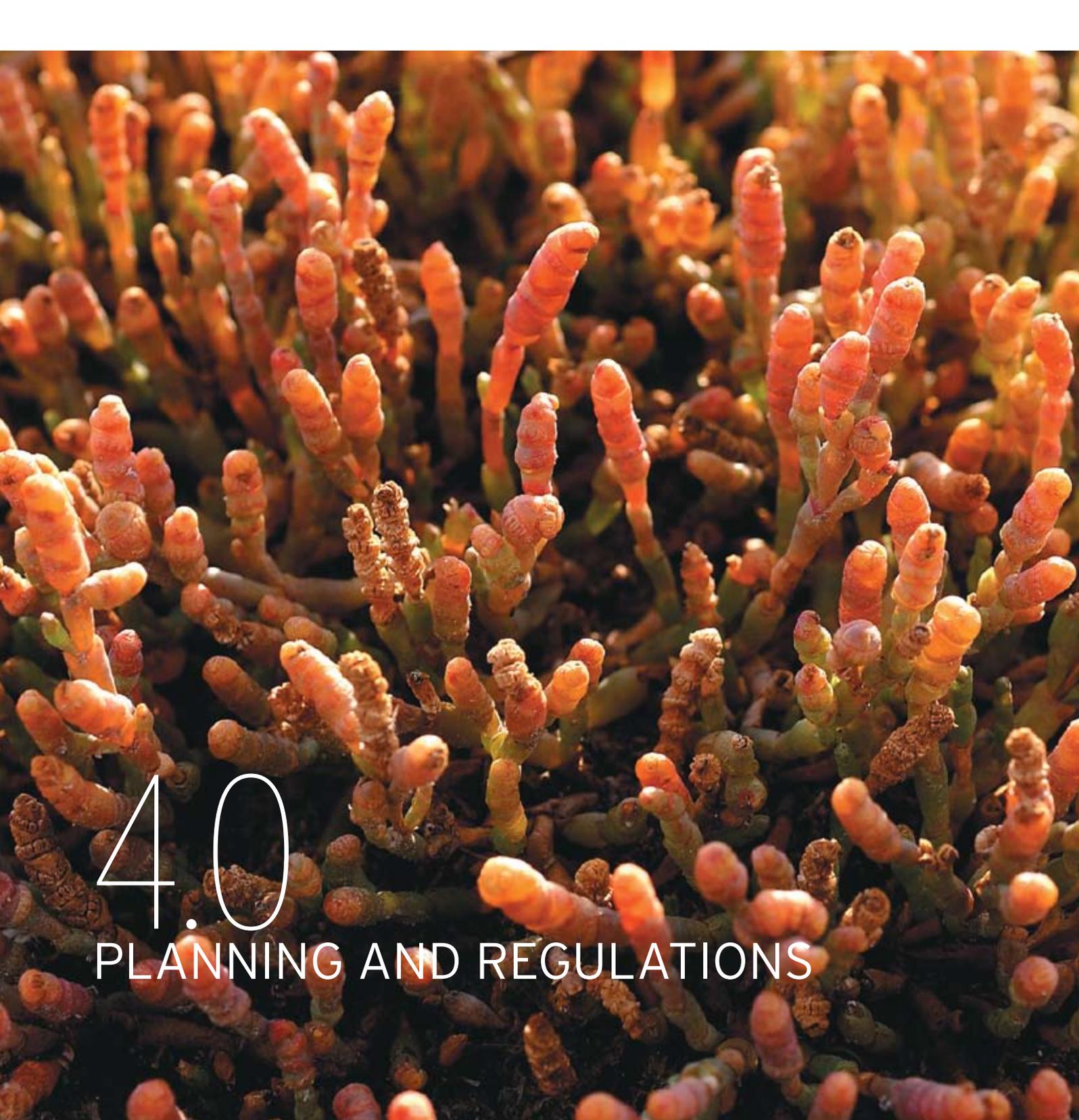
The picture below is of Red Rock which is not on the list of high conservation areas in *Table 7* because Council is only responsible for the road and the car park. However, it is an example of where Council needs to work with the surrounding land managers to preserve the values of the area.

#### INTERNAL

Strong internal relationships are also critical to improving management of Council managed land. Regular inter-departmental meetings along with internal referral processes have been implemented to ensure good communication particularly in areas with environmental sensitivity. On-site meetings are also being carried out in some cases to ensure all parties are clear on the prescriptions that need to be adhered to. The effectiveness of these processes needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure internal relationships are maintained and enhanced, particularly when new staff joins the Council. Council's Environment Unit will carry out these reviews and report to the Executive Management Team of Council if there are any issues that need to be rectified.

BELOW: The view from Red Rock





# 4.0 PLANNING AND REGULATIONS

**The Planning and Environment Act (1987) provides the legislative backing for the development of the Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme.**

The scheme sets out policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land in the Shire. Key provisions of the scheme are set by the State Government.

For example section 52.17 defines state wide provisions on native vegetation.

**Appendix 2** provides details on other key elements of the planning scheme (listed below) that Council has more ability to influence:

- Municipal Strategic Statement (Local Planning Policy Framework);
- Zoning; and
- Overlays.

*ABOVE: Salt-loving beaded glasswort grows on the edge of Lake Corangamite*

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It is important to note that Council is also responsible for regulating provisions under the *Environmental Protection Act* (e.g. littering and septic tanks), the *Country Fire Authority Act* (e.g. issuing of fire prevention notices) and codes of practice (e.g. *Code of Practice For Timber Production On Private Land*). Local Laws also provide Council with the ability to manage environmental issues, for example Council's Livestock Local Law has provisions to ensure that grazing of roadsides is carried out in an environmentally sensitive manner.

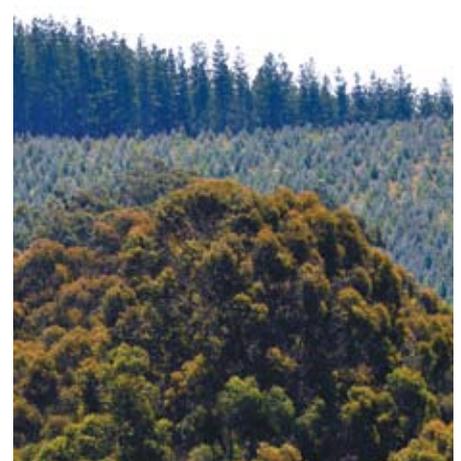
The administering and enforcement of the planning scheme and the other relevant regulations provides Council with the ability to influence environmental management across the landscape. However it is important to note that Council cannot make changes to the planning scheme or the regulations without an amendment being approved subject to prescribed public notices and consultation processes. Amendments may also need to be approved by another government agency. Therefore, although the planning scheme and regulations provide an opportunity for Council to significantly improve environmental management across the landscape. However making changes to the provisions is not within the complete control of Council. This needs to be appreciated when considering the targets set in this section of the Strategy.

## 4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

**TABLE 11:**  
*Planning and Regulation Achievements*

| PLANNING AND REGULATION ACHIEVEMENTS                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Updating the Municipal Strategic Statement, Local Planning Provisions (e.g. overlays) and completion of Amendment C55 providing direction for sustainable land use for the Shire. |
| Land use controls implemented through the Colac Otway Shire planning scheme to protect environmental values.                                                                      |
| Appointment of a Planning Enforcement Officer to implement a system to monitor and enforce planning scheme compliance with assistance from Local Laws.                            |
| Auditing of private forestry operations against the State Government code of practice and Council's Timber Harvesting Prescriptions.                                              |
| Climate change considerations for sea level rise in line with the Victorian Coastal Strategy.                                                                                     |
| Improved septic tank systems in proclaimed water catchments.                                                                                                                      |
| Improved water quality at Wye River, Separation Creek and Kennett River through septic tank improvements.                                                                         |
| Land management plans required for developments in areas with significant environmental values.                                                                                   |
| Processes for monitoring septic tank condition and enforcing replacement as required.                                                                                             |
| Reduction of litter on private land (silage wrap) through enforcement of regulations by Local Laws.                                                                               |
| Implementation of a strategic fire prevention programme that also considers the ecological benefits of fire (e.g. weed control).                                                  |
| Small town master plans developed that identify sustainability principles.                                                                                                        |
| Review of Council's Roadside Grazing Procedure to ensure environmental assets are protected.                                                                                      |

BELOW: A koala in the Great Otway National Park  
RIGHT: A bluegum plantation in the Otways



## 4.2 OBJECTIVES

**TABLE 12:**

*Planning and Regulation Objectives (PRO)*

| PLANNING AND REGULATION OBJECTIVES (PRO) |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRO                                      | 1 | Environmental Sustainability principles incorporated into new developments and storm water quality leaving residential, commercial and industrial environment and entering waterways and soil profiles is improved. |
| PRO                                      | 2 | Ensure the Planning Scheme contains the most up to date information with regards to overlays, associated schedules and controls that match.                                                                         |
| PRO                                      | 3 | Ensure the protection and enhancement of environmental assets on or near private land through land management plans and regulatory controls that are appropriately enforced.                                        |
| PRO                                      | 4 | Integrated fire prevention measures that also provide ecological benefits.                                                                                                                                          |
| PRO                                      | 5 | Achieve a net gain in the quality and quantity of native vegetation on private land.                                                                                                                                |

## 4.3 TARGETS

**TABLE 13:**

*Planning and Regulation Targets (PRT)*

| PLANNING AND REGULATION TARGETS (PRT) |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRT                                   | 1  | Incorporate most current environmental mapping into Councils planning scheme and review as required.                                                                                                        |
| PRT                                   | 2  | Develop and implement response strategies to environmental pollution events by 2011.                                                                                                                        |
| PRT                                   | 3  | Develop and commence implementation of an offset management procedure to manage native vegetation off-sets established across the Shire by 2011.                                                            |
| PRT                                   | 4  | Develop a Council Environmental Sustainability policy for the organisation that addresses opportunities for improving sustainability of new developments by 2012.                                           |
| PRT                                   | 5  | Implement a Council Environmental Sustainability policy for the organisation that addresses opportunities for improving sustainability of new developments by 2012.                                         |
| PRT                                   | 6  | Review the municipal strategic statement by 2014 and ensure climate change, salinity, sustainable land use and acid sulphate soils are recognised appropriately and are managed through statutory controls. |
| PRT                                   | 7  | Implement recommendations in the Colac Otway Shire Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, review the Plan's performance and renew by 2014.                                                                    |
| PRT                                   | 8  | Develop and implement standards for domestic wastewater treatment systems near waterways and in water supply and ground water recharge areas by 2014.                                                       |
| PRT                                   | 9  | Develop and commence implementation of an Integrated Fire Management Plan by 2014 for safety and ecological outcomes.                                                                                       |
| PRT                                   | 10 | Undertake audits of at least 20 properties with land management plans and 20 logging coupes every year with a target of 100% compliance by 2018.                                                            |

*BELOW: A paddock being irrigated at Alvie*

*RIGHT: Transport: climate change action has to come from all corners of our community*



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#### 4.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

In order to achieve the targets set in this section of the Strategy it is important to acknowledge that measures will need to be taken to not only adapt to but also prevent climate change. Planning and regulations can prepare the community to adapt to climate change impacts (e.g. sea level rise) but they can also prevent activities that will increase carbon emissions from the region (e.g. housing developments solely reliant on car usage).

Targets have been set in the Strategy to help achieve more sustainable developments that will result in reduced carbon emissions for new developments however targets have not been set specifically in relation to planning provisions for adapting to climate change. This is due to the complexity associated with this issue and the significant amount of research that is currently being undertaken to understand the implications of climate change (e.g. DSE Future Coasts Project). Until there is more certainty in this area (i.e. how much will the sea level rise?) Council has to rely on the information and guidance being provided by State and Federal Government agencies that have the expertise and resources to undertake the research and analysis required.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy (Victorian Coastal Council, 2008) sets out a section for climate change, highlighting that sea level rise and storm surges are significant issues. A minimum allowance of 0.8m is stipulated along with three adaption options:

- Protect (protection of beaches, dunes and infrastructure; land use and development);
- Accommodate (planning and building policies and provisions, redesign and rebuild); and
- Retreat (relocation of infrastructure, land use and development).

It is also important to note that the State Government is in the process of developing the Land and Biodiversity White Paper and a Climate Change White Paper. It is certain that these documents will have implications for how all Victorian local governments respond to climate change through planning and regulatory means.

#### 4.5 RELATIONSHIPS

##### EXTERNAL

There are many external stakeholders that Council needs to work with in order to administer the planning scheme and the various regulations. However in general terms the key stakeholders include:

- Department of Planning and Community Development (responsible for approval of planning scheme amendments);
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (referral authority for biodiversity and native vegetation matters);
- Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (referral authority for land subject to inundation and works on water ways permits);
- Country Fire Authority (referral authority for land subject to wild fire);
- Environmental Protection Authority (sets regulations for littering and septic tanks);
- Department of Primary Industries (sets regulations for forestry on private land); and
- Permit applicants (e.g. private land owners adjoining roadsides).

To ensure strong working relationships are established and maintained each circumstance needs to be treated differently. In some cases there are many parties who need to be engaged (e.g. planning scheme amendments) while in other areas it may be appropriate to meet with only the permit applicant informing them of the values in the area, the management actions required and who to contact if they have any questions.

Where Council is monitoring compliance and where enforcement measures are required it is particularly important that all the key stakeholders have a clear and transparent relationship. In such cases Council will ensure that stakeholders are kept informed of all developments in writing and rely on strong relationships with other relevant authorities to ensure that mixed messages are not being given to the community. Where strong relationships exist often an on-site meeting can be undertaken to expedite a resolution satisfactory to all parties.

##### INTERNAL

It is important to highlight that activities undertaken by Council (e.g. capital works projects) are almost always subject to requirements under the planning scheme and the various regulations. Therefore strong internal relationships are critical to ensuring Council works are carried out appropriately. Regular inter-departmental meetings along with internal referral processes have been implemented to ensure good communication particularly in areas with environmental sensitivity. On-site meetings are also being carried out in some cases to ensure all parties are clear on the prescriptions that need to be adhered to.

The effectiveness of these processes needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure internal relationships are maintained and enhanced particularly when new staff joins the Council. Council's Environment Unit will carry out these reviews and report to the Executive Management Team of Council if there are any issues that need to be rectified.



# 5.0

## PHYSICAL WORKS AND GENERAL SERVICES

**Physical works and general services are carried out by Council on behalf of the community and include everything from road works to rubbish collection.**

*ABOVE: Odonate (otherwise known as a dragonfly or damselfly) shell*

This section covers a wide range of works, each with its own set of regulations and legislative requirements.

Physical works are defined as any works of a physical nature, encompassing both capital and maintenance works.

Capital works are defined as building and engineering works that create an asset, as well as constructing or installing facilities and fixtures.

These works typically include construction of buildings, roads and bridges.

Maintenance works are undertaken to maintain existing assets in working condition.

These keep an asset functioning and do not enhance the asset significantly. This is in contrast to capital works on an existing asset, which will substantially change or improve the asset through expansion or upgrades.

General services include a myriad of activities including the ongoing provision of street lighting; rubbish collection; street sweeping and trimming of trees along roadsides. General services also covers the purchasing of equipment (e.g. computers) as well as general purchases (e.g. stationary and catering) Council is required to undertake as part of the provision of general services.

The environmental management approaches for physical works and general services can be divided into the two categories; environmental considerations and environmental outcomes. Environmental considerations are required when undertaking a project or programme that is aimed primarily at addressing a different issue. For example, when purchasing new vehicles the primary aim is to have affordable vehicles that allow Council staff to get from A to B safely in a timely manner.

Consideration is given to fuel efficiency but not at the cost of achieving the primary aim. In contrast physical works and general services that aim to provide environmental outcomes have environmental objectives as the primary aim. For example the Kennett River Wetland was constructed primarily to prevent degradation of the river by trapping nutrients coming from the town.

This distinction between whether works or services require environmental considerations and whether they are aimed primarily at achieving an environmental outcome needs to be understood when considering the targets set in this section of the Strategy.

## 5.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

**TABLE 14:**

*Physical Works and General Services Achievements*

| PHYSICAL WORKS AND GENERAL SERVICES ACHIEVEMENTS |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.                                               | Formation of the Sustainability Working Group to oversee implementation of the Greenhouse Action Plan and the Sustainable Water Use Plan through investment from Council's Sustainability Action Fund.                                              |
| 2.                                               | Energy conservation and carbon emission reduction measures implemented. Examples include: implementation of more efficient lighting in Council facilities; and a light fleet policy encouraging the purchasing of more fuel efficient vehicles.     |
| 3.                                               | Water conservation measures implemented. Examples include: retrofitting of public toilets; and water management action plans for major Council water users (i.e. Blue Water Fitness Centre, Sale Yards, Botanic Gardens, Central Reserve).          |
| 4.                                               | Significant increases in green purchasing each financial year. Examples include: recycled paper; and recycled materials used in street furniture.                                                                                                   |
| 5.                                               | Improved Recycling and Green Waste management processes to reduce landfill waste and a reduction in non organic litter in public spaces through implementation of receptacles for waste.                                                            |
| 6.                                               | Active involvement in recognised sustainability programmes such as ECOBuy, Waste Wise, Cities for Climate Protection, and the Barwon Region Waste Management Group.                                                                                 |
| 7.                                               | Improved project management processes that recognise values and minimise impacts to ensure environmental protection for works carried out by Council and by contractors on behalf of Council.                                                       |
| 8.                                               | Improved Stormwater Management. For example: installation of seven Gross Pollutant Traps in Colac and Apollo Bay; and construction of the Kennett River Wetland.                                                                                    |
| 9.                                               | Regular water quality monitoring for Wye River, Kennett River, Skenes Creek, Birregurra and Lake Colac.                                                                                                                                             |
| 10.                                              | COSworks has an ISO1401 accredited Environmental Management System. This has led to a reduction in the number of stockpile and dump sites located throughout the Shire and improvements in vehicle hygiene practices to reduce the spread of weeds. |
| 11.                                              | Environmental management plans required for major events approved through Council.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 12.                                              | Council policy that directs routine vehicle hygiene measures for works crews.                                                                                                                                                                       |

BELOW: Skenes Creek



## 5.2 OBJECTIVES

**TABLE 15:**

*Physical Works and General Services Objectives (PWGSO)*

| PHYSICAL WORKS AND GENERAL SERVICES OBJECTIVES (PWGSO) |    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PWGSO                                                  | 1  | All Council programmes, projects, services, plans and policies to have environmental considerations incorporated into them that aim to demonstrate the current best management practices. |
| PWGSO                                                  | 2  | Council policy that encourages purchasing of more environmentally friendly services and products.                                                                                         |
| PWGSO                                                  | 3  | Implementation and review of the Greenhouse Action Plan to reduce Council's energy use.                                                                                                   |
| PWGSO                                                  | 4  | Implementation and review of the Sustainable Water Use Plan to reduce Council's water use.                                                                                                |
| PWGSO                                                  | 5  | Reduced waste entering landfill by increasing the amount of waste being re-used or recycled.                                                                                              |
| PWGSO                                                  | 6  | Environmental credentials of lessees, contractors and service providers assessed in selection processes to encourage best environmental management practices.                             |
| PWGSO                                                  | 7  | A Green Business Network established using green marketing tools to encourage more businesses to become more environmentally responsible in their operations.                             |
| PWGSO                                                  | 8  | Identify water quality issues that pose a threat to environmental health and take appropriate action.                                                                                     |
| PWGSO                                                  | 9  | Protect sensitive areas from pollution through improved stormwater and waste water management.                                                                                            |
| PWGSO                                                  | 10 | Environmentally Sustainable Development practices for all capital works carried out by Council.                                                                                           |
| PWGSO                                                  | 11 | Environmental management incorporated into all events carried out in the Shire.                                                                                                           |
| PWGSO                                                  | 12 | Ensure cultural heritage values are protected during works carried out by the Shire.                                                                                                      |

## 5.3 TARGETS

**TABLE 16:**

*Physical Works and General Services Targets (PWGST)*

| PHYSICAL WORKS AND GENERAL SERVICES TARGETS (PWGST) |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PWGST                                               | 1  | Maintain regular water quality monitoring at nine waterway sites across the region and place results on the Council website every three months.                                                                        |
| PWGST                                               | 2  | Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with local aboriginal groups, to ensure protection of cultural heritage and to engage them in environmental management initiatives by 2011.                                      |
| PWGST                                               | 3  | Develop and implement a criteria for assessing the environmental credentials and plans of contractors, in a manner appropriate for the nature and scope of the works by 2011.                                          |
| PWGST                                               | 4  | Develop and implement a Council Environmental Sustainability policy to direct Council's programs, projects, processes and services by 2012 and undertake audits to ensure compliance.                                  |
| PWGST                                               | 5  | A total of 65% recovery rate (by weight) of waste produced through Council operations for re-use, recycling or energy generation by 2013.                                                                              |
| PWGST                                               | 6  | Develop an Environmental Management System that encourages best management practices for all Council programmes, projects, services, plans and policies by 2014 and investigate having it ISO14001 accredited by 2016. |
| PWGST                                               | 7  | Council to improve water use efficiency by implementing Water Management Action Plans for Council facilities that consume more than 10ML per year and review progress by 2014.                                         |
| PWGST                                               | 8  | Obtain Waste Wise certification for 11 major Council facilities by 2014.                                                                                                                                               |
| PWGST                                               | 9  | Implement the recommendations of the Colac Otway Stormwater Management Plan and review progress in 2014.                                                                                                               |
| PWGST                                               | 10 | Waste Wise certification requirement for all Council approved community events and festivals held within the Shire by 2014.                                                                                            |
| PWGST                                               | 11 | Council to increase green purchasing to 2.5% of total operating budget by 2014 and to 5% by 2018. (Note: Total operating budget includes human resource expenditure).                                                  |
| PWGST                                               | 12 | Council to become Carbon neutral (zero net emissions) by 2016.                                                                                                                                                         |
| PWGST                                               | 13 | Council to satisfy 15% of its water consumption requirements through rainwater harvesting or treated water by 2016. (Note this will require flow metres to be placed on rainwater tanks to measure usage).             |

## 5.6 CLIMATE CHANGE

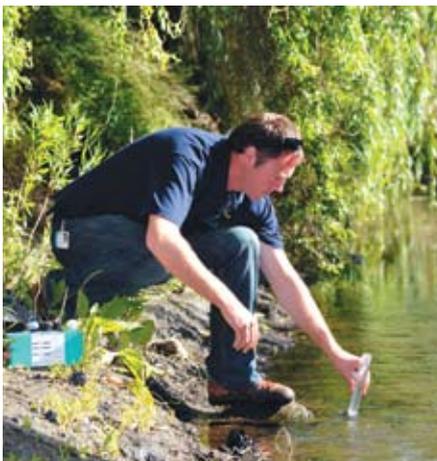
Physical works and general services will need to adapt to climate change but the targets set in the Strategy focus on reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. Achieving the targets set in this section of the Strategy will dramatically reduce Council's carbon footprint. Physical works may need to be changed or maintenance regimes changed to adapt to climate change impacts.

For example an increase in the number of extremely hot days each year will cause roads to warp and crack and increase maintenance requirements. Reduced average rainfall, an increase in wild fire events and sea level rise will also have impacts on Council assets that will need to be managed. Targets have not been set for adaptation due to the complexity of predicting impacts.

However Council's capital works programme needs to consider the latest research findings and try to account for the increased costs that may be incurred as a result of climate change. New information is being published regularly and more specific targets may be able to be identified in the review of the strategy in 2014.

*"This is a good opportunity for the Shire to demonstrate leadership...!"*

- Beech Forest Forum Participant



## 5.7 RELATIONSHIPS

### EXTERNAL

There are many external stakeholders, groups and organisations that Council needs to work with in order to carry out physical works and general services. Some of the key stakeholders include:

- Environmental organisations (e.g. ECOBuy, Waste Wise and the Barwon Region Waste Management Group);
- Environmental networks (e.g. Landcare Networks and the Local Government Environment Officer Network);
- Business networks (e.g. Otway Business Inc., Otway Tourism and the Apollo Bay Chamber of Commerce and Tourism);
- Contractors (e.g. engineering companies); and
- Lessees (e.g. sporting clubs).

To ensure strong working relationships are established and maintained each works project or service needs to be treated differently. In some cases there are many parties who need to be engaged (e.g. construction of a new council building) while in other cases it may be only a small number of parties (e.g. the purchase of paper for printing and photocopying). In some cases a stakeholder committee may be developed to ensure the programme is undertaken effectively.

### INTERNAL

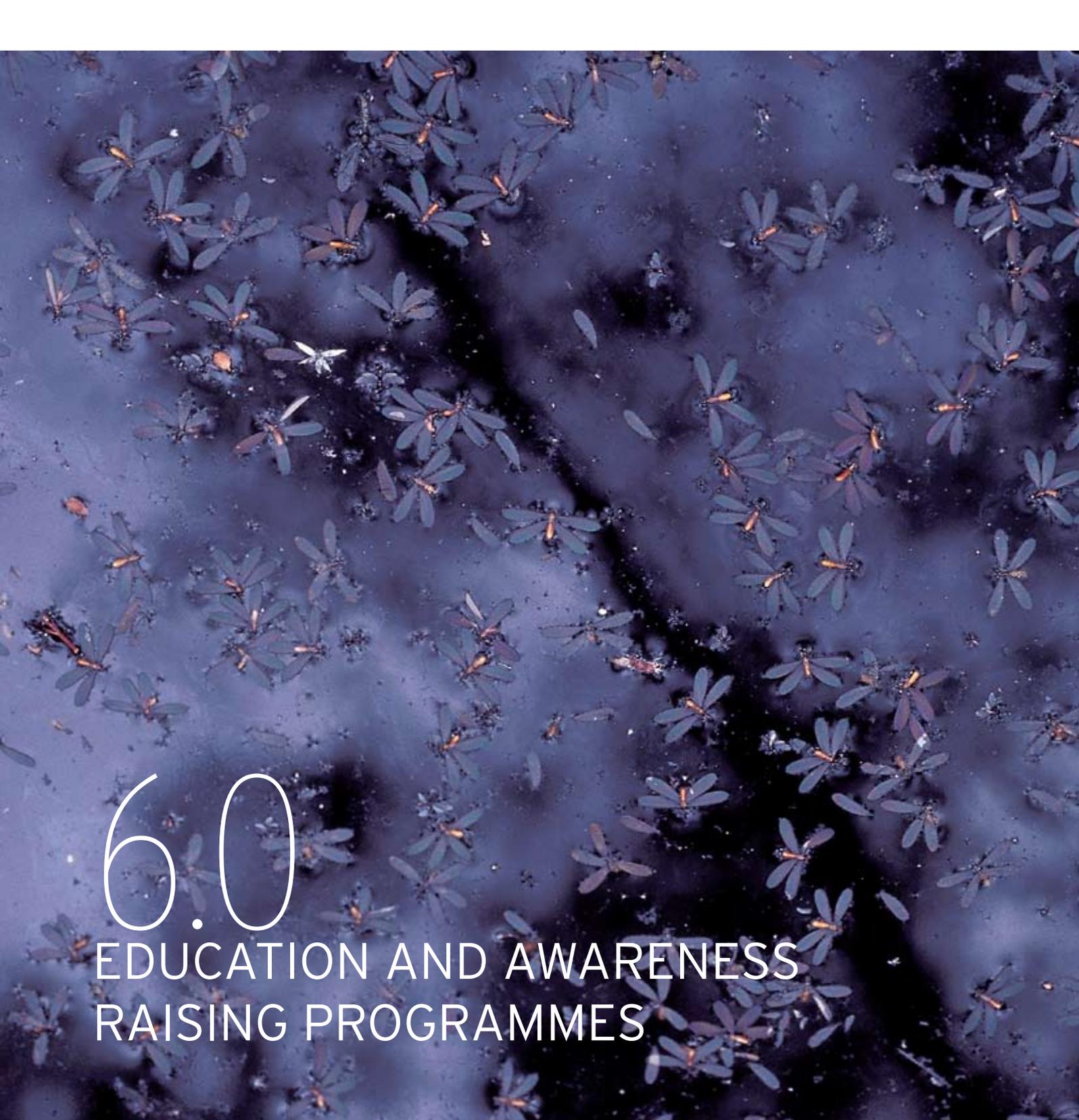
It is important to highlight that strong internal relationships are critical to ensuring works and services are carried out appropriately. As previously stated regular inter-departmental meetings along with internal referral processes have been implemented to ensure good communication particularly in cases with environmental sensitivity. On-site meetings are also being carried out in some cases to ensure all parties are clear on the prescriptions that need to be adhered to.

These internal processes are strengthened through two other environmentally focused working groups. The Sustainability Working Group was formed in 2007 to oversee implementation of the Greenhouse Action Plan and the Sustainable Water Use Plan through investment from Council's Sustainability Action Fund. The group is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of Council and is critical to achieving the targets set in this section of the strategy.

A Water Managers Working Group was formed in 2008 to provide a coordinated response on strategic water management issues and initiatives. The current drought and the threat posed by climate change demand that even more attention be given to the strategic management of water. The Water Managers Working Group, chaired by the General Manager for Infrastructure and Services, is also critical to achieving the targets set in this section of the strategy.

The Environment Unit within Council provides a critical role in ensuring that the internal relationships are maintained. The Environment Unit provides the executive support for the two working groups described above and will monitor the effectiveness of these processes to ensure internal relationships are maintained and enhanced particularly when new staff joins Council. Council's Environment Unit will carry out these reviews and report to the Executive Management Team of Council if there are any issues that need to be rectified.

LEFT: Colac Otway Shire Council's Simon Howland water testing Barongarook Creek



# 6.0

## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING PROGRAMMES

**To create a community that is prepared to address the environmental challenges, Council must encourage environmental values and develop skills of the people that live and work in the Shire including Council staff. Importantly, education and awareness raising build people's capacity to innovate and implement solutions independently.**

Education and awareness raising are not the only means to improve environmental management by the general community.

Other measures referred to in the Strategy include, legislation, planning scheme provisions, regulation and demonstration of best management practices.

With its focus on knowledge, skills, values and behaviour, education and awareness raising are critical tools in achieving enduring change.

However the prospects of success in implementing change are enhanced when the tools are integrated.

*ABOVE: Termites form an abstract pattern*

Therefore the Strategy seeks to ensure that education and awareness raising targets are integrated with the targets outlined in the previous sections of the Strategy.

The education and awareness raising programme presented in the Strategy has three core elements:

1. Demonstrating leadership through Council's own policies, programmes and operations;
2. Working with business and industry on incentives for change such as improved efficiencies, cost savings and corporate reputation; and
3. Harnessing community spirit to act by creating opportunities for local communities to get involved in local projects and for individuals to take action in their own lives.

## 6.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

**TABLE 17:**  
*Education and Awareness Achievements*

| EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACHIEVEMENTS |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                      | Demonstration of environmental management through Council Operations (e.g. achievements outlined in previous sections for Council managed land and Council operations).                                                                                          |
|                                      | Education and training for Council staff on relevant legislation and sites of biodiversity significance.                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                      | Facilitating businesses to participate in VIC 1000, a Sustainability Victoria programme that assesses the environmental impacts of a business and helps to implement changes.                                                                                    |
|                                      | Increased community and Council awareness of the environmental significance of the region and the major environmental issues through various initiatives (e.g. regular Environmental Column in local paper and Community education workshops on various issues). |
|                                      | Annual community events that provide people an opportunity to learn about what they can do to help the environment (e.g. National Tree Day, Earth Hour and World Environment Day).                                                                               |
|                                      | Improved resource and energy use by the community through provision of information (e.g. sustainable living guide on Council website).                                                                                                                           |
|                                      | Improved weed management by the community through provision of information on environmental weeds (e.g. Weed identification pamphlet).                                                                                                                           |

*"Don't be afraid to think big - small groups can achieve great things"*

- Apollo Bay Forum Participant

## 6.2 OBJECTIVES

**TABLE 18:**  
*Education and Awareness Objectives (EAO)*

| EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OBJECTIVES (EAO) |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EAO                                      | 1 | Increase and then maintain Community awareness of environmental management actions being undertaken by Council.                                                                                                                                                                |
| EAO                                      | 2 | Increase and then maintain Council staff and Councillors understanding of the environmental values/issues in the Shire, relevant environmental legislation and regulation along with the associated agencies in the sector and relevant Council processes and policies.        |
| EAO                                      | 3 | New Council staff and Councillors to be inducted on the environmental values, programmes and policies for the Shire.                                                                                                                                                           |
| EAO                                      | 4 | Increase the awareness of the business community on opportunities to improve efficiency through improved environmental management and also the potential marketing benefits.                                                                                                   |
| EAO                                      | 5 | Increase and maintain community understanding of the environmental values/issues in the Shire, relevant environmental legislation and regulation along with the associated agencies in the sector and provide information to help them be more sustainable in their own lives. |
| EAO                                      | 6 | Provide various opportunities for the community to be involved in local environmental projects and to form groups that carry out ongoing works.                                                                                                                                |

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6. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING PROGRAMMES

## 6.3 TARGETS

TABLE 19:

Education and Awareness Targets

| EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TARGETS (EAT) |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EAT                                   | 1 | Maintain regular updates on environmental initiatives undertaken by Council through monthly media releases and highlight significant achievements in a detailed advertorial placed in local papers every two years.        |
| EAT                                   | 2 | Develop ongoing 'general' and 'issue specific' training programmes for Council staff and Councillors addressing major issues in the Shire and relevant environmental/cultural heritage legislation and regulation by 2011. |
| EAT                                   | 3 | An environmental/cultural heritage induction process for new Council staff and Councillors to be developed and initiated by 2011.                                                                                          |
| EAT                                   | 4 | Develop and promote a web based information package targeted at local businesses and industry and identify any specific training needs by 2011.                                                                            |
| EAT                                   | 5 | Develop and promote a web based information package targeted at the general community and identify any specific training needs by 2011.                                                                                    |
| EAT                                   | 6 | Develop and implement an ongoing training programme for local business', industry and community by 2014.                                                                                                                   |
| EAT                                   | 7 | Provide a minimum of two environmental community days each year and support Landcare Groups to carry out ongoing works where community interest is sufficient.                                                             |

## 6.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

Achieving the targets set in this section of the Strategy will help reduce the communities' carbon footprint and raise awareness of actions Council is taking to reduce carbon emissions in order to demonstrate to the community ways to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

## 6.5 RELATIONSHIPS

There are many external stakeholders, groups and organisations that Council needs to work with in order to carry out education and awareness raising programmes.

Some of the key stakeholders include:

- Government and Statutory bodies (e.g. Sustainability Victoria);
- Environmental Networks (e.g. Landcare Networks);
- Business Networks (e.g. Otway Business Forum); and
- Local community groups (e.g. Progress Associations).

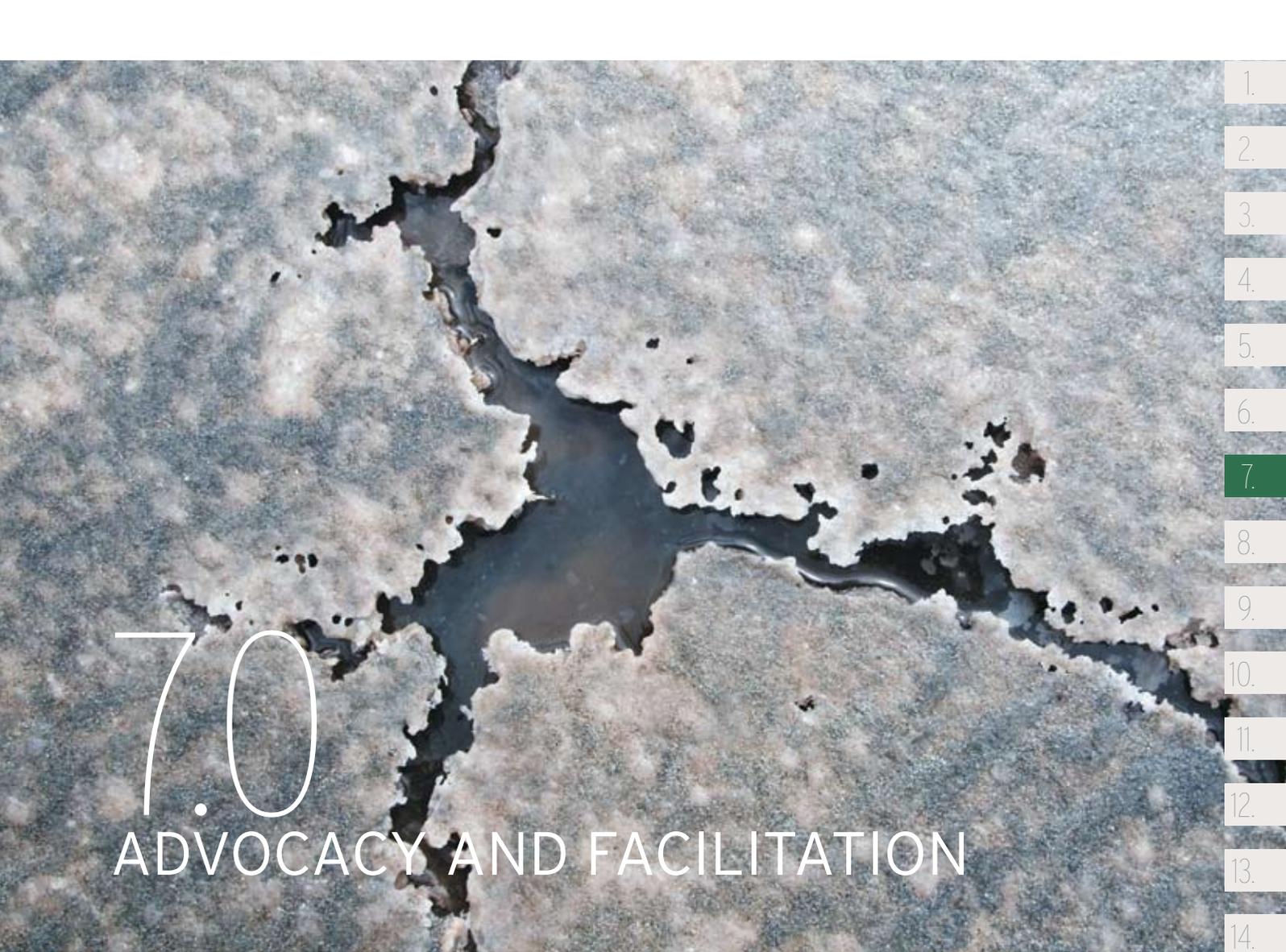
To ensure strong working relationships are established and maintained each programme needs to be treated differently. In some cases there are many parties who need to be engaged to organise an event (e.g. World Environment Day activities) while in other cases a small number of technical experts need to be engaged to develop an information package (e.g. Environmental weed pamphlet).

As stated in previous sections of the strategy a number of internal mechanisms already exist to ensure regular communication. These mechanisms will be critical to developing appropriate actions to achieve the two targets (i.e. EAT 2 and EAT 3) set in this section of the Strategy that focus on Council staff and Councillors. Council's Environment Unit will lead this process and use existing networks (e.g. the Weeds Consultative Committee) to ensure the education and awareness raising programmes are effective.

LEFT: See the light and help our environment with energy-efficient lightglobes

BELOW: Planting for the future - Barongarook Creek





# 7.0 ADVOCACY AND FACILITATION

**As previously stated the focus of the Strategy is on areas Council can control or strongly influence. Areas outside of this focus area that are important to Council and the community are identified in this section to direct Council's efforts to advocate concerns or issues on behalf of the community.**

Council has identified a number of the recommendations in the State of the Environment Report Victoria 2008 that are of high importance to the local community. Each of these, as well as additional issues identified through the community engagement process, is listed in *Table 20*.

Council recognises the importance of these issues and commits to advocating concerns and/or facilitating progress on behalf of the community with the relevant stakeholders.

*"A bottom up, community-developed plan for collective action, based on community priorities and agreed outcomes is needed."*

- Apollo Bay Forum Participant

ABOVE: Salt crust at Lake Corangamite

As part of this process, Council will determine what method will be used to advocate on behalf of the community.

Possible methods include:

- Asking questions;
- Offer advice;
- Facilitate discussion with relevant parties; and/or
- Facilitate community action.

Given that Council resources are limited the Strategy identifies an advocacy process shown in *Figure 7* that ensures appropriate resources are dedicated to a specific issue. It is important to highlight that the process allows new issues to be identified and added to the list in *Table 20* as they arise. When the issue is raised by the community it is first examined by the SWG. The SWG prepares a report for Council Executive that decides whether Councillors should be briefed on the issue. If so, Councillors make a decision in relation to the approach Council should take on the issue and the community will be notified on the decision.

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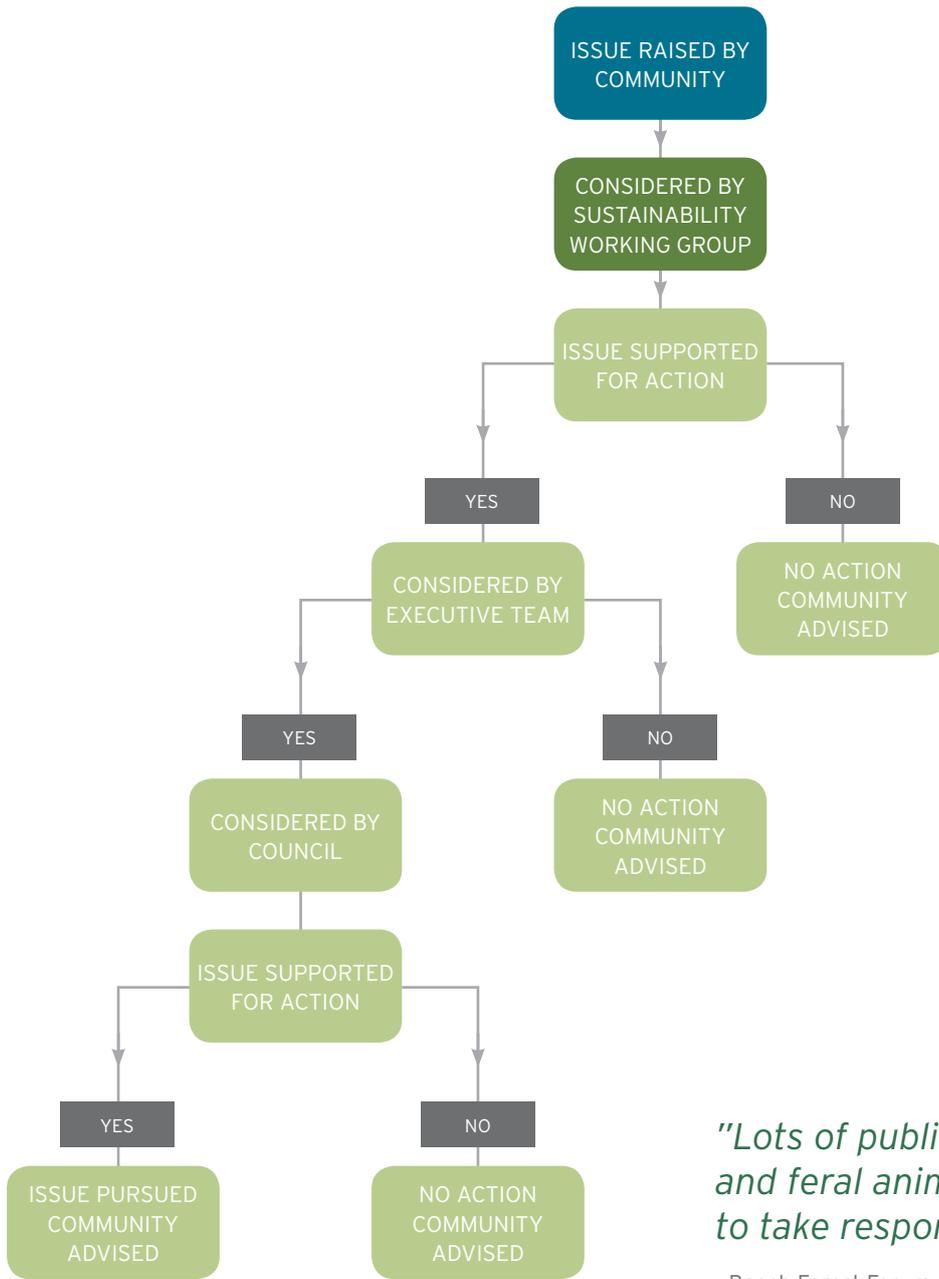
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7. ADVOCACY AND FACILITATION

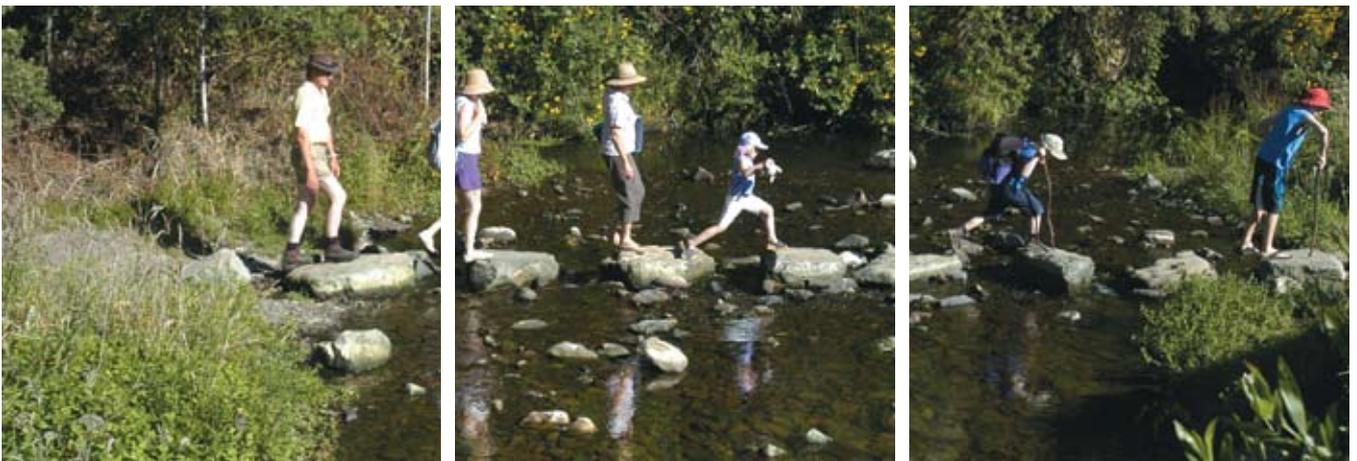
**FIGURE 7:**  
Advocacy and Facilitation process



*"Lots of public land is full of weeds and feral animals and no one seems to take responsibility"*

- Beech Forest Forum Participant

BELOW: Marriner's stepping stones



**TABLE 20:**  
*Advocacy and Facilitation Issues*

| ADVOCACY AND FACILITATION ISSUES                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Climate Change                                              | <p>The need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate a response to the increased risk of extreme weather events that are arising from climate change.</li> <li>Increase the knowledge and understanding of the impacts of climate change on the environmental values of inland waters; including risks posed by soil acidification and issues associated with dry lakes.</li> <li>Update the Victorian Coastal Strategy as outcomes of the Future Coasts project become known.</li> <li>Ensure mechanisms are established to provide information to local governments to assist in planning decisions that may be impacted by climate change.</li> <li>Establish processes/mechanisms to ensure the inflow of information from State Government to Local Government and the community.</li> <li>Advocate to State and Federal Governments on Climate Change and reducing Victoria's and Australia's carbon emissions.</li> </ul> |
| Sustainable Resource Use and Waste Management               | <p>The need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a set of national, mandatory minimum standards for water and energy use efficiency in new appliances, homes, commercial and government premises and subdivision design.</li> <li>Increased water efficiency performance thresholds expected from the 5 star building standards that include stormwater quality objectives and energy use objectives.</li> <li>Increased numbers of local businesses in the region certified through ECOBuy and Waste Wise programmes.</li> <li>Investigation increasing the quality of treated water (e.g. Class A) to encourage wider community use.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Soil Health                                                 | <p>The need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the soil surface pH map layer to indicate the current soil pH status.</li> <li>Develop and implement an Acid Sulphate Soil strategy, which identifies risk areas and extend it to inland areas and also develop statutory controls for local government.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Native Plant, Animal and Habitat Protection and Enhancement | <p>The need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify where offsets are located and ensure they are being tracked by DSE.</li> <li>Ensure that DSE has adequate resources to assess the additional vegetation clearing permit applications being referred by local governments.</li> <li>Increase promotion of the threats to grassy ecosystems and the protection under state and federal regulation to the community.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Pest Plants and Animal Control                              | <p>The need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate resources for a regular review of the Noxious Weeds list to ensure that the <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act</i> is informed by accurate and up-to-date listings of weed species threatening Victoria's environment and economic productivity.</li> <li>Clarification on the roles and responsibilities for management of regionally controlled weeds along roadsides and develop strategies to adequately support implementation.</li> <li>An investigation of how to effectively develop partnerships with the broader community to achieve weed and pest animal control, since these problems occur across tenures.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Waterway Protection and Enhancement                         | <p>The need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scientific rigour of groundwater management and the practice of managing surface and groundwater as a single inter-connected system.</li> <li>Improved management of Ramsar wetlands (e.g. Lake Corangamite), to ensure the obligations of the Convention are met.</li> <li>Updated and streamlined governance arrangements to facilitate protection and restoration of all water frontages, including Crown Land.</li> <li>Integrated catchment management of Lake Colac and the Barham River.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Coastal and Marine Protection and Enhancement               | <p>The need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the implications of population pressure, including the impact of tourism.</li> <li>Update the Victorian Coastal Strategy as outcomes of the Future Coasts project become known.</li> <li>Improve the health of estuaries, coastal dunes and marine environments.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Community Action                                            | <p>The need to provide support to local communities to develop local solutions and initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address local food security and develop local community Peak Oil Action Plans.</li> <li>To identify targets for reducing community water and energy use (e.g. 20% reduction against 2010 levels by 2018).</li> <li>To explore various sustainability initiatives (e.g. plastic bag free) for local communities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



# 8.0

## TWO YEAR ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

**Implementation of the Strategy will be achieved through the development of an action plan every two years. The two year action plan (the Plan) will identify priority projects and programmes that will address the targets and objectives presented in this Strategy.**

ABOVE: Waterplants form a textural image

The Plan will identify the following details for each of the projects and programmes identified:

- The target being addressed;
- The Council business unit responsible for implementation;
- Possible funding sources;
- Possible partners;
- Relevant internal and external documents; and
- Key Milestones and dates for completing the actions.

The Plan development process is shown in *Figure 8*. The process will begin at the start of July and be completed by the end of September. This approach has been adopted to allow budget requests to be submitted in line with Council's annual budget process. This process comprises of four main major elements:

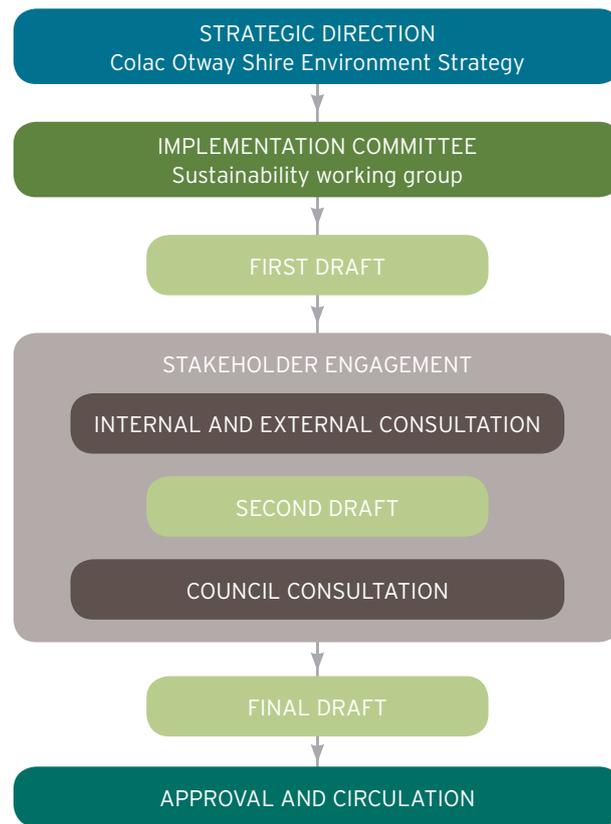
- Strategic Direction;
- Implementation Committee;
- Stakeholder Engagement; and
- Approval and Circulation.

## 8.1 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The targets and objectives identified in the Strategy will form the strategic direction for the development of the Plan. Therefore, actions that do not contribute to achieving the targets in the Strategy will not be included in the Plan. However as previously stated the Strategy will be reviewed in 2014 and as a result new objectives and targets may be incorporated at this time.

**FIGURE 8:**

*Two Year Action Plan Development Process*



## 8.2 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee will be appointed to manage the process and rationalise information in order to develop drafts of the Plan. It is proposed that Council's Sustainability Working Group (SWG) be the responsible group for this process and their current Terms of Reference revised to include details that reflect this role and responsibility.

The committee will be responsible for identifying actions that will address the targets listed in the Strategy. Understandably, developing actions that address these issues will require open discussions and advice from various departments. The SWG is an appropriate committee for this process given that it is chaired by Council's Chief Executive Officer and has a range of representatives from across the organisation. This process also allows for consideration of the resources required, the urgency, the feasibility and capacity to carry out the works.

## 8.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engaging internal staff is critical to the Plan development process. Given that staff across Council will be responsible for implementing the actions listed, it is crucial that they have time to assess the actions and determine if they are achievable.

Therefore the first draft of the Plan will be provided to key external stakeholders and the Managers in Council to discuss with their staff. Their feedback will then be taken back to the SWG and incorporated into the second draft of the Plan.

The second draft will then be provided to Councillors for consideration. The feedback from Councillors will be taken back to the SWG and incorporated into a final draft of the Plan.

## 8.4 APPROVAL AND CIRCULATION

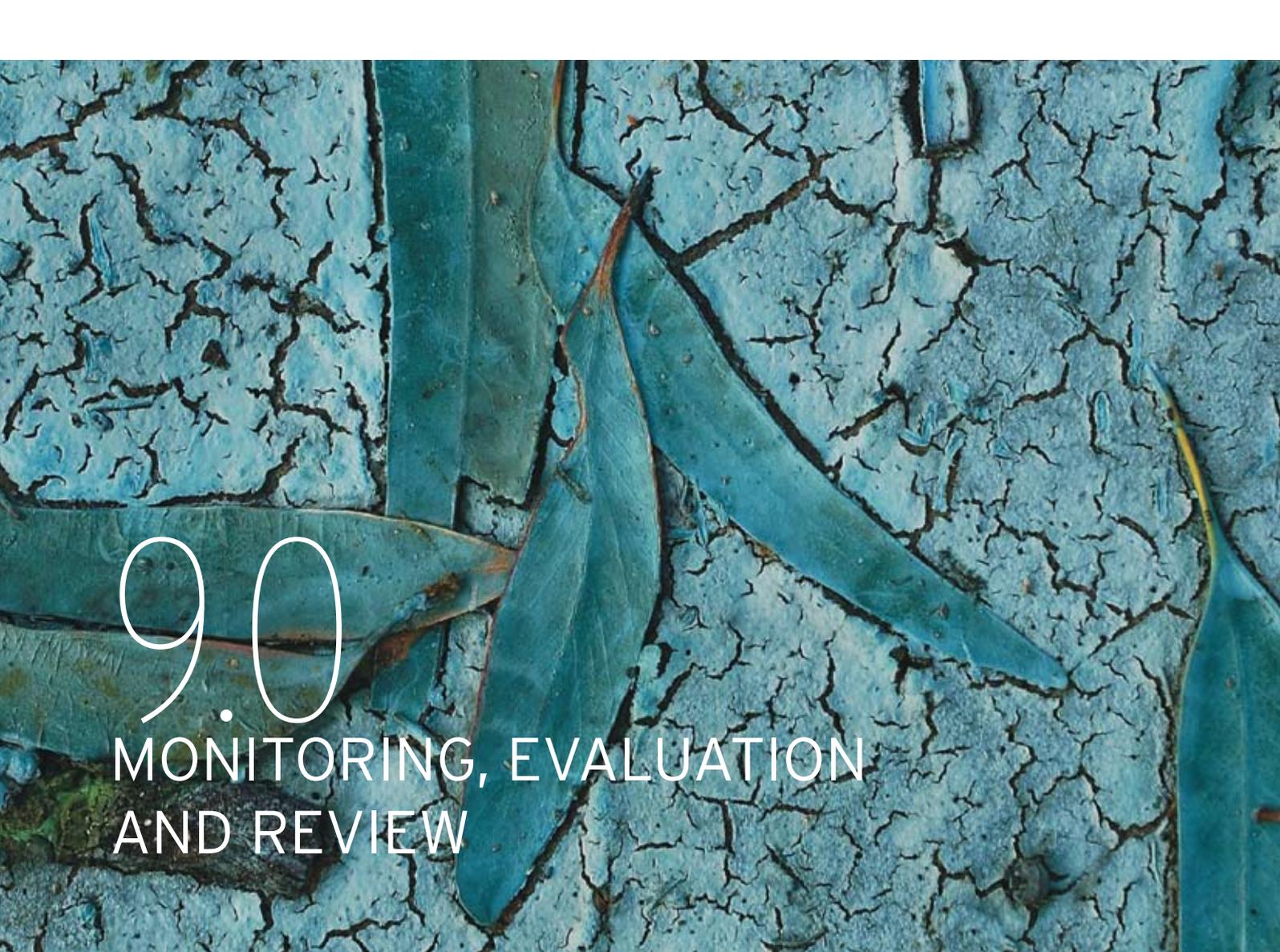
Once the committee agrees on a final draft of the Plan it will be formally approved by Council before it is circulated.

The Plan will be placed on Council's website to enable the community to view it. Hard copies of the Plan will only be provided upon request.

The business unit within Council identified against each action in the Plan will ensure the action is included in their Business Plan for the next financial year. It is important to note that business units will need to submit budget requests for any actions that require additional funds.

There is no guarantee that any budget request will be approved. Where possible external funds will be sought to carry out the actions.

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# 9.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

**The actions that are ultimately carried out through the implementation of the Strategy will be reported on through Councils' business planning software (Interplan).**

Interplan allows a report to be generated that draws out progress reports for the environmental actions being carried out across the various business units in Council.

This will allow progress against the targets in the Strategy to be monitored and also allow annual reporting to Council to be done in a clear and efficient manner.

As shown in *Figure 4* the information gathered will in turn inform the development of the next two year action plan and the next four year Council Plan. In addition target EAT 1 requires that a detailed advertorial be placed in local papers every two years highlighting Council's performance against the Strategy.

In some cases more detailed monitoring and evaluation at the project or programme scale will be required. For example systems need to be installed to effectively monitor resource consumption for all Council operations.

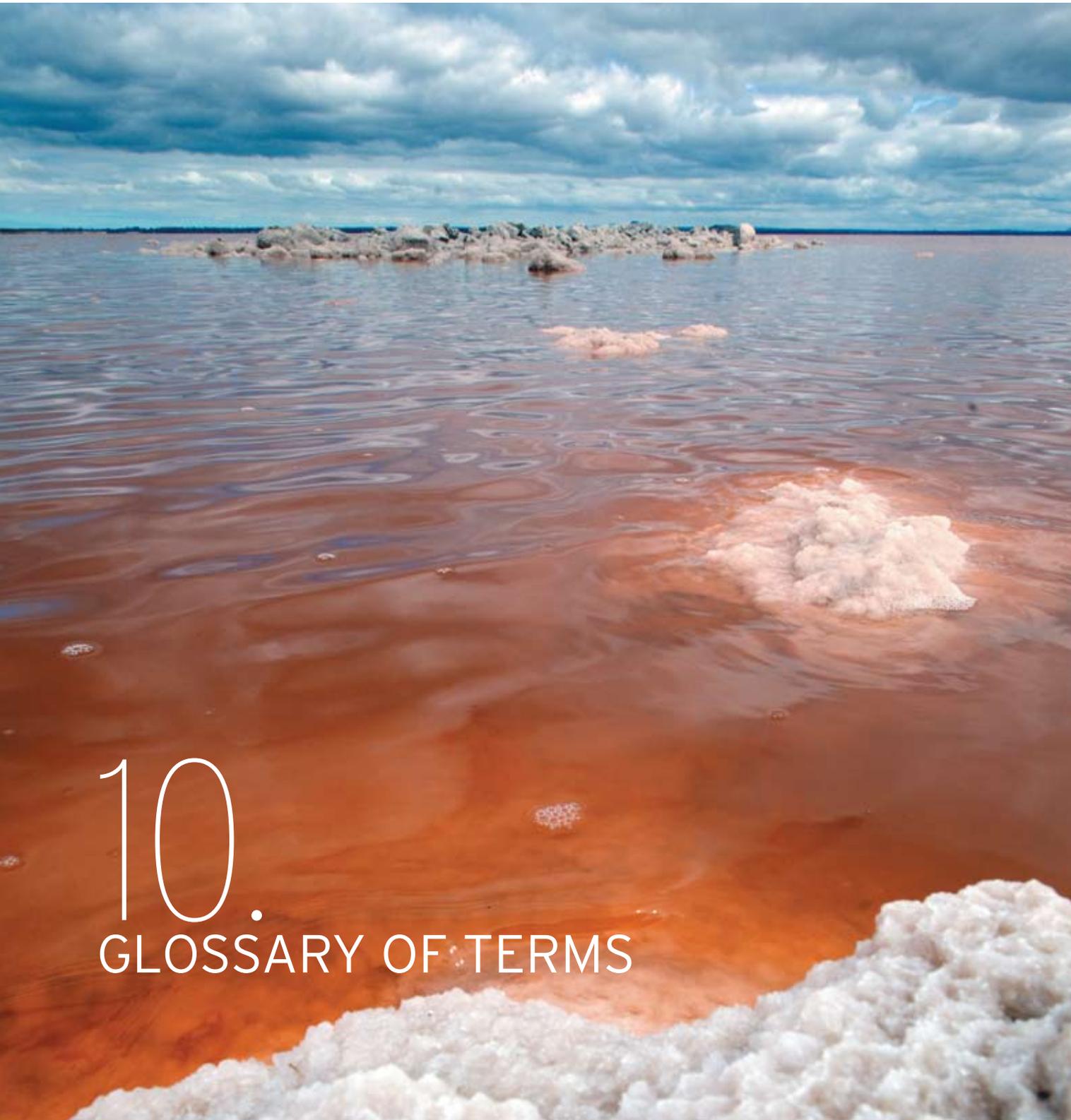
Where Council is monitoring its own compliance it is particularly important that where possible Council's performance is validated through independent assessments (e.g. Waste Wise or ECOBuy).

It is worth noting that a target has been set to develop an environmental management system (EMS) for Council. If achieved an EMS would provide a rigorous process for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing Council's environmental management performance and facilitate continuous improvement.

In addition if external auditing is carried out as part of ISO14001 accreditation processes this information will further corroborate Council's progress against the targets set in this Strategy.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Review findings will be critical to informing the review of the strategy in 2014 and to enable further improvement at the sunset of the Strategy in 2018.

*ABOVE: Eucalypt leaves and blue-green algae on a dry creek bed*



# 10.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABOVE: Salt-loving algae turns  
Lake Corangamite pink

### Best Practice

Managing and implementing activities in ways that are designed to achieve agreed and beneficial environmental outcomes and performance targets based on the most current knowledge and experience.

### Biodiversity

Is the totality of the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. It is the natural wealth of the earth, which supplies all of our food and much of our shelter and raw materials.

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### **Carbon Neutral**

Commonly refers to a situation where the net emissions associated with a product or an organisation's activities are equal to zero through the acquisition and retirement of carbon offsets that meet an accepted set of criteria. It is important to note that Council will strive to meet the National Carbon Offset Standards but given that Council does not intend to take part in the emissions trading scheme a set of criteria will be developed that are adapted to the Colac Otway Shire's needs.

### **Catchment**

An area of land that drains naturally to its lowest point.

### **Cities for Climate Protection Programme**

An international programme initiated by the International Council for Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and now being run by Council's around Australia.

### **Climate Change**

A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

### **Conservation**

The protection, preservation and careful management of natural resources.

### **Council's Operating Budget**

Council's operating and capital works budget, excluding salaries.

### **Ecological footprint**

A concept that defines a theoretical area of land (hectares per person) needed to provide products for human consumption as well as that required for waste disposal.

### **Ecologically Sustainable Development**

Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes are maintained and the total quality of life now and in the future can be increased.

### **Ecosystem**

A community of organisms interacting with one another plus the environment in which they live and with which they also interact.

### **Environmental Weed**

A weed is a plant out of place. Most pest plants or environmental weeds are plants that have spread from the home garden into bushland, roadsides and foreshore areas that degrade the habitat value.

### **Fauna**

The collective name for the animals or animal life of any particular region.

### **Flora**

The collective name for the plants or plant life of any particular region.

### **Green Power**

Energy derived from renewable resources (i.e. wind, water, solar, biomass).

### **Green Purchasing**

Green or environmentally preferred products are defined as products and services that are less damaging to human health and the environment than competing products and services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider the source of raw materials, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, potential for reuse and recycling, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product.

### **Gross Pollutant Trap**

A structural device placed within the stormwater drainage system to collect litter and debris washed into drains.

### **Habitat**

The normal abode or locality of an animal or plant.

### **Indigenous**

Native or original to an area, not introduced from outside the particular region or environment.

### **Integrated Catchment Management**

The management of all the components of catchment assets and their inter-relationships in a cooperative and coordinated manner.

### **Municipal Strategic Statement**

Is a concise statement of the key strategic planning, land use and development objectives for the municipality and the strategies and actions for achieving the objectives. It is within the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme.

### **Net Gain**

Is where, over a specified area and period of time, losses of native vegetation and habitat, as measured by a combined quality-quantity measure (habitat hectare), are reduced, minimised and more than offset by commensurate gains.

### **Noxious Weed**

A plant proclaimed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*.

### **Ramsar**

Refers to wetlands listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance which was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Australia is a signatory to the treaty which aims to halt the loss of wetlands and to conserve through wise use and management.

### **Remnant Vegetation**

Any patch of native indigenous vegetation remaining in an area where most or all of the original distribution has been removed.

### **Renewable Resource**

Natural resources that come from an essentially inexhaustible source (i.e. solar energy from the sun).

### **Riparian**

The area adjacent to the edge of a waterway, including the banks.

### **Stormwater**

Is runoff from hard surfaces like roads, roofs, pavements and car parks.

### **Sustainability**

The simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, social equity and environmental quality.

### **Triple Bottom Line**

The concept of using a range of economic, environmental and social parameters together to measure outcomes or performance.

### **Water Sensitive Urban Design**

A philosophical approach to urban planning and design that aims to minimise the hydrological effect of urban development on the surrounding environment.

### **Wetlands**

Areas of either permanent or ephemeral (temporary) shallow flooding with water that can be fresh, brackish or saline.



# 11. REFERENCES

ABOVE: The eastern shoreline of Lake Corangamite

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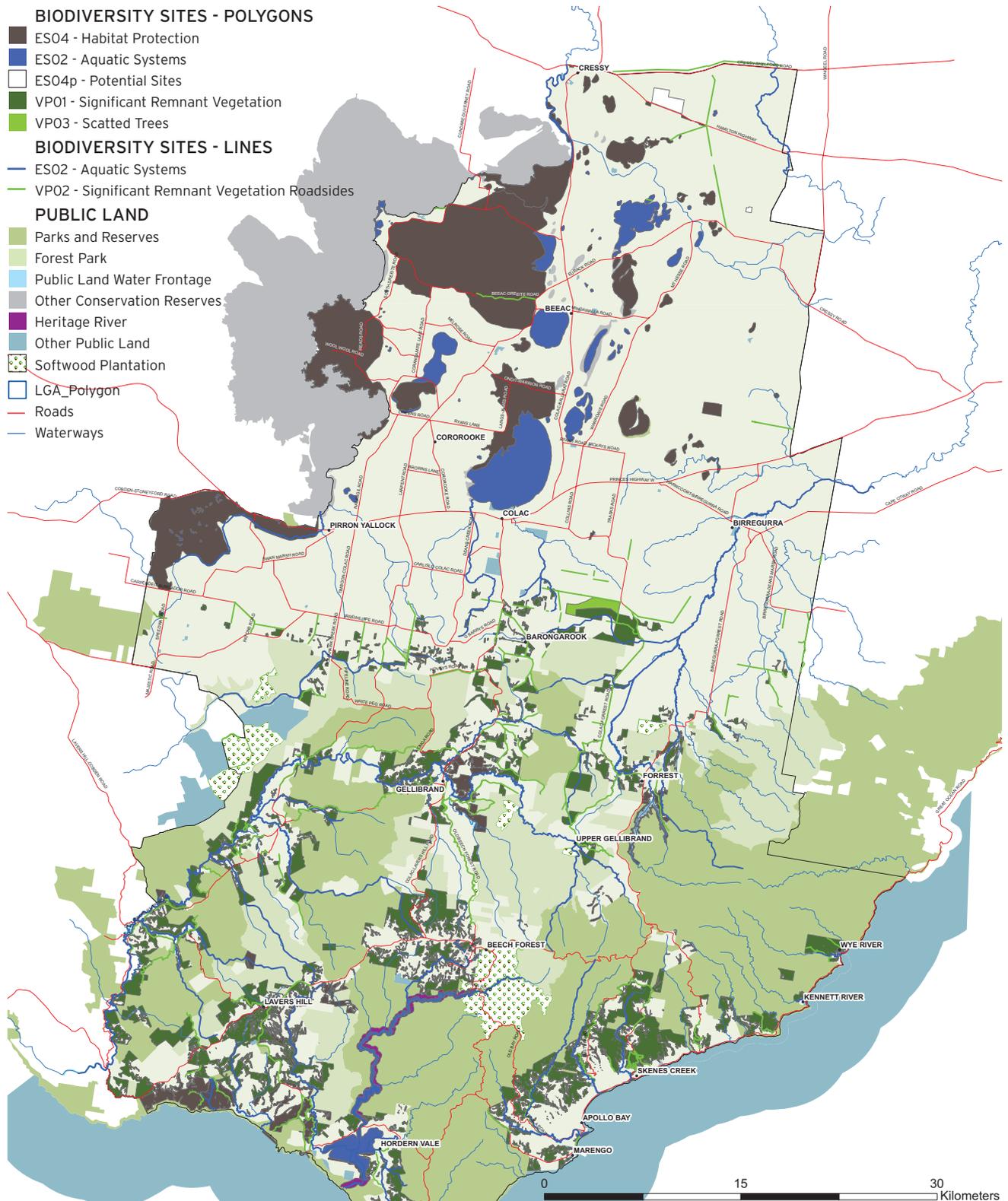
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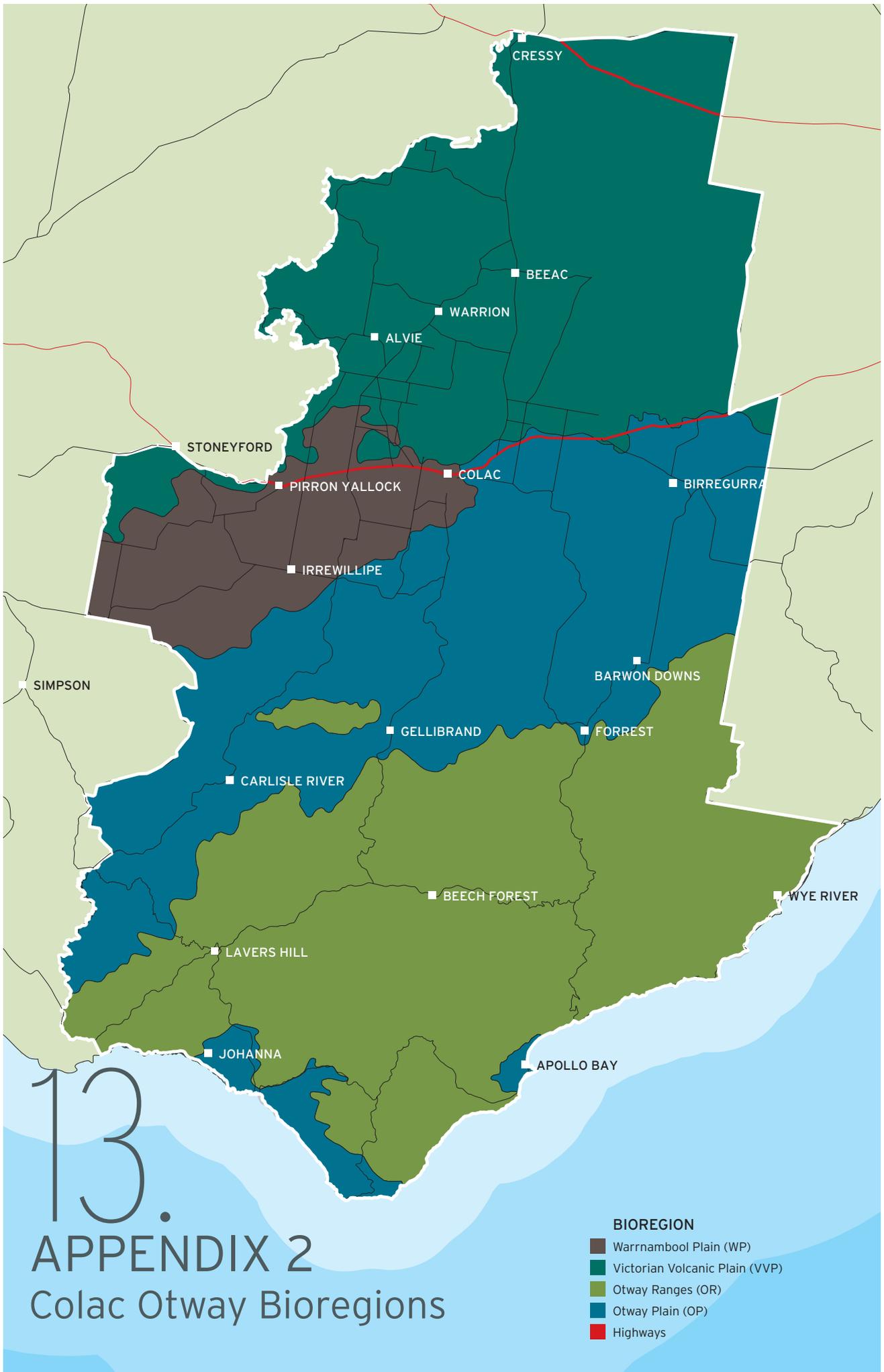
## APPENDIX 1

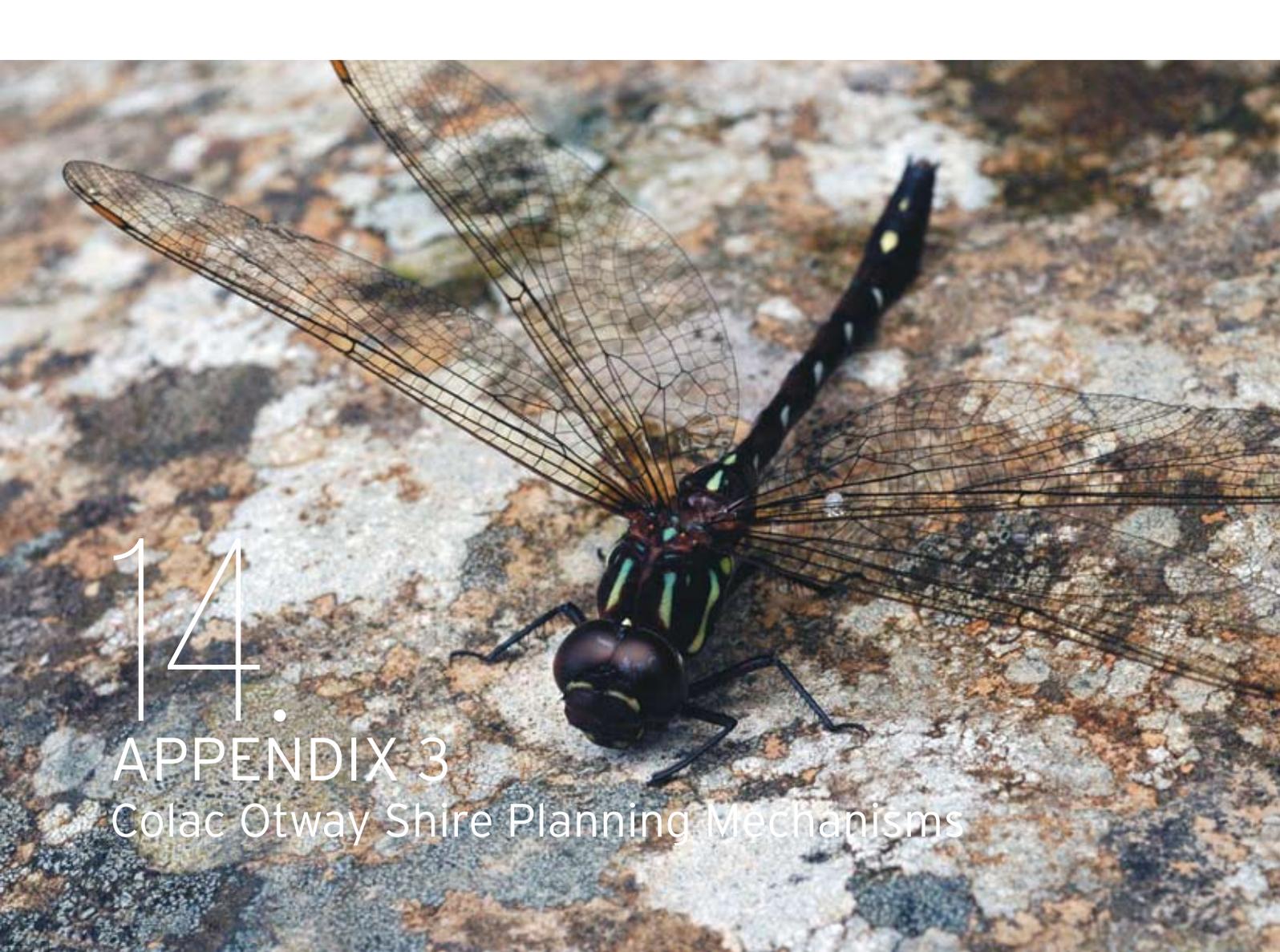
### Sites of Biodiversity Significance

*Note: The 2009 map is not part of the Council's planning scheme at the time of printing this document*

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12. APPENDIX 1 13. APPENDIX 2





# 14.

## APPENDIX 3

### Colac Otway Shire Planning Mechanisms

ABOVE: A dragonfly suns itself on a rock

#### **Municipal Strategic Statement**

An important part of Council's planning scheme is the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). The MSS provides the broad outline and vision for existing land use within this municipality. It provides the strategic basis for the application of the zones, overlays and particular provisions in the planning scheme and decision making by the responsible authority.

#### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic Planning is land use planning for a whole municipality, setting out the vision for what the municipality should look like and how it should function. It is important because it provides a policy framework to plan for the future needs of an area. It seeks to influence the direction of change to achieve the greatest overall benefit to existing and future residents.

From an environmental perspective, strategic planning identifies ecological assets within the Shire, under direction from the MSS, and then selects appropriate land zoning and overlays available in the Victorian Planning Provisions that will protect these assets.

## Statutory Planning

Statutory Planning is the everyday process of dealing with applications for a planning permit. A planning permit may be issued for the use of land or buildings and to carry out building and works or subdivision of land. Examples of when planning decisions are involved include a new residential development, a subdivision or land to be rezoned to allow for different uses.

Statutory Planning protects the environment through the considerations of the land zoning and overlays pertaining to a specific application, as the specific values identified in these provisions will be considered in the decision making process.

The enforcement and compliance process of the planning scheme is addressed through statutory planning.

## Planning Overlays

Overlays affect subdivisions, buildings and works. They operate in addition to the zone requirements and generally concern environmental, landscape, heritage, built form, and land and site management issues.

Council must decide whether the proposal will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the State Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Policy Framework, and the purpose and decision guidelines of the overlay.

Table 21 lists two of the environmental overlays in the Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme, with brief description provided for each. Each overlay aims to implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.

## PLANNING PERMITS AND CONDITIONS

A planning permit is required if the planning scheme states that an activity can only be undertaken if a permit is granted. A planning permit is not required if the planning scheme states that the activity may be undertaken without a permit. Planning permits must not be confused with building permits. Building permits are issued under the Victoria Building Regulations and generally relate only to the constructional aspects of a building or other development. A range of conditions can be placed on a planning permit that ensures works are undertaken with respect to certain standards.

## ZONES

A zone controls land use and development. Each zone includes a description of its purpose and the requirements that apply regarding land use, subdivision and the construction and carrying out of buildings and works. Each zone lists land uses in three sections:

*Section 1 - Uses that do not require a permit.*

*Section 2 - Uses that require a permit.*

*Section 3 - Uses that are prohibited.*

Uses that are not specifically mentioned are covered by a reference to 'any other use'. This is usually found in Section 2, but is occasionally found in Section 3.

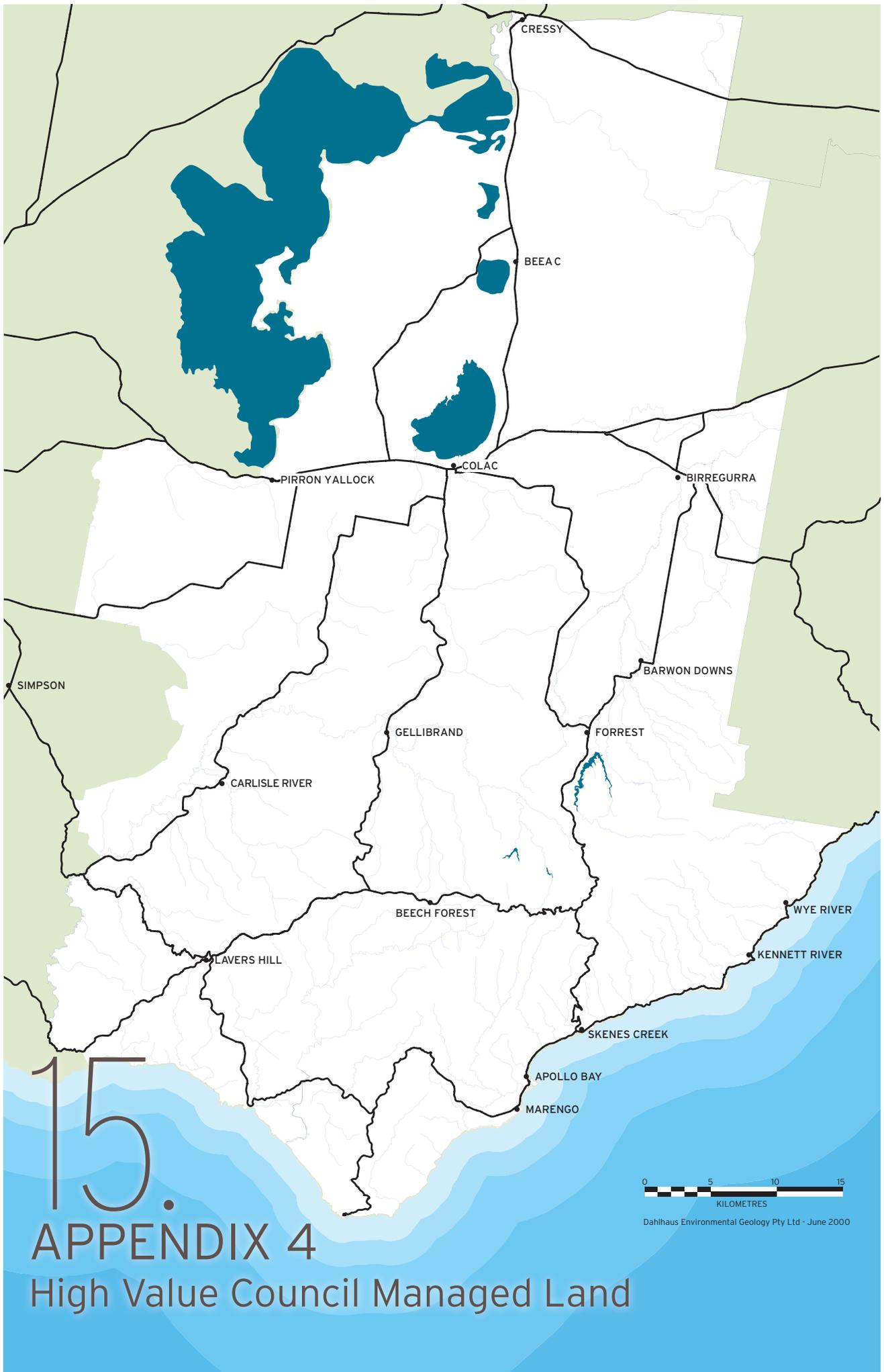
Sometimes a use in Section 1 or Section 2 must meet specified

conditions. If these are not met, the use may require a permit or may be prohibited. Note that the three sections refer to the use of land, not to the development of land.

Development of land includes the construction of a building, carrying out works (such as clearing vegetation), subdividing land or buildings, or displaying signs. The zones indicate whether a planning permit is required to construct a building or carry out works. Some buildings and works, such as fences and underground services, usually do not require a permit. These are listed in Clause 62 of the scheme under Uses, buildings, works, subdivisions and demolition not requiring a permit.

**TABLE 21:**  
*Planning Overlays*

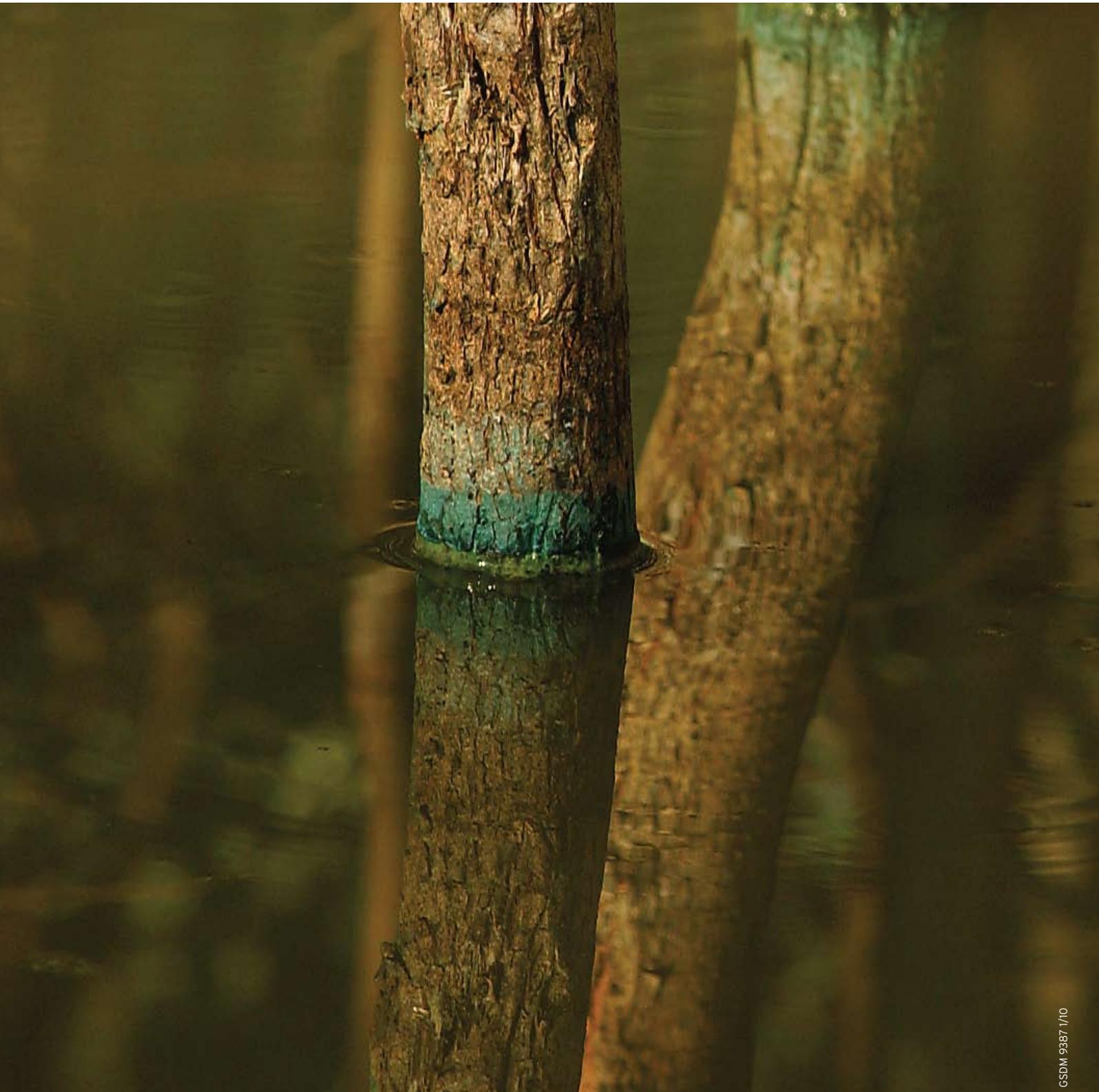
| OVERLAY                                  | PURPOSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints; and</li> <li>To ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO)      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect areas of significant vegetation;</li> <li>To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation;</li> <li>To preserve existing trees and other vegetation;</li> <li>To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance;</li> <li>To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna; and</li> <li>To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation</li> </ul> |



# ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

## ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

| FULL NAME                                                  | ACRONYM      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Catchment and Land Protection Act                          | CALP Act     |
| Corangamite Catchment Management Authority                 | CCMA         |
| Cities for Climate Protection                              | CCP          |
| Country Fire Authority                                     | CFA          |
| Council Land Management Objectives                         | CLMO         |
| Council Land Management Targets                            | CMLT         |
| Department of Sustainability and Environment               | DSE          |
| Education and Awareness Objectives                         | EAO          |
| Education and Awareness Targets                            | EAT          |
| Environment Management System                              | EMS          |
| Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act | EPBC Act     |
| Environment Strategy Steering Committee                    | ESSC         |
| Ecological Vegetation Community                            | EVC          |
| Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act                              | FFG Act      |
| Geelong 21                                                 | G21          |
| Gross Pollutant Traps                                      | GPT          |
| International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives  | ICLEI        |
| Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement      | LESPTS       |
| Monitoring, evaluation and review                          | MER          |
| Municipal Strategic Statement                              | MSS          |
| Planning and Regulation Objectives                         | PRO          |
| Planning and Regulation Targets                            | PRT          |
| Physical Works and General Services Objectives             | PWGSO        |
| Physical Works and General Services Targets                | PWGST        |
| Roadside Conservation Advisory Committee                   | RCAC         |
| Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely     | SMART        |
| Square kilometres                                          | sq km        |
| Sustainability Working Group                               | SWG          |
| The Local Sustainability Accord                            | The Accord   |
| Colac Otway Shire Council                                  | The Council  |
| Colac Otway Shire                                          | The Shire    |
| Colac Otway Shire Environment Strategy 2010-2018           | The Strategy |
| Terms of Reference                                         | TOR          |
| Victorian Volcanic Plain                                   | VVP          |



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