Biodiversity

The tradeability of land

The biodiversity value of rural land (including farmed land) should be identified for development and planning purposes. So for example, environmental and social losses can be factored into the decision to trade high value arable farms into residential use. The same applies to green wedges, which form important buffers at the urban/rural interface.

New tools for biodiversity management

Consideration should be given to new instruments for land manager's approach to NRM. For example, in South Africa they have a program underway that values ecological goods as marketable assets. Farmers are responsible for the welfare of rhinos that occur on their properties just like any other asset (e.g. tractor, building, workers) that appears on their accounts.

Outcomes focus to inform Planning Scheme provisions

There needs to be greater clarity of alignment of planning provisions (zones, overlays, schedules and general and particular provisions) with desired strategic outcomes sought. For example land which may contain important stand of vegetation that is identified as future residentially zoned land, is unlikely to be allowed by DSE to use the RCZ in that area, which provides for the best management of those values, as the RCZ is a rural and not a residential zone.

Adaptive responses to climate change

Fragmentation and buffering:

Planning should be underway to minimise fragmentation of biolinks from climate change. In particular north/south vegetation corridors need to be established (not just non-urban corridors) to allow latitudinal migration of species. Current national park (including marine parks) borders should be reviewed to ensure a buffer for species extension due to climate change. An increase in the southern boundaries of marine parks would allow for future species migration and protection.

Social and economic equity

The social and economic impacts of climate change should be included in adaptive planning. For example, if inundated Wilson's promontory may lose its iconic social value due to climate change. How do we maintain the balance in social and recreational amenity?

Infrastructure planning

Institutional arrangements and infrastructure planning for climate change scenarios need to be in place. Alpine resorts highlight the need for adaptive planning now. Why is infrastructure and leasing being supported when a reduced snowfall is anticipated? Along the coast, the same applies, for example, is Bastion Point the best place to build a boat ramp when the area is predicted to get increasingly strong storm surges?

Pests and weeds

Planning needs to be in place for the next generation of pests plants and animals (including marine species), that will invade Australia or expand into new areas as temperatures rise. Is there adequate resourcing and forward planning to minimise the impact of these "next pests"?

Restoration works
Adaptive planning is also needed to ensure that revegetation restoration work will maintain biolinks for those regions that are most susceptible to climate change impacts. This includes an assessment of species lists, size and extent of vegetation corridors in relation to anticipated latitudinal changes in temperature.

Capacity building and resourcing for biodiversity
Wildlife response
Wildlife incident response should be better integrated across agencies. Previously under NRE, DPI and DSE staff responded to wildlife incidents but under current institutional arrangements better integration between DSE, DPI and PV staff and cross-organisational training will improve incident response.

Volunteer support
A lot of natural resource management is provided by volunteers (e.g. committees of management, Coastaction/CoastCare, Landcare etc) who are ageing and experiencing 'burn-out' as well as facing increased regulatory burdens and compliance requirements. These groups need to be adequately supported and succession planning underway to ensure that there is continuity and delivery of important NRM work. Further DSE leadership is needed to ensure there is adequate transfer of knowledge to volunteers, for example on climate change, so that adaptive planning can be undertaken.

White paper next steps and implementation
Upgrade wording for coasts and marine
The wording of the Land and Biodiversity paper is biased toward the land, for example the LAND and Biodiversity white paper, or "landscapes" do not include seascapes. As a result, coast and marine regions appear to be treated "separately", which undermines the key need for integrated coastal zone management along the catchments to coast continuum.

Alignment of polices and their implementation
There is a very strong need for proper alignment of policies to their implementation. Current tools should be in better sync with reality of implementation. Implementation of the white paper needs to align with planning documents. Planning schemes that have led to degradation need to be revised. This needs to be considered in the climate change debate. Implementation by councils is greatly assisted by clear mapping at an appropriate scale.

Institutional Arrangements
Role clarity and efficient operations
The Regional Coastal Boards and the Victorian Coastal Council have demonstrated international and local leadership and provide value for money for over a decade. The focus on climate change, coastal spaces and the marine environment are current priorities in the review of the VCS, as is a review of the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations of the previous review of committees of management.

However, for the general public particularly governance arrangements appear confused and overly bureaucratic. Clearly improvements to how roles and responsibilities are communicated is necessary, as well as facilitating interaction with 'government'– national, state, local or its agents and delegates, and some review of current arrangements, in the central region, may be required,.

Regarding other models the CCB would support any process to investigate options to improve service delivery, effectiveness and efficiency and to reduce the regulatory burden faced by land owners and others. However, the CCB does not support the model put forward by the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchments Management Authority (PPWPCMA) CMA as it

- Fails to properly consider the role and relationship of the current PPWPCMA and proposed Melbourne CMA, with Melbourne Water.
- Fails to consider the implications and relationship if any with the Corangamite CMA (draining to Port Phillip).
- Fails to consider the breadth of the role of GAA currently
- Fails to align investment and effort with urban planning, infrastructure, NRM and service provision functions of local government.
- The growth areas and green wedges area generally geographically removed from the coast.