

**MEDIA RELEASE:**

**Victoria's Coast at Critical Point: Community Urged to Get Involved**

21 November 2007

Associate Professor Geoff Wescott of Deakin University's School of Environmental and Life Sciences and Chair of the State Reference Group of the Marine Coastal Community Network said today: "The Victorian coast is at a critical point in its conservation and planning."

"The issues faced by the Victorian Government in ensuring the protection and planning of the Victoria's marine and coastal environment include:

- coastal development;
- the impacts on the coast of climate change;
- the absence of any comprehensive marine planning process; and
- the proposal for a desalination plant on the coast."

"The mechanism for coping with these challenges in Victoria is the Victorian Coastal Strategy – a statutory strategic planning document with a five year life", said A/Prof Wescott.

"A draft of the new (third) Coastal Strategy has just been released for public comment (until 31 January 2008) and whilst each of these issues has been identified none of them have been adequately tackled in the draft."

"This strategy has to 'get it right' in terms of the State Government's response to these crucial issues. It will only do so if ordinary members of the Victorian community read and respond to the draft. Please do so – the future of Victoria's coastal and marine environment depends on you making your voice heard through a submission on the draft!" concluded A/Prof Wescott.

**Draft Victorian Coastal Strategy meeting**

Over the next couple of weeks, Nicola Waldron, Regional Co-ordinator Victoria, from the Marine Coastal Community Network (MCCN), will be travelling around Victoria to talk with the community about the draft Victorian Coastal Strategy.

Meetings will be held in the following venues and times:

Wed 21st November 2007

10:30 – 12:00 @ San Remo Recreation Centre, Wynne Rd, SAN REMO  
13:30 – 15:00 @ The Glade Park (opposite Inlet Hotel), INVERLOCH  
17:00 – 18:30 @ Victory Room, The Exchange Hotel, FOSTER

Fri 23rd November 2007

10:30 – 12:00 @ at The Heads Restaurant, Jetty Rd, BARWON HEAD  
14:30 – 16:00 @ Spooners Cafe, Shop 2, 57 Geelong Rd, TORQUAY  
18:00 – 19:30 @ Figtree Community House, 16 Mountjoy Parade, LORNE

Tues 27th November 2007, 13:30 – 15:00 @ Gippsland Lakes Angling Club, LAKES ENTRANCE

Wed 28th November 2007

10:00 – 11:30 @ Mud Brick Pavilion, MALLACOOTA  
14:30 – 16:00 @ Orbst Angling Club, 1 Foreshore Rd, MARLO

Thurs 29th November 2007

10:00 – 11:30 @ Riversleigh Country Hotel, 1 Nicholson St, BAIRNSDALE  
17:00 – 18:30 @ Mezzanine, Region Theatre, 210 Commercial Rd, YARRAM

Mon 3rd December 2007, 13:30 – 15:00 @ Marengo Marine Life Centre, 13 Pascoe St, APOLLO BAY

Tue 4th December 2007

10:00 – 11:30 @ 12 Rocks Cafe, PORT CAMPBELL  
13:30 – 15:00 @ 3WAY-FM Community Radio, Hyland St, WARRNAMBOOL  
16:30 – 18:00 @ Port Fairy Citizen Band Hall, Bank St, PORT FAIRY

Wed 5th December 2007, 10:30 – 12:00 @ DSE Portland Office, Julia Street, PORTLAND

Mon 10th December 2007

10:00 – 11:30 @ Sandridge Life Saving Club, The Boulevard, PORT MELBOURNE  
13:00 – 14:30 @ Venue TBC, MELBOURNE CBD

Tue 11th December 2007

13:30 – 15:00 @ Venue TBC, WILLIAMSTOWN  
16:30 – 18:00 @ Heath Road Library, Werribee Plaza, WERRIBEE

Thurs 13th December 2007

10:30 – 12:00 @ Venue TBC, GEELONG  
14:00 – 15:30 @ Venue TBC, QUEENSCLIFF

Fri 14th December 2007, 16:30 – 18:00 @ Mornington Library, Vancouver St, MORNINGTON

END of statement.

**The Victoria Coastal Strategy Background:**

The Coastal Strategy is Victoria's major strategic planning document for the Victorian marine and coastal environment. The draft Strategy is prepared by Victoria's lead coastal agency: the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) under the Coastal Management Act 1995. Each Strategy lasts five years.

The VCC produces the draft and releases it for public comment. The VCC then considers the public submissions made, rewrites the draft and submits it to the Minister for environment. The Minister then considers the final draft, modifies if the Government wishes and releases it as the Victorian Government's Coastal Strategy. Hence the Coastal Strategy needs to establish a blueprint for coastal planning and management over the next five years.

The Coastal Strategy is a statutory document and is used by local councils and government agencies in meeting their responsibilities when they overlap with the coast. The strategy is often used in planning disputes and quoted in planning hearings.

### **MCCN Background:**

The Marine Coastal Community Network is a national, not-for-profit network. It aims to inform, engage, and connect community interests, government and industry to facilitate positive outcomes for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecological processes, and the ecologically sustainable use of Australia's marine and coastal environments.

There are currently over 10,000 organisations, groups and individuals who use the services of the Network, covering government agencies, industry and the community sector.

### **Media Enquiries & Contact:**

Nicola Waldron, Regional Coordinator - Victoria

Marine Coastal Community Network

Tel: (03) 5973 4602

Mobile: 0407 858 865

Email: [vic@mccn.org.au](mailto:vic@mccn.org.au)