

Managing Belfast Coastal Reserve

Draft Management Plan
Summary
January 2018

The Belfast Coastal Reserve Draft Management Plan

Parks Victoria has released the Belfast Coastal Reserve Draft Management Plan for community feedback. The plan outlines proposed management directions for the Reserve over a 15-year time frame, aimed at protecting and improving the scenic beauty, biodiversity, cultural heritage and community enjoyment of the area.

The Belfast Coastal Reserve protects a narrow section of public land on the coastline between Port Fairy and Warrnambool in south-west Victoria (a map included at the back of this summary). The reserve is backed by flat open farmland, creating a sense of remoteness from nearby Warrnambool and Port Fairy.

The Belfast Coastal Reserve Draft Management Plan outlines the proposed management of this reserve, with a focus on protecting and enhancing its outstanding cultural and natural values, while allowing for recreation and use that is compatible with the protection of those values.

The plan recognises the importance of active and evidence-based management, and the need to improve our understanding of the reserve through shared scientific, cultural and local community knowledge.

About this summary

This document provides a high-level introduction to the vision and key management themes of the plan.

Please note: The rationale, themes and strategies are spelled out in much greater detail in the full draft plan, which we recommend reading before completing a submission.

Full draft plans are available in both print at local Council and Parks Victoria offices, or online at www.engage.vic.gov.au/belfast

How to have your say

Parks Victoria wants to hear your thoughts on the draft plan so that the final version reflects how you and your community feels about the future management of the reserve. You can obtain a copy of the draft plan in three ways:

- download a copy from the project website – www.engage.vic.gov.au/belfast
- collect a printed copy from Moyne and Warrnambool Council offices, libraries, and the DELWP offices. Call **13 1963** for more details.
- pick-up a copy at a community event, details online.

You can provide comments in several ways:

- complete a written submission form and send a letter setting out your comments to:

**Manager, Park Planning
Parks Victoria, Level 10, 535 Bourke St
Melbourne VIC 3000**

- complete an electronic submission form and email to parksplan@parks.vic.gov.au, or
- complete an online submission at www.engage.vic.gov.au/belfast

Please note: Feedback must be received prior to 16 March 2018 to be considered in the final plan.

What happens to your submission?

We will carefully consider all submissions when preparing the final management plan for approval.

Privacy

Names of individuals and groups submitting comments will be published in the final plan and supporting documents unless you mark your submission as 'CONFIDENTIAL'.



Killarney Beach, Belfast Coastal Reserve

Belfast Coastal Reserve, 15 years from now...

Belfast Coastal Reserve is an important cultural landscape on Victoria's south-west coastline, recognised for its scenic beauty, environmental attributes and cultural significance. Effective, coordinated management of the reserve has been achieved within a framework of strong partnerships across agencies, local Traditional Owner groups, neighbouring land owners, volunteers and community groups.



Locals and visitors coming to the reserve continue to enjoy walking, bird-watching, fishing, swimming, dog-walking, picnicking and nature study. The location, timing and intensity of activities such as horse riding has been managed to avoid conflicts between uses, and to reduce the risk of damage to the environment and cultural sites. Locals and tourists appreciate the 'wild feel' of Belfast Coastal Reserve, which is easily accessed from the busier areas of Warrnambool and Port Fairy.



The natural values of the coastal landscape have been maintained and enhanced. The impacts of pest plants and animals have been progressively reduced through coordinated programs with agencies and neighbouring landholders. Native plants and animals are flourishing and significant rare and threatened species are recovering. The area continues to provide important habitat and refuge for native species, particularly threatened migratory birds that breed and feed here. Sound decision making is assisting to moderate the impacts of erosion and climate change.



Eastern Maar and Gunditjmara peoples are actively involved in management of the reserve, providing valuable traditional knowledge and unique connections to 'Country', where they harvest traditional resources, and practise their culture. The future of Aboriginal cultural heritage here is secured through partnerships and continues to be protected, preserved and valued by the Aboriginal, local and broader community alike. Well-planned information and interpretation provide for stronger appreciation of the cultural landscape and offer opportunities for learning in nature.

Key Management themes

The draft plan includes a series of strategies identified to help realise the future vision for the reserve. These strategies are grouped under five management themes, which are summarised below.

1. Cultural landscape and living heritage

Belfast Coastal Reserve is part of the rich living heritage that is a vital legacy not just for Aboriginal people, but also the broader local community and Australians. The coastline contains evidence of thousands of years of continuous presence and practices, which endures today. It is as an important place for the Eastern Maar and Gunditjmarra Traditional Owners, who would like to see the area protected, preserved and valued within the Aboriginal and broader community alike.

Post-settlement heritage is also valued, with the reserve being the reputed location of the Mahogany Ship.

Key strategies:

- Investigate and support the heritage significance of the reserve's cultural landscape and values.
- Support the continuation and revival of Traditional Owners' knowledge, traditions and cultural practices.
- Protect Aboriginal and historic places and features from the impacts of use of the reserve.



Middens, Belfast Coastal Reserve

2. Healthy Country

The reserve is home to a rich variety of native plants and animals; in the wetlands, the sea, on the beaches and through the dunes.

Key strategies:

- Establish a **Conservation and Recreation Zone**: to protect environmental and cultural values while allowing for recreation. *Location: From the far western end of the reserve through to the Killarney boat ramp and from Big Baldy to the far eastern extent of the reserve.*
- Establish a **Conservation Zone**: to protect areas of the highest environmental and cultural values. *Location: The central part of the reserve from east of the Killarney Boat Ramp through to the west of Big Baldy. Horses (unlicensed) and dogs will be prohibited in the Conservation Zone and restricted in other areas.*
- Protect the reserve's natural values, including flora and fauna, through conservation partnerships and programs.
- Protect and improve the condition of native vegetation and priority habitats by reducing disturbances, rehabilitating priority areas, managing weeds and pests, and implementing control measures for appropriate and sustainable access to the reserve.
- Protect vulnerable fauna, such as Hooded Plovers, by controlling the impacts caused by dogs, horses and people.



Levys Beach, Belfast Coastal Reserve

3. Recreation and use

The Belfast Coastal Reserve attracts many locals and visitors throughout the year. It offers a ‘wild feel’ experience, readily accessed from Warrnambool and Port Fairy. The reserve is used for a variety of low-intensity recreational activities such as walking, swimming, fishing, surfing, hiking, cycling, picnicking, birdwatching, photography and beach-combing. The reserve is also frequently visited by dog owners and recreational horse riders. Authorised uses currently include horse riding tours and racehorse training at specific locations and times.

Use of the reserve by people, dogs, horses and vehicles has been a key focus of consultation. Passive recreation activities are generally supported given their limited impact on environmental and cultural values. There are, however, mixed opinions about the ongoing impact of dogs and horses.

Dogs were considered one of the biggest threats to shorebird breeding sites, and can be a broader safety issue particularly when off-leash.

Horse riding, both for recreational and commercial purposes, can be a threat to dune health, cultural heritage, shorebirds and public safety, especially when riders did not comply with regulations, codes of conduct or licence conditions.

Key strategies:

- Implement park zones to minimise the impact of visitor activities such as dog walking and recreational horse riding, on environmental and cultural values.
- Manage licence conditions on authorised uses, including commercial horse training and tour operators, to ensure minimal effect on both values and visitors.
- Develop on-site information and interpretation for the reserve on values and risks, to enhance visitor awareness and experience.

4. Managing in partnership

The draft plan commits to maintaining the community’s important role in the future of the reserve, strengthening how the community and partner agencies work together. The plan promotes collaboration and improved alignment across government, communities, Aboriginal Victorians, business, licensees and private land managers.

Key strategies:

- Involve Traditional Owners in management decision about the reserve.
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with the community, Traditional Owners, Shires and other key organisations, and promote opportunities for working together to achieve shared goals.

5. Research and monitoring

Research and monitoring are vital for informing the on-ground management of the reserve. The draft plan seeks to build a shared knowledge, an understanding of management issues, and appreciation of science-based decision making.

Key strategies:

- Conduct research and monitoring activities, in collaboration Traditional Owners and the broader community, to support effective management of the reserve’s ecological, cultural and visitor values.

Activities within the proposed zones

Sites within the zone(s)	Conservation and Recreation Zone	Conservation Zone
Boating: non-motorised	Y	Y
Boating: motorised	Y Launching from designated boat launching areas only (refer to Map 3 in the draft management plan). Not permitted in estuaries and wetlands other than Belfast Lough. 5 knot speed limit within 200m of shore.	Y
Birdwatching and bushwalking	Y On designated tracks only.	Y
Campfires	N	N
Camping	Y Permitted at Killarney Camping Reserve.	N
Cycling / Mountain biking	Y On all public access roads and designated tracks, including the rail-trail (refer to Map 3 in the draft management plan).	Y
Dog walking: on-leash	Y Permitted on designated walking tracks, carparks and beaches at all times, (see Map 4 of the draft plan). Dogs not permitted at Killarney Beach between 9am and 6pm from December 1st to Easter Tuesday.	N
Dog walking: off-leash	Y Permitted at Killarney beach, (refer to Map 4 in the draft plan) at all times excepted between 9am and 6pm from December 1st to Easter Tuesday.	N
Diving and water sports	Y	Y
Dune boarding	N	N
Fishing: recreational	Y	Y
Fossicking and prospecting	N	N

Conservation and Recreation Zone

Conservation Zone

Sites within the zone(s)

Golfies, Golf Course East, Killarney, Killarney Boat Ramp, Big Baldy, Hoon Hill, Spookys and Levys beach

The Basin, Rutledges Cutting, Rollercoaster and Sarahs Beach

Hang Gliding

N

N

Horse riding: recreational

Y Permitted on designated track, carparks and beaches (see Map 5 of the draft plan). Groups of more than 6 riders require a permit.

N

Horse riding: commercial tours

Y Tour operators require a licence.

N

Horse riding: commercial training

Y Permitted at Golfies beach, Killarney, Levys Beach and Hoon Hill (see Map 6 of the draft plan), under licence. Timing and number restrictions will apply, refer to the draft plan for further details.

Y Permitted only at Rutledges Cutting (see Map 6 of the draft plan), under licence. Timing and number restrictions will apply, refer to the draft plan for further details.

Hunting

N

N

Jet skiing

Y

Y

Permitted in ocean subject to 5 knot speed limit within 200m of shore.

Kite surfing, wind surfing, surfing

Y

Y

Permitted in the ocean. Not permitted in estuaries or wetlands.

Orienteering

Y

Y

Picnicking

Y

Y

Swimming

Y

Y

Vehicle access: four-wheel drives, motorcycles, trail bikes, and other recreational vehicles

Y

Y

Registered vehicles are permitted on public vehicle tracks only (see Map 3). Vehicles are not permitted off-road, on walking tracks, dunes or beaches unless launching vessels at the designated boat launching areas (refer Map 3 of the draft plan).

Walking, running

Y

Y

Belfast Coastal Reserve

Draft Coastal Management Plan 2018



Zoning

- Conservation Recreation Zone
- Conservation Zone
- Marine Area

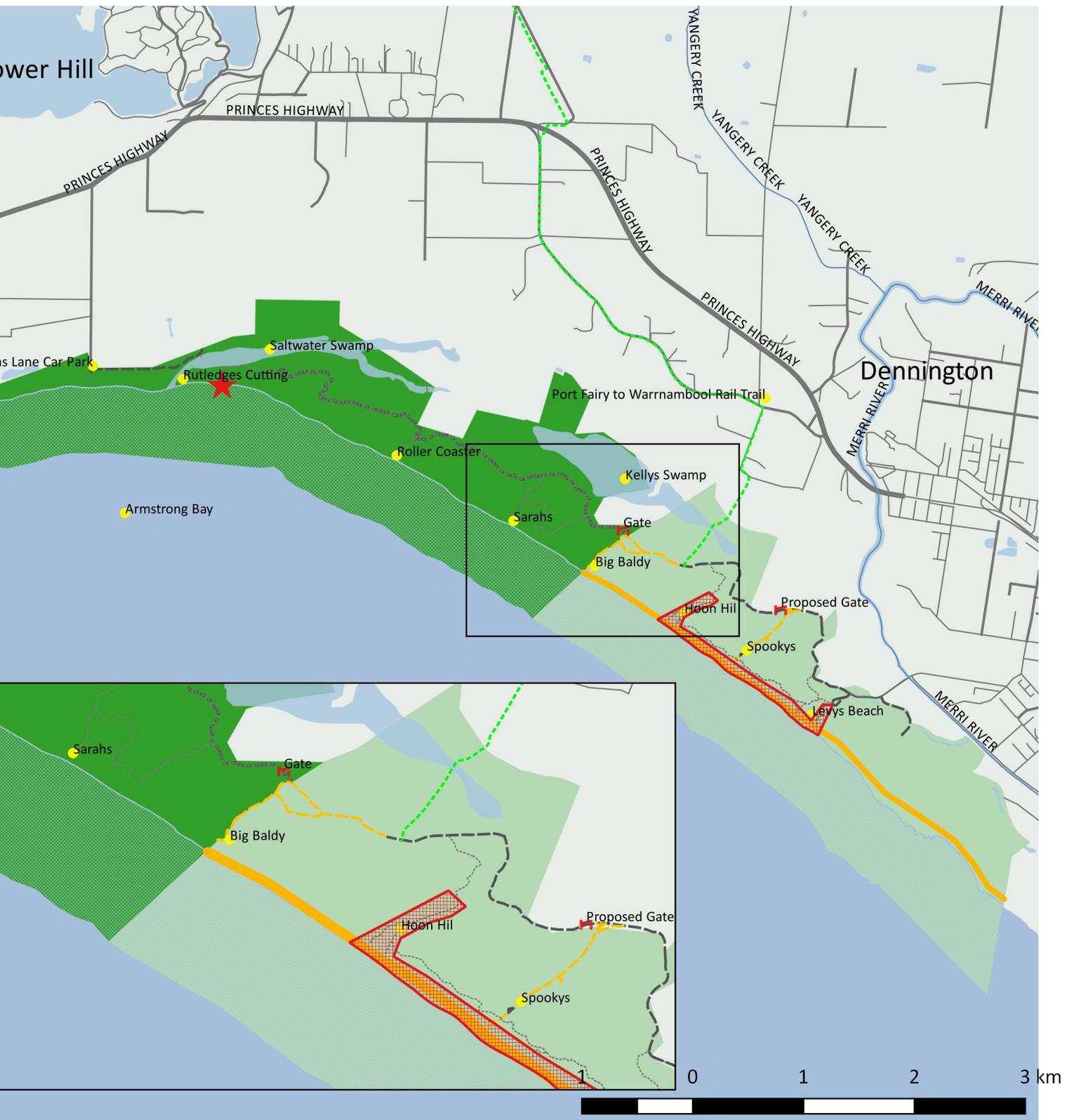
Marine area extends to High Tide mark

Licensed Racehorse Training

- Licensed
- Proposed
- ★
 Historical

Dog Access

- Off Leash
- On Leash



- HIGHWAY
- Road - Sealed
- - - Road - Unsealed
- - - 4WD track
- - - Management Vehicle Only
- Walking Tracks
- - - Rail Trail
- Water Body
- Locations
- Gate

www.parks.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without flaw of any kind and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on this information.



Parks Victoria

13 1963

www.parks.vic.gov.au

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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service on 133 677 or visit www.relayservice.com.au