

Frequently Asked Questions

Inverloch Coastal Protection – August 2020

Q. What is the Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP)?

- A. The Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) is a partnership established under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018. The Inverloch RaSP is the first to be created under the new Act and was formally gazetted on 6 August 2020.

The RaSP brings together Traditional Owners with nine agencies that each have a role in managing the coastal and foreshore values, assets and infrastructure around Inverloch. Together they have committed to working collaboratively on long term strategies to respond to the issues of erosion and inundation facing the Inverloch community now and into the future.

The RaSP partners are; Bass Coast Shire Council, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of Transport, Gippsland Ports, Heritage Victoria, Parks Victoria, South Gippsland Shire Council, South Gippsland Water and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Q. The term RaSP is confusing for the community. Will it have another name that describes it's work better?

- A. Yes, the RaSP project will be called the 'Cape to Cape Resilience Project'. This captures the geographic extent of the project area, from Cape Paterson to Cape Liptrap and better describes the strategic work the partners will be undertaking.

Q. What work will the RaSP be doing?

- A. The RaSP will undertake several key pieces of work to investigate the erosion and inundation issues facing Inverloch. They are:

A local coastal hazard assessment which will look at many of the influences on the coast such as wave height and direction, storm tides and surges, previous shorelines, groundwater, and sea level rise due to climate change. It will model these influences and help us understand what happened in the past, what is happening now, and what we can expect to happen in the future. This information will be used in detailed models of different options that could be used to mitigate erosion or adapt to future changes on the coastline.

Extensive community engagement to understand community values, how the community feels about the changes, and what the community thinks can and should be done to respond to the erosion and inundation issues. Community engagement will help the partnership decide how the Inverloch coastline will be used and managed in the future.

A coastal risk and vulnerability assessment – to apply the work and recommendations from the hazard assessment and engagement to determine what values and assets are at risk from erosion and inundation, when we expect them to be at risk, and how they may be at risk.

Coastal resilience planning – which will use the above work to guide the partner agencies to develop their own strategic implementation plans for the use and management of the values and assets they individually have responsibility for into the future.



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Q. How long will a local coastal hazard assessment take?

- A.** The coastal hazard assessment will take around 12 months to complete. The collection of digital and field data and processing for detailed computer modelling is complex and time consuming, and many climate change scenarios will be modelled.

Q. I live on Surf Parade and I'm worried about flooding due to erosion at the mouth of Wreck Creek. What is being done to protect Surf Parade and private properties?

- A.** Wreck Creek and its associated waterways and catchments are regulated by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA). Parks Victoria manages artificial openings of the creek mouths in collaboration with Bass Coast Shire Council. Together, these agencies are monitoring the risks around Surf Parade, and undertaking investigative work relating to the creek mouths and catchments.

In the event of flooding, Bass Coast Shire Council will enact its emergency management procedures.

Q. When will we see more erosion protection works at Inverloch?

- A.** In May 2020, DELWP completed works on a 70-metre long revetment constructed with specialised sand-filled geotextile containers along the Surf Live Saving Club (SLSC) area of the Inverloch foreshore to help protect this section from further impacts of wave erosion.

In July 2020, Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) completed construction of an engineered rock revetment to provide medium-term protection to Bunurong Road. This consolidated the emergency works undertaken in May 2020.

No further protection works are planned until the coastal hazard assessment is completed and adaption options are assessed and modelled.

If monitoring of conditions indicates that further interim protection is necessary, the Inverloch multi-agency working group will jointly make that decision and seek funding for implementation.

Q. Will the geotextile container wall at the Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club be extended?

- A.** Not at this stage. The length was designed by a consultant engineer to provide protection to the SLSC building. It is performing as expected by protecting the dune in front of the SLSC from erosion.

Q. Some of the geotextile container wall bags were damaged during storms, and there has been erosion at the ends - is it working?

- A.** The Inverloch geotextile container wall is a temporary structure with a design life of around 10 years. It will be monitored throughout its life and minor maintenance or repairs to the sandbags will be undertaken as required. The dunes at either end is being monitored by Bass Coast Shire Council and sand will be periodically relocated when required to manage any erosion

Q. Why was a rock wall been installed at the Cape Paterson-Inverloch Road (Bunurong Road) area?

- A.** In April 2020, a significant storm surge event occurred affecting the Cape Paterson-Inverloch Road (Bunurong Road) area.

Waves overtopped the dune causing further erosion and splashed over onto the road. Regional Roads Victoria closed the road temporarily while interim emergency works were carried out.

500-tonne of rock was transported to the site to construct an 80-metre revetment, as part of the emergency response to this extreme wave and tidal erosion event. RRV contractors and crews worked solidly for four days to undertake these emergency works.

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This rock has now been reworked into an engineered rock revetment. This is a medium-term solution to help protect this important asset whilst a more permanent long-term solution is investigated through the local hazard assessment.

Q. Rock was used to protect the Bunurong Road area. Why wasn't this mitigation measure used at the SLSC location?

A. An options evaluation was undertaken on recommended stabilising options for the SLSC area following further erosion from several storm events late in 2019. The most appropriate protection measure recommended and adopted by the Inverloch multi-agency working group was a geotextile container wall.

The key benefits of sand-filled geotextile containers are: a design life of over 10 years; relatively low cost; wave reflection due to sloped design; much safer to have on a popular beach than rock; aesthetically more attractive compared to rock or seawalls and easy to remove in the future if sand builds back up.

The installation of a hard-engineered structure, such as a rock wall, could have a severe impact on the beach along the foreshore, so it is very important that this type of protection be investigated further by coastal engineers during the development of a local coastal hazard assessment.

Q. Has the trial wet-sand fencing worked?

A. Trial wet-sand fencing was installed in March 2019 to reduce wave energy and collect sand, thereby providing a buffer to assist in preventing further erosion at the Bunurong Road and SLSC areas.

There is some evidence that the wet-sand fencing, coupled with sand renourishment, did slow down erosion impacting on dunes to some extent, however it is too soon to gauge the overall effectiveness of the wet-sand fencing. The structures need to be exposed to a full seasonal cycle (12 to 18 months) to fully assess their performance.

The wet-sand fencing was not intended as a long-term solution. It was installed as a short-term interim trial, while funding was sought to investigate coastal processes at Inverloch and surrounds for more permanent solutions.

The Inverloch multi-agency working group will continue to actively monitor both areas.

Q. What's next?

A. The RaSP will commence its research investigations, initially with the coastal hazard assessment and modelling. A consultancy team will be appointed to support the RaSP's community engagement work, including establishing a Stakeholder Reference Group via expressions of interest. Monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the installation of the geotextile container wall at the SLSC area, the rock wall at the Bunurong Road area, and the wet sand fencing, will continue.

For further information, contact DELWP Traralgon on 03 5172 2111