

Coastal Development

Impacts of growth

Over-development or development in inappropriate locations can undermine the aesthetic and environmental values that attract residents and visitors to the coast. Infrastructure and service pressures can be created by growth of resident populations and numbers of visitors.

Population change

Coastal areas have experienced strong population growth in recent decades. Much of this coastal growth occurs within 1-2 hours drive of Melbourne and is related to an extending commuter belt as much as retirement migration.

Coastal environments

The Victorian coastline has a range of important environmental attributes. The establishment of national and state parks are evidence of this value, as are protected wetland sites and marine parks. The value of these areas is not just in terms of biological significance but also aesthetic value, making the coast a significant economic asset for tourism.

Coastal communities

Coastal communities are diverse. Much attention has been given to the movement of working age people seeking coastal lifestyle and amenity however this is only one aspect of community change in coastal areas. Some centres have grown rapidly on the basis of a strong and diverse economic base. Others have grown through retirement migration.

An integrated picture of Coastal Development

Land and housing development

The price of coastal land and housing has risen markedly in the past decade. The rate of coastal dwelling construction is likely to be stronger than the rate of population growth due to second home ownership and non-permanent populations. Much coastal housing is vacant in winter.

Environment and economy

Coastal areas are key regions for economic activity such as tourism, fishing and recreational activities. Ecotourism activities such as whale watching are becoming increasingly popular, taking advantage of environmental assets and, along with popular activities such as surfing and swimming highlight the link between environmental health and economic opportunity.