



Inverloch Coastal Resilience Project Report Released

South Gippsland Conservation Society's *Inverloch Coastal Resilience Project Report* was released at an event at Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club on 2 August 2019. The report is the culmination of 12 months' investigation and community and stakeholder consultation.

The report analyses the coastline erosion at Inverloch since 2013 that far exceeds previous changes recorded and observed. The ecological, Aboriginal cultural heritage, geomorphological and economic values that are being threatened with the loss of the vegetated dunes behind the beach are highlighted in the report, drawing on specialist consultant studies commissioned for the project. The report also documents the outcomes of the survey that was administered by SGCS in conjunction with the public exhibition held in Inverloch and Wonthaggi between March and June this year.

At the Project Report release event, SGCS Project Leader Philip Heath said:

'The changes that have occurred at Inverloch surf beach represent one of the most rapid changes on the Victorian coast in European historical times, and are rated as 'severe' to 'extreme' by global comparison. The Inverloch coastline dynamics appear to have changed to the extent that the cyclical changes that have occurred in the past may not repeat in the future.

Scientific investigations, including a Local Coastal Hazard Assessment (LCHA), are urgently required to further analyse the factors that have contributed to the changes, as well as to identify feasible long term strategies to manage the on-going erosion sequence. While we all need to keep pushing for funding of the long-anticipated LCHA, our project has identified a number of relatively low-cost measures that can be implemented over the next 12 months and which will help to build on-ground coastal resilience, as well as providing important input to the LCHA.

Future management actions to protect the surf beach should not only consider coastal infrastructure, but also the environmental, cultural heritage, economic

and community values of the vegetated dunes that are being lost. The Inverloch coastline is rated of State Geoscience significance, comprises vital habitat for threatened flora and fauna and contains at least four sites of Aboriginal cultural significance that are at high risk. In addition, \$3-5 million per annum of resident and tourism values are at risk from further sustained coastline impacts.

The survey undertaken for the project revealed that the natural setting provided by the vegetated dunes is rated as extremely important by 81% of respondents, comprising both Inverloch residents and visitors. The recreation and tourism impacts that are already occurring were reflected in the survey results, with 82% of respondents being either significantly (44%) or moderately (38%) affected over the past summer. Respondents also highlighted how important it is that both short and longer term actions are taken to manage the risk of further coastline recession.

South Gippsland Conservation Society urges the Victorian Government and its Agencies, including Bass Coast Shire Council, to consider the content, findings and recommendations of this Project Report and its supporting specialist consultant reports in future planning for the Inverloch coast, including the proposed Bass Coast Local Coastal Hazard Assessment. In particular, the apparent change in Inverloch coastline dynamics since 2013, and the geomorphological, ecological, Aboriginal cultural heritage, economic and community values of the Inverloch dune system, need to be examined carefully in any future assessment of risk associated with coastal recession at Inverloch.'

The Project Report and its supporting consultant studies are on-line at www.sgcs.org.au, together with other information about the Inverloch Coastal Resilience Project. For further information, please contact Philip Heath (M. 0411 430 438) or Dave Sutton (M. 0419 230 110).

