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***Urban Design Framework
Draft Settlement Background Paper
Venus Bay***

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Table of Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Project Brief	4
1.2 Background	4
1.3 Objective	5
2. Urban Design Frameworks	6
2.1 Urban Design Framework	6
2.2 Project Approach	7
3. Regional Context	8
3.1 Future Trends	8
3.2 Policy	12
3.3 Key Issues	17
4. Settlement Role and Function	21
4.1 Settlement Categories	21
4.2 Coastal Development Infrastructure	23
4.3 Future Growth and Development	24
4.4 Future Settlement Roles	24
5. Venus Bay	25
5.1 Existing Conditions	26
5.2 Planning and Land Use	37
5.3 Community and Agency Views	45
5.4 Settlement Analysis	48
5.5 Strategic Directions	52
5.6 Managing Growth	54
6. Structure Plan	57
7. References	61

Appendix A

Ecological Vegetation Class Map

Appendix B

Acid Sulfate Soils Hazard Map

Appendix C

Summary of Community Workshops

Appendix D

Figure 1.0: Existing Conditions - Context Analysis; Figure 2.0 & 2.1: Site Analysis; Figure 3.0: Land Capability Analysis-Initial Investigation Areas; Figure 4.0 Land Capability Analysis-Future Opportunities for Growth; Figure 5.0 & 5.1: Structure Plan.

Appendix E

Summary of Comments & Suggested Changes: Responses

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

South Gippsland Shire Council has engaged Connell Wagner to develop Urban Design Frameworks (UDFs) for the townships of Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay. The UDFs will provide a vision for the future form and function of these townships and give greater certainty to the community and investors about what development is possible and appropriate.

This Settlement Background and Issues Paper forms part of the Venus Bay UDF and will address the following matters including:

- The approach undertaken to develop a UDF;
- The strategic regional context;
- The role and functions of the surrounding townships in relation to Venus Bay;
- The existing conditions; and
- The emerging issues and themes that will inform the town vision, objectives and design principles.

1.2 Background

Recent research undertaken by Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), *Basic Demographic Analysis of Coastal Towns from Towns in Time 2001* database, May 2005 indicates:

“Australia’s coastal regions are experiencing growth and pressure for development. The cause of this varies, but in Victoria it reflects an overall increase in population through migration and natural growth, changes in household types which has led to an increase in demand for housing stock, and a general trend to retire to coastal centres. Added to this has been a buoyant property market with greater investment in coastal areas as a lifestyle choice or simply as a financial investment.”

As a result of these trends, many coastal settlements, particularly those outside of metropolitan Melbourne, are experiencing unprecedented levels of development related to the uptake of existing residential land, a rapid transformation in the form of building stock through redevelopment, and increasing use of rural allotments for residential living.”

Within this current environment it is anticipated that some coastal settlements will expand significantly, whilst other coastal settlements are likely to remain small. Given this is the case, strategic planning is required, through State and Local Government to enable sustainable development to occur.

The State Government is planning through DSE’s Coastal Spaces Study (2004). This comprises a number of strategic projects with the objective to clarify the strategic outlooks for settlements, protection of spaces between settlements, management of hotspot development areas and the capacity to manage change.

South Gippsland Shire Council is undertaking the development of UDFs for the townships of Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay, with support funding from DSE. In managing this development a Project Control Group has been formed consisting of representatives from South Gippsland Shire Council, DSE Gippsland Region and the Gippsland Coastal Board. The role of the Project Control Group is to ensure the vision for Gippsland is achieved, as defined in *The Victorian Coastal Strategy, 2002 (VCS)* and the *Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland – Coastal Action Plan (CAP)*.

“In 50 years the Gippsland coast will still be recognised as an area of outstanding beauty and ecological diversity, offering a range of recreational lifestyle and economic opportunities for both local residents and tourists. Areas of natural and cultural significance will be identified, widely appreciated and protected. Coastal development and land use decisions will adopt an integrated approach founded on the principles of ecological sustainability and will be based on consistent municipal coastal planning policies across the entire Gippsland coast” (GCB, 2002).

1.3 Objective

The Background Settlement Paper will form part of the Venus Bay UDF and will aim to direct development pressure and infrastructure provision to appropriate areas and manage them in defined settlement activity nodes, so as to ensure that development is respectful of the surrounding environment. The UDFs will provide a vision for the future form and function of the coastal settlements and give greater certainty to the community and investors about what development is possible and appropriate.

2. Urban Design Frameworks

An Urban Design Framework is a strategic planning document, prepared with input from the local community that presents a vision and future-planning framework for the development of a town. The process should produce both a framework articulating how the town will develop, and the actions needed to realise that framework.

The UDFs for the coastal towns of South Gippsland will:

- Identify the capacity of each settlement in relation to it's environment and capacity to sustain growth;
- Direct and manage development and infrastructure pressures into defined settlement areas;
- Develop broad planning principles of areas between defined settlements; and
- Implement a coordinated planning and design approach.

Actions undertaken to achieve this include:

- Identifying existing and projected socio-economic trends;
- Identifying areas of significance (ie. landscape, buildings, historical or cultural features, natural features);
- Identifying major opportunities and constraints for future development;
- Identifying preferred land use and development options;
- Identifying improvements to the visual quality of entrances and thoroughfares in the town; and
- Identifying improvements to vehicular and pedestrian traffic routes and linkages.

2.1 Urban Design Framework

As a final product, a UDF is a package of documents and plans. The UDFs for the coastal towns of South Gippsland will be made up of four documents and two plans. These include:

1. Strategic Regional Background Paper (document)
2. Settlement Background Paper (document)
3. Structure Plan (plan)
4. Master Plan/s (plan)
5. Principles for areas in between settlements (document)
6. Implementation plan (document)

A brief explanation of each of these sections is detailed below.

Strategic Regional Background Paper

This is a concise paper that provides an assessment of how existing policies, plans and local issues relate to the future planning of the project towns. The Strategic Regional Background Paper is delivered as an individual document as well as being incorporated into the initial section of the Settlement Background Papers.

Settlement Background Paper

This is a background paper that looks at existing conditions, future trends and current issues within each of the identified settlements and the surrounding environments.

Structure Plan

A structure plan is broad plan identifying township boundaries, land use types, environmentally sensitive areas, development or tourism opportunities, open space locations and connections, infrastructure and vehicular and pedestrian movement.

Master Plan

Master plans are prepared for key priority areas within the townships and provide detail for areas that have a specific function, such as a gateway entry point or tourism focus.

Principles for Areas in Between Settlements

This is a concise document detailing broad land use planning principles to guide future uses and development in areas between settlements.

Implementation Plan

Once the framework plan has been finalised, an implementation plan is prepared. An implementation plan outlines the actions that are required to implement the framework/guidelines, priority works, timing and responsibilities.

2.2 Project Approach

The State Government, Agencies, Council, investors and the community will use the UDFs for future planning. To gain ownership of the project from these groups and utilise their local knowledge the following approach has been applied.

Desktop study and literature review

A review of background literature and previous studies is required to gain an understanding of the history and key issues relevant to the study area.

Site inspections

Site visits to the project towns and surrounding areas. This provides an opportunity to detail the town layout, structure, character and surrounding environment.

Agency Workshop

A workshop will be coordinated with project officers and staff from organisations such as:

- Gippsland Coastal Board;
- South Gippsland Shire Council;
- Department of Sustainability and Environment;
- South Gippsland Water;
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority;
- Parks Victoria; and
- VicRoads.

The benefit of the workshop is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, (SWOT), for each town, explore strategic issues in the region, and identify which current or proposed projects may impact on the development of the UDF.

Community Consultation and Participation

Community consultation and participation occurs throughout the project in the form of community workshops focussed on information collection, information displayed on Council's web site, 24 hour phone access to the Connell Wagner project team, community workshops focussed on the draft documents and plans and a formal exhibition period of the UDFs.

A summary of the information and views of the community is detailed in Section 5.3 Community and Agency Views.

3. Regional Context

Coastal councils around Australia, including many in Victoria, have been heavily impacted on in recent years as a greater number of people migrate to the coast for holidays or to live. This shift in population creates challenges for councils in how to meet lifestyle and housing demands, provide sufficient infrastructure and ensure there is adequate council planning capacity.

In terms of strategic planning, *Melbourne 2030* sets future land use directions for metropolitan Melbourne and specifically designates urban growth boundaries for settlements. With this 'sea change' phenomenon occurring across Victoria there is now a need to replicate this planning process in coastal towns.

3.1 Future Trends

Victoria

Victoria boasts 2,000 kilometres of coastline with a wide range of natural and cultural values. Most Victorians use the coast, with an estimated 70 million recreational visits being made per year (DSE 2004). The Victorian coast contributes significantly to regional economies through tourism and related services.

Trends

Victoria in Future 2004 (DSE 2004), indicates that the future overall population growth rate in Victoria is declining and that our society is generally ageing with the 'Baby Boomers' generation close to retirement. However, even though the growth rate will be slower, the population will continue to increase with the majority of the population growth occurring in Melbourne. Regional areas will also continue to grow but at a slower rate than Melbourne.

The population of coastal Victoria increased by at least 10% between 1991 and 2001 (VCC 2002). This was consistently higher than Victoria as a whole. As the baby boomers retire and choose lifestyles away from Melbourne, and as the housing prices in Melbourne continue to increase, there will be a demand for affordable rural/coastal lifestyle opportunities within one or two hours of Melbourne. The main coastal municipalities this affects includes, Surf Coast, Mornington Peninsula and Bass Coast. However, these municipalities are 'filling up' causing the growth to spread further along the coast to the next layer of municipalities, such as Colac/Otway and South Gippsland, although, a limiting factor to this growth is likely to be travel distance to Melbourne of no more than two hours.

In terms of coastal population trends the VCS predicts we can expect:

- Increased housing density, particularly in key holiday areas, such as Mornington Peninsula, Surf Coast and Bass Coast;
- Coastal areas to increase in population not related to dwelling construction, but through conversion of holiday homes to permanent residences; and
- Visitor numbers to coastal areas to continue to grow with improved mobility and regional access.



Map 1. Victorian Coastline. Source: Victorian Coastal Council, 2002.

Gippsland Region

The Gippsland region is located in southeast Victoria, extending from the edge of Melbourne's outskirts to the NSW/Victorian border. The coastline includes Phillip Island, Wilsons Promontory, the Gippsland Lakes, Ninety-Mile Beach and Croajingalong National Park. The region supports a population of a quarter of a million people working in a diverse number of industries including, education, farming, forestry and fishing. There are four major coastal councils across Gippsland - Bass Coast Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire.



Map 2. Gippsland Coastal Region. Source: Victorian Coastal Council, 2002.

Trends

The nominated southmost growth corridor of Melbourne (eg: Cranbourne, Pakenham and Dandenong) feed into the Gippsland region through the Shires of Cardinia, Bass Coast and Casey. The total population in the Gippsland Coastal region grew at an annual rate of 0.3% between 1991 and 2001, with an increase in total number of households of 1.1% per annum (DSE 2005). For population growth and future development, Bass Coast Shire is identified as having a growth rate well above the average for Victoria. The duplication of the South Gippsland Highway and the increased ease of access to coastal areas from Melbourne (approx 1.5 hours) have assisted this. Bass Coast Shire has recently developed the Bass Coast Strategic Coastal Planning Framework, which provides Council and the community with direction and advice on future development of coastal areas throughout the Shire. East Gippsland and Wellington Shire have also recently engaged consultants to develop UDFs for 16 coastal towns across their municipalities.

South Gippsland

This study is focused on the municipality of South Gippsland Shire. Located approximately 130km southeast of Melbourne the Shire stretches from Venus Bay in the west to Port Welshpool in the east. It covers approximately 3,297 square kilometres and has a population of 26,159 (DSE 2004). It is an important beef production and dairying region and the coastline is a popular holiday and retirement area.

South Gippsland abuts five municipalities: the Shires of Baw Baw and La Trobe to the north; Wellington to the east; Bass Coast to the southwest and Cardinia to the west. The Strzelecki Ranges form most of the northern boundary with the coast forming the southern boundary. The major towns include Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster with other significant settlements being Nyora, Toora, Welshpool, Sandy Point and Venus Bay. Most of the towns in the municipality serve the surrounding rural communities, however Venus Bay, Sandy Point, Waratah Bay and some of the other small coastal towns are predominantly tourist destinations with holiday homes.



Map 3. South Gippsland Coastal Towns. Source: RACV, 2005.

Trends

Over the past two decades, most towns in South Gippsland have experienced population decline (DSE 2005). However, South Gippsland is projected to experience moderate population and household growth over the next 30 years (DSE 2004). Growth is likely to occur in the west of the Shire with the driver being urban growth from Melbourne and the central coastal areas. To support this growth, and assist Melburnians explore areas further afield, the South Gippsland Highway is being upgraded from Lang Lang to Sale.

Coastal towns also have a relationship to inland rural settlements. As with the sea change phenomenon there is also a 'tree change' trend occurring. In South Gippsland this is an increase in rural lifestyle living within proximity to the coast driven by increasing coastal housing prices and residents selling up, 'cashing in' and moving inland. This inland movement and growth creates development pressure in the large rural service centres and the smaller rural settlements. In South Gippsland this growth in rural areas is occurring in Nyora, Mirboo North, Foster, Fish Creek and Meeniyan.

Increased investment in the area is recognised as making a positive contribution to the long-term economic viability of the towns and providing increased employment opportunities. However, it is essential that any development and investment is undertaken within a defined framework and makes a significant contribution to the built form and natural environment of the area.

Coastal Settlements

UDFs are being developed for the settlements of Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point. These settlements are predominantly coastal retreats and holiday destinations supported and serviced by Leongatha, Foster, Inverloch and Wonthaggi. The role and function of these settlements and how they relate to each other and the major centres in the region is detailed in Section 4 (*Settlement Role and Function*).



Map 4, Study Area as defined in the brief for Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay



Map 5, Study Area as defined in the brief for Sandy Point and Waratah Bay

3.2 Policy

Management of the coastal zone is a complex task shared by many authorities and levels of government. The Commonwealth, State and Local Governments all have a role to play, as does the community and industry. Coastal planning in Australia starts at broad level principles through Federal coastal policies down to day to day decisions made by the State Government and local councils. The Urban Design Frameworks are tools to help implement the state and regional coastal policies at a local level.

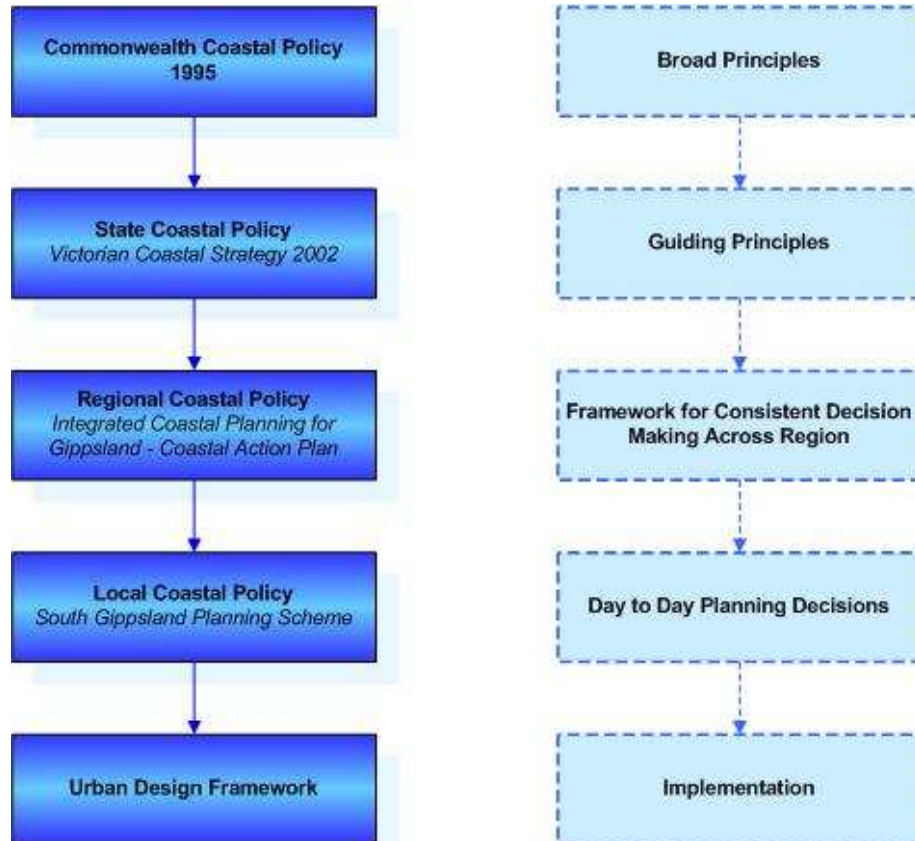


Figure 1. Integration of Australia's coastal policies and how they relate to the Urban Design Frameworks.

Federal

The **Commonwealth Coastal Policy** presents the Commonwealth's vision for a co-operative, integrated approach to coastal management. It provides both the means for the Commonwealth to manage its own coastal activities, and a range of initiatives whereby all Australian governments can work together to ensure best management of the coast.

The Policy aims to achieve specific practical improvements to coastal management through four broad fronts. These include:

- Increasing community involvement in coastal management.
- Addressing the most pressing coastal problems, such as coastal development and pollution.
- Enhancing awareness through promoting education and improving the knowledge, experience and information available to coastal managers, planners and users.
- Promoting Australian coastal management expertise in neighbouring regions.

State

The **Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS)** is the key policy and planning document for managing the use and development of coastal resources in Victoria. The VCS sets out a vision and hierarchy of principles for coastal planning that provide a pathway for decision making.

The hierarchy of principles are:

1. Protection of significant environmental features.
2. Sustainable use of natural coastal resources.
3. Direction for the future.
4. Suitable development on the coast.

In relation to coastal development, the vision states, “...coastal villages will retain their seaside and village characters....townships will no longer grow like topsy, they will be recognisably coastal in character and grow within planning frameworks which respect the environment they are built in.Much of the coast between townships will be preserved undeveloped...”.

The sections on suitable development and the description of activity nodes (existing settlements) and recreational nodes (outside of settlements) is also relevant to the UDFs. The VCS states, “development pressure and infrastructure will be directed away from sensitive areas and managed within activity nodes and recreational nodes”.

The four project townships are defined as existing settlements (activity nodes) and the objective of activity nodes is to provide for development within defined limits and protect areas between settlements from inappropriate development.

Coastal Spaces Project, Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) 2004

To help guide the interpretation and implementation of the VCS in relation to coastal development, DSE is undertaking a project titled ‘**Coastal Spaces**’. The aim is to improve and clarify strategic planning for sustainable growth in coastal Victoria, improve application of planning and environmental tools in coastal areas and develop new tools as appropriate, and build the capacity of practitioners to implement and apply Government policy for the coast.

The project will be undertaken from September 2004 to October 2005. The UDFs for the four coastal towns will be guided by the principles of the Coastal Spaces Project and shall become tools to assist Council with coastal planning decisions in the future.

Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report (DSE) April 2006

In May 2005, the Victorian Government released the Coastal Spaces Inception Report which identified a set of emerging issues to be addressed as part of the Coastal Spaces Initiative. The Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report follows on from the earlier Inception Report and provides a series of recommendations which seek to improve and clarify strategic planning tools for managing sustainable coastal development in non-metropolitan areas. One of the key recommendations of this report is to finalise and support implementation of Settlement Plans such as Urban Design Frameworks and Structure Plans in relevant Planning Schemes.

Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1998 (S & D Guidelines)

The S & D Guidelines were developed by the Victorian Coastal Council to assist coastal managers, and ensure that developments on the coast complement the surrounding landscape and result in excellent design. The guidelines are used at a site-specific level by councils, coastal managers and developers to achieve appropriately sited and designed structures on the foreshore.

As the UDFs move to detailed design with the master plans and design elements the S & D Guidelines will provide guiding principles to follow and apply. This will be particularly important for public foreshore land and the interface between public and private land.

The three key areas of the S& D Guidelines are:

1. Functional Guidelines
(Efficient use of space, consolidation of structures, availability of public access).
2. Cultural and Aesthetic Guidelines
(Structures maintain/enhance coastal landscape and character do not impair views to and from water).
3. Ecological Guidelines
(Structures result in minimal change to natural systems, native vegetation disturbed as little as possible, avoid locating structures in dunes, protection of marine biological values).

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF)

The SPPF sets out general policies and principles for land use and development in Victoria. These policies and principles form part of the South Gippsland Planning Scheme and are grouped into six headings including settlement, environment, housing, economic development, infrastructure and particular use and development.

Key components that are relevant to the UDFs include:

Environment Clause 15.01

- Refers to the protection of catchments, waterways and groundwater. The objective of this clause is to assist the protection, and, where possible, restoration of catchments, waterways, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment.

Coastal Areas Clause 15.08

- The objective of this clause is to, protect and enhance the natural ecosystems and landscapes of the coastal and marine environment, ensure sustainable use of natural and coastal resources and achieve development that provides an environmental, social and economic benefit enhancing the community's value of the coast.

Native Flora and Fauna Clause 15.09

- The objective of this clause is to assist in conserving native flora and fauna through protection and conservation of biodiversity, including native vegetation retention and provision of habitats for native plants and animals, and to control of pest plants and animals.

Open Space Clause 15.10

- The objective of this clause is to assist creation of a diverse and integrated network of open space in line with the needs of urban communities and rural areas.

General Implementation Clause 15.11.1

- This section of the State Planning Policy Framework identifies the need for responsible authorities to identify, conserve and protect places of natural or cultural value from inappropriate development.

This includes amongst other things:

- Places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance including historical and archeological sites.

Design and Built Form Clause 19.03

- The objective of this clause is to achieve high quality urban design and architecture that reflects the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community, enhances livability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm and promotes attractiveness of towns and cities within broader strategic contexts.

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Regional

Implementation of the VCS at a regional level occurs through Coastal Action Plans (CAP). A CAP is a strategic planning document prepared by a Regional Coastal Board in accordance with the Coastal Management Act 1995. The Gippsland Coastal Board has prepared the *Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland (CAP) 2002*.

Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland (CAP) 2002

The CAP aims to provide an integrated approach to coastal planning for Councils in the Gippsland region. A key principle is the concept of 'activity nodes' and the need to avoid strip development along the coast. Implementation of this and other key principles occurs at a local level through the development of Coastal Management Plans and Urban Design Frameworks. The CAP encourages municipalities to identify town and settlement boundaries through new or revised local structure or framework plans with development to occur within these boundaries.

Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study 2005

The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study aims to develop a comprehensive assessment of visually significant landscapes along the Victorian Coast. The study is now in its final stages and will provide an assessment of the existing distinctive landscapes, and assess the adequacy of current planning strategies and measures for landscapes along the Victorian coast and immediate hinterland. The study has local implications in relation to the UDF particularly in relation to the Tarwin floodplain, Venus Bay Dunes and the surrounding landscapes of Waratah Bay and Sandy Point.

Local

Local policies that relate to coastal planning and development include the South Gippsland Coastal Development Plan 2004 and sections of the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) in the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.

The **South Gippsland Coastal Development Plan 2004**, is a strategic planning framework for the future development of towns along the coast. Some of the key features of this strategic planning document include:

- The use of a Coastal Policy Area as stated in the South Gippsland Rural Strategy 2001;
- Any growth to be concentrated in towns, not strip development;
- To promote compact or consolidated growth; and
- The development of eco towns with sustainability principles.

The LPPF provides policy guidance for the assessment of planning applications. It can provide a set of generic considerations that apply to all proposals for which a planning permit is required. To follow is a summary of the policies applicable to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.

Sub Clause 21.04-1 Environment and Cultural Heritage

- Council aims to ensure that sustainable land use and development can occur. It highlights areas within the Shire, particularly coastal areas facing increasing environmental pressure from residential development. This pressure is likely to continue in the foreseeable future given the Shire's relatively close proximity to Melbourne.

Sub Clause 21.04-9 Venus Bay

- This objective is to maintain Venus Bay as a holiday settlement, allowing development to occur in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner that protects the delicate landforms and character of the area.

Sub Clause 21.04-10 Small Towns

- This sub clause aims to:
 - Maintain a network of small towns with a range of roles and services designed to cater for the needs of residents and visitors to the Shire.
 - Provide an attractive and safe residential environment and strengthen the economic future of the small towns within the Shire.
 - Promote Tarwin Lower as an important local centre serving the needs of the local community and tourists in the southern portion of the Shire.
 - Recommend the implementation of a townscape improvement program for Tarwin Lower aimed at revitalising the existing town centre and integrating the town with the Tarwin River;
 - Recommend restricting any further expansion of Sandy Point and Waratah Bay until reticulated sewerage becomes available.

3.3 Key Issues

Below is a summary of the key drivers of change and associated impacts and issues. The issues identified are discussed in the following section.

DRIVERS	IMPACT	ISSUE
Population Growth	Township growth, greater number of subdivisions and development within township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased pressure on infrastructure, eg: waste disposal, water and sewerage treatment, stormwater system Pressure on environment eg: if infrastructure is not adequate and causes seepage of septic systems into water ways and stormwater runoff into estuaries
	Greater development occurring outside of existing township boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of town structure through urban sprawl Loss of landscape value along the coast through strip development and incremental growth of homes Increased pressure on habitat values and biodiversity Misuse of 'Recreation Nodes' as described in VCS through branding of resort type developments eg: golf courses to justify their existence outside of existing settlements.
Urban Development	Loss of coastal character and township amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large package (house and land) development concepts imported from urban environments. Upgrade of infrastructure eg: dirt roads to sealed roads with kerb and channel, more formal landscaping Lack of strong planning controls to direct and maintain township character, eg: height controls, siting, materials, landscaping
Tourism	Continued focus on day visitors to the coast particularly over summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and management of foreshores and public infrastructure
	Increase in resident population of coastal towns by 2 to 3 times (or higher) during summer period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable accommodation on the coast for all Victorians Infrastructure pressure eg. car parking.
Management of Coastal Reserves	Interface of public and private land and the impact of the different activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of different uses, eg: invasion of garden weeds, fire fuel management, trampling of sand dunes through use of goat tracks from properties
Climate Change	Accelerated erosion from increased frequency of storms, storm surge (mixture high tide and water from rivers), rise in sea level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of existing infrastructure, future need for coastal protection infrastructure or strategies eg: groynes, seawalls. Appropriate siting for new infrastructure or relocation of existing infrastructure

Township Growth

As outlined in Section 2, there is an increase in the growth rate of the population in Victoria particularly in the coastal areas located within 1-2 hours of Melbourne. This population growth consists of a combination of retirees moving to the coast, people changing their coastal holiday homes into permanent dwellings, and families moving out of Melbourne to more affordable areas. The increase in population growth creates demand for the release of new greenfield sites for development. This in turn adds pressure to the existing infrastructure and the surrounding environment.

Infrastructure

In terms of township growth and the effect on infrastructure, there is the issue of the capacity of existing infrastructure to cope with holiday residents becoming permanent residents, and the issue of new infrastructure that may be required for new development and how this will effect the surrounding environment.

Roads

Roads in small coastal towns are often unsealed with grassed drains and channels to manage storm water. Gravel roads are cheap to administer and contribute to the rural low key amenity of a town. With an increase in traffic and road use, more maintenance is required to grade the gravel roads. Development of new buildings and hard surfaces will result in an increase in stormwater runoff, which can cause erosion, sediment deposition in vegetation, sediment runoff and excess nutrients leading into the waterways. As townships expand there may be a need to provide a hard surface treatment to roads and the installation of a more sophisticated stormwater drainage system.

Power

All of the coastal towns in this study area are connected to main power supplies. However, it has been noted from general community comments that power outages occur frequently. This issue needs to be addressed by the appropriate power supply authorities.

Another source of power that is creating community interest in coastal areas is the installation of wind turbines. There have been a few recent proposals in the South Gippsland area and there may be more in the future. However, the issue is not the service and use of power but rather the loss of landscape values and local amenity.

Sewerage

As the population of towns increase so does the pressure on the sewerage and water systems required. Currently in the areas where septic systems are used there is a minimum lot size needed for the filtration to work adequately. In towns such as Venus Bay there are already problems with seepage of septic systems into the ground water and nearby Anderson Inlet.

Telecommunications

Currently the mobile coverage in some of the coastal towns is very limited with reception only possible at various vantage points. As people come to live on the coast from areas that already have good coverage there is an expectation that adequate coverage should also be provided in their adopted town. However, the siting of mobile phone towers is an issue in coastal towns, as ideally they should be co-located with other infrastructure and not near the foreshore or close to the residential areas.

Environment

The towns in the study area are situated in fragile environments highly valued for their flora and fauna, biodiversity and recreational use.

Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower are situated between the open coast and Anderson Inlet. Anderson Inlet is a significant estuary with seagrass, mangroves, wetlands and a host of bird species, some of which are listed on international migratory bird agreements (JAMBA, CAMBA).

Waratah Bay and Sandy Point are situated on the open coast and are also in close proximity to Shallow Inlet, which has significant environmental values.

People choose to holiday and live in these areas for these environmental assets, however, there must be an awareness that as the population increases so does the pressure on the environment. Issues such as septic leakages into waterways and stormwater drains, sediment and nutrient run off into estuaries and the clearing of vegetation must be identified and addressed.

Development Outside of Townships

With an increase in population growth, impacts of development are occurring not only within existing township areas, but also in areas of land between towns in rural areas. The development between townships often occurs when the use of land for housing creates greater economic opportunity than traditional farming.

This type of development causes issues such as loss of township structure and urban sprawl, incremental strip development, isolated resort type developments, loss of landscape values along the coast, and increased pressure on habitat values and the threat of habitat fragmentation.

Strip development and township structure

Strip development occurs between coastal townships when development overflows from one town into another with the coast forming one continuous housing strip. This phenomenon is especially prominent on the NSW coast.

Isolated resort developments (hot spots in Coastal Spaces Project)

With an increase in activity occurring in and around the coast, developments are being proposed that are outside of township areas but are residential housing developments packaged as recreational resorts eg: golf courses. In cases such as these, developers apply to rezone land from rural to residential and mitigate opposition by proclaiming they are designing township buffer zones and creating Recreational Nodes as described in the VCS.

Loss of landscape values

Coastal landscapes across Victoria have many significant features and characteristics. In the South Gippsland area there are three landscape setting types as classified by the Landscape Settings Types of Victoria (VCC, 1998). The landscape types range from high cliffs with inlets, to flat areas with estuarine environments. In all cases there are areas of outstanding scenic quality requiring appropriate planning controls to ensure development does not impact on the landscape values.

Habitat loss and fragmentation

In areas between towns there is evidence of remnant vegetation and large stands of good quality vegetation. When new developments occur, vegetation is cleared for both construction and coastal views. This clearance can disrupt precious habitat corridors that exist between and around townships. Habitat and vegetation corridors are critical for the health and genetic integrity of flora and fauna species that occur in local coastal areas.

Loss of Town Character and Amenity

An increase in housing and urban development can create a loss of township character and coastal amenity. This can be caused by large areas of land being developed by one company, the house and land package concept and ad hoc development occurring without adequate planning controls to guide the town character and amenity.

An increase in development also leads to a need for more substantial infrastructure and landscaping such as sealed roads, kerbs and channelling. This can consequently change the coastal character and low key amenity of towns.

Tourism

The Victorian coast continues to remain an attraction for intrastate, interstate and overseas visitors. A key characteristic of tourism in coastal Victoria is the huge influx of visitors and beach users over the summer period with most coastal towns more than doubling in size. This tourism pressure creates issues such as:

- Planning and management of the foreshores and the need to provide convenience facilities to meet both the needs to day tripper and overnight visitors;
- The 'loving it to death' scenario and the ability of the environment to cope with so much use; and
- As housing prices increase, the use of camping facilities and affordability of holidays on the coast for all Victorians.

Interface of Public and Private Land

An obvious indicator of how we value our coast is property prices. Homes with a coastal view or backing onto the beach are measurably more expensive than those without these features. However, the coast and beach is Crown land which can be used and appreciated by all. Those with the luxury of abutting the beach or foreshore reserves have a responsibility to limit and control their impact on the coast.

Conflicting issues between freehold land and coastal Crown land include:

- Spreading of weeds from gardens;
- Expectation of clearing coastal vegetation for a fire break;
- Clearing of coastal vegetation for views;
- Creation of informal tracks from properties and trampling of nearby sand dunes; and
- Visual impact of development and homes on the foreshore.

Climate Change

Science tells us that we can expect climate change with certainty and that sea level rise and changing weather conditions will have the most significant impact on coastal planning and management. Direct impacts are likely to be increased and altered patterns of erosion of beach and dune systems, undercutting of cliffs, increased peak flows in coastal rivers and estuaries and damage to coastal infrastructure (piers, jetties, breakwaters and seawalls). In built environments volumes of stormwater reaching the coast are likely to increase which will have an impact on the water quality of coastal estuaries and the near shore environment.

There is a need in any future planning to take into consideration these impacts and provide for the maintenance of existing coastal structures, and appropriately site any new coastal structures or developments. Along these lines the Gippsland Coastal Board is currently involved in a project which studies sea level change and coastal subsidence and the implications for geomorphic aspects and physical assets along the Gippsland coast. The result of this study should be considered for all future coastal planning decisions in this area.

4. Settlement Role and Function

4.1 Settlement Categories

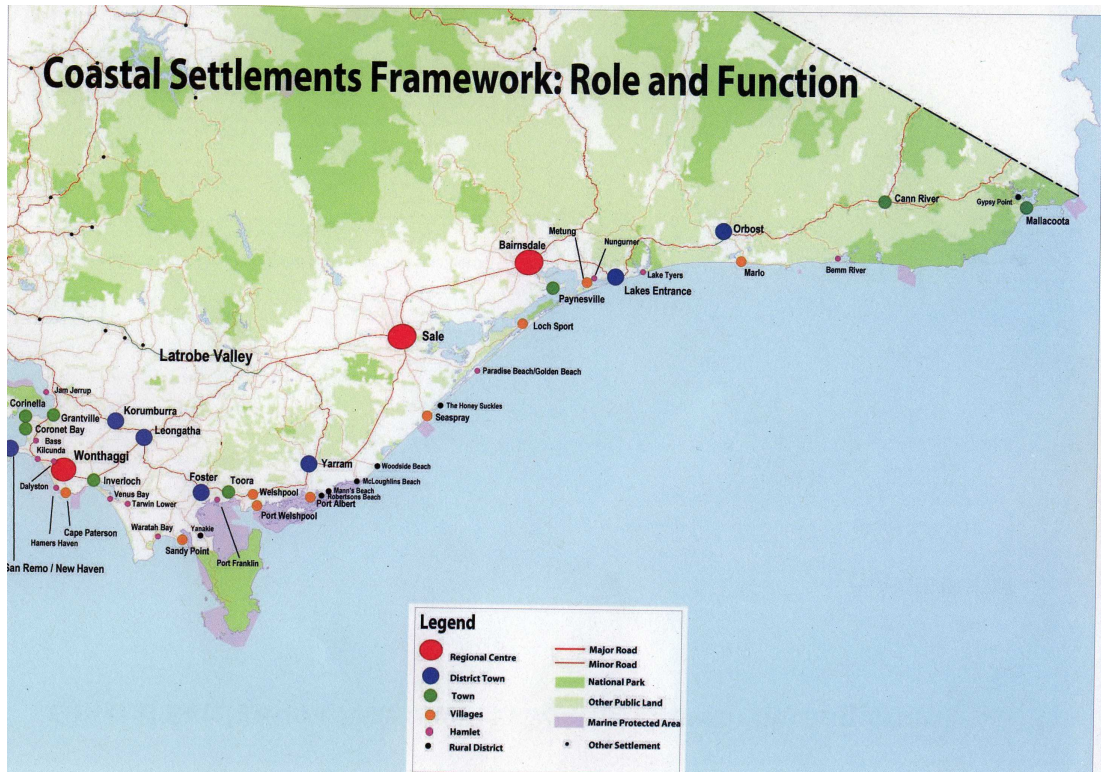
When planning for growth and development it is important to explore the role and function of settlements in the region. For a consistent approach in describing the role and function of settlements along the coast of Victoria, the Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report (DSE April 2006) defines the status of existing coastal settlements into six categories. The categories are based on information relating to population size, land use zoning, utilities infrastructure, health, education and other general service provision and accommodation facilities. The six categories are:

<i>Regional Centre</i>	A diverse population base which is over 10,000 people. All essential services are connected. These centres serve the role as a major interchange point for rail, bus, sea and air, and access is available to large hospitals. Regional centres also provide for a large diverse employment base.
<i>District Town</i>	A large population base of 2,000 to 10,000, with a diverse housing stock. Connection to all essential services with numerous accommodation stocks including motel/hotel and multiple caravan parks. These towns provide for a large business district with moderate employment base. Hinterland settlements of this type provide an important service support role for coastal settlements and other rural activities.
<i>Town</i>	Population of 500 to 2000. Connection is available to all essential services with a small business and /or industrial area. Coastal settlements of this type have moderate to high levels of home ownership. These settlements usually have strong employment relationships with larger settlements nearby.
<i>Village</i>	A small population base between 200 to 500. Access to services may include a general store and some form of accommodation, primarily through a caravan park or small establishment. There is connection to water but sewer connections can vary. Villages have moderate to high levels of holiday home ownership in settlements closer to Metropolitan Melbourne.
<i>Hamlet</i>	A very small population between 100-200, with the settlement being located in a singular urban zone. Limited access is available to reticulated water and sewerage. Generally there are no services within settlements. Some accommodation is available in the form of a small caravan park.
<i>Rural District</i>	Population 100 or less located in dispersed housing on smaller than average rural allotment sizes. No access to reticulated water or sewer or services generally within the settlement.

More detail about the settlement categories can be found in the *Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report, April 2006*.

This categorisation lays a foundation for defining what role settlements fulfil in a regional context and what role settlements may play in the future. In relation to the South Gippsland area, within the Bass Coast Shire region, Wonthaggi is categorised as a *Regional Centre* and Inverloch is a *Town*. Within the South Gippsland Shire region Leongatha, Korumburra and Foster are categorised as *District Towns*, Toora is categorised as a *town* and *Sandy Point* is classified as a *Village*. Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower and Waratah Bay are categorised as *Hamlets*.

It is South Gippsland Shire Council's view that based on population data and existing infrastructure, categorisation of some settlements in the South Gippsland Shire region is incorrect and fit more appropriately into the category of *Village* as opposed to *Hamlets*.



Coastal Spaces – Recommendations Report April 2006

Role of Settlements

This section details the roles the towns Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point play in the region. In the South Gippsland Shire coastal area Leongatha (District Town), serves the role of a higher order service and employment centre for the surrounding rural and coastal settlements, including Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point.

Tarwin Lower

Tarwin Lower is a small rural settlement approximately 25km south of Leongatha and 4km east of Venus Bay. It is located on the banks of the Tarwin River and contains a primary school, sporting facilities, local hotel and a range of commercial services. In the 2001 Census the township of Tarwin Lower had a population of 139 (based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics). Tarwin Lower has limited infrastructure including no reticulated sewerage. It has three key functions in the region.

- It plays the role of a small country hamlet with a permanent population;
- It provides lower order services to surrounding rural areas including Venus Bay; and
- Is an entry point for tourists to access Anderson Inlet.

Venus Bay

Venus Bay situated 4km east of Tarwin Lower and 35km south of Leongatha. This hamlet was created from the donation of land by a local farmer and established in three parts, commonly known as the first, second and third estates. All the estates are situated between large sand dunes and Anderson Inlet. Venus Bay's enumerated population in 2001 was 405 based on data from the 2001 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics). This figure is said to triple during holiday periods. Venus Bay contains a limited number of shops with the settlement reliant on tank water and on-site waste-water disposal systems. Venus Bay as a small coastal hamlet has three roles.

- Primarily it is a holiday destination for people from Melbourne and the surrounding district;
- Secondly it plays the role of a small hamlet for a permanent year round population; and
- Is a destination for day-trippers to Anderson Inlet and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.

Waratah Bay

Waratah Bay is situated 40 kilometres south east of Leongatha, 10km west of Sandy Point and adjoins Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. It is a holiday hamlet with a small permanent population (approximately 47 in 2005, based on the Shire's rates database). Waratah Bay has one Caravan Park and long flat sandy beaches that are used for swimming and fishing. The town has few services with most people relying on the caravan park for incidental supplies, and Sandy Point and Foster for more convenience goods. Reticulated sewerage has recently become available and it is planned to construct a waste-water treatment plant near the town. Waratah Bay's primary role is as:

- A holiday destination for Melbourne and the surrounding rural areas;
- It also plays a minor role supporting a small permanent year round population; and
- Is an entry point for tourists to the beach and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.

Sandy Point

Sandy Point is located 201km south east of Melbourne, 40km south of Leongatha, 5 minutes from Shallow Inlet with Wilsons Promontory National Park to the east. Sandy Point was developed as a small holiday coastal hamlet in the 1950s and has remained a popular destination for surfing, fishing and boating. There is a surf club, tennis court, local hall, caravan park and shopping strip with a cafe/restaurant, general store, and mini golf facilities. The estimated population is approximately 130 (based on the Shire of South Gippsland rate database). The township has a lack of infrastructure and a limited range of commercial services and community facilities. Sandy Point as a small coastal hamlet has three roles:

- Primarily it is a holiday destination for people from Melbourne and the surrounding district;
- It is also a settlement for a small permanent year round population; and
- Is a destination for tourists to Shallow Inlet and the surrounding Coastal Parks.

4.2 Coastal Development Infrastructure

An essential component of township categorisation is the consideration of existing or potential infrastructure, this is particularly important in regards to regional planning to direct where growth should occur along the coast.

As a guiding principal urban growth should only occur in areas which have capacity to accommodate all necessary infrastructure. In regards to the South Gippsland region the Integrated Coastal Planning for the Gippsland CAP contains guidelines to assess the capacity of coastal settlements for further development. The CAP contains an 'Infrastructure Development Rating' for Gippsland coastal settlements which gives an indication of development potential based on existing infrastructure capacity and potential for infrastructure upgrade and expansion.

Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point have been assessed as having an infrastructure rating of 3. This signifies that the available infrastructure is a major impediment to any further development and that even if land is identified for growth this should only occur if adequate infrastructure is provided.

4.3 Future Growth and Development

Future growth across a region should occur in a cohesive and strategic manner. The Victorian Coastal Strategy is the guiding policy document; which states that development on the coast will be;

- directed away from sensitive areas;
- managed within defined existing settlements; and
- strategically planned so that inappropriate development between settlements can be avoided.

The ability for coastal settlements to accommodate further growth is a function of the physical, environmental, cultural and landscape characteristics and the availability and capacity of infrastructure (power, water, sewer and access).

In the South Gippsland region, there are environmental, cultural and landscape constraints which will affect growth in all four towns.

- Tarwin Lower is close to the river and associated river flood plains. It is also affected by acid sulfate soils.
- Venus Bay is surrounded by sand dunes Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Anderson Inlet, the Tarwin River flood plains and land affected by Acid Sulfate Soils. The town has also been identified as containing areas of cultural heritage significance.
- Waratah Bay adjoins Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, significant flora and fauna, the ocean beach and floodplains.
- Sandy Point adjoins a beach reserve and is in close proximity to Shallow Inlet. Floodplains are identified to the east and west of the town, however anecdotal evidence suggests that rural land between the north boundary of the town and Sandy Point Road is also affected by poor drainage which is contributing to flooding in that area.

Therefore, taking into consideration both infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints, future growth on the coast in the South Gippsland region should be limited and apportioned across the four towns within defined settlement boundaries.

4.4 Future Settlement Roles

Based on the above assumptions of where future growth should occur along the coast the future roles of the settlements is envisaged as follows:

- Leongatha will continue to be a higher order service centre for the region and will provide ongoing urban development opportunities.
- Tarwin Lower will act as a permanent rural hamlet and lower-order service centre for Venus Bay and surrounding rural areas.
- Venus Bay, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay will continue to primarily be holiday destinations and recreational based seasonal settlements. Their secondary role will be to accommodate a small permanent population consisting of predominantly retirees who wish to enjoy the benefits of a sea change lifestyle.

5. Venus Bay

This Settlement Background Paper explores the existing conditions of Venus Bay and provides an analysis of the information to guide future growth and development. The existing conditions detail population, town character, environment, lot supply and demand and infrastructure.

Venus Bay was created from a donation of land by a local farmer, and established in three parts known as the first, second and third estates. The estates are situated between a sand dune and Anderson Inlet and separated by rural farm land and wetland/ salt marsh vegetation.

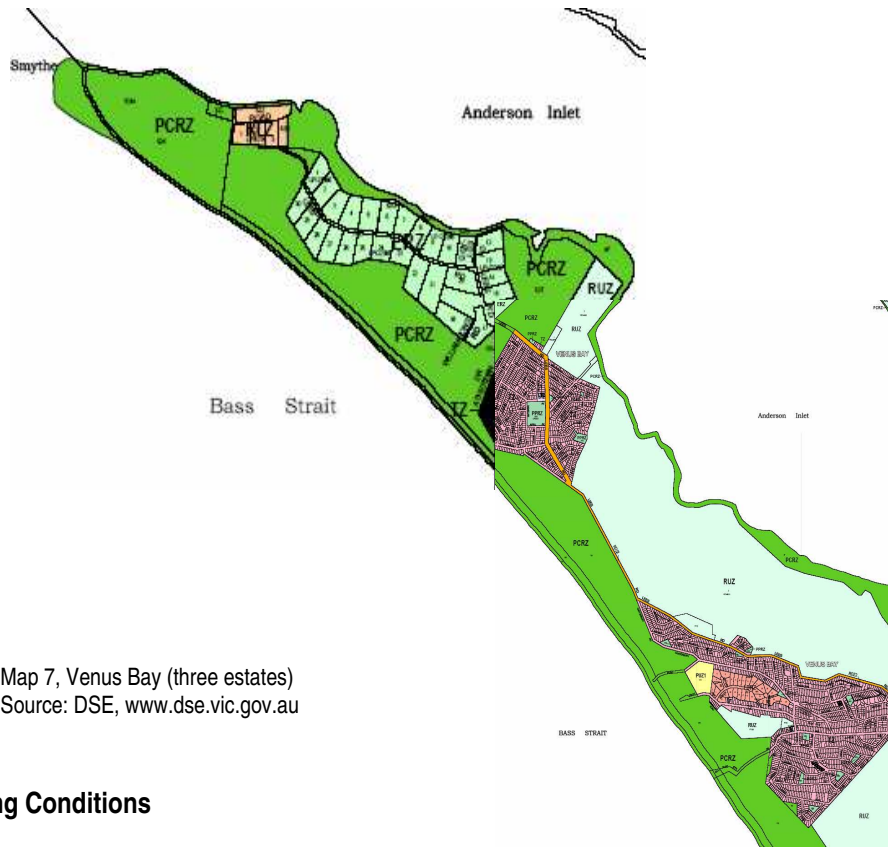
The estates consist predominantly of holiday homes, with approximately 41 % of residential land still undeveloped (South Gippsland Shire Rate Database 2005). Venus Bay has limited retail services and is reliant on tank water and on-site waste-water disposal systems. In context of its location in relation to other towns within the region we note the following.

Venus Bay is located approximately:

- 4 kilometres from Tarwin Lower;
- 10 kilometres across the entrance of Anderson Inlet to Inverloch;
- 22 kilometres from Meeniyan (east);
- 35 kilometres from Leongatha (45 minutes north); and
- 150 kilometres from Melbourne (2 hours).



Map 6, Venus Bay in the region
Source: www.promcountry.com.au



5.1 Existing Conditions

Population

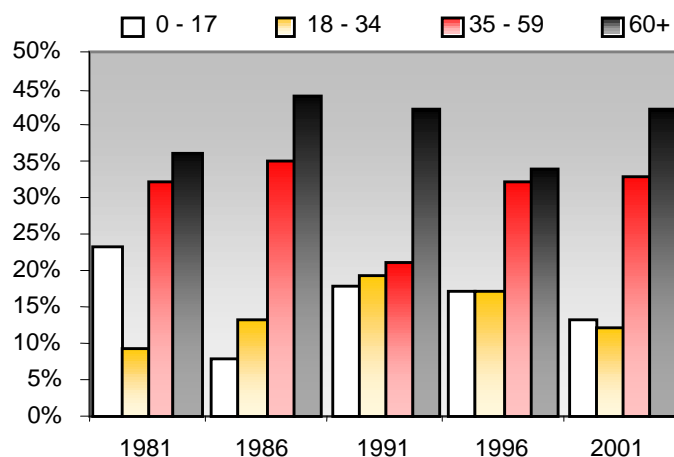
Urban Enterprise Pty Ltd was engaged to analyse demographic trends within Venus Bay. There were limitations on the availability of demographic data due to the small size of the hamlet. The demographic information and trends are based on data from the 2001 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics).

Venus Bay has a total permanent population (as at 2001) of 405 of which 53% are male and 47% are female.

Age

The total permanent resident population of Venus Bay has been dominated by persons aged 60+ since 1981. Since 1996, the proportion of Venus Bay residents aged over 35 years increased and conversely the proportion of residents aged 34 years or less has fallen slightly.

The permanent population has been steadily ageing since 1981, but it is unlikely that the rate of ageing is significantly different to other parts of regional Victoria. There is insufficient data available at present to identify the future intentions of existing holiday home owners, particularly in relation to whether there will be an increasing proportion of holiday home owners retiring to Venus Bay over time.



Source: DSE Know Your Area

Household Structure

The majority of people living permanently in Venus Bay are couples without children (63%). These people are likely to be retired as reflected by the age structure of Venus Bay residents.

Family Type	% of Families
Couple family	21%
Couple family without children	63%
One parent family	14%
Other family	2%
Total	100%

Source: ABS, CDATE 2001

Trends

Venus Bay's permanent population has grown (367%) between 1981 to 2001. This growth was derived from a small base population. Based on this historical growth and the continued demand in the 'sea change' property market, it is expected that the permanent resident population could increase to around 600 persons over the next 10 years.

The small permanent population of Venus Bay is predominantly made up of retirees. The existing age structure of permanent residents is unlikely to change markedly, other than a gradual ageing of the population as more holiday home owners retire to the town.

Population Fluctuations through Tourism

The South Gippsland Shire attracts an estimated 1.1 million visitors annually, comprising of approximately 577,000 daytrip visitors, and 573,000 overnight visitors. Almost half of all overnight visitors stay in holiday homes, 18% are staying in caravans and camping grounds and 16% stay in cabin accommodation. (Source: The Economic Impact of Tourism in Prom Country –Urban Enterprises Pty Ltd).

The demographic data supplied by Urban Enterprises shows that of the estimated 2458 holiday homes in the South Gippsland Shire, the majority (40%) of visitors stay in holiday homes within Venus Bay.

The Phillip Island and Gippsland Discovery Region, which includes the Local Government Areas of South Gippsland, Bass Coast, Wellington, La Trobe and Baw Baw, had an estimated 1.92 million overnight visitors for the year ending March 2004. Since 2000 the rate of overnight visitors to the region has increased steadily at a rate of 4.4 % per annum compared to the average of 1.4 % for Victoria.

There are significant fluctuations in the population of Venus Bay throughout the year due to the holiday home sector. Holiday homes are characterised by a seasonal form of occupancy and have distinctive visitation patterns throughout the year. For example, holiday homes within Venus Bay are occupied 43% of the time on average during the summer season. (Source: The Economic Impact of Tourism in Prom Country). This is more than double the occupancy experienced during the winter season.

This data assists in developing a range of estimates as to the "actual" population of Venus Bay at any given time throughout the year. For example, during the summer months (December to February), it is estimated that the population of Venus Bay swells to around 2,180 persons. (Source: The Economic Impact of Tourism in Prom Country).

Town Character

Describing a sense of a place or character of a town is done through an analysis of various attributes including land form; physical boundaries; town entries; roads and streets; building character; town landmarks; and focal points.

Land Form

The land form of Venus Bay is characterised by its location on an old sand dune system and by its position in relation to the current sand dune system. The old system with its undulating topography was extensive and spread from the ocean out towards Anderson Inlet. The edges of the old sand dune system can be seen to the north and east of Venus Bay characterised by the pronounced slope and height variation between the sandy soil and the flood plain of the Tarwin River. Essentially all three estates are located on the old sand dune system, and very little of this old sand dune remains undeveloped.

The current sand dune system which includes part of Cape Liptrap Coastal Park also influences the sense of place and character of Venus Bay. The current sand dunes situated to the south of the hamlet are 400-500 metres wide, 30 metres high and covered with coastal vegetation including Tea-Tree, Banksia and Wattle. The sand dunes form a visual and physical barrier ensuring that no dwellings have an ocean view or can be seen from the beach. This creates a distinct separation between the hamlet and beach and enhances the sense of isolation experienced while on the beach.



Photo 1 Interface of flood plain and old sand dune system



Photo 2 Sand dunes to the south creating a barrier to the town

Physical Boundaries

The first estate has an elongated triangular shape running north-west/south-east parallel to the beach. The boundaries of the triangle include the:

- Sand dunes to the south;
- Junction of the old sand dune system with the flood plain to the north (parallel to Lees Rd); and
- Junction of the old sand dune system with the flood plain to the east (along the line of pine trees). (Refer Figure 2.0 and 2.1 of **Appendix D**).

On the northern boundary, Lees Road runs parallel to the old sand dune/flood plain junction at a distance of approximately 100 metres. Views over the flood plain towards Tarwin River and Anderson Inlet are broken occasionally by vegetation and a small number of dwellings.

The eastern boundary consists of a line of pine trees (now senescent) that form a visual screen to the edge of the hamlet. Views can be seen through the pine trees towards flat grazing land.

The second estate is square in shape and bordered on the south and west sides by Cape Liptrap Coastal Park and to the north and east by the interface of the old dune system and flood plain. Two features of the northern and eastern edges of the hamlet are the close proximity to Tarwin River and the unscreened ground floors of dwellings, carports, and taller dwellings projecting above the ridgeline.

The third estate is rectangular in shape following the form of the sand spit and bounded by Anderson Inlet to the north and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park on all other sides.

Town Entries

The main entry to Venus Bay and the first estate is on the east side of the hamlet. The entrance is announced by several stands of tall pine trees lining the road and by the transition from flat to undulating terrain.

The entry to the second estate via Lees Road does not provide a sense of arrival, and does little to announce entry to the estate. Similarly, the entrance to the third estate is understated with the entrance undistinguishable from the surrounding Coastal Park.

Roads and Streets

The principal streets and roads are fully constructed and asphalt-sealed with grassed swale drains. Minor streets are unsealed and surfaced with light coloured sandy gravel. The undulating topography limits internal views along the existing roads to short vistas of low crests and roadside vegetation.

In many parts of the hamlet there are Tea Trees which are well established and provide screening for many existing dwellings. In other areas where vegetation clearing is more dominant, dwellings become more easily identified revealing variations in building design and character.

Building Character

A majority of dwellings in Venus Bay are simple in terms of design and built form. Many of the older dwelling stocks consist of single storey weatherboard and fibro cement sheet buildings nestled within established Tea Trees. However, there is also evidence of more contemporary dwelling designs emerging that have been established on higher ground to take advantage of views across Anderson Inlet. While there are often objections to the bulk and height of such buildings, many are sensitively designed and have added further richness to the mix of the settlement.

In relation to lot size, there is variation between each of the estates. The lot sizes can roughly be described as follows:

- 1st estate: Lot sizes ranging from approximately 550sqm to 1000sqm;
- 2nd estate: Lot sizes generally around 650sqm in area;
- 3rd estate: Low density allotments, which have areas ranging from approximately 3.5ha to 10 ha.



Photo 3. Recent housing developments that have departed from traditional styles within Venus Bay and can be seen above the treeline

Township Focus

The first and second estate differ in their town focus. The first estate has the commercial strip and community centre, while the second estate has Van Cleef Reserve and the boat ramp.

In the first estate the commercial area straddles a short length of Jupiter Boulevard, and has the character of a typical Australian town shopping strip, albeit limited to approximately twelve businesses. The strip is not well landscaped and visually suffers from a lack of consistency of style in built form and streetscape detail. The community centre sits in a clearing with minimal landscaping. What landscaping is present appears to be out of character with the surrounding vegetation.

The second estate contains no commercial or community areas and the town focus is on Van Cleef Reserve, a well vegetated 4.6 hectare bush area in the centre of the estate, and the boat ramp situated on Tarwin River that provides access to Anderson Inlet. The boat ramp and associated infrastructure, jetty, toilet block and car park are in poor condition.

The third estate contains large vegetated lots that blend into the surrounding Coastal Park and Anderson Inlet, which create a reclusive setting for many existing dwellings. The only focus or point of significance in the third estate is the car park at the entrance to Point Smythe.

Overall Town Character

In summary the key character elements of the town including its landscape setting and built form collectively creates a small hamlet, which integrates with the surrounding coastal environment.

Environment

The condition of the natural environment has important implications for the use and future growth of an area. This section provides an analysis of the environmental values including, landscape, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, features of significance, and constraints such as flooding and acid sulfate soils.

Landscape

As described in the town character section Venus Bay consists of three separate estates that lie between a high sand dune ridge and the fringe of Anderson Inlet. The open coast and beach on the south side is magnificent with long sandy beaches. The beach is one of the primary attractions of Venus Bay, and the feeling of isolation is especially felt at the far end of the hamlet where Point Smythe leads into Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.



Photo 4. Venus Bay beach and foreshore dune

Flora and Fauna

The dune area is a typical representation of coastal vegetation in Victoria including Coastal Tea-Tree, Coast Banksia, Coast Wattle, Coast Beard-heath, Spinifex and Marrum Grass. The beaches are potential breeding areas for shorebirds, particularly Pied Oyster Catches and Red Capped Plovers. A diverse range of mammals, such as koalas, possums, wombats, and echidnas can be found in and around the local area.

The Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) around Venus Bay include:

- Weedy Coastal Banksia Woodland;
- Coastal Saltmarsh;
- Coastal Banksia Woodland; and
- Coastal Dune Scrub Mosaic (SGSC, 2004).

Refer to **Appendix A** for EVC Map.

The South Gippsland Coastal Development Plan classifies the Bioregional Conservation status of the area near the Second and Third Estates as '*Vulnerable*' and, of '*least concern*' near Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. Threats to the flora and fauna in the area come from domestic pets and disturbance to the coastal vegetation.



Photos 5 & 6: Coastal vegetation around Venus Bay

Feature of Significance - Anderson Inlet

Venus Bay is situated on the south side of Anderson Inlet. The Inlet covers an area of 2498 hectares and has mobile sand belts permanently open to the ocean. It is surrounded by foreshore reserve, agricultural grazing land, rural residential development and the townships of Inverloch, Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay. The shoreline is fringed by mangroves and salt marsh, with seagrass in the intertidal and subtidal zones. Anderson Inlet is used year round by thousands of birds for breeding and feeding, and is subject to two international wader bird agreements including the Japanese Migratory Bird Agreement and the Chinese Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA and CAMBA). The inlet has also been recognised as having all the required criteria to be listed as a RAMSAR site.



Photo 7. Salt marsh of Anderson Inlet

Flooding data

Historical flooding data provided by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) shows land affected by a 1 in 100 year flood event (refer to Figure 1 in **Appendix D**). The historical flooding around Venus Bay has occurred in a large area on the Anderson Inlet side of Venus Bay between the First and Second Estates. Historic data also shows flooding has occurred to the east between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower and to the north east of the First Estate along the edge of Anderson Inlet. The CMA has initiated work to improve the estimated 1 in 100 year flooding data, but the outcomes of this work are currently not available.

Acid Sulfate Soils

Acid sulfate soils are wide spread throughout Australia, with an estimated 40,000km² of coastal soils being considered acid sulfate prone. Acid sulfate soils are initially formed under marine conditions and therefore often found in coastal areas. The soils contain iron sulfide layers which if disturbed can cause oxidation of the iron sulphate to form sulfuric acid. The mobilisation of sulfuric acid into the ground water has many impacts including:

- ♦ Reducing the water quality of surrounding water ways;
- ♦ Toxicity to fish and marine organisms;
- ♦ Reduction in biodiversity of surrounding wetland;
- ♦ Reduced agricultural productivity;
- ♦ Threats to human and animal health; and
- ♦ Corrosive impacts on buildings and infrastructure (SGSC, 2004).

The Acid Sulfate Soils Hazard Map Guidelines for Coastal Victoria, shows that the estimated extent of probable acid sulfate soils covers a large area on the eastern edge of the hamlet and along the fringe of Anderson Inlet (refer to **Appendix B**).

There is also a specific area on the edge of Anderson Inlet that has been identified as having high degrees of acid sulfate soils found shallower than one metre. This mapping has been designed to indicate where caution is needed or further investigations and analysis is required before any land is disturbed.

Cultural Heritage

The Gunai / Kurnai and the Boonwurrung Aboriginal peoples have a strong traditional association with the South Gippsland coast. Many examples of prior occupation by these Aboriginal groups have been identified as a result of regular survey and investigation. These include coastal shell middens, flaked stone artefact scatters, burial sites and other camp sites. This evidence continues to increase as further heritage assessments are undertaken.

In Victoria, all heritage places, sites and objects are protected under State (*Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972*) and Commonwealth (*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*) legislation. Development of Victoria's coastal fringe that does not consider Aboriginal heritage at the planning stage has the potential to adversely affect these values.

The Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health and Housing Co-operative Limited (CGAHC) in Morwell is the organisation with statutory authority for Aboriginal heritage. The CGAHC and the Gippsland Regional Cultural Heritage Unit provide advice on any Aboriginal heritage matters.

A new State Aboriginal Heritage Act has been developed and will be introduced in the near future (possibly early 2007). Broad protection of Aboriginal heritage places, sites and objects will remain although some other statutory arrangements across Victoria will be different. It will be necessary to review this section when this Act is in place. Details of the new Aboriginal Heritage Act are available at www.heritage.gov.au.

Fire

The location and nature of Venus Bay being situated on a point, set amongst vegetation and surrounded by heavily vegetated sand dunes, increases the risk of bushfires occurring in the area. This risk is recognised in Council's Building Regulations with Venus Bay being classified as a 'bushfire prone area'.

Lot Supply and Demand

Residential

There is a substantial supply of vacant residential land available in Venus Bay. Of the 2251 residential lots in the town, 1318 have been developed and 933 are vacant. 84% of the existing dwellings and 80% of the vacant lots are in the ownership of non-resident ratepayers. (Refer to table below).

Commercial

According to Councils' available rates information there are 12 commercial properties in Venus Bay, with a limited supply of vacant properties for development (8) (see table below).

Type	Lots	% of total property
Residential Dwellings	1318	58%
Vacant Residential	933	41%
Rural Property	2	0%
Commercial Properties	12	1%
Vacant Commercial	8	0%
Land Owners	2273	100%

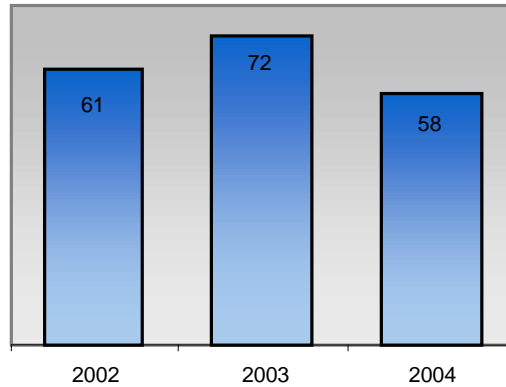
Source: South Gippsland Shire Rates Database, 2005



Photo 7. View of dwellings overlooking Anderson Inlet

Dwelling Approvals

There has been strong growth in building approvals for dwellings in Venus Bay, with 191 dwellings approved between 2002 and 2004 inclusive. The graph below shows the number of building approvals for dwellings in Venus Bay each year since 2002.



Source, South Gippsland Shire Rates Database, 2005

There is however, a distinction between the number of building approvals granted and the number of dwellings that have received a building occupancy permit (BOP). The BOP is evidence of a dwelling approval being carried through to completion of construction and fit for habitation. In Venus Bay the proportion of dwelling approvals that have carried through to a building occupancy permit since 2002 has averaged 51%. The approvals that have not proceeded to BOP stage could represent dwellings still under construction as well as those not yet commenced. Accordingly, these figures need to be treated with caution.

	2002	2003	2004	Total
Total building approvals	61	72	58	191
Proportion with BOP	64%	51%	49%	51%

Source: South Gippsland Shire Rates Database, 2003 and 2005

Dwellings Completed.

Between 2003 and 2005 there have been 91 dwellings completed in Venus Bay, of which 84 have been holiday homes. Trends indicate that the majority of new dwellings will continue to be holiday homes.

Infrastructure

A preliminary investigation has been undertaken of the current infrastructure capacity of Venus Bay, and the requirements for future upgrading.

Water Service Infrastructure

There is currently no water supply service provided by South Gippsland Water. Potable water is obtained from rain tanks and bore holes on individual properties.

South Gippsland Water has developed concepts for head works, transfer and reticulation systems however funding has not been identified. Based on the current developed lot numbers of approximately 1100, the estimated current potable water demand is around 200 ML/year. It is expected that demand will increase to approximately 484 ML/year based on forecast growth over the next 20 years.

South Gippsland Water provides no waste water service to Venus Bay. Waste water in Venus Bay is collected through on-site waste water disposal systems, the majority being septic systems. Investigations by Southern Rural Water identified ground water contamination from septic tanks in Venus Bay and Sandy Point. In response to this and to help address this issue the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has introduced interim guidelines on the protection of groundwater in townships with sandy soils.

In response to issues related to waste water disposal Council has developed Waste Water Management Plans for the townships of Nyora, Poowong, Loch and Meeniyan. Following direction from the State Government, this process has now evolved into the development of a Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) that has recently been exhibited in draft form. The DWMP incorporates Venus Bay and sets out a future action plan to assess and address issues relating to wastewater management.

Council also has an adopted list of townships prioritised to reflect their need for reticulated sewerage infrastructure. Venus Bay is high on that list of Council's preferred townships for sewerage infrastructure. It is also understood that South Gippsland Water has investigated the options for installing reticulated sewerage for Venus Bay, however, no funding has been identified for future implementation.

Services and Roads

Current power and telecommunication services are reported to be generally acceptable and upgrades to improve reliability are not perceived by the community to be of a high priority.

Jupiter Boulevard is the main access road leading into Venus Bay. It is sealed and in a satisfactory condition. The main connecting roads around Venus Bay including Lees Road are also sealed, however many local streets are unsealed with gravel surfaces.

Sandy soils provide a natural means of infiltration for stormwater runoff from hard pavement/roof surfaces. The use of grassed swales as the major form of conveyance of storm flow is preferred as it assists in maintaining the informal ambience of the town, and serves to provide a secondary level of treatment to the stormwater before discharging to adjoining waterways.

Community Infrastructure

There are several community infrastructure elements in Venus Bay.

- The Surf Life Saving Club overlooks the main surf beach. It is a large building used for storage of life saving equipment and includes a radio look out and social rooms. There is also public toilets and dedicated car parking spaces.
- A caravan park is situated on an old sand dune next to the commercial area in the first estate on Jupiter Boulevard. It is a family caravan park, which becomes a popular destination over the peak summer and Easter periods.
- A community centre is located near the commercial area in the first estate. It is a large brick building used for a range of community activities.
- There is a double lane boat ramp with a jetty, adjoining car park and toilet facilities at the end of Fishermans Road in the Second Estate. The Gippsland Boating Coastal Action Plan identifies the upgrading of the jetty as a necessary action.
- Venus Bay also has a range of public open space assets including a network of Council Reserves.



Photo 8: Anderson Inlet boat launching ramp and jetty



Photo 9: Shops in Commercial Area

5.2 Planning and Land Use

Management of land use is achieved primarily through the application of State Policies and Planning Schemes, in this case the South Gippsland Planning Scheme (refer Section 3.2 of Regional Context). The use of land is controlled to limit impacts on the environment so townships can evolve and develop in a sustainable manner. Planning schemes provide specific controls with regard to the preferred land use for each parcel of land.

Through the application of the South Gippsland Planning Scheme controls, Venus Bay has developed into a quiet, low key coastal village. However with more evidence of contemporary building designs emerging within the hamlet, there is a threat that town character may be compromised by the introduction of larger more prominent dwellings.

To follow is a description of the Planning Scheme policies and controls that apply to Venus Bay. An analysis of the application of these controls in Venus Bay is also provided.

Local Planning Policy Framework

The Municipal Strategic Statement sets the broad strategic framework and direction for the South Gippsland Municipality and identifies key issues and areas to be addressed. Within the South Gippsland MSS particular areas that relate to Venus Bay include:

- Environment and Cultural Heritage;
- Venus Bay; and
- Small Towns.

Sub Clause 21.04-1 Environment and Cultural Heritage

- Council aims to ensure that sustainable land use and development occurs. It highlights areas within the Shire, particularly coastal areas that face increasing environmental pressure from residential development. This pressure is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, given the Shire's natural beauty and relatively close proximity to Melbourne.

Sub Clause 21.04-9 Venus Bay

- This subclause aims to maintain Venus Bay as a holiday settlement, allowing development to occur in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner that protects the delicate landforms and character of the area. One of the actions for implementation is to "prepare a Local Structure Plan to coordinate future development in and around the town".

- It also strongly discourages medium density housing until reticulated sewerage becomes available. It also discourages industries and retail premises, except for small food and drink premises within the existing business districts.

Sub Clause 21.04-10 Small Towns

- This subclause aims to maintain a network of small towns with a range of roles and services designed to cater for the needs of residents and visitors to the Shire. Additionally, this sub clause aims to provide an attractive and safe residential environment and strengthen the economic future of the small towns within the Shire.
- It also promotes Tarwin Lower as an important local centre serving the needs of the local community and tourists in the southern portion of the Shire.

These three sub clauses will guide the objectives and strategies developed as part of the UDF.

Zoning

A key element of planning controls is the application of zones, which guide land use and development within appropriate areas of the Municipality (refer Map 8). Zones control the uses that can occur on particular parcels of land, and there are nine different zones within Venus Bay. These include:

- Township Zone;
- Low Density Residential Zone;
- Rural Living Zone;
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone;
- Rural Zone;
- Business 1 Zone;
- Environmental Rural Zone;
- Public Park and Recreation Zone; and
- Public Use Zone 1 – Service and Utility.

The zoning of Venus Bay and surrounds reflects the 'estate' nature of the settlements, as well as the surrounding natural environment. The use and application of each zone is discussed below.

Estates 1 and 2 are predominantly zoned **Township**, which allows for a variety of uses including residential, commercial and industrial. The zone requires that services must be provided to new subdivisions and development, and a strong emphasis is placed on the established neighbourhood and township character when deciding on applications for new developments.

The **Low Density Residential Zone** applies to land surrounding Monour, Grogan and Redmond Courts. Uses allowed in this zone are generally semi-rural/residential, however some commercial uses that support residential uses are also permitted.

The **Rural Living Zone** applies to a small pocket of land on the Anderson Inlet side of the 'point'. This zone allows for residential uses in a rural setting and low scale agricultural uses, which are conducted in a sustainable manner.

Land at the tip of Point Smythe, and land adjoining the beach on the Bass Strait side, is zoned **Public Conservation and Resource**. This zone also applies to land adjoining the foreshore on the Anderson Inlet side of the township. The intent of this zone is primarily to protect and conserve the natural environment, and provide facilities for educating the public on the natural environment, whilst allowing for appropriate resource based uses. This zone effectively prohibits uses that are not carried out by or on behalf of the public land manager.

The rubbish tip, located at the western end of Canterbury Road is zoned **Public Use 1 – Service and Utility**. This zone permits the collection and disposal of household refuse, however other uses may be permitted which are consistent with the primary purpose of the zone.

The **Rural Zone** applies to land generally between Lees Road and Anderson Inlet, land between the first and second estates, and land further southeast beyond the first estate. The purpose of the Rural Zone is for agricultural and horticultural uses. It also permits limited residential and commercial uses in appropriate areas.

The **Business 1 Zone** applies to land in Jupiter Boulevard located in estate 1, and to a small pocket of vacant land in estate 2 at the corner of Lees Road and Black Avenue. This zone encourages retail, appropriate commercial uses, and entertainment and community facilities.

Estate 3 is predominantly zoned **Environmental Rural**, which encourages subdivision that promotes effective land management practices and infrastructure provision that has regard to environmental sensitivity and biodiversity.

There are also a number of sites designated as Council Reserves zoned **Public Park and Recreation**. These sites are seen by both the Council and local residents as important assets that need to be retained as local pockets of open space.



Map 8: Zoning Map of Venus Bay
Source: DSE Planning

Overlays

Overlays are additional controls over land that offer a further level of direction in relation to areas that have a particular sensitivity or unique circumstance. There are three overlays in Venus Bay, and these include:

- ♦ Environmental Significance Overlay 3;
- ♦ Environmental Significance Overlay 6; and
- ♦ Restructure Overlay.

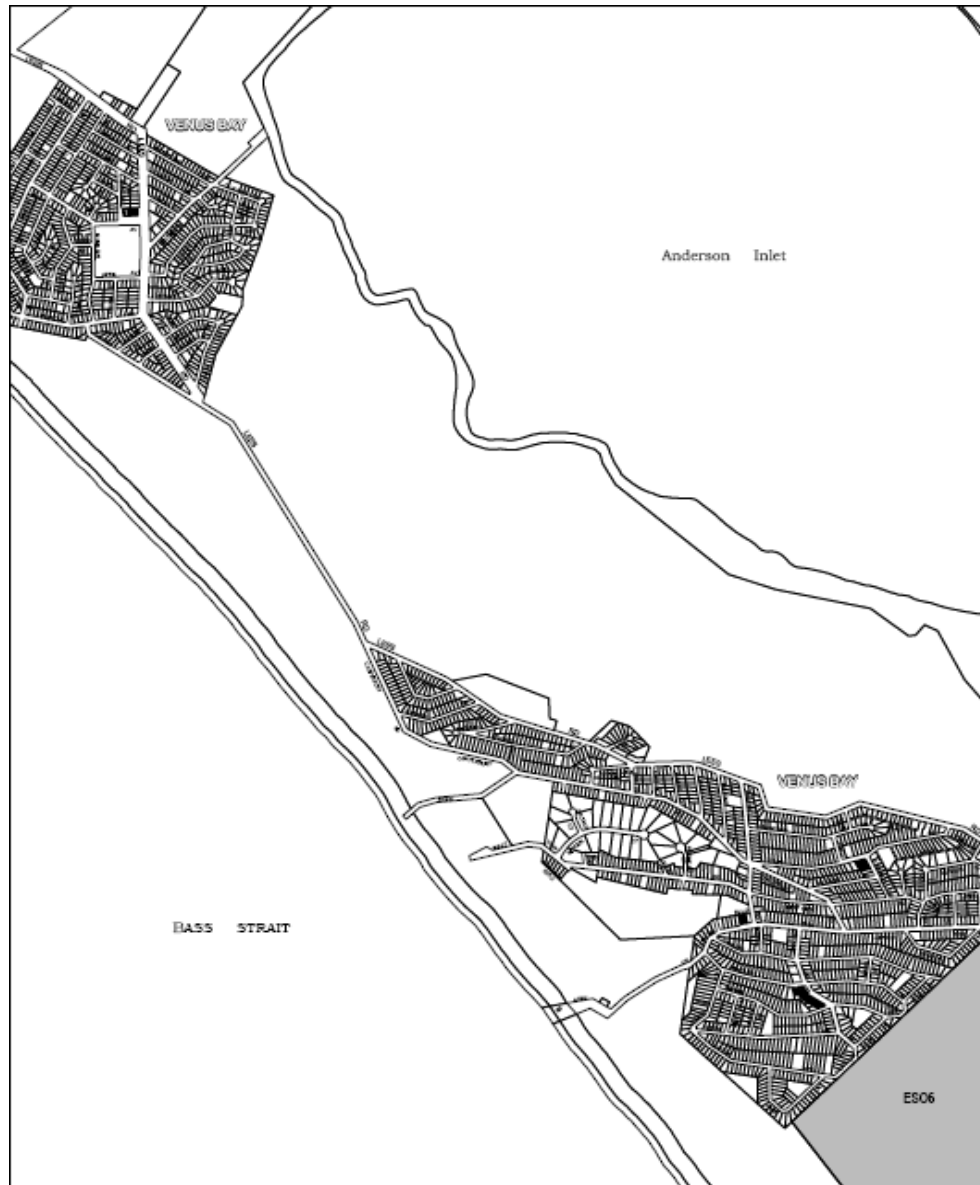
These overlays and their application to Venus Bay are described below.

The **Environmental Significance Overlay 3** applies to the entire Venus Bay area and relates to coastal areas. The overlay focuses on the conservation of the coastline, and the protection of the surrounding natural environment.



Map 9
Environmental Significance Overlay 3
Source: DSE Planning Website

The **Environmental Significance Overlay 6** applies to land on the eastern fringe of the first estate. This overlay relates to areas susceptible to flooding. A planning permit is therefore required for most buildings and works, to ensure that development does not occur on potentially flood prone land.



Map 10
Environmental Significance Overlay 6
Source: DSE Planning Website

There are two small parcels of land within the first estate that are subject to the **Restructure Overlay 1 and 2**. This overlay affects sites where inappropriate subdivisions have occurred in the past, and in this case the schedule to the overlay identifies the following sites:

- Land bounded by Mercury Drive, Juno Road and Saturn Parade; and
- Land located on corner of Louis Road and Atkinson Avenue.

Within these areas any new subdivision and development proposals must comply with the requirements of the restructure plan overlay.



Map 11 Restructure Overlay 1



Photo 10 – Vacant Business 1 Zone
in the Second Estate

Adequacy of Current Planning Controls

The key shortcomings of the South Gippsland Planning Scheme relate to the Municipal Strategic Framework and Local Planning Policies. Clause 21.04-9 of the MSS is dedicated to Venus Bay and includes reference to a specific environmental and character objective, and a series of strategies and actions including the need for a Local Structure Plan for the hamlet. Given that a structure plan has now been developed for the hamlet, there is clearly a need to revise this section of the MSS to better reflect the findings of the Settlement Background Paper including the “vision” statement which is referred to in this report.

Notably absent within the current MSS are specific strategies and actions which deal with design and built form within the village, flooding and acid sulfate soils. This is further reflected in the absence of appropriate planning controls that can be applied through a series of overlays and local planning policies.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Clause 21 and 22 of the LPPF has limited relevance to Venus Bay. The Local Planning Policy therefore clearly needs to be expanded upon to include a set of objectives and design guidelines that will reinforce the preferred vision for the town and that reinforce protection of land likely to be exposed to flooding and acid sulfate soils.

Township Zone

The Township Zone provides the flexibility for a wide variety of uses that may be required in small towns. In the case of Venus Bay the Township Zone appears to be appropriate given that its size and land use mix comfortably fits within the description of the purpose of the zone. Despite this, further consideration of supporting planning controls needs to be considered to prevent inappropriate development from occurring within the hamlet.

New Rural Zones

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has introduced new zones into the Victorian Planning Provisions that guide the function and use of rural zoned land. The new zones include:

- A *Farming Zone* which replaces the Rural Zone. This will be the new zone for agricultural areas.
- A *Rural Activity Zone*. This is a new zone providing flexibility for agriculture and other land uses to co-exist.
- A *Rural Living Zone*. This upgrades the existing zone and will be the new zone for rural residential areas.
- A *Rural Conservation Zone*. This replaces the Environmental Rural Zone and will be the new zone for areas with significant environmental considerations.

The application of new Rural Zones to rural land surrounding Venus Bay will be considered by the South Gippsland Shire Council as part of a separate project and does not form part of this study. However, the land on the southern boundary of the hamlet should be retained in a Rural Zone until the development potential of the land has been fully assessed. In this regard the structure plan nominates the balance of the land adjoining the caravan park as a long term development area that will need to satisfy a series of development prerequisites before any further growth can be supported.

Low Density Residential Zone

The Low Density Residential Zone consists of a small number of larger lots surrounded by conventional allotments within the township zone near the centre of the first estate. This zone is considered appropriate within this location and offers an alternative for prospective purchasers who may wish to live on larger allotments as opposed to more conventional lots associated with the Township Zone.

Public Use Zone 1

The Public Use Zone 1 within the First Estate continues to be used as the Council refuse site. The outcomes of recent community consultation did not identify specific issues with the use of this land and as such it should continue to operate at least in the short to medium term period.

Business 1 Zone

The Business 1 Zone defines the boundaries of the small shopping centre in the first estate and a small vacant parcel adjacent to the Van Cleef Reserve in the second estate. It is considered that the existing Business 1 Zone in Estate 1 is appropriate, however it should also be extended south of Jupiter Boulevard to capture the remaining smaller allotments within the township zone. By reinforcing the role of the commercial precinct through rezoning of this land any further threats of ad hoc commercial development within the township zone will be avoided.

In contrast the Business 1 Zone in the second estate is considered to be inappropriate given that it has remained vacant for many years and unlikely to be developed in the foreseeable future. Given that there is now a clear focus on consolidating the existing commercial precinct in estate 1, it is recommended that the Business 1 Zone in the second estate be rezoned to a Township Zone and a Restructure Overlay be applied to the site to avoid further use of an inappropriate subdivision of the land.

Environmental Rural Zone and Rural Living Zone

These zones occupy the third estate and will be subject to the transition of the new Rural Zone provisions. These zones are considered to be appropriate at least in the short to medium term and should be retained until further consideration is given in relation to the application of the new Rural Zones including the amended version of the Rural Living Zone and the Rural Conservation Zone which will replace the existing Environmental Rural Zone.

Overlays

There are currently no overlays that reinforce town character and visions for suitable design outcomes in Venus Bay. The only existing overlays in Venus Bay relate to land that is susceptible to flooding (ESO6), protection of coastal areas (ESO3) and the restructure overlay (RO). There is no specific overlay control to support and encourage desired urban design outcomes for the town or particular environmental and landscape objectives. The application of appropriate schedules in a Design Development Overlay (DDO) would assist in achieving the objective of reinforcing particular urban design outcomes for the village within the Township Zone, the Low Density Residential Zone and the Business 1 Zone. From examination of emerging trends in built form there is clearly a threat of continued ad hoc commercial development which could otherwise be managed through appropriate design guidelines which can be achieved through the introduction of this overlay. There are also no vegetation protection controls affecting the village which would be worthy of consideration given the number of vacant lots which remain undeveloped. However, the introduction of specific controls should be delayed until a proper vegetation survey is undertaken to determine the significance of the existing vegetation.

Environmental Significance Overlay 3 - Coastal Areas

The main purpose of the Environmental Significance Overlay 3 is to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastal areas of Venus Bay and to ensure that development adjacent to coastal areas is compatible with the environment and does not result in adverse impacts on coastal processes. The ESO3 affects the entire village however there is no reference to building height controls or protection of the significant beach landscapes. In this case the ESO3 which applies to the village would be better served by a (DDO) as described above which would provide more definitive controls in relation to design and built form and would be more effective in achieving the desired vision for the town.

In considering an alternative overlay that would best preserve the landscape characteristics of the village, reference should be made to the findings of the Coastal Spaces- Recommendations Report (April 2006) and the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (CSLAS). Both documents recognise the value of the Venus Bay Peninsula and Anderson Inlet for its landscape values, including the coastal dunes and sandy beaches which provide a scenic backdrop to Andersons Inlet and hinterland area.

Through the CSLAS it is recommended that the Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) should be applied across the Rural Zone beyond the northern boundary of the village. The introduction of this overlay will require a specific schedule which recognises the particular landscape characteristics that warrant protection, including the key elements of the landscape, landscape character objectives, permit requirements and decision guidelines.

Environmental Significance Overlay 6 – Areas Susceptible to Flooding

This overlay serves to identify land that is at most risk of flooding, and to provide controls on development in areas likely to be affected by flooding. The aim of the overlay is also to generally protect water bodies and watercourses. The ESO 6, however, only identifies those areas at risk to flooding, and is not based on reliable flood mapping. It is therefore essential that further investigations are undertaken to improve the reliability of flood data which can then be translated into a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). This overlay is considered to be the most appropriate planning tool to address issues relating to definitive flood data, and therefore it is recommended that the LSIO replace the existing ESO6.

In addition to reinforcing the importance of flood data, there is also a clear absence of guiding controls that would assist in addressing areas of land affected by acid sulfate soils. In the absence of an appropriate overlay that could be used to address this issue it is considered appropriate that a Local Planning Policy is introduced into the Planning Scheme which can provide guidance in relation to development on or near sites which may be affected by ASS. In preparing such a policy careful consideration should be given to the recommendations of the Coastal Spaces–Recommendations Report (April 2006), which reinforces commitment to the objectives of a National Strategy for the management of coastal acid sulfate soils.

Restructure Overlay

As previously outlined on page 36 of this report the application and use of the Restructure Overlay (RO) is an appropriate tool for avoiding continued or future use of inappropriate subdivisions. The use of this overlay should be utilised to address the recommendation for rezoning of the Business 1 Zone in Estate 2 which includes lots which are no longer considered appropriate for this area of the village.



Photo 11: Caravan Park on Centre Road



Photo 12: Venus Bay General Store

5.3 Community and Agency Views

As detailed in the Project Approach two actions undertaken to develop ownership of the project and collection of information were the completion of an Agency Workshop and three community workshops. A summary of this consultation is detailed below. The complete summary of the Venus Bay community workshops can be found in **Appendix C**.

Agency Workshop

The Agency workshop was undertaken in a SWOT analysis format.

The main strengths and opportunities seen by the agencies include:

- Location and use of the Life Saving Club;
- The unsealed roads that helped to create a country town ambience;
- The development of new shops that create local employment opportunities;
- Options for new waste water recycling systems; and
- The availability of lots for development within the existing town.

The main weakness and constraints seen by the agencies include:

- Ground water pollution from the septic systems;
- Inadequate planning for sea level rise and the associated impacts;
- The risk of exposure of acid sulfate soils in the area;
- The loss of vegetation through uncontrolled development;
- Infrastructure constraints;
- Inadequacy of parking and access to the beach to meet the demand particularly in summer; and

- Limited vehicular access to the village.

Community Workshop

Three community workshops were held to capture the views of the permanent and non permanent residents of the community.

Information collected at the workshops was focussed on:

- What the community valued about Venus Bay;
- The community's vision for the future; and
- The issues that may stop the vision being realised.

It was determined that the Venus Bay community values:

- The tranquil, uncrowded, relaxed nature of the township;
- The community spirit and family friendly atmosphere;
- The treed character of the area;
- The pristine beaches;
- The flora and fauna;
- The low rise and low visibility of buildings; and
- The low volumes of traffic.

The community views Venus Bay as a family holiday destination that attracts people who enjoy peace and quiet and the natural environment. It is also seen as a place for retirees with a small permanent population.

The community feels that the character of Venus Bay is identified and reinforced by its beach atmosphere, 'weekender' homes, small lots and tree lined streets. The community would like to see this character maintained and the buffer of undeveloped land maintained between the estates and between Tarwin Lower. Certain members of the community also indicated a preference for no reticulated services as this is seen to be a potential catalyst for further development.

The community has concerns regarding potential groundwater contamination, pollution of beaches, inappropriate development, inefficient public toilets, control of environmental weeds and the impacts of disturbance of acid sulfate soils.

The community would like to see features such as bicycle and walking tracks developed, visitor information signs installed, and improvements such as underground power lines, regular inspections and maintenance of septic tanks, and the utilisation of existing blocks for future low scale development.

StratPlan 2005

A project undertaken by the Tarwin Lower Venus Bay Association (TLVBA) with a similar focus to the Settlement Papers and Structure Plans was the development of Tarwin Lower & Venus Bay Community StratPlan 2005. This document is a survey and report of community views on the Tarwin Lower / Venus Bay area. Whilst the survey contained some questions relating to 'today', it's main focus was on the future direction for the area. The survey examined areas such as:

- Community vision for Tarwin Lower & Venus Bay;
- Built environment and infrastructure;
- Natural environment;
- Economy; and
- Human services.

From the survey results the majority of people favour limited development, and an environmentally sensitive and sustainable future for the two towns. Many realise that change is inevitable, however there is hope that the factors that brought them to these towns are not lost in the future.

There is also a desire that the shire and other authorities embark on a series of changes to maintain and improve the level of services within the hamlets as well as the pristine nature of the coastal park and surrounds (Ian Try, October 2005).

Council at a meeting on 5 April 2006, acknowledged the Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower Community StratPlan 2005 as a community document and as a submission to the Draft Urban Design Framework'. A copy of StratPlan 2005 can be found on the TLVBA website www.venusbaywetlands.com

Exhibition of draft documents

The draft Settlement Background Papers and Structure Plans for the UDF project were exhibited for public comment over a six week period between 23 January and 11 March 2006. A total of 170 submissions were received, of which 26 related to Venus Bay. A summary of the information and concerns in the submissions is detailed below.

- There was general support for the documents and the community believed the findings and recommendations respond to community concerns. The community believed the vision expressed was achievable although some concerns were raised in relation to the lack of emphasis placed on providing a safe environment for residents and visitors.
- Some submitters did not consider that their ideas from the workshops had been included. Some respondents indicated that they did not receive any notification in relation to the information sessions. Some submissions highlighted flaws in the documents, and that "StratPlan 2005" better represented the community's views.
- Many submitters did not support any expansion of the town's boundaries or development in new areas. There was also a general belief that as there is no firm evidence of increasing demand for additional housing within the town, no further justification for expansion of the hamlet could be considered.
- There was opposition in relation to future expansion of the hamlet into environmentally sensitive dune areas. It was considered that if the hamlet were overdeveloped there would be no incentive for people to travel to Venus Bay. It was suggested that Venus Bay, with local and state government support, could become a model hamlet with a much smaller environmental footprint than so called developed towns.
- There was a preference by many submitters for existing water tank and septic systems rather than reticulated water and sewerage, and that alternative ESD systems should be investigated. It was also suggested that provision of reticulated water should not be considered for fear that the infrastructure may cause massive environmental damage. However, it was also noted that the area is being compromised by inefficient septic systems, which need to be addressed through proper auditing to determine suitable alternative solutions.
- Questions were also raised over the accuracy of available flood data and mapping information, and the implications of this in relation to ground water contamination.
- It was suggested that advocating further expansion of the hamlet would compromise the scientific and environmental values of the region. Actions including a strategy to control environmental weeds and reinstating the wetlands to the north of Lees Road were cited as options for creating a flora and fauna sanctuary.
- There was also a concern in relation to the prerequisites associated with the release of new growth areas. It is considered that in this regard some flexibility should be considered over the

timing and staging of new land releases. Opportunities for tourist accommodation are not dealt with in sufficient detail and the Structure Plan makes no provision for tourism based activities including accommodation.

- There was a request for more emphasis on the need for public transport services between Venus Bay, Leongatha and Wonthaggi. Several submissions highlighted car parking issues and recommended various traffic control devices.
- It was noted that there are a number of Aboriginal burial sites within the Venus Bay sand spit area, some of which are recorded and some of which are not. It was requested that the four identified areas recommended for future growth be removed from the Venus Bay UDF because of the uncertainty attached to the location of these sites.

5.4 Settlement Analysis

This section identifies issues that have the potential to impact on the future use and development of Venus Bay. The rationale for any future change or development in Venus Bay is demonstrated by addressing these issues through a vision, objectives and strategies. The vision, objectives and strategies that provide the future strategic direction for Venus Bay are identified in section 5.5.

A general SWOT analysis was undertaken to guide the issues investigation. The diagram below provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Venus Bay in relation to planning, land use and development.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unspoilt natural environment and beaches • Lack of congestion • Hamlet feel / character • Dune buffer • Low rise development • Isolation / serenity • Wildlife • Unmade roads • Proximity to Melbourne • Confined town boundaries • Commercial uses in Tarwin Lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No facilities for the aged • No infrastructure (sewer, water) • No public transport • Lack of parking in shopping strip over holiday period • Lack of parking at beach access points • Town entries • Poor traffic circulation • Lack of community facilities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism outside of main holiday period • Educational and eco-tourism ventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate development • Excessive commercial development • Ground water contamination from septic tanks • Excessive clearance of vegetation and loss of habitat. • Potential Flooding • Acid Sulfate Soils. • Impact of development on sites of cultural heritage significance. • Holiday population peaks • Dust and sediment from gravel roads • Impact of private development on the foreshore.

Key Issues

Loss of town character through introduction of hard edges, formal road landscaping and sealing of roads

The form of the existing road design which consists predominantly of sealed and unsealed roads with unmade shoulders reinforces the town character of Venus Bay. It is expected that with increased visitation there is likely to be increased pressure placed upon the existing road infrastructure. This will result in increased pollution through dust emissions and sediment run off. A solution to reduce dust and erosion is the implementation of a more formal road system including fully sealed roads with kerb and channels, however this may reduce and threaten a key characteristic of the town character.

Loss of town character through urban development

The dwellings and buildings in Venus Bay are of two basic types, low-key older style holiday homes and larger contemporary dwellings. The older style holiday homes with wide frontages set amongst vegetation add charm to the low-key character of Venus Bay. As development occurs and existing dwellings are replaced, there is a threat that future dwelling stock may not be in keeping with the town character. Characteristics of more recent development include dwellings consisting of more than one storey with double garages, extensive site coverage and minimal open space.

Enhancement of town character through tighter design and control of commercial areas

Currently the commercial centre of Venus Bay is in the first estate and consists of a general store, cafes and commercial uses. In terms of town character there is a threat that the existing commercial centre may continue to develop in an ad hoc fashion unless a boundary is established which clearly defines the commercial precinct.

Enhancement of town character through improvements to town entries and traffic circulation including bike paths and walking tracks

Town character usually stems from the established layout and access circulation of a town. Currently Venus Bay has no defined entry and circulation is focussed on vehicle access rather than cyclists and pedestrians. This is evident both within the estates and between the estates.

Threat to the identified town character through an increase in housing density

Based on current and forecast trends in both population and dwelling approvals it is unlikely that dwelling densities will increase beyond one dwelling per lot within the foreseeable future. The current housing density is in keeping with the coastal character of the village, and it is likely that this will continue. If however, there were proposals to increase housing density, it should only occur if the town's character is not compromised.

Loss of vegetation through urban development

As towns develop there is often a loss of vegetation and fauna habitat. This commonly occurs through lots being cleared to accommodate new dwellings and dwelling extensions. Older style holiday dwellings within Venus Bay generally have limited site coverage which allows for the retention of native vegetation. As dwellings may be converted to larger permanent residences in the future, larger tracts of vegetation will also require clearing.

Loss of vegetation from installation of new or upgraded septic systems that need a specified amount of land for filtration

Another source of vegetation loss is through clearing to accommodate new or upgraded septic systems. EPA Guidelines on Septic Systems for Townships with Sandy Soils specifies the area for a septic system irrigation facility. These values are approximately 5 to 10 times greater than what was previously required, and hence there is a potential for loss of further vegetation in order to accommodate these new systems.

Dust and sediment from gravel roads can affect vegetation, and cause sediment to enter the waterways.

Roads with gravel surfaces form a proportion of the current road network in Venus Bay. These unsealed surfaces create dust and sediment run off which can impact on the water quality of Anderson Inlet.

Loss of habitat corridors through clearing of vegetation for urban development

Venus Bay is unique in that it is located between Anderson Inlet and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, both of which contain significant flora and fauna. With increased clearing of vegetation over a period of time there is a threat that these habitat areas will be reduced and fragmented creating a loss of habitat corridors within and between the estates, the Coastal Park and Inlet.

The impact of failed septic systems and effluent discharged into the environment

Many people are generally unaware that septic tank systems are not designed for permanent waste treatment. As these systems age ongoing 'decay' may cause eventual failure. When this occurs raw or partly treated sewerage may be discharged into the environment. Septic system breakdowns can also occur through irregular usage, increasing the potential for transmission of disease and environmental degradation. Additionally due to the nature of the sandy soils, there is an issue with managing seepage into the soils and ground water. Seepage from septic tanks may contain heavy metals, toxic organisms, nutrients and micro-organisms which are considered a source of stream pollution. The impacts of septic systems on the surrounding environment include, alga blooms, toxicity to native flora and fauna and contamination of ground water. Seepage may also rise to the surface and seep directly into waterways and coastal waters (SGSC, 2004). Consultants SKM have recently completed studies on the current status of the ground water and its relationship to the current septic systems. The results obtained from tests using observation bores indicate that groundwater at Venus Bay is unsuitable as an untreated potable supply at most locations at various times of the year (SKM 1997).

The impact of sand dunes at the interface of private properties and the foreshore

In most coastal towns there is an interface between freehold land and foreshore reserves. This interface usually consists of a row of houses that back directly onto the sand dunes. This adds pressure on the maintenance of public and private land, particularly in relation to the protection of native flora and fauna. Issues normally encountered include:

- Exposure to greater fire risk due to infrequent clearing of understorey vegetation near established areas;
- Creeping of garden weeds into the foreshore reserve causing loss of local biodiversity;
- The lopping and clearing of vegetation to improve or enhance views; and
- The creation of 'goat tracks' instead of defined formal access tracks.

The extent of flooding is seen as a constraint to further development in Venus Bay

Flooding has been recognised as having occurred in a large area shown to the east between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower and to the north east of the estates along the edge of Anderson Inlet. The extent of flooding is seen as an environmental constraint, and as such development should not be encouraged in flood prone areas.

Potential for Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils to be disturbed through development

Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils (CASS) have been identified in the Venus Bay area. The primary objective of managing acid sulfate soils is to avoid disturbance which would otherwise create potential for environmental damage including the creation of sulphuric acid and the impact of this on nearby land and water. Activities likely to disturb CASS may include excavation for buildings and works and drainage of coastal swamp areas.

Impact of development on sites of cultural heritage significance

Through AAV, the Department for Victorian Communities (DVC) has responsibility for administering cultural heritage legislation which includes the Commonwealth *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* and the *Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972*. Section 5 refers to the importance of South Gippsland to the Gunai/ Kurnai and Boonwurrung Aboriginal peoples as a place of cultural heritage importance. As such there is a need to protect Aboriginal heritage places that may be identified within the Shire and which need to be managed through a series of appropriate guidelines. A new State Aboriginal Heritage Act has been developed which is likely to be introduced in 2007, and which will require a review of current statutory arrangements. It is expected that this legislation will establish clear guidelines for the preservation and management of sites considered to be of cultural heritage significance.

It is estimated that there are 60 listed sites within Venus Bay for their cultural and heritage importance. A number of these sites have now been identified along the northern boundary of the first estate as known cultural heritage sites comprising of coastal shell middens. The Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health and Housing Co-operative Ltd (CGAHHC) who are the statutory authority responsible for considering any applications for consent to disturb Aboriginal cultural heritage sites within the CGAHHC region have recommended that these areas remain free from any further development.

Poor maintenance of boating infrastructure including the ramp, car park and associated toilet facilities

Venus Bay is a key access point to Anderson Inlet. To support this there is a boat ramp, jetty, trailer park and toilet facility in the second estate. However, this facility is in poor condition and in need of maintenance and upgrade.

Lack of community facilities, police and medical facilities

As the majority of the population in Venus Bay consists of non permanent residents, they will continue to rely on medical and other essential services in Melbourne and Leongatha. As the role of Venus Bay is primarily as a holiday destination, it may not be viable to allocate funding towards these services for a small population. Options worthy of consideration may involve a community funded bus service which could be explored outside of this particular study.

Lack of car parking at beach access areas, particularly in peak summer times

The main attraction of Venus Bay is the ocean beaches. The foreshore and beaches are managed by Parks Victoria and make up part of Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. There are five main access points to the ocean beaches. At some of these, particularly in the first estate where the life saving club is located there is inadequate parking facilities and traffic congestion on busy days. However, as there is a fluctuation in visitation to the town between summer and winter there is a need to provide adequate infrastructure.

The impact of further development on the environment.

The three estates in Venus Bay are built on a fragile sand pit between the open ocean and a significant wetland system (Anderson Inlet). Against present day coastal policies and legislation it is unlikely that the original Venus Bay development would have been approved and in retrospect the estates should not have been built in this location. However, as the estates do exist and are recognised as an activity node in the Victorian Coastal Strategy, Venus Bay will continue to be managed and developed as a settlement. However, it is situated in a fragile environment and none of the surrounding wetland or coastal areas should be further compromised by unsuitable development.

The impact of incremental urban growth outside of townships on the landscape

Incremental growth of dwellings outside of the main township area can create strip development and urban sprawl. This in turn threatens the shape and character of the village which in turn can cause a loss of landscape value between townships. As Venus Bay is set out in three separate estates, there is the potential for strip development to occur between the estates and between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower. In recognising this potential threat there is a need to establish a defined boundary around the village through the implementation of a structure plan.

Impact of population growth on Venus Bay

It is predicted that with the general Victorian population increase and the boost of the 'sea change' phenomena, the population of Venus Bay is also expected to increase. The permanent population is predicted to increase from 405 in 2001 to 600 in ten years and while there is no data for the predicted increase of holiday residents it is likely that a proportion of vacant sites owned by non permanent residents will be developed as holiday homes. This indicates there will not be a dramatic shift in the ratio of permanent residents to holiday residents, and therefore Venus Bay should continue to be planned primarily as a holiday destination.

Impact of climate change and storm surge on coastal areas

The combined effects of mean sea level rise due to climate change could have a significant consequence on the coast of Victoria (CSIRO, June 2005). Sea level rise may accelerate the erosion of coastal areas, threatening land and property and diminishing the effectiveness of the buffer provided by beaches and wetlands. Rising seas may also cause coastal flooding through an increase in storm surges (K.J.E. Walsh et. al, May 2002). In the case of Venus Bay, there is the potential for coastal flooding from the Tarwin River and inundation of low-lying areas adjoining Anderson Inlet. To minimise the impacts of climate change and storm surges, further guidance should be established through the implementation of appropriate planning control mechanisms.

5.5 Strategic Directions

For Venus Bay to evolve and develop in line with policy, legislation and government and community aspirations there is a need for a common vision, objectives and strategies to realise such a vision.

Vision

This vision has been developed from the values expressed by the community, planning policy and other relevant influences. In the future Venus Bay will be known as:

- *A small coastal village that is an attractive holiday destination for residents of Melbourne regional Victoria and visitors from other states.*
- *A village that will retain a relaxed holiday atmosphere reinforced by simple urban form and land use activity.*
- *A village where future population growth will be promoted within existing township boundaries, and clearly defined growth areas when required.*
- *A village that will display a distinct character built upon low-rise development within a natural bushland setting.*
- *A place in which environmentally sustainable practices are promoted and widely used.*
- *A place for day tourists as well as being a place where residents will have convenient access by foot or bicycle to all its features and facilities."*

With regard to its regional context, the role of Venus Bay will be as a small coastal village supporting a small permanent population as well as non-permanent residents. It will provide low end daily convenience facilities and rely on Tarwin Lower and Leongatha for access to major retail, industrial and commercial facilities.

Objectives

To realise this vision the following broad level objectives are required:

Managing Growth

- Maintain the low key holiday character of the hamlet and preserve the different styles of each estate (refer to strategies 1& 2).
- Promote development that will respect and enhance the coastal character of the village (refer to strategies 1-5).
- Where demand can be demonstrated facilitate development within the existing town boundary and long term development areas when required. (refer to strategies 6-8).

Enhancing Environmental Benefits

- Protect the environmental values of Anderson Inlet and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park (refer to strategies 7 & 9).
- Promote environmental sustainable principles within the hamlet (refer to strategies 1,3,9,10,11,12,13,14&17).
- Protect the identified landscape values of the area (refer to strategy 14).

Balancing Service Provision

- Provide infrastructure services that address the ongoing needs of the community while protecting the environmental values of the area (refer to strategies 5, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16).

Strategies

To implement and achieve these objectives a range of detailed strategies are required. These include:

Managing Growth

1. Develop appropriate planning controls and policy provisions to reinforce the following siting and design aspects including built form site coverage materials, colours, siting, fencing, landscaping treatments and soil disturbance.
2. Develop a series of character prerequisites for defined growth areas which reflect existing topography, vegetation and built form.
3. Develop a series of development prerequisites which assess the potential impact associated with flooding, acid sulfate soils, and sites of cultural and heritage significance.
4. Develop guidelines to improve the design of key entry points for each estate through the implementation of signage and planting schemes.
5. Develop a Master Plan for the town which focuses on the commercial centre within the first estate and the boat ramp in the second estate.
6. Develop a Structure Plan, which clearly defines the boundaries of commercial development, and planning controls to ensure that the design of commercial areas is consistent with preferred town character.

7. Infill lots where appropriate at the first and second estates prior to allowing outward expansion to surrounding undeveloped/ rural land.
8. Define the hamlet boundary through implementation of a Structure Plan, (including the boundary of each estate) and limit projected residential growth to these areas.
9. Maintain the rural buffer between the first, second and third estates and between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower.
10. Maintain current housing density through recognition within identified planning controls.
11. Undertake a flood study for the Venus Bay, and translate the findings into a Local Policy or overlay control within the Planning Scheme. The study must include a reference to climate change impacts.

Enhancing Environmental Benefits

12. Continue the development of the Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan to comprise assessment of wastewater management issues for Venus Bay and devise strategies and action plans as appropriate.
13. Use best practice water sensitive urban design measures for new developments.
14. Review the suitability of ESO3 control and develop amended or new controls as appropriate to address habitat corridors and connection to surrounding foreshore reserves and coastal parks.

Balancing Service Provision

15. Investigate funding opportunities to upgrade boating facilities.
16. Investigate opportunities to improve the availability and configuration of car parking at beach access areas within appropriate locations.
17. Review the suitability of planning controls relating to land potentially affected by flooding, acid sulfate soils and sites of known cultural heritage significance. Develop amended or new controls as appropriate.

5.6 Managing Growth

A key element of the UDF is the relationship between growth and available land that is suitable for development. In Venus Bay there is an expectation that population growth of both permanent residents and non permanent residents will increase. While the role of Venus Bay is to remain as a small hamlet reliant on Leongatha and Tarwin Lower for more essential services, it can be expected that where suitable land is identified, development should be encouraged that is respectful of town character.

Figure 1.0 in **Appendix D** shows the key features that constrain the land available for development in the future.

These constraints include:

- The extent of the flooding areas to the north;
- The foreshore reserve, including Cape Liptrap Coastal Park to the south;
- The extent of existing and potential acid sulfate soils to the north and east; and
- The extent of the old sand dune system on which the town is located.

Identification of sites having cultural and heritage significance has not been included in this list due to the confidentiality of the location of these sites. Verification of any such sites which may exist will form part of the development prerequisites within the structure plan.

Figure 2.0 and 2.1 in **Appendix D** provides a Site Analysis of estates 1 and 2 and Figure 3.0 outlines details of the Initial Investigation Areas within estate 1 that were selected for the following reasons:

1. The land beyond the northern edge of the township forms a natural edge of the dune extension which could provide suitable conditions for future development.
2. Land forming the southern boundary including the Council refuse site and vacant land abutting the caravan park is underutilised and has development potential with links to the foreshore reserve and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.
3. Land beyond the eastern edge of the town also forms a natural edge of the dune extension which could also be developed subject to a review of the development prerequisites.
4. The remaining developed areas forming estates 2 and 3 have reached the limits of development potential and should not be developed any further.

Following further detailed examination of the Initial Investigation Areas it was determined that Areas 1 and 2 as noted on Figure 5.0 in **Appendix D** would best accommodate any future growth beyond the current township boundaries. The reasons for the selection of these areas are listed as follows:

1. Potential growth areas north of Lees Road as shown in Figure 3 are both associated with known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites (coastal shell middens), which have recently been confirmed by the Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health and Housing Co-operative Ltd (CGAHC). Details of the location of these particular sites was outlined at a meeting held between officers from the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), South Gippsland Shire Council, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and the Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health and Housing Co-operative during June 2006. At this meeting it was acknowledged that as a result of a 'blow-out' in part of the dune system on the northern perimeter of the hamlet extensive areas of middens have since been exposed across growth Areas 1 and 2. As a consequence it was deemed appropriate that no development of these areas should occur in order to minimise disturbance of the middens and to preserve the cultural and heritage significance of the sites.
2. The Council refuse site has been deleted from reference as a potential growth area as it is expected that refuse operations will continue for some time to come. However, the remaining vacant land parcel adjacent to the Caravan Park could be developed to clearly define the edge of the urban area and the adjoining Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.
3. The raised dune extension east of the town boundary has been selected subject to further review of the potential impacts of acid sulfate soils and flooding. The desired extension of the township boundary at this location is considered appropriate due to its location away from the more sensitive coastal areas to the north and south of the town. In this regard any future development will have limited impact in terms of views across the floodplains within the rural zone and Anderson Inlet. Landscape planting along the northern and eastern boundary of this area provides an opportunity to further define the entry to the hamlet.

These areas will now form the basis of the structure plan for the town.

Growth Scenarios

In the next 15 to 20 years Venus Bay is expected to experience moderate growth. The brief for this project was to investigate available land for development for the next 15 to 20 years. However, it is worth noting that the Planning Scheme requires investigation of potential growth areas to be identified for the next 10 years.

To manage this future growth in line with the vision for Venus Bay, it is important to develop a growth program. This program is based on reticulated sewerage being installed in the village to respond to the existing problem of contamination from septic systems. Regardless of any future increase in population the problem of contamination needs to be addressed. However, if no reticulated sewerage is to be installed then no further expansion or growth of the village should occur beyond its current boundaries.

The growth program designates what land is available for development, how many lots this equates to, an estimate of how many people this will accommodate and the timeframe in which it will occur. The following assumptions have been made in developing the growth program:

1. That the current average household size remains unchanged (3.25 persons per household);
and
2. That the current proportion of permanent dwellings to holiday homes remains unchanged (16%).

Land Available for Development

The growth scenario includes estimates on the permanent population, peak population of non-permanent residents occupying holiday homes during summer and the total population during the peak summer period. This growth scenario assumes that the existing 933 vacant lots will be developed. This development will lead to an estimated permanent population of 890 persons with a peak population of 3,019 occupying holiday homes during summer. In addition, the estimated total population in the peak summer period is expected to be 3,909. With these assumptions it is estimated that the available land supply will be adequate to meet demand for the next 15 years.

Despite these forecast growth rates further consideration should be given to unforeseen changes in population trends which may require the release of new land within defined growth areas in advance of the forecast period. The following section of this report provides guidance on this issue with a series of prerequisites that will ultimately determine where and when newly defined growth areas should be released.

6. Structure Plan

The structure plan for Venus Bay aims to reflect the community's vision for the town and cater for expected growth as highlighted in Section 5 of this Settlement Paper. *It is important to note that the structure plan does not identify all of the Planning Scheme and related controls that will be used to address matters relating to building design, vegetation control and other matters.* This will be addressed in the Implementation Phase of the UDF process.

In essence the Structure Plan identifies the key strategies within the Settlement Background Paper noting in particular:

- *The current and preferred future extent of the settlement, which reflects (where appropriate) a 15 year period having regard to population and development forecasts, infrastructure capacity, settlement role, environment and heritage considerations.*
- *Identification of the relationship between the settlement and its public land surroundings, assets and values.*
- *Identification of preferred locations for the land use types required to achieve the vision.*
- *Connectivity of open spaces.*

To follow is a summary of the preferred land patterns set out in figures 5.0 and 5.1 in **Appendix D**. It is envisaged that the format of the Structure Plan will form the basis of the final implementation of the Urban Design Framework for Venus Bay.

Proposed Township Boundary

The Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report dated April 2006, advocates the use and establishment of settlement boundaries to:

- Establish a town edge so that the coastal and landscape values of non-urban areas are protected;
- Protect areas of environmental and landscape significance and productive agricultural activity;
- Optimise the use of existing infrastructure and services within settlements to minimise resource use and cost;
- Meet community desires to have separate, clearly identifiable settlements; and
- Provide clarity of what is considered urban and non-urban.

The proposed township boundary of Venus Bay is shown on the Structure Plan in Figure 5.0 and 5.1 in **Appendix D**.

- The northern boundary of the first estate is defined by Lees Road which forms a boundary between the Township Zone and the Rural Zone.
- The eastern boundary of the first estate is defined in part by the existing Township Zone and the Rural Zone identified in yellow as a long term development area.
- The southern boundary is defined by the existing Township Zone, Rural Zone and Public Use Zone which straddles the boundary of Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.
- The boundaries of the second estate are defined by the outer edges of the Township Zone and will remain unchanged.
- The boundaries of estate 3 will also remain unchanged.

Development Prerequisites

In the context of the population forecasts that have been assumed for the village, caution needs to be applied when considering the release of new land parcels for residential development.

It is acknowledged that there has been moderate growth within the village indicated by steady approvals in the number of holiday homes. However, there still remains a significant proportion of vacant lots which have yet to be developed. On the basis of forecast infill rates, the supply of vacant lots is unlikely to be exhausted for 15 years. It is also recognised that these areas may be subject to a number of environmental constraints that will require further investigation before any further development is considered.

In considering these factors, the Structure Plan recognises that allowance needs to be made for additional growth areas that can support suitable residential densities in appropriate locations. However, any immediate expansion into the long term development areas identified on the Structure Plan should not occur until the following prerequisites have been met:

- *That any immediate rezoning should be delayed until a significant proportion of the available remaining vacant lots within the Township Zone and Low Density Residential Zone has been developed;*
- *Reticulated water and sewerage is available;*
- *Further investigation is undertaken to confirm the extent of potential problems associated with acid sulfate soils and flooding;*
- *Further investigation is undertaken to confirm the location of sites of recognised cultural and heritage significance.*
- *Further investigation is undertaken to confirm the location of sites of recognised environmental significance.*

As part of these prerequisites, prospective developers should document findings of their investigations, and in consultation with Council officers confirm whether any specific development guidelines need to be established before development occurs.

As a guiding mechanism for determining when land should be released Council should monitor demand trends to assess the progress of the town's infill expansion, particularly after the introduction of reticulated sewerage. If development pressure is such that demand exceeds the available supply, then Council should apply discretion and release land in stages within the long term development areas identified in the Structure Plan. The implementation of a 3-5 year review process should form part of a guiding mechanism with the Municipal Strategic Statement to inform Council of when to exercise such discretion.

Township Zone, Low Density Residential Zone, Environmental Rural and Rural Living Zones (Estates 1-3)

In context of the population forecasts that have been assumed for the town it is clear that the existing vacant lots within these zones will be sufficient to sustain growth within the village at least in the medium term. The Structure Plan for Venus Bay recommends retention of the Township Zone, primarily due to its limited size, which is considered in line with the purpose of the zone. The Low Density Residential Zone and the remaining residential areas in estate 3 although progressing slowly with new development is fully subdivided and should be retained until a proper review of the new Rural Zone provisions is completed. In addition the boundaries of estates 2 and estate 3 should not be extended. The extent of flood prone areas and acid sulfate soils between estate 2 and 3, combined with Cape Liptrap Coastal Park provide a series of barriers which will restrict any expansion beyond the current boundaries of these developed areas.

Business 1 Zone (Estates 1 & 2)

The Structure Plan recognises the importance of the existing commercial precinct in the first estate and as such it recommends an extension of the Business 1 Zone south delineating the existing commercial uses currently included in the Township Zone so that a defined edge to the commercial centre can be established. The actions designed to improve the identity and function of this centre will be addressed in more detail as part of the Master Plan. In addition the existing Business 1 Zone in Estate 2 should be considered for rezoning to the Township Zone as it is unlikely to be utilised for commercial purposes. In this regard, it is considered appropriate that the land be rezoned to the Township Zone, and a Restructure Plan Overlay be included to reinforce the role of the commercial centre in estate 1.

Rural Zone – Caravan Park and adjoining land to the west

The Structure Plan recommends retention of this land in a Rural Zone until further consideration is given to the long term development potential of this land. It is acknowledged that the caravan park should remain an important focus of Venus Bay as a community facility however consideration for future development opportunities on the balance of the land is recommended subject to compliance with the defined development prerequisites.

Design Controls and Township Character (Estates 1 & 2)

It is also acknowledged from a review of Section 5 of this report that the village has no definitive controls that can guide design and built form. In this regard a Design Development Overlay (DDO) is considered to be the best tool to manage future development within the existing Township Zone, Low Density Residential Zone and Business 1 Zone across the first and second estates. The DDO should replace the existing ESO3 to better guide the future design and built form of dwellings and commercial buildings within the hamlet. The use of appropriate schedules for the DDO will provide more definitive development guidelines that will assist developers and Council officers in making better informed decisions in relation to planning applications in the future.

Design Controls for the Protection of Landscapes.

The Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study recommends inclusion of a Significant Landscape Overlay along the Venus Bay Peninsula and Anderson inlet. Included within this area is the Rural Zone which stretches between the first and second estates and the third estate which is currently zoned Environmental Rural and Rural Living. It is considered that this overlay should be applied to reinforce the importance of the landscape qualities of these areas.

Design Controls for the Protection of Native Vegetation

There is a distinct lack of data available in relation to the extent and importance of local native vegetation within Venus Bay. Given the large number of remaining vacant lots within the estates there is a possibility that a substantial area of native vegetation could be cleared over time unless a strategy is developed to identify whether or not vegetation should be protected in certain locations. In this case it is recommended that Council undertake a vegetation survey to confirm the extent of native vegetation worthy of protection, and then decide whether planning controls are required to manage the removal of native vegetation within specified locations in the village. Such a strategy should be consistent with the DSE Practice Note for Vegetation Protection in Urban Areas.

Design Controls for Areas Susceptible to Flooding

It is recognised that reliable flooding data is unavailable which would otherwise assist in determining the extent of the areas susceptible to flooding in and surrounding the village. On the basis of this information it is recommended that further investigation be undertaken to determine the extent of the areas affected by flooding, so that the existing ESO6 can either be amended or replaced with a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). Supporting mapping and definitive controls should then be established to better inform Council officers when assessing particular applications within these affected areas.

Design Controls for Areas affected by Acid Sulfate Soils.

Information available on the location of acid sulfate soils is still lacking in terms of what can be readily translated as guidelines into the Planning Scheme. The Coastal Spaces–Recommendations Report (April 2006), will provide guidance in relation to managing areas affected by ASS. In the absence of suitable overlay controls that could be used to control the use and development of land in areas affected by ASS, it is recommended that a Local Policy be introduced into the South Gippsland Planning Scheme. In preparing a new policy it is recommended that dialogue commence with appropriate officers from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to determine best practice guidelines which are consistent with the National Strategy for the management of coastal acid sulfate soils.

Reticulated Water and Sewerage

In terms of reticulated services the Settlement Background Paper clearly identifies the issues associated with poor septic systems and the need to control development until reticulated water and sewerage is made available to the town. At this stage Venus Bay is identified as being high on the Council priority list of townships where reticulated sewerage is required. South Gippsland Water has developed concepts for reticulation systems, however funding has not been identified and implementation is uncertain.

To reinforce the importance of the issues surrounding current wastewater management within Venus Bay, the structure plan recommends that stronger reference be made to Councils Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2006-2010 within the Municipal Strategic Statement. In this regard actions such as the identification of Smart Septic Systems will assist in addressing gaps in the performance of existing wastewater management within the village.

Boating Facilities

The structure plan denotes the existing boat ramp in Estate 2 as an area that requires upgrading, including toilet facilities subject to the availability of funding. The proposed upgrade for this area is outlined in further detail in the Master Plan.

Car parking

Parking particularly during peak summer periods has been identified as a major infrastructure constraint in the town. The structure plan recognises the need to investigate with Parks Victoria opportunities to improve parking availability and access within the vicinity of the life saving club, which is the area in most need of review and improvement. A review of parking arrangements within the existing commercial centre will also be considered as part of the Master Plan process.

Transport Movement / Linkages

Key entrance nodes and vehicular, pedestrian and cycling links into both Estates 1 and 2 have been delineated on figures 5.0 and 5.1. Traffic calming should be investigated for the township to ensure pedestrian, cyclist and motor safety.

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Appendix A

Ecological Vegetation Class Map

Appendix B

Acid Sulfate Soils Hazard Map

Appendix C

Summary of Community Workshops

SOUTH GIPPSLAND
COASTAL URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORKS
Community Workshops January/February 2005

Summary of Workshop Outcomes for Venus Bay

South Gippsland Shire Council has engaged Connell Wagner to develop Urban Design Frameworks (UDFs) for the townships of Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower, Sandy Point and Waratah Bay.

The UDFs will aim to:

- Provide a vision for the towns for the next 15 years.
- Identify town character and actions to retain and enhance the character.
- Provide a structure for the growth of the towns.
- Develop planning principles for areas in between towns.
- Develop Master Plans for certain areas.

A key part of the project is consulting with community, seeking their input on issues relating to the future planning, development and design in each town.

The local community has local knowledge and a history of the area, which needs to be collected as part of the information gathering stage. The community is the future of the area and needs to be involved in the project and listen to other community member's ideas. To this end community workshops have been undertaken.

Below is a summary of the outcomes of the Community Workshops held in Venus Bay on January 18th 2005 and at the Malvern Town Hall on Thursday 17th February 2005. Interested parties were also given the opportunity to submit comments in writing. A summary of the outcomes is provided below. More detail regarding responses to the workshop questions are available in the attachment to this summary.

The questions raised at the workshops required the community to outline their vision for their town, highlight areas suitable for a master plan and respond to issues of town character, growth and the environment.

Venus Bay

The Venus Bay community values the tranquil, peaceful, uncrowded, relaxed hamlet nature of the township as well as the community spirit and family friendly atmosphere. They also value the treed character of the area, the pristine beaches, the flora and fauna, the low rise and low visibility of buildings and the low volumes of traffic.

Venus Bay is seen as a holiday destination, an unspoilt eco-green alternative to Inverloch that attracts people who like the quiet, natural habitat and family focus. It is also seen as a retirement town with a small permanent population and is distinct from the service town at Tarwin Lower.

Venus Bay is characterised by 'weekender' houses, small blocks, tree lined streets with a rural 'beachy' atmosphere and a predominant landscape of native vegetation. The community would like to see this character maintained through restrictions to development such as height limits, single dwellings, no sewerage, no water reticulation and no view of houses from the beach. They would also like to retain unmade roads, the existing reserves, and the buffer between the estates.

The community has recommended the implementation of bike and walking tracks, visitor information signs, improved beach access and parking, improved rubbish collection, underground power lines, regular septic tank cleanouts and the utilisation of existing blocks for future low scale development. Concerns have been raised regarding potential groundwater contamination, septic tank problems, pollution of beaches, inappropriate development, inefficient public toilets, disturbance of sulphate soils and peat and environmental weeds.

Master Plans are recommended for the following areas:

- Wetlands – tourism icon
- Commercial Area – town square
- Beach Access car parking
- Playground / BBQ area on Pluto Dve
- Parkland on Jupiter Blvd
- Estuary – improve habitat
- Van Cleef Reserve – improved park
- Entry and Arrival Point
- Coastal dune scrub regeneration
- Walking / Bicycle track to Tarwin Lower
- Swimming pool
- Fishermen’s Jetty – observation deck

SUMMARY DATA FROM WORKSHOPS

VENUS BAY

1. What do you value about your town

Treed character	Surrounding areas – parks & gaps
Pristine beaches	Tranquillity
Lack of congestion	Close to Melbourne
Low density of development, visually appealing	Uniqueness – river/beach/inlet/national park/wetlands
Village feel, relaxed attitudes	Community feel, Sense of community
Fishing	Unmade roads
Dune buffer	Different lifestyle
Flora & fauna	Not overly developed (also commercially)
Family	peaceful
Town entry	river
Beaches – abundance of	Small seaside feel
Not commercialised	Get away from the hassles of life
Good place to retire	safe atmosphere
safe quiet environment	neighbourhood feel
low rise	low visibility
community brains	Underdeveloped nature
clean environment	watersports
kids supporting each other	clean sea
vegetation (coastal dune) scrub, preserved since 170, special & unique	fresh, drinkable bore water
village character	low traffic volume
lots of families	unspoiled
quiet 9 months a year	coastal park = wild beach, untrammelled by housing
unmade roads	compact and confined town boundaries
isolation	lack of development – no high rise
sounds of surf	open space – access to water is not blocked by private owners
wildlife – migratory birds, sedentary birds	What we have – native vegetation & wildlife
lack of urban infrastructure (no tar or concrete)	Ecologically & socially nurturing green environment.
Venus Bay IS NOT A TOWN. We are a coastal VILLAGE.	No townhouse apartments
Serenity	The beaches
Nature	Kangaroos, Wombats, Echidnas etc
Green spaces	We value our village, not like Sorrento, Rosebud etc.

The inlet farmland buffer which protects our village from the rest of the world.	The river estuary & its environs
Point Smythe – beauty unspoiled.	Retail natural ti-tree
Quiet, tranquil and peaceful	Better beach access
Tourism	Small community, ringed by rural space
A place to escape work pressures	A little piece of paradise
Its unchanging quality – so precious (some change has happened; comparatively little)	Community spirit, Community feeling
Sense of community – people in street mix, socialise	Uncrowded, relaxed
Bike/walking track	Plantation – indigenous
Natural environment	No street lighting
Silence – remoteness – quiet	Sense of isolation
Current boundaries / size satisfaction	Egalitarian – no one has views of sea

2. How does your town relate to the surrounding communities and what role does it play in the region?

Good to keep Tarwin Lower (TL) and Venus Bay (VB) as distinct towns	Holiday destination
An eco/green alternative to Inverloch.	Daily trippers from Melbourne & Gippsland
A special small community	We go to Inverloch or Leongatha for doctor etc.
Inverloch / Wonthaggi committed to development. Not suitable for Venus Bay	We shop in Leongatha & Wonthaggi
Not an industrial hub	We are a dormitory area dead end – you come to stay not to drive through
Mobile phones not so important	Fire danger is real (limited exits etc)
VB always been symbiotic with TL. We use their school and shops. TL will be expected to be more commercial and VB is naturally enclosed, service oriented.	Holiday town for Melbourne residents
Permanent residents use Leongatha and Inverloch	Re – vision – I am a writer, I imagine living here. With internet access we can do this year. Therefore telecom infrastructure is needed to support workers in a eco/green town
Big issue – a sandspit cannot cope with major expansion. Someone said what we have already is probably too much to bear	Use Wonthaggi and Foster for main supplies
Escalating pressure in last 10 years	Vision bigger base of permanent residents & large number of holiday homes
What about climate change implications and sustainability. The river is flooding much more every full moon	“Eco-Development”
VB would never be settled now if we weren’t already here.	Does not relate – does not even have a bus service - need more facilities for aged
We attract people who love the quiet, natural habitat & wild beaches.	Family focused
	If people want a fast life / or weekend they can go to other options like Cowes or Inverloch.

Dual role – permanent/holiday
Catchment of 2-4 hours travel time
Local recreational catchment
mostly holiday area/semi retired
A residential area for retirement, holiday and fishing.
Venus Bay is for houses, both holiday and permanent

Higher contributor / lower receiver of rate revenue
Retirement town / holiday town / dormitory town
Kids & elderly leave as no infrastructure
Walking tracks
Lack of tourism/money outside main holiday period
Tarwin Lower seems to be more commercial

3. Describe your vision for the town for the next 15 years

Preserve unique character and aesthetics
Set strict limits on development
People walk here, not too many cars
Fences stop movement of wild life – open access
Echidnas, wombats, blue tongues, kangaroos are to be encouraged
Underground powerlines
Different, with its own character
Sustainable community – no reticulated water for example. Encourage proven alternatives. Design solutions that promote revegetation. Reticulation is the past – old technology.
No more subdivision on the peninsula
Keep low scale of housing stock – height limit of 7m
We want to preserve the things we like but we also realise in 15 years it will be different – there will be a chemist, doctor and police??
Improved access to beach
More self-sufficient e.g. play equipment, facilities

Roads staying unmade – retain character of beachside (pressures of additional traffic)
Growth with country charm, with control some change to support maintenance of community
Next 15 years – would like it to remain as is
Rural, sleepy village maintained with sewerage and water, garbage collection and a cap on development of units.
Bike rack – Tarwin Lower to beach 1-5 & second estate
Natural character with or without development
Clean beaches

A model green community
Maintain existing character & village feel
Contain town to existing boundaries
Controlled commercial development
Having the ability to control development

Maintain existing environmental values
Public transport
Investigate alternative effluent disposal before sewerage

Mobile phone coverage
Broadband
Knowledge and understanding or relationship between coastal developments & fauna to preserve and regenerate, protect a model green community
Community involvement in simple water testing
No unit developments, medium density or high density
Protect village atmosphere
Encourage pharmacist/doctor
Eco-tourism could be encouraged
Manage infill development
Provide more indigenous vegetation
Markets
Christmas function

No houses view from beach

Health of inlet & estuary, improve

Tarwin Lower & Venus Bay – twin villages

Flora and fauna protect

Walking trails

Retain coastal character

In 15 years some want the unmade roads left. Some don't. We like the feel of unmade roads, we like the rural feel. No kerbs and channelling. We like the Kangaroos etc

Vision for next 15 years:

- No reticulated water
- No sewerage

Tarwin Lower – main commercial centre

Guidelines to development of houses

Need to protect the inlet. A natural limit to development

Tarwin Lower – to provide casual doctors/nursing etc library

Preserve coastal parks – buffer

Stay within existing boundaries

Divided by estates (?)

No shops in Estate 2 required

Small shop zone ok

Retain undeveloped reserves

Development should be gradual

Needs to develop gradually

Venus Bay:

- Has sufficient commercial development
- No more shops

Sensitive environs (to be maintained):

- Beach
- Town
- National Park
- Rural

Maintain environmental independence

- Water
- Sewerage

Emphasise native plants

Sense of community desired

Single dwellings – two-storey ok – low scale, no more tar

Not above tree vine

I will retire and continue to live in Venus Bay. I would a viable future for my family

A town that caters for all our needs not just the needs of people who want to keep it as it is.

4. Nominate a specific area where a Master Plan could be prepared and what improvements would be gained?

Master plan – road widening, bike lanes & racks, shuttle bus in summer, one person wants a road along the beach

Let people walk along levy banks and enjoy our fabulous wetlands and extend the bike path to the jetty. Wetlands to be restored as a major tourism icon. Bird hides and rentable bungalows ok. Controlled board walks. Young people using this for learning about the environment.

Master plan commercial area

Shops – turn them into a carless town square with charm and beauty. Alternative route to the beach. Parking hidden behind trees and in shade. The current set up is ugly.

Shopping strip

- Parking was a disaster, especially over Christmas

Van Cleef – improved park facilities

- Reserve/Park – more open space
- More parks in general

Beautify entry and arrival point at Venus Bay

- Walking tracks and bike tracks
- Pedestrian and vehicle separation

Planned, well informed regeneration of coastal dune scrub. Fishing from the river bank to be fastened by improving spots – 4 jetties	Fisherman’s jetty – include an observation Tower/Deck over Anderson inlet
Bike paths, good safe footpaths	• New toilet block
Boat ramp improvements? – Not really. Noisy and badly behaved boat users are not welcome. Do not encourage more than we have.	More carparking at beach access points
A community green (village green)	• Data on number of cars travelling to each beach access point
Commercial area, 1 st estate	An alternative exit road OR decent fire management fire management plan and warning system, including fire refuge(s).
Second estate jetty area could be developed for recreation	Community centre outside town centre, maybe move, maybe support, promote local use
Playground/BBQ area, reserve on Pluto Drive	Beautify township (back of general store)
Multi-use path network (walking, cycling, horse riding etc)	Parking around shops – not safe in high traffic times of the year
Fishermans access boat ramp	Fisherman’s Jetty
Toilet block Van Cleef reserve	Beach access to all five beaches to be maintained
Walking/bicycle trail to Tarwin Lower	Separate access to No. 1 Beach for surf life saving club vehicle
Alternative access road Juno Rd to Walkerville Rd	Master plan to extend community centre to include open air events
Commercial Area masterplan/car parking	Alternative to ‘inlet land’ e.g. wet-land park develop plans
Village green needed, footie etc	Parkland on Jupiter Boulevard
Beach car parking	Upgrade toilets second
Permanent infrastructure for Venus Bay (Sewer)	More shops?
Estuary – redevelop floodplain as improved habitat for wetlands flora and fauna	Walking tracks eg steps and handrail to the no 1 beach with decent parking
Roads need maintaining and fixing	Tip
Broadband & better mobile	Planned project for Lees Rd supported by some (it is ugly now)
2nd Access road – extend Mercury Dr / Saturn Pde to link with Tarwin Meadows Rd	

5. How would you describe the town character and what do you most value about it?

Variation in block sizes	Sleepy, village feel, restful, not developed
Change from weekenders to “Architect-Designed” houses	Existing house blocks – prefer height restrictions
Steep and small house lots – “unbuildable”	No existing units and none wanted
Rural atmosphere – “beachy”	Natural vegetation – key aspect of Venus Bay

Pedestrian and vehicular separation	Small blocks – with houses becoming larger
Bike and walking tracks	Mixed housing character <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trend towards smaller houses
Tranquil, tree lined (empty blocks give us this)	No Units – maintain single dwellings
Vegetation is key character; also rustic; grown from fishing shacks. Very Australian	Large number of undeveloped blocks – 50% available
Very small blocks – inappropriate for full development (consolidation possible?)	Its home. Separated from town and farms and no heavy vehicles or through traffic
Retain native vegetation as predominant character (can incorporate housing)	Residents largely self-reliant
Getting more very large, dominant housing built, Stilts give height	. Relaxed, attractive, not overcrowded

6. Are there particular town character elements that should be maintained and improved and, if so how?

Some like no commercial facilities for entertainment.	Limited to two storey
No development north of Lees Road	No high-rise – except in appropriate areas
Need footpaths, bike tracks and walking tracks	Blended in with existing streetscapes
Return third estate back to coastal park	Currently there are number of places that have a house on one block and own the block next door for garden, open space, etc
Keep Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay separate	Flood plain not appropriate, especially rising water floods
Potential future development south of Tarwin Lower / Venus Bay Road	
The roads should be sealed	No further development beyond existing boundaries (i.e. no further subdivisions)
Protect rural feel	No further rezoning
Parklands improvement	Information for visitors about flora and fauna, vegetation etc.
Van Cleef Reserve to be maintained	Ensure tree removal policy (protection of native veg)
Develop and upgrade parks, open area and the roads	Beach access and parking
Beach access – beach 4/5 bad roads & inadequate parking, walking tracks to all beaches – not maintained	Occasional smell from septic tanks and uncollected rubbish
Overhead power lines	There should be permanent sewer and council rubbish collections
Poor road maintenance including roadside vegetation	Potholes in the road – should be sealed
Unsafe walkways on main thoroughfares	Access to beaches poor
Speeding vehicles in built up areas	Fire is a concern – need fire breaks. Incinerators and burning of rubbish should be banned.
Poor landscaping in commercial areas	More traffic control measures to slow down visitors.

Lack of parking in commercial areas	Jupiter Blvd shops a bit ad hoc at present
Increased litter in town and beaches	No footpaths – we need some.
Excessive & illegal tree clearing and lack of enforcement of regulation	Character of built environment is under threat – if all vacant land built equals over development
Excessive height of recent developments – lack of council enforcement	Facilities poorly maintained (pier and toilet blocks on 2 nd estate near jetty)
Others consider this (evergreen) a very inappropriate development site	Housing – too much clearing of vegetation, houses too close together, inappropriate style of new homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural • Not overbuilt • Village feel • Sound of water • No lights can see sky • No footpaths, kerbs etc 	

7. If any, what land use or style of future development should be encouraged and where?

More of the same ie single dwellings within current height limits	Limit on block size (not too small)
Commercial development to be limited to existing commercial area in first estate	Single dwelling covenant
Any development is subject to Government control	Mix of lifestyles – but not apartments, units
Tarwin Lower could develop more	Relationship/ratio land: building size
Farmland between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower	Town Planning restrictions adhered to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9m – height • No multi-unit / resorts
Tarwin Lower – business/commercial hub. Venus Bay residential	Services developed in Tarwin?
Develop to the east (if at all)	Keep its character - small house on each block
Future development style (?) – environmentally friendly	Footpaths made and street neatened up
One storey restrictions if apartments considered, double storey private homes ok	B+B ok
Limit commercial development	Some support encouragement of all development
Development is inevitable but it should be planned to fit in with what we have now.	Totally residential with limited amount of self contained cabins and rental units. No multi level building.
Eco-tourism development – tree-house type observatories and accommodation.	Bund wall to be removed and wetlands restored for bird and wildlife
Single dwelling on the vacant blocks in 1 st and 2 nd estates, two storey limit maintained	

8. What are the key environmental features and values of the area?

Swampland	Coastal Park
Amazing bird life	Diversity of Plants
Animals - Resident wombats/wildlife	Air Quality
Pristine Beaches	Fishing, surfing, swimming
Rugged Coast	Vegetation – ti tree, dunes
River	Houses not visible from the beach (we love this)
Fantastic, Magnificent beaches	Wide skies
Sand Dunes	Kangaroo colony
Coastal shrub	Farmland (we like the cows)
Park – Cape Liptrap Coastal Park	Indigenous Flora and fauna
Open spaces	Rural atmosphere
Andersons Inlet – water birds, fishing, wetlands	So varied – ocean, inlet so different
Tremendous tourism development potential	Wetlands – a lot happening that cannot be seen, prolific bird life
Development not above tree line	Unique feel of “beach and bush”
It is wild, windy, floodplain very exposed	No industry and business other than servicing.
Mangroves	Middens
Bench / Inlet – levy bank	Clean, unspoilt surf beach and attractive estuary.
No through traffic	Special location between Sea and Inlet
Point Smythe Park area	

9. What are the main environmental issues and threats in and around the town?

Safe walking	Potential problems with peat – does it exist?
Boundaries around 1 st and 2 nd estates MUST be confirmed and NOT extended	People buy here with a different vision to the community, no information, lack of awareness – needs education and planning framework
Potential groundwater contamination	Over-development – inappropriate
Short – medium term: may need proper sewerage system	Higher loading on infrastructure as more people are visiting the town
Septic tank problems	Water contamination and consequential pollution of beaches
Safe cycling	Road kills – speed limits, signage
We would hate to see beach 1 turned into a car park	Estate agents are not pointing out restrictions on land clearance etc
Bike racks would be better (great area to walk and bike around)	Developments proposals right around the inlet, 2 in VB. Developers are buying up. What happens in Inverloch affects us. Must be an inter-shire approach to Anderson

	Inlet, this is modern ecological management.
Sustainable transport is a key environmental issue	The tip – water pollution in the ground
One road in and one road out – implications for fire and other safety issues	Sustainable transport – more paths for walking/biking
Increase in flooding	Ignorance on part of those buying and selling land
Native veg & wild life – loss of habitat	Sea level rise
Fires for heating? Possible risks	Increased traffic – dust
Fire breaks	Unthinking development that is set to destroy what we have
Protection of native animals	Inappropriate development
Public toilets behind shops inefficient	Increased population (too quick)
Some against development on floodplain	Chaotic traffic on hot beach days
Water table levels	Loose, dangerous dogs & cats
Need for underground power etc	Clearing vegetation for housing
Over developed wetlands area, loss of trees	Existing/new septic tanks
Not accommodating growth of use of beach – how to access beach	Do not need more beach parking – not all agree
Sulphate soils, peat	Over development of Venus Bay – one access road only
Environmental weeds	Slashing contractors damaging bush
Upgrading of facilities – i.e. water sewerage, roads	Increase in speed of vehicles
Sealing of roads	Noise pollution (i.e. trail bikes, quad bikes)
Irresponsible owners of pets	Bridge from Inverloch
Erosion of dunes	Rubbish
Massive development (rapid)	Inappropriate development
Older septic systems – ignorance of maintenance	Change in flood environment
Sewerage, garbage, water	

10. Are there opportunities to protect and promote the key environmental features? And what infrastructure would you like to see improved?

Modern septic systems. Inspect existing to bringing up to standard.	Council to keep roads in good condition and keep more care in the area
No reticulation system	Improve road between Venus Bay and Tarwin Lower
Ped & bike movement facilitated, foster non-car travel in town and to the beach	Rubbish removal
Underground power	Consider Solar Power
Fire management	Information boards at beach displaying local flora and fauna (like Wilson's Prom)
Bike and footpaths	Better beach access – carparking

A beautiful town square	Footpaths
Wetlands as a major tourist and educational attraction	Power
Improved roads – white seal?	Sewerage brought in – others disagree.
Retirement Village in Tarwin Lower	Define edge of roads
No wind turbines	Main roads improved (not secondary)
Mainly improve what is here	Better septic systems – develop them
Tip – open more regularly, free tip for locals	Alternative waste storages
We want free mulch back	Controlled development
A bridge from Smythes Point to Hughes Point	Sand dunes need more protection
Police Station in Tarwin Lower	Bridge to Inverloch would make facilities accessible like doctor, chemist, supermarket, and library. Bridge would also save lives in a fire
Opportunities now growing BUT council & government bodies do not listen	Shared pathway – key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jetty Road
SGSC to oversee mandatory cleaning of all septic tanks on a street-by-street basis	Canterbury / Lees Road (commencing at Jupiter Boulevard)
More regular grading and maintenance of unsealed roads (council to implement a policy)	Future sales of council owned blocks in Venus Bay to be offered to adjoining owners for consolidation and no further buildings be constructed
Bike/walking track to go to No. 1 Beach and not take 10 years	Existing fire tracks to be utilised as walkways
Fix up toilet and shower facilities near ramp	Widen area, picnic area between E2 and E3 (Doyles Road)
Open community area / recreation - Concerts etc	Playground should be shaded
Enhance wetland environment	No medical, police, no new infrastructure
Electricity supply could be ore reliable	No garbage , no water, no sewerage
Beach access (safety)	Electricity supply could be ore reliable
Peak parking	Rubbish disposal – provide bins and collection
Ensure developments are carefully planned and environmentally friendly	Visiting GP, medical clinic, dental service

11. Are there any other issues you would like to provide comment on?

Scrub to be cut back on verges to boundaries

Crucial to keep some places which are underdeveloped and therefore different.

No more shops thank you. ECO GREEN is our future.

Re-zone Estate 2 shop block to a park. Council to buy back from our rates

Education material for new people

Zoning – to maintain our vision

Water (NO) tanks are good

Tourism for future – low key again. Support our vision (information centre?)

Parks Vic plan for beach access

Safety issues – access to the town

The tip to be open at some time midweek, opening times now are too restricted

Promote responsible fishing – too much rubbish from fishermen on beaches

Social Infrastructure

- 14-18 year olds not catered for
- Town meetings and develop communications
- Seek club support – encourage to be more open
- Calender of social events
- Data on Community Groups

Appendix D

Figure 1.0: Existing Conditions - Context Analysis

Figure 2.0 & 2.1: Site Analysis

Figure 3.0: Land Capability Analysis-Initial Investigation Areas

Figure 4 Land Capability Analysis-Future Opportunities for Growth

Figure 5.0 & 5.1: Structure Plan.

Appendix D

Appendix E

Summary of Comments & Suggested Changes: Responses

Summary of Comments & Changes from Submissions for Venus Bay

Summary of Comments & Suggested Changes from Submissions	Recommendation/Response
There was general support for the documents and the community believed the findings and recommendations basically respond to community concerns.	Noted.
Some individuals did not think their ideas from the workshops had been included. Some respondents indicated that they did not receive any notification for the information sessions.	Noted.
Many submitters did not support any expansion of the town's boundaries or development in new areas. This was emphasised by the demographic trends which demonstrate moderate growth rates over the next 10 - 15 years.	The Structure Plan has been altered to reflect recent cultural heritage issues and a series of development prerequisites have been included to control growth in defined areas.
There was insufficient reference to the community's preference for alternative solutions for reticulated sewerage and town water.	Reference to Council's Wastewater Management Plan has been recognised in the UDF.
It is considered that the development restrictions based on the take up of vacant residential lots is unrealistic and should be made more flexible.	A series of development prerequisites have been included to better define when expansion into any defined growth areas should occur.
There was a request for more emphasis on the need for public transport between Venus Bay and Leongatha and Wonthaggi. Several submissions highlighted car parking issues and recommended various traffic control devices.	Comments on the adequacy of public transport are noted, however specific recommendations cannot be included as part of the scope of this project..
It is considered that yellow areas 1, 2 and 3 should be removed from the plan as they are unable to sustain growth.	Areas 1 & 2 previously nominated for the land north of Lees Road have been removed from the Structure Plan following confirmation of the location of defined areas of cultural heritage importance. The newly defined long term development areas have been renumbered accordingly.
The UDF should make reference to the environment and to commercial projections concerning the value of wetland restoration at Anderson Inlet.	This comment is noted, however it is considered that issues surrounding wetland restoration fall outside of the scope of this study.
Venus Bay is home to the Southern Barred Bandicoots. It was suggested that advocating expansion has taken no account of scientific and environmental studies. The UDF should include the strategic value of having scientific work of this nature undertaken. A suggestion to restore the wetlands to the north of Lees Road as a sanctuary for wildlife and tourism should also be explored.	This comment is noted, however it is considered that further work involving scientific and environmental studies in relation to native fauna falls outside of the scope of this study.
A number of submitters requested that more reliable flood mapping be provided for this area.	The UDF recommends further examination of flood data to determine whether new or

Summary of Comments & Suggested Changes from Submissions	Recommendation/Response
	amended planning controls are required to be inserted into the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.
There is opposition to future expansion of the village into environmentally sensitive dune areas. Concerns were also raised in relation to a possible threat of over development in Venus Bay. .	The UDF provides a series of development prerequisites designed to control expansion of the town. A series of new overlay controls will also protect the desired character of the village.
Questions were raised regarding the seriousness of ground water contamination. What effect would contaminated ground water have on environment, adjacent farms and animals?	The UDF recognises the need for further study on the status of groundwater contamination. Groundwater contamination is pertinent to the Wastewater Management Plan.
Some concerns were raised in relation to the impact of new development into newly defined growth areas.	Prerequisites linked to further investigation ie. ASS, flooding and cultural heritage have been included in the UDF.
General agreement has been reached in relation to the extension of the current Business Zone in estate 1. In addition suggestions were made for more car parking and a roundabout at the intersection of Jupiter Boulevard and Centre Roads. Other actions including the installation of a non-illuminated pedestrian crossing across from Jupiter Boulevard outside the shopping centre , and one across Centre Rd (coming from shops) has also been offered.	Car parking and traffic issues are dealt with in the Master Plan and Implementation Plan.
Some submitters were surprised and disappointed that the draft UDF makes no use or reference to the results of StratPlan 2005 (community survey initiated by the Association) the results of which were sent in October 2005. In addition there was no reference to the Tarwin Lower Venus Bay Community Strategy Plan, ratified by the Council in 1993 as a precursor to the StratPlan 2005. The StratPlan 2005 canvassed 2240 residents with a return rate of 45.4% (1016 responses). Questions included community vision for Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay, built environment and infrastructure, water and waste management, natural environment and human services.	Reference and comment on the StratPlan has been included in the UDF. The UDF identifies the broad infrastructure issues and identifies recommendations.
Recommendations were made for the UDF to include consideration of a block consolidation scheme for Venus Bay (Estates 1 and 2).	The UDF refers to the existing Restructure Overlay and recommendations have been made to apply this overlay in addition to a proposed rezoning of the Business 1 Zone in the second estate..
Climate change and storm surges have not been emphasised in the paper.	The Key Issues section of the UDF refers to this point in more detail.
It is considered that the discussion about Ecological	This point is noted, however it is considered

Summary of Comments & Suggested Changes from Submissions	Recommendation/Response
Vegetation Classes was given little prominence in the UDF. Concern in relation to loss of flora and fauna habitat needs to be addressed.	that any further detailed assessment on this issue will fall beyond the scope of the UDF.
<p>A submission received from Beveridge Williams recommended that land in the general vicinity of 1-2 meter contour owned by the Evergreen Eco Group should be included within the proposed township boundary and be noted as a proposed urban area on the <i>Structure Plan</i> for Venus Bay.</p> <p>These areas should be identified as future urban areas suitable for an eco resort consisting of low-density residential development with a notation stating that outlook to the floodplain and Andersons Inlet is to be retained as part of any development concept.</p>	This comment is noted, however in light of the recent confirmation of the location of known sites of cultural heritage significance, Areas 1 and 2 as previously identified as potential growth areas have now been abandoned.
Some submitters suggested an inconsistency with the approach used in relation to land available for development. That is, the low growth scenarios do not include the yield of 205 lots proposed in the new areas while the high growth scenario does. This has resulted in misleading figures being presented on land supply.	Reference to specific lot yields and density has been removed from the Structure Plan in favour of development prerequisites.
Some suggestions were made for consideration of alternative means of service supply other than reticulated services.	The importance of reticulated services including water and sewerage has been recognised in the UDF and cannot be overlooked. However, the UDF acknowledges use of Councils Wastewater Management Plan as a means of alternative waste management until full servicing is available.
Some submissions identified the need for sealed roads in certain locations.	Noted. No change to text.
General support was offered for the inclusion of the caravan park in the Township Zone. However, the recommendation that the remainder of land in this area be rezoned Low Density Residential does not take into account the fact that the caravan park may require expansion.	The caravan park is not proposed for rezoning to a Township Zone at this stage. The Structure Plan recommends retention of the existing Rural Zone for this land and identifies a long term development area for the balance of the land which is currently vacant subject to a series of development prerequisites.
<p>A submission from the Gippsland Cultural Heritage Unit and, and Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health & Housing Co-operative stated that the UDF has not taken into consideration the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972 (State) or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Commonwealth).</p> <p>It was requested that the four identified areas (footprints for development) be removed from the Venus Bay component of the UDF.</p>	The comments received are acknowledged in the UDF, and this is reflected in the amendments made to the Structure Plan.

