

# French Island National Park

October 1998



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## Management Plan



This Management Plan for French Island National Park is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct all aspects of management in the Park until the Plan is reviewed. A Draft Management Plan for the area was published in December 1997. Twenty-six submissions were received and have been considered in developing this Approved Plan.

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## FOREWORD

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Although somewhat in the shadow of its smaller but better-known neighbour Phillip Island, French Island in Western Port has several claims to fame. It is the only unincorporated locality in Victoria - that is, it has no municipal council; it has few motor vehicles, and is a great place for an escape to nature; it has wetlands of international significance; it has no foxes; and it has Victoria's only national park entirely contained on an island.

French Island National Park, which occupies about two-thirds of the Island, covers more than 11 000 hectares. It is one of our newest national parks, having been proclaimed as recently as June 1997, although a large part of the Park had been reserved as French Island State Park from 1982. It has very high natural values: mangrove and saltmarsh areas, habitat for large numbers of migratory birds, a rich native flora including the remarkable total of some 100 orchid species, and fauna of national and international significance.

The Park does not attract large numbers of visitors at present, but for those seeking a remote, timeless and natural experience it will increasingly become known as a special attraction. This Plan calls for the provision of appropriate low-key facilities in the Park such as walking tracks, camping areas, drinking water, information and lookouts to cater for

visitors, and for the development of an overall Tourism Strategy for French Island to integrate the provision of services and facilities within and outside the Park. The over-riding aim, however, is to protect and enhance the special values of the Park and Island.

The Plan explains in detail how the Park's natural values will be protected and enhanced in terms of fire management, weed and pest animal control, soil conservation and research. It stresses that park management will be developed in co-operation with private land holders on the Island through a French Island Co-operative Neighbour Program, and that the input of volunteers such as the Friends group will be encouraged.

I commend the Plan to you, and look forward to further, and increased, community involvement in its implementation.

**Marie Tehan MP**  
**Minister for Conservation**  
**and Land Management**

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## APPROVED MANAGEMENT PLAN

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This Approved Management Plan, prepared under Section 17 of the *National Parks Act 1975* (Vic.) and is approved for implementation. It provides the basis and direction for the future management of the French Island National Park.

During the Plan's preparation there was consultation with key groups and individuals to seek input into resolving management issues. Twenty-six submissions were received on the Draft Management Plan. They were all carefully considered when this Plan was being prepared.

Rod Gowans  
**Acting Director of  
National Parks**

Mark Stone  
**Chief Executive  
Parks Victoria**

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## SUMMARY

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French Island National Park (11 100 ha) protects wetlands of international significance and is the only substantial representation in the State's nature conservation reserve system of the land systems of the coastal sand plains and clayey-sand plains of Western Port.

In addition, it is the only national park in Victoria totally contained on an island. It has outstanding natural values and a high level of protection, largely due to its isolation.

The Park offers unique semi-remote recreation opportunities on the 'doorstep' of Melbourne because of restricted access and low visitor numbers.

Mainland visitors to the Park are generally not permitted to bring their own motor vehicles. Bus tours of the Island are available. The main recreation activities are walking, cycling, camping and nature and heritage study.

The Park covers about two-thirds of the Island, the remainder being mainly farmland. The Island is an 'unincorporated locality' (i.e. it has no municipal council).

The protection of the Park and the successful provision of tourism support services, including transport and accommodation, depend upon close liaison with the local community. All co-operative arrangements proposed in this Plan in relation to the use of private land by the land holders are voluntary.

Protecting and enhancing the Park's largely undisturbed environments will be an important management goal, as will maintaining its distinctive character, offering a retreat from the pressures of urban life.

Significant management directions are summarised below.

- The Park will be promoted as an important conservation reserve, enhanced by its island location.
- Significant flora and fauna, including habitat for migratory water birds and sites of threatened species of flora, will be given special protection.
- Comprehensive management strategies will be implemented to protect and enhance marine, freshwater and terrestrial communities.
- Priority will be given to Koala management and restoration of habitat.
- Weed, pest animal and disease control measures will be undertaken.
- A comprehensive fire management plan will be developed and implemented to serve the interests of the Park and the Islanders.
- The generally remote northern and eastern sections of the Park and Barrallier, Pelican and Rams Islands will be investigated for designation as Remote and Natural Areas under Schedule 6 of the National Parks Act.
- Creation of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, incorporating the Park and any adjacent marine protected areas, will be investigated.
- A strategy for management of vehicular access within the Park is defined to improve access routes for management purposes and use, and reduce impacts on the Park.
- An attractive system of walking and cycling routes, with appropriate facilities for day and overnight visitors, will be established.
- Facilities will be provided at key features in the Park to increase the enjoyment and understanding of visitors undertaking bus tours.
- Provision of information to visitors about the Park and French Island will be improved.
- A voluntary Co-operative Neighbour Program will be encouraged in partnership with the local community.



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Location and planning area

French Island National Park (11 100 ha when fully proclaimed) is about 75 km south-east of Melbourne in Western Port.

The Park comprises about two thirds of French Island (17 000 ha), the remainder being private land used primarily for agricultural purposes. To the south in Western Port is Phillip Island, which is smaller.

The planning area covers the existing French Island National Park and an area of 175 ha in the vicinity of Heifer Swamp which will be added to the Park on 4 June 1999.

The seaward boundary of the Park is 150 m offshore from the mean high water mark. This means that some 1100 ha of inter-tidal area are included in the Park.

## 1.2 Regional context

Port Phillip Bay, the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port form the most popular informal recreation area in Victoria, and the parks and reserves in this area are the setting for a wide variety of recreation activities. These include beach activities such as surfing, swimming, scuba diving, walking, horse riding, hang gliding and coastal viewing.

It is estimated that there are about 5 million visitors a year to the parks in this region.

French Island National Park is the largest national park in the Central Coastal Region but is a striking contrast to the rest of the region. It has almost no beaches and far more restricted recreation opportunities, constrained by its relative isolation with restricted access and sensitive environments unsuitable for intensive recreation use. It has about 6 000 visitors a year, making it the least visited Park in the region.

French Island is the largest island along the Victorian coastline. It is about 2 km from the mainland at its closest point, but has no linking bridge or causeway.

The reliance of French Island on ferry and barge transport has brought about a dramatic

contrast with both Phillip Island (which has bridge access) and the mainland. This is clearly reflected in the following:

- the small size of the population (about 50 permanent residents and some 120 part-time residents);
- the very limited extent of commercial development;
- the lack of services, including reticulated electricity and water supplies;
- the low standard of roads and tracks;
- the restriction on Park visitors bringing their own motor vehicles to the Island and to the Park;
- the relatively undisturbed ecosystems.

Parks Victoria supports the Access Strategy of the Island, which restricts visitors from bringing their motorised vehicles onto the Island.

The Park is unique in the region because it is close to a large capital city, yet remains remote and relatively undisturbed.

It contains one of the largest intact areas of native vegetation in the Western Port Region, and has highly significant botanical and faunal values.

## 1.3 Significance of the Park

French Island National Park makes a valuable contribution to Victoria's parks system, which aims to protect viable representative samples of the State's natural environments occurring on public land. Parks also provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate natural and cultural values, and many make important contributions to tourism.

The National Park is assigned the IUCN Category II (National Parks) of the United Nations' List of National Parks and Protected Areas. Category II areas are managed primarily for ecosystem protection and recreation.

The Park is also listed on the Register of the National Estate as part of a larger area, in

recognition of its outstanding values and importance as part of our heritage.

The landscape of French Island is classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). This classification excludes the Tankerton area but includes Elizabeth Island and Pelican and Barrallier Islands.

The significant features of the Park are summarised below.

### **Natural values**

- The only substantial representation of the land systems of the coastal sand plains and clayey-sand plains of Western Port within the State's nature conservation reserve system.
- Extensive mangrove and saltmarsh areas along the north coast which are of State geomorphological importance.
- Part of the Western Port site listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention).
- Habitat for a vast number of migratory birds which are listed under the Japan-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (JAMBA) and the China-Australia Migratory Birds Agreement (CAMBA).
- The sand spit along the west coast, is an important research site for sediment movement and coastal dynamics.
- A rich flora with more than 580 species, including about 100 orchids and 12 threatened species (appendix 1).
- Vegetation of at least State botanical significance, with high quality representative samples of sand heathland, shrubby foothill forest, coastal heathland, coastal saltmarsh and swamp sedgeland, and grassland.
- Fauna of international and national significance, including more than 260 species, whose conservation is enhanced by the Island's isolation from the mainland preventing colonisation by foxes and limiting the degree of habitat disturbance.

### **Cultural values**

- Isolated evidence of Aboriginal use, particularly shell middens.
- Continuing association with European settlement dating from 1854.
- Evidence of unsuccessful Government settlement programs of the 1890s.
- Over 30 sites of historical interest, including old salt harvesting basins on the coast, an isolated grave on Tortoise Head and an 1850s wattle and daub dwelling.

### **Tourism and recreation values**

- Opportunities for walking, cycling, camping, nature and heritage study in a 'remote island' environment.
- Spectacular wildflower displays and opportunities for viewing wildlife.
- Opportunities for minimal contact with other people, especially in the more remote parts of the Park, because of the small resident population, the few motor vehicles and the generally low visitor numbers on the Island.
- Panoramic views across Western Port to the Mornington Peninsula, Phillip Island, and the South Gippsland Hills.
- A potential 'unique niche market for nature-based tourism' within a region offering a broad spectrum of recreation and tourism experiences.
- Excellent opportunities to interpret the Park's outstanding natural values.
- The closeness of the Park to Melbourne, with rail transport to Stony Point and ferry access to the Island.

## **1.4 Creation of the Park**

Since the first European settlement, about a third of the Island has been alienated from the Crown, primarily for agricultural and other uses.

In 1971, the then Fisheries and Wildlife Division produced recommendations in an internal report for a French Island Wildlife Reserve (Seebeck 1971) which provided a basis

for submission to the then LCC in 1974 (Seebeck 1974).

The former LCC in its Final Recommendations for the Melbourne Study Area (LCC 1977) recommended that an area of about 8000 ha be reserved as French Island State Park and that it be managed by the then Fisheries and Wildlife Division. The Park was permanently reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (Vic.) in June 1982.

Subsequently, on 28 June 1988, the State Park of 8300 ha was included on Schedule Three (Other Parks) of the National Parks Act as a result of the *National Parks (Amendment) Act 1984* (Vic.), and transferred to the new Schedule Two B (State Parks) in 1989.

Following a review by the former LCC (completed in July 1994) and acceptance of its recommendations by Government, the *National Parks (Amendment) Act 1997* (Vic.) provided for the reservation of French Island National Park, under Schedule Two (National Parks) of the National Parks Act. The enlarged French Island National Park (10 664 ha) was proclaimed on 4 June 1997 and the SEC land at Red Bluff (261 ha) included in the Park on 15 July 1997. Land in the vicinity of Heifer Swamp (175 ha) is to be added to the Park in 1999. This area will cease to be available for use for duck hunting when included in the Park.

## 1.5 Legislation and guidelines

The Park is reserved and managed under the provisions of the National Parks Act. The Act requires the Director to preserve and protect the natural condition of the Park and its natural and other features and, subject to this, to provide for the use of the Park by the public for enjoyment, recreation and education. The Act also provides for appropriate research.

The LCC Recommendations accepted by Government in relation to the National Park do not allow hunting of native species (duck), but grazing by stock and slashing could be permitted in the short-term for management purposes, at times and places to be determined by the land manager.

The two Reference Areas, proclaimed under the *Reference Areas Act 1978* (Vic.), are managed in accordance with Ministerial directives and relevant guidelines and plans. Within these areas, which form a reference for comparative study purposes, natural processes are to be allowed to continue undisturbed.

The Park is managed in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines for the management of parks, and with other plans and guidelines, including:

- Dandenong Region Fire Protection Plan (CNR 1992);
- Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land (CNR 1995a).

## 1.6 Park management aims

Sections 4 (Objects) and 17 of the National Parks Act provide the main basis for management of the Park.

The following management aims are derived from those sections and as such broadly govern all aspects of park management.

### Resource conservation

- Preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Maintain, or where possible enhance, remote and natural values.
- Allow natural environmental processes to continue with the minimum of interference.
- Maintain biodiversity.
- Conserve features of archaeological, historical and cultural significance.

### Park protection

- Protect human life, the Park and adjacent lands from damage by fire.
- Eradicate or otherwise control introduced plants, animals and diseases.
- Control effects of marine pollution (including oil spillage and beach litter)

### The Park visit

- Provide opportunities for appropriate recreation and tourism.
- Promote and encourage an appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the Park's natural and cultural values and its recreational opportunities.
- Encourage appropriate park use and visitor behaviour, and foster a conservation ethic in visitors.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of visitors.

**Other**

- Provide for and encourage scientific research, including surveys and monitoring that will contribute to a better understanding and management of the Park.
- Co-operate with local, State and interstate government authorities, the community and other interested organisations to assist in the management of the Park.

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## 2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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### 2.1 Park vision

Future visitors to French Island National Park find the Park as an integral part of the total experience of visiting French Island. Its international significance as a relatively undisturbed core of the complex marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Western Port is widely recognised. Visitors are also aware of the important contribution the Park makes to Victoria's national parks system because of its island status, outstanding natural values, absence of foxes, and lack of major diseases.

Overriding priority is given to the protection, restoration and maintenance of the Park's ecosystems and significant natural and cultural features.

The island location gives visitors a unique discovery experience through ferry travel and self-reliant exploration of a system of walks and cycling routes or guided tours to features and sites of interest. Feelings of remoteness and timelessness are supported by sensitively designed and located facilities that enhance enjoyment of the Park and appreciation of its diverse natural values. The proposed Remote and Natural Area designation of a substantial part of the Park under the National Parks Act ensures that the 'remote' experience is preserved for future generations.

The Friends group, volunteers, and other co-operative arrangements are encouraged to protect the special values of the Park in consultation with the community.

The Park makes an important contribution to the local economy with community-based park support services, including provision of transport for visitors, accommodation and management assistance.

### 2.2 Management directions

Major management directions for the Park are outlined below.

### Resource conservation

- The wide range of habitats and ecosystems will be managed to maintain and enhance biodiversity.
- Flora and fauna will be given special protection and management where required.
- Hunting of native species and the harvesting of seagrass will cease.
- Urgent priority will be given to the management of Koalas, including protection and restoration of habitat.
- A plan will be developed for the restoration and maintenance of fresh-water wetlands in the Park.
- Cultural heritage and landscape values, and sites of geomorphological significance, will be protected.
- The designation of the generally remote northern and eastern sections of the Park, and Barrallier, Pelican and Rams Islands, as Remote and Natural Areas under Schedule 6 of the National Parks Act, will be sought.
- Voluntary co-operative management with landholders outside the Park will be encouraged where this is likely to enhance special values (e.g. Koala habitat).
- The desirability and feasibility of creating a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, which will incorporate French Island National Park and any adjacent marine protected areas as the relatively undisturbed core area of the Reserve, will be investigated.

### Park protection

- Pest plant and animal control will give priority to key species and key sites with the objective, where appropriate, of eradication, in co-operation with landholders.
- Priority will be given to preventing the introduction of pests and diseases to the Island.

- Access will be managed in accordance with the current approved French Island Access Strategy.
- Fire management will integrate the requirements of significant flora and fauna, habitat management, pest plant control and asset protection.

### **The Park visit**

- The recreation opportunities provided for in the Park will be natural and cultural heritage appreciation, walking, cycling, boating and camping.
- The predominant experience to be promoted will be a feeling of remoteness and untouched quality, without intrusive development.
- A comprehensive walking track and cycling route network will be provided, offering a range of half-day, one-day and longer trips.
- Remote camping, with limited facilities, will be provided for in attractive settings in the Park.
- The road and track network in the Park will be managed to give public vehicular access to strategic viewing locations near Park boundaries, and to provide through routes in the western section.
- Local transport services to readily accessible areas will be encouraged.
- Appropriate tourism facilities and services on private land to complement Park visits will be encouraged.
- The quality and extent of interpretation services for visitors will be improved.

### **Community awareness and involvement**

- Increased awareness and understanding of the Park and its values will be promoted.
- Visitors will be encouraged to respect the rights of private property holders.
- A Co-operative Neighbour Program will be developed, to benefit both private landholders and the Park.

### **Monitoring and research**

- An Environmental Management System will be introduced for managing the comprehensive Park database, and environmental monitoring programs.
- The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program will be utilised if appropriate (section 3.7) to provide a regional basis for ecological and environmental research.
- The Park will be promoted for its ecological research opportunities.

### **2.3 Zoning**

A park management zoning scheme has been developed to:

- provide a geographic framework in which to manage the Park (including the inter-tidal areas);
- indicate which management directions have priority in different parts of the Park;
- indicate the types and levels of use appropriate throughout the Park;
- assist in minimising existing and potential conflicts between uses and activities, or between these and the protection of park values;
- provide a basis for assessing the suitability of future activities and development proposals.

Three management zones apply to the Park - Reference Area, Conservation, and Conservation and Recreation. Overlays are also used to indicate management requirements additional to those of the underlying management zones. There are four overlays - Special Protection Areas, a land use designation (proposed Remote and Natural Area), Special Management (Rehabilitation) and Special Management (Koala Habitat).

Table 1 specifies the management zones and overlay characteristics, and their locations are shown in figure 2. Special Protection Areas are listed in appendix 5.

Section 4.2 covers amendments to the boundaries of the East Reference Area.

**TABLE 1 MANAGEMENT ZONES AND OVERLAYS**

	ZONES		
	CONSERVATION & RECREATION	CONSERVATION	REFERENCE AREA
AREA/LOCATION	2450 ha, 22% of the Park. Areas near Tankerton along the Coast and McLeod roads, around the boundary of the former prison farm and part of Mosquito Creek area.	8255 ha, 74.4% of the Park including all areas between high water mark and 150 m seaward.	395 ha, 3.6% of the Park – North and East Reference Areas (section 4.2).
VALUES	Important natural values and scope for recreation opportunities.	Important and sensitive natural values and scope for low impact recreation opportunities.	Relatively undisturbed representative land types and associated vegetation.
GENERAL MANAGEMENT AIM	Protect less sensitive natural environments and provide for sustainable dispersed recreation activities and small-scale recreation facilities without significant impact on natural processes.	Protect sensitive natural environments and provide for minimal impact recreation activities and simple visitor facilities, subject to ensuring minimal interference to natural processes.	Protect viable samples of one or more land types that are relatively undisturbed for comparative study with similar land types elsewhere, by keeping all human interference to the minimum essential and ensuring as far as practicable that the only long-term change results from natural processes.
FIRE MANAGEMENT	Fuel reduction and ecological burning using minimal impact techniques.	Fuel reduction and ecological burning using minimal impact techniques.	No fuel reduction burning; fire suppression in adjacent zones.
ACCESS	Seasonal 2WD and 4WD public access generally available.	Mainly management vehicle emergency access only.	For approved scientific research only.
SIGNAGE	Directional, identification, interpretation and information signs.	Minimal directional, identification, interpretation and information signs.	Not appropriate.

Table 1 (cont)

	OVERLAY			
	SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA	REMOTE AND NATURAL AREA	SPECIAL MANAGEMENT (REHABILITATION)	SPECIAL MANAGEMENT (KOALA HABITAT)
AREA/LOCATION	600 ha, approx. 5.4% of the Park (figure 2 and appendix 5).	5600 ha, 50.5% of the Park. Proposed for reservation under Schedule Six of the National Parks Act.	2500 ha, 22.5% of the Park with special management for eradication of pines, rehabilitation of cleared areas and rehabilitation of grassland and enhancement of depleted forest/woodland.	100 ha, approximately 0.9% of the Park. Scattered occurrences of koala habitat.
VALUES	Discrete significant areas requiring special attention.	Significant remote and natural area. Opportunities for self-reliant recreation.	Degraded areas with significant values requiring special management.	Declining habitat due to overpopulation by koalas as well as deterioration from other agents requiring special management.
GENERAL MANAGEMENT AIM	Protect specific natural or cultural values in specific areas and sites where a special management focus is required.	Protect the Area's remote and natural attributes; prevent further developments and upgrading of access, except as provided for in this Management Plan.	Restore and enhance special values with interim management which includes grazing by domestic stock and burning regimes, and eradication of pines.	Protect and restore areas to create viable units of habitat, and control size of koala populations.
FIRE MANAGEMENT	Fuel reduction and ecological burning, minimal impact fire suppression techniques, no burning in special cases.	As per underlying management zone.	Prescriptive burning taking into account requirements of underlying zoning.	As per underlying management zone.
ACCESS	Usually restricted to protect particular values.	As per underlying management zone.	As per underlying management zone.	As per underlying management zone.
SIGNAGE	Minimal interpretation signs where appropriate.	Minimal interpretation signs where appropriate.	As per underlying management zone with special explanatory signs.	As per underlying management zone.

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## 3 RESOURCE CONSERVATION

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### 3.1 Geological and landform features

French Island has low relief, with a central block of steep hills and gentle hills to the south-west. The maximum elevation is 98 m above sea level at Mount Wellington. In the north-west there are extensive sand sheets, with swales and swamp deposits between ridges containing a remarkably intact and large network of freshwater wetlands. The coast has extensive mangrove areas and mudflats, sand spits and a complex of dunes, cliffs, and shore platforms of stones, gravels and sands extending to mudflats. Tortoise Head, a former basalt island, has become linked to the main island by an isthmus of mangroves.

There are only four small creeks, largely tidal, on the Island.

The main geological elements are Mesozoic sediments, Tertiary basalt and sediments, Quaternary sands of aeolian origin, and more recent Holocene swamp and intertidal deposits.

The most widespread soils in the Park are sandy, with smaller areas of clays and clay loams, and extensive peaty sands and clays in swamps and saltmarsh areas.

Eighteen sites of geological and geomorphological significance have been recognised in the Park (table 2). The Island features the 'last remaining extensive coastal area (near Melbourne) in which natural processes may be studied in relative isolation from the pressures of industrial, recreational and urban development' (Rosengren 1984).

Potential threats to these sites include quarrying, inappropriate coastal engineering, roadworks, dredging and spoil disposal, vegetation clearing and other activities leading to soil disturbance.

#### Aims

- Protect the outstanding geomorphological and geological features, and maintain the natural processes and functioning of the natural aquatic ecosystems.

- Provide for the appreciation and study of the physical features and associated geomorphological processes.

#### Management strategies

- *Monitor and manage significant sites to minimise human impacts, in accordance with table 2.*
- *Liaise with relevant Government agencies to ensure that effective planning controls and measures exist to restrict and control works in Western Port, so as to maintain the coastal environment of the Park in its natural condition.*
- *Encourage geomorphological studies, particularly to enhance knowledge of coastal dynamics and appropriate management for areas identified in table 2, and provide interpretative and educational material for the public.*

### 3.2 Marine and intertidal environment

French Island is a central feature of the Western Port sunkland. The tidal watershed around the Island is a complex marine system which has immense biological wealth due to the wide variety of habitat types present in the Bay, a variety which does not occur elsewhere in Victoria (Shapiro 1975). The tidal watershed to the north-east of Palmer Point is particularly significant for understanding the evolution of Western Port (Rosengren 1984).

The 'zone of dynamic interaction of sea and land together with the associated biota' has been identified by Shapiro (1975) as an important entity deserving special protection. The north coast of French Island and Tortoise Head, from the low water mark and extending inland, were two such areas recommended for reservation by Shapiro. These two areas are now largely within the Park boundary (150 m

**TABLE 2 MANAGEMENT OF SITES OF GEOMORPHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	MANAGEMENT
*Palmer Point Sand Ridges	State - display of relict geomorphic processes; illustrates value of mangroves for stability of saltmarsh.	Avoid physical works; restrict access.
*River Point - Duck Splash Mangroves & Saltmarsh	State - major mangrove and saltmarsh area important for study of sedimentary processes.	Prevent mangrove disturbance, dredging and deposition of dredge spoil in area.
Scrub Point & Chilcott Rocks	Regional - significant ferruginous sandstone rock outcrops (2 sites).	Discontinue extraction of rock.
*Tankerton to River Point	State - sand drift and mangrove retreat illustrating shoreline physiography (rapid changes).	Monitor mangrove retreat and take action if stability of north shoreline is threatened.
The Pinnacles	State - unique example of relatively undisturbed high crescent shaped aeolian dune.	Avoid new road works and vegetation clearing; manage vehicular traffic.
Clump Lagoon	Regional - complex wetland of two lakes and swamp terrain.	Avoid soil disturbance within catchment.
Tankerton Creek	Regional - example of natural shoreline erosion process and dynamics.	Maintain area; allow natural processes to continue.
*Tortoise Head	State - basalt promontory, sand spit and advancing mangroves, with large number of active geomorphic processes.	Protect from disturbance, including coastal engineering south of Tankerton Jetty and construction works.
The Anchorage	State - exposed contact zone between Tertiary and Mesozoic formations.	Maintain area without modification.
Chesapeak Sand Ridges (part in private property)	Regional - paired spits/sand accretion zone.	Protect from disturbance in collaboration with private land owner.
Rams Island & adjacent coast	Local - example of a tombolo.	Prohibit works and erection of any structures.
Red Bluff	State - exposure of Lower Cretaceous structural features.	Protect from disturbance and prevent unauthorised collection of fossil material.
Mosquito Creek	Regional - saltmarsh terrace and chenier formation; geomorphic process.	Allow natural processes to continue. Prevent drainage, clearing, grazing and construction.
*Freeman Point	State - sandy cusplate foreland, coastal bluff and cliff.	Protect from disturbance and prevent erection of structures.
*Blue Gum Point to Spit Point	State - shoreline progradation and landform development.	Prohibit coastal works between Palmer and Freeman Points; allow natural processes to continue.
*Albions Point	Regional - sedimentation processes affecting mangroves and saltmarsh.	Maintain natural processes.
Barrallier Island	Regional - gravelly island which changes in response to storms.	Protect from disturbances.

\*indicates priority sites for study

REFERENCE: Rosengren (1984)

off-shore from the mean high water mark). Together with the whole Bay and catchment, they need to be managed in an integrated manner to ensure conservation and sustainable use.

The intertidal areas and saline wetlands of the Park and Western Port are biologically of national and international significance (section 3.4). They include:

- mangroves and extensive seagrass areas;
- unusually extensive saltmarshes, up to 1 km wide. Compared to other areas in southern Australia the saltmarshes are richer in plant species (some 40 species recorded), less disturbed and relatively weed-free, making them of national significance.

Potential risks to the environment may arise from a range of activities. Risks include oil spills and ballast water flushing from shipping and port activities, sediment movement over seagrass and mangroves from dredging and spoil disposal or coastal engineering, decline of shoreline habitat from seagrass harvesting, water pollution and introduction of foreign species, as well as disturbance to fauna from aquaculture in adjacent areas, and entry of contaminants and nutrients from effluent and stormwater drainage from the catchment.

Considerable amounts of sea-borne rubbish, largely from fishing boats, are deposited on the beaches and saltmarsh areas (M. O'Brien pers. comm.). Litter such as fishing line and plastic material poses significant environmental threats, particularly along the west coast.

The saltmarsh areas are vulnerable to damage from trampling, and from erosion and sedimentation if the protective mangroves are destroyed.

Aquaculture was not provided for when the Park was established.

Commercial harvesting of seagrass cast on beaches has occurred under Permissive Occupancies for a number of years. Access to the beach for this activity is at Chilcott Rocks, a high tide roost for birds, and harvesting occurs over summer when birds breed in the area. This activity is inappropriate also because of the value of seagrass to shore birds

and for ameliorating wave action and sediment movement into seagrass beds, mangroves and saltmarsh. In addition, saltmarsh and soils are damaged by vehicles used for harvesting.

### **Aim**

- Protect and maintain the quality of the marine and intertidal environment in the Park, in conjunction with adjacent waters.

### **Management strategies**

- *As a priority conserve seagrasses, intertidal flats, saltmarshes, mangroves, reefs and critical habitat for wading birds and fish.*
- *Protect mangroves and saltmarsh areas from physical disturbance, including trampling, vehicle use, domestic stock, drainage and construction work.*
- *Discontinue seagrass harvesting in the Park.*
- *Liaise with other authorities responsible for management of Western Port and its catchment, and provide input as appropriate for managing and reducing risks to the marine environment (particularly pollution, sediment movement and introduction of introduced species).*
- *Develop and implement a program for monitoring the intertidal areas of the Park to detect weed establishment, litter, chemical pollution and visitor impact, and take appropriate action.*
- *Do not allow new coastal development works (other than recreation facilities provided for in this Plan) in the Park, and, through liaison with the responsible authorities, seek to minimise adverse impacts from any such activities outside the Park, including aquaculture near ecologically sensitive sites such as threatened bird roosts or breeding areas.*
- *Encourage the development and implementation, in collaboration with other agencies, of an education and*

*interpretation program on the ecological significance of Western Port which promotes responsible waste and rubbish disposal and pollution control.*

### 3.3 Vegetation

The Park forms one of the largest intact areas of native vegetation in the Western Port catchment and within 100 km of Melbourne, largely because of the restricted access (Opie et al. 1984).

The botanical values are considered to be of State significance. Twenty-nine vegetation sub-communities, now generally absent on the mainland, within 10 major vegetation communities, are present (Opie et al. 1984). Two additional communities are either extinct (Blue Gum forest) or very reduced (Manna Gum coastal woodland) (Vanderzee 1992).

The most significant land-based features, in addition to the marine and intertidal values outlined in section 3.2, are:

- very expansive and rich heathlands;
- remnant sclerophyll forest and woodlands, now limited in extent (valuable remnants also exist on private property);
- extensive freshwater swamp and ephemeral communities, largely drained elsewhere in the region, consisting of four major communities and six sub-communities (Vanderzee 1992).

The 580 native plant taxa recorded in the Park comprise 292 dicotyledons, 267 monocotyledons and 21 ferns and fern allies (NPS database 1995). Notably there are few entrenched weeds, and the destructive Cinnamon Fungus is absent from the Island (section 4.2).

About 160 native species, including about 100 species of orchids, are considered significant because of their regional, State or national rarity, or unusual features.

Thirty-two species of native plants from the Island are not recorded elsewhere in the region; 26 of these are in the Park and 15 are only present in the Park (Opie et al. 1984). The Park's rare or threatened and significant flora is

listed in appendix 1. At least 12 species are rare or threatened in Victoria, but can be considered secure in the Park. None is listed as threatened under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic.), but one has been recommended for listing.

No plant communities are considered to be threatened. Five sites of botanical significance have been identified (Opie et al. 1984) because of the diverse range of communities or notable species present (appendix 2). Three of these are confined to the Park, and two will be predominantly in the Park when recent land acquisitions are incorporated.

A number of partly cleared areas in the Park and areas scheduled for inclusion in the Park require revegetation measures and conservation of important grassland species. These (defined as Rehabilitation Areas in figure 2) include Gartsides and Brella Spur, and Blue Gums (the former SEC land) which has significant species regenerating in parts (Cameron 1996).

The wildflower display, and particularly the orchids, are a major visitor attraction.

The main influences which have affected the vegetation following European settlement are:

- burning, rabbit and stock grazing, and non-intensive agricultural practices;
- clearing of vegetation and construction of roads, track and firebreaks;
- land drainage affecting the wetland system. Over 60 freshwater wetlands (most of which are in the Park) remain on the Island;
- Koalas, insects and other causes degrading Manna Gum and Swamp Gum.

Appropriate fire management is vital to enable communities to attain maturity, maintain species diversity and control invasive weeds and native species such as Coast Tea-tree and Coast Wattle (section 4.1).

The conservation and management of flora, as well as all other resources, can be enhanced by encouraging research and monitoring, and use of an Environmental Management System.

### Aims

- Conserve the indigenous vegetation communities in their natural condition, and maintain natural ecological processes.
- Rehabilitate disturbed areas and provide special protection and management to maintain and/or enhance genetic and species diversity.
- Provide for appropriate research and appreciation of the flora which involves minimal disturbance to the environment.

### **Management strategies**

- *Seek reservation of the remote northern and eastern sections of the Park, including Barrallier, Pelican and Rams Islands, as a Remote and Natural Area under Schedule 6 of the National Parks Act (section 2.3 and figure 2).*
- *Minimise disturbance to the vegetation, particularly the sites of botanical significance (appendix 2) and sensitive communities such as swamps and ephemeral wetlands, and threatened and significant species (appendix 1), by undertaking visitor management and education programs (sections 5.3 and 6.3).*
- *Encourage research (including collection of oral records) and monitoring to improve understanding of the conservation status of rare and threatened species and communities and their original condition, and the appropriate fire regimes for vegetation management.*
- *Establish a park-based Environmental Management System to record data, using existing systems where practicable, to improve resource conservation.*
- *Prepare and implement a comprehensive plan for vegetation management, particularly relating to fire ecology.*
- *Manage fire regimes to maintain the diversity of species and communities (including wildlife habitat), as specified in section 4.1.*

- *Maintain strategic areas (e.g. selected firebreaks and roadsides) for wildflower viewing by visitors (section 5.2.2).*
- *Develop and implement, in collaboration with NRE and Friends of French Island, a plan based on engineering surveys for the restoration and maintenance of freshwater wetlands in the Park, and, under the Co-operative Neighbour Program (section 6.2), encourage voluntary reinstatement of drained wetlands outside the Park.*
- *Develop plans for managing the Rehabilitation Areas (figure 2), including regeneration and maintenance of rare grassland species, using, where appropriate, controlled stock grazing with electric fencing, and selective use of fire and herbicides.*
- *Rehabilitate areas of dead and denuded Manna Gum and Swamp Gum through appropriate Koala management (section 3.4), integrated with insect control and replanting programs.*
- *Provide advice and assistance to landholders to encourage conservation of native vegetation and wildlife habitat on private land, under the Co-operative Neighbour Program (section 6.2).*

### **3.4 Fauna**

The Park is of national and international significance for fauna.

It is nationally significant because ‘it provides a continuous range of habitats for fauna, which supports a higher diversity of animals than on comparable mainland areas’ (Andrew et al. 1984).

It is internationally significant because it is an integral part of the extensive and interconnected intertidal mudflats and wetlands of Western Port, important for the conservation of migratory birds. The area is listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as waterfowl habitat (the Ramsar Convention). Many of the birds using the area, such as the migratory waders, are also

listed under the JAMBA and CAMBA international agreements.

Western Port is one of Victoria's most important areas for wading birds, many thousands of birds foraging during summer over the exposed mudflats and shores (Loyn 1975).

The Park supports over 230 species of indigenous birds (about 130 land-based species and 64 migratory species, of which at least 115 species have been recorded as breeding), 10 species of indigenous mammals, 12 species of reptiles (lizards and snakes) and at least 10 species of frogs (NPS database 1995).

The invertebrate fauna is unsurveyed, but the 'intact' terrestrial and aquatic environments are likely to support a diverse assemblage of species, potentially of major scientific interest in view of the island situation.

The vertebrate fauna includes over 20 threatened species (excluding incidental records), of which seven species are listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (appendix 3). Over 20 species depend on tree hollows for breeding. Seven bird species present in early records, including the Brolga, have not been recorded again (NPS database 1995). Human disturbance, such as from recreation and bird banding for research purposes, poses a growing threat to rare species and fauna reliant on limited habitat for breeding or roosting.

As is typical of islands, the mammal fauna is depauperate. Carnivorous marsupials, bandicoots, possums and large macropods are absent. However, Long-nosed Potoroos occur in good numbers, the only extant population in the Western Port region, probably largely because of the absence of the Red Fox (Seebeck 1981; Lumsden et al. 1991). The effect of the long period of isolation from the mainland of species such as the Bush Rat and Swamp Rat on the Island is of scientific interest.

Keeping foxes off the Island and controlling feral cats, which are a particular threat to ground-dwelling fauna, are essential for the protection of small mammals and ground-frequenting birds.

Koalas on the Island are derived from a few animals introduced in the 1880s. They are free of the disease *Chlamydia* and continue to have a high reproductive rate. Despite an annual relocation program, over-browsing of food trees and tree mortality is a major problem over the whole Island. The habitat is scattered and only about 20 percent is in the Park. The French Island population has major significance for Koala conservation in Victoria (Martin 1989) and has been the major source for the successful Koala re-establishment program on the mainland. Koalas in the Park are included in Koala fertility control trials being conducted by NRE, through the Koala Working Group, using Ecoplan Ltd. to evaluate options for resolving over-browsing problems at various sites in Victoria.

The Island has a small population of Sambar, which are protected wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic.), but exotic fauna under the National Parks Act. Their impact on the vegetation, soils and wetlands appears to have been minimal, but no systematic assessment has been made. Hunting is not permitted in the Park, but has occurred in the past.

Duck hunting on designated wetlands has occurred in the State Park in the past on the understanding that this practice would be reviewed when a management plan was prepared. Duck hunting is not permitted in any national park in Victoria. The inclusion in the Park of an area of former freehold in the vicinity of Heifer Swamp, where duck hunting is allowed, is deferred until June 1999, when hunting on this land will cease.

The need to maintain the quality of the marine habitat has been outlined in section 3.2.

### Aims

- Ensure the conservation of indigenous terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna.
- Maintain the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in healthy condition.
- Meet international commitments of the Ramsar Convention and the JAMBA and CAMBA agreements for protection of waterfowl and migratory wading birds.

- Provide for appropriate research and appreciation of wildlife, which involves minimal disturbance.

### **Management strategies**

- *Develop and implement, with public involvement, a comprehensive wildlife management plan, with prescriptions for habitat management (including appropriate fire regimes) and control of threats to maintain viable populations of the indigenous species. In the interim, undertake actions for particular species listed in table 3.*
- *Manage species and potentially threatening processes listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (including protection of the Orange-bellied Parrot and White-bellied Sea-Eagle, and control of threats posed by feral cats), according to relevant Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statements*
- *Implement, with NRE support, strategies to conserve Koalas and their habitat, including:*
  - *regular site assessment of habitat condition to indicate browsing intensity and translocation requirements;*
  - *immediate prevention of further tree defoliation by Koalas, involving such measures as use of tree guards and partial or total removal of Koalas from damaged sites;*
  - *exclusion of domestic stock by fencing where necessary;*
  - *replanting to replace lost trees and to enlarge or help link isolated trees and groups of trees in cleared areas;*
  - *monitoring and research to provide a basis for management;*
  - *developing and providing information and educational materials and signs addressing Koala habitat, biology and management, and advising of preferred locations for Koala viewing;*
  - *assisting with the implementation of the Koala fertility control trials.*
- *Assist development by NRE of a Koala Management Plan for its conservation on the whole Island, in accordance with the*

*approved National Koala Strategy and statewide plan for Victoria being developed by the Koala Working Group, based on research and involving habitat protection and regeneration, and population management and maintenance at sustainable levels.*

- *Manage waterbird and seabird breeding sites designated as Special Protection Areas in accordance with table 4.*
- *Continue to maintain waterbird and wader feeding and roosting areas (listed in appendix 4 and defined as Special Protection Areas) in a secluded and undeveloped condition, and protect these from disturbance by public activities by restricting access, avoiding nearby developments, and by public education (section 3.2).*
- *Develop with NRE, appropriate mechanisms under the research permit system to avoid disturbance of wildlife during breeding and adverse impact of bird banding.*
- *Encourage relevant research and surveys to determine the distribution and habitat requirements of key species (particularly invertebrate species) in order to identify any necessary protection or management measures.*
- *Allow duck hunting only in the former freehold land near Heifer Swamp until 3 June 1999.*
- *Determine the population level, distribution and impact of Sambar in the Park, and implement appropriate control measures as and when necessary.*

**TABLE 3 MANAGEMENT OF THREATENED AND SIGNIFICANT FAUNA**

SPECIES	STATUS ON FRENCH ISLAND	HABITAT	DISTRIBUTION	MANAGEMENT
King Quail <i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	Uncommon resident; breeding.	Low, dense swampy heath, particularly recently burnt areas. Ground nesting and feeding.	Scattered locations, including Heifer Swamp margins. Nest site to north of Link Rd is one of few recorded Victoria.	Identify key breeding sites. Control cats. Mosaic burning. Maintain swamps/rehabilitate.
Orange-bellied Parrot <i>Neophema chrysogaster</i>	Rare; winter migrant.	Saltmarsh & swamp margins during winter. Ground feeding.	Over-winter records include Barrallier Is., West Coast, Tankerton, Bullock & Decoy Swamps, Heifer Swamp & Gartside.	Protect saltmarsh and swamps from disturbance, and mangroves from sedimentation. Control cats. Continue population monitoring.
Fairy Tern <i>Sterna nereis</i>	Uncommon; breeding.	Sheltered sandy & rocky coastal areas. Ground nesting.	Nest on Rams Is. Tidal flooding and excessive vegetation development can prevent nesting.	Maintain Rams Is. suitable for nesting by weeding and distribution of shellgrit. Access for management and research purposes only.
White-bellied Sea-Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	Rare; in danger of local extinction; breeding.	Coastal waters. Tall eucalypts for nesting.	Nesting site near Red Bluff (the only known site Melb. 2 Study Area, LCC 1994); possible second site on northern part of island.	Protect nesting site and critical vicinity from all disturbance (incl. bird banding). Access only for management and essential research. Check for location of new nest sites. Identify habitat requirements, define critical habitat and protect/maintain.
Swamp Skink <i>Egernia coventryi</i>	Localised.	Tidal saltmarsh with abundance of driftwood, & heathy swampy areas.	Tortoise Head & Heifer Swamp.	Provide controlled access to Heifer Swamp and protect habitat from disturbance. Access to Tortoise Head for management and research purposes only.
Long-nosed Potoroo <i>Potorous tridactylus</i>	Uncommon, present in low (natural) densities.	Heath-woodland/Open-forest.	Scattered distribution; known locations being extended; majority now in Park, but significant habitat on private land.	Assess local habitat requirements. Define burning regime required for food and shelter. Conduct trial burning and monitor to refine management prescriptions. Assist landholders to conserve habitat.

REFERENCES: Seebeck 1981; Andrew et al. 1984; Belcher & Hastings 1983; Lumsden et al. 1991; M. Douglas pers. comm.

**TABLE 4 MANAGEMENT OF KEY WATERBIRD BREEDING AREAS**

AREA	SPECIES AND SIGNIFICANCE	MANAGEMENT
<b>Freshwater swamps</b>		
Heifer & Little Heifer Swamps	Major colonies of Straw-necked & Australian White Ibis; also Royal Spoonbill, Little Pied Cormorant, Blue-billed Duck (uncommon in Victoria), Australian Shoveller, Lewin's Rail, Baillon's Crake and Spotless Crake.	Provide limited access and well located bird hide for public.
Clump Lagoon	Pied Cormorants bred in 1980-81 (one of few known area in Victoria outside Murray Basin); also Australian White and Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, and Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants.	Provide controlled access to bird hide and protect habitat from disturbance.
Stick Swamp	Little Pied Cormorant, Blue-billed Duck, Straw-necked Ibis and Musk Duck.	Access for management, monitoring and research only.
Bullock and Decoy Swamps	Black Swan, Chestnut Teal and other ducks.	Control access and protect habitat from disturbance.
<b>Saline areas</b>		
The Duck Splash	Australian Pelican (2nd largest of three regular breeding colonies in Victoria), and Australian Shelduck, Black Swan and Little Pied Cormorant in nearby mangroves.	Prohibit access during breeding and restrict access at all other times to protect from disturbance.
Palmer Point	Pelican rookery in some years in saltmarsh at creek outlet. Also Black Swan and Australian Shelduck.	Prohibit access during breeding and protect habitat from disturbance.
Red Bill Creek	Pied Cormorant (with 50 pairs in 1960) and small colony of Australian Pelican in some years. Black Swan and Australian Shelduck breed regularly.	Restrict access and increase public awareness of need to avoid disturbance.
Fairhaven	Black Swan and Australian Shelduck on saltmarsh.	Restrict access and increase public awareness.
Tortoise Head	Short-tailed Shearwater (3000+ burrows), Pied Oystercatcher, Caspian and Fairy Tern in small numbers, Black Swan and Australian Shelduck.	Discourage landing of boats and general access from Tankerton; increase public awareness.
Barrallier Island	Pied Oystercatcher (one of few breeding sites in Western Port Bay), Little Penguin and Crested Tern.	Protect from disturbance by boats and prohibit landing and land access; increase public awareness.
Rams Island	Caspian and Fairy Tern (vulnerable in Victoria), and Pied Oystercatcher.	Protect from disturbance by boats and prohibit all access; increase public awareness.
South coast foreshore	Pied Oystercatcher	Provide controlled access; increase public awareness.

REFERENCES: Andrew et al. 1984; Belcher & Hastings 1983; Loyn 1975; Lumsden et al. 1991; M. Douglas pers. comm.; D. Quinn pers. comm.

### 3.5 Landscape

The outstanding elements are island features and the setting in Western Port, extensive undisturbed natural landscapes and seascapes giving a sense of remoteness and timelessness. The Pinnacles offer one of the best viewing locations in the Park.

Most of the Island has been classified by the National Trust for its high landscape values in recognition of these features.

Aspects which detract from the natural landscape include pine trees and other exotic vegetation, roads and vehicular tracks in poor condition, and poorly maintained structures (sections 7.2 and 7.3).

Developments within the Park and in adjacent areas, and management activities, have the potential to affect landscape values.

#### Aim

- Protect the landscape and minimise impacts on natural values, particularly as seen from major viewing points.

#### Management strategies

- *Ensure that new developments, works and management activities in the Park are planned and designed to minimise impacts on landscape values, in keeping with the character of the Park and the Island, and do not significantly impair internal and external views.*
- *Remove or ameliorate undesirable visual intrusions, such as pines in natural settings, where practicable (section 4.2).*
- *Assess the visual impact of structures and roads in the Park, and options for ameliorative actions, in conjunction with their value for management needs, and take appropriate action.*

### 3.6 Cultural heritage

The Bunurong language group of the Port Phillip and Western Port area is reported to have utilised the Island's plant and animal resources. Three client groups comprising the Burinyung-bulluk, Mayone-bulluk and Yallock-

bulluk fringed the Island, but records of their use of the Island are lacking (Barwick 1984). All animals tended to be hunted, fishing was important, and egg collecting prompted travel to the Island (Gauthwin 1981). The coastal wetlands were the most productive, yielding large quantities of oysters, mussels and other shellfish, as well as waterfowl and eggs such as swans' eggs.

There is little available archaeological information and no recorded evidence of permanent occupation. A limited archaeological survey was conducted by Gauthwin in 1981. Three sites (two shell middens and a stone scatter) have been officially recorded (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria), and there are records of additional middens, stone scatters and several stone items (NPS database 1995; Rangers pers. comm.). Other sites are known to occur and need investigation.

A review of background information and a field survey is needed to determine adequately the archaeological values present and management or protection required.

All Aboriginal material is protected under the *State Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972* (Vic.). In addition the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (Cwlth) gives broader protection for Aboriginal cultural property, including places, objects and folklore of particular significance to Aborigines.

The first reported sighting of French Island by Europeans was by George Bass on 5 February 1798. James Grant named Tortoise Head and Barrallier Island, during exploration of Western Port in 1801. Members of a French expedition from the ship *Le Naturaliste* were credited with discovering that French Island was an island in April 1802. They named the Island Ile Francoise ('Frances's Island'), later incorrectly translated as French Island. The first European occupation was temporary, in April 1844, to produce barilla (an alkali) from mangroves. The first lease of land was a pastoral run to William and John Gairdner on 11 December 1850. This was followed by further settlements, subdivisions, and such

ventures as salt harvesting. Records indicate that the community suffered many hardships and a lack of facilities because of the isolation and wet or swampy conditions.

In the 1890s, seven settlements were established on the Island to give employment to people in the Depression. All these settlements failed because of the remote conditions and the settlers' lack of farming skills.

The former McLeod Prison Farm, established in 1916, was closed in 1975 because of the increasing number of escapes and growing costs. This facility, now the privately owned McLeod Ecofarm and Historic Prison, is a visitor attraction which offers accommodation.

There are over 30 sites of historical interest in the Park, including old salt harvesting basins on the coast, an isolated grave at Tortoise Head and an 1850s wattle and daub dwelling located partly in the Park. Many of these sites present opportunities for interpretation and tourism (NPS database 1995).

#### **Aims**

- Preserve and protect archaeological and historic sites and features of significance, and where appropriate interpret particular features.
- Improve understanding of the historic and cultural values and their significance.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Initiate investigations and field surveys (through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and in consultation with the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council) to identify the archaeological values present.*
- *Conduct investigations before starting any development works.*
- *Protect, interpret and manage Aboriginal sites and places in the Park in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines and in consultation with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council.*

- *Encourage the assessment and investigation of sites and, where appropriate, development of conservation plans for European heritage sites in the Park, with provision of appropriate interpretation and tourism opportunities (section 5.3).*
- *Interpret the rich cultural history of the area at appropriate locations in the Park and at Tankerton (section 5.3).*

### **3.7 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves**

The international wetland values, relatively undisturbed nature and isolation of the Park, and the need for co-operation with local communities to help protect these values, warrant consideration of the creation of a Biosphere Reserve within the Western Port Region, which incorporates French Island.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's Seville Strategy (UNESCO 1995) describes Biosphere Reserves as 'areas of terrestrial and coastal/ marine ecosystems, or a combination thereof. These are internationally recognised within the statutory framework of UNESCO's Program on Man and the Biosphere'.

Biosphere Reserves should consist of a relatively undisturbed core area (protected for nature conservation values) surrounded by areas that have been modified in various ways by human activity (e.g. farming or port development) and resource utilisation (e.g. fishing and tourism). The inclusion of private land in the Biosphere Reserve is purely on a voluntary basis.

The Park and any future marine protected areas satisfy these criteria and appear to be ideally suited to forming part of such a reserve.

Reserves are nominated by national governments. Each reserve must meet a set of minimum criteria and adhere to a set of minimum conditions before being admitted to the world network of reserves.

The purpose of the UNESCO Biosphere Program is to help reconcile the conservation of biodiversity and biological resources with their sustainable use. An effective Biosphere

Reserve involves management authorities and local communities working closely together.

As at March 1995, there were 324 reserves in 82 countries, of which 12 are in Australia and three in Victoria.

Each Biosphere Reserve is intended to fulfil three complementary functions, as follows:

- a conservation function to preserve genetic resources, ecosystems and landscapes;
- a development function, to foster sustainable economic and human development;
- a logistic support function, to support demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and research and monitoring.

The role of the Park and any future marine protected areas would be to provide the relatively undisturbed core of the Reserve. The inclusion of other areas in the Reserve would need to be subject to further investigation. It could include farmland with co-operative programs such as protecting Koala habitat or revegetation under Landcare programs, and marine and coastal reserves in the region with various forms of resource utilisation, including aquaculture.

The benefits include:

- appropriate recognition of the international values of the area;
- promotion of co-operative arrangements;

- integrated management of the continuum of natural values on public and private land and marine areas in the Western Port Region;
- encouragement of appropriate economic activity (outside the Park), including provision of infrastructure services in accord with achieving sustainable development;
- conduct of environmental studies and monitoring which assist in the conservation of resources;
- establishment of demonstration projects and education programs;
- strengthening of links between communities and visitors to the region.

#### **Aim**

- Investigate creation of a Biosphere Reserve incorporating the planning area and surrounding Western Port area.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Liaise with relevant authorities and key stakeholders to assess the feasibility of establishing a Biosphere Reserve, with the Park and any adjacent marine protected areas forming the relatively undisturbed core area. Ensure participation of the French Island community in the feasibility assessment.*
- *Subject to feasibility, seek in-principle support from the Government to initiate preparation of a submission to the Federal Government recommending nomination of the area as a Biosphere Reserve.*

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## 4 PARK PROTECTION

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### 4.1 Fire management

It is required under the National Parks Act to 'protect the Park from injury by fire', and under the *Forests Act 1958* (Vic.) to undertake sufficient fire prevention and suppression works to protect life and property.

The Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land (CNR 1995a) provides the framework for addressing the threat of fire, and the achievement of other land management objectives including the protection of environmental values as far as practicable from the adverse effects of wildfire, suppression measures and imposition of inappropriate fire regimes.

Fire management, particularly in the proposed Remote and Natural Area, needs to be conducted with a minimum of disturbance.

Construction of mineral earth fire lines in the Park generally has long-lasting adverse effects because of its sandy and swampy nature, and is inappropriate in many areas. Following site disturbance, rehabilitation measures are important to minimise weed establishment and facilitate natural regeneration.

Current fire protection measures for the Park are specified under the Dandenong Region Fire Protection Plan (CNR 1992), and the associated three-year rolling prescribed burning plan for the Park. These are very broad, with primary emphasis on fire protection rather than meeting ecological requirements.

Under the area's previous land use by the Islanders the Park was burnt frequently, parts as often as every three to five years. Fires were set and often allowed to burn away from settled areas until they went out. Although the incidence of wildfires has not been high (21 records in the Park Register between 1930 and 1995), there is the potential for a major wildfire to develop (eight fires have exceeded 200 ha since 1969).

Although few areas have escaped fire, and the time since the last wildfire is not known for much of the Park, some areas in the north and

north-east appear not to have been burnt for more than 30 years.

The incidence of wildfires can be minimised by restricting the use of wood-fuelled camp fires in the Park, and increasing public awareness of the threat of fire.

Prescribed burning for fire protection and vegetation management has totalled about 5000 ha in the last 10 years. This, together with the system of internal roads and tracks and adjacent fire breaks, enables the risk of wildfires spreading unchecked over large areas to be reduced.

Fire management in the Park requires a balance between meeting protection and ecological requirements (sections 3.3 and 3.4). The establishment of monitoring programs is vital to improve understanding of the ecological role of fire and help upgrade fire planning and management.

General evidence indicates that relatively frequent fires are required to maintain the diversity of communities such as heathlands. Areas where long-term exclusion of fires is a priority also need to be identified. These include existing long-unburnt communities, important for ecological reference, and also fire-sensitive communities.

To protect the Park and private values adequately from damage by fire it is vital, particularly in view of the island situation, that the existing strong co-operative arrangements for fire protection with the local Country Fire Authority (CFA) continue to be encouraged.

#### Aims

- Protect life, property and park values from damage by fire.
- Minimise the impact of fire protection and suppression measures on park values.
- Develop and maintain appropriate fire regimes to conserve the indigenous flora and fauna.

## Management strategies

- *Provide adequate fire fighting resources to contain fires, taking into account the flammable vegetation and inability to move additional equipment quickly on to the Island.*
- *Maintain co-operative arrangements with NRE and CFA to undertake prescribed burning and wildfire suppression.*
- *Initiate a review of fire protection and management, in the context of ecological requirements, and prepare a comprehensive strategic fire protection plan for French Island (jointly with the CFA) which serves the interests of the Park and the Islanders.*
- *Maintain an adequate network of roads and tracks, and associated fire breaks, to meet requirements for fire protection, suppression and emergency purposes (section 5.2.1), including improved drainage and maintenance of Link, Clump and part of Causeway Roads.*
- *Prepare and implement, as a priority, a detailed plan for the ecological management of fire, using fire regimes which maintain the diversity of species and communities (including wildlife habitat), and control invasive species such as Coast Tea-tree. In the interim, maintain a comprehensive range of fire age classes (including protection of long unburnt areas in the heathland areas).*
- *Observe the environmental care principles of the Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land, and as far as practicable employ measures for fire suppression which minimise soil disturbance.*
- *Minimise construction of mineral earth fire lines, where possible without threatening property or other values, by allowing wildfires to burn out to natural or pre-existing control lines.*
- *Consider use of a moving rotational system for slashed fire breaks to reduce long-term site disturbance and the opportunity for weed invasion.*
- *Monitor before and after prescribed burning and after significant wildfires to detect vegetation changes, the impact of fire suppression measures on park values, and the effectiveness of fire management measures employed, and use this information to improve fire management practices.*
- *Prepare and implement rehabilitation plans following fires as necessary, as specified in the Code of Practice for Fire Management.*
- *Encourage research which helps to improve knowledge of ecological requirements of the flora and fauna (sections 3.3 and 3.4).*
- *Publicise fire regulations and restrictions, and prohibit use of wood-fuelled camp fires throughout the Park (section 5.5).*

## 4.2 Pest plants and animals, and diseases

The establishment of pest plants and animals and diseases has generally been constrained by the Island's isolation and the nature of prior land use. Infestations of pest plants, with several exceptions (e.g. Cluster Pine), are generally still relatively restricted, and there is a unique opportunity to eradicate most of these from the Park given prompt action and adequate resources. To optimise effectiveness, management and control programs need to have a whole-Island approach, with the voluntary co-operation of landholders.

### Pest plants

Weeds are one of the greatest threats to the Park, particularly to herbaceous plants such as the rich orchid flora. The main threat is from weed spread near farmland, and along roadsides, tracks and firebreaks. Weed invasion is facilitated by disturbance to soil and vegetation cover by vehicles, machinery, hard-

hoofed animals, grazing and fire, and by introduction through soil and gravels.

The Park is still remarkably weed-free (none recorded in 85 per cent of sampled vegetation quadrats by Opie et al. (1984) and the infestations are mostly small and localised. A total of 180 introduced species has been recorded, of which up to 32 are considered major environmental weeds (appendix 6).

Grassy and herbaceous weeds pose a major threat to the ground flora, but most could at this stage be effectively and economically controlled. Woody weeds with the greatest potential to invade and spread in undisturbed bushland include pine trees, which are being effectively controlled through a major program, and Sweet Pittosporum.

Cluster Pine plantations and wildings had infested over 3 000 ha, concentrated in the east of the Park, with a smaller area near the west coast in the vicinity of the old Airstrip and on various private holdings. Most of the infestations have been successfully treated in a program which began in 1989-90, using felling and burning, with follow-up weeding to eradicate the pines and other weeds. Results are good, but some follow-up eradication is required. Felling of remnant mature pine trees adjacent to and within the McLeods Ecofarm and Historic Prison is required as soon as possible to avoid reinfestation.

As the Cluster Pine control program includes the southern part of the East Reference Area, and requires continued active management, the Reference Area boundaries should perhaps be moved to exclude the disturbed area.

Mature Mahogany Gums at Gartside's are seeding and spreading rapidly, and require control.

A significant number of other weeds are spreading noticeably. Well-established species of particular concern include Blackberry, Bridal Creeper, Boneseed and Cape Tulip. However, many localised species, such as Sweet Vernal-grass and Sweet Pittosporum, will spread rapidly and become a major problem if not controlled. Vigilance to detect the arrival and enable control of new species, such as Rice Grass (*Spartina* sp.), is vital. This

species has become established in various estuaries of Western Port and has the potential to invade the Island's shoreline.

### **Pest animals**

Notably, the Red Fox is absent from the Island, and its establishment and that of other new introduced species must be guarded against.

Eight species of introduced birds and four of introduced mammals have become well established in the Park (NPS database 1995). Those adversely affecting native species or their habitats are rabbits, feral cats, feral goats, Starlings, Blackbirds and Indian Mynahs, as well as feral honeybees and European Wasps. A small population of the Greylag Goose is centred on private property, and should not be allowed to spread. Rabbits and feral cats are widespread and are the most serious pests. Swift action has prevented feral pigs, which appeared in 1997, from becoming established in the Park.

Under the Strategic Plan for the Approved Release of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease in Victoria, French Island is a priority area for co-ordinated follow-up rabbit control to complement the effects of Rabbit Calicivirus Disease when it has passed through, as well as strategic predator control to protect vulnerable wildlife.

It is estimated that there are several thousand feral cats on the Island (Rangers pers. comm.), which are a serious threat to fauna such as the Orange-bellied Parrot, Long-nosed Potoroo, King Quail, Shearwaters at breeding sites and Pelican chicks. Effective control requires a major co-ordinated program for the whole Island, coupled with preventing recruitment of domestic cats to the wild population. This becomes particularly vital as rabbit numbers decline due to the Rabbit Calicivirus Disease and associated control measures.

Straying domestic stock can also cause significant damage. Such problems are increased by the significant proportion of absentee landholders with stock on the Island.

## Diseases

No major plant diseases have been recorded in the Park or on the Island.

It is vital to prevent the establishment of new diseases. This applies particularly to Cinnamon Fungus, which can be introduced by transport of infected soil, gravel or plant material. It kills many native species, particularly heathland species (as well as horticultural species). This fungus occurs on surrounding mainland areas and the risk of transfer to the Island is high. Actions to help prevent infestation include increasing public awareness of the threats, and appropriate precautionary measures such as purchase of plants only from reputable sources, and use of plant, soil and road-making material previously tested and certified clean. Wash-down facilities for earth-moving equipment and vehicles transported to the Island have been proposed at Corinella as a hygiene measure, but there are practical operating difficulties to be resolved.

The threat posed by Cinnamon Fungus to the Park's vegetation, and the risk of rapid spread due to the nature of the soils, require vigilance to detect any signs of its presence on the Island.

## Aims

- Control, and where possible eliminate, pest plants and animals, using methods having minimal adverse impact on the Park.
- Minimise opportunities for new pests and diseases becoming established, particularly the fox and Cinnamon Fungus.

## Management strategies

- *Continue the pine control program in the Park, and encourage the removal of pines on freehold land and road reserves.*
- *Develop and implement a pine removal program for the area abutting the McLeod Ecofarm and Historic Prison, in consultation with the property owners, which provides for the staged removal of pines and replacement with native species by the year 2003. As part of this program, encourage the replacement of pines on the farm.*

- *Seek to amend the boundaries of the East Reference Area to exclude pine infestations, Albions Track and an old tip site from the Reference Area as approved by the Reference Areas Advisory Committee and shown on figure 2.*
- *Survey and map the distribution of weeds in the Park, and record on the Environmental Management System.*
- *Monitor the Park for any new weeds, including intertidal areas for Rice Grass, and establish a working party to map and initiate control of any new arrivals.*
- *Develop a strategic weed management plan for the Park which targets areas and species for attention, with emphasis on eliminating localised species or infestations, priorities for control of species, and measures to prevent the establishment of new infestations in the Park.*
- *In the interim, continue to control priority weed species listed in appendix 6, with particular emphasis on the control of Mahogany Gum, Bridal Creeper, Boneseed, Blackberry and grassy and herbaceous weeds.*
- *Investigate with the Island community classifying and declaring Regionally Restricted Weeds for the Island, to restrict the sale, planting and use on the Island of species posing environmental threats.*
- *Minimise soil and vegetation disturbance conducive to weed spread by controlling vehicular use of Park roads and tracks.*
- *Develop a strategic plan for the Park to eliminate goats and pigs, and eliminate or control all other vertebrate pests and introduced species such as Greylag Goose, with emphasis on feral cats and rabbits (capitalising on the release of the Calicivirus) under the Strategic Plan for Rabbit Calicivirus Disease release in Victoria.*

- *Co-operate with the Island community in developing a contingency plan to eradicate any foxes arriving on the Island.*
- *Monitor and eradicate concentrations of feral honeybees and European Wasps where practicable.*
- *Develop and implement an effective strategy to protect the Park from infestation by Cinnamon Fungus, facilitated through a working group with community representation, which takes into account public education; monitoring; testing of soil, gravel or plant material prior to its transport to the Island; and hygiene procedures for vehicles and earth moving equipment transported by barge to the Island, in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines.*
- *Encourage the development of co-operative programs with landholders (section 6.2) for the elimination or control of major pest plants and animals on the Island, and for monitoring to detect any arrival of new invasive weeds and introduced animals, particularly foxes.*
- *Develop and implement a program to improve public awareness about:*
  - *threats posed by weeds, appropriate control measures, and non-invasive plant species recommended for planting;*
  - *threats posed by introduced animals and the need to discourage the keeping of introduced species which may escape;*
  - *responsible ownership (section 6.2) and control of domestic and pet animals, particularly cats and dogs and wandering stock;*
  - *the threat of Cinnamon Fungus and other diseases, and appropriate hygiene measures (including signage).*

### **4.3 Soil conservation**

Soils in the Park are generally highly erodible, because of their sandy or prolonged wet and swampy nature. Any new developments undertaken need to reflect the land use capability (section 5.1).

The main areas of degradation, or at risk of degradation, are along roads and tracks, at coastal access points, and near swamps. Degradation at these sites is the result of illegal off-road driving, vehicular use when wet, and the poor standard of roads (section 5.2.1).

Wandering stock and stock droving has had localised impact, and cattle grazing has caused severe soil pugging and compaction in areas of previous farmland now incorporated in the Park. These activities will be restricted (section 7.2), except for stock grazing where required for management purposes.

#### **Aim**

- Prevent and control soil degradation, and rehabilitate degraded areas.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Undertake rehabilitation measures and maintain roads in accordance with table 6.*
- *Undertake any new developments according to Land Capability assessments.*
- *Regulate movement of domestic stock and management activities to minimise damage to soil.*

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## 5 THE PARK VISIT

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### 5.1 The Park visitor

The Park offers visitors opportunities for walking, cycling, camping, nature and heritage study in a 'remote island' environment.

Several ferry trips are run daily between Stony Point on the mainland and Tankerton on French Island. In addition, a limited service including charters is available between Cowes on Phillip Island and Tankerton.

The present level of about 8000 visitors a year to the Island (6000 visitors to the Park) is lower than about a decade ago when larger ferries brought a total of about 14 000 visitors to the Island, with a proportional number to the Park.

A limited visitor survey (Corbett et al. 1988) showed that most visitors to the Park came from the Melbourne area, were involved in a professional or clerical occupation and travelled with family and/or friends - usually visiting the Island for the first time and for only one day. On the other hand, some groups which stay overnight have visited the Park over a period of up to 10 years or more.

Visitor services will continue to highlight the distinctive visitor experiences and target the following market segments:

- 'natural adventurers';
- 'escape to nature';
- 'out and about seniors'.

In addition, continuing emphasis will be given to encouraging a wide range of groups to visit the Park. These groups include organisations such as scouts, schools, walking clubs, bicycle touring groups and bird observers.

Tourism strategies are being prepared for the region, but there is no detailed strategy for French Island. Because of the interdependence of operators providing transport to the Island and the operation of transport and support facilities on the Island, a detailed strategy is needed to integrate the provision of services effectively to optimise benefits to Park visitors and operators.

#### Providing for the visitor

A visit to the Park is a memorable experience, with positive features such as lack of crowding and opportunities to see relatively undisturbed nature, and negative aspects in terms of restricted access and clouds of mosquitoes during a large part of the year.

On arrival, a visitor's first impression is the 30 to 40 vehicles parked at the jetty - a veritable museum of old and rusty cars waiting to carry their owners to their properties on the Island. Behind this 'display' is the newly-constructed Parks Victoria visitor shelter.

Parks Victoria is preparing a future directions plan for the Tankerton Coastal Reserve (not part of the Park).

An Access Strategy for the Island has been developed and implemented in conjunction with the local community and Government authorities. This limits vehicle transport to, and use on, French Island in order to protect the Island's natural values and minimise wear and tear on the road system. A permit is required for a visitor to take a vehicle onto the Island. Roads and tracks throughout are rough and generally poorly maintained.

As the capability of land for sustainable use over much of the Park is low, due to limitations imposed by the sandy or dispersible soils and impeded drainage, careful planning and costly engineering solutions will be required to ensure proper location of facilities and their maintenance under intensive use.

With limited opportunity to bring their own motor vehicles to, or hire vehicles on, the Island, visitors have the options of walking, cycling or using bus transport provided by tour operators on the Island.

The challenge in providing visitor services is to integrate the presentation of the features inside and outside the Park and to preserve what has made French Island very special. These features are:

- the natural attractions;
- remoteness from urban living, although on the fringe of a city of more than three million people;

- the feeling of being in a ‘time warp’, with little vehicular traffic, few facilities, poor access, and relatively undisturbed nature.

For day visitors wishing to see the Island’s attractions, guided bus tours take them to key accessible locations in the Park en route to destinations outside the Park, such as Koala habitat along roads, the Bayview Chicory Kiln and the McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison.

‘Natural adventurers’ and those who wish to escape to nature tend to be self-reliant walkers and cyclists. They may use public bus transport on the Island to take them closer to their destination before they become independent travellers.

Day visitors have limited time available, governed by the arrival and departure times of the ferry.

For overnight visitors, camping will be provided in a convenient and accessible location in the Park, especially for family groups and older people, to provide a hub from which they can access circuit walks and cycle routes.

More active walkers and cyclists will have access to a network of walking tracks and cycling routes for two-day and longer trips, serviced by two remote camping sites in the Park (and accommodation on private land).

The choice of private accommodation outside the Park ranges from camping to fully-serviced facilities.

As very little of the Park is accessible to two-wheel drive vehicles, the Park will be promoted to encourage more adventurous and independent visitors to stay overnight and explore the Park by walking or cycling.

If the present character of the Island and the values of the Park are to be maintained, monitoring of visitor numbers and impacts is necessary to guide future management.

## **Aims**

- Provide for visitors in accordance with the above overview of future management.
- Ensure minimal impact on the Park from visitor activities.

## **Management strategies**

- *Continue to support the Access Strategy for the Island which restricts visitors from bringing their own motorised vehicles (including trail bikes) for recreational use.*
- *Ensure that the future directions plan for the Tankerton Coastal Reserve establishes an aesthetically pleasing ‘gateway’ to French Island with provision for a range of recreational uses and facilities.*
- *Encourage the development of a tourism strategy for French Island which recognises continuing constraints on access, integrates the provision of opportunities within and outside the Park, promotes particular market segments, and provides benefits to tour operators.*
- *Permit recreational activities in accordance with table 5, and provide routes for walking and cycling in the Park (figure 3).*
- *Undertake a risk assessment prior to development of new facilities, which takes into account potential impacts on natural and cultural values, land capability for sustainable use, and safe practices for visitors and staff (section 5.5).*
- *Provide and maintain appropriate facilities and services in the Park, which highlight, but are in keeping with, its distinctive character (tables 7 and 8).*
- *Monitor visitor numbers and use to ensure adequate provision of facilities, consistent with appropriate types and levels of use, and to control visitor impacts on the character and values of the Park.*

**TABLE 5 SUMMARY OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

ACTIVITY	MANAGEMENT ZONES AND OVERLAYS						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Picnicking - dispersed	No	Y	Y	Y	No	No	No
Camping - designated sites only	No	YC	YC	YC	No	N/A	No
Walking	No	Y	Y	Y	YC	No	Y
Pleasure driving*	No	YC	YC	YC	No	N/A	N/A
4WD driving*	No	YC	YC	YC	No	N/A	N/A
Bicycle riding	No	YC	YC	No	No	No	N/A
Horse riding	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Orienteering/Rogaining	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Fishing - marine and estuary	N/A	Y	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A
Intertidal bait collecting	N/A	YC	N/A	N/A	YC	N/A	N/A
Firewood collection	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Motor boating (including mooring)	N/A	YC	N/A	YC	YC	N/A	N/A
Water-skiing and Jet-skiing	N/A	No	No	No	No	N/A	N/A
Hunting	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Dogs	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

\* Roads and tracks in the Park are subject to seasonal closures during the winter months.

**KEY:**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Reference Zone                   | 5. Special Protection Area                              |
| 2. Conservation Zone                | 6. Special Management Area (Rehabilitation)             |
| 3. Conservation and Recreation Zone | 7. Special Management Area (Koala Habitat)              |
| 4. Proposed Remote and Natural Area |   |
| Y: Yes                              | YC: Conditional - refer to relevant section for details |
| No: Not appropriate                 | N/A: Not applicable                                     |

- *Encourage all Park visitors to adopt minimal impact techniques and to adhere to codes of conduct appropriate to their activity.*
- *Liaise with the French Island Community Association and the French Island Tourism Association regarding the establishment of new visitor facilities in the Park.*
- *Apply current market surveys on visitor profiles, patterns of behaviour, expectations and preferences, to assist in park management.*

## **5.2 Visitor recreation activities and facilities**

### **5.2.1 Vehicle access**

The main access routes for locals and visitors alike are along the west coast of the Island via Coast Road, and to the centre and south-east coast of the Island via Tankerton, Long Point, Mount Wellington, Mosquito Creek, Overpass and McLeod Roads (figure 3).

These roads are open all year round, but are generally in poor condition. Some improved maintenance would increase the comfort of visitors (and locals), lessen wear and tear on vehicles (including tour coaches) and make bike riding easier.

Sections of Coast Road and McLeod Roads are in the Park (not on their road reserves) and as

main roads for public access should be excluded from the Park.

The existing network of roads and tracks in the Park has developed to provide seasonal access, avoid wet areas where practicable, cater for management and recreation activities including deer and duck hunting, and give access to former private inholdings.

A number of the tracks are now overgrown or little used, and some rationalisation of access is desirable.

There are sections of road reserve in the Park which lead mainly to former private land now included in the Park. The incorporation of these reserves into the Park will improve management of the roads to ensure minimal impacts on the Park. This action does not necessarily mean closure of a road, but rather a change in status from road reserve to Park.

The key considerations in determining the strategy for future motor vehicle traffic in the Park are outlined below.

- Nearly all the roads and tracks in the Park are unformed and seasonally closed because of extensive wet and boggy sections which are impassable.
- Many roads and tracks are on erosion-prone sandy soils and on side slopes, and their condition is deteriorating with the current level low levels of use and maintenance.
- Substantial improvement of key roads and tracks in the Park to a suitable standard to cater for the current level of use without deterioration of park values requires capital expenditure and on-going annual maintenance.
- Improvement and maintenance should take into account the importance of strategic roads and tracks for fire protection and suppression.
- There are very limited resources on the Island for road making and maintenance, and transport of road material onto the Island is expensive and increases the risk of infection with Cinnamon Fungus.
- The social and recreational needs of the Island community should be considered.

- Restriction on vehicle access greatly reduces the risk of damage to very vulnerable native orchid areas which occur on fire breaks and along roadsides, and which currently are being damaged by off-road traffic. This restriction also reduces the spread of pest plants and diseases in the Park.

#### **Aims**

- Continue support for the French Island Access Strategy.
- Maintain an appropriate network of roads and tracks in the Park, primarily for management and emergency purposes.
- Encourage visitors to use this network for walking and cycling.
- Minimise the impact of vehicle use on the Park's natural and cultural values.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Support a strategy for improved maintenance of main roads outside the Park.*
- *Seek to excise sections of Coast Road and McLeod Road from the Park so that these roads are located entirely on road reserves.*
- *Implement the provisions of the French Island Access Strategy which provides for road reserves that are bounded on both sides by Park, and not required for legal access to private property, to be incorporated into the Park.*
- *Manage and permit the use of existing roads and tracks in the Park, in accordance with table 6 and figure 3, as follows:*
  - *provide for public vehicle access through or within the Park only via Link Road, Causeway Road (south of Link Rd) and Clump Road, and from Clump Road to The Pinnacles Lookout car and bus park;*

**TABLE 6 MANAGEMENT OF VEHICLE ROADS AND TRACKS**

ROAD OR TRACK	CLASS	CURRENT STATUS	PROPOSED STATUS	COMMENTS/USE
Clump Rd	4	O	O/C	Erosion-prone route with sections subject to waterlogging. Surfacing and drainage works. Investigate realignment of northern section to avoid extensive seasonally wet areas.
Pinnacles Track	2	O	O/C	Access to Pinnacles Lookout and car park for bus tours. Upgrade access and provide for bus parking, taking into account protection of orchid areas and drainage of wet areas.
Link Rd	4	O	O/C	Provide through route in Park. Surfacing and drainage works. Investigate realignment around wet sections.
Causeway Rd	3	O	O/C/MVO	Former access to freehold land (now included in the Park). Section south of Link Rd for public vehicle use and cycling. MVO on remaining section.
Mt Wellington Rd	3	O	MVO	Erosion-prone sections with significant flora. Close where bounded on both sides by Park.
Ridge Track	4	O	MVO	MVO to minimise erosion.
Centre Track	4	O	-	Duplicated by other access. Close and revegetate.
Brella Spur Track	4	O	MVO	No through access. Erosion control and drainage works.
Rain Point-Gartsides Track	4	O	MVO	Erodible and wet; use as firebreak and to assist in Cluster Pine control.
Albions Track	4	MVO	MVO	No through access. MVO to protect East Reference Area.
Causeway Track	4	MVO	MVO	Access to East Reference Area.
Unnamed tracks between Chilcott Rocks and Clump Rd	4	MVO	MVO	Erosion-prone and wet sections. MVO to protect very sensitive flora in Pinnacles area. Use for walking circuit (with Pinnacles Walking Tk).
Unnamed swamp access tracks from Clump Rd	4	O	MVO	MVO to protect wetlands and use for walkers.
Unnamed tracks from Coast Rd to Heifer Swamp	4	O	MVO	MVO following inclusion in Park.
Cemetery Track	3	O	O	

NOTE: 1. Causeway Rd and sections of Clump Rd and Link Rd are located on road reserves.

2. All Park roads and tracks are subject to seasonal closure.

CLASS: 1. All vehicle - all weather  
2. All vehicle - dry weather only  
3. 4WD - all weather

STATUS: MVO - management vehicles and walkers only  
O - open to public vehicles  
C - roads and tracks for cycling

4. 4WD - dry weather only
  - *improve maintenance of roads designated for public use and develop a Code of Practice in consultation with the local community to manage use and minimise environmental deterioration.*
- *Prohibit public vehicular use (including trail bikes) of all other roads and tracks in the Park. Allow management vehicle only access (i.e. for emergency and management use) and access for public activities authorised by permit which assist in park management.*
- *Continue seasonal closure of all Park roads and tracks.*
- *Do not upgrade roads and tracks in the proposed Remote and Natural Area (section 2.3).*
- *Upgrade and standardise road and track signposting, including warning signs to protect wildlife.*

### 5.2.2 Day use areas

There is a lack of drinking water and facilities catering for day visitors in the Park. Most visitors who use the private tour services provided have very little contact with the Park. Visitors who walk or cycle from Tankerton generally follow public roads, and except for a Park brochure have little to guide them.

Operation of the new visitor shelter at Tankerton will improve this situation, but there is a need to provide walking and cycling routes that offer some separation from motor vehicle traffic.

The coastline, wetlands and key viewing points, coupled with the diversity of vegetation, wildlife and landscapes, are attractions which offer excellent potential for a system of walking and cycling routes extending out from Tankerton. Planning of this system needs to consider strategically located water points, recognise visitors' time constraints imposed by the schedule of the ferry services, and provide for both short and longer day trips.

There is potential for walking and cycling routes to significantly improve appreciation and

understanding of the Park's values (section 5.3).

### Aims

- Establish and maintain day visitor facilities which enhance visitor enjoyment and understanding of the Park and are consistent with protecting park values.
- Where practicable, provide facilities suitable for visitors with limited mobility.

### Management strategies

- *Collaborate in developing picnic facilities at Tankerton (including gas barbecues) outside the Park (section 5.1).*
- *Provide visitor facilities in accordance with table 7, figure 3 and section 5.3.*
- *Improve opportunities and facilities at readily accessible sites in the Park for tour groups to access key features, e.g. The Pinnacles and wildflowers.*
- *Develop a network of walks and cycle rides extending from Tankerton (sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.6).*
- *Provide rest areas with seats, shelter and water points at strategic locations along the walking and cycle routes. Use a shelter design which allows for water collection.*

### 5.2.3 Camping

The peak visitor periods are December to January, and Easter. Estimated camper nights for 1995-96 were about 1000. Permits are currently required and booking are advisable.

The Park provides opportunities for camping for individuals and small groups at Fairhaven on the coast some 5 km north of Tankerton along the Coast Road. This site is accessible to walkers and cyclists and is also served by bus tour operators on the Island.

More remote camping areas at Gartside, Mount Wellington and Rain Point have been closed in recent years, primarily because of

their inappropriate locations. There is a very limited amount of boat-based camping along

**TABLE 7 EXISTING AND PROPOSED RECREATION FACILITIES**

SITE	TOILETS	PICNIC TABLES	FIRE PLACES	WATER SUPPLY	PARK INFORMATION	WALK TRACK	LOOKOUT	CAMPING
Tankerton foreshore <sup>1</sup>	E	P	N	E	E	P	N	N
Fairhaven	E	E	N	E	P	P	N	E
Gartsides	N	N	N	P	P	P	N	P
Rain Point	N	N	N	P	P	P	N	P
Blue Gums	N	N	N	P	P	P	P	P
Tortoise Head view point	N	N	N	N	P	P	P	N
The Pinnacles lookout	N	N	N	N	P	P	E	N
Link track lookout	N	N	N	N	P	P	P	N
McLeod view point	N	N	N	N	P	P	P	N

<sup>1</sup> Proposed facilities shown for the Tankerton foreshore (not included in the Park) are subject to a future directions plan currently being prepared.

KEY: E = existing facility; N = no facility; P = proposed facility

the shoreline of the Island, including Fairhaven and Spit Point. This activity, however, is restricted by the general lack of boat access to the shoreline abutting the Park, except at or near high tide.

Outside the Park, there are camping sites at the Bayview Chicory Kiln and the McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison which can cater for individuals and groups using the Park, especially larger groups.

The lighting of fires by visitors for cooking and warmth poses an unacceptable risk to the Park and private property, and firewood collection has caused damage to vegetation around campsites.

Despite aims for visitors to be responsible for their own rubbish, rubbish collection is undertaken at Fairhaven, because of the hygiene and health issues associated with carrying rubbish on the ferry.

#### **Aim**

- Provide opportunities for accessible and remote camping experiences with limited

facilities in attractive settings, while minimising impacts on park values.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Continue to provide for readily accessible camping at Fairhaven, and upgrade and maintain facilities.*
- *Allow remote camping within designated areas at Gartsides (around the old homestead site), at Rain Point west of the former campsite with access to the foreshore via steps and in the north-west corner of Blue Gums, only outside the breeding period of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle, i.e. from about December to June (figure 3).*
- *Develop a site plan for camping at Blue Gums which covers access and facilities, and integrates recreation use with vegetation rehabilitation. Do not allow camping during the breeding season of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle.*

- *Monitor visitor use and impact at Blue Gums and review arrangements as necessary to ensure that the natural values of the site, habitat rehabilitation and protection of the White-bellied Sea-Eagle are not compromised by public use.*
- *Remove the former camping facilities at Gartsides, Mount Wellington and Rain Point, and rehabilitate the areas.*
- *Promote the use of private camping facilities provided outside the Park, especially for large groups.*
- *Introduce a permit system and a peak season booking system for all camping areas. Permits will be subject to a fee and conditions.*
- *Remove all fireplaces and prohibit the lighting of fires in the Park by visitors. Continue to permit use of portable fuel stoves for cooking.*
- *Introduce a 'take your rubbish home' strategy for all areas except the designated camping site at Fairhaven.*
- *Prevent unauthorised vehicles from driving into the Fairhaven camping site.*
- *Promote minimal impact camping techniques.*
- *Monitor designated camping areas to assess levels of use and environmental impacts.*

#### 5.2.4 Walking

At present, walking is mostly along roads and vehicular tracks, and some accessible areas of coastline. A major improvement in opportunities and visitor satisfaction would result from the development of short and long routes specifically for walking, where cyclists and motor vehicles are excluded.

There is the potential to develop half-day and one-day walks, and longer routes in remote settings, to offer a much wider range of experiences and exposure to what the Park has

to offer, than at present, particularly in relation to close viewing of wetlands and observing a wide variety of bird life.

It is important to provide information to visitors not only on the opportunities which are available, but also on the likely time involved, so visitors can return to Tankerton in time to catch the ferry.

The greatest challenge is to complete a three day walking trip which takes in most parts of the Park. This walk can offer views of sections of the Park from vantage points, and also in various directions across Western Port.

Camping areas are required at strategic locations to facilitate this walk through the Park.

Some sections of the coastline are unsuitable for public access because of their vulnerability (e.g. Saltmarsh Herbfeld). In particular strategic locations, where such sections could provide links in coastal walks, opportunities for alternative routes crossing private property should be explored with adjacent landholders, with a view to negotiating public access with conditions that are satisfactory to all parties.

#### Aim

- Increase the range of bushwalking opportunities in the Park while minimising impacts on park values.

#### Management strategies

- *Provide and maintain new facilities for bushwalking in accordance with tables 7 and 8, and figure 3.*
- *Continue to provide for walking along all roads, and management vehicle only tracks.*
- *Subject to feasibility establish a 2-3 day circuit walk including:*
  - *provision of rest areas, shelters (with water collection for drinking) and bird hides carefully sited at strategic locations along routes;*

**TABLE 8 MANAGEMENT OF PROPOSED WALKING TRACKS**

NAME	DISTANCE (APPROX.)	ADDITIONAL WORK REQUIREMENTS	PROPOSED STANDARD
Tankerton Nature Walk	4 km	Identify route, construct track and three crossings of Tankerton Ck, construct pathway and platform to view Tortoise Head, install interpretative signs.	B
Fairhaven Coastal Walk*	5 km	Identify route which avoids Chilcott Rocks and the beach immediately south, construct track, install markers and interpretative signs.	B/C
Pinnacles Walking Track	4 km	Identify route and construct track between vicinity of Chilcott Rocks and The Pinnacles.	B/C
West Coast Wetlands Walk*	3 km	Identify route and construct track between Fairhaven and Heifer Swamp Bird Hide. Boardwalks in wet areas.	B/C
Heifer-Pinnacles Walk	3 km	Identify route and construct track. Boardwalks in wet areas.	B/C
Gartsides Track*	9 km	Identify route and establish track between Clump Lagoon and Gartsides. Boardwalks or corduroy in wet areas. Establish three creek crossings.	C/D
Brella Creek Track*	8 km	Link track between Brella Spur and McLeod Road. Construct creek crossing.	C/D
South Coast Walk*	7 km	Define route between McLeod and Barge Landing. Establish Mosquito Creek crossing. Other works to be determined.	C/D
Blue Gums Track*	6 km	Route between Barge Landing and west end of Salt Mine Point Rd via Blue Gums Campsite.	C/D
Cemetery Track*	6 km	Route between Mosquito Creek Road and The Pinnacles. Define route by markers.	C/D
Mount Wellington Circuit Walk	4 km	Define route by markers and install interpretative signs.	C/D

- NOTES:
1. All routes subject to environmental assessment and approval before construction.
  2. Track construction generally by slashing and mowing where necessary.
  3. See section 5.2.4 and figure 3 for further information on walks.
  4. All tracks routes defined by markers (and information signage).
  - \* Track sections forming part of a 2-3 day circuit walk around the Island.

## STANDARD:

- B Well defined, benched and drained track up to 1 m wide; may have some steep sections.
  - C Track, defined through use, which may be benched, drained and cleared in sections.
  - D Walking track or path defined through use but having no basic construction.
- *identifying strategic locations along the southern coastline where walking access is desirable but impracticable through the Park, and negotiating alternative*

*access with owners of adjacent private property.*

- *Prepare walk notes and signpost routes as appropriate. Include estimates of time required to complete sections of the walks.*
- *Encourage minimal impact techniques for bushwalkers through publications, signs and promotion of codes of conduct.*

### 5.2.5 Horse riding

A few local property owners have horses and there is a small amount of horse riding in the Park. There are no commercial horse riding operators with a permit for this activity in the Park, but some horse riding tours on a limited scale have been provided in the past.

Horses have the potential to disturb soil and spread weeds (sections 4.2 and 4.3). This is particularly important in relation to many of the firebreaks abutting roads and containing numerous orchid species that can be displaced by grassy weeds. Also, many of the tracks are vulnerable to erosion, especially in wet areas.

Recognising that there are extensive opportunities for horse riding on roads and properties outside the Park, no provision is made for horse riding in the Park.

#### Aims

- Minimise any environmental impacts caused by horse riding.
- Minimise conflict between horse riders and other Park users

#### Management strategies

- *Exclude horse riding from the Park (horse riding can occur along Coast Road and McLeod Road through the Park).*
- *Provide information on locations available for horse riding outside the Park.*

### 5.2.6 Cycling

Cycling, including mountain bike riding, is a popular activity in the Park. The Park has a network of roads and tracks that offer cycling opportunities.

Hire of bikes is available outside the Park at Tortoise Head Guest House.

Larger numbers of bicycles, and particularly mountain bikes, may have some impacts on roads and management vehicle tracks, particularly in erosion-prone areas.

#### Aim

- Provide access for cycling while minimising environmental damage and conflicts with other recreation activities.

#### Management strategies

- *Allow cycling only on vehicle roads and tracks in the Park (in accordance with table 6 and figure 3).*
- *Prohibit cycling on walking tracks.*
- *Apply seasonal and temporary closures of roads and tracks as required.*
- *Allow camping by cyclists at Fairhaven and remote designated camping areas in the Park (section 5.2.3), and encourage other camping at strategic locations outside the Park (e.g. at the McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison and the Bayview Road Chicory Kiln).*
- *Prepare information on cycling, outlining opportunities and routes for both day and overnight rides. Include information on short walks available to access Park features (e.g. Pinnacles Walk and the proposed bird hides at Clump Lagoon and Heifer Swamp) and water points.*
- *Encourage use of the 'Mountain Bike Code' (CNR 1994).*
- *Monitor the level of use by cyclists and the condition of roads and tracks, and take actions to minimise damage to the Park as necessary.*

### 5.2.7 Fishing

There are three creeks whose small estuaries are in the Park – Redbill Creek, Tankerton Creek and Mosquito Creek. These have very sensitive shorelines and are not usually fished.

The marine component of the Park (extending 150 m seaward of mean high water mark) does include some limited opportunities for fishing especially at high tide from the shore-line or from boats where a channel comes close to the shore (e.g. Blakes Channel near Tortoise Head).

There is very little opportunity for commercial fishing in the Park because of the shallow depths of the water and extensive mudflats.

The outcome of a Marine and Coastal Investigation by the Environment Conservation Council may affect the use of waters abutting the Park.

#### Aim

- Provide opportunities in marine waters for fishing and bait collecting where it is consistent with the protection of park values.

#### Management strategies

- *Allow recreational fishing and bait collection, in accordance with Park Regulations in marine areas of the Park, except those areas adjoining Rams and Barrallier Islands.*
- *Monitor the impact of fishing and bait collection in the Park and take action as appropriate.*
- *Review management strategies for fishing, in accordance with Government consideration of the Environment Conservation Council's recommendations.*

### 5.2.8 Boating

The potential for boating is limited by the lack of sufficiently deep water in the creeks and estuaries of the Park. It is also limited by the generally shallow tidal areas which make up most of the area of Park below mean high water mark. A fringe of mangroves, particularly

along the north and north eastern coastline, is a barrier to boat access. However, access at high and low tides is available for boats at seven points around the coast, namely Tankerton, the Barge Landing, McLeod Jetty, Tortoise Head, the slipway near Gairdners Cottage, Long Point and Spit Point. In addition, there are another 12 points in the Park, including Redbill Creek and Mosquito Creek, where access is available at various levels above low tide. Boats are moored at some of these locations (section 7.1.1).

Boat landing at Rams, Barrallier and Pelican Islands and Tortoise Head is undesirable because of the impacts on sensitive habitats and disturbance to waterbird and wader breeding, feeding and roosting (table 4 and appendix 4).

There is occasional use of jet-skis (departing from the mainland), and some Island residents water-ski in the area off-shore from Tankerton. These activities may cause disturbance to waterbirds and waders. The potential for increased recreational hovercraft activity in the Bay, and impacts on sensitive habitats, need to be considered.

#### Aim

- Provide opportunities for boating in the Park while minimising the environmental impact of the activity on sensitive shoreline areas.

#### Management strategies

- *Encourage boat landings outside the Park at Tankerton.*
- *Protect environmentally sensitive areas of the Park from the impacts of boating activities.*
- *Do not provide facilities onshore which will encourage boat landing in the Park for recreation purposes.*
- *Prohibit boats approaching within 150 m of mean high water mark on Barrallier and Rams Islands, except in an emergency or for authorised research or management.*

- *Discourage boat landing at Tortoise Head and Pelican Island, other than in an emergency or for authorised research or management.*
- *Allow other current boat activities to continue pending a review of management strategies for boating, in accordance with Government consideration of the Environment Conservation Council's recommendations.*
- *Encourage responsible rubbish removal through education to avoid beach and water pollution (section 3.2).*

### 5.2.9 Orienteering, rogaining and competitive events

There is a negligible demand for these activities in the Park. The extensive areas of wet heath make a significant proportion of the Park unsuitable. Much of the remainder of the Park, especially the coastal and wetland areas and associated wildlife, is vulnerable to disturbance associated with off-track use.

#### Aim

- Do not provide for these activities in the Park.

#### Management strategy

- *Redirect enquiries and applications for these activities to Bayview Chicory Kiln and the McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison, or to other mainland areas in the region.*

### 5.2.10 Dogs

Dogs are generally not permitted in national parks.

Very few visitors bring dogs onto the Island. Dogs on the Island are predominantly working dogs on farming properties.

There are many opportunities for walking and exercising dogs outside the Park, including the two foreshore areas at Tankerton and the Barge Landing site.

The beach at the Anchorage adjacent to the Tankerton Estate area is occasionally used for dog walking.

#### Aim

- Prohibit dogs from the Park, to protect park values, ensure public safety and enhance the visitor experience.

#### Management strategies

- *Do not permit dogs in the Park.*
- *Develop and implement an ongoing education strategy on the reasons for prohibiting dogs in the Park.*

### 5.3 Visitor information and interpretation

Provision of information and interpretation services needs to be improved to ensure that visitors are fully aware of the Park's opportunities and constraints. These include fire restrictions, safety issues (e.g. water supply, first aid) and constraints such as the time required to walk or cycle to particular Park features and return in time to catch the ferry back to the mainland.

Pre-visit information about the Park at key mainland departure points for ferries (Stony Point and Cowes jetties) and the vehicle barge (Corinella) also needs to be improved.

A new visitor information shelter has been constructed recently at Tankerton to provide information services to all visitors arriving at the Tankerton Jetty. Information includes interpretation displays.

Some information about the Park is provided on the ferries. Rangers provide very limited interpretative services to visitors. Commercial bus tour operators also provide information on the Park and its values.

#### Aims

- Orientate visitors to the Park and its features.
- Enhance visitors' appreciation of the Park and provoke interest in the area's natural and cultural environment.

## Management strategies

- *Develop an interpretation plan for the Park.*
- *Develop day visitor facilities (nature walk, short walks and viewing points) at Tankerton Creek, along the Coast Road, behind Tortoise Head, at The Pinnacles and along McLeod Road to interpret the natural and cultural history of the Park and the Island (section 5.2.2).*
- *Provide information boards at departure points for visits to the Island (i.e. Stony Point, Cowes and Corinella).*
- *Maintain information about the Park's features, use and protection of the Park, and visitor comfort and personal safety, at the visitor shelter at Tankerton.*
- *Liaise with the regional tourism industry to provide visitor information through tourist information centres and destinations.*
- *Co-operate with the French Island Tourism Association to provide visitor information both on and off the Island.*
- *Encourage mainland information service providers to include information on the need for insect repellents, sun lotion, water and emergency arrangements.*
- *Minimise the use of signage in the proposed Remote and Natural Area of the Park.*
- *Encourage the implementation of a system of road and track signs for the Island which directs visitors to attractions inside and outside the Park and informs them of distances and expected times of outgoing and return trips back to Tankerton.*
- *Develop and maintain an interpreted nature walk loop starting at Tankerton.*
- *Develop a brochure on walking, cycling and camping covering the range of opportunities available (table 5 and figure 3).*
- *Use the themes shown in table 9 in the development of interpretative and education material for the Park, and make these available using interpretative signs at key locations within and outside the Park.*
- *Encourage the provision of interpretation programs during peak visitor periods. Co-operate with ferry and commercial tour operators and local accommodation hosts to widen the range of information services available to Park visitors.*
- *Encourage the production of saleable materials detailing the natural and cultural resources and recreation opportunities of the area.*
- *Monitor and maintain all interpretative facilities, and undertake regular evaluation of information and interpretation programs related to the Park.*

## 5.4 Commercial tourism operations

The restriction on the public bringing their own motor vehicles onto the Island creates a special need for public transport and the provision of tours by commercial operators. Furthermore, the relative inaccessibility of most of the Park, coupled with the limited time available for most visitors, means that maximum use should be made of key accessible sites along roads in and outside the Park to interpret the values of the area.

Well-organised tour groups can help to minimise impacts on the Park and interpret its values.

Commercial accommodation is currently available on private land near the Park at Tankerton, on the Coast Road, on Bayview Road and at the McLeod Ecofarm and Historic Prison.

There is an opportunity to further integrate recreation in the Park with support services outside the Park, giving greater focus to the unique features of the Park and the Island.

**TABLE 9 INTERPRETATION THEMES AND LOCATIONS**

THEME	LOCATION
Maritime discovery	Tankerton and Tortoise Head viewing point.
Geological and landform features	Fairhaven, Tortoise Head viewing point.
Isolation as a resource	The Pinnacles lookout and Link Road walking track viewing point.
Koala management	Tankerton Road public hall.
European settlement	McLeod viewing point, Star of Hope school site, former salt extraction sites.
Coastal ecology	Blue Gums (former SEC land) viewing point and the Link Road walking track viewing point.
Wetlands	The Pinnacles lookout, The Punt, Heifer Swamp Bird Hide, Duscher Swamp and the Clump Lagoon Bird Hide.
Biological diversity	The Pinnacles lookout and Link Road walking track viewing point.

NOTE: A whole-Island approach is adopted in the presentation of themes because of the inaccessibility of most of the Park and the occurrence of important natural and cultural values outside the Park.

The operations of the ferries and bus tours and accommodation owners in providing transport, guided tours and a diversity of accommodation are important support services to visitors.

Maintaining good relations with providers of visitor services is an important aspect of the management of the Park.

#### **Aims**

- Encourage commercial tourism services to be provided, consistent with park management objectives.
- Monitor tourist use of the Park to ensure that impacts are not detrimental.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Encourage, support and co-operate with commercial operators to provide services, facilities, and information for visitors, and to protect park values.*
- *Provide opportunities for vehicle guided tours, public transport and guided walking and cycling tours in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines, and encourage use of*

*accommodation and support services outside the Park, including cycle hire.*

- *Ensure that all commercial tour operators working in the Park are licensed; encourage accreditation, assist in training in nature-based interpretation, and provide feedback to operators on research and investigations carried out in the Park.*

### **5.5 Public safety**

The climate (with lack of shelter from the sun and adverse weather), lack of fresh water and facilities, and sometimes impenetrable vegetation, may present inherent dangers and risks to Park visitors that may be increased by remoteness and limited access. Wildfire is a potential hazard during drier times of the year.

#### **Aims**

- Promote public safety in the use of the Park.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to assist in emergency situations.

### **Management strategies**

- *Encourage visitors to seek information on activities they intend to undertake.*
- *Require registration of intentions of visitors undertaking overnight trips into the proposed Remote and Natural Area of the Park, in association with the issue of camping permits.*
- *Ensure that visitors comply with year-round restrictions on camp fires (section 4.1).*
- *Manage the Park in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines for risk mitigation and emergency management.*
- *Prepare a Fire Response Strategy to minimise risks to Park visitors in the event of fire, and ensure that staff and commercial operators are briefed on the strategy before each fire season.*

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## 6 COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT

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### 6.1 Friends and volunteers

The Friends of French Island National Park have made very valuable contributions to park management, especially in pest plant control and inventory of resources. Groups such as field naturalist clubs, bird observers and other interested groups and individuals also provide assistance, and their involvement will continue to be encouraged.

The section of Park on Bayview Road containing the Park office and depot has ample space for further development of support facilities. Other uses of the depot area are described in section 7.3.

#### Aim

- Assist volunteer groups to undertake appropriate management tasks in the Park.

#### Management strategies

- *Continue to support the Friends group.*
- *Develop and evaluate a long-term volunteer strategy which incorporates the skills and interests of volunteer groups in park management activities, e.g. volunteer guides (including the reception of visitors at the visitor information shelter at Tankerton) and a park monitoring program.*
- *Improve facilities for volunteers at the office and depot in Bayview Road, including accommodation and plant nursery arrangements to support park programs.*

### 6.2 Community awareness and Park neighbours

The Park presents an opportunity to increase the economic well-being of the local community and to increase awareness and understanding of natural and cultural values, ecological processes and sound land management practices.

A number of families on the Island have long links with many areas now incorporated into the Park.

There are also important nature conservation and cultural values occurring on private land outside the Park. For example, about 80 per cent of the Koala habitat on the Island is outside the Park. There are interesting cultural features on private land, including chicory kilns and remains of old buildings, which can be interpreted from roadsides outside the Park without entering private property.

The management of weeds, pest animals, fire, visitors, roads and tracks, and visitor use of the Island, are major areas of common interest.

The lack of local government funding and high costs of transport of materials and equipment to the Island make co-operation with the Island community important.

Private landholders would be greatly assisted by action to control pest plants and animals on public land. Similarly, control on private land can greatly reduce threats to the Park (section 4.2).

Parks Victoria and NRE are involved in co-operative projects with landholders outside the Park. These include pest plant control (particularly removal of Cluster Pine) and the Koala management program.

#### Aims

- Increase awareness and knowledge of the Park, and maintain good relations within local communities.
- Co-operate with landholders outside the Park in the protection of both private property and public land from fire, pests and other hazards.
- Encourage conservation and sound land management practices on private land adjoining the Park.

#### Management strategies

- *Maintain liaison with local community groups and land owners, including the*

*French Island Landowners Consultative Group and the French Island Community Association Inc., and as appropriate involve them in relevant aspects of planning and managing the Park.*

- *Establish a French Island Co-operative Neighbour Program involving voluntary participation by landholders which:
 
  - *develops a comprehensive Koala management strategy for the whole Island (section 3.4);*
  - *investigates establishing a tree planting program, involving volunteers, to rehabilitate habitat;*
  - *assists in the removal of pine trees on private land, and revegetation;*
  - *establishes a cat control and responsible ownership program, a program for the control or elimination of major plant and other animal pests, and monitoring to detect arrival of new pests (e.g. foxes and Rice Grass) and measures to prevent their establishment (section 4.2);*
  - *encourages private landholders to manage their land in the interests of nature conservation and land care, building on existing schemes such as Landcare, Land for Wildlife and Conservation Covenants (Trust for Nature);*
  - *encourages codes of practice to be prepared for nature conservation on private land (e.g. revegetation and wetland management).**
- *Encourage organisations and individuals to become involved in volunteer work.*
- *Seek media coverage of co-operative activities and other items of general interest in relation to the Park.*

### **6.3 Schools, education and special interest groups**

French Island is currently not a popular destination for school groups because of a lack of awareness of what the Island has to offer and the limitations on access to and on the Island. There is, however, the potential for greater use by schools and other education institutions if such use were more actively promoted.

The Park has a special place in the system of national parks in Victoria as the only park which is wholly located on an island. This feature is an excellent basis for interpreting isolation as a very important attribute in the preservation of the highly significant natural values of a diverse range of ecosystems.

The Park can be seen as both a classroom and laboratory, and as such can have particular appeal to special interest groups such as bird observers, walkers and cycling clubs. This presents a special opportunity to develop targeted education programs, and encourages groups to contribute to monitoring and research programs.

#### **Aims**

- Promote the educational value of the Park to schools, tertiary institutions and special interest groups.
- Encourage participation in park monitoring and research programs.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Encourage the development of suitable educational materials for the Park.*
- *Increase awareness of opportunities for educational visits to the Park.*
- *Support appropriate teacher training field programs and in-services.*
- *Identify opportunities and encourage involvement of schools and special interest groups in monitoring and research programs.*

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## 7 OTHER ISSUES

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### 7.1 Authorised uses

#### 7.1.1 Landholder access from the sea

There are eight landholders who currently use their own boats to travel between the mainland and French Island. They moor their boats in the Park as follows:

- Redbill Creek (4 landholders);
- North-west coast (2 landholders);
- Mosquito Creek (1 landholder);
- Anchorage Road (1 landholder).

Rights of access from the sea through the Park for landholders is provided for in the National Parks Act. This access is subject to such terms and conditions as the Minister determines.

#### Aim

- Provide access for landholder boats while minimising environmental damage to the Park.

#### Management strategies

- *Permit mooring of boats in accordance with the provisions of the National Parks Act. Establish permit conditions that provide for the following:*
  - *specified location of moorings;*
  - *the maximum number of boats to be accommodated;*
  - *structures to minimise impact on the Park, provided at the landholder's expense (e.g. steps and boardwalks);*
  - *routes for land and water access to mooring sites.*
  - *minimisation of site specific environmental and landscape impacts.*
- *Monitor the impact of this activity on the Park, and review permits to ensure that the Park is protected.*

#### 7.1.2 Apiculture

The effects of feral honeybees on indigenous flora, fauna and natural processes are not fully understood. There currently is no provision for

apiary sites in the Park but there are sites outside the Park on private land.

#### Aim

- Minimise the adverse effects of apiculture on park values.

#### Management strategy

- *Do not provide for beekeeping in the Park.*

#### 7.1.3 Other uses

There are many navigation markers within the Park. The marker at the top of The Pinnacles has deteriorated and requires maintenance. Some of the markers may have historical significance although they may be no longer required for navigation purposes.

There are numerous groundwater test bores in the Park, of which about 10 are measured some three times annually. The aim of these measurements is to establish the level of groundwater of French Island for use in comparative studies with levels measured on the mainland which are influenced by human activities such as irrigation.

Defence Force training exercises occur occasionally at various locations. A recent landing exercise caused some damage to the sensitive coastline of the Park and required restoration works.

There are some disused gravel pits in the Park.

The former LCC (1994) identified the French Island tip as a source for road making material, the removal of which should be integrated with rubbish disposal. The tip, formerly part of the State Park, was excised when the National Park was created.

#### Aims

- Ensure appropriate use and authorisation of public utilities.
- Allow appropriate uses in the Park when alternative sites are not available, subject to minimal impacts.

## Management strategies

- *Ensure that new and existing public utilities, including the groundwater bores, are covered by a consent under Section 27 of the National Parks Act in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines.*
- *Determine from the appropriate authorities the future requirement for existing navigation markers in the Park. Formalise those which are still required, and seek to preserve those which have historical significance.*
- *Allow appropriate Defence Force training in the Park in accordance with Parks Victoria guidelines.*
- *Obtain gravel and land fill from sources outside the Park (section 4.2).*

## 7.2 Boundaries and adjacent uses

French Island is an ‘unincorporated locality’, which means that it has no municipal council but is administered directly by the State Government. The Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for the French Island Planning Scheme.

The Planning Scheme provides for the use, development, protection and conservation of land on the Island. This scheme, which is currently under review, has an important role in preserving the character and conservation values of French Island.

The Park has an extensive interface with private property, particularly abutting the coastline. Most of the surrounding freehold land is used for grazing and cropping. Stock occasionally strays into the Park and grazes illegally. This situation is exacerbated by some absentee landholders who visit the Island infrequently.

A few private properties have traditionally used the Park as a ‘short cut’ to reach other properties or parts of the Island. A few property owners very occasionally walk stock along roads through the Park en route to other properties which they may own or lease.

There are three small sections of public land on the French Island coastline that are not part of the Park. These are the Tankerton and Barge Coastal Reserves, and an easement at Freeman Point opposite the McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison which includes the jetty with a link to the private land. The Tankerton foreshore is the ‘gateway’ to the Park and there is an opportunity to further improve facilities and the landscape to encourage visits.

The creation of a French Island Bushland Reserve of 4 ha (C 63E) has been approved by the Government. It offers views across the Bay and is comparatively accessible to Tankerton.

The McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison is a key visitor focus point on French Island, and management liaison is desirable to provide complementary opportunities for Park visitors on adjoining lands.

### Aim

- Minimise conflicts between park values and neighbouring land use.

### Management strategies

- *Continue to adhere to the French Island Planning Scheme in its application in relation to the Park, and support its role outside the Park in maintaining and protecting the relative isolation and special character of the Island.*
- *Cease the walking of stock, other than along Coast Road and McLeod Road, in the Park in three years from the date of approval of this Plan. In the interim, allow walking of stock in the Park only in instances where park values are not threatened and use of an alternative route outside the Park will create undue hardship or inconvenience to the stock owner. Establish an interim permit system with conditions that minimise impacts on the Park.*
- *Liaise with McLeod Ecofarm and Historical Prison to facilitate continued public vehicular access to Freeman Point*

*and to encourage sound management of adjoining lands.*

- *Liaise with landholders and encourage them to maintain fences and to take other appropriate action to prevent stock straying into the Park.*
- *Integrate planning and operation of the Park with other public land on French Island, including the French Island Bushland Reserve.*
- *Ensure that a current operations plan is maintained for the rubbish tip that minimises its impact on the Park.*

### **7.3 Park office and depot**

The Park office and depot and associated buildings are located on a block of the Park on Bayview Road. The facilities are generally in good condition and there is an extensive area available for facilities supporting volunteer groups (chapter 6).

The role of the office for direct contact with visitors is diminished with the development of the new visitor information shelter at Tankerton.

The workshop is an integral part of the precinct and includes provision for fire fighting equipment and storage of hazardous materials.

Power is provided by a generating plant.

Location of the facilities on the site is haphazard.

Facilities at the site are used for special management programs (e.g. Koalas) and have the potential to support survey and research activities by Universities and special interest groups.

#### **Aims**

- Efficiently co-ordinate administration, supervision and operations functions associated with the management of the Park.
- Minimise the impact of operations on the Park's landscape.

#### **Management strategies**

- *Maintain the office and depot and other facilities but review the location of the Park office against the benefits of a consolidated office at the Tankerton jetty.*
- *Improve facilities for volunteers and research at the office and depot.*
- *Prepare a site development plan that rationalises use of the site for park management and volunteer functions, and potential survey and research activities.*

## 8 IMPLEMENTATION

A three-year rolling implementation program will be prepared for the Park to ensure efficient implementation of this Plan. Priorities for management are identified in table 10 as an initial step in this process.

**TABLE 10 PRIORITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	SECTION IN PLAN
<b>Resource conservation</b>	
Discontinue duck hunting and seagrass harvesting.	3.2, 3.4
Manage and protect threatened species.	3.4
Develop a wildlife management plan and manage threats.	3.4
Develop and implement strategies for Koala management and habitat restoration.	3.4
Protect waterbird feeding, breeding and roosting sites from disturbance.	3.4
Develop and implement plans for vegetation management and rehabilitation of degraded or cleared areas.	3.3
Protect significant cultural values and features.	3.6
<b>Park protection</b>	
Prepare and implement a detailed plan for the ecological management of fire and protection of assets.	3.3, 4.1
Continue the pine control program.	4.2
Develop and implement a strategy to reduce risk of introduction of Cinnamon Fungus onto the Island, and monitor vegetation for symptoms.	4.2
Develop and implement strategic pest plant and animal control plans.	4.2
<b>The Park visit</b>	
Manage the Park road and track system as specified.	5.2.1
Support the French Island Access Strategy.	5.2.1
Develop a nature walk and new walking tracks and associated facilities.	5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.3
Develop other visitor facilities as specified, and maintain.	5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.6
Improve information and interpretation facilities and services.	5.3
<b>Community awareness and involvement</b>	
Develop a long-term volunteer strategy.	6.1
Encourage private operators to provide appropriate park support services.	5.4, 6.2
Establish a French Island Co-operative Neighbours Program.	6.2
<b>Monitoring and research</b>	
Establish the Environmental Management System for data management and monitoring programs.	3.3, 4.2
Facilitate survey of invertebrate fauna, and flora and fauna research.	3.3, 3.4, 4.1
Survey archaeological values (particularly prior to development works).	3.6
Monitor visitor numbers and use.	5.1, 5.2
<b>Other</b>	
Investigate reservation of Biosphere Reserve with the Park as the undisturbed core.	3.7

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## APPENDIX 1 THREATENED AND SIGNIFICANT FLORA

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	STATUS	FFG STATUS*
<b>Threatened flora</b>			
<i>Burnettia cuneata</i>	Lizard Orchid	Rr	
<i>Caladenia insularis</i>	French Island Spider-orchid	Vv	
^ <i>Caladenia patersonii</i> var. <i>patersonii</i>	Common Spider-orchid	k	
^ <i>Caladenia reticulata</i>	Veined Caladenia	v	
<i>Lycopodiella serpentina</i>	Bog Clubmoss	r	
<i>Microtis orbicularis</i>	Swamp Onion-orchid	r	
<i>Olearia viscosa</i>	Viscid Daisy bush	r	
<i>Prasophyllum frenchii</i>	Maroon Leek-orchid	Ve	Recommended listing
<i>Prasophyllum parviflorum</i>	Broad-lip Leek-orchid	v	
<i>Prasophyllum pyriforme</i> s.s.	Silurian Leek-orchid	k	
<i>Pterostylis chlorogramma</i>	Green-striped Greenhood	Vv	
<i>Tetratheca stenocarpa</i>	Long Pink-bells	Rr	
<i>Thelymitra benthamiana</i>	Blotched Sun-orchid	r	
<i>Thelymitra mucida</i>	Plum Orchid	v	
<b>Regionally significant flora</b>			
<i>Agrostis venusta</i>	Misty Bent	#	
<i>Calochilus paludosus</i>	Red Beard-orchid	#	
<i>Chenopodium glaucum</i>	Glaucus Goosefoot	#	
<i>Comesperma calymega</i>	Blue-spike Milkwort	#	
<i>Danthonia geniculata</i>	Kneed Wallaby-grass	#	
<i>Hydrocotyle verticillata</i>	Shield Pennywort	#	
<i>Leucopogon lanceolatus</i>	Lance Beard-heath	#	
<i>Lilaeopsis polyantha</i>	Australian Lilaeopsis	#	
<i>Microtis atrata</i>	Yellow Onion-orchid	#	
<i>Mitrasacme distylis</i>	Tiny Mitrewort	#	
<i>Mitrasacme pilosa</i>	Hairy Mitrewort	#	
<i>Patersonia glabrata</i>	Leafy Purple Flag	#	
<i>Poa clelandii</i>	Matted Tussock-grass	#	
<i>Pomaderris lanigera</i>	Woolly Pomaderris	#	
<i>Pomaderris oraria</i>	Coast Pomaderris	#	
<i>Prasophyllum brevilabre</i>	Short-lip Leek-orchid	#	
<i>Prasophyllum odoratum</i>	Sweet Leek-orchid	#	
<i>Prasophyllum parviflorum</i>	Slender Leek-orchid	#	
<i>Schizaea fistulosa</i>	Narrow Comb-fern	#	
<i>Schoenus latelaminatus</i>	Medus Bog-sedge	#	
<i>Stylidium despectum</i>	Small Trigger Plant	#	
<i>Stylidium perspusillum</i>	Slender Trigger Plant	#	
<i>Villarsia reniformis</i>	Running Marsh-flower	#	
<i>Wolffia australiana</i>	Tiny Duckweed	#	

SOURCE: NRE database (1998b); Vanderzee (1992); F & C Gordes (pers. comm.).

STATUS:

e - endangered in Victoria

k - poorly known in Victoria

r - rare in Victoria

R - rare in Australia

v - vulnerable in Victoria

V - vulnerable in Australia

# - not recorded elsewhere in the Western Port catchment

\* - Status under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

^ - Taxonomy requires clarification.

## APPENDIX 2 AREAS OF BOTANICAL SIGNIFICANCE

SITE	SIGNIFICANCE	MANAGEMENT NEEDS
<b>Significant communities</b>		
Saltmarsh (WPC 21, 22 and 23)	Extensive, rich and little disturbed. Probably of National significance.	Minimise disturbance to community and drainage system.
Mangroves (WPC 24)	Northern coast contains one of the most extensive, best developed and least disturbed mangrove areas.	Minimise disturbance to community and drainage system.
Swamps and ephemeral wetlands (WPC 14 and 15)	Good examples of communities now largely depleted elsewhere in Victoria.	Maintain existing drainage pattern unless study indicates changes would be beneficial.
<b>Significant quadrats</b>		
A rated Coastal Heathland (WPC 15.1 - 15.4; 11 quadrats)	Either floristically rich, or containing restricted species, or is one of the best representatives of its type.	Allow sites disturbed by past practices to recover and develop management prescriptions.
A rated <i>Leptospermum myrsinoides</i> Heathland (WPC 8.3; 1 quadrat)	One of the best representatives of its type.	As above.
A rated Damp Sclerophyll Forest (WPC 5.8; 1 quadrat)	Unusual, with restricted species typical of Wet Sclerophyll communities.	As above.
<b>Significant sites</b>		
North Reference Area	Contains most of the major communities of French Island, some undisturbed swamps and ephemeral wetlands, and large areas of mature heathland.	As per Reference Area Management Plan. Adjust boundaries (see this Plan).
East Reference Area	Diverse vegetation, relatively undisturbed and containing notable restricted species, some from East Gippsland.	As per Reference Area Management Plan. Eradication of feral goats from Dores property is vital.
North East Central Area	High quality Damp Sclerophyll Forest, largely cleared elsewhere.	Allow recovery from previous burning; develop management prescriptions.
Stockyard Point - Red Bluff	Damp Sclerophyll Forest and heathland, with native grassland species of regional significance.	Develop prescriptions to maintain important grassland elements in equilibrium with woody elements.
River Point East	No description.	

SOURCE: Opie et al. (1984); Vanderzee (1992).

## APPENDIX 3 THREATENED FAUNA

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	STATUS	FFG STATUS
<b>Mammals</b>			
<i>Arctocephalus pusillus</i>	Australian Fur Seal	Vul	
<i>Potorous tridactylus</i>	Long-nosed Potoroo	Ir(nt)	
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great Egret	End	L
<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	Whiskered Tern	Ir(nt)	
<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	King Quail	CE #	
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	CE	L
<i>Falco subniger</i>	Black Falcon	End	
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	End #	L AS(60)
<i>Larus pacificus</i>	Pacific Gull	Ir(nt)	
<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot	End	L
<i>Neophema chrysogaster</i>	Orange-bellied Parrot	CE	L AS(43)
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	Eastern Curlew	Ir(nt)	
<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	Nankeen Night Heron	Vul	
<i>Oxyura australis</i>	Blue-billed Duck	Vul	N
<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	Fairy Prion	Ir(nt)	
<i>Phalacrocorax fuscescens</i>	Black-faced Cormorant	Vul	
<i>Phalacrocorax varius</i>	Pied Cormorant	Ir(nt) #	
<i>Platalea regia</i>	Royal Spoonbill	Vul #	
<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	Baillon's Crake	Vul	N
<i>Rallus pectoralis</i>	Lewin's Rail	End #	N
<i>Sterna bergii</i>	Crested Tern	Ir(nt) #	
<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Caspian Tern	Vul #	N
<i>Sterna nereis</i>	Fairy Tern	Vul #	L
<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	Gull-billed Tern	End i	N
<i>Thinornis rubricollis</i>	Hooded Plover	End i	L
<b>Reptile</b>			
<i>Egernia coventryi</i>	Swamp Skink	Vul	

SOURCE: NRE database (1997a); NRE 1998; Des Quinn pers. comm.

STATUS (NRE 1998):

CE - Critically endangered in Victoria

End - Endangered in Victoria

Ir(nt) - Lower risk (near threatened) in Victoria

Vul - Vulnerable in Victoria.

# - recorded breeding in Park

i - incidental occurrence only

FFG STATUS:

L - Listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

N - Nominated for listing under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

AS(no.) - Action Statement published.

## APPENDIX 4 WADER FEEDING AREAS AND HIGH TIDE ROOSTS

AREA	MAIN SPECIES AND SIGNIFICANCE
<b>Feeding Areas</b>	
West coast mudflats (Scrub Point and 10 km south) - intertidal	Eastern Curlew, Terek Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Royal Spoonbill and Australian White Ibis.
Mudflats of NW corner (Scrub Point and 5 km along northern coast) - intertidal	Lesser Golden Plover, Terek Sandpiper, Eastern Curlew, Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Oystercatcher, Double-banded Plover, Grey-tailed Tattler and Australian White Ibis.
Blue Gum Point to Spit Point mudflats - intertidal	Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper.
Long Point to Tortoise Head (6 km) - intertidal	Mongolian Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Lesser Golden Plover, Eastern Curlew, Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Royal Spoonbill and Australian White Ibis.
Mud flats off the west coast (Tea-tree Pt and 2 km south - intertidal	Mongolian Plover.
North-west corner - terrestrial non-tidal area	Double-banded Plover, Red-necked Stint, Curlew Sandpiper etc. - used when regular intertidal areas are unavailable.
<b>High Tide Roosts</b>	
Tortoise Head	One of two most important high tide roosts in Western Port - including Mongolian Plover, Eastern Curlew, Red-capped Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Red-necked Stint and Pied Oystercatcher.
Rams Island	Second of two most important areas; coupled with Rhyll Inlet and interchange with Tortoise Head - including Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Mongolian Plover, Large Sand Plover, Whimbrel, Curlew Sandpiper, Eastern Curlew, Grey-tailed Tattler.
Barrallier Island	Large area supporting some of the highest bird numbers in Western Port - including Grey-tailed Tattler, Terek Sandpiper, Greenshank, Eastern Curlew, Curlew Sandpiper, Lesser-Golden Plover, Red-necked Stint and Whimbrel.
Bullock-Decoy Swamps and Duck Splash	Alternative area to Barrallier Island - including same species.
Heifer Swamp and Clump Lagoon	Important for ibis.
Mangroves off Barrallier Is. and adjacent coast	Cormorants, ibis, spoonbills and waders.
Blue Gum Point	Most important for Red Knot (uncommon in other parts of Bay) and Double-banded Plover.
Fairhaven and Chilcott Rocks	Small roost for Pied Oystercatcher.

REFERENCES: Andrew et al. (1984); Belcher & Hastings (1983); Loyn (1975); Lumsden et al. (1983); M. Douglas pers. comm.; D. Quinn pers. comm.

## APPENDIX 5 SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS

NO.	AREA	PURPOSE
1	Heifer and Little Heifer Swamps	Bird breeding and Swamp Skink habitat
2	Clump Lagoon	Bird breeding
3	Stick Swamp	Bird breeding
4	Bullock and Decoy Swamps	Bird breeding and roosting
5	Gartsides Swamp and Mountain Hole	Botanical values
6	Barrallier Island	Bird breeding and roosting
7	Rams Island	Bird breeding and roosting
8	Tortoise Head and mangroves/saltmarsh	Bird breeding and roosting and Swamp Skink habitat
9	Stockyard Point - Red Bluff area	Sea-Eagle breeding
10	Tankerton Creek	Biological values
11	Redbill Creek	Bird breeding and roosting and biological values
12	The Duck Splash and Gartsides saltmarsh	Bird breeding and feeding
13	Palmer Point creek and saltmarsh	Bird breeding and roosting
14	Mosquito Creek	Biological values
15	NW mangroves, mudflats and coastal area (north from Fairhaven)	Bird roosting and feeding
16	Chilcott Rocks	Bird roosting
17	Off-shore from Tea-tree Point	Bird feeding
18	Tortoise Head to Long Point coastline and mudflats	Bird feeding
19	Blue Gum Point coastline and mudflats	Bird feeding and roosting
20	Pinnacles area	Orchids
21	Mount Wellington area	Orchids

NOTE: Locations of Special Protection Areas are shown on figure 2.

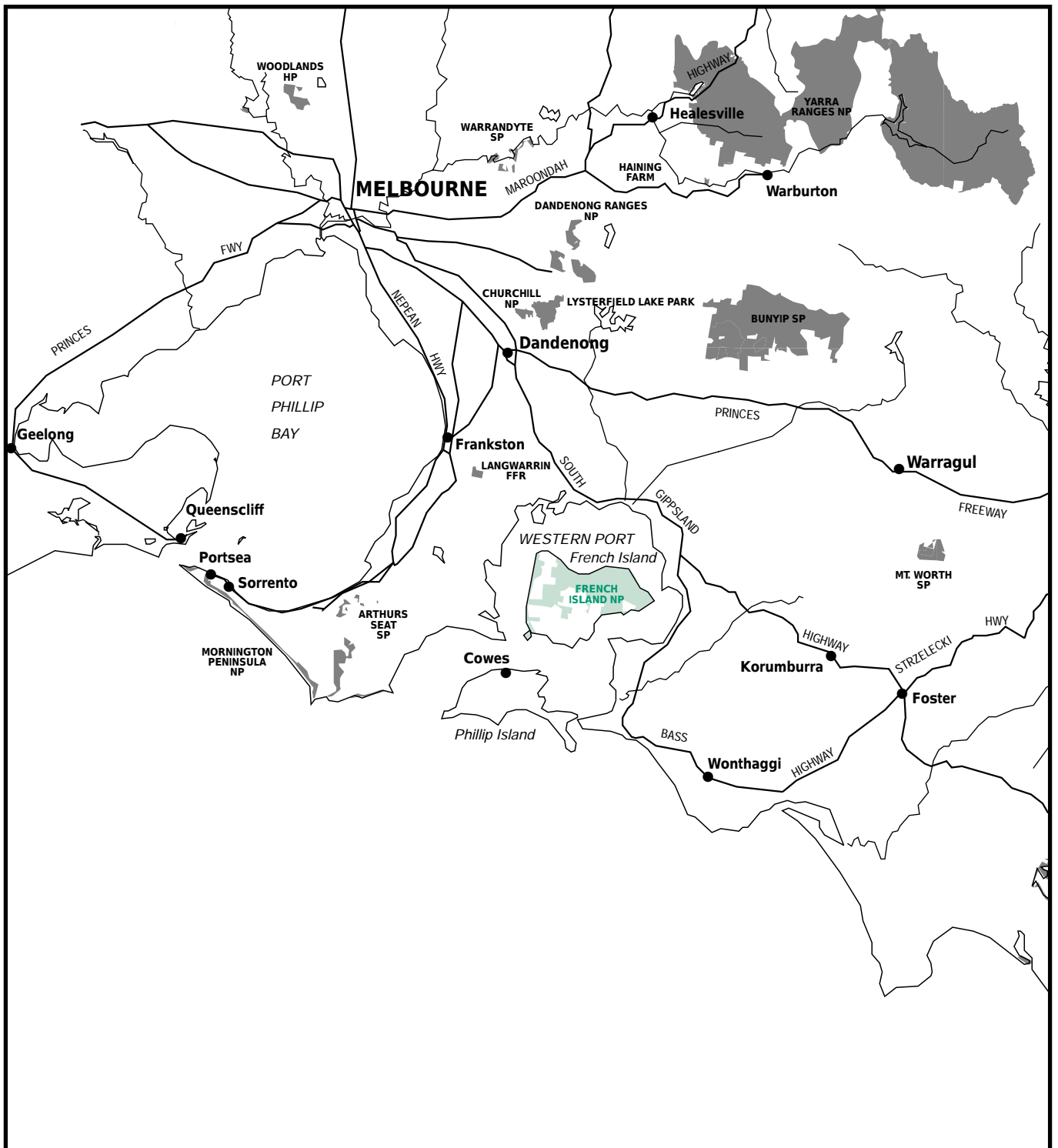
## APPENDIX 6 MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Aloe saponaria</i>	Aloe
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet Vernal-grass
<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>	Asparagus
<i>Briza maxima</i>	Large Quaking-grass
<i>Briza minor</i>	Lesser Quaking-grass
<i>Chrysanthemoides monilifera</i>	Boneseed
<i>Conyza bonariensis</i>	Tall Fleabane
<i>Dittrichia graveolens</i>	Stinkweed
<i>Echium plantagineum</i>	Paterson's Curse
<i>Erica lusitanica</i>	Spanish Heath
<i>Eucalyptus botryoides</i>	Mahogany Gum
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire Fog
<i>Homeria flaccida</i>	One-leaf Cape Tulip
<i>Hypochoeris glabra</i>	Smooth Cat's Ear
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>	Cat's Ear
<i>Juncus acutus</i>	Sharp Rush
<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	African Box-thorn
<i>Myrsiphyllum asparagoides</i>	Bridal Creeper
<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	Paspalum
<i>Paraserianthes lophantha</i>	Cape Wattle
<i>Phytolacca octandra</i>	Red Ink-weed
<i>Pinus pinaster</i>	Cluster Pine
<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Monterey Pine
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>	Sweet Pittosporum
<i>Polygala myrtifolia</i>	Myrtle-leaf Milkwort
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Sweet Briar
<i>Rubus discolor</i>	Blackberry
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> spp. agg.	Blackberry
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Furze
<i>Watsonia bulbifera</i>	Bulbil Watsonia
<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>	White Arum Lily

## GLOSSARY

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CAMBA	China -Australia Migratory Birds Agreement
CFA	Country Fire Authority
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JAMBA	Japan -Australia Migratory Birds Agreement
LCC	Land Conservation Council (now Environment Conservation Council)
MVO	Management vehicles and walkers only
NRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
SEC	State Electricity Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



# FRENCH ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

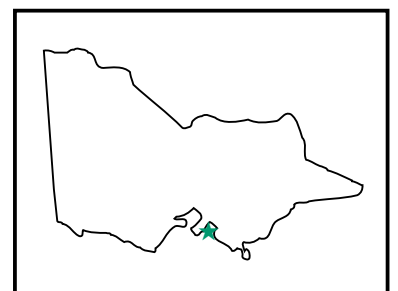
## FIGURE 1 REGIONAL LOCALITY PLAN

Highway

Parks



0 20  
G/5003.1 Kilometres



**Parks**  
VICTORIA

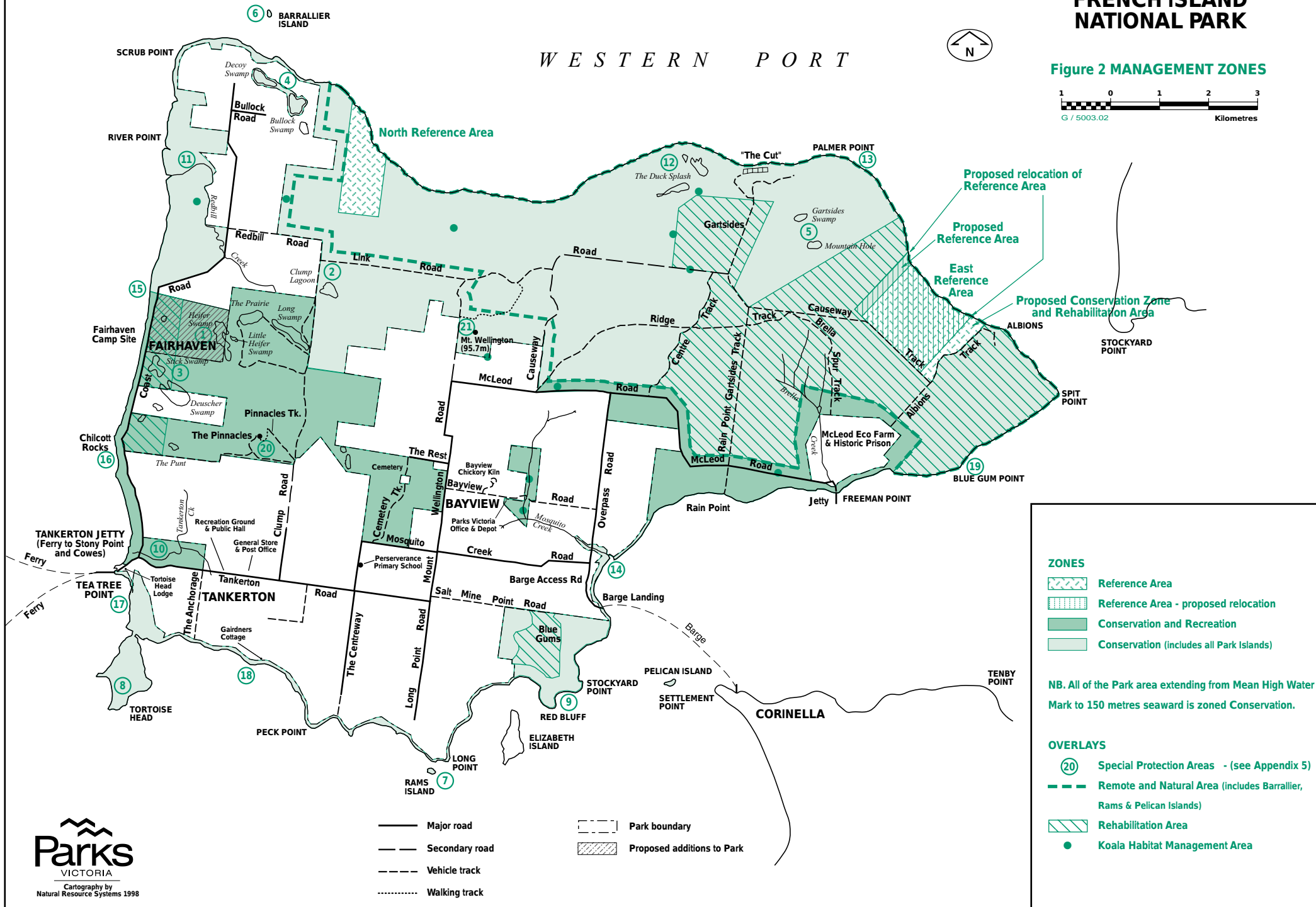
Cartography by  
Natural Resource Systems 1998

# FRENCH ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

WESTERN PORT



Figure 2 MANAGEMENT ZONES



- ZONES**
- Reference Area
  - Reference Area - proposed relocation
  - Conservation and Recreation
  - Conservation (includes all Park Islands)

NB. All of the Park area extending from Mean High Water Mark to 150 metres seaward is zoned Conservation.

- OVERLAYS**
- Special Protection Areas - (see Appendix 5)
  - Remote and Natural Area (includes Barrallier, Rams & Pelican Islands)
  - Rehabilitation Area
  - Koala Habitat Management Area

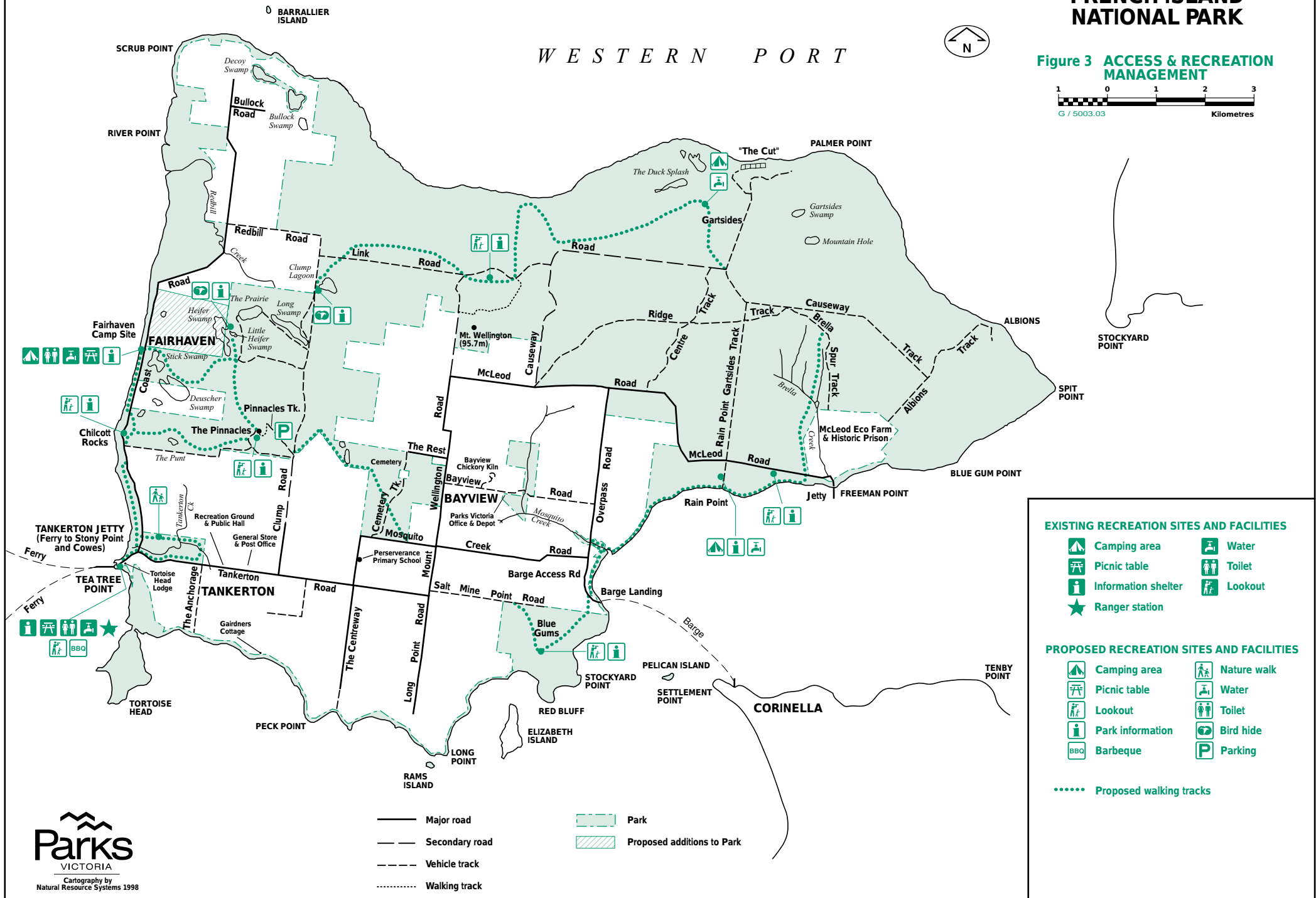
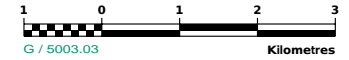
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Vehicle track
- Walking track
- Park boundary
- Proposed additions to Park

# FRENCH ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

WESTERN PORT



Figure 3 ACCESS & RECREATION MANAGEMENT



### EXISTING RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES

-  Camping area
-  Picnic table
-  Information shelter
-  Ranger station
-  Water
-  Toilet
-  Lookout

### PROPOSED RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES

-  Camping area
-  Picnic table
-  Lookout
-  Park information
-  Barbecue
-  Nature walk
-  Water
-  Toilet
-  Bird hide
-  Parking

..... Proposed walking tracks

-  Major road
-  Secondary road
-  Vehicle track
-  Walking track
-  Park
-  Proposed additions to Park