



Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands



Future Directions Plan

June 2005

The Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands Future Directions Plan is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct management and development of the Parklands until the plan is reviewed. A draft Future Directions Plan for the Parklands was published in May 2004. The submissions received have been considered in developing this approved Plan.

Copies

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**POINT COOK COASTAL PARK AND CHEETHAM
WETLANDS
FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN**



June 2005

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Published in May 2005 by Parks Victoria
Level 10, 535 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Parks Victoria
Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands Future Directions Plan.

Bibliography.
ISBN 1 920789 02 2

1. Metropolitan and regional parks - Victoria - Management.
2. Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands (Vic.). I. Title.

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Cover: Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands: Point Cook Homestead; Point Cook Beach; Point Cook Coastal Park.
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FOREWORD

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands contain significant natural and cultural values and provide a range of passive recreational opportunities for the western region of Melbourne. The parklands will continue to provide important open space opportunities for a growing population, as well as protecting internationally significant wetlands and migratory birds.

This Future Directions Plan provides strategic management directions and a decision-making framework for Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands for the next 10 to 15 years. Focus over the next five years will be on providing linkages within the parklands, managing the potential impact of urban development adjoining the parklands, promoting community involvement and developing cooperative management approaches with land managers and stakeholder groups.

The plan will be implemented by Parks Victoria as the lead agency responsible for land-based management of the parklands, in partnership with local government, other land managers, community groups and the wider community.

The valuable contribution of key stakeholders and the community during the planning process to develop this plan and advice provided by staff within Parks Victoria is recognised.

Mark Stone
Chief Executive
Parks Victoria

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Point Cook Coastal Park (443 ha) and Cheetham Wetlands (420 ha) comprise a total area of 863 ha. In addition, the Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary, which adjoins Point Cook Coastal Park, is 290 ha. The parklands are located approximately 20km south-west of Melbourne.

Point Cook Coastal Park is relatively well established and was created in 1978 to preserve the historic homestead and the nearby Basalt Plains Grasslands, freshwater lakes and coastal dune ecosystems. The Park was officially opened to the public in 1982.

The role of this Future Directions Plan is to provide a 10 to 15 year strategic framework and clear direction for management of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

Point Cook Coastal Park provides significant open space and recreational opportunities, servicing Melbourne's western region. The parklands predominantly service residents living in the municipalities of Hobsons Bay and Wyndham, but also attracts visitors from across Melbourne and further afield.

The parklands attract approximately 200,000 visitors per annum, but this figure is expected to rise as the population increases. Whilst the City of Hobsons Bay is expected to experience little to moderate population growth over the next 10-15 years, the City of Wyndham and the Point Cook area will experience significant population and residential growth.

Urban development adjoining the parklands will change the nature and character of the parklands. Parks Victoria will need to work with Wyndham City Council and the developers to ensure the impact of urban development on the parkland values is minimised.

Pedestrian and cycle access to the parklands is currently limited. This access will be improved when the Bay Trail linkages are completed, linking the existing Bay Trail to

the Federation Trail. Completing gaps in the Bay Trail is identified in both *Melbourne 2030* and *Linking People & Spaces* as a priority initiative.

Key values

The key values of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands include:

- The internationally significant Cheetham Wetlands, which was designated Ramsar status in recognition of its high value as habitat for waterbirds.
- Shorebirds of international importance, including the Double banded Plover, Curlew, Red necked Stint, Sharp tailed Sandpiper and Pied Oystercatcher.
- Diverse vegetation types which include several Ecological Vegetation Communities (EVCs), including Coast Banksia Woodland, Coastal Dune Scrub, Bern Grassy Shrubland, Plains Grassy Wetland and Estuarine Flats Grassland.
- Sites of archaeological and cultural heritage significance to Indigenous communities.
- The Point Cook homestead precinct, including the historic homestead and landscape setting, which are of state significance.
- The former Cheetham saltworks, which is maintained for its cultural significance, as well as environmental values.
- The Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary encompasses a number of habitats including sandy beaches, subtidal soft sediment, intertidal and subtidal reefs.
- A number of settings ranging from the Beach Picnic Area on the shores of Port Phillip Bay to the ephemeral (freshwater) wetlands of Spectacle Lake and Lignum Lake, and the RAAF Lake.
- Landscape values that reflect the rural character and reinforce the parklands sense of remoteness.

Role of the Parklands

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands provide for the enjoyment of environmental, cultural heritage, marine and coastal values, in close proximity to the city.

The parklands play a key role as a 'refuge' from urban development and provide opportunities for passive recreation in an expansive and tranquil setting on Port Phillip Bay. The parklands dual conservation and recreation role is integral to the visitor experience and is a defining feature of the parklands.

The vision for Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands helps to articulate its role within the region and its value to the community.

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands provides a natural setting on Port Phillip Bay, where visitors can enjoy a range of passive recreational experiences and appreciate the marine and cultural heritage values within close proximity to Melbourne.

The internationally significant wetlands will be managed to provide enduring quality habitat for migratory birds and wildlife and the parklands will continue to provide open space for the diverse and growing population of Melbourne and its suburbs. The margins of the parklands will be carefully managed so urban development has minimal impact on the important dual role of conservation and recreation.

Management Framework

The management of the Parklands will be underpinned by a number of guiding principles, which link broadly to Melbourne's Open Space Strategy, *Linking People and Spaces*, and strategic directions that are specific to Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

The parklands have been divided into six management zones. These management zones reinforce the identity of particular areas

within the parklands, and provide a framework to direct decision-making and to determine how Parks Victoria will manage the land, in partnership with key stakeholders and the community.

Priorities and Staging

Implementation of the actions within this Future Directions Plan will be dependent on increasing population and visitor demand, funding and agreement with other agencies.

Some of the key initiatives for the parklands, which will be the key focus over the next five years include:

- Construct Stage 2 of the Bay Trail and undertake planning for Stage 3 of the trail adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands.
- Expand the internal trail network within Point Cook Coastal Park at Spectacle Lake, the RAAF Lake and the Duck Pond.
- Work with key agencies and landowners to minimise the impacts of urban development on the parkland values, through appropriate rezoning, development parameters and planning controls.
- Work with Hobsons Bay City Council to encourage coordinated management of open space and promote joint signage and educational programs.
- Develop Point Cook Coastal Park as a destination for school groups for marine education and interpretation.
- Encourage community involvement in the parklands through the establishment of a friends group and working with migrant groups.
- Continue to liaise with the Commonwealth and relevant State agencies regarding the transfer of the RAAF Lake and coastal strip component of the RAAF site.
- Work with lessees of the homestead precinct to ensure any development is in accordance with the *Conservation Management Plan*.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The role of this Future Directions Plan is to provide a 10 to 15 year strategic framework and clear direction for management of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. This plan builds on the outcomes of previous planning, the most recent of which was the *Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands Strategy Plan* developed in 1997.

Point Cook Coastal Park (443 ha) and Cheetham Wetlands (420 ha) comprise a total area of 863 ha. In addition, the Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary, which adjoins Point Cook Coastal Park, is 290 ha. There are several parcels of land, an area of 122 hectares, adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands that are currently managed by the Department of Sustainability & Environment. The management arrangements for the Crown land north of Cheetham Wetlands needs to be resolved as Parks Victoria currently informally manages the land as part of the parklands.

Point Cook Coastal Park is relatively well established and was created in 1978 to preserve the historic homestead and the nearby Basalt Plains Grasslands, freshwater lakes and coastal dune ecosystems. The Park was officially opened to the public in 1982. The properties were purchased by the then Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and ownership was transferred to Melbourne Parks and Waterways in 1994. Upon the creation of Parks Victoria and the wind-up of Melbourne Parks and Waterways all land transferred to the state and became Crown land in 2001. The land is reserved for Public Purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Cheetham Wetlands was formerly a saltworks but was set aside in 1996, under the management of Melbourne Parks and Waterways (now Parks Victoria), to protect the wetland system and its migratory birds. The wetlands are a series of artificial lagoons and a

natural lagoon, supporting migratory birds of international significance.

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary covers an area of 290 hectares and came into effect on 16 November 2002. The marine sanctuary was proclaimed under the *National Parks Act*. The marine sanctuary includes the existing Point Cook Marine Reserve, which was proclaimed under the *Fisheries Act 1982*. The sanctuary is part of the system of marine protected areas established across the state and was included for its representation of the western shoreline environments of Port Phillip Bay.

The Future Directions Plan will ensure that the balance between the conservation and recreation values are carefully managed. Wyndham City Council is one of the fastest growing municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne and this increased population is likely to result in increased visitation and pressure for expanded visitor services and facilities.

The main objectives of the Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands Future Directions Plan are to:

- Set strategic management directions;
- Identify management zones to guide decision-making regarding appropriate current and future use; and
- Outline key actions.

1.2 Location

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands cover an area of 863 hectares, with the land extending from Laverton Creek to the north and the RAAF base to the south. Map 1: Location Plan shows the location of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands are located approximately 20 km south-west of Melbourne. The Park is located within the Wyndham City Council local government area. Cheetham Wetlands is

located partly within the Wyndham local government area and partly within the Hobsons Bay local government area, with Skeleton Creek being the boundary between the two municipalities.

Point Cook Coastal Park is in the Victorian Volcanic Plains Bioregion and Cheetham Wetlands is in the Otway Plains Bioregion (*Victorian Biodiversity Strategy*). The parklands are both part of the West Region as designated in Melbourne's open space strategy, *Linking People and Spaces 2002*.

1.3 Regional Context

Point Cook Coastal Park provides significant open space and recreational opportunities, servicing Melbourne's western region. The parklands predominantly service residents living in the municipalities of Hobsons Bay and Wyndham, but also attracts visitors from across Melbourne and further afield.

The parklands attract approximately 200,000 visitors per annum, but this figure is expected to rise as population increases. Whilst the City of Hobsons Bay is expected to experience little to moderate population growth over the next 10 to 15 years, the City of Wyndham and the Point Cook area will experience significant population and residential growth.

The Werribee Growth area is identified as one of five growth areas in *Melbourne 2030*, the State Government's integrated planning document. The proposed urban growth boundary abuts the parklands to the west and north.

Between 1996-99 the Werribee growth area yielded some 15% of all development on Melbourne's growth areas and in a metropolitan context, the City of Wyndham is expected to have the second highest housing growth of all municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne.

Point Cook is identified as one of the three priority growth fronts within Wyndham. A detailed Concept Plan for the Point Cook growth front was developed in 2000, outlining broad infrastructure and land-use requirements

for an additional population of around 150,000.

Urban development adjoining the parklands will change the nature and character of the parklands. Parks Victoria will need to work with Wyndham City Council and the developers to ensure the impact of urban development on the parklands values is minimised and that the following issues are considered in planning for residential development on land adjoining the parklands:

- Stormwater treatment and drainage;
- Protection of the ephemeral wetlands;
- Buffer zones;
- Design and development parameters;
- Disturbance to birdlife;
- Landscape and vistas.

Completing gaps in the Bay Trail is identified in both *Melbourne 2030* and *Linking People & Spaces* as a priority initiative. The Bay Trail is a government initiative that will create a continuous shared-use trail around Port Phillip Bay and is part of the Melbourne Metropolitan Trail Network (MTN).

The Bay Trail currently stops north of Cheetham Wetlands on the northern side of Skeleton Creek. Stage 1 of the trail within the Park has been completed and planning for Stage 2 has commenced. Stage 3 of the trail will link the Tower to the existing Bay Trail at Altona Meadows. The completion of this part of the Bay Trail will increase visitation and improve visitor access, and connect the Bay Trail and eventually the Skeleton Creek Trail and the Federation Trail.

In planning for Stage 3 of the trail a range of factors will need to be considered including:

- Protection of environmental values;
- Fencing;
- Access;
- Visitor safety and security;
- Creek crossing; and
- Views.

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands form part of the Altona Coastal Parklands, which aims to create continuous open space links and trails from Point Gellibrand, Williamstown, to Point Cook

Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands, Altona Meadows.

The nearest existing parks to Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands that serve a regional open space role are Werribee Park, Truganina Parklands, Point Gellibrand Coastal Heritage Park, Newport Lakes and Westgate Park. In addition, the foreshore areas of Altona, Werribee South and Williamstown, the waters of Port Phillip Bay and the trail connections along the foreshore and waterways play an important open space and recreation function. Truganina Explosives Reserve has been reserved for open space and planning is underway. The linkages and integration between Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands and Truganina Parklands will need to be investigated and cooperative management approaches developed.

Whilst there are a number of large parks and reserves servicing the western region, significant future growth is expected in the areas of Werribee and Melton, where access to open space is currently limited relative to other areas in metropolitan Melbourne. To address this disparity, *Linking People and Spaces* states four new parks in the growth corridors of Werribee and Melton will be established over the next 20 years.

The Point Cook RAAF base to the south of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands is no longer required for defence purposes and planning to determine the future use of the site is underway. The future use of this site may impact on the management of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands and opportunities to integrate the site will need to be investigated.

According to park-visitor surveys conducted by Parks Victoria, 60 percent of metropolitan park visitors will travel up to only 15 kilometres to access a regional park. Using 2001 Census Data, the population within 15 kilometres of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands is 191,348.

Within this population catchment, 27% of the population speak a language other than English at home. This is reflected in the *Point Cook Community Profile*, which states that 25% of

the population speak a language other than English at home. Languages spoken are diverse, emulating the local multicultural population. The top five non-English speaking languages for Point Cook are Italian (3.7%), Greek (2.1%), Chinese languages (2.1%), Macedonian (2.0%) and Maltese (1.9%) (Wyndham; 2002: 11).

1.4 Planning Process

Point Cook Coastal Park was created in 1978 to secure open space in the outer metropolitan local government areas to meet future needs.

Parks Victoria prepared the *Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands Strategy Plan* in 1997 to develop a strategy to manage the recently acquired Cheetham Wetlands and to increase visitor numbers to Point Cook Coastal Park.

Since that time the surrounding area has experienced significant residential and population growth, community values have changed and the marine sanctuary has come into effect. This plan is now considered outdated hence the need for a new Future Directions Plan.

This Future Directions Plan is the next stage of planning for the future of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. It has been led by Parks Victoria, in consultation with the City of Wyndham, City of Hobsons Bay, Department of Sustainability & Environment and Melbourne Water. Although the Future Directions Plan identifies a number of management actions for the Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary, a detailed management plan for the sanctuary will be developed in 2005-2006. The actions identified in this Future Directions Plan will not pre-empt the detailed planning process being undertaken for the Marine Sanctuary, but are intended to provide input into the process.

A section of Cheetham Wetlands forms part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site. The area south of Skeleton Creek is part of the Ramsar site, whereas the area to the north of Skeleton Creek to Laverton Creek is not included in the Ramsar site. The area between Skeleton

Creek and Laverton Creek has previously been recommended for inclusion in the Ramsar site as it is environmentally significant and contributes to the overall integrity of the site. The area should be managed in a way that is complimentary to adjacent Ramsar areas.

The *Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Strategic Management Plan 2003* was developed to provide a framework to manage the internationally significant wetlands. The plan was developed in consultation with key stakeholders and the community. This plan will provide the key framework for the management of these internationally significant wetlands, however key management actions will be incorporated into this Future Directions Plan.

The process for developing this Future Directions Plan has involved five key stages:

- Research and analysis, including a review of previous plans and strategies;
- Preparation and distribution of a Discussion Paper to facilitate community input;
- Defining guiding principles and strategic directions;
- Developing management zones and actions; and
- Preparation and distribution of a draft Future Directions Plan for public comment.

Consultation with local government, other land managers, stakeholder groups and the wider community has been integral to the planning process. Prior to the development of the draft plan, a Discussion Paper was on public exhibition for a period of eight weeks for public comment. Thirteen groups and individuals made submissions about park values and their visions for the future of the parklands. All issues raised in the submissions have been considered as part of the preparation of this Future Directions Plan.

The main points and issues raised in the submissions included:

- The need to clarify access arrangements and manage unauthorised access to the wetlands;
- Managing the potential impact of urban encroachment and retaining the parklands sense of remoteness;
- Community education and involvement;
- Developing cooperative management approaches between the different land management agencies;
- Enhancing the role of the homestead precinct as a key visitor destination;
- Balancing the parklands environmental and recreational values; and
- Creating linkages to other attractions and open space areas in the region.

The issues raised were considered in the development of the Draft Future Directions Plan. The draft plan was on public exhibition for a period of eight weeks and approximately seventy copies of the plan were distributed to stakeholders, groups or individuals for comment.

Eight submissions were received on the draft plan. The key issues raised in submissions to the draft plan were in relation to:

- Trails provision and timing;
- Environmental management and sustainability;
- Regional context and linkages;
- Cultural heritage and the need to recognise and protect the significance of the former saltworks;
- Management partnerships; and
- Urban development adjoining the parklands.

Public submissions to the draft plan were considered and the plan was revised accordingly. The final Future Directions Plan will provide an important decision-making framework for determining the role of the parklands and appropriate use of the parklands over the next 10 to 15 years.

2 CURRENT STATUS OF THE PARKLANDS

2.1 Regional Open Space and Linkages

The West Region of Melbourne has a diverse range of open space components that support tourism, recreational and conservation values and opportunities. Most of the public open space in the region and surrounding areas is in the form of large parks and reserves and distribution is concentrated in the inner and coastal areas.

Linking People and Spaces identifies that the existing provision of open space in the West Region is limited and below average compared to that of residents living in Melbourne's east or south-east. As significant future growth is expected in the growth corridors of Werribee and Melton, four new parks will be established in these areas over the next 20 years.

In addition to the development of new regional parks, there is a need to improve existing facilities and develop additional areas to cater for increased demand within existing parks. *Linking People and Spaces* highlights the need to balance the expansion of existing parks and facilities with the ongoing priority of protecting the environmentally sensitive areas of Point Cook from increased visitor pressure.

Wyndham City Council's *Open Space Strategy* recognises that the regional open space system consists of large isolated parklands that are poorly connected to surrounding urban areas or other open space systems. The strategy identifies the need to develop regional trail systems that link open space and residential areas to waterways and natural attractions.

Hobsons Bay City Council's *Open Space Strategy* recognises that close coordination with other agencies is required, particularly concerning standards of development and maintenance, trail connections and the management of regionally significant areas. Cooperation between the agencies is required to achieve better integration on management and

planning issues. Linkages to, as well as signage and promotion of, these areas requires upgrading to improve regional access to the sites.

The majority of visitors to the parklands travel by car as access via public transport is poor. The Princes Freeway and Point Cook Rd provide ready vehicular access to the parklands.

Pedestrian and cycle access to the parklands is currently limited. This access will be improved when the Bay Trail linkages are completed within the parklands, linking the existing Bay Trail to the Federation Trail.

The environmental values of Cheetham Wetlands mean pedestrian and cycle links to the surrounding residential areas of Sanctuary Lakes, Point Cook and Altona Meadows are not available. The completion of the Bay Trail through the parklands will enhance pedestrian and cycle access to the parklands from the north and these residential areas. The construction of Stage 3 of the Bay Trail, on the boundary of Cheetham Wetlands, will be completed in a way that minimises the effects on fauna and flora values. Unauthorised access is a current issue that needs to be managed to protect the parklands environmental values and appropriately manage visitation.

2.2 Parklands Identity

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands contain significant and diverse natural and cultural assets. The parklands offer visitors a sense of space and remoteness in a tranquil natural setting on Port Phillip Bay.

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands are characterised by plains and wetlands abutting Port Phillip Bay. Saline lakes are situated throughout the hinterland at Point Cook whilst at Cheetham Wetlands an extensive series of artificial lagoons and a natural lagoon are associated with the mouth of Skeleton Creek. Lignum Lake and Spectacle Lake are ephemeral wetlands and a coastal

dune system extends into the coastal margin of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. A road network links the different settings and the proposed trail network within Point Cook Coastal Park will enhance visitor movement within the parklands and improve integration between the different visitor nodes.

The parklands provide a visual break to the expanding residential areas. The parklands sense of remoteness and its role as a 'refuge from urban development' is one of its defining features. The parklands offer visitors a sense of space with expansive views across Port Phillip Bay to Mornington Peninsula, the Dandenongs and along the coast towards the city and the Bellarine Peninsula. Views inland are dominated by the You Yangs, the Brisbane Ranges and open plains.

The Beach Picnic Area provides visitors with a large area for passive recreational pursuits on the shores of Port Phillip Bay. Spectacle Lake and the RAAF Lake provide opportunities for bird watching and plane spotting, as well as providing important habitat for birdlife.

The Cheetham Wetlands landscape contrasts to that found within Point Cook Coastal Park, with wetlands, lagoons and saltmarshes. The Tower: A Monument to Migration and Aspirations is located on the southern boundary of the wetlands and offers panoramic views over the wetlands and Port Phillip Bay.

The homestead precinct provides visitors with the opportunity to understand the region's pastoral heritage in an attractive and remote setting. The precinct offers a number of facilities supporting the visitor experience, including a café, the historic stables and homestead.

The marine environment and the Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary is representative of the western shallow shoreline marine environments of Port Phillip Bay, including narrow beaches of mud and sand and shallow basalt reefs. The area consists of a rock platform and isolated boulders surrounded by soft sands and mud, supporting an array of flora and fauna.

The parklands play an important education and interpretation role. For many visitors, the area provides a rare opportunity for them to interact

with nature in close proximity to Melbourne and gain an understanding of the areas environmental, marine and cultural heritage values.

2.3 Visitor and Recreation Values

The parklands provide a range of passive recreational opportunities in a natural setting on Port Phillip Bay. The parklands currently attract approximately 200,000 visitors per annum, an increase of approximately 20% from 1997/1998 visitation levels. Map 2 shows the visitor experiences within the parklands, as well as current and proposed trail linkages to other areas and attractions.

Residential development occurring close to the parklands is likely to increase the demand for recreation and leisure activities within Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. The parklands need to accommodate appropriate recreation demand without compromising significant environmental values.

The Beach Picnic Area is the major visitor node within the parklands and provides for a range of passive recreational experiences such as walking, socialising, picnicking and swimming. The area is popular with families and large social groups who enjoy the BBQ, shelter and playground facilities.

The existing visitor infrastructure, such as the playgrounds, picnic and barbecue areas, shelters, information centre, signage and trail network, reflects the developed and long established nature of Point Cook Coastal Park.

The historic homestead precinct is the other major destination within the parklands. The precinct is leased to a private operator who manages the historic homestead and stables and operates a café and bistro facility.

Nature appreciation and bird watching are popular activities, with Cheetham Wetlands and Spectacle Lake providing habitat for internationally significant migratory birds. Public access to the wetlands is restricted but limited ranger led tours can be arranged where appropriate. A commercial operator runs tours of the nearby Western Treatment Plant and

opportunities to provide tours of Cheetham Wetlands may be investigated in the future. An expression of interest process to run tours was advertised but there was limited interest due to site constraints and financial viability.

The Tower: A Monument to Migration and Aspirations is a viewing platform providing panoramic views over Cheetham Wetlands and Port Phillip Bay. The project was commissioned in 1995 and was opened on 30 September 1997. The Tower has won international awards (Guernica, Spain) for its messages on migratory birds, migration and reconciliation.

Education and interpretation are an important part of the parklands. Visitors are able to learn about the values via self-guided walks, ranger led activities, interpretative signage and park notes. An interpretative facility is located at the Beach Picnic Area, offering seasonal displays and information. The key themes that interpretation and educational programs within the parklands will focus on are:

- Indigenous values;
- Marine;
- International birds and migration;
- Wetlands;
- Connection with European settlement; and
- Open Space.

Except for the Bay Trail and the Altona Meadows Natural Features Reserve, dogs are currently prohibited from all areas of the parklands. As residential development adjacent to the parklands increases and when the Bay Trail is complete through the parklands, demand for dog access into the park is likely to increase. Allowing dog access within the parklands will need to be managed to ensure the environmental values of the park are not compromised.

Parks Victoria conducts visitor surveys at a number of parks throughout the State. Visitor Surveys were conducted in 2004 and before that in 1997. Some of the key findings of the 1997 Visitor Survey include:

- 63% of people reported visiting Point Cook Coastal Park to supervise children's play;
- 37% of people visited the Park to swim;

- Informal sports activities comprised 27% of visits; and
- The average length of stay was 3.28 hours.

Some of the key findings of the 2004 Visitor Satisfaction Monitor include:

- 62% of people reported visiting Point Cook Coastal Park to attend a special/major event/Christmas party;
- 43 % reported having a picnic or barbeque, 34% supervised outdoor activity with children and 32% undertook a short walk;
- The average length of stay for people on a day trip from home was 4.2 hours; and
- 19% of people reported 'more shaded areas or shelters' would improve their satisfaction of their visit to the site.

2.4 Environment Values

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands comprise a range of varied vegetation types supporting indigenous vegetation.

Before European settlement, vegetation within the parklands would have appeared quite different. Early survey maps show there was originally enough native timber growing in the dunes that it was called the 'Point Cook Forest'. Timber was cut to sell in Werribee for firewood and remnant Acacias still remain as part of the landscape. Salt evaporation pans were constructed in areas of Quaternary swamp deposits along the lower reaches of Skeleton Creek in 1924. This area would have supported Shrubby Glasswort and possibly White Mangroves (Cook, 1996; 2). The *Cheetham Wetlands Environmental Management Plan 1996* states that 90% of Cheetham Wetlands is modified saltmarsh and 10% remnant coastal dune/lagoon (MP&W, 1996; 9) and the site is considered a continuous block of indigenous vegetation.

Point Cook Coastal Park has been altered by agricultural practices but still contains a diverse range of vegetation communities, now dominated by the Coastal Tussock Grassland community.

Mapping conducted for *Digitised Floristic Vegetation Map of the Melbourne Area* (Cheal et al, 1989) and for *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework* (NRE, 2002) show

seven Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) are present within Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands (see Map 3: Environmental Values). The seven EVC's present are Berm Grassy Shrubland, Coast Banksia Woodland, Coastal Dune Scrub, Coastal Saltmarsh, Coastal Tussock Grassland, Estuarine Flats Grassland and Plains Grassy Wetland. McDougall describes the parklands as having State significance as it is the only reserve in the region than contains four of these EVC's in one location (McDougall, 1987; 28).

Major species present in the Berm Grassy Shrubland EVC include Coast Saltbush (*Atriplex cinerea*), Rounded Noon-flower (*Disphyma crassifolium* subsp. *Clavellatum*), Beaded Glasswort (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora*) and Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana* subsp. *Candolleana*), (Oates et. Al, 2001).

The Coast Banksia Woodland EVC overstorey is dominated by Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia* var) and the shrub layer comprises Sallow Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* var. *sophorae*), Common Boobialla *Myoporum insulare*) and Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*).

Shrubs common in the Coastal Dune Scrub EVC include Coast Teatree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*), Coast Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* var. *sophorae*), Drooping Sheoak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Common Beard-heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*) and Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*). Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana* subsp. *Candolleana*), Sea Box (*Alyxia buxifolia*) and Coast Everlasting (*Ozothamnus turbinatus*) are found in the understorey.

Beaded Glasswort (*Sarcocornia quinqueflora* ssp. *Quinqueflora*), Chaffy Saw-sedge (*Gahnia filum*), Southern Sea-heath (*Frankenia pauciflora* spp. *Pauciflora*), Creeping Brookweed (*Samolus repens*), Rounded Noon-flower (*Disphyma crassifolium* spp. *Clavellatum*) and Sea Rush (*Juncus kraussii*) are typical of the Coastal Saltmarsh EVC.

The Coastal Tussock Grassland (Blue Tussock Grassland) community is characterised by Blue Tussock-grass (*Poa poiformis*), Nobby Club-rush (*Isolepis nodosa*), Black-anther Flax-lily

(*Dianella revoluta* var. *brevicaulis*), Coast Spear-grass (*Stipa flavescens*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Wallaby Grass (*Danthonia* sp.), Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), Small-leaved Clematis (*Clematis microphylla*), Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*) and Stinking Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle laxiflora*). This vegetation community is assigned State significance as it has been severely depleted across the coastal region (Cook, 1996; 36).

Estuarine Flats Grassland EVC is dominated by the large tussock grasses Prickly Spear-grass (*Austrostipa stipoides*) and Blue Tussock-grass (*Poa poiformis*), together with Hairy Spinifex (*Spinifex sericeus*) and Coast Saltbush (*Atriplex cinerea*).

The Plains Grassy Wetland EVC is usually treeless, sparse River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) or Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus ovata*) can occur in some instances. Ground cover is dominated by grasses and small Sedges.

Cheetham Wetlands are part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site, which comprises eight areas from Lake Connewarre on the Barwon Peninsula to Skeleton Creek. Cheetham Wetlands, the Western Treatment Plant, Truganina Swamp, the Altona Coastal Parklands and The Spit Nature Conservation Reserve are important as part of an integrated system, with migratory birds utilising all of these sites for roosting and feeding.

Cheetham Wetlands are of International significance, listed under the International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl – commonly referred to as the Ramsar Convention. The site was designated Ramsar status in recognition of its high value as habitat for waterbirds.

The Ramsar and non-Ramsar listed wetlands in Port Phillip Bay together regularly support over 60,000 shorebirds during summer months (DSE, 2003; 16). Yearly counts of wader and migratory birds at Cheetham Wetlands since 1987 have varied from a minimum count of 2,650 in 1996 to a maximum count of 12,362 in 1994. Seasonal factors such as breeding

success and drought conditions determine the quantity of bird numbers.

Migratory waders utilising Cheetham Wetlands are protected under the Ramsar Convention, Japanese-Australian Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA), Chinese-Australian Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA), Bonn Agreement and the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG).

The wetlands provide one of the remaining wintering sites for the critically endangered Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) (DSE, 2003; 16). Several sightings of the Orange-bellied Parrot occurred in the parklands during June and July 2004.

The following shorebirds of international importance are supported by the wetlands: Double banded Plover (*Charadrius bicinctus*), Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Red kneed Dotterel (*Erythrogonys cinctus*), Red necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*), Red necked Avocet (*Recurvirostra novaehollandiea*), Sharp tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*), Pied Oystercatcher (*Haematopus longirostris*), Banded Stilt (*Claytonia leucocephalus*), Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) and Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*). The Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) and Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*) are shorebirds of national importance also present within the wetlands.

Cheetham Wetlands water levels are regulated directly through pumping and water flow controls. 'The correct maintenance and operation of pumps and water control structures at these sites is critical to maintaining their Ramsar values' (DSE, 2003; 10).

The RAAF Lake and Spectacle Lake, although not listed as Ramsar sites, are described as 'areas of international importance for Double-banded Plover, Eastern Curlew, Red-necked Stint, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Pacific Golden Plover and Banded Stilt' (DSE, 2003; 52).

Reptiles such as the Striped Legless Lizard, listed as vulnerable under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and the Metallic Skink are provided habitat within the parklands. More

common species including the Eastern Blue-tongue Lizard and the Tiger Snake, are found throughout the parklands. Invertebrate species are also abundant, and the regionally rare Altona Skipper Butterfly has been recorded within the parklands.

The Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) identifies Ramsar sites as matters of national environmental significance. The EPBC Act protects Ramsar wetland sites, with 'wise use' principles extending beyond the Ramsar site boundaries.

Weed and pest animal control is an on-going maintenance practice for park staff. Noxious weeds present within the parklands include Boneseed, Artichoke thistle, Spiny rush, Boxthorn, Horehound, Serrated tussock, Prickly pear, Galenia, and Chilean needle grass. Boneseed, Boxthorn, Serrated tussock, Galenia and Chilean needle grass present the greatest environmental threat as these species inhibit growth and regeneration of middle and understorey species.

Rabbit grazing and predation by foxes, cats and dogs provide a major threat to the environmental values of the parklands. In 1996, seven fox dens were found within the coastal dunes and saltmarsh areas of Cheetham Wetlands (MP&W, 1996; 21). Ground nesting birds, followed by middle storey nesting birds are at greatest risk from these predators. Reptiles and amphibians are also at risk.

In summary, the flora values include:

- 9 species regarded as endangered;
- species listed as vulnerable;
- 23 species identified as rare or poorly known in Victoria; and
- 10 FFG listed species.

The fauna values include:

- 1 critically endangered species;
- 5 endangered species;
- 9 vulnerable species;
- 33 bird species listed under JAMBA/CAMBA;
- bird species listed under CAMBA only;
- bird species listed under JAMBA only; and
- 10 FFG listed species.

Table 1: Species List, details these flora and fauna species.

2.5 Cultural Heritage Values

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands are important locations for Indigenous groups. Occupation of these areas extends over thousands of years, taking the form of camps making use of the riverine, wetland and coastal resources.

Point Cook is located within the 'traditional lands' of the *Boon wurrung* people, which extended along the coast from the Melbourne side of the Werribee River on Port Phillip Bay to Corner Inlet. The *Boon wurrung* were divided into a number of clans one of which, the *Yalukit willam* clan, occupied an area close to Port Phillip Bay between the Werribee River and present day St Kilda. Very little is known about the pre-European contact occupation of this area by the *Yallukit willam* people as most references to Aboriginal people in the vicinity of Melbourne during the early contact period describe *Woi wurrung* clans or the broader *Boon wurrung* language group.

By the time the area was taken up by William Taylor, who was the first European to settle at Point Cook in 1849, the *Boon wurrung* people would have been severely disrupted by European occupation in the surrounding Port Phillip district.

There are a number of Indigenous cultural heritage sites and places throughout the parklands, being remnants of past *Boon wurrung* occupation. A number of areas of high archaeological sensitivity have been identified and ongoing consultation with the relevant Indigenous groups will occur to ensure their ongoing protection. Large proportions of the sites comprise of stone artefact sites and occur within 300 m of the coastline. In addition, there are a large number of midden sites along this section of coastline, with the Point Cook homestead area and surrounds being built on middens and camp areas.

The area known as Point Cook was originally named Point Cooke by Captain William Hobson in 1836, in honour of his Mate, John M Cooke, on His Majesty's Vessel *Rattlesnake*.

The 'e' has been dropped from the place name by common usage, but when referring to the actual point, the 'e' remains for historical correctness to the geographic feature.

The Point Cook homestead precinct is an area of historical significance. The buildings and gardens are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and are of state significance as an early rural landscape and the precinct's sense of isolation is part of its strong appeal and cultural significance.

The Point Cook homestead garden is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register for its historical and aesthetic significance as an enclosed landscape setting to an important complex of buildings. The homestead precinct contains introduced species such as conifers and palms, with the nineteenth century conifer plantings providing wind protection and giving definition to the homestead garden.

The land around Point Cook and Skeleton Creek was settled during the 1840's. In 1852 Thomas Chirside purchased the land and the homestead was built in 1857. Brothers Andrew and Thomas Chirside established a sheep run and it became the home-station for their increasing pastoral runs in the west of the colony. The Chirside's imported horses to the property and the bluestone stables were built in the 1860's.

As the Chirside's extensive land holdings were developed, substantial homesteads were constructed at Werribee Park, Carranballac, Mount William and Curnong. The Chirside brothers began construction of the elaborate Werribee Mansion in 1873 and by 1877 the site was their primary base, largely displacing the Point Cook homestead as a focus of family activity.

The property was sold to Sydney Dalrymple in the 1920's, after almost 70 years of continuous ownership by the Chirside's. The jetty within the homestead precinct was constructed during this period, the remnants of which remain. The property was sold again in 1939 to Mr Hooper and a number of owners held the land till 1978. In 1978 the property was sold to the Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) and has remained in ownership of the Crown since.

The precinct is currently leased to a commercial operator for recreational and tourism uses. A *Conservation Management Plan (2002)* was developed to protect the conservation values of the homestead precinct and provide guidance on their future development proposals. The *Conservation Management Plan* should be regarded as the primary planning document for the precinct and reviewed in line with any changes in the future management of the area.

The property has had a long history of horses, as the Chirnsides brothers had a strong interest in bloodstock and racing. A number of Cup winners were housed at the property, including the Melbourne Cup winner 'Haricot' in 1874, and the Caulfield Cup winners, 'Newminster' in 1878 and 'Tom Kirk' in 1880.

Cheetham Wetlands, including Skeleton Creek, were part of the Point Cook estate and were held by the Chirnsides until they were sold in 1920 to Mr Cunningham for Cheetham Salt Pty Ltd. A saltworks was established in 1924 on the lower reaches of Skeleton Creek and several parcels of land surrounding the wetlands. A refinery was built during the 1940's and harvesting continued until the wetlands were acquired for a park and the surrounding land was sold for residential development.

The wetland system is maintained for environmental and cultural heritage values. The water regime of Cheetham Wetlands is dependent on the pumping of seawater from the estuary of Skeleton Creek.

Map 4: Cultural Heritage shows the Indigenous and European cultural heritage sites within the parklands.

2.6 Marine Values

Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary is part of a system of 13 Marine National Parks and 11 smaller Marine Sanctuaries established to ensure that representative samples of Victoria's diverse and distinctive marine environment are conserved for future generations. The system of parks and sanctuaries now protects 5.3% of Victoria's coastal waters. The Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary covers an area of 290

hectares and protects 3.9km of coastline, including the area that was formerly reserved as the Point Cook Fisheries Reserve.

The sanctuary was recommended by the ECC for its representation of the very shallow western shore of Port Phillip Bay with narrow beaches of mud and sand and for the ready accessibility of its relatively intact habitats to the population of Melbourne. The parallel sand and coastal ridges that form the point relate to the sedimentary history of the area and are of regional significance.

The sanctuary encompasses a number of habitats including sandy beaches, subtidal soft sediment, intertidal and subtidal reefs as well as beds of cunjevoi *Pyura stolonifera* and small patches of the seagrass *Heterozostera tasmanica*. The basalt reefs within the sanctuary support an abundant community of algae and associated herbivorous and epibenthic fauna. The sea lettuce *Ulva sp.* and filamentous red and green algae dominate the intertidal reefs, the common kelp *Ecklonia radiata* and the brown kelps *Cystophora sp.* and *Sargassum sp.* dominate the subtidal reefs. Filter feeding animals, the mussel *Mytilus edulis* and the tube worm *Galeolaria caespitosa* are the dominant species on the intertidal reefs and herbivorous invertebrates such as abalone, sea urchins and other molluscs are in abundance on the reefs with algal communities. Bryozoans, sea stars, anemones, ascidians, shellfish, crustaceans, sharks, skates and many other species of fish occur in the sanctuary.

The significant wetlands of the adjoining Cheetham Wetlands are part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site. The Ramsar site, together with an area 300 metres off-shore (part of the former marine reserve) are listed on the Register of the National Estate for their environmental and marine values. The offshore sandbanks of the sanctuary support over 50 species of shorebirds, including migratory and threatened species.

The sanctuary is popular for recreational activities including bird watching, sightseeing and swimming. Snorkelling activities can be undertaken on the accessible intertidal reefs and divers can explore the two Heritage-listed

shipwrecks, the *Henrietta* and the *Diana* within the sanctuary. The sanctuary has excellent opportunities for marine education and the rangers organise interpretive activities for community and school groups on request.

The adjoining Point Cook Coastal Park Beach Picnic Area provides a range of visitor facilities that complement activities undertaken in the sanctuary. Recreational and commercial fishing and the collection of bait and other items from the sanctuary is prohibited. This is in addition to in the area of the former Point Cook Fisheries Reserve where fishing has been prohibited since 1982.

2.7 Land Management

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands is Crown land under the management of Parks Victoria. The land is reserved as crown land for Public Purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Map 5: Land Status outlines the different land management responsibilities for the parklands and the surrounding area.

Melbourne Water has management responsibility for both Skeleton Creek and Laverton Creek, which includes water quality and monitoring, litter management, water flows and hydrology. The Environment Protection Authority also plays a role in water management in terms of legislation, policies and regulatory controls. A number of water programs are undertaken in partnership with key agencies and the community to prevent pollution, monitor water quality and facilitate appropriate management practices.

The City of Hobsons Bay manages Truganina Park, which is still under construction, Truganina Explosives Reserve to the north of the wetlands, part of Lower Skeleton Creek and the Bay Trail from Williamstown to Altona Meadows. The Koorringal Golf Club is located within the Hobsons Bay local government area and is a private golf course located to the north of the parklands, adjoining Truganina Explosives Reserve.

The City of Wyndham manages the foreshore areas of Werribee South and is the planning

authority for residential subdivisions in the Point Cook growth area. The Sanctuary Lakes Golf Club is located within the Wyndham local government area but is a privately operated facility as part of the residential estate.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment provides guidance and expertise on biodiversity conservation (flora and fauna values), wetlands management and legislative requirements. DSE manage several parcels of land adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands.

The Department of Defence owns the RAAF base to the south-west of the park, which comprises the RAAF base and defence facilities, an operating airfield and the RAAF museum. The site is no longer required for defence purposes and planning is underway to determine the future use of the site. As part of this process it is proposed that a portion of land will be transferred to the State for future public open space.

Private rural land is located to the north of Point Cook Homestead Road and currently provides a landscape buffer between the parklands and residential development. This land is located within the Urban Growth Boundary and it is anticipated it will be subdivided for residential development within the next five to 10 years.

Cooperative partnerships between the various public land managers and private landowners that protect the areas environmental, marine, waterway and landscape values will be encouraged. Current land management issues where partnership initiatives could be developed or continued include:

- Access arrangements and restrictions;
- Water quality and water management;
- Pest plant and animal control;
- Education, interpretation and promotion;
- Minimising any adverse impacts from urban development on adjoining land; and
- Community involvement.

In addition to the public agencies there are a number of organisations that undertake monitoring and revegetation programs within the parklands.

An agreement with Conservation Volunteers Australia and Parks Victoria has recently been signed. Conservation Volunteers Australia supply volunteer staff to carry out work programs at Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands as identified by Parks Victoria. Birds Australia is developing a bird-monitoring program for Conservation Volunteers Australia to undertake within Cheetham Wetlands. The Victorian Wader Studies Group carry out regular bird species and number counts. The Department of Sustainability and Environment conduct a yearly Orange-bellied Parrot search at Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

Although an active friends group does currently not operate within the parklands, there is interest in establishing a friends group and a nature club. A number of organisations and community groups assist with the management of the parklands. Activities include monitoring, pest plant control and revegetation work.

The Point Cook/Cheetham Wetlands Advisory Committee plays an important advisory role in the management of the parklands and Parks Victoria will continue to support this group in the implementation of this plan.

3 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

3.1 Vision

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands provides a natural setting on Port Phillip Bay, where visitors can enjoy a range of passive recreational experiences and appreciate the marine and cultural heritage values within close proximity to Melbourne.

The internationally significant wetlands will be managed to provide enduring quality habitat for migratory birds and wildlife and the parklands will continue to provide open space for the diverse and growing population of Melbourne and its suburbs. The margins of the parklands will be carefully managed so urban development has minimal impact on the important dual role of conservation and recreation.

3.2 The Role of the Parklands

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands provide for the enjoyment of environmental, cultural heritage, marine and coastal values, in close proximity to the city. The parklands play a key role as a 'refuge' from urban development and provide opportunities for passive recreation. The parklands provide a diversity of opportunities in an expansive and tranquil setting on Port Phillip Bay. The parklands dual conservation and recreation role is integral to the visitor experience and is a defining feature of the parklands.

Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands contain vegetation communities of State significance and Cheetham Wetlands are of international significance. The parklands provide habitat for critically endangered, endangered and vulnerable fauna.

The parklands serve as a means of accessing the beach and have a coastal management role as part of the bay-wide context. The parklands have a catchment role in terms of run-off and as an end point before it enters Port Phillip Bay. The parklands provide a natural setting on the bay, rather than a manicured,

landscaped park. Visitors to the parklands should be equipped to enjoy the natural environment.

The parklands play a significant regional and tourism role, as part of a wider tourism trail that incorporates the RAAF base, Werribee Park and Werribee South.

The parklands have an important educational role, as well as providing a focus for the community. The parklands have a role to play in bringing the local community, particularly the multi-cultural community, to the parklands to create a sense of pride and an understanding of the values.

The homestead precinct is a major activity node and provides opportunities to appreciate the site's cultural heritage values within a park setting. The precinct offers a number of opportunities for visitors.

The size of the parklands, 863 hectares, means that it plays a significant role in providing a visual landscape break from the surrounding urban area. This role will increase as urban development continues to expand in the areas adjoining the parklands.

As well as providing for today's visitors, the parklands play an important role in preserving open space for use by future generations. The role it plays as a place to enjoy picnicking, water play, walking and socialising will expand as population growth adjoining the parklands increases.

3.3 Guiding Principles and Strategic Directions

The management of Point Cook Coastal Park is underpinned by the guiding principles from Melbourne's open space strategy, *Linking People and Spaces*. These principles relate to the entire metropolitan open space network and provide the framework and rationale for the park-wide and specific management zone actions for the Parklands.

These include:

Partnerships. This principle is fundamental to the management of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands, which involves working with public agencies, volunteer groups and the wider community.

Diversity. Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands provide a range of passive recreational opportunities for its visitors and includes a diversity of environmental, marine and cultural heritage values. The parklands will be managed to maximise visitor health and wellbeing benefits.

Equity. This principle will ensure that the parklands are widely accessible to the community and managed for inclusive use. Encouraging community ownership and involvement, and multicultural access to the parklands will be encouraged.

Flexibility and Responsiveness. Park management will respond to changing and emerging needs and trends where appropriate.

Sustainability. It is important for future generations that Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands be managed sustainably. This includes environmental, recreational and financial management.

Other strategies that guide the overall management of the parklands include Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth 2002; the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Strategic Management Plan 2003; Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries Interim Management Statement 2003 and the Wyndham and Hobsons Bay Planning Schemes.

Melbourne 2030 contains the Parkland Code: Urban Open Space Principles. The aim of the code is to sustain the benefits of open space into the future and support the broad actions and strategies of *Linking People and Spaces*. The code outlines guidelines for the planning and management of open space, such as community involvement. The government is committed to these principles for urban open space managed by Parks Victoria and encourages other land managers to adopt the principles.

The Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar Site Strategic

Management Plan 2003 provides a framework to manage the internationally significant wetlands. The plan establishes management objectives as well as promoting a range of specific management actions that will maintain, and in some cases restore, the ecological character of the sites.

Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries Interim Management Statement 2003 has been developed to guide the management of parks and sanctuaries until a detailed management plan has been developed for individual parks and sanctuaries. This document will guide the management of Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary until the management plan is developed in 2005-2006 on the protection of natural and cultural values, community involvement and managing visitors and facilities.

Under the Wyndham and Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme the parklands are zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone, reflecting the environmental values. An area around the homestead precinct is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone under the Wyndham Planning scheme, reflecting its role as a key visitor destination. The land to the north and west of the parklands is currently zoned Rural.

In addition, park specific principles and strategic directions are identified as follows:

3.3.1 Regional Context and Linkages

Improve the Parklands trail network and external links to other open space areas and attractions.

- Facilitate trail links through the parklands and to surrounding open space to improve non-car-based access and enhance the internal trail network to meet increased recreational needs.
- Encourage pedestrian access from surrounding residential areas where appropriate.

Manage the parklands dual conservation and recreational role.

- Continue to manage Point Cook Coastal Park as a major area of regional open

space, providing a range of recreational opportunities in a natural setting.

- Increase community awareness of the diverse environmental, marine and cultural heritage values of the parklands.
- Recognise Cheetham Wetlands role as one of a number of wetland sites within the region and the important habitat linkages it provides.

Ensure the parklands are integrated with adjoining land-uses.

- Manage the parklands in partnership with relevant land managers and ensure adjoining land-uses are integrated with the parklands.
- Encourage improved historical linkages to Werribee Park and promote the Chirside association between the two properties.

3.3.2 Park Visitors

Provide recreational facilities that complement the environmental, marine and cultural heritage values of the parklands.

- Assess diversity of community needs when considering new visitation infrastructure.
- Ensure that adequate facilities are provided to cater for future increases in visitation.

Visitation will be managed on an environmentally sustainable basis through the encouragement of appropriate use and visitor behaviour.

- Utilise visitor information and interpretative signage to inform visitors about appropriate recreational opportunities, activities and behaviour.

Encourage community involvement and connection to Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

- Build community partnerships to encourage community involvement in park activities and community awareness of the parklands values.
- Continue to expand programs that facilitate the involvement of the multi-cultural community.

3.3.3 Parklands Character

The parklands sense of remoteness and its role as a refuge from urban development will be maintained.

- Minimise the effects of urban encroachment on the parklands and manage interface issues.
- Promote the role the parklands play in providing a haven from urban development.
- Promote an understanding of how the flat topography and open viewsheds are intrinsic to the character of the area.

The different precincts within the parklands will continue to be managed as distinct visitor areas offering a range of experiences.

- Continue to manage the Beach Picnic Area as a major recreational node.
- Ensure the homestead precinct is managed to protect the cultural heritage values and any future development proposals are sympathetic to the character of the precinct.

3.3.4 Natural Environment

The natural environment will be protected, maintained and enhanced commensurate with the environmental values of individual areas.

- Maintain a program of environmental works in accordance with an established set of priorities commensurate with environmental values.
- Protect significant vegetation communities and habitat for species of international, national, state and regional significance.
- Use appropriate information, interpretation and education programs to protect and promote environmental values.

Manage Cheetham Wetlands as part of the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site.

- Protect, and where appropriate enhance, ecosystem processes, habitats and species.
- Manage visitor access to minimise disturbance to waterbirds.

- Encourage strong partnerships between management agencies and volunteer groups.
- Minimise disturbance effects and the potential impacts on wetland values from urban development adjoining the parklands.
- Ensure sound and consistent management with Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary to protect the natural and cultural values and manage visitor use.
- Ensure complementary management practices between Point Cook Coastal Park and Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary.
- Promote the marine values and appropriate recreational use of the marine sanctuary.

3.3.5 Cultural Heritage

The cultural heritage values and archaeological sites will be protected in accordance with relevant legislation, Parks Victoria's Indigenous Guidelines and through an agreed process of consultation with the local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

- Identification, management and interpretation of local Indigenous cultural heritage will be undertaken in partnership with the relevant local Indigenous groups where appropriate.
- Protection of Indigenous cultural heritage will be undertaken in accordance with the Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 and the Victorian Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972.

Protect, enhance and promote the heritage values and significance of the Point Cook Homestead Precinct.

- Promote the homestead precinct as a key visitor destination within the parklands.
- Ensure any new development proposals are sympathetic to the character and significance and are in accordance with the current management framework for the precinct.
- Work with the lessee of the homestead to enhance visitor facilities and conserve and interpret the heritage values.

- Ensure any upgrade to Homestead Road retains the rural character and sense of remoteness of the precinct.
- Continue to recognise the former use of Cheetham Wetlands as a saltworks and promote its cultural heritage significance.

3.3.6 Management Partnerships

Partnerships with other agencies, local government, community groups and other landowners will be encouraged to achieve the parklands management objectives.

- Encourage and support the monitoring and environmental programs undertaken by Conservation Volunteers Australia, Birds Australia, the Victorian Wader Studies Group and other volunteer groups.
- Work in partnership with land managers and landowners to improve management practices and minimise the effects of adjoining land-uses on the parklands values.
- Encourage community involvement in planning processes to provide guidance and advice on management of the parklands.

4 MANAGEMENT ZONE FRAMEWORK AND ACTIONS

The main objectives of this plan are to provide strategic management directions and identify management zones and key actions to guide decision making within the parklands for the next 10 to 15 years. These actions either apply to the Parklands as a whole or to a particular management zone defined within the parklands.

While these actions provide guidance on directions or issues that are current or have been anticipated through the planning process, it is acknowledged that ongoing management of the parklands occurs within a changing social, political and economic environment. The plan is therefore also intended to be used as a decision making framework to respond to proposals and issues that may arise in the future that are not specifically addressed within the plan. In this regard, the vision and role of the parklands, the strategic directions, and the role and purpose of the specific management zones affected, provide the decision-making framework and criteria by which an appropriate response to the proposal or issue will be assessed.

Management zones have been defined to reflect the primary purpose and values of each area.

- Recreation.
- Conservation and Recreation.
- Natural Values Conservation.
- Non-Indigenous Heritage.
- Indigenous Cultural Heritage.
- Special Use Zone A (Park Management).

Management zones provide a framework for directing decision-making and have been applied to all land within the parklands. The zones also provide a basis for assessing lease or licence proposals within the parklands presented by private operators.

A Special Use Zone has been applied in the case of the Park Office and depot, where the current or future use of land is not compatible with the general park management zones.

Map 6 outlines the management zone framework for the parklands. Table 2 identifies recreational opportunities within each management zone.

4.1 Parkland Wide Actions

4.1.1 Regional Open Space and Linkages

- Construct Stage 2 of the Bay Trail within Point Cook Coastal Park linking the staging area to the Beach Picnic Area.
- Undertake planning on the Stage 3 trail alignment adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands and investigate the requirements and feasibility for linkages over Skeleton Creek.
- Work with Hobsons Bay Council to investigate linking the Bay Trail to the Skeleton Creek trail.
- Investigate future trail linkages through the RAAF base to Werribee South once the future use of the site has been resolved.
- Investigate expanding the internal trail network at Spectacle Lake and the RAAF Lake to improve integration within Point Cook Coastal Park and enhance visitor opportunities, without compromising the natural values.
- Investigate links from the parklands to future residential areas to the north of Homestead Road.
- Encourage historical links to Werribee Park that promote the Chirside association.
- Work with Hobsons Bay City Council to encourage coordinated management of open space and promote joint signage and educational programs.

4.1.2 Parkland's Visitors

- Utilise Parks Victoria's Levels of Service framework to develop priorities for the parklands relating to:
 - Standards for facilities and services.
 - Range of recreational opportunities.
 - Coordination of visitor information.

- Economically sustainable facilities and services.
- Review the Information Interpretation and Education Strategy for the parklands to promote the health and well-being benefits of parks and open space.
- Encourage activities through leases and licences that are inclusive of parkland visitors and compatible with management zones.
- Ensure any future commercial arrangements within the Parklands are consistent with each management zone, complement the park values and diversifies visitor opportunities.
- Monitor visitor numbers to ensure the appropriate provision of low impact visitor facilities.
- Use orientation, information and interpretative information to inform visitors, adjoining landowners, new residents and the community on natural, marine and cultural heritage values. This should include flora and fauna, catchment hydrology, indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage and environmental management.
- Encourage pedestrians to keep to designated trails through appropriate signage and park notes.
- Maintain the key visitor areas for passive recreational use and socialising and the minor visitor areas for low impact, nature-based opportunities such as walking and bird watching.
- Monitor and ensure appropriate provision for possible increased demand for future recreation and leisure activities.
- Maintain existing dog, cat, horse and trail bike prohibition for the majority of the parklands to protect the values and work with Hobsons Bay and Wyndham City Councils to investigate coordinated signage and educational programs.
- Investigate potential areas within Conservation and Recreation, and Recreation zones, such as the paddock on Homestead Road, to be made available for dog access. Work with the Point Cook Cheetham Wetlands Advisory Committee and other stakeholders to determine appropriate dog access that does not

compromise the natural values of the parklands.

- Review the current hire scheme for visitor sites at the Beach Picnic Area for large groups.
- Promote use of Point Cook Coastal Park by large groups through the week when there is substantial visitor capacity, as opposed to weekends when saturation levels are reached during the peak periods.
- Continue to provide ranger assistance to ensure disabled access to the homestead precinct, Beach Picnic Area and the Tower is maintained.

4.1.3 Parkland's Character

- Work with the City of Wyndham and the Department of Sustainability & Environment to ensure effective Parks Victoria input into future residential development proposals to minimise the impact of urban encroachment on adjoining land and retain the parklands sense of remoteness and rural character
- Liaise with local community groups and local residents to enhance community understanding of the role and character of the parklands and encourage community ownership.

4.1.4 Natural Environment

- Utilise Parks Victoria's Conservation Objectives and Environmental Management Framework to provide a formula for the maintenance and enhancement of natural values. The conservation objectives prioritise actions such as:
 - Controlling pest plant and animal control programs;
 - Targeted management of significant flora and fauna species and vegetation communities, including research and monitoring;
 - Bird monitoring and habitat programs; and
 - Mapping the extent and quality of vegetation communities and habitat condition.
- Work with developers and local government to encourage restrictions on

domestic animals on land abutting the parklands.

- Work with Council and the developers to purchase 29 ha of saltmarsh on adjoining land for inclusion into the parklands for conservation purposes, through the Conservation Land Purchase Program.
- Work with other habitat managers to achieve Ramsar site plan goals.
- Support the Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team in considering the RAAF Lake as a release site for the species.

4.1.5 Cultural Heritage

- Ensure management actions are undertaken in accordance with Parks Victoria's Indigenous Heritage Guidelines and legislative requirements.
- Continue to work with the local Indigenous groups to ensure the protection of cultural heritage sites.
- Work with the local Indigenous groups to develop appropriate interpretative information to promote an understanding about the cultural heritage values within the parklands.
- Manage the homestead precinct in accordance with legislative and lease requirements and the parameters of the *Conservation Management Plan*.

4.1.6 Management Partnerships

- Work with Wyndham City Council and developers to define parameters for future rezoning of land to the north of Point Cook Homestead Road.
- Work with Melbourne Water to manage stormwater and drainage on urban development adjoining the park.
- Encourage lower density housing on land to the north of Point Cook Homestead Road and work with Wyndham City Council to encourage development that incorporates appropriate buffers and design controls.
- Liaise with the developers to encourage the dissemination of information on the parklands environmental values as part of any promotional material.
- Work with Conservation Volunteers Australia, Birds Australia, the Victorian Wader Studies Group, the Friends of

Williamstown Wetlands and the Department of Sustainability & Environment to carry out bird monitoring programs in Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

- Investigate developing Point Cook Coastal Park as a destination for school groups for marine education and interpretation given its close proximity to Melbourne.
- Continue to work with the Migrant Resource Centre and migrant groups to undertake planting and conservation programs to raise awareness of the natural and coastal values.
- Continue to work with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Department of Sustainability & Environment to encourage appropriate fire management practices within the parklands.
- Support the establishment of a friends groups to undertake conservation work and enhance community involvement in management of the parklands.
- Continue to support the Point Cook/Cheetham Wetlands Advisory Committee to provide support in the implementation of this plan.
- Liaise with the Department of Sustainability & Environment and Hobsons Bay City Council to resolve management responsibilities for the Crown land to the north of Cheetham Wetlands and implement a practical management solution complementary to Cheetham Wetlands.
- Liaise with the utility companies regarding the compatibility of communication towers with park management activities and values.

4.2 Management Zone Actions

4.2.1 Recreation

Purpose

Provision of a wide range of passive recreation opportunities catering for a large number of visitors in a pleasant, semi-natural or developed parkland setting.

Description

The Recreation Zone includes the major visitor nodes within the parklands, which provide a

range of passive recreational opportunities and cater for a large number of visitors. It includes the Beach Picnic Area, the homestead precinct and the RAAF Lake car park.

Role

- To provide attractive settings and appropriate amenities to enable visitors to enjoy the natural setting and engage in passive recreation activities.
- To provide open areas and well serviced visitor nodes catering for individuals and large groups.
- To provide opportunities for social interaction and physical well being in a natural coastal setting.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include picnicking and BBQs, group socialising, occasional events, education and interpretation, playing, swimming and water play, informal games, walking, jogging, cycling and fitness.

Actions

- Develop a replacement program for visitor facilities in line with Parks Victoria's Level of Service framework.
- Upgrade visitor facilities and replace play equipment at the Beach Picnic Area to cater for high visitation levels and future recreational needs.
- Electrify the BBQ's and refurbish the toilet block once power to the Beach Picnic Area has been established.
- Provide appropriate shade relief at the Beach Picnic Area, through planting and pruning or shade shelters.
- Enhance the Interpretation Facility and expand educational programs to cater for larger groups.
- Retain existing beach access points and expand the internal trail network to facilitate improved access to the coastal areas.
- Undertake detailed planning to determine the most appropriate location for toilet facilities at the homestead precinct.
- Ensure any future carparking at the homestead precinct is provided at the staging area and vehicular access within the precinct is limited.

- Ensure that any new facilities or services are consistent with the purpose of the land reservation, complement the role of the parklands, provide a public benefit and facilitate enjoyment of the park environment.
- Liaise with Council to encourage the upgrade of Homestead Road to improve visitor access to the homestead precinct and enhance its role as a major destination within the parklands.
- Investigate developing a pedestrian trail around the duck pond in the homestead precinct.
- Promote the Tower and its messages of migration and reconciliation as a destination.
- Retain and promote the birdhide at Spectacle Lake for passive birdwatching and nature appreciation.

4.2.2 Conservation and Recreation

Purpose

Protection, maintenance and enhancement of areas with environmental and cultural heritage values while providing appropriate low intensity passive recreation opportunities.

Description

The Conservation and Recreation Zone includes the existing Bay Trail section (Stage 1) within the parklands and the proposed future trail alignments (Stages 2 and 3). It includes a 50 m buffer area around Spectacle Lake, the foreshore area between the homestead precinct and the Beach Picnic Area and Community Planting paddock to the west of Spectacle Lake.

The zone also provides an area either side of the existing Beach Picnic Area and the land to the north of the homestead precinct to investigate the provision of future visitor facilities to meet future park needs.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include walking, jogging, cycling, nature appreciation and interpretation, socialising and bird watching.

Role

To protect and manage significant flora and fauna habitat, while providing visitors with opportunities to enjoy the natural values.

- To provide a natural setting for visitors to recreate in and enhance their understanding of the environment.
- To enhance pedestrian and cycle trail linkages within the parklands.
- To ensure future recreational needs are catered for and appropriate facilities are provided.

Actions

- Construct Stage 2 of the Bay Trail, linking the Beach Picnic Area to the staging area, and investigate developing a rest area along the foreshore to enjoy views over the bay.
- Develop the 18 hectare area to the west of Spectacle Lake as a focus for community plantings and investigate allowing dog access in this area to meet future demand.
- Investigate developing a designated, low impact trail around Spectacle Lake to enhance the visitor experience and formalise access, without compromising the conservation values
- Investigate developing a pedestrian trail around the northern section of the RAAF Lake to the Beach Picnic Area.
- Investigate the provision of additional visitor facilities to meet future visitation and recreational needs.

4.2.3 Conservation and Recreation (Marine)

A detailed management plan for Point Cooke Marine Sanctuary will be developed in 2005-2006. The zone, role and actions identified in this Future Directions Plan will not pre-empt the detailed planning process being undertaken for the Marine Sanctuary, but are intended to provide input into the process.

Purpose

Protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural areas with significant habitat and marine values.

Description

The Conservation and Recreation (Marine) Zone incorporates the Point Cooke Marine

Sanctuary, including the area that was formerly reserved as the Point Cook Fisheries Reserve.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include swimming, snorkelling, education, nature appreciation and interpretation, and bird watching.

Role

- To promote appropriate recreational use of the sanctuary and promote an understanding of the marine values.
- To protect and enhance the marine values.

Actions

- Promote the interpretation and education role of the marine sanctuary for school groups.
- Investigate options for the provision of educational and interpretation programs for marine and conservation programs by a service provider.
- Encourage appropriate recreational use, such as snorkelling.
- Ensure community representation and involvement in the management planning process for the marine sanctuary.
- Ensure the management planning process addresses issues such as jetty access to the homestead precinct and the development of an underwater trail.
- Continue to produce multi-lingual Park Notes to ensure the parklands are managed for inclusive use and the community understands the parklands values.
- Work with Fisheries Victoria and angling and fishing clubs to promote appropriate use and behaviour within the marine sanctuary.
- Work with community groups to develop targeted programs to minimise poaching.
- Ensure there is adequate signage to define the marine sanctuary boundaries.
- Develop conservation programs to encourage community involvement.

4.2.4 Natural Values Conservation

Purpose

Protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural areas with significant habitat and environmental values.

Description

The Natural Values Conservation Zone includes Cheetham Wetlands and Lignum Lakes. It also includes the land surrounding Spectacle Lake and the land adjoining the RAAF Lake, within the parklands boundary.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include walking, bird watching, nature appreciation, solitude and interpretation.

Role

- To protect and enhance the significant habitat and wildlife values of Cheetham Wetlands in accordance with international agreements (JAMBA, CAMBA, Bonn and Ramsar).
- To promote enjoyment and appreciation of the conservation values where appropriate.
- To maintain appropriate water regimes and water flow.
- To protect significant vegetation communities and habitat for species of international, national, state and regional significance.

Actions

- Undertake planning to determine the preferred trail alignment for Stage 3 of the Bay Trail and investigate the need for a crossing over Skeleton Creek.
- Continue to provide effective Parks Victoria input into the Wyndham Growth Area Review being led by the Department of Sustainability & Environment.
- Work with Wyndham City Council and developers to ensure urban development adjoining the parklands has minimal impact on the wetland values and birdlife.
- Maintain the hydrological system within Cheetham Wetlands and install additional pumping infrastructure to increase water quantity to ensure the wetlands values are maintained.
- Work with Sanctuary Lakes to implement the Section 173 requirements under the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*, in relation to the moat, access and fencing.
- Ensure the parcel of land to the north of Point Cook Homestead Road is integrated into the parklands and its catchment role

for Spectacle Lake is not impacted by urban development.

- Ensure the significant vegetation communities and habitat sites are protected and recreational activities are compatible.
- Encourage visitors using the trail from Lignum Lakes to the Tower keep to the designated trail through appropriate signage and information.
- Investigate allowing pedestrian access on a shortened wetland trail from the Tower to provide visitors with a wetland experience and develop appropriate signage to protect and interpret the values.
- Investigate tours of the wetlands being run by a service provider in conjunction with the Western Treatment Plant and other key sites.
- Work with Hobsons Bay City Council to review dog management and access arrangements along Skeleton Creek and Laverton Creek.
- Replace the management bridge from Pumphouse No. 1 across Skeleton Creek.

4.2.5 Non-Indigenous Heritage

Purpose

Protection, maintenance and enhancement of areas or adaptive use of properties with significant cultural heritage values.

Description

The Non-Indigenous Heritage Zone applies to Point Cook homestead buildings and curtilage.

Role

- To recognise and protect historically significant buildings and plantings.
- To promote the homestead precinct as a destination for visitors to enjoy and appreciate its cultural significance and role in the regional context.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include walking, jogging, cycling, fitness, education, appreciating views and cultural heritage values, interpretation, solitude, tourism, dining and small group picnics.

Actions

- Work with the lessees of Point Cook homestead to improve management of the heritage assets in accordance with legislative and lease requirements.
- Work with lessees of the homestead precinct to ensure any development is consistent with the *Conservation Management Plan*.
- Undertake tree risk works and ensure the lessees progress implementation of the Maintenance Plan.
- Ensure that any new facilities or services are consistent with the purpose of the land reservation, complement the role of the parklands, provide a public benefit and facilitate enjoyment of the park environment.
- Liaise with the lessees to ensure public access to the homestead, in accordance with the lease requirements.
- Promote and encourage improved historical linkages to Werribee Park, building on the Chirnside association.

Work with local government and tourism groups to promote the homestead precinct as a visitor destination.

Work with the lessees to develop appropriate interpretative material.

Review the Vines & Lane Report (1991), *Worth its Salt* on the former Cheetham Wetlands area and determine how the cultural heritage values can be interpreted as part of the parklands.

4.2.6 Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Purpose

Protection and maintenance of natural areas with significant indigenous cultural heritage values.

Description

The Indigenous Cultural Heritage Zone includes the areas of high archaeological sensitivity to the north of the homestead, the coastal dune between the Beach Picnic Area and the homestead precinct and to the west of the Beach Picnic Area. The indicative areas of concentration of these sites are mapped but the exact location of individual sites and artefacts are not revealed publicly to ensure their protection.

The types of recreation activities that may be appropriate for this zone include walking, bird watching, nature or cultural heritage appreciation, solitude and interpretation.

Role

- To recognise and protect archaeologically sensitive areas and cultural heritage sites.
- To encourage appreciation and understanding of the cultural heritage values.

Actions

- Continue to work with the local Indigenous groups to interpret and protect the cultural heritage values.
- Ensure park development is undertaken in accordance with Parks Victoria's Indigenous Heritage Guidelines and legislative requirements.

4.2.7 Special Use Zone A (Park Management)

Purpose

Parks Victoria buildings, offices and depots associated with the management of the Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands.

Description

The Special Use zone includes the District Park Office and depot for park management uses.

Role

- To provide administration space to facilitate Parks Victoria management.
- To provide a range of community facilities to support environmental management and fire protection.

Actions

- Maintain the zone as the focus for park management within the parklands.
- Continue to provide meeting and administrative space for contractors and community and volunteer groups.
- Maintain the depot as a site for fire management, in partnership with the CFA.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan provides the framework for management of the Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands over the next 10 to 15 years. Implementation of the actions within this Future Directions Plan will be dependent on increasing population and visitor demand, funding and agreement with other agencies.

5.1 Priorities and Staging

A number of key issues need to be addressed if the vision for Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands is to be realised. These issues are:

- Provision of linkages within the parklands and to adjoining open space and residential areas.
- The potential impact of urban encroachment on the parklands values and sense of remoteness.
- Protection and promotion of environmental and cultural heritage values.
- Promoting opportunities to enhance community involvement and creating a sense of ownership.
- Developing cooperative management approaches with other land managers.

The following actions are a priority, and envisioned to be a key focus over the next five years. The implementation of these priority actions, however, will depend upon available funding and partnerships with other agencies, landowners and the community.

- Construct Stage 2 of the Bay Trail and undertake planning for Stage 3 of the trail adjacent to Cheetham Wetlands.
- Expand the internal trail network within Point Cook Coastal Park at Spectacle Lake, the RAAF Lake and the Duck Pond.
- Work with key agencies and landowners to minimise the impacts of urban development on the parks values, through appropriate rezoning, development parameters and planning controls.
- Work with Hobsons Bay City Council to encourage coordinated management of open space and promote joint signage and educational programs.

- Support bird monitoring programs being undertaken by volunteer organisations within the park.
- Develop Point Cook Coastal Park as a destination for school groups for marine education and interpretation.
- Encourage community involvement in the park through the establishment of a friends group and working with migrant groups.
- Undertake planning and seek funding for toilet facilities at the homestead precinct.
- Continue to liaise with the Commonwealth and relevant State agencies regarding the transfer of the RAAF Lake and coastal strip component of the RAAF site.
- Replace the management bridge from Pumphouse No. 1 across Skeleton Creek.
- Work with lessees of the homestead precinct to ensure any development is in accordance with the *Conservation Management Plan*.
- Replace the playground equipment at the Beach Picnic Area.
- Liaise with the Department of Sustainability & Environment and Hobsons Bay City Council to resolve management responsibilities for the Crown land to the north of Cheetham Wetlands and implement a practical management solution complementary to Cheetham Wetlands.

5.2 Management Resources

The current status of land ownership and management of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands means that Parks Victoria is the lead agency responsible for land based management. There are opportunities, however for collaborative management and joint projects with other land managers.

The development of partnerships with other land managers and volunteer organisations are an important component of park management. The resourcing and implementation of some actions in this plan will require collaborative partnerships with other management agencies, such as adjoining landowners, developers and

community groups. Avenues of funding or assistance to achieve actions in this plan may include:

- Individual management agency funding;
- State and Federal Landcare and Heritage grants;
- Environmental and community grant programs;
- Developer contributions;
- Sport and Recreation Funding;
- Volunteer and community involvement;
- Private sector/ homestead lessees; or
- Corporate partnerships.

5.3 Performance Measures

There is some environmental, cultural heritage and recreation data available for Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. There is a need, however, to establish indicators, targets and initiate data collection to establish base levels against which performances can be measured in the future. The following provide some criteria to measure performance by:

- Implementation of priority actions in this Future Directions Plan;
- Park awareness levels;
- Visitation numbers;
- Visitor satisfaction levels;
- Bird numbers;
- Environmental performance measures that monitor vegetation and habitat condition against conservation objectives; and
- Cultural values performance measures that monitor the degree to which the values of the homestead are retained, comprising:
 - the precinct's historic character and integrity;
 - the rural and remote character of the precinct's approach and broader setting; and
 - the physical condition of the precinct's historic buildings, landscape and vegetation.

5.4 Monitoring and Review

Ongoing monitoring and review of this plan is required to ensure that strategic directions and actions remain relevant, and meet the management objectives of the parklands and its visitors.

To ensure the continuing relevance of this Future Directions Plan assessment of outcomes against resourcing, work priorities and actions will be required.

The dynamic nature of Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands will necessitate a review of this Future Directions Plan within 10 to 15 years. An internal review of implementation of actions and priorities within this Future Directions Plan will be undertaken every two to three years.

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APPENDICES

TABLE 1: Species List

TABLE 2: Recreation opportunities

MAP 1: Location Plan

MAP 2: Visitor Experience

MAP 3: Environmental Values

MAP 4: Cultural Heritage Values

MAP 5: Land Status

MAP 6: Management Zones

TABLE 1: SPECIES LIST**Flora Species**

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status	State Significance
<i>Cullen tenax</i>	Tough Scurf-pea	L	e
<i>Diuris</i> sp. aff. <i>lanceolata</i> (Laverton)	Small Golden Moths	L	e
<i>Prasophyllum suaveolens</i>	Fragrant Leek-orchid	L	e
<i>Rutidosis leptorhynchoides</i>	Button Wrinklewort	L	e
<i>Senecio macrocarpus</i>	Large-fruit Fireweed	L	e
<i>Comesperma polygaloides</i>	Small Milkwort	L	v
<i>Diuris palustris</i>	Swamp Diuris	L	v
<i>Thesium australe</i>	Austral Toad-flax	L	v
<i>Helichrysum</i> aff. <i>rutidolepis</i> (Lowland Swamps)	Pale Swamp Everlasting		v
<i>Diuris</i> X <i>fastidiosa</i>	Proud Diuris		e
<i>Pimelea spinescens</i> ssp. <i>spinescens</i>	Spiny Rice-flower		e
<i>Podolepis</i> sp. 1	Basalt Podolepis		e
<i>Alternanthera</i> sp. 1 (Plains)	Plains Joyweed		k
<i>Amphibolis antarctica</i>	Sea Nymph		k
<i>Atriplex australasica</i>	Native Orache		k
<i>Austrodanthonia bipartita</i> s.s.	Leafy Wallaby-grass		k
<i>Cuscuta tasmanica</i>	Golden Dodder		k
<i>Desmodium varians</i>	Slender Tick-trefoil		k
<i>Isolepis victoriensis</i>	Victorian Club-sedge		k
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i> (perennial variety)	Wetland Blown-grass		k
<i>Lepidium pseudohyssopifolium</i>	Native Peppergrass		k
<i>Panicum decompositum</i>	Australian Millet		k
<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. aff. <i>ixioides</i> (French Island)	French Island Sun-orchid		k
<i>Thelymitra</i> sp. aff. <i>pauciflora</i> (Laverton)	Short Sun-orchid		k
<i>Acacia retinodes</i> var. <i>uncifolia</i>	Coast Wirilda		r
<i>Atriplex paludosa</i> ssp. <i>paludosa</i>	Marsh Saltbush		r
<i>Austrostipa gibbosa</i>	Spurred Spear-grass		r
<i>Austrostipa setacea</i>	Corkscrew Spear-grass		r
<i>Avicennia marina</i> ssp. <i>australasica</i>	White Mangrove		r
<i>Juncus revolutus</i>	Creeping Rush		r
<i>Lawrenca spicata</i>	Salt Lawrenca		r
<i>Salsola tragus</i> ssp. <i>pontica</i>	Coast Saltwort		r
<i>Triglochin minutissimum</i>	Tiny Arrowgrass		r
<i>Triglochin mucronatum</i>	Prickly Arrowgrass		r

Key:

e - Endangered in Victoria

v - Vulnerable in Victoria

k - Species poorly known, suspected to fit into a VROT category

r - rare in Victoria

Fauna Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	FFG Status	State Significance
<i>Neophema chrysogaster</i>	Orange-bellied Parrot	L	CEn
<i>Delma impar</i>	Striped Legless Lizard	L	End
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	L	End
<i>Oxyura australis</i>	Blue-billed Duck	L	End
<i>Sterna nereis</i>	Fairy Tern	L	End
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Terek Sandpiper		End
<i>Falco subniger</i>	Black Falcon		Vul
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Black-tailed Godwit		Vul
<i>Neophema elegans</i>	Elegant Parrot		Vul
<i>Platalea regia</i>	Royal Spoonbill		Vul
<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	Baillon's Crake	L	Vul
<i>Rallus pectoralis</i>	Lewin's Rail	L	Vul
<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail	L	Vul
<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Little Tern	L	Vul
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Wood Sandpiper		Vul
<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	Whiskered Tern		LR
<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	White-winged Black Tern		LR
<i>Circus assimilis</i>	Spotted Harrier		LR
<i>Coturnix ypsilophora</i>	Brown Quail		LR
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's Snipe		LR
<i>Haematopus fuliginosus</i>	Sooty Oystercatcher		LR
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull		LR
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Eastern Curlew		LR
<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	Nankeen Night Heron		LR
<i>Phalacrocorax fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Cormorant		LR
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied Cormorant		LR
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Glossy Ibis		LR
<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific Golden Plover		LR
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Grey Plover		LR
<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	L	LR
<i>Stiltia isabella</i>	Australian Pratincole		LR
<i>Turnix velox</i>	Little Button-quail		LR
<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i> SCR	Spotted Marsh Frog SCR		Ssp

Key:

Cen - Critically Endangered

Cmp - Comprising Several Taxa

End - Endangered

LR - Low Risk Near Threatened

Ssp - Subspecies

Vul -Vulnerable

Source: Department of Sustainability and Environment 2003, *Atlas of Victorian Wildlife*

TABLE 2

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Activity	NATURAL VALUES CONSERVATION	INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE	CONSERVATION & RECREATION	CONSERVATION & RECREATION (Marine)	RECREATION	NON-INDIGENOUS HERITAGE	SPECIAL USE ZONE A (Park Management)
	630.42 Ha	19.09 Ha	168.43 Ha	290.00 Ha	39.20	1.70	3.66
	54.70% of parkland	1.66 % of parkland	14.61% of parkland	25.16% of parkland	3.40% of parkland	0.15% of parkland	0.32% of parkland
Walking*	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	○
Dog Walking*	✘	✘	-	-	-	-	-
Bicycle riding*	✓	○	✓	○	✓	-	○
Picnicking*	✓	○	✓	○	✓	✓	○
Barbecuing	✘	○	-	○	✓	-	○
Playing (playground)	✘	○	-	○	✓	-	○
Playing (ball games, beach games)*	✓	○	✓	✓	✓	✓	○
Scenic Viewing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○
Birdwatching & Nature Study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○
Heritage Study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	○
Fishing	○	○	○	✘	✓	○	○
Swimming	○	○	○	✓	✓	○	○
Snorkelling/Diving	○	○	○	✓	✓	○	○
Removal of fish, crustaceans, sea plants, seabed or artefacts below the high water mark	○	○	○	✘	○	○	○
Vessel sewerage disposal	○	○	○	✘	✘	○	○

- ✓ - activity allowed within management zone
- - activity possible, but not yet provided for within management zone
- - activity not possible within management zone
- ✘ - activity prohibited
- * - prohibited in Cheetham Wetlands

The above table lists the broad types of activities that are appropriate in Point Cook Coastal Park and Cheetham Wetlands. In some areas the services and facilities to support activities are not currently available. Activities will only be permitted after assessment against management objectives. For the exact locations of current activities please refer to park signage, information brochures and staff.

This table needs to be read in conjunction with the description, purpose and role of individual Management Zones.

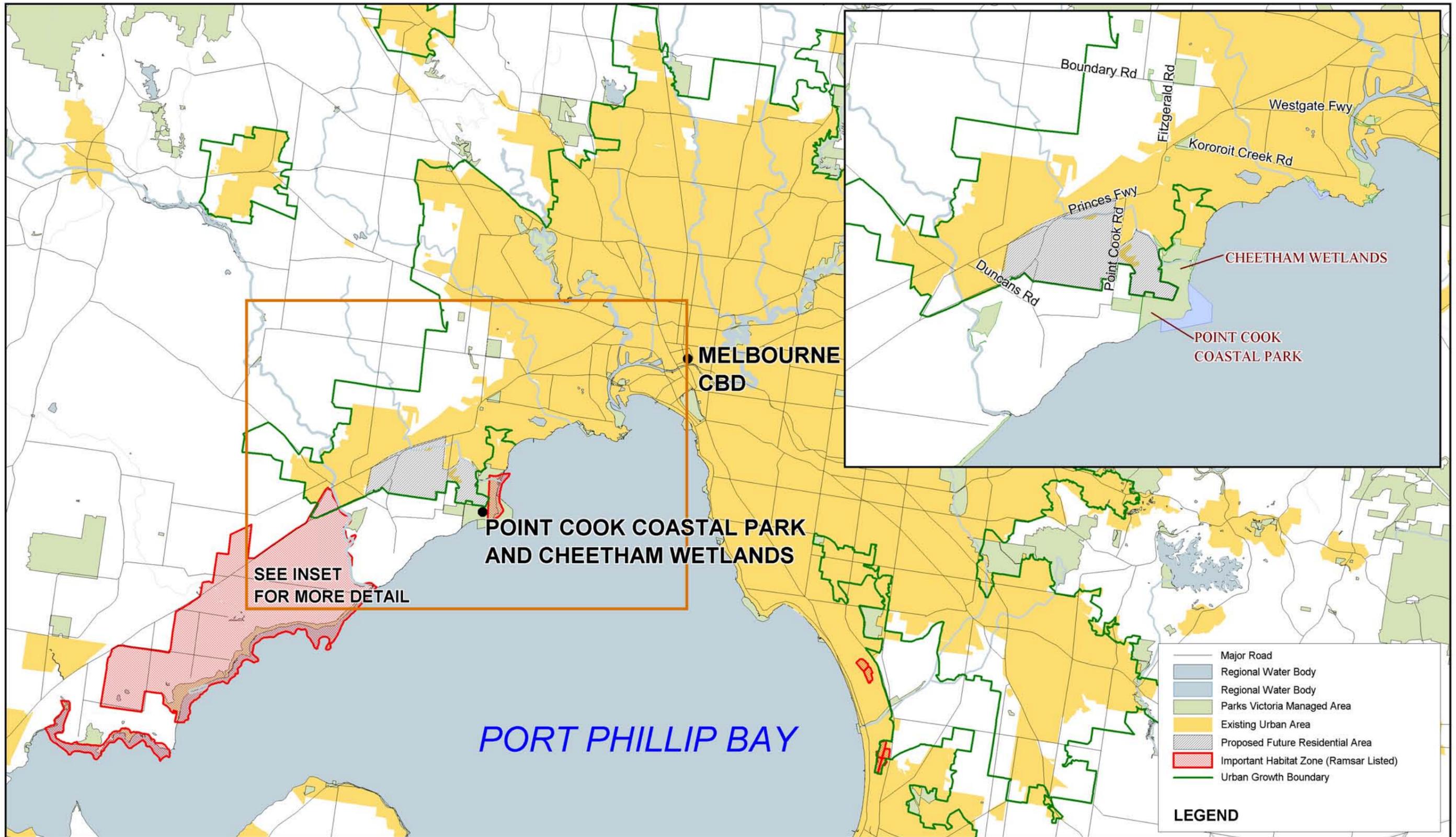


For more information contact the **Parks Victoria Information Centre** on **13 1963**, or visit www.parkweb.vic.gov.au



*Healthy Parks
Healthy People*





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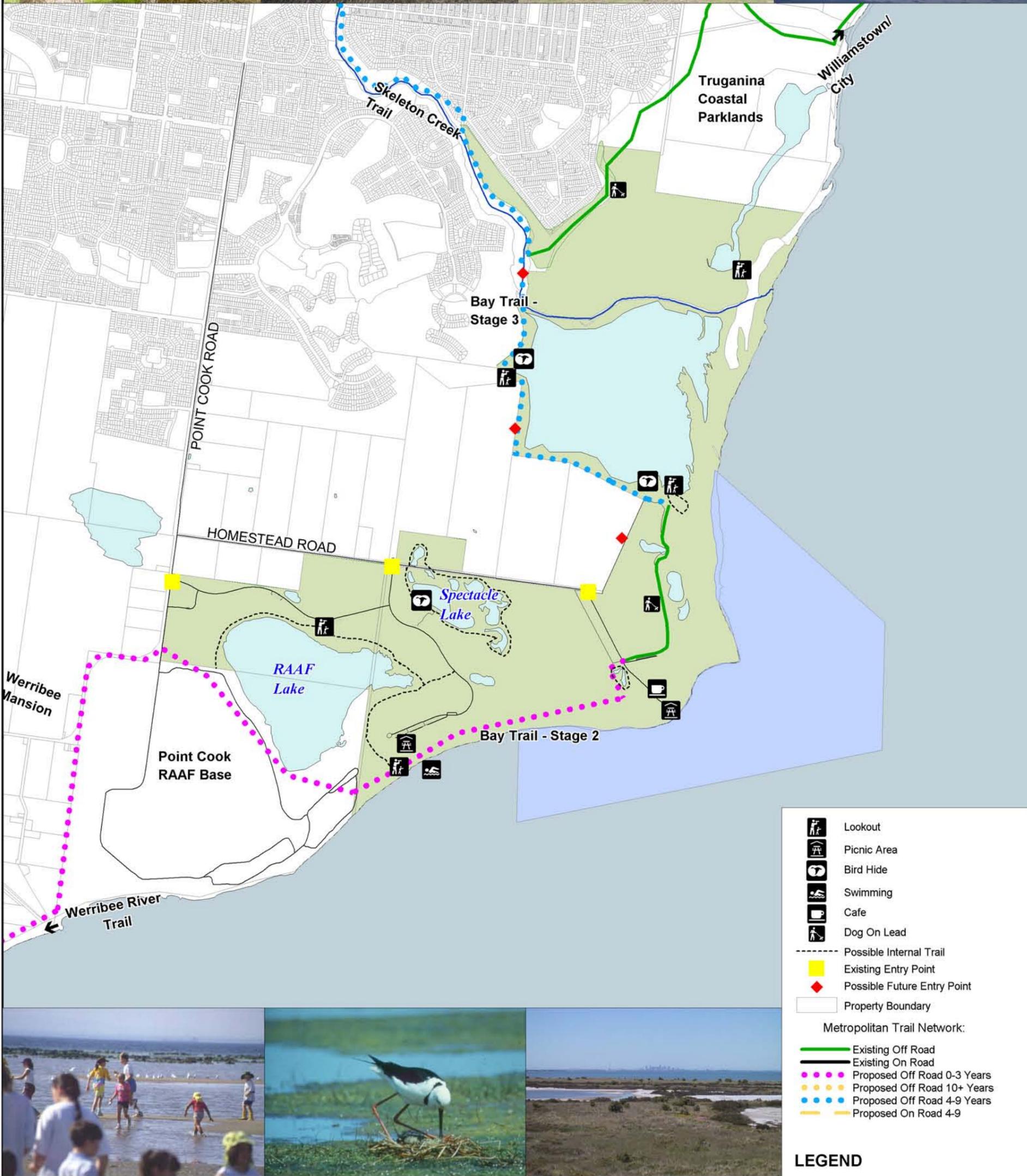
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Map 1 - Location Plan

Point Cook Coastal Park and
Cheetham Wetlands

Map 1 of 6





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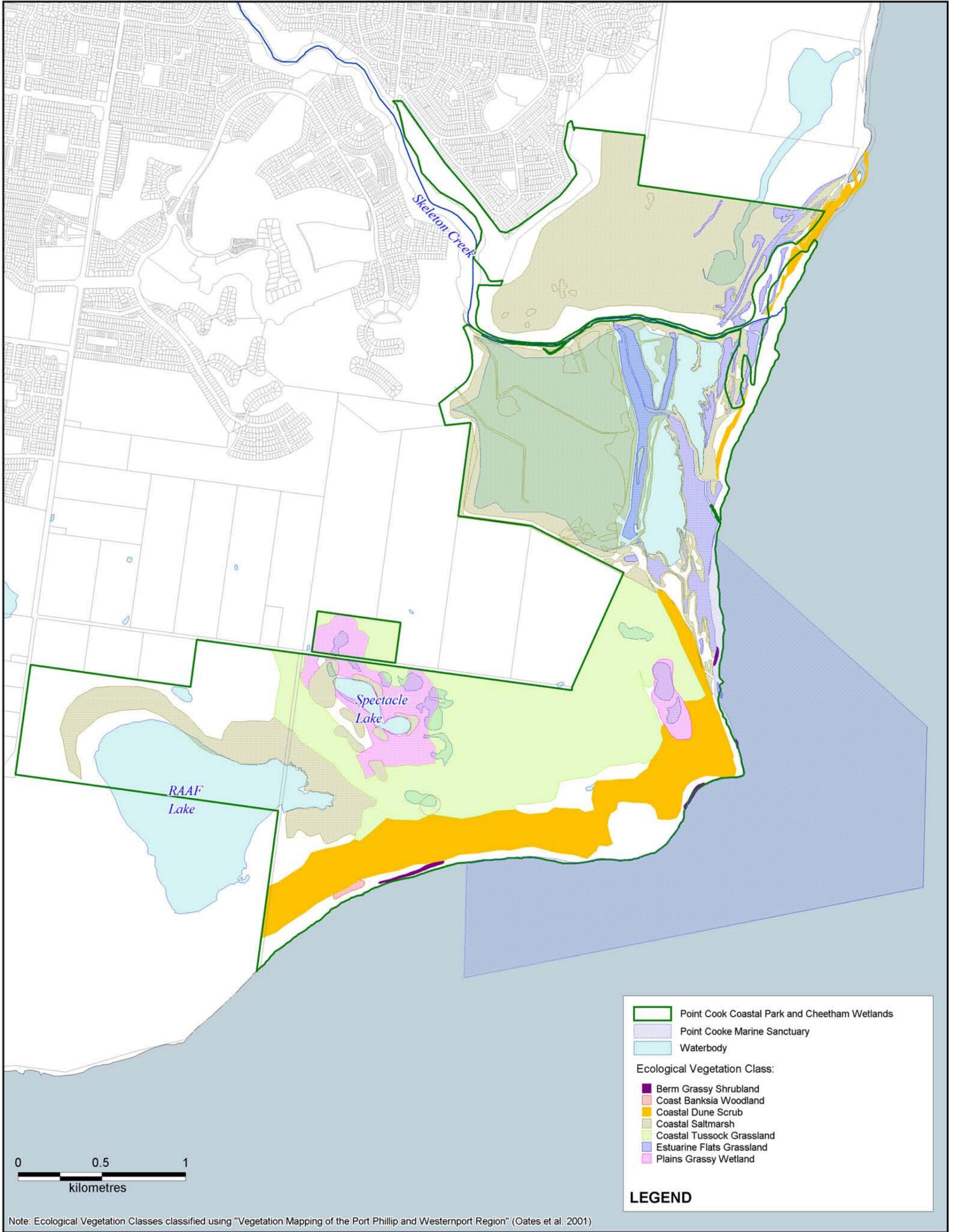
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Map 2 - Visitor Experience Map

Shared Use Trails, Access And Recreation

Map 2 of 6





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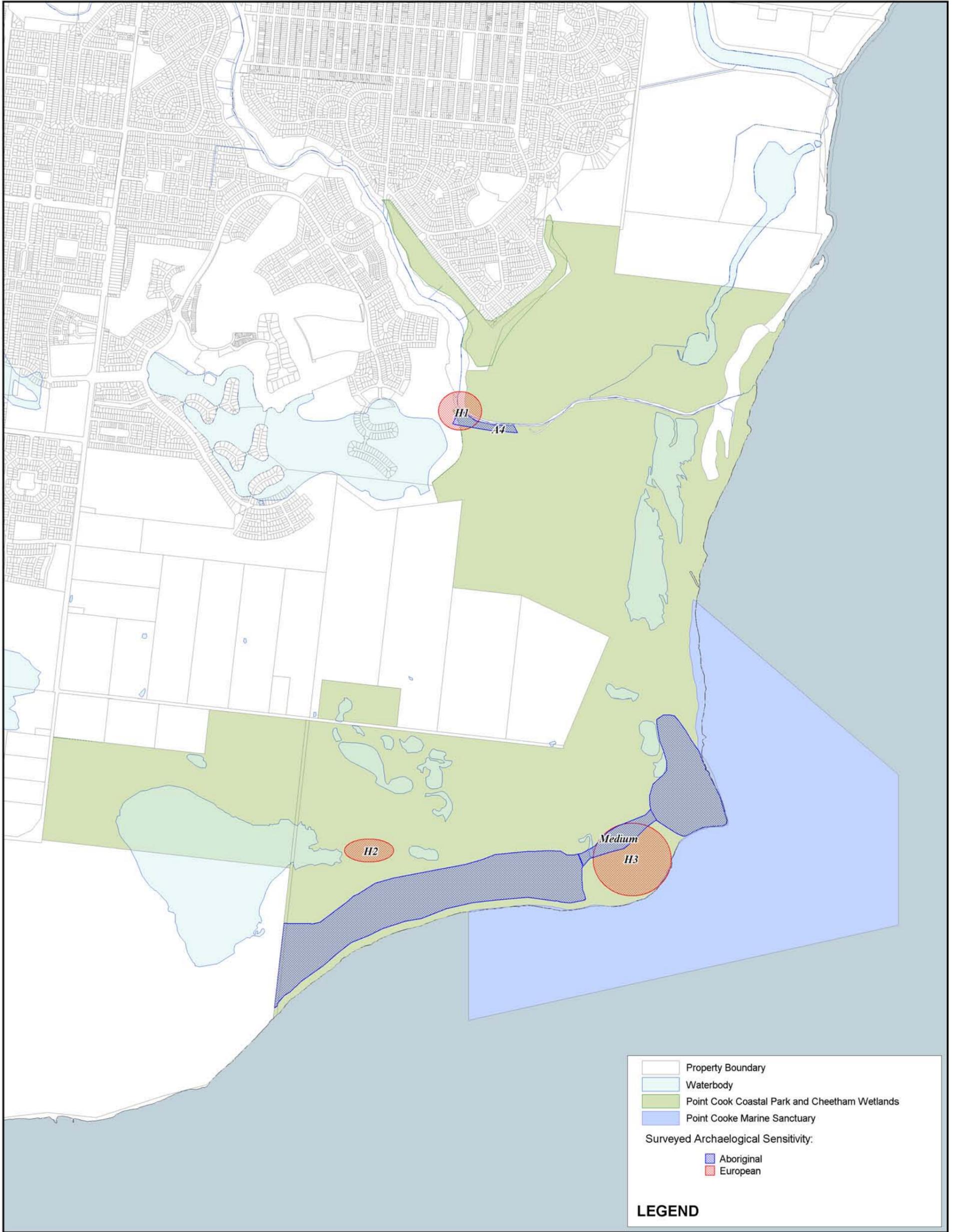
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Map 3 - Environmental Values

Ecological Vegetation Classes

Map 3 of 6





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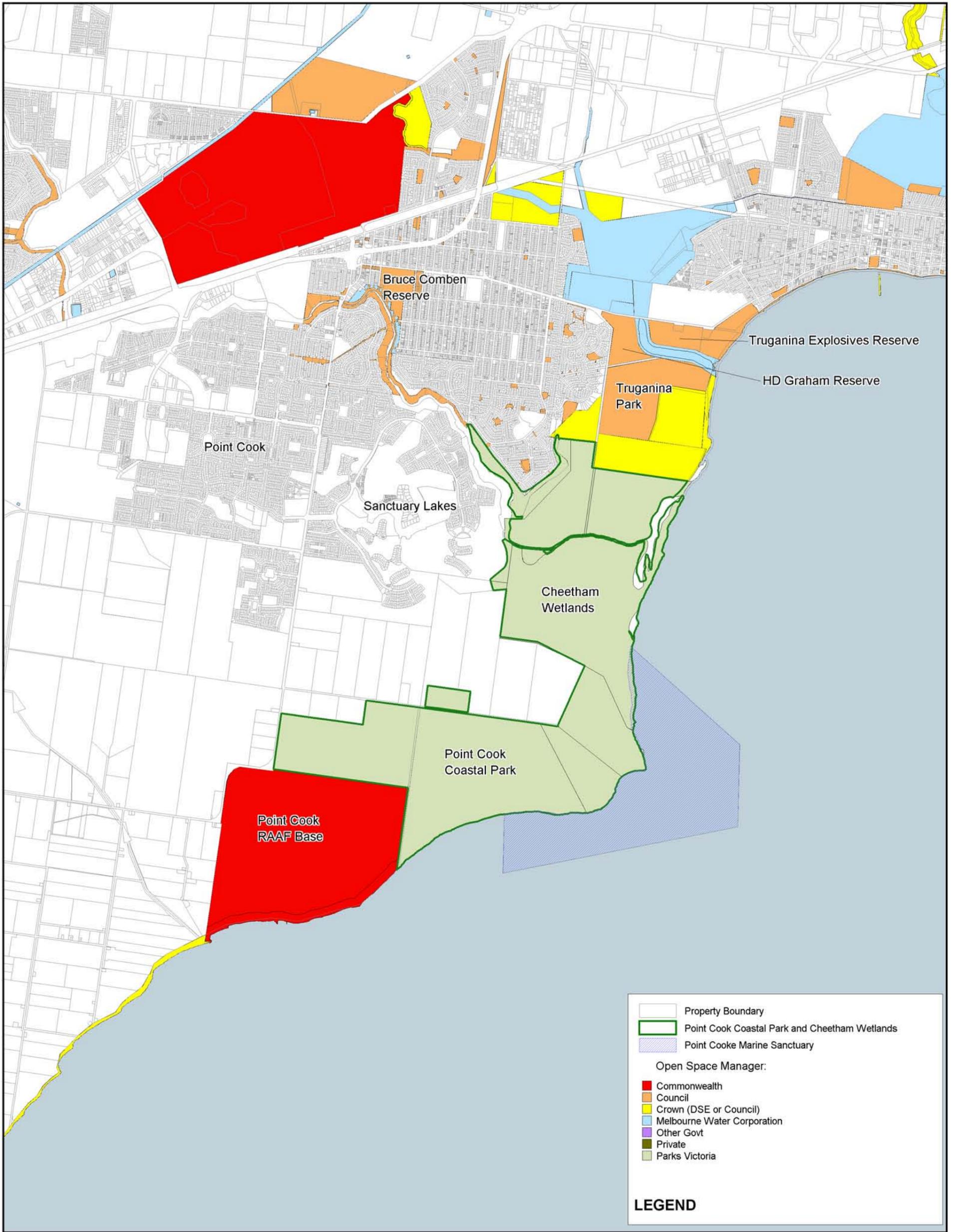
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Map 4 - Cultural Heritage Values Indigenous And European Heritage Sites

Map 4 of 6





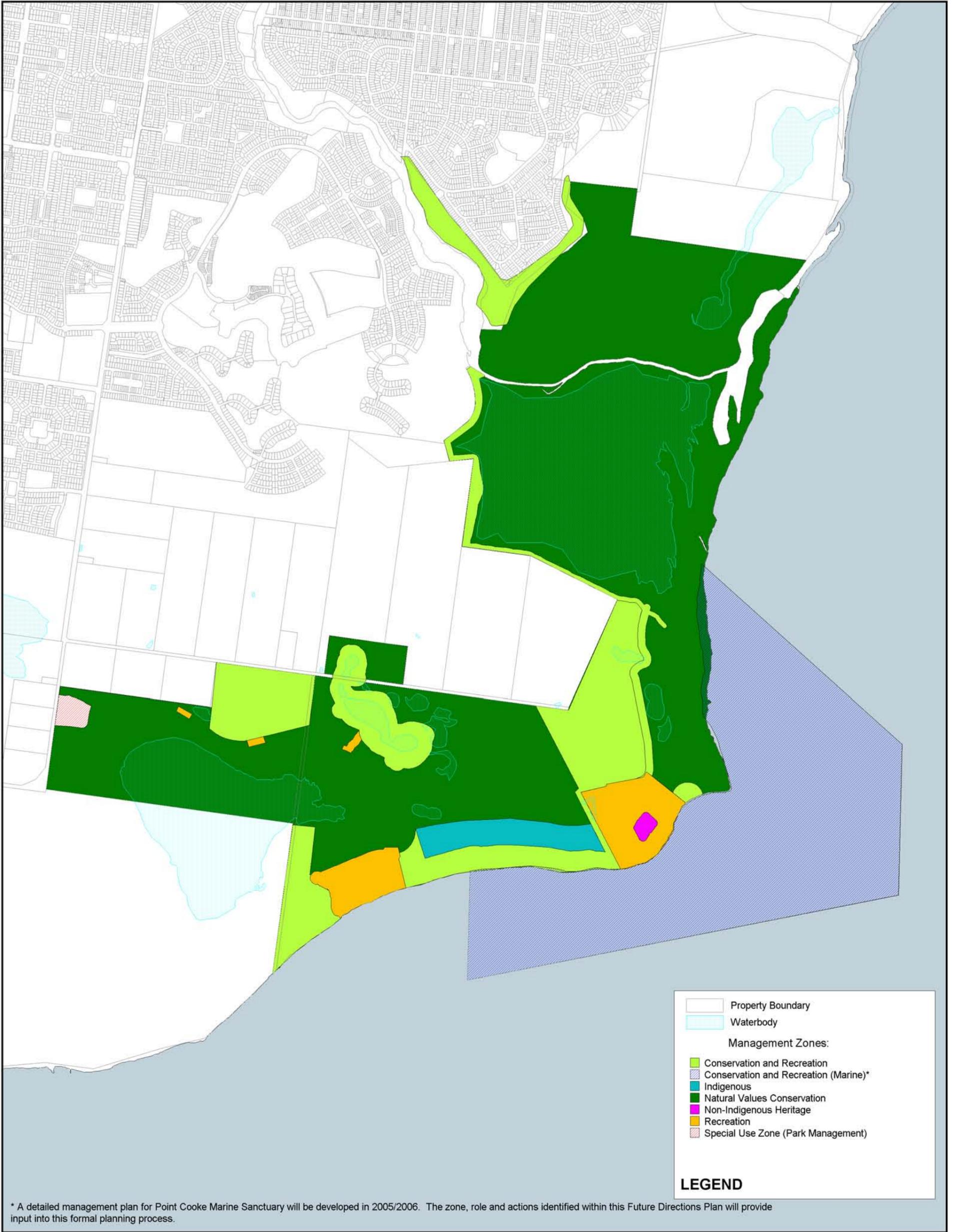
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Map 5 - Land Status Land Management Responsibility

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Map 6 - Management Zones

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