

11 January 2012



Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation  
Productivity Commission  
LB2 Collins Street East  
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Chairperson,

**Submission to Productivity Commission on Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the inquiry into barriers to effective climate change adaptation. Sorry for the delay in submitting this to you.

The Victorian Coastal Council (Council) is established under the provisions of the *Coastal Management Act 1995*. It is the peak advisory body on coastal and marine issues in Victoria. Its role is to provide strategic direction and improve the co-ordination of coastal and marine management in Victoria.

Adapting to the impacts of climate change on the coast requires foresight, leadership and a coordinated response from all levels of government. The three levels of Government (national, state and local) have begun work on different aspects of adaptation on the coast, however as yet there is no Australia wide agreed or consistent framework. Such a framework could help to reduce barriers and enable more effective adaptation. Table 1 (below) articulates key pillars and supporting actions for such a framework.

In Victoria, the *Victorian Coastal Strategy 2008* (VCS) sets the primary policy position for the State's coast. The Strategy is underpinned by a vision and supported by principles, policies and actions to achieve this vision. A key component of the VCS is planning for climate change and adapting to the impacts of sea level rise. Policy statements and actions detailed in the VCS include:

- Applying the policy of planning for sea level rise of not less than 0.8m by 2100
- Completing coastal vulnerability studies and incorporating the findings into relevant policy, planning and management frameworks
- Developing appropriate adaptation strategies to support local and regional level decision-making.

A range of these actions are being progressed through initiatives like the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Future Coasts Program. However, there is still some way to go in this work being completed and implemented.

Yours sincerely

**Libby Mears**  
Chair  
Victoria Coastal Council

Table 1. Framework for managing the impacts of climate change on the coast

Pillars	Supporting Actions
<p><b>Roles</b> Clearly understood roles and responsibilities of each level of government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A statement of roles and responsibilities for each level of government</li> </ul> <p>An example of these roles are:</p> <p><i>National:</i> setting climate change scenarios for policy and planning and providing consistent messaging on climate change impacts</p> <p><i>State:</i> developing state policies and planning requirements, the provision of state-wide datasets and provision of implementation tools and implementation guidance for regional and local councils</p> <p><i>Regional/local:</i> lead regional strategic adaptation planning, implement policies and planning provisions, engage with local communities in adaptation planning</p>
<p><b>Benchmarks</b> Consistent sea level rise benchmarks for policy and planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A process for establishing and reviewing climate change science scenarios for setting policy and planning benchmark e.g. after each IPCC Assessment CSIRO to set benchmarks for use in Australia</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consistency</b> Consistent 'cost benefit analysis' or 'risk assessment approaches' for scoping and choosing adaptation options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional strategic adaption planning will alleviate the need for site by site decisions. Appropriate bodies should be nominated to lead regional strategic adaptation planning and implementation in coastal areas</li> <li>Develop a package of case studies which demonstrate different types of cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment processes (incorporating social, environmental, cultural elements) for scoping and choosing adaptation options</li> <li>Work with peak Insurance bodies to further understand the distribution costs for damage to coastal properties as a result of sea level rise and increased frequency and intensity of storm events</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information</b> Access to adequate information to help understand the impacts and risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State-wide and local coastal climate change assessments</li> <li>Guidance for practitioners on how to use the data to undertake analysis of assets (built and natural)</li> <li>Communication of information regarding the impacts in 'risk areas' – e.g. areas of inundation or erosion through council rates notices or Land Sale legislation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement</b> Effective engagement and communication with communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community receiving clear and consistent messages on the impacts of sea level rise e.g. whole of government communications program (including a key messages package for coastal councils and authorities to use as a basis for education/ information programs)</li> <li>A range of community engagement methods (e.g. documented as case studies) that councils and regional bodies can use to involve the community in adaptation option scoping, choosing and implementation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instruments</b> Effective implementation instruments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land titles systems capable of managing changing coastlines</li> <li>Markets and financial programs to manage the coastal land buffer for: ecosystems migration, public values (recreation, social use) and managing damage to property</li> <li>Planning systems capable of managing a changing coastal hazards (erosion and inundation)</li> <li>Use of best practise codes and guidelines</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity</b> Adequate skills, capacity, resources and guidance for practitioners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a practitioner (decision makers) coastal climate change training program (accredited)</li> <li>Establish a coastal skills strategy to ensure that governments and agencies are supported by coastal engineers, planners and managers capable of providing authoritative advice</li> </ul>