



4

Community values

- 4.1 *Recreation and social values of the coast*
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This chapter provides a summary of contemporary community values and use of the coast and the impacts associated with those activities. It also provides guidance for engaging local communities and working with community groups when undertaking coastal management works.

Tasmanians are fortunate to have such vast and diverse coastal areas to enjoy and they have a long association with living and recreating on the coast. However some recreational pursuits can be very damaging to coastal values in particular areas, or if not managed appropriately.

Community involvement is essential to achieving the protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage along Tasmania's coastline. Many coastal areas are fortunate enough to have dedicated community groups of local volunteers that regularly care for the coastal environment.

For the broader community, education, awareness-raising and the use of interpretive tools and products are important to encourage community stewardship of coastal areas. Involving the community in coastal management planning and decision-making processes will help to foster this stewardship.

Tab photo: Sunset at a popular beach in south-east Tasmania. © Leah Page.



4.1

4.1 Recreation and social values of the coast

This section outlines some of the key recreational pursuits and the impacts on Tasmania's coastline associated with those activities. Specific management actions are provided, where available, and detailed in other chapters where appropriate.

Recreational pursuits include fishing, surfing, sailing, kayaking, birdwatching, swimming, bushwalking, horseriding, dog-walking and camping. Some recreational activities can have unwanted impacts on the coastal environment. Some recreational community groups, such as surf clubs and sailing clubs, rely on the coast for their activities. The provision and maintenance of infrastructure or access for recreational activities need to be balanced against the preservation and protection of coastal values.

Figure 4.1 Tasmanians have a strong affinity with the coast. © Leah Page



The provision of facilities is covered in **Chapter 14** and requires careful planning and consultation to ensure that facilities are appropriate for the users, meet occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements and will not impact on natural or cultural values. It is also now important to ensure that facilities are appropriate for sea level rise predictions and other potential climate change impacts. **Refer to Chapter 13 Access management and Chapter 14 Structures and facilities.**

4.1.1 Recreational use conflicts

In many instances recreational activities are concentrated on tracks, beaches and reserves where the different needs of various users may conflict. Recreational values can also be in conflict with other coastal land uses, such as industry and commercial fishing operations. Some activities are inappropriate in some locations where the impact on coastal values is unsustainable, such as disturbance to bird breeding areas or threats to endangered flora and fauna.

The needs of various users must be managed in conjunction with human impacts on coastal values. Providing opportunities for communities to enjoy and use the coast may involve providing facilities and will always involve managing public risk and liability and impacts.

4.1.2 Recreational fishing

Over-fishing and illegal fishing practices are obvious impacts, but the activities of recreational fishers can have various other impacts on the coast. Irresponsible boating practices can lead to the spread of marine pests and discharge of pollutants and litter into coastal waters; inappropriate access to fishing spots through dunes and beaches and ad-hoc launch sites exacerbates coastal erosion, spreads weeds and



threatens wildlife such as breeding shorebirds. **Refer to section 4.1.3 Recreational boating and section 4.1.6 Coastal access**

What coastal land managers and recreational fishers can do to minimise harm:

- Fishing regulations have been developed to support sustainable fisheries. Refer to the *Recreational Sea Fishing Guide* released each November, which outlines the identification of key species, rules, seasons, catch limits and provides information on responsible fishing practices.
- Recreational gillnets are allowed in Tasmanian marine waters. Restrictions include closed areas, prohibition of setting recreational gillnets over night (except Macquarie Harbour), not setting for more than 2 to 6 hours depending on area. Fishers should be encouraged to stay

in close proximity of their gear to avoid wildlife interactions.

- To reduce the risk of harming marine life fishers should avoid fishing and/or setting nets close to wildlife, rookeries and nesting sites. Fishers are encouraged to find out the locations from the Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Recreational fishers should take care to protect birds and other wildlife from hooks and fishing line. In particular avoid disposing of line, any monofilament or plastic bait bags – accidental or otherwise.
- Consider providing facilities for cleaning and gutting fish at suitable locations; otherwise provide information to encourage fishers to clean fish at home.
- Support efforts to inform the public of the human health issues associated with seafood collection and consumption, in particular shellfish.

Figure 4.2 Pacific Gull entangled and drowned in fishing line. © Anna Wind



The Wild Fisheries Branch (DPIPWE) promotes responsible and sustainable fishing practices, through the *Fishcare Tasmania* program. Volunteers conduct fisheries education in schools, fisheries awareness events, patrols and responsible fishing clinics.

4.1.3 Recreational boating

Recreational boating is a great way to enjoy the many coves and bays that make up Tasmania's unique coastline. It provides access to areas that may otherwise be inaccessible and for this reason recreational boaters need to be particularly careful to minimise their impact on the coastal environment. **Refer to section 4.1.6 Coastal access.**

Coastal land managers, in conjunction with the Tasmanian Port Authority and Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST), are responsible for boating facilities,



including the maintenance of shipping channels and launching ramps. Land managers should investigate infrastructure and practices at slipways and improve facilities to meet best practice environmental standards. **Refer to Chapter 14 Structures and facilities.**

Pests and pollutants

Recreational vessels may inadvertently spread introduced species, attached to the hull, in gear or areas that are not cleaned and dried thoroughly. A piece of the introduced alga *Undaria pinnatifida* (wakame) left on a net or anchor will survive for one or two days, possibly more. Microscopic spores floating in water in the bottom of boats will stay alive for a similar time. In mooring areas and marinas, boat hulls can quickly become infested which can result in the rapid spread of the weed around the state (DPIPWE website, accessed 7th October 2010).

What boat users can do to minimise harm:

- Remove any weeds, animals or sediment from boats, trailers and gear and place them in the bin, not back in the water. After each trip CHECK, CLEAN, DRAIN and DRY your boat, trailer and gear. Using water with a mild detergent, disinfectant or soap, wash vessels and equipment away from the shore where it will not drain into the marine environment.
- Slip and clean moored boats regularly, at least every year and anytime there is a build-up of fouling. Maintain the boat with a suitable antifouling paint (ensure paint residue does not get washed into the water) and treat internal seawater systems (including water inlets and bilge tanks) regularly – flush with fresh water or an approved treatment. Ensure appropriate disposal of sewage and bilge water at an approved pump out facility.

- Fishing gear and rubbish not stowed correctly on board can end up as marine debris in coastal waters. Poorly maintained boats or irresponsible practices at boat ramps can lead to oils and pollutants draining into waterways.

Wildlife

Inappropriate access of foreshore areas to launch boats or landing on offshore islands can threaten vegetation and wildlife communities through spreading weeds or trampling vegetation, leading to erosion and disturbing breeding birds. **Refer to section 4.1.6 Coastal access.**

Recreational boat operators will come into contact with wildlife and must minimise impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat. Boat operators can report whale sightings and strandings on the whales hotline. Humpback and southern right whales are the two best known species that make the annual winter migration north to breed.

Boat operators are not permitted to go any closer than 100m to a whale in any boat and should only approach from the side of the whale. The *Australian national guidelines for whale and dolphin watching* (Dept Environment & Heritage 2005) outlines standards that allow people to observe and interact with whales and dolphins in a way that ensures animals are not harmed. **Refer to Chapter 10 Wildlife Management.**

Motor boats

Motor boats may increase shoreline erosion in susceptible sheltered waters of estuaries and inlets, particularly when driven at high speeds. Some Tasmanian water bodies are suffering unnatural and largely unnecessary erosion as a result of boating activities. Once initiated, the erosion caused by wave



wake or other vessel effects may be very difficult to control. Remediation works may be expensive or in themselves cause further habitat damage or loss of amenity. The trends towards increasing boat ownership, more powerful engines and rising sea level all add to the potential for problems so there is a need for greater awareness of vessel effects on both natural values and other users of our waterways. All boaters can help care for Tasmanian waterways by limiting their wake to a size appropriate to the area (DPIPWE website, accessed 7th October 2010).

Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) enforces a 5-knot speed limit in most port areas and has regulations limiting vessel speed to control damage to shores, facilities and other vessels. *Tasmania Marine and Safety (Motor Boats and Licenses) By-laws 1997*, Section 28 states, amongst other things, that a person must not drive a motorboat at a speed exceeding 5 knots within 60m of any shoreline, river bank, etc. (DPIPWE website, accessed 7th October 2010).

Within the World Heritage Area, motorised boating is only permitted on specified water bodies – for details contact the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

4.1.4 Kayaking

Kayaking is often considered to be minimal impact but, as well as the potential to create some of the same problems as recreational boating, there are also some special considerations with kayaking, especially because it can provide access to remote locations and proximity to coastal wildlife.

Guidelines for minimal impact kayaking

- Take home all rubbish, including empty packaging, food scraps and sanitary products. Collect rubbish left by others if possible.
- Use existing campsites and tracks whenever possible. If visiting a previously undisturbed site,

Figure 4.3 Hauling boats out onto the shoreline is destructive to the vegetation and can lead to increased erosion.
© Leah Page





Figure 4.4 Kayaking allows access to remote coastal locations such as the Bathurst Channel in south-west Tasmania.

© Chris Rees

keep movement around the area to a minimum. Carry, rather than drag, your kayak.

- Use a fuel stove for cooking. Campfires leave ugly scars, reduce the availability of dead timber as habitat and can escape and start destructive wildfires.
- When depositing human waste, burying it is a minimum requirement: consider disposal in the sea. Best of all, carry it away with you.
- Avoid using soap or detergent when camping. Beach sand is an excellent alternative for cleaning cookware.
- Maintain a respectful distance from all wildlife, both on land and water (100m from whales).
- Do not disturb breeding wildlife. Avoid landing on smaller offshore islands used for breeding, and camp well away from other breeding sites.

4.1.5 Camping

Many Tasmanians have long enjoyed camping in coastal areas and some families have returned to the same sites annually for many years. Environmental knowledge and understanding of human impacts on coastal values has increased significantly over the years and camping practices have had to be modified to reflect this knowledge. Ongoing education of campers and provision of appropriate facilities is essential to minimise impacts from coastal camping.

Guidelines for minimal impact camping

- Camping in coastal areas should be restricted to formed campsites. Keep camping equipment and vehicles within site boundaries. Many coastal campsites are located within reserved land and are managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service with strict guidelines about permissible activities depending on the status of the reserve.
- Dispose of waste properly, to minimise environmental impacts. Visitors should take all rubbish away with them or use rubbish receptacles if provided. Disposal of black water (toilet and kitchen waste water) into campground composting toilets will destroy the composting process. Dispose of black water only at facilities listed in the *Caravan and holiday park guide to Tasmania*. (Tourism Tasmania, n.d.)
- Do not remove or damage plants, animals, historic artefacts and rocks: they are protected.
- Do not cut or remove dead trees and branches for firewood or other purposes: they provide refuges and homes for wildlife.
- Do not disturb Aboriginal middens (shell and bone deposits), which are found in and around sand dunes, or remains of historic use such as huts, footings, walls and fences. These sites are protected.
- Avoid digging drains, channels or pits, they are destructive to the vegetation and landscape; and channel water which will increase erosion.
- Campfires are permitted in some camping areas (except on days of total fire ban) and usually only in fireplaces provided. Fires should not be left unattended and should be kept small. They must be extinguished fully with water before leaving. It is an offence to leave a fire unattended without fully extinguishing it. Total fire bans can be imposed at short notice - it is advisable to carry a fuel stove.
- Do not feed wildlife: inappropriate food can make them very ill and feeding discourages them from foraging for themselves. Maintain a respectful distance from all wildlife.
- Dogs and horses are permitted in some camping areas – check with the land manager for permission and conditions.



4.1.6 Coastal access

In the past, coastal accessways were often developed in an ad-hoc manner and often by adjacent landholders. Land managers need to work together and develop plans to ratify public access, to ensure protection of fragile or valuable environments. This involves identifying access points and undertaking public awareness (including signage) and management actions that control access in foreshore areas, to reduce erosion and degradation. This work should be undertaken in collaboration with local community care groups and in consultation with public users.

Designated coastal access should be appropriate for the area and consider the demographics of the area

and the user groups. It might be necessary to consider ramps for disabled access. Many elderly people can use steps with hand rails but could not use ladder-and-chain-style access. **Refer to Chapter 13 Access management.**

Access to beaches and coastal areas by 4WD vehicles, quad bikes and trail bikes can be extremely damaging to the coastal environment, leading to destruction of natural and cultural values. Aboriginal heritage sites, dune vegetation, dune stability and breeding shorebirds are all extremely vulnerable to vehicles on beaches.

Vehicles can spread weeds and diseases and cause severe erosion, and can lead to compaction of the

Figure 4.5 Access to coastal areas by trail bikes, quad bikes and 4WDs can be extremely destructive and should be very carefully managed. © Shaun Thurstans





Figure 4.6 Poorly designed and sited rubbish bin in southern Tasmania. © Leah Page

sand, affecting the animals living within the sand (meiofauna) which are an important food source for seabirds and shorebirds. On popular beaches and dune systems, 4WD vehicles, quad bikes and trail bikes can also be dangerous to other beach users.

What coastal land managers can do:

- Consult with user groups and establish the reasons for 4WD access and the social context of the activity. Provide education about the impacts of vehicles on beaches and dunes through signage, newsletters and notices. Most importantly invite representatives of recreational groups to get involved in coastal management and encourage them to inform their members of coastal values, the risks associated with their activity and the best ways to minimise those risks.
- Review beaches with vehicle access and assess environmental impacts against social benefit. Consolidate vehicle access through dune systems and provide board-and-chain tracks to reduce dune erosion. Signage is essential on beaches where boat launching is permitted, to tell users to restrict vehicle access to the launch site. **Refer to Chapter 13 Access management.**
- Enforcement of vehicle restrictions requires collaboration between all land managers, usually the Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Land Services and local council as well as Tasmania Police.

Offshore islands

There are around 600 named islands, rocks and reefs around the Tasmanian coast. The majority of these are true islands, with most of the landmass lying just above the high water mark.

Many islands support flora and fauna of conservation significance, including breeding populations of seabirds and seals. Because of their geographic separation, offshore islands are very vulnerable to the introduction of weeds, pests and diseases, but their isolation also makes them highly defensible against threats and impacts.

Anyone accessing offshore islands must take care not to introduce new weeds, pests or diseases, by practising good hygiene for boats and personal equipment. Visitors should take care to minimise disturbance to vegetation communities and wildlife. Land managers should consider involving local communities in management plans for offshore islands and should play a role in educating the broader community about the value and sensitivity of these important environments.

4.1.7 Litter

Litter in coastal landscapes has a visual impact and degrades vegetation communities and wildlife habitat. Litter in coastal waters (known as marine debris) threatens wildlife, who may become entangled in or eat it. Illegal dumping of household waste and unwanted items in coastal areas is a public health



hazard, is destructive to the local environment and has a very serious aesthetic impact.

Rubbish bins

For many popular coastal locations, rubbish collection services are the responsibility of the land manager. Sometimes it is acceptable in more remote areas to encourage people to take their rubbish away with them. But if other public facilities are provided at a site, users will often expect to be able to dispose of rubbish there, too.

Figure 4.7 Rubbish bins for specific purposes such as dog faeces need to be accompanied by signage and checked regularly to ensure that the bags provided are not creating a litter problem. © Leah Page



What coastal land managers can do:

- Ensure that the size and design of the rubbish bins are appropriate for the amount and type of waste. Bins designed to prevent scavenging by seagulls and possums should be considered in coastal areas.
- Provide separate bins for waste/rubbish, recyclables and dog faeces, where appropriate.
- Consider where the bins are located and how often they are emptied. Monitor usage to ensure bins are located in the right spot.
- To minimise litter escaping into the environment, ensure that bins are never more than 75% full and ensure that spilt litter is cleaned up when bins are serviced.

Rubbish dumping

Coastal areas are also sometimes used as dumps for garden waste, household refuse, unwanted items such as furniture and even cars. Dumping of garden waste may introduce weeds and diseases. Rubbish looks unsightly, can destroy vegetation and impact on wildlife values, and cause contamination of waterways.

There are also considerable public health and safety risks associated with the dumping of household refuse and large items.

Any illegal rubbish dumping should be reported to Tasmania Police or the local land management authority; usually Crown Land Services, the local council or the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Education of the public and strict enforcement is essential to manage the issue of illegal dumping.

Marine debris

Sources of marine debris include stormwater, fishing and aquaculture industry waste, shipping operations



and recreational use of coasts and waterways. Marine debris can entangle and strangle or cause starvation of marine wildlife, pollute water and look unsightly, detracting from recreational enjoyment.

Common marine debris items include plastic bags, cigarette butts, ropes and bait box straps, plastic wrappers and small pieces of plastic. Cigarette butts persist for a long time in the environment, ropes and straps are very prone to causing entanglement, and small pieces of plastic and bags and wrappers are commonly ingested by marine life.

The Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council is the peak commercial fishing industry body in Tasmania. It has developed a code of conduct for a responsible seafood industry and actively promotes to its members the importance of reducing marine debris and encourages the provision of improved waste facilities.

Many community groups undertake clean-up activities and these efforts should be supported by land managers and other coastal stakeholders. Marine debris clean-up operations must consider the impact of the activity on other coastal values, in particular wildlife, such as breeding shorebirds. **Refer to Chapter 10 Wildlife management.**

The installation and servicing of litter traps on stormwater facilities can greatly reduce stormwater pollutants entering waterways. **Refer to Chapter 12 Stormwater and crossings.**

4.1.8 Surfing and water recreation

In addition to recreational boating, kayaking and jet-skiing, popular water sports in Tasmania include scuba diving, surfing, kite-surfing, windsurfing, snorkelling and swimming.

These activities can have unwanted impacts on coastal

values. Popular surfing spots often have formalised access and sometimes other facilities; other surf spots are more remote and not easily accessed. It is important that surfers and other users minimise their impact on coastal values when accessing the foreshore, in particular where there no formalised access or facilities are provided.

Artificial reefs

The creation of artificial reefs to modify swells to change the surf conditions should be avoided. Complex hydrological processes are responsible for the transport and deposition of sand on beaches and any modification to wave action and swells could upset the balance of this process. This is of particular concern with climate change also increasing the pressure on shorelines through sea level rise and increased storm activity.

4.1.9 Coastal views

Coastal views are highly prized and enjoyed by Tasmanians. Developments and structures on the coast can degrade the visual appearance of the area. Sometimes local residents in coastal areas try to modify their own coastal view by illegally removing vegetation in adjacent coastal reserves.

View field maintenance

The visual appearance of the coast fosters a powerful sense of place within local communities, enriches recreational experiences and adds to enjoyment of coastal areas.

Planning for coastal development should consider the importance of maintaining coastal landscape views or view fields (the view of the coastline from another vantage point). There are very few prescriptive guidelines for view field maintenance in existing



policy and legislation, so currently it is up to individual planning bodies to consider these issues when assessing development applications.

Illegal removal of vegetation

Some coastal foreshores have suffered the illegal removal of coastal vegetation by adjacent landowners, usually to open up coastal views. Removal of vegetation from any coastal foreshore can cause severe damage to these fragile ecosystems and lead to erosion and instability. In light of sea level rise, foreshore stability is increasingly important, as is protecting remnant coastal vegetation and ecosystems such as wetlands.

It is critical to educate the public about the value of coastal vegetation and ways in which they can care for their coastal areas. Law enforcement will also be needed where problems are occurring. **Refer to section 7.7 Vegetation removal.**

4.1.10 Horseriding

Horseriders enjoy riding along beaches and on a number of coastal horseriding trails around the state. Like vehicles on beaches, horses can spread weeds and diseases (in their hooves and droppings) and can easily trample shorebird nesting sites, eggs and chicks. Some riders utilise catch bags to collect their horse droppings.

Access to coastal areas for horses should be restricted to particular locations. It is important to consult with user groups and establish workable outcomes that provide access whilst protecting important coastal values. Education about the impacts of horses on beaches and dunes can be provided through signage, newsletters and notices.

Most importantly, representatives of horseriding recreational groups should be invited to get involved

in coastal management and encouraged to inform their members about coastal values, the risks associated with their activity and the importance of sticking to designated tracks to minimise those risks.

4.1.11 Dog-walking

Walking dogs on beaches is an extremely popular recreational activity and many local councils have dog management plans that designate particular beaches for this. Dogs on beaches raise obvious health and safety concerns for other beach users that need to be managed; restrictions on dog access often apply to popular beaches during the summer months.

Figure 4.8 Many dog owners enjoy exercising their pets on the beach but some beaches should be dog free to provide space for wildlife. © Leah Page





Dogs can also have significant impacts on coastal wildlife and should be totally excluded from some beaches where coastal values are sensitive, such as those where shorebirds breed.

Dogs leave behind scents that will impact on the behaviour of wildlife. Even the sight of a dog in the distance will stress shorebirds and other wildlife who recognise its shape as a predator. When dogs chase birds, the feeding time of the birds is reduced, affecting their ability to provide enough food for themselves and their young. Unsupervised dogs can eat shorebird eggs and attack and kill penguins, shearwaters and other wildlife.

Dog owners should be educated about coastal values and potential impacts of their dog in coastal areas. They should be encouraged to use beaches designated for dog-walking and obey any local restrictions, and should carry bags to collect dog faeces and dispose of these appropriately.

Community organisations such as Birds Tasmania, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, the Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania and the Natural Resource Management (NRM) regional bodies have joined forces to deliver community awareness events such as 'Dog's Breakfasts' at popular beaches: dog owners and their pets are given a free BBQ and owners are educated about coastal values in their area and ways to minimise their dog's impact on these values.

4.1.12 Birdwatching

Birdwatching is a significant recreational activity in Tasmania that is increasing in popularity and attracting tourists to Tasmania from the mainland and from overseas. Ecotourism and specifically birdwatching make an economic contribution to Tasmania, but the exact value is unknown. Volunteers from Tasmania and further afield get involved in bird counts and observations for organisations like Birds Tasmania and Wildcare.

Viewing coastal birds should be undertaken with great care. Seek advice from the local Parks and Wildlife Service and Birds Tasmania.

Shearwater and penguin burrows can be easily damaged or destroyed by inappropriate access. Because these birds come ashore at dusk, lighting is often required to view them, which can be very disturbing to the birds. Ensure torches are covered with red cellophane to minimise this disturbance.

Refer to Chapter 10 Wildlife management.

4.1.13 Removal of seaweed and other coastal resources

Sand, seaweed, pebbles and driftwood are resources that have a value as landscaping or gardening products. However, it is illegal to remove seaweed and other resources from public beaches without approval from the land manager, and a licence from Crown Land Services (DPIPWE).

Seaweed and seagrass wrack plays a role in trapping sand and building up beaches. It also provides habitat and food for small invertebrates and micro-organisms that live on the beach, which are an important part of the food chain, in particular for shorebirds. On shorebird breeding beaches seaweed also provides camouflage for nests and shelter for chicks.

Land managers who remove wrack for aesthetic reasons should only remove it from above the low tide mark and only on high-use beaches that do not support breeding shorebirds.

Sand should not be removed from the beach or dunes as this can lead to instability and erosion. It is illegal to remove sand without a permit. Sand mining requires specialist advice and consideration of the local processes of erosion and deposition to determine if the activity is sustainable. **Refer to Chapter**



11 Soil management and earthworks.

Beach rocks and pebbles also play an important role in slowing down wave action, therefore reducing coastal erosion. It is illegal to remove any rocks, pebbles and stones without a permit.

Logs and driftwood on beaches have a function of trapping sand and providing shorebirds with shelter and a place to hide from predators. If it is necessary to remove large logs that pose a hazard, the land manager's approval is required.

4.1.14 Surf clubs, rowing clubs and sailing clubs

Surf clubs, sailing clubs and often rowing clubs are located on coastal foreshores and their activities rely on access to the coast. These clubs play an important role in providing healthy experiences in the coastal environment, particularly for young people. However,

the intensity of their activities on the foreshore can have unwanted impacts on the coast.

In summer, surf clubs hold regular training activities, at least weekly and a number of state-wide carnivals occur on various beaches, involving large numbers of people. They generate a lot of litter that needs to be managed and have the potential to threaten local vegetation and wildlife, in particular breeding shorebirds.

Sailing clubs and rowing clubs also train regularly and hold events that attract large numbers of people to foreshore areas.

Sporting clubs should work closely with local land managers to ensure their activities are not damaging coastal values. This is particularly important when planning events. Adequate facilities and resources for cleaning up after events need to be provided. Coastal sporting clubs should raise awareness of coastal values and the potential impacts of their activities on the coastal environment with their members.

Figure 4.9 Surf club carnivals attract large numbers of people to the beach which can impact on coastal values. They are a great opportunity to raise awareness about coastal issues and protecting the coastal environment. © Leah Page





4.2

4.2 Working with community

This section deals with involving the local community in coastal management and working with local community groups, in particular environmental groups. Works on the coast will be more effective if they have community support rather than indifference, or even opposition.

Before developing a works plan, pro-active land managers involve the local community, so that people know what works are planned and why, and have the chance to put forward their ideas and concerns. Communication and collaboration at the start will help to identify important issues and to gain acceptance and support for projects.

Community groups (such as Coastcare groups) often undertake very significant coastal land management works in partnership with local land managers and other coastal stakeholders.

It is essential to recognise, respect and support Aboriginal connections and concerns for the coast. This includes consulting with Aboriginal communities about proposed activities that may interfere with Aboriginal values. Working with the Aboriginal community involves its own set of requirements and legislation and is covered in **Chapter 5 Cultural heritage management**.

Figure 4.10 Coastcare volunteers learning about coastal issues at a regional workshop.
© Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania





4.2.1 Identifying stakeholders

For any given coastal area in Tasmania there will be user groups and members of the community that have a vested interest in the area. Before commencing works it is important to identify who will be interested in or affected by the proposed activity. It is even better to establish long-term partnerships with community stakeholders that will allow meaningful dialogue on coastal management issues.

When planning projects on the coast, it is important to identify the different values of all coastline users, not just local residents and regular visitors. One stretch of coastline may be used at different times for walking, swimming, picnics, dog-exercising, fishing, surfing, boating, birdwatching, off-road-vehicle driving, horseriding, surf carnivals, sports training, education and ecotourism. Identifying and recognising people's different values will also help to identify and minimise conflicts between different users.

People living next to a coastal reserve are the most likely to become involved in hands-on activities. They are also more likely to help with ongoing maintenance and reporting and deterring vandalism and arson.

Know your community. Local councils can best achieve this by having a dedicated employee such as an NRM Officer who regularly works with the community in their municipality on environmental management issues. If there is local volunteer group in the area it probably has its own aspirations and plans for the area and may even be working with other agencies to achieve them.

Local communities often don't know or care who manages the coastline (local council, Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Land Services), they just want it managed in a way that reflects their values.

4.2.2 Consultation with the community

Community consultation is important to inform people and gain public support for coastal works and developments that might affect public use and enjoyment of the area. Residents and visitors should feel that their concerns, ideas and needs have been carefully addressed. It is important that they understand the reasons behind a project especially if they oppose it. This may elicit support for protecting cultural and natural heritage, even if it might interfere with some people's recreational activities.

Consultation with established community groups should be ongoing and involves visiting group work sites, participating in group meetings and inviting group representatives to be involved in land management planning and decisions. Local people often know more about some local issues (e.g. bird nesting sites) than the professional managers.

The broader community is consulted when projects or management issues arise. Putting a notice in the newspaper advising of works is not enough. It is better to have face-to-face contact, such as conducting informal beach walks or public workshops. Brochures in local shops, surveys, temporary signs and letterbox drops are good ways of informing people and inviting consultation. Developing a community engagement strategy is advisable.



4.2.3 Types of community organisations

There are many different community organisations with an interest or involvement in coastal land management.

Key individual community organisations and their contact information is summarised in **Appendix 4**.

Environmental non-government organisations (NGO's) such as Birds Tasmania, the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, Ocean Planet and the Understorey Network provide advice to community groups and, in some instances, coordinate coastal projects for groups.

For a fee, **volunteer providers** such as Conservation Volunteers Australia, Green Corps and other organisations provide teams of volunteers with

an experienced leader to undertake a range of environmental activities, from weeding and revegetation to track work and monitoring.

Local community groups such as Coastcare and Landcare groups get involved in coastal land management and Scout clubs or sporting groups such as Surfriider's Foundation are keen to get involved in beach clean-ups or revegetation projects.

Community support organisations such as the Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania and Tasmanian Landcare Association provide support and regional coordination for local volunteer groups. **Refer to 4.2.4 Volunteer support programs.**

Many **schools** have environmental programs and are interested in coastal issues and coastal management. These little environmentalists will be the custodians

Figure 4.1 | School group involved in water quality monitoring. © Leah Page





of the land in the future and it is never too early to introduce them to best practice coastal management. It is very effective when an expert in coastal issues takes the time to work with staff and students.

Community organisations such as the Understorey Network and local Coastcare groups create opportunities for working with school groups when resources allow. School groups can get involved in revegetation works and monitoring programs. Coastal land managers and NRM regional bodies should consider working with school groups whenever possible.

4.2.4 Volunteer support programs

A range of organisations and programs offer support to community volunteer groups interested in coastal management. Umbrella groups such as the Tasmanian Landcare Association (TLCA), Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania (SCAT), the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) and Wildcare provide opportunities and resources and foster networks and linkages among local volunteer groups.

The TLCA and Wildcare maintain databases of volunteers keen to work on short-term projects or particular activities such as whale-stranding rescue operations.

Conservation Volunteers Australia also works on short-term projects. For a fee, it provides a highly motivated workforce that can work in partnership with land management authorities to manage and protect the coastline.

Regional NRM bodies provide opportunities for funding, training and guidance on regional issues. They have facilitators that support community groups and encourage groups to address regional priorities.

Many local groups utilise Australian Government

programs (e.g. Caring for Our Country) to access funding for their projects.

Land managers (e.g. local councils, Parks and Wildlife Service) can provide support through developing agreed management plans with local volunteer groups and providing on-ground assistance.

Volunteer support programs can help:

- individuals to join an existing group or set up a new one
- identify local problems and possible solutions
- work with groups and land managers to develop projects and apply for funding
- identify local specialists and other volunteers (e.g. schools, Scout clubs)
- make sure that community projects are well planned, with input from land managers, and fit into local or regional coastal management plans
- ensure community projects are technically sound and feasible, and comply with relevant legislation.

4.2.5 Understanding community groups

Many people in Coastcare, Landcare, Fishcare, Wildcare, progress associations, service clubs, youth clubs and similar groups regularly volunteer many thousands of dollars' worth of time and resources for environmental projects. Most are from environmental care groups like Coastcare, and local Scout groups and service clubs often partner with Coastcare groups to tackle specific projects.

Volunteers from environmental care groups are often very skilled and experienced and highly motivated but should not be regarded as a free labour force. Some will also have work and personal commitments; others may be retirees with varying physical abilities.

All volunteers deserve respect and need to be



supported and appreciated. Most do not want rewards but request that land managers provide resources (e.g. tools and equipment), funding, expertise (e.g. training) or advice, and approval of activities.

Community groups come in many forms but most have a least a basic structure that requires them to hold regular meetings and be accountable to their members. Many Coastcare and other groups are incorporated bodies that satisfy a host of legal criteria, including having a committee, insurance and a constitution. When working with community groups it is important to remember that they have a responsibility to fulfil the functions within their constitution and/or to respond to the needs and directives of their membership.

Most groups hold monthly meetings at which members plan activities and manage their administrative affairs and funds.

Most groups also hold monthly, or regular working bees where members work on local projects and on-ground activities to protect or enhance their coastal environment.

The majority of volunteers prefer hands-on activities and find the administrative burden of running an incorporated body taxing. Umbrella organisations like Wildcare, Tasmanian Landcare Association and the Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania attempt to reduce some of this administrative burden on groups through different initiatives such as advice on insurance and incorporation and coordination of regional projects.

Membership fees are usually nominal and projects require external funding, often in the form of government or corporate grants. Such funds are highly competitive; applications take a considerable amount of effort to apply for; and funds are tied to

defined and non-negotiable expectations from the funding body. Funding can also be sourced from NRM regional bodies, state government programs and corporate sponsorships.

4.2.6 Working with community groups

Supporting volunteers does not have to be expensive. Many organisations and volunteer programs have extension officers or facilitators who can help to seek funding and develop agreements between volunteers and land managers.

Many public works (e.g. management of weeds, native vegetation and wildlife) require ongoing work and maintenance and will be more successful if carried out in partnership with the community. Community groups can help with many tasks, including the essential monitoring and maintenance after weed removal, planting and maintaining revegetation projects, conducting wildlife tours to educate the public about protecting wildlife, and developing signage to raise public awareness of such issues. However, there should not be exclusive reliance on volunteers to undertake land management responsibilities.

Local councils that invest in their own NRM facilitators have very successful working relationships with volunteer groups working on coastal management issues. Organising and holding educational workshops and working bees can be a good way to support groups and attract new volunteers. Support from the land manager greatly increases volunteers' motivation and enjoyment. Without this support, community groups can become discouraged and fade away. Some local councils offer simple small grant schemes for community groups in their area, to support and acknowledge the contribution made by their volunteers.



The volunteering experience should be a two-way relationship. Volunteering is a vital component of a healthy community. The volunteering experience should be enjoyable and satisfying. The best way to achieve this is with regular consultation through meetings and a formal agreement with the groups, to outline everyone's responsibilities and establish common goals. **Refer to section 4.2.9 Partnership agreements.**

It is also important to train works crews and contractors to avoid practices that may (often unintentionally) cause damage and upset local residents or dedicated volunteers who care for their environment, such as depriving wildlife of habitat by cutting down old trees, or removing fallen branches just because they look untidy.

4.2.7 Guidelines for collaborating with community groups

Community groups can be great advocates for your organisation and your work if you develop a healthy partnership with them.

- Provide a regular open channel for community groups to provide input in coastal management decisions and planning (i.e. NRM facilitators in land management agencies).
- Consult with community groups before planning coastal management works. Provide at least six weeks' notice wherever possible to allow groups to consult their members at one of their regular monthly meetings then consolidate that input into a response.

Figure 4.12 Some local councils provide resources in the form of tool trailers to assist Coastcare and Landcare groups with their activities. © Leah Page





- Provide support for community groups in the form of resources, advice and training. Visit the sites where the community groups are working and make note of their concerns and aspirations.
- Encourage community groups to seek support and advice from other NRM organisations, such as NRM regional bodies and community group umbrella organisations such as the Tasmanian Landcare Association and the Southern Coastcare Association of Tasmania.
- Become familiar with NRM funding programs and the constraints and processes involved. Be prepared to respond in a timely way when funding rounds open. Community groups will often be keen to apply and will need support and approvals from land managers prior to submitting funding applications.
- Review existing works programs, activities and management plans to ensure that land management practices align with community group programs and activities, and that community group activities are compatible with local, regional and state strategies. If there are inconsistencies, work with the group to resolve these.
- Establish a partnership agreement or management plan with your local community group to provide clear direction on everyone's responsibilities and establish common goals. Review these regularly with the group.
- Attend meetings and working bees when possible to update groups on land management activities and plans and to hear about the groups' activities and plans.

Common community group concerns

- Management decisions made without consultation
- Tight time frames for providing input or feedback that do not allow enough time for consultation with members
- Lack of support from local land managers and other agencies to raise awareness of coastal values and provide education about coastal issues
- Lack of enforcement of illegal coastal activity such as vegetation removal

4.2.8 Community involvement in working groups and advisory bodies

Coastal projects will benefit from community group representation on steering committees, working groups and advisory bodies. Ongoing coastal land management activities will benefit from ongoing consultation with community groups.

Land managers often have to liaise with numerous groups. One approach is to form a working group involving all local groups and the land manager in a meeting twice a year to exchange information about works plans, programs, aspirations and issues. This would not replace individual consultation with each group but could be an effective way for a land manager to receive input on development proposals and other works programs and local groups could benefit from the opportunity to discuss their activities in the region and share ideas and concerns with each other.



4.2.9 Partnership agreements between land managers and community groups

Asset and site plans should include reference to community groups with an interest in that particular location. Ideally they should include strategic actions that will be undertaken to support and work with the community group/s. It is even better to establish a partnership agreement with key groups, to establish a truly collaborative approach to coastal land management.

The purpose of a partnership agreement is to provide guidance to the community group and the land manager for certain activities related to the management of coastal land. The agreement may satisfy legislative requirements for authorisation to work on the land manager's property, but more importantly it will provide details of each party's role and responsibilities and provide a foundation for community group works to be undertaken in collaboration and with the support of the land manager.

Keep partnership agreements as simple as possible and use plain English. A partnership agreement should specify key pieces of information that will assist its implementation. The agreement could specify the location or areas covered by the agreement and provide some background information on those locations and also on the community group and its aspirations and history of involvement. The agreement could also nominate a liaison person for each party.

Works program

A partnership agreement outlines the works program to be undertaken by the group and the works or support that will be undertaken by the land manager. It can list tasks that the group, in consultation with the

land manager, has agreed to undertake. It can also list support that the land manager will give to the group's tasks in the form of works, training, resources etc.

The works program may include a site plan, maps and other technical information and a time frame for agreed activities. It may be specific (e.g. authorising particular works on a certain day) or it may describe a general work program. It is important to remember that a works program does not hand over management responsibilities to the community group: rather, it outlines the scope and any limitations of the community group's work activities and what the group can expect from the land manager. It also provides strategic direction for planning activities and seeking funding.

Examples of works community groups might undertake:

- weed management
- foreshore management such as access management and removal of feral oysters
- protection of threatened species habitat
- visitor services site management (e.g. camping or picnic areas)
- walking track maintenance or construction
- revegetation of degraded areas
- maintenance of cultural heritage assets (e.g. historic huts)
- rubbish collection and removal, such as marine debris beach clean-ups
- monitoring coastal values such as penguins, shorebirds or vegetation
- monitoring coastal processes



Examples of land manager works and support:

- management advice for the area
- risk assessment of proposed activities
- training for group members
- administrative support for the group (e.g. photocopying, newsletter distribution)
- logistical support (e.g. transport) for group activities
- provision of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- provision of materials (e.g. herbicide, timber)
- provision of funding (where appropriate or possible)
- loan of tools
- assistance with specialist equipment and/or skills (e.g. design of track work, rubbish removal, spraying weeds, chainsaws, large vehicles)
- general assistance with on-ground works
- events to recognise the contribution of community group volunteers
- assistance with grant applications
- assistance with organising community events
- assistance with promotion of activities

A partnership agreement template is provided in the **Guidelines** at the back of this manual.

Support and assistance from land managers

Land managers can provide important guidance and assistance to community groups, using their staff resources to undertake risk assessments with the group and help them to implement high standards of OH&S through training and the provision of safety equipment. Land managers can offer to provide supervision of tasks where deemed necessary by both parties.

The partnership agreement should clarify responsibilities for OH&S and specify the processes for undertaking a risk assessment and reporting hazards or incidents.

Land managers could explore the possibility of providing insurance cover for groups working on their land. It is highly recommended that groups also seek their own insurance cover, regardless of arrangements with land managers, as coastal land tenure is complicated and confusing and volunteers may find themselves unwittingly working on another manager's land.

The partnership agreement can also provide some key organisational tips for community groups, such as recording volunteer attendance, registration and annual activity summaries. This information will assist groups in demonstrating a safe work environment and will be valuable when seeking funding or recognition for work activities.



4.3 Tools and resources

Complete details of all printed publications listed here are provided in a reference list at the end of the Manual. A list of community support organisations is provided in **Appendix 4**. Other tools and resources including websites are collated in **Appendix 5**.

Australian national guidelines for whale and dolphin watching (Department of Environment and Heritage 2005)

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.pdf>

Caravan and holiday park guide to Tasmania.
(Tourism Tasmania)

Annual publication

Fishing restrictions

03 6233 7042

Automated recorded service

Fishwatch

0427 655 557

Report suspected illegal fishing, fishing offences and lost or found fishing gear

Leave no wake: Minimal impact sea kayaking

Brochure available from Parks and Wildlife Service and information on the website

www.parks.tas.gov.au

NRM regional bodies and volunteer support organisations

See Appendix 4

Partnership Agreement template

See Guidelines at the back of this Manual

Recreational Sea Fishing Guide

Available from Service Tasmania

Produced annually by DPIPWE

www.fishing.tas.gov.au

Stow it don't throw it (brochure)

Guidelines for minimising risk of rubbish and pollutants for boating activities

Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

http://www.amsa.gov.au/publications/Marine_Environment_Protection/Stow%20it.pdf

Whale hotline

0427 942 537

Report whale sightings and strandings

