



Corinella Residents and Ratepayers Association Inc.

September, 25th 2020

Brief to be Answered:

Inquiry into Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations.

The Committee is interested in the views and insights of stakeholders on any aspect of the Terms of Reference, including the following issues:

- the benefits of accessing and using different types of environmental infrastructure*
- the impact of population growth in Melbourne and regional centres on the provision and preservation of environmental infrastructure*
- differences in the availability of environmental infrastructure between different suburbs and between different regional centres*
- the effectiveness of current legislation and planning provisions in securing environmental infrastructure*
- existing delays or obstacles to securing environmental infrastructure*
- the impact of COVID-19 on the importance, use and design of environmental infrastructure.*

Submission to the Inquiry into Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations.

Wayne Maschette, Vice President, CRRA



The committee of the Corinella Residents and Ratepayers Association requested members send in responses to the above brief. The responses were limited and no meeting discussion was engaged due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Most of the response statements remain unedited unless grammatical mistakes were found, or an assumed local knowledge required further explanation. I hold the responsibility for these interpretations.

Corinella is a small coastal town on Westernport of approximately 700 full-time residents. In non COVID-19 times this increases substantially over the holiday periods. It is approximately 115 Kms from Melbourne CBD and has increased interest as an ideal living place from young families. There is a childcare centre and a primary school located some 10 kms away. High schools are located in Wonthaggi and Newhaven.



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Comments 1:

We would like to request that the walking tracks be widened and resealed. After rain there are many areas that are under water and extremely muddy. Also, to keep 1.5m from other walkers is impossible in some areas of the track around Corinella.

Also, we have grave concerns if the old sporting ground was to be used by the public, especially a dog free area. This is the home for many different types of wildlife.

There are enough un-restrained dogs and dog attacks in Corinella without adding another area they can be unrestrained we see this as a potential issue. Would the dog free area be fenced? If not, this will cause numerous issues with people walking out to the point and around that area with their dogs on a lead.

There was talk a while back with bike/walking tracks linking Corinella to Grantville, is this proposal still likely to go ahead?

Comments No 2:

I would like CRRA to understand that this response is my own personal view of matters relating to the Environmental Infrastructure of Corinella and nearby areas. It is probable that these views and observations largely coincide with those expressed by other SCTA (Small Coastal Towns Alliance) members when viewed in the larger framework of Bass Coast. I will firstly address your suggested points.

1. Hughes Reserve. The reserve has had much attention already, especially over the last few years. I understand there is a Master Plan for the Hughes Reserve, which I have not seen but likely addresses the most obvious item to me and that is an upgrade to the toilet block and the provision of distributed electrical power, especially considering the Market attendances needs.
2. Rotunda Esplanade area. I have always felt that this area would benefit from sheltered BBQs and table areas. It has been my experience that rain often "spoils the parade".
3. Foreshore Reserve. For many of us, seating at intervals is a necessity rather than just a convenience. Becoming older has its drawbacks. Enjoying the beautiful scenery does the heart good. Moving along the walking track requires good sightlines to avoid accidental contacts with other users. These sightlines are usually good already as the track needs to be wide enough to cater for emergency and foreshore service vehicles. Sightlines are for the safety of visitors/users and not for the convenience of those who desire a water view from the kitchen window
4. We all understand the critical importance of protection the native grasses and native trees that hold the soil in place that keeps the whole foreshore from being eroded away by wind and rain. To that end, we need to protect these assets to the best of



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our abilities. Birdlife needs the higher branches habitat for protection and mammals need the ground covers and bushes for sustenance and hideaways. Our Foreshore Reserve provides a corridor for native wildlife to safely travel as needed. The Corinella Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management have done a remarkable job over the years and must be congratulated.

5. The old sporting oval is a much under used asset that might well benefit the community by structured facility and provide a good use for our younger residents and friends.
6. Interpretive signage would be useful for visitors. There are several sites where this would be appropriate.
7. Further afield, we should be trying for wildlife corridors to be retained, no matter the intended use of the old Holden Proving Ground.
8. Grantville foreshore erosion is an ongoing and serious problem. I wonder if using groynes, as was done for beaches on Port Phillip Bay, is a partial solution. This is for wiser professionals to examine.

Comments No 3:

My thoughts on the 4 areas CRRA committee presented to its members:

1. Hughes Reserve (playground, BBQ's , open space, tennis courts, cricket nets, skateboard area, toilets etc).

This area is the hub of the community and the asset will be greatly improved after the items on its management plan is completed.

2. Rotunda Esplanade Foreshore (BBQ's, picnic area, fishing car park, jetty, toilets, etc).

The tourist precinct for Corinella requires formal parking along the Esplanade to cope with the summer visitors.

3. Foreshore Walking track (seating, open space views, line of sight, access to the beach, access to the off-leash dog area, etc).

a. Track The walking track requires a surface upgrade in several areas.

b. Fencing To protect the community from the dangers of the eroding cliffs.

c. Vegetation is being removed at an alarming rate comprising the safety of the track users.

4. Old Sporting Ground (Increase in young families, organised sports facility, dog free run area, etc).



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It would be the local government responsibility to provide open space for recreational sporting activities – not appropriate for DELWP / foreshore reserve.

Off lead area's for dogs is always on the agenda for dog owners but not so much the rest of the community. This issue should be discussed with Bass Coast and through urban development make allowances within the planning of new housing developments for this infrastructure.

The old sporting oval. (Settlement Point area) I feel this could be encouraged as a small sanctuary.

This area is the important link of the coastal wildlife corridor from Coronet Bay to the Grantville bushland and should be preserved as a haven for wildlife.

The area requires historical interpretive signage to assist with the education of both the natural and cultural history of the area.

Currently the area is widely used by families for walking, cycling, and exploring nature with both stunning sceneries not only across Western Port but within the bushland itself.

At the moment it houses wonderful birdlife, echidnas, wombats and a large range of reptiles (some I don't want to meet) and other mammals. Wildflowers are slowly returning as is the quality of native grasses and other vegetation with the assistance weed eradication.

The Bass Coast is losing pockets of vegetation due to illegal removal which over time will impact hugely any wildlife corridors that are currently available. More work is required by all the relevant organisations to ensure this is neutralised with tougher laws regarding this issue.

The destruction of vegetation affects mental health and wellbeing of all the users of Bass Coast and especially the walking tracks around the waterline.

Comments No 4: Around Corinella:

1. There may be an opportunity to create an off-lead area in the green space of the Heritage Bay estate. The area on the Cuthbert St side of the Fig & Bay and about 40m from the restaurant down to Cuthbert St ~100m and from the edge of the foreshore area to the back of the housing blocks ~50m. This area is currently fenced along the rear of the housing blocks and if continued on the other 3 sides with self-closing gates would create a useful off lead area that is not tide dependent as is the current area. This area includes a retarding basin which would need a little extra protection.



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2. If any areas are opened up to development abutting the foreshore (eg on south side of Cuthbert St. all the way to Coronet Bay) there needs to be a wider foreshore reserve between the shore and private properties to allow for a sustainable foreshore environment for both fauna and flora. This should also apply to the wetlands around the Coronet Bay drain and retarding basin just north of Norsemans Rd. Note it is most important that this corridor is created well in advance of any subdivision or property sales so no purchaser is unaware of this requirement.
3. The coastal area surrounding Corinella will require some protection from rising sea levels and storm erosion. The cliff areas along the western side are continually eroding creating dangerous rock falls.
4. Some extra viewing points along the western side walking track would be useful particularly over headlands that create a view along the coast. One option is a canter lever platform near the end of Cuthbert St. or where the track is close to the cliff about halfway between Cuthbert St and O'Connor Rd. These would reduce the likelihood of people making short tracks through the vegetation to get coastal views. Another option would be a lookout tower overlooking the wetlands north of Norsemans Rd, and also provides a view along the coast to both Coronet Bay and Corinella. Perhaps similar to the one on South Gippsland Hwy at Koo Wee Rup.
5. I would like a squirts park considered in Hughes Reserve and/or shade sails over the playground to assist particularly young children at the park on ever increasing hot summer days.
6. Corinella is in need of completed footpaths facilitating residents, particularly older ones, walking to Hughes Reserve, the local shop and the rotunda/pier area on the foreshore without the need to walk on the roads. Some unpaved areas are quite uneven and very wet in winter.
7. I believe it is important to maintain the relatively development free area between Corinella and Coronet Bay, basically between Norsemans Rd. and Corinella/O'Connor rds. This is currently designated "Rural Activity" and should remain so. This facilitates agricultural activities with low levels of any form of housing, either temporary/holiday or permanent.
8. The proposed walking/bike track from Corinella out to the Bass Hwy would be a great advantage. Currently riding out of Corinella or Coronet Bay require using 100km/hr roads with no shoulder. This track could then eventually be linked up with the Nyora Wonthaggi Rail Trail.

The Wider Bass Coast area:

1. Protection of our very small remaining bush areas is imperative. The bush area of the previous Holden proving ground is one of the last remaining remnant vegetation areas in the area and must be protected. Other areas at risk of sand mining are the Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve, the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve and the Grantville Bushland Reserve. Some of the vegetation in these areas I am informed is between 400-600 years old. The concept of revegetating previously mined areas is appreciated but cannot replace such old growth species. How can an area designated as "Conservation Reserve" be open to sand mining? These bushland areas need to be large enough to be able to maintain diversity of fauna and flora and provides



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an opportunity to be in an area well separated from human habitation or activity. Vegetation corridors are also very important to assist with diversity and reduce inbreeding of species.

2. Broader coastal protection along the coast from Grantville to Lang Lang is needed. There is already private property too close to the coast and perhaps re-establishing the coastal mangroves along this coast is a first option for coastal protection.
3. Coastal erosion near Inverloch is also of concern and needs immediate mitigation. This coastal area from Inverloch to Cape Paterson has great opportunity for a coastal path albeit with some engineering challenges.
4. There is a walking track on Phillip Is. Between Berrys Beach and Pyramid Rock, which would be great to extend north east past the race track on to Smiths Beach or Sunderland Bay.
5. Another great walking track extension would be the George Bass track continued from Punch Bowl Rd. through to San Remo.

Comments No 5:

The benefits of accessing and using different types of environmental infrastructure need to be informed by the science of well-being and health and not simply personal opinion. The science is of particular value when confronted by the personal opinion based on the longevity of residence in an area. Population growth is a fact of life and the infrastructure must be put in place for people to enjoy the environmental, social, economic and health benefits. As such, the devastating bushfires of 2019 in Victoria (and many times previously) point to the cost to the community of human and wildlife deaths, infrastructure losses and the mental health issues which arise from such traumatic experiences. A number of international scientific studies will now be presented for information.

Europe is a highly developed cluster of high-income countries. After extensive research and analysis of existing environmental assessment tools, the BlueHealth researchers developed a novel tool to evaluate the social, physical or ecological characteristics of urban blue spaces. The outcome, BlueHealth Environmental Assessment Tool (BEAT), improves understanding of the factors that can maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of blue spaces. Including where people interact with the water directly (in, on or around) or indirectly (by viewing or sensing it). To improve usability, two versions of the tool have been created, one for landscape, planning and environmental management professionals, and one for community groups. Both versions are free to access online, enabling users to make simple, practical and comprehensive assessments of blue spaces both before and after design changes are made.

*BlueHealth: a study programme protocol for mapping and quantifying the potential benefits to public health and well-being from Europe's blue spaces. **J Grellier, MP White, M Albin, S Bell, LR Elliott, 2017***



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Introduction

Proximity and access to water have long been central to human culture and accordingly deliver countless societal benefits. Over 200 million people live on Europe's coastline, and aquatic environments are the top recreational destination in the region. In terms of public health, interactions with 'blue space' (eg, coasts, rivers, lakes) are often considered solely in terms of risk (eg, drowning, microbial pollution). Exposure to blue space can, however, promote health and well-being and prevent disease, although underlying mechanisms are poorly understood.

BlueHealth (www.bluehealth2020.eu) is the first study programme to explore systematically the benefits to human health and well-being associated with interacting with blue space across Europe.

- ▶ *BlueHealth uses a variety of methods drawn from several disciplines to examine possible complex mechanisms underlying relationships between blue spaces and public health.*
- ▶ *The project uses novel tools and methods to evaluate the changing characteristics and states of blue spaces associated with interventions made to urban infrastructure as well as with climate and other environmental change.*
- ▶ *Although BlueHealth is looking at some risks associated with blue spaces, the project is chiefly focused on benefits to health; findings will therefore need to be integrated with existing and ongoing research relating to risks in order to fully understand potential trade-offs.*
- ▶ *Although the breadth of approaches and methods used in BlueHealth in different geopolitical and demographic contexts ensures broad applicability of the findings in decision-making processes in Europe, it is uncertain how the project outputs might transfer to low- and middle-income countries.*

Another study has researched the aesthetic qualities of visual and non-visual aspects of blue spaces. Contrary to many government departments, local councils and some local community members responses that views in a Coastal town are not important, well researched and validated studies are available to show that the opposite is the case. The government department DEWLP has published on its website a series of Environmental Vegetation Classifications (EVC's) which are a baseline to which community foreshore management committees can refer to. These EVC's can be used to establish an evidenced based management plan based on a comparative analysis of the lifeforms predicted in the EVC and what the vegetation mix actually is. Unfortunately, some personality issues dominate in our town and there is a huge gap between the science and personal longevity assessments.



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A useful tool can be accessed in this study. It discusses the aspects of the aesthetics domain and engages assessment criteria to give an indication

The development of a tool for, assessing the environmental qualities of urban blue spaces.
 Himansu Sekhar Mishra, Simon Bell, Peeter Vassiljev, Friedrich Kuhlmann, Gloria Niin, James Grellier

Aspects of the aesthetic domain.

Aspects	Assessment criteria
Aspect 1: Visual condition of the surroundings of the site	1. The visual quality of buildings and other structures visible along the site boundaries (land-side)
	2. Screening of off-site eyesores by trees and vegetation
	3. Quality of views out from the site across the water
	4. Sense of openness and scale of water views
	5. Presence of focal points visible from the site
	6. Visual pollution such as garish advertising
Aspect 2: Visual quality of the site	1. Quality of views within the site
	2. Quality of views to the site from the water
	3. The visual quality of built structures within the site
	4. The attractiveness of vegetation on the site
	5. Light pollution at night
	6. Sense of wildness
Aspect 3 Non-visual aesthetic aspects	1. Smells and olfactory pollution



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	2. Sounds and noise pollution
	3. Sense of atmosphere: wind, moist air, etc.
	4. The feeling of tranquillity or calm

In particular, the scientific studies to reflect upon the Terms of Reference in the following ways:

Terms of Reference, including the following issues:

·the benefits of accessing and using different types of environmental infrastructure

Corinella has a diversity of residents but currently most are in the 60+ age groups. Access to the beach is problematical and virtually impossible for those with disabilities. The walking track needs major repairs and the installation of seating would make a major difference to many people enjoying the coastal vistas. Line of site is critical to elderly people when walkers, joggers, bike riders and horse riders use the track.

·the impact of population growth in Melbourne and regional centres on the provision and preservation of environmental infrastructure

The outer suburbs of Pakenham or Cranbourne are some of the fastest growth areas in Victoria. These suburbs will increase the numbers heading to the Bass Coast area, with Phillip Island being the primary destination. Huge traffic delays during the holiday season at the San Remo bridge will lead to people to begin to explore other areas of Westernport and it is feasible that Corinella and Coronet Bay will be impacted by this. Our current infrastructure would be completely overwhelmed if this happens and people seeking the coastal vistas may be disappointed in not being able to picnic etc in the area comfortably.

·differences in the availability of environmental infrastructure between different suburbs and between different regional centres

The regional centre of Wonthaggi and the holiday destination of Phillip Island both have major infrastructures and amenities. The San Remo bridge does cause major traffic problems due to the lack of traffic lanes leading to and exiting from it. Also, the bridge itself with 2 lanes fails to cope with the traffic.



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·the effectiveness of current legislation and planning provisions in securing environmental infrastructure

The vastness of Victoria's coastline is unmanageable without volunteer Committees of Management. The appointment process is made via regional DEWLP officials. As such, this can be an efficient process covered by current legislation and planning provisions. It is however, a natural attractor for people who have strong personal opinions on how the coastal environment should look. The guideline given to volunteer committees are adequate but the actual management must be informed by science and not personal preference opinion. The latest DELWP strategy to involve the community at large in the management is to be commended but the actual committee members must be instructed in community engagement and keeping the community informed. In our region the minutes of the committee are kept secret, yet their brief is to "represent the community". We have had a number of action groups who must pay to use FOI to find out what is happening. They do put up edited highlights but not minutes for scrutiny.

·existing delays or obstacles to securing environmental infrastructure

There is a lack of information regarding the makeup of the vegetation, the value of blue versus green vistas on a coastal walk for our area. No comparative studies have been done to see what the EVC predicts and what is actually in place. This is very important when over the last 20 years various foreshore committees have set up a green hedge which have environmental, social, economic and health consequences to our community. This lack of knowledge leads to a "we have always done it that way" with little background knowledge simply personal preferences of some individuals. Typically, this is justified by some saying they know all the names of the plants and so are experts. I may say that I know all the names of skin cancers but this not make me a specialist!

·the impact of COVID-19 on the importance, use and design of environmental infrastructure.

Social distancing is of critical importance but the width and condition of the walking track is such that this is impossible to achieve.