

Monday, 17 April 2006

\$2M BOOST TO PROTECT VICTORIA'S COASTLINE

Victoria's coastline is to receive a funding boost and further protection from inappropriate development as part of the *Coastal Spaces Initiative* announced today by Acting Premier and Minister for Environment John Thwaites and Minister for Planning Rob Hulls.

Speaking at the release of *The Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report* at Ocean Grove, Minister Thwaites announced a more than \$2 million funding package to help implement the findings of the report.

"The Bracks Government is committed to protecting the special values appreciated by so many Victorians and visitors, while still providing scope for appropriate and sustainable development on the coast," Mr Thwaites said.

"People are flocking to the coast like never before, so maintaining and protecting our coastline requires a long-term approach, something we have already identified through our Victorian Coastal Strategy."

The report recommends containing urban and residential development within existing township boundaries, to encourage sustainable development along the coastline.

The State Planning Policy Framework will be updated so that these boundaries are clearly identified in council planning schemes, with non-urban spaces protected for future generations.

Minister for Planning Rob Hulls said the Government was ensuring that proper, strategic planning led development in the right direction, rather than allowing ad hoc decisions to set unwelcome precedents and urban sprawl.

"The Bracks Government is committed to working closely with coastal councils to ensure that the necessary planning is undertaken to protect significant coastline areas."

"As part of the *Coastal Spaces Initiative*, visual landscapes along the coast have been assessed to provide councils with important information to guide project siting and design in visually sensitive areas."

Under the *Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report*, the Bracks Government today announced:

- Up to \$1 million from the Provincial Statement to support non metropolitan coastal councils to manage change through strategic township planning.
- \$600,000 to work with local councils to implement the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment and Great Ocean Road Region Landscape Assessment studies.
- \$325,000 of Commonwealth National Heritage Trust funding to develop policy and guidelines to address coastal acid sulfate soils.
- \$100,000 to work with Wellington Shire to deal with old, undesirable subdivisions on Gippsland's coast.
- Continuing investment in innovative solutions to address environmental hotspots through the town and country water supply program.