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# Coastal Zone Management Policy for Western Australia

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*For Public Comment*

Prepared by

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# Minister's Foreword



Community input is encouraged on this draft Policy to set planning and management policy for the coast in Western Australia.

The draft Coastal Zone Management Policy for the State aims to strike a balance between the conservation and development of our coast.

Western Australia has more than 14,000 kilometres of coastline that is highly valued as a place to live and recreate and central to the State's economy in areas including tourism, shipping and fishing.

Further development will need to occur on the coast to meet increasing demands. However, it can't be allowed to happen in a haphazard fashion.

Clearly it is not in the interest of the community for this expansion to stop altogether but planning needs to recognise that there are areas of natural, cultural and social significance where development should be carefully placed and managed or should not take place.

The aim of this Policy is to safeguard our coastline for future generations while ensuring its availability to all.

The Policy identifies the various pressures and issues affecting the coast and addresses them based on the principles of:

- ◆ Ecological sustainability.
- ◆ Recognising environmental processes and protection of biodiversity.
- ◆ Meeting the variety of demands for use of the coastal resource.
- ◆ Public ownership of foreshores.
- ◆ Appropriate foreshore reserves and coastal setbacks.
- ◆ Community consultation in coastal planning and management.
- ◆ Allowing public access to the coast with controls and management.

The draft Policy has been developed over the past two years by the Western Australian Planning Commission's Coastal Zone Council, which has members from the Departments of Resources Development, Environmental Protection, Conservation and Land Management, Transport, Fisheries WA, Water and Rivers Commission, local government and the community.

Once finalised, the Policy will form the basis for all Government agencies in setting strategies and plans for the coast. This will result in better coastal zone management and improved co-ordination across Government.

The Western Australian Planning Commission is also developing a Coastal Statement of Planning Policy to address more operational aspects of coastal planning such as specific setback limits.

The draft Coastal Zone Management Policy has been released for three-months public submission period. I invite people to make a submission on the draft Policy.



HON GRAHAM KIERATH MLA  
Minister for Planning

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# Setting the Scene

## Introduction

The coast is one of Western Australia's most valuable natural assets and is used and enjoyed by a significant proportion of the State's population. It makes a substantial contribution to the economic and social well-being of Western Australians.

Coastlines are special places. They are at the interface between land and sea – two very different natural systems. The marine and land components of the coast are closely linked through a myriad of inter-dependent physical and ecological processes.

With more than 14,000 kms, Western Australia has the longest coastline of any Australian State. This coast encompasses an extremely diverse array of environments, many of which have important natural values. Although population is quite sparse along much of the coast, some parts (such as the Perth metropolitan area and the South-West) are quite densely settled. Development pressures and resource use conflicts may threaten the important natural values of the coast. At the same time, the coast is highly valued as a place to live and recreate, is a focus for much of our tourism industry and is also important for the State's economy in providing locations for ports and related facilities. The Government recognises that further development will occur on the coast to meet these needs. It is not in the community's interests, however, for this to occur in a haphazard fashion, and planning should recognise that there are areas of natural, cultural or social significance where development should not take place. It is the aim of the Western Australian Government to provide for social and economic needs while ensuring that the management of our coast provides an example of environmental sustainability which will be respected worldwide.

In recognition of the management challenges facing our coastal zone this century, and of the need to provide a co-ordinated approach to addressing these, this paper presents a number of policies for coastal zone planning and management endorsed by the Western Australian Government. The policies are set in the context of threats and pressures operating on the coast, existing planning and management systems, and management challenges. The government's proposed approach for co-ordinating coastal zone planning and management at the highest level, through the Coastal Zone Council, is also presented.

## Purpose

This document sets out the State Government's policy position on coastal planning, management and protection. It provides the broad policy framework within which planners, developers, managers and users should operate, and detailed agency plans and policies will be developed and implemented. The Policy focuses on the Government's efforts to provide for the most appropriate use and enjoyment of the State's coastal resources both now and for the long term. It should be read and implemented within the context of other major international, national and State policy initiatives, including:

- ◆ *UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992);*
- ◆ *UNEP Global Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (draft);*
- ◆ *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity (1996);*
- ◆ *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1992);*
- ◆ *Living on the Coast: the Commonwealth Coastal Policy (1995);*
- ◆ *COAG Heads of Agreement on Roles and Responsibilities (Environment) – Commonwealth and State Governments (1997);*
- ◆ *National Water Quality Management Strategy (1998);*
- ◆ *Western Australian State Planning Strategy (1997);*
- ◆ *New Horizons – the Way Ahead in Marine Conservation and Management (1998);* and
- ◆ other State Government policies.

A widely accepted definition of the coast is that presented in the 1995 Donaldson Report, the *Final Report of the Review of Coastal Management in Western Australia*. This definition, however, encompasses large areas of marine waters in some parts of the State.

The issues and appropriate policy responses are somewhat different for marine waters and that area of

near shore coastal waters we normally call the coastal zone. ***This Policy deals exclusively with the Government's policy position in relation to the coastal zone. The demands and pressures on this section of our coast are immediate and pressing, creating an urgent need for a co-ordinated statement of government policy. While demands are also increasing on our marine waters, some statements of government policy for the management of parts of the marine zone do already exist (including, for example, New Horizons – The Way Ahead in Marine Conservation and Management). No such whole-of-government policy statements exist for the coastal zone.*** A co-ordinated government policy response to marine waters will be dealt with in a separate Position Paper prepared in association with a State Marine Planning Strategy to be coordinated by the Coastal Zone Council over the next two years.

A review of this Policy and the detailed policy statements contained in it will be undertaken after five years of operation.

## Definitions

The **Western Australian coast**, as defined in Donaldson (1995) comprises:

- ◆ coastal waters, the seabed and offshore islands, including gulfs and sounds under the jurisdiction of the Western Australian Government;
- ◆ the mobile beach zone and modern (Holocene) dune systems, mangroves, and wetlands and flats subject to tidal influence;
- ◆ areas potentially subject to shoreline movements; and
- ◆ estuaries and coastal lagoons.

***This Policy deals only with those parts of the coast normally referred to as the coastal zone, and comprising near shore waters and the coastal foreshore.*** Along parts of the Western Australian coast, waters under State jurisdiction extend many kilometres out to sea and encompass large areas of marine waters.

While these waters are included in the above definition of the coast, and are included in the co-ordinating responsibilities of the Coastal Zone Council, they are not dealt with directly in the present Policy. A later Policy will deal with marine waters and the role of the Coastal Zone Council in these waters.

There are other areas which have a direct and significant impact on the coast. These include river catchments and inland waters (including surface and groundwater). These areas also need to be used and managed in a way which recognises their potential impact on the coast. The State's administrative and statutory planning mechanisms should ensure co-ordinated decision-making between agencies responsible for catchment and coastal management and those responsible for managing the coast itself.

It is also important to recognise that marine waters are continuous with coastal waters. Marine organisms readily cross from one area into another, while processes and activities in coastal areas affect, and are affected by, those occurring in marine waters. As for coastal catchments, marine waters need to be managed in ways that recognise these interconnections, and the major potential for each aquatic area to affect the other. Co-ordinated management of marine waters is also essential if both marine and coastal waters are to be protected and sustainably used. To this end, the Coastal Zone Council also proposes to co-ordinate development of a State Marine Planning Strategy to set in place a broad framework for resource allocations and sustainable multiple use of the State's marine waters.

# Setting the Scene

## Coastal Resources

The coastal zone is a very diverse place which contains natural assets of importance for recreation, tourism, industry, residential development, conservation, scientific research and education. In particular, the ecological values of the coast are of fundamental importance as the uses we all make of the coast are dependent on them. Distributed along the coast are abundant natural and cultural resources, including historic shipwrecks and sites of importance to Indigenous Australians. The coast is enjoyed by many Western Australians as a place for living and recreation. It also provides waters for shipping, boating and industrial purposes, and important fishery resources. Sections of the coast also offer opportunities for pearling, aquaculture and nursery sites for important commercially exploited species, while estuaries and mangroves generate nutrients used by the whole marine ecosystem.

An important natural feature of our coast is a long chain of reefs which extends from Cape Bouvard (near Mandurah) to Port Gregory (north of Geraldton), and from Cape Cuvier to the North West Cape. On the landward side of these reefs, seagrass, algal beds and coral reef communities provide habitat and food for many fish species which form the basis of important commercial fishing industries. These inshore waters are also increasingly supporting pearling, aquaculture and a wide variety of recreational and tourism activities. Tourists are strongly attracted to the coast for its scenery, moderate climate, sandy beaches, coral reefs, islands, fishing, and the opportunity to enjoy an unspoilt natural environment.

Industries are often dependent on the coast for port sites, offshore gas pipelines, shipbuilding, and access to raw materials such as minerals, petroleum, salt and shell, and these industries make a very significant contribution to the Western Australian economy. Other industries may regard location adjacent to the coastal zone as essential in order to remain competitive through reduced transport costs and proximity to infrastructure.

Many important scientific studies take place on the coast, and coastal reserves are crucial for the protection of native species and ecosystems.

Coastal resources need to be protected and wisely and sustainably managed to ensure that future generations are still able to use and enjoy them. In particular we need to protect and maintain the ecosystems and ecological processes which give rise to the coast's natural resources and habitats, and the quality of its waters.



# Where Are We Now?

## *Threats and Pressures Operating on the Coast*

The coast is a dynamic and often fragile system. Powerful natural processes change its form and appearance frequently, and extreme natural events such as tropical cyclones, winter storms and king tides can have profound effects. The daily action of waves, currents and winds which change in direction and intensity over the course of each year can also have a significant impact on the coast, removing or depositing sand and changing the shape of dunes. Coastal planning and development must take these processes into account. Human use of the coast poses a range of pressures, and often affects our perceptions of, as well as our responses to, natural processes and events.

## *Natural Processes*

### **Erosion and accretion**

The action of wind and waves deposits sand to form sandy beaches, and also attacks existing beaches and dunes, removing sand and changing the shape and quality of the beach. The profile of the beach under water may also alter, turning a safe swimming beach into an area of dangerous dumping waves or rip currents in the following season. In the northern region of the State particularly, the scale and intensity of these phenomena are accentuated by enormous tidal ranges. Fluctuations are also very significant at Geographe Bay. People often wish things to stay exactly as they are, especially if they include attractive wide sandy beaches. Attempts to control and moderate these natural processes can be very expensive, ongoing, and can cause unintended side-effects on neighbouring beaches. Structures built too close to the beach, without regard to these natural processes, can also endanger property and life.

### **Major climatic events**

Storm surge or the powerful winds and waves that accompany cyclones can result in dramatic changes to the coast overnight. Even a succession of unusually high tides can lead to very rapid cutback of the beach. It can be extremely difficult to predict some of

these events, let alone control their effects, and the most effective defence is to keep development away from likely impact areas. Restoring sections of the coast to their previous state after these events can be very expensive, and sometimes quite impractical.

### **Sea level change**

Many scientists now agree that the atmosphere is warming and sea level rising. Global sea levels have already risen between 10 and 25cm over the past 100 years. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that: "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate" and acknowledges that the climate is expected to continue to change in the future. The IPCC's second report has been internationally accepted as representing the current state of knowledge in relation to climate change science, impacts and mitigation techniques. The extent of the effect of climate change and the so-called enhanced greenhouse effect remains uncertain. One major concern resulting from climate change is the potential for sea level rise. Impacts on the coast can be expected to include increased erosion, loss of some sandy beach and mangrove areas due to higher sea level, and changes in the intensity and frequency of cyclones and storms in some places. While few radical changes may occur during present lifetimes, our children and their children will have to live with the decisions we make now. Coastal management now requires a precautionary approach, based on our best understanding of the likely long-term effects of climate change. This may include locating or relocating structures away from likely impact areas.

## Human Use

### Historical use

The Western Australian coastal zone has been used by human beings for many thousands of years. The combination of benign climate and abundant food sources made the coast an attractive place for Indigenous Australians to live tens of thousands of years before Europeans reached these shores. The coast was a rich source of stories for its original human inhabitants and holds great spiritual significance for Indigenous Australians to the present day. It also contains many sites of great archeological significance as well as historic shipwrecks which document the early European exploration of the coast.

### Residential use

Australians have a great love for the sea and the coast, and living right beside the ocean is a dream for many. Unfortunately, the dynamic nature of coastal processes means that the immediate coast is often not a sensible place to build houses. Foredunes are frequently unstable, and houses built on them are at great risk from erosion. In many parts of the world, houses built on foredunes suffer major collapse and damage every year due to the action of wind and waves. The community as a whole should not be required to pay, through the use of government funds, for the repair or stabilisation of housing in these locations when we have ample evidence of the significant risks associated with placing buildings right on the coast, in the active shore zone. Coastal residential development, especially where it is located right on the foredunes, can also limit access to the coast for other people, can adversely affect its visual amenity, and may create drainage and waste disposal problems. The Government believes our foreshores should be a public asset available to all, and that their scenic and habitat qualities should be protected and conserved.

### Industrial use

The coast is vital to many industries and mining and petroleum activities that require access to deepwater sections of the coast for port facilities, for the import and export of materials and products, sites for internationally competitive industrial estates, and supply of water for cooling purposes. At present many of our major resource-processing industries are sited

on the coast, in industrial estates such as Kwinana, south of Perth, and the Burrup Peninsula, in the Pilbara. Additional sites for industrial estates are also under investigation. While coastal location is vital to some industries for a number of reasons, there are environmental issues such as pollution, restrictions on public access, increased traffic and population pressures in regional areas and impacts on coastal scenic values and recreational values.

The Government recognises the importance of good port facilities for many industries, and will allow the development of new port facilities, with associated industry, in a planned way after careful assessment of impacts and alternatives. New industries, however, will not be allowed to develop on the coast in a haphazard fashion. Industries which do not need a coastal location should be located elsewhere. Where this is not possible, there will be strong constraints against the introduction of industrial wastes into coastal waters. In particular, the cumulative impact of co-location of particular industries or activities needs to be considered. Careful examination of the real need for coastal location will be weighed against the option of locating industry inland and transporting materials or products by pipeline, conveyor or other means. If the latter option is adopted, the Government will encourage consolidation of infrastructure corridors. Where coastal location for new industries is seen to be in the best interests of the State, stringent pollution control measures will take account of the fragile nature of coastal ecosystems, with special emphasis on avoiding or minimising run-off and discharge.

### Fisheries

Fisheries are a major primary industry for Western Australia, and contribute significantly to the State's revenues and job market. They encompass not only the traditional catch of finfish, prawns, rock lobsters and other species, but also increasingly include pearling and highly organised farming (aquaculture) operations. Particular areas of the coast are crucial as nursery areas for key species. Mangroves and seagrass beds are especially important, and also particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Water quality is also critical for fisheries, since pollutants may be harmful to fish or concentrated within them to levels which pose a

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threat to human health. Recreational fishing is an activity enjoyed by many, but conflicts can arise between recreational and commercial fishers, especially where the resource is limited. Overfishing can lead to the collapse of the resource which may take many years to recover. In the worst case, recovery may simply be impossible. The Government is committed to maintaining the level of take, from all activities, within sustainable levels.

## Grazing

Grazing can place pressure on coastal vegetation and adversely affect the stability of dunes and foreshore areas. Some of the State's pastoral leases include coastal areas, and leaseholders are encouraged to minimise grazing impacts by fencing off the foreshore wherever practical. However, native animals can also pose a problem, especially where their numbers have increased above natural levels due to artificial maintenance of a year-round water supply. Native animals lack the hard hooves of cattle and horses, and cause less immediate damage to the substrate, but large numbers can sometimes damage vegetation. Fencing is rarely effective in excluding native animals, but the careful siting of watering points can be used to influence their location.

## Recreational use

Australians have a long history of spending leisure time on the coast. The coast is attractive for swimming, surfing, fishing, walking, relaxing and a variety of sporting activities. Many of these activities are not harmful to our beaches but others need to be controlled to avoid damage. Particular care needs to be taken with activities such as sandboarding which can cause major destabilisation of dunes. Driving along beaches is not appropriate where it may affect the enjoyment and safety of other beach users, threaten the stability of dunes or coastal vegetation, or threaten wildlife. Even relatively benign activities may pose a threat if large numbers of people are involved (e.g. a surf carnival may increase the number of people walking over dunes by many times the normal usage). Pressure for recreational usage in some areas may lead to proposals to alter the structure of the coast (such as the building of sea walls or groynes, or surface hardening of dunes). This is not necessarily inappropriate but the impacts, likely effectiveness and

ongoing costs of any proposal should be carefully assessed. Examples might include stabilisation of mobile dunes in order to build a surf club or café, or a proposal for an artificial surfing reef (as at Mosman Park in Perth). Certain areas of our coast are made up of fragile and eroding limestone cliffs and caves. These can occasionally collapse as part of the natural process of erosion, leading to public safety issues. Great care will need to be taken to ensure these hazards are managed in ways that minimise risks to public safety without causing serious environmental damage.

## Beach protection works

Our desire to use the coast, live on it, and put buildings on it, can result in demand for beach protection works. These include the building of groynes, regular sand replenishment, the creation of artificial channels and other waterways, and fencing, brushing and planting to stabilise dunes. These activities, again, are not necessarily inappropriate but some can cause damage, and others require substantial ongoing expenditure. Construction of groynes and sea walls, for example, often substantially changes the pattern of sand deposition and erosion over a wide area. A groyne designed to protect a beach from erosion, if poorly sited, can result in cutback of adjacent beaches. Artificial waterways can lead to deposition of sediments, and may become stagnant if not properly and regularly flushed. Brushing (the laying of dead vegetation across dunes for stabilisation purposes) and planting must be done with care to avoid the spread of weed species. The important message is that all the effects of such works need to be considered – including the “downstream” and long-term effects on areas other than those for which the works are designed to provide immediate benefit. As well as possible adverse environmental impacts, consideration needs to be given to ongoing costs. As a general rule, the Government will not approve the siting of community or other buildings in areas where it would be expected to meet the cost of ongoing expensive stabilisation works.

## Access to the coast

Access to the coast is required for indigenous cultural, recreation, fishing, industry, and management purposes. Poorly located or unmanaged access tracks can be very damaging to fragile coastal vegetation,

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and the stability of dunes. Vehicle access can be particularly harmful, and needs to be managed carefully. Perhaps the greatest damage to coasts occurs where access is unregulated and spread over wide areas. Damage can be minimised and controlled by carefully siting access tracks for both people and vehicles, as well as car parks and recreational facilities such as picnic areas. In some situations, it may be necessary to limit the numbers of people or vehicles using fragile areas of the coast.

## Introduced pests and weeds

To avoid the unintended establishment of weed species and resulting damage to local vegetation communities, species selected for stabilisation plantings should always be local natives, or known sterile cultivars which cannot escape to become weeds. Special care needs to be exercised with species such as marram grass to control the risk of invasion into areas vegetated with native species. The source of brushed material used for temporary stabilisation also needs careful attention. Brushed material from tip sites should not be used unless there is really no alternative, due to the very high risk of exotic and other weed seeds and cuttings being included. Our coastal waters are also at risk of invasion from harmful exotic species in the ballast water discharged from visiting ships, or attached to their hulls. There is a high risk of marine pest species being introduced this way, and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service is co-ordinating efforts to guard against this possibility.

## Existing Planning and Management Systems

Other than for lands under its direct control and ownership (e.g. defence bases), the Commonwealth Government has no direct role in the management of Western Australia's coastline. Some Commonwealth laws (e.g. the Environment Protection (Sea Dumping) Act 1981 and quarantine laws) do, however, control certain activities in coastal waters. The Commonwealth has also prepared a Commonwealth Coastal Policy and has released Australia's Oceans Policy.

A number of Western Australian government agencies operate under a variety of Acts and statutory policies to plan and manage the State's coastline.

## Ministry for Planning

### Western Australian Planning Commission

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) is the State Government agency with primary responsibility for both statutory and strategic land use planning. The Ministry for Planning assists the WAPC in its statutory planning responsibilities which include the preparation and administration of regional planning schemes, approving town planning schemes and their amendments, and the approval of subdivisions. The Ministry also prepares strategic regional plans and policies for endorsement by the WAPC to guide statutory decision-making. It provides coastal planning advice to other government agencies, local governments, developers, and community groups. The WAPC operates under planning legislation which includes the Western Australian Planning Commission Act 1985, the Town Planning and Development Act 1928 and the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959. State planning legislation provides for the development of regional planning schemes. The influence of these schemes may extend offshore.

The WAPC is guided by a number of policy documents in its coastal decision-making. These include:

- ◆ State Planning Strategy (1997);
- ◆ Country Coastal Planning Policy (DC6.1); and
- ◆ a variety of regional strategic plans covering coastal areas.

The WAPC is developing a new coastal planning policy to replace the Country Coastal Planning Policy referred to above. The new policy will apply to the whole State, including the metropolitan region.

Where pressures for development arise or planning issues have been identified in a regional strategic plan prepared by the WAPC, a more detailed coastal strategic plan may be developed. Relatively broad-scale plans of this kind identify land which is most suitable

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for development, protection and recreation, and suggest solutions to address potential long-term management problems.

## Local governments

Local governments often prepare coastal management plans for specific areas, with the intention of integrating economic, social and environmental factors, and guiding decisions about development in a balanced way. These plans may include detailed recommendations for setbacks for development, as well as designating specific areas for particular uses. These plans may be non-statutory, or incorporated in a local government's (statutory) town planning scheme. While a significant number of these plans already exist and contribute to better management of the coast, large sections of the coast do not have such plans. Where plans do exist, they are not necessarily integrated or consistent with neighbouring plans or with State policies. It is crucially important for the future conservation of coastal resources that coastal planning be approached in an integrated way, and that practical and realistic plans are developed and implemented, according to agreed priorities, for the entire coastline.

Foreshore reserves are generally vested in local governments, which are responsible for their maintenance. Developers may be required to prepare detailed Foreshore Management Plans as a condition of development or environmental approval. These provide quite specific guidelines for management of that part of the coast subject to the proposed development. In some cases, the local government itself may undertake the preparation of the Foreshore Management Plan where, for example, a foreshore reserve is subject to competing community demands, or where there is a need to provide detailed guidance on implementation of a regional strategic plan.

New planning schemes, amendments to existing planning schemes, or development proposals likely to have a significant impact on the coastal environment, are subject to impact assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. Following assessment, the Environmental Protection Authority recommends to government environmental conditions to ensure that adverse impacts are minimised.

## Department of Conservation and Land Management

### Marine Parks and Reserves Authority

### Conservation Commission

Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) is responsible for the conservation and protection of flora and fauna and protected area management throughout the State. The Department has particular responsibility for identification of areas of the State worthy of gazettal as protected areas for conservation purposes, the preparation of management plans for these areas and for their subsequent on-ground management. The Government's "New Horizons" policy (1998) guides marine conservation and management across the State.

Coastal areas may form part of marine conservation reserves, or of terrestrial national parks, nature reserves or conservation parks under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*. Reserved areas are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority or the Conservation Commission respectively, and are managed by CALM. Conservation and management of the State's marine ecosystems will be supported through the creation of a comprehensive system of representative marine reserves vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority. A three-tiered reserves system has been adopted, comprising Marine Nature Reserves, Marine Parks, and Marine Management Areas.

The *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* provides for conservation and ecologically sustainable use within marine reserves, based on an inclusive multiple-use philosophy. The Department and the Authority prepare plans for marine reserves, under this Act, which integrate ecological, social, cultural and economic factors via multiple-use zoning. The new *Biodiversity Conservation Bill* will provide for conservation of flora and fauna throughout the State, including within State waters.

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## Environmental Protection Authority

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* for the protection of the environment across the State, including the coastal zone. The EPA prepares statutory Environmental Protection Policies for the State, specific areas of the State, or to address particular environmental protection issues. Environmental Protection Policies may include the development of environmental values and an agreed set of environmental quality objectives to assist in addressing the problem of cumulative impacts which may arise from multiple activities which impinge on the environment. It is the intention of the EPA to recommend to government an Environmental Protection Policy for the State's marine waters. The EPA is also specifically responsible for assessing development proposals and planning schemes for potential environmental impacts.

## Department of Environmental Protection

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) provides advice to the Minister for the Environment on environmental issues as well as providing the EPA with professional and technical support, particularly in relation to its statutory responsibilities for development of environmental policy and environmental assessment of proposals. The Department has responsibility for administration of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. The main activities of the Department which contribute to achieving the objectives of the Act are: environmental systems management, waste management, pollution prevention, evaluation of proposals and environmental policy co-ordination.

## Fisheries WA

Fisheries WA is responsible for fisheries policy and management, enforcement of regulations and licensing conditions, and research. Under the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*, the *Pearling Act 1990* and related legislation, it is responsible for the conservation and management of all aquatic animals and plants, excluding aquatic mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians, within the Exclusive Economic Zone (with the exception of marine reserves). It may establish and manage declared Fish Habitat Protection Areas under s.115 of the *Fish Resources Management*

*Act 1994* to protect fish and the aquatic environment. It also undertakes management planning for areas under its control, and for fisheries and aquaculture. It has special responsibilities for managing and regulating resource use in relation to commercial and recreational fishing and aquaculture.

## Department of Land Administration

The Department of Land Administration (DOLA) provides secure records of ownership of interests in freehold and Crown land, registers land transactions and holds records of freehold and Crown surveys. It administers and maintains a survey and land information framework for Western Australia and provides administrative support for the WA Land Information System (WALIS). DOLA serves as the custodian for certain land information data and maintains Western Australia's Geographic Names Register. It also serves as the primary source of access to information from satellite imagery and aerial photography. The Department has administrative responsibility for the Crown estate, which comprises about 93 per cent of the State's land area, and management responsibility for unallocated Crown lands (about 34 per cent of the State). Under recent legislation "Crown land" has been redefined to extend seaward to the three nautical mile limit, extending DOLA's functions to coastal waters. DOLA acquires land for government services, releases Crown land for sale or lease throughout the State, creates and administers various classes of reserved land, and maintains the tenure system for the State's roads. DOLA is the lead agency in the administration of the State Government's coastal squatter shack policy and performs a key native title policy and mapping role in relation to Crown land.

## Department of Minerals and Energy

The Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) under the *Mining Act 1978*, the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994*, the *Petroleum Act 1967*, the *Petroleum Pipelines Act 1969*, the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1982* and other related Acts of Parliament, is responsible for managing and supporting the sustainable development of the State's mineral and petroleum resources on land, sea and coastal areas. The Department awards mining tenements and petroleum permits and provides up-to-date geo-

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scientific information for use by government, industry and the public to support exploration, land use planning and infrastructure development.

## Port authorities

Port authorities around the State operate under the *Port Authorities Act 1999* which governs the management of the commercial aspects of ports, their physical environment and their infrastructure. Port authorities have been established at Albany, Bunbury, Dampier, Esperance, Fremantle, Geraldton and Port Hedland. Each established port requires a plan of management. Several new ports or port extensions are under consideration.

## Department of Resources Development

The Department of Resources Development (DRD) plans, promotes and co-ordinates responsible development of the State's resources for the benefit of Western Australians. This includes downstream processing of resources. Many resource-based developments of State significance on the coast are administered by the Department under project-specific Government Agreement Acts. These Acts are legally binding agreements between government and the developer on how the operations are managed. The Department also conducts research to assist in the assessment of impacts of industry on the coast and in the preparation of government policy and decision-making.

## Department of Transport

The Maritime Division of Department of Transport (DOT) is responsible for marine safety which comprises a broad range of activities including licensing, education and provision of navigation aids. Efficiency of maritime transport is enhanced through the provision of policy advice to the Minister. The Maritime Division also caters for the operation of smaller vessels through the provision of appropriate facilities. The Division also provides technical advice to State and local government on coastal and planning issues, and provides technical and financial assistance for coastal protection works. It administers a variety of Acts including the *Marine and Harbours Act 1981*, the *Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967*, the *WA Marine Act 1982* and the *Jetties Act 1926*. It is intended to

consolidate all of these Acts into one integrated Maritime Act. In 1995, the Department also released a policy paper on maritime transport directions for Western Australia, entitled "*The Way Ahead*". The Department's roles are supported by an extensive database of marine and coastal information. The Department is actively involved in the development and promotion of a Coastal Data Centre designed to provide all users and managers of coastal systems with access to these data.

## Water and Rivers Commission

The Water and Rivers Commission (WRC) is responsible for ensuring that the State's waterways, including estuaries, are maintained in a functional and healthy condition for the benefit of the community. It assists and supports management bodies for specific waterways such as the Swan River Trust in Perth. These bodies are set up under legislation administered by the Commission, with the exception of the Swan River Trust which has separate legislation. Some of these bodies such as the Geographe Bay Catchment Council and Albany Waterways Management Authority have responsibility for near shore coastal waters. The Commission also administers the *Waterways Conservation Act 1976*. This provides the legal framework for co-ordinated management of waterways and near shore coastal waters in areas gazetted under the Act.

## Cockburn Sound Management Council

The Cockburn Sound Management Council was established in February 2000 as a subcommittee of the Board of the Water and Rivers Commission in response to growing concerns over increasing pressures on Cockburn Sound. The purpose of the Council is to provide a co-ordinated approach by government and the community to management of the waters of the Sound and its catchments. The Council comprises an independent Chairman and representatives from community groups, industry and local, State and Commonwealth governments.

## Aboriginal Affairs Department Aboriginal Lands Trust

The Aboriginal Affairs Department (AAD) ensures the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal families and communities are reflected in the development, implementation and evaluation of public policy and government services. It builds and supports partnerships with and between Aboriginal peoples, government and the broader community. The Aboriginal Lands Trust was established under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972* to acquire and manage land on behalf of Aboriginal peoples. Lands currently held by the Trust comprise some 12 per cent of the State and include coastal lands. The Department also administers the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

## Regional Development Commissions

Regional Development Commissions, within the Commerce and Trade portfolio, are involved in major coastal developments around the State. While the Commissions' statutory mandate of fostering regional economic development is not specific to the coast, it does often involve the coastal zone. In these projects, the Commissions are usually in partnership with other government agencies, local governments and the community.

## Community groups

Community groups also have an important role to play in management of our coast. The number of coastal care groups continues to increase, with many people taking an active role in management, monitoring and rehabilitation. Many of these groups have been assisted in their endeavours by grants from Commonwealth and State Governments under the Coastwest/Coastcare Program. As major landowners and managers, Aboriginal peoples have an important stake in the planning and management of coastal lands through relevant government agencies, independent Aboriginal corporations and other organisations, and native title rights and processes.

## Legislation

Western Australia does not have special purpose coastal protection legislation which assigns responsibility for coastal management to a particular agency or Minister. Instead, the State Government has chosen to promote a co-ordinated approach through the activities of the Coastal Zone Council. Individual government agencies may also enter into memoranda of understanding or similar formal agreements with one another as a mechanism for co-ordinating processes across various relevant Acts. At present, the Government does not see a need to change this approach. However, if the effectiveness of coastal management is seen to be reduced as a result of overlap and duplication, or a lack of co-ordination in addressing issues, consideration may be given to a revised approach which could include legislative backing for a co-ordinating body such as the Coastal Zone Council, as has been the approach in a number of other States.

## Management Challenges in the Coastal Zone

Closeness to the sea and a wide range of opportunities for recreation, coupled with a pleasant, benign climate, make the coast very attractive for residential purposes. Increased population pressure in both metropolitan and country areas has led to growing demand for near shore housing land and recreational use of the coast. This has led to some degradation of both land and water quality, especially in areas of high population density.

Erosion problems experienced at Mandurah, Cottesloe, South Fremantle, Bunbury, Busselton and Esperance highlight the costs incurred when natural processes are ignored or misunderstood. In Mandurah, for example, recreation reserves were eroded and properties threatened by storm activity in the 1970s. To combat this, a series of groynes was constructed along the coast and beach renourishment programs implemented. Much of this cost could have been avoided at the planning phase. Notwithstanding the lessons available from these examples, similar problems still occur. Serious erosion of popular beaches and associated infrastructure still occurs at Bunbury, for example, and groynes have been

# Where Are We Now?

constructed to protect foreshore developments at Busselton. While efforts are currently being made to address these particular problems, planning and management will pay special attention to avoiding problems of this kind in areas where high growth is expected in the future, especially the coastal areas of the South-West, Peel and Kimberley Regions or where major infrastructure is planned, as in the Pilbara Region.

The demand for tourist facilities along the coast may lead to inappropriately sited developments, including high rise buildings which are not in harmony with the coastal landscape and overshadow the beach. Illegal and unmanaged camping on vacant Crown land is also a growing issue, as lack of facilities and overcrowding can cause environmental degradation. It will be a major challenge to ensure that adequate and attractive facilities are provided to meet the growing demand, without compromising precisely those natural assets which visitors come to enjoy.

Because of the high community value placed on the coast, the community has a strong interest in coastal management, and an increasing interest in direct involvement in management activities. There is strong community support for government to take a proactive role in protecting coastal resources and ensuring public access to the coast and retention of coastal and foreshore areas in public ownership.

The consideration of cumulative impacts is a growing challenge. Current processes for environmental impact assessment make this difficult, as developments and their potential impacts are assessed individually, and cumulative impacts are sometimes difficult to measure with sufficient accuracy for inclusion in decision-making processes. While current impact assessment procedures are adequate to deal with major development proposals and government initiatives, they are often not equipped to deal with the combined effects of many small development decisions which may result in a progressive degradation of the environment.

Local government manages a significant proportion of the State's coast, with very limited resources and rate bases. Where population is sparse, as it is along much of the State's coast, there may be serious financial constraints in managing the coast effectively. In particular, local governments are often not equipped to manage

issues such as four-wheel drive activity, illegal camping and squatter shack occupation in such areas. In 1995 the Government appointed the Hon. Bruce Donaldson MLC to undertake a review of the management of the coastal zone in Western Australia. The resulting report estimated that local government spending on the coast annually would total between \$5 million and \$10 million per year. For specific local government areas, however, annual expenditure varies from over \$1 million to zero (Donaldson 1995). The majority of local government spending on coastal management comes from local governments' own budgets, with an estimated 5% only coming from State or Commonwealth government grants. Unfortunately, it is also often the case that visitor pressure is strongest on those areas which do not have a high resident population. As a result, much of the coast is currently not actively managed, leading to significant degradation in many places due to inappropriate access, poor land use practices and mismanagement.

Local government has expressed concern about reduced levels of State government funding for coastal management works and especially erosion control. This has led the Department of Transport to commence development of a set of guidelines for cost sharing between the two levels of government for coastal protection. Local governments also express concern about the difficulty and expense of obtaining specialist expert advice on coastal management. The provision of advice and resources to local government to ensure that it is equal to the immense task confronting it in coastal management is a significant challenge for all levels of government.

Funding for a wide range of coastal management and rehabilitation activities under the Commonwealth Government's *Coasts and Clean Seas Initiative* has allowed many worthwhile projects to be undertaken in areas and circumstances where this would otherwise have been financially impracticable. In particular, the joint Commonwealth-State Coastwest/Coastcare Program has also facilitated the involvement of many community groups in practical coastal management initiatives. Ongoing funding under these programs, however, cannot be guaranteed. There is no doubt that community involvement in all aspects of coastal management will continue to be a priority for the future. The challenge will be to maintain momentum and enthusiasm for this on a limited resource base, where external funding programs

# Where Are We Now?

have a finite life span, and to encourage meaningful community involvement in remote areas with sparse populations.

One of the ongoing concerns of coastal management agencies is the generally low level of funding for research into physical and biological processes in the coastal zone, and for inventory of coastal biodiversity and other resources. This problem could be mitigated by improved co-ordination in the research effort and increased dialogue between those doing the research and those making use of its results.

Some of the most significant challenges for coastal management in the State continue to be those which cross over the interface between the land and the sea. These include aquaculture, marinas and canal estates, tourism facilities, new port sites and the siting of new industrial operations on the coast.

Major new port and industrial development and the development of community infrastructure is often a matter of serious community concern, as well as of major economic significance to the State. It is important that open dialogue between government, community and industry be maintained on these issues.

Issues of risk and liability present serious management challenges where, for example, the public has access to high and unprotected cliff lines, unstable limestone cliffs and caves, or rock platform areas subject to wave surge. Many local governments and State government agencies are confronting difficult questions relating to liability, and the extent of warning signage, protective structures or remediation works required.

While signs, railings and viewing platforms may improve safety, many people feel they impair the beauty of coastal areas and the “naturalness of the experience”. Some local governments have felt the need to undertake major structural modifications to unstable limestone areas, including blocking off or filling in caves, and blasting unstable cliff areas. These activities may have significant ecological impacts and may or may not be effective in reducing public safety risk.

## Coastal Zone Management Co-ordination

The Donaldson Report of 1995 pointed out that a series of reviews and inquiries over the past 20 or more years has continued to be critical of the “fragmented and often overlapping approach to coastal management within and between spheres of government....” All have recommended stronger mechanisms for co-ordination.

Local governments and communities, along with many Western Australian government agencies and statutory authorities, play a significant role in managing use and enjoyment of the coast. In addition, many community groups play an important role in providing for the protection and enjoyment of the coast. It is not the intention of this Policy to propose changes to the existing roles and responsibilities of State government agencies and statutory authorities involved in coastal zone management. Rather, the approach will be based as far as possible on the existing activities, responsibilities and policies of State government agencies and statutory authorities, co-ordinated through the State’s Coastal Zone Council.

The Coastal Zone Council was set up in 1996 as a part of the Government’s response to the Donaldson Report. As a committee of the Western Australian Planning Commission, it is able to provide advice on coastal policies and plans, and their implementation through planning legislation. It also enables individual government agencies with interests in coastal zone management to participate in integrated policy and strategy development.

The Coastal Zone Council should identify coastal management needs and priorities, and seek sources of funding for necessary programs or projects. Its members should reach agreement on arrangements for implementation of these programs or projects by an appropriate coastal management body, thereby ensuring needs are met while avoiding unnecessary duplication or overlap. The scope and operations of the Coastal Zone Council will include both the coastal zone in the relatively narrow sense used in this document, as well as marine waters included in the Donaldson definition of the coast. This Policy deals only with those aspects of the responsibilities of the Coastal Zone Council which relate to the coastal zone comprising near shore waters and the coastal foreshore.

# *Where Are We Now ?*

The Coastal Zone Council receives administrative support from the Ministry for Planning, while agencies participating in the Council may provide technical and financial support subject to their own business planning processes. Additional members may be co-opted to the Council to deal with specific issues or areas in which they have expertise. In addition, the Council will seek regular feedback from key stakeholders and the community at large.

The Council is well placed to fulfil its co-ordinating role through its membership which includes the key State government agencies with interests and involvement in coastal planning and management as well as community representation.



# A Future for Our Coast

## A Vision for Coastal Zone Management

“Management” is used here in the very broadest sense, to include all those activities necessary to protect, conserve and wisely use land and resources. In particular it includes planning, onground management and monitoring and review of effectiveness. The Government’s **vision** for coastal zone management in Western Australia is that:

- ◆ The principle of ecological sustainability and a commitment to maintaining healthy functioning ecosystems will underpin **all** planning, policy and management decisions about the coastal zone in Western Australia.
- ◆ Coastal zone management will be co-ordinated across **all** of government leading to sensible balanced decisions and the most efficient use of resources, and will be undertaken in partnership with the community.
- ◆ The management of Western Australia’s coastal zone will engender international respect and admiration.

## Achieving the Vision - A Goal for Coastal Zone Management

The Government’s **goal** for coastal zone management in Western Australia is to manage the coast sustainably for the long-term benefit of the community, by protecting environmental quality, biodiversity and features of cultural significance, and providing for social and economic needs.

## Coastal Zone Management Principles

The *State Planning Strategy* prepared by the Western Australian Planning Commission and adopted by the Government in 1997 sets out five core principles which should guide future decision-making throughout the State.

### Environmental principle

*To protect and enhance the key natural and cultural assets of the State and deliver to all Western Australians a high quality of life which is based on environmentally sustainable principles.*

### Community principle

*To respond to social changes and facilitate the creation of vibrant, accessible, safe and self-reliant communities.*

### Economic principle

*To actively assist in the creation of regional wealth, support the development of new industries and encourage economic activity in accordance with sustainable development principles.*

### Infrastructure principle

*To facilitate strategic development by ensuring land use, transport and public utilities are mutually supportive.*

### Regional development principle

*To assist the development of regional Western Australia by taking account of the region’s special assets and accommodating the individual requirements of each region.*

## Coastal Zone Management Objectives

The strategic objectives for management of the coastal zone and the multiple uses it supports will be to ensure:

- ◆ Biodiversity conservation and ecological integrity.
- ◆ Intergenerational equity.

Knowledge and understanding of coastal resources and processes will be treated as a priority, as they are central to the achievement of these strategic objectives. These broad objectives will be supplemented by a number of more detailed operational objectives, outlined below, related to the principles of the State Planning Strategy.

### Environmental Objectives

- ◆ Protection and conservation of areas of environmental and cultural significance through appropriate means, including a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of conservation reserves.
- ◆ Avoidance or mitigation of adverse impacts of natural hazards or human activities.
- ◆ Protection and enhancement of aesthetic qualities.
- ◆ Maintenance of physical and biological processes.
- ◆ Maintenance and improvement of water quality (marine, estuarine, surface and groundwater) in accordance with national and State water quality management strategies.
- ◆ Restoration of degraded environments to agreed standards.
- ◆ Integration of coastal zone management with catchment, estuarine and offshore management programs.

### Community Objectives

- ◆ Fair and equitable public and commercial use of coastal resources.
- ◆ Retention of the widest possible range of options for future generations.

- ◆ Appropriate recreational and tourism use and enjoyment of the coast, with due regard for public safety.
- ◆ Protection and improvement of the visual amenity of the coast.
- ◆ Public access to the coast consistent with public safety needs and the maintenance of natural values and processes.
- ◆ Protection for areas valued by the community for their natural and cultural heritage.
- ◆ Public awareness of and involvement in coastal zone management.

### Economic Objectives

- ◆ Long-term economic benefits based on the ecologically sustainable use of coastal resources.
- ◆ Optimal and effective expenditure by Commonwealth, State and local government and the private sector on coastal zone management.
- ◆ Conservative and sustainable resource use to avoid compromising the options of future generations.
- ◆ Appropriate application of the user-pays principle.
- ◆ Provision for balanced multiple use of coastal zone resources, consistent with the specified purpose for reservation of particular lands under law.
- ◆ Minimisation of resource use conflicts.
- ◆ Recognition of the economic and commercial value of coastal land, and the legal rights of private landowners.
- ◆ Efficiency and accountability in coastal zone management.

# A Future for Our Coast

## Infrastructure Objectives

- ◆ Recognition of the dynamic nature of coastal environments and the consequences for coastal development and use.
- ◆ Avoidance or mitigation of the impacts of natural hazards through intelligent siting and design of infrastructure, based on ongoing scientific research.
- ◆ Development of ports, industry, residential areas, tourism and other future commercial needs in appropriate locations, based on planned allocation of suitable sites.
- ◆ Minimisation or avoidance of adverse environmental impacts of new infrastructure through adoption of mechanisms such as strict control measures (including zero discharge requirements wherever practicable).
- ◆ Location of new industrial and other infrastructure development away from the coastal zone and concentration in existing nodes, wherever practicable.
- ◆ Minimisation or avoidance of adverse visual impact of new infrastructure through designs which harmonise with coastal landforms.
- ◆ Equitable cost-sharing arrangements for the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure between State and local governments.
- ◆ Recognition of the needs of regional areas for an economic resource base, including the need for new port facilities, and carefully planned residential, industrial and tourism development.
- ◆ Recognition of the limited financial resources of many regional local governments with primary responsibility for coastal management.
- ◆ Recognition of the different needs and pressures operating in metropolitan and country areas.

## *A Statewide Coastal Zone Strategy*

The Government, through the Coastal Zone Council, will develop a Coastal Zone Strategy in consultation with all key stakeholders. This Strategy will address in detail the long-term requirements and opportunities for coastal planning and management in Western Australia. The Strategy will bring together all the strategic initiatives necessary to achieve the vision, goal and objectives outlined above for coastal zone management. The Strategy will be implemented through strategic, statutory and operational activities of government, and will identify those agencies responsible for each aspect of implementation. In doing so, it will lay the basis for effective and efficient management of the coastal zone by achieving co-ordination and collaboration between all management bodies.

## Regional Development Objectives

- ◆ Retention of as much of Western Australia's regional coastline as possible in a natural and healthy condition.
- ◆ Ecological sustainability for all new regional development.
- ◆ Equitable sharing of coastal management resources across all regions.
- ◆ Full coverage of coastal regions with coastal management plans.
- ◆ Good coastal management practice for all regional coastal areas, based on appropriate levels of access to coastal management knowledge and skills.

## Government Policies for Planning and Management of the Coastal Zone

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1. All coastal development and resource use should be based on principles of ecological sustainability. However, the Government recognises that our ability to measure sustainability for any given use or activity is still limited. The Government will support research, trials, investigations and monitoring to increase our knowledge and confidence in distinguishing between sustainable and unsustainable processes, and in developing responses to demonstrably unsustainable activities.
2. Use of coastal resources should be equitable, and take account of the likely needs of future generations. Reasonable demands for housing, tourism, recreation, commercial and other activities along the coast should be accommodated, provided this can be done within the bounds of ecological sustainability, and within standards which are acceptable to the community.
3. In recognition of the dynamic nature of natural processes on the coast, the physical capability of coastal land must always be considered before development takes place. Development should be restricted to areas of high capability and low risk. In particular, development should not be permitted on unstable, active frontal dunes and beaches. Dynamic coastal processes that need to be taken into account include natural fluctuations in sea level and climate, climate change, storm events, shoreline changes, and the mobility of species within coastal ecosystems.
4. The Government is committed to the maintenance of biological diversity and natural systems and processes for both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Where significant environmental qualities have been degraded, remedial action will be a high priority.
5. Wherever possible, foreshores will remain in or be returned to public ownership. This will ensure the availability of coastal lands for public access and use, and minimise potential costs to the community of protecting private property from damage due to natural coastal processes. It will also facilitate the protection of coastal natural resources, habitats and species. As a corollary to this, the greatest possible range of options for future use will be retained, and irreversible and irretrievable commitments of coastal zone resources should be minimised.
6. Where coastal development is permitted in near shore areas, a foreshore reserve of an appropriate width will be required to provide public access and to provide a buffer against physical processes and shoreline instability.
7. The Government recognises community interest in participating in coastal planning and management, and is committed to open consultative processes which facilitate public involvement. The long connection of Indigenous Australians with our coasts is acknowledged, and their knowledge and values will be incorporated in coastal management arrangements.
8. Public access to the coast is encouraged, but needs to be controlled and managed so that the use and enjoyment of the coast does not cause damage which degrades the resource and is difficult and costly to repair. Access by any particular group of users should also take into account the safety, comfort and enjoyment of other legitimate users of the coast. Planning will therefore take into consideration potentially conflicting and compatible uses in the coastal zone so that maximum community benefit is gained from coastal resources.
9. Decisions on resource use in the coastal zone will take into account the likely impacts on the economic, environmental, social, and cultural values of the coast, and negative impacts will be minimised as far as practicable. Likely cumulative impacts will also be taken into account in coastal resource use decision-making.

# A Future for Our Coast

10. In making decisions about resource use in the coastal zone, the Government will adopt a precautionary approach, such that where there is a high risk of serious or irreversible adverse impacts, the use will only be permitted if those impacts can be mitigated or there are overwhelming reasons for proceeding in the interests of the State as a whole. Where there is insufficient information to assess the impacts with a high degree of certainty, decisions will be made in a cautious and conservative manner, taking into account known costs and benefits. Lack of full scientific certainty will not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent or mitigate negative impacts.
11. The Government is committed to a multiple-use approach to coastal management. However, this will not be taken to mean that uses which eliminate or significantly diminish the potential for other reasonable uses will be routinely permitted. Where competing uses are being sought, as a general principle, resources will be allocated in a way which provides for the greatest overall benefit to the community based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development. It is recognised, however, that it may be necessary to allocate certain resources or areas to a single or dominant use which essentially excludes other uses. Examples may include the allocation of coastal land to port facilities, or to a conservation reserve with restricted access.
12. Scenic values are an important aspect of community enjoyment of the coast. In order to protect the visual amenity of the coast, the design of coastal developments should be in harmony with coastal landscapes.
13. Where residential development occurs on the coast, it should be concentrated in nodes. New linear or strip development should be avoided. Concentrations of residential and associated development into urban nodes should only be permitted where approved regional strategies, planning schemes or coastal plans have identified appropriate locations.
14. Waste disposal into the ocean and other coastal areas will be strictly limited and monitored to ensure the quality and quantity of the output material can be accommodated by the receiving environment without compromising agreed environmental values. The development of new facilities for waste disposal into coastal waters will be regarded as a last resort to be used only after all other avenues for re-use, recycling or alternative disposal sites have been exhausted. Alternative uses for wastewater and adoption of the most up-to-date technology will be actively encouraged. The performance of existing facilities should be regularly reviewed for opportunities to make use of emerging and improved technologies.
15. The Government will continue to enforce its squatter shack policy consistently along the coast. New development nodes containing camping and caravan sites, and chalets for rent to the public may be permitted if they are adequately planned, regulated, and serviced.
16. Special attention will be paid to the protection and management of places with important natural and cultural heritage values. These may include places with unique scientific or landscape qualities, as well as sites with important species or communities, and historic, anthropologic and ethnographic sites. The special knowledge of Indigenous Australians and their long-standing relationship with coastal sites is acknowledged. Their participation in coastal management will be actively encouraged.
17. Protection of high productivity coastal sites which make an important contribution to food production for marine ecosystems, and nursery sites for aquatic species, will receive high priority.
18. The priority to be assigned to stabilisation and rehabilitation of degraded areas of the coast will be assessed against the other values of the site, any threats to other sites arising from the damage (as in the case of coastal erosion), costs, and the extent to which natural processes can or should be controlled.

19. The Government will discourage the construction of buildings in the coastal zone where there is a significant risk of damage from natural processes. Well planned coastal development should minimise the need for installation and maintenance of costly shore stabilisation works to protect foreshore development from the impact of natural processes. The Government will not provide financial support for restoration of damage or hazard control where buildings have been constructed contrary to prevailing laws and policies or professional advice, and without due regard for land capability and the risks posed by natural processes.
20. Development on and adjacent to the coast should be compatible with the protection and maintenance of the coastal environment, and should be both ecologically and economically sustainable. All proposed developments along the coastal zone should be thoroughly examined for their potential social, economic and environmental impacts. In particular, new industrial development will normally be permitted within the coastal zone only where such location is essential to the operation of the particular industry.
21. The Government is committed to the progressive establishment and sound management of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of reserves across the State, including its coastal zone, to ensure the conservation of biodiversity and natural systems.
22. The Government recognises the importance of the coastal zone in providing opportunities for active recreation, its social value and the zone's positive promotion of the health and well-being of residents of Western Australia through physical activity.

## *Implementation of Government Policy*

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The Government seeks to implement these policies in an integrated way in co-operation with the community and other levels of government. Where relevant decisions or management activities are the province of local government, technical and financial assistance may be available from the State Government where this is warranted and practical. State government agencies will be expected to use this document as the basis for their own policies, plans and management practices.

The Government expects the Coastal Zone Council to take a leading role in facilitating co-ordinated implementation of these policies and advising the Western Australian Planning Commission on relevant policy issues.

## *The Role of the Coastal Zone Council*

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The Coastal Zone Council will be required to report regularly to relevant Ministers, through the Western Australian Planning Commission, on its operations and the effectiveness of coastal zone management and planning in the State. The success of the Council in co-ordinating and improving the standard of planning and management will be reviewed at regular intervals. The Government intends to commission a review of the Council's operations in 2001, after it has been functioning for five years.

An important task of the Coastal Zone Council over the next two to three years will be development of a Coastal Zone Strategy. This Strategy should be based on comprehensive resource inventories designed to assist government to decide the most appropriate locations for new industries and ports, housing, aquaculture and tourism developments, as well as identifying those locations where development is not appropriate or where conservation needs should take priority. The Strategy should examine issues surrounding expansion of the aquaculture industry, increasing demand for tourism facilities and activities, port expansion and the demand

# *A Future for Our Coast*

for boat harbours and canal estate development. It should also identify additional marine and terrestrial coastal areas which should be considered for reservation for conservation purposes, in conjunction with the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority and the Conservation Commission. The Strategy will be developed co-operatively by all government agencies with responsibilities in the coastal zone, and should document those areas requiring active management or intervention, or the development of detailed planning strategies, and list actions required by State government agencies and local government. Priorities for implementation will be determined by agreement amongst relevant agencies.

The Coastal Zone Council will also be expected to address and make recommendations on those areas and issues where more resources or different approaches are needed. In this way, the activities and efforts of existing bodies will be enhanced, the State's resources will be used more efficiently, and better outcomes for the coast will be achieved.

Because the role of the Coastal Zone Council is considered crucial in ensuring the Government's approach to coastal zone planning and management is implemented effectively, the formal role and responsibilities of the Council are expected to undergo evolution over time, and to require regular review. The role of the Council has already changed somewhat since it was first created. It is timely, therefore, to set down the current understanding of the Council's mission and responsibilities, as a means of defining the Government's expectations over the next three years.

## *The Mission of the Coastal Zone Council*

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- ◆ The Coastal Zone Council will facilitate co-ordination of coastal planning and management by providing policy support and advice to government and the community, within the framework of ecologically sustainable development.
- ◆ The Coastal Zone Council will provide leadership and direction for the key stakeholders in coastal planning and management.
- ◆ The Coastal Zone Council will seek to optimise the use of resources available for coastal zone management.

## *The Responsibilities of the Coastal Zone Council*

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- ◆ Promote coherence in policies, plans and priorities for coastal zone management.
- ◆ Provide advice to government and the community on effective management of the coastal zone.
- ◆ Report on the co-ordination of coastal zone management programs in Western Australia, and provide advice on strategies and mechanisms for facilitating such co-ordination.
- ◆ Promote community involvement in and understanding of coastal zone management.
- ◆ Promote the involvement of Indigenous Australians in coastal zone management.
- ◆ Promote effective and efficient co-ordination of resources for coastal zone management.

## *Into the Next Millennium*

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As we enter the new century, the Government of Western Australia is committed to ensuring that our coastal zone is protected, conserved and wisely used so that all Western Australians and our visitors can value and enjoy this precious natural resource. This Policy provides the broad framework for achieving this vision. A policy document alone, however, cannot ensure the protection of our coasts. This will only happen if we all work together actively to achieve this aim, in a partnership of government, community and industry. The coast is valuable to all of us. It belongs to all of us. And we are all responsible for it. With the personal commitment of every citizen who uses and cares for the coast, we can ensure it is protected both for ourselves, and for the enjoyment and use of future generations.



# Public Submissions on the draft Coastal Zone Management Policy for Western Australia

This draft Policy has been released to seek public comment. All aspects of the Policy will be re-assessed in light of comments received, before it is endorsed as government policy for the coast.

Every submission received will be acknowledged in writing and considered by the Coastal Zone Council and the Western Australian Planning Commission. All submissions will be treated in confidence.

When making a submission, it is very helpful to:

- clearly state your opinion and the reasons for it;
- if possible, outline possible alternatives or solutions to your area of interest;
- cite section or page numbers relating to your area of interest; and
- provide any additional information to support your comments.

Please include your name, contact details and area of interest with your submission.

## THE CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS FRIDAY 4 MAY 2001

The submission form overleaf is included for your convenience. It can be folded to create an envelope and posted free of charge. If you would prefer to comment in an alternative format, or provide additional information, you may use the Ministry for Planning's Freepost address, which is:

Draft Coastal Zone Management Policy for Western Australia  
Ministry for Planning  
Reply Paid 68766  
PERTH WA 6000

For more information, please contact:

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**WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR SUBMISSION.**

