

Walkerville environmental kit



About the kit

Walkerville is an exceptional place. It needs and deserves special care from all its residents, ratepayers and visitors.

This leaflet was originally produced as part of a kit delivered to local households in March/April 2007. The kit aimed to help interested people find out more about Walkerville's environmental values, and to suggest actions you can take to help look after them.

The full kit included copies of:

- *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park Visitor Guide (Parks Victoria Parknotes A3 sheet).*
- *Living Between the Tides (DSE Coast Action).*
- *Common Weeds of Gippsland (SGSC).*
- *Indigenous Plants of Sth Gippsland (SGSC.)*
- *Native Vegetation Controls (SGSC).*
- *Membership application for Walkerville Ratepayers and Residents Association.*

Most of these publications are available from the organisations listed.

You are welcome to come to local meetings of the Residents and Ratepayers Association. Guest speakers provide interesting information on current environmental issues. And of course you are welcome to join this group.

The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Management Committee also welcomes visitors to the first part of each committee meeting.

The dates and times of upcoming meetings will be posted on the notice board at the Caravan Park Kiosk.

This leaflet was originally prepared for the Friends of Walkerville and the Walkerville Ratepayers and Residents Association - groups committed to protecting Walkerville's special values while supporting compatible use, enjoyment and appreciation.

Parks Victoria's Community Grants Program and the Friends of Walkerville funded printing of the original notes. This update was funded by the Walkerville Ratepayers and Residents Association. April 2007, updated Jan 2008.

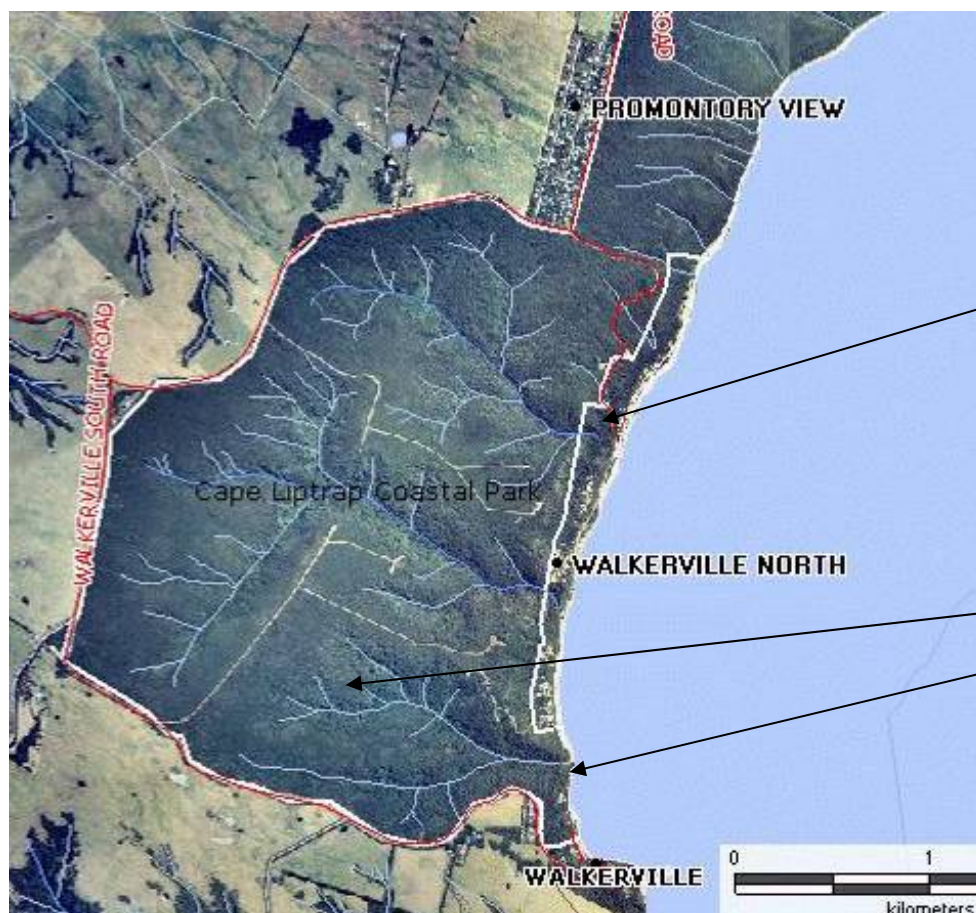
Helping take care of Walkerville

A beautiful coastline with sheltered beaches backed by forested hills, diverse geology, flora and fauna, rich cultural heritage, and opportunities for informal recreation and quiet relaxation – Walkerville offers a great deal.

But Walkerville's special environmental values won't just look after themselves – weeds invade bushland, development can mar attractive landscapes, recreation activities and facilities can have adverse impacts, and climate change will have serious long term effects.

This leaflet outlines the area's values, threats to these values, and some of the actions that local organisations, residents and visitors can take to help care for Walkerville.

The actions build on strategies identified in the *management plans for Walkerville Foreshore Reserve (2001)*, and *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park (2003)*.



Walkerville Foreshore Reserve

Cape Liptrap Coastal Park

Photo: Parks Victoria

1. What is special about Walkerville?

▪ Diverse flora, fauna and marine life

Sheltered from the prevailing south-westerly winds, Walkerville is unusual for the Victorian coast, with dense coastal woodland growing right down to the foreshore. In places, tree-ferns are only a few metres from the beach. Common species include Drooping She-oak, Coast Banksia, Sweet Bursaria and Swamp Paperbark, with Messmate eucalypts and Blackwood wattles in moist gullies. Back from the coast, rich heathland often dominates, particularly along the loop road.



High quality coastal vegetation in Foreshore Reserve (top), and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park

Wildlife is abundant and varied – commonly seen species include the Swamp Wallaby, Koala, Echidna, Common Wombat and Eastern-grey Kangaroo. Numerous bird species populate bushland areas and the foreshore. Pacific Gulls regularly fly overhead, White-faced Herons and, less frequently, Sooty Oyster Catchers search for food on the rocks, and Wedge-tailed Eagles soar above the ridge line. Wrens, Kookaburras (photos below), Magpies and Crimson Rosellas are often seen near houses.



Marine life is diverse and can be readily observed on the rocky reefs exposed at low tide.



Rock reef and rich marine environment at Walkerville North

Landscapes and geology of State significance

A recent landscape study of the Victorian coast rated Walkerville as being of State significance (as part of the coast from Venus Bay to Waratah Bay township). Contributing factors included complex geological formations, relatively remote and natural landscapes, and largely intact forest and heathland. (*Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study - South Gippsland Shire Toolkit*, Planisphere and DSE, 2006.)

Landscape highlights include views across Waratah Bay to Wilsons Promontory, The Bluff (site of a high limestone cliff removed by the line burners, and the striking Waratah Fault) the beach at Walkerville South, limestone rock stacks at Bird Rock, and the coast near Digger Island.



The Bluff and exposed Waratah Fault

Walking along the coast south from the Caravan Park, the observer passes 410 million year old grey/brown mudstones and sandstones (often with sedimentary beds markedly tilted and folded), grey/cream limestones from the Bluff, and ropey 570 million-year old greenstones just south of Bird Rock (the oldest rocks on the Victorian coast). Few other sections of the coast provide such variety.

Rich cultural heritage

Indigenous people have used the Cape Liptrap/Waratah Bay area for over 6000 years. Midden sites at Digger Island and elsewhere include the remains of shellfish and charcoal, indicating that the coast provided a rich source of food.

Non-indigenous heritage is dominated by the lime burning era from 1875 to 1926, with six kilns built at South and one near Digger Island. The remains of the kilns and associated facilities are of State significance and one of the most important examples remaining in Victoria.

A number of early graves can also be seen at the small Walkerville Cemetery.



Loading bags of lime ca 1920 (top), and the Kilns today

More recently, tourism and holidaymaking have added to the cultural values of the area, with many families and individuals having long and close associations with Walkerville.

Rewarding recreation and education opportunities and a relaxed lifestyle

Sight-seeing, walking, beach-going, swimming, camping, fishing, boating, photography and nature observation are all popular. Walking tracks provide panoramic views of the coast. See the *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park Parknotes* sheet for more information.

Cabin and cottage accommodation have recently increased in popularity, encouraging more people to stay in the area.

Coastal features provide educational opportunities for a range of students, and many residents and visitors appreciate the quiet and peaceful lifestyle provided by the area's natural setting. Many enjoy the fact that few commercial facilities are available to attract visitors looking for a more urban experience.



Informal beach activities and boat launching

2. What is threatening these values?

Coastal managers often use the concept of 'threats' to help identify important issues that need attention. For Walkerville, a range of global, statewide and local threats are relevant.

At the broadest level, climate change will affect Walkerville in the medium to long term with impacts including more frequent and higher storm surges and gradually rising sea levels.

More localised threats include:

- **Flora, fauna and marine life**
- Weed invasion - a major issue - continually threatens native vegetation at Walkerville (and much of the Victorian coast). Serious weeds include Sweet Pittosporum, Cape Ivy, English Ivy, Agapanthus, Blackberry, Mirror Bush, Blue Periwinkle, Sweet Pea and Dolichos Pea. These weeds can displace native species, reducing habitat value for wildlife.



Agapanthus and Sweet Pittosporum – major weed threats

- Foxes and rabbits adversely affect native fauna and flora, and the introduced blackbird can spread weed seeds.
- Unrestrained domestic cats kill many native birds, and dogs can attack or frighten wildlife.
- Unnecessary removal of native vegetation in residential areas reduces habitat for wildlife and can create a source of weeds if problem species are planted, e.g. Agapanthus. Retaining native vegetation is now a very high State and local Government priority.
- Disturbing or collecting marine organisms, particularly on rocky reefs, can lead to unnecessary loss of marine life.



Rock pool with rich marine life

- Wildfire can adversely affect flora and fauna, although regular fire is a natural occurrence, particularly in heathland. Parks Victoria undertakes burning in the Coastal Park each year for fire protection and to maintain the health of the vegetation and fauna habitat.
- Seepage from septic tanks and domestic grey water systems can adversely affect water quality and affect marine life.

Landscapes

- Roads, parking areas and recreation facilities are important factors along the foreshore with landscape values sometimes adversely affected.



Natural landscape marred by powerlines and vehicle parking at North

- Surveys indicate that Victorians highly value natural landscapes with minimal intrusions along the coast. Developments involving buildings or other structures which do not blend with natural surroundings reduce landscape values. Building form, colour and screening with natural

vegetation are all important factors. *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998)* sets out principles of sensitive design

- Overhead powerlines are unsightly and mar coastal views.
- Removal of native vegetation can increase the visual impact of buildings on landscapes (although it may sometimes be needed for safety or fire protection reasons).

Cultural heritage

- Erosion is the main threat to middens, with shells etc being washed down slopes.
- Natural processes are also the main threats to the kilns and associated sites – particularly wave action, seepage and tree roots.
- Vandalism can lead to some damage to heritage fabric, eg the old jetty at Digger Island.

Recreation

- Informal beach recreation can be adversely affected by conflicting activities e.g. the inappropriate use of personal pleasure craft (jet



Vehicles illegally parked on beach at South

skis) or the parking of vehicles on the beach. Vehicles are generally not permitted on beaches in Victoria but access is allowed at Walkerville for boat launching only.

- Dogs off leads can adversely affect recreation experiences for other beachgoers. Dog regulations permit dogs on leads at most times in the Foreshore Reserve. Dogs are not permitted in Cape Liptrap Coastal Park except on leads along the beach between North and South (from 6pm to 9am only between December 1 and March 31.)
- Rubbish left by some users, eg fishing waste and drink containers, mar the rocks near South.
- Wildfire is a potential threat to recreation (and other) facilities along the foreshore.

3. Taking action to look after what's special

OK, we have seen the summary of values and threats but who can help and what can they do?

▪ Who is responsible for the coast here?

People are often confused about responsibility for the Walkerville coast. It's really pretty straight forward.

Most of the land along the coast is Crown land belonging to the people of Victoria. The remaining land is private land often resulting from subdivisions occurring at the time of lime burning (part of South), and more recently at North and Prom Views.

Crown land is managed by:

- **Parks Victoria** – who manage the *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park* which extends along much of the coast from Venus Bay to Waratah Bay township. The park includes The Bluff, Kilns and Cemetery.
- **The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management** – who manage the *Foreshore Reserve* including the caravan park and the remainder of the foreshore extending south past Bird Rock. Foreshore land boundaries are shown on the *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park Parknotes* leaflet. The Foreshore Committee manages the foreshore reserve on behalf of **DSE** (Department of Sustainability and Environment) which is responsible for most Crown land in Victoria.
- **South Gippsland Shire Council** – who manage most local roads, including Bayside Drive when gazettal is completed.
- **DSE, the CFA and Parks Victoria** have agreed responsibility for fuel reduction burning and fighting fires.

Volunteer groups, including Friends of Walkerville and the Walkerville Ratepayers and Residents Association, assist with coastal management activities such as weed control. Government programs such as Coast Action/Coastcare, and Parks Victoria's Community Grants provide support.

See back page for contact details.

Private land is owned and used in accordance with the South Gippsland Shire Council Planning Scheme, and other government regulations.

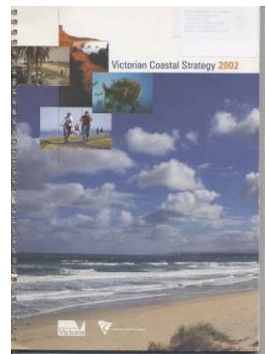
▪ Who decides what happens on coastal Crown land?

A lot of legislation and planning has been undertaken to help provide for protection and use of the Victorian coast. Basically, these provide for the long-term protection of natural, cultural and landscape values, with development only approved where these values are protected and public benefits (environmental, social and economic) obtained.

Balanced conservation and recreation, and sustainable coastal management and development are also key requirements.

The Victorian Coastal Strategy (2002) sets out the details – this is being updated in 2007-08.

Any ideas for changes to coastal Crown land management, including land managed by local committees, must be tested against the principles set out in the Strategy (and other coastal planning documents including specific management plans).



At Walkerville, the coastal reserve is very narrow and large scale development is unlikely to comply with the Strategy.

▪ Flora and fauna actions

It is not realistic to remove all weeds at Walkerville, but more can be done to protect and enhance native vegetation. The South Gippsland Shire Council's *Common Weeds of Gippsland* booklet is a very useful guide.

- **Garden escapes** (weeds spreading into the bush from gardens) are a serious problem that everyone can help with. All property owners can remove the worst offenders, or, for species such as *Agapanthus*, remove flower heads before seeds drop. This needs to be done in February (for *Agapanthus*) and seed heads disposed of at the tip (in the large transfer bins). Other plants that should be removed from gardens and adjacent roadsides include *Sweet Pittosporum*, *Cape Ivy*, *English Ivy*, *Blackberry*, *Cotoneaster*, *Mirror Bush* and *Watsonia*. These are invading the bush, particularly at North.
- **Garden waste** should never be dumped on Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, the Foreshore Reserve or



Blackberry – candidate for removal

roadsides. Take it to the tip.

- **Weeds on Crown land** are being tackled by Parks Victoria and the Foreshore Committee. You can help by removing invasive weeds by hand (if you are sure they are weeds), or documenting their location and advising the land manager or Friends group.

You can also join the Friends group and take part in working bees. The Friends will assist with a weed control plan to clarify tasks and priorities. Sweet Pittosporum is currently threatening to smother existing understorey plants and is a very high priority for removal. *Membership application forms* are provided with these notes.

- **Dogs and cats** should not be let loose in the bush or on the foreshore where wildlife may be affected. Keeping cats confined at all times is critical to protect native birds and other wildlife.
- **Foxes** are baited by Parks Victoria twice a year. Make sure your dog is not in the park – the baits are highly toxic to dogs.
- **Marine actions**
- Follow good practice by not disturbing or collecting living marine creatures – see the leaflet *Living Between the Tides*.



Enjoy the rocky reefs but do not remove marine creatures

- Ensure that no grey water or sewage effluent from your property adversely affects the environment.
- **Landscape actions**

The 2006 Coastal Spaces assessment (see section 1) sets out clear objectives and actions for the Walkerville coast including:

'Ensure that development is sympathetic to the natural, visual and environmental landscape character and significance.'

'Walkerville South and North will be villages set amongst indigenous vegetation with dwellings constructed of colours and materials which minimise distant visibility.'

Our aim is for Walkerville to become one of the lowest impact settlements along the Victorian coast. We have superb views out to sea, let's soften the views to the inland and let nature become the dominant focus.

- All landowners can all help by adopting sensitive design principles which help houses and other buildings blend into the landscape. This need not be difficult – when painting or repainting use

bush colours, eg dark green, grey and brown. Dark green or dark grey Colorbond also blend well with coastal vegetation.

- After providing for fire protection, retaining as much native vegetation as possible around houses also makes a significant contribution to retaining Walkerville's landscape. Where buildings are exposed, some selective screen planting with indigenous trees and shrubs can also help. Remember that all indigenous vegetation is protected on Crown land including coastal reserve in front of houses.



Revegetated foreshore (foreground) and mature bushland in the Coastal Park help retain Walkerville's natural feel

- You can assist by providing constructive input into development proposals for foreshore facilities.
- The Foreshore Committee can help by using appropriate designs for facilities, signs etc, and implementing landscape plans for recreation sites along the foreshore.
- Undergrounding of powerlines at North by the power company would make a major contribution to enhancing landscape values.

Cultural heritage actions

- Parks Victoria is responsible for protecting and interpreting the kilns and cemetery. Ongoing conservation work is being undertaken.

- Continuing to regulate vehicles and visitors is important to protect early stone footings and a stone chimney at South.

- You can assist by leaving heritage items in place, taking part in working bees, e.g. at the Cemetery, and finding out more about local heritage.



Recreation actions

- All users should comply with regulations e.g. not parking on the beach or allowing dogs off leads.
- Recreational users can ensure that their activities allow all people to enjoy the beach/foreshore.
- Following the *Cape Liptrap Coastal Park Visitor Guide* (Parknotes sheet) will help Park Victoria to look after the park.
- Participating in interpretive walks and activity programs will help you find out more about geology and marine life.



Interpretive walk at The Bluff

Lifestyle actions

- Climate change is real and we can all help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming. Examples include reducing energy use in our everyday lives, recycling (at the local tip) composting kitchen wastes, and reducing fuel use in cars and boats. Even walking to the Kiosk instead of driving makes a contribution.

There is plenty of helpful information available through DSE and Sustainability Victoria publications and websites.



Contacts / further information

To get involved or find out more come to a local meeting of the Ratepayers and Residents Association or Foreshore Committee, or contact/check the following.

Contacts

- Walkerville Ratepayers and Residents Assoc.: Barbara Ford, Hon Secretary, ph 5663 2150.
- Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Committee, Chelsea Taylor, Secretary, ph 5663 2111
- Parks Victoria, Foster, ph 5683 9000. Parks Victoria can provide information and advice on weed identification and control, pest animal control and natural values.
- DSE Coast Action/Coastcare, Yarram, Bruce Atkin, ph 5183 9100.
- South Gippsland Shire Council, ph 5662 9200.

You may also be interested in other groups which represent some boat users and day visitors: the Walkerville Blue Water Boating and Angling Club, and the Walkerville Progress Association.



Friends/Ratepayers meeting at the Hall

Websites

- www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
- www.dse.vic.gov.au
- www.environment.vic.gov.au
- www.sustainability.vic.gov.au
- www.vcc.vic.gov.au
- www.sgsc.vic.gov.au

Publications

See publications included in text (above).

With thanks

Parks Victoria, South Gippsland Shire Council, DSE and the Walkerville Foreshore Committee provided helpful advice and support in the development of the Kit.