



**Western Coastal Board**

**Submission on the Western Regional Coastal Plan 2015-2020 Draft.**

12<sup>th</sup> March 2015

The Torquay Angling Club congratulates and supports the Western Coastal Board on the draft strategy and the vision as outlined in the draft plan.

The Club supports the social and economic values outlined in the draft that impact on the coast and are of great concern to many club members, in particular the increased visitation by many boat owners who now have easy access to this region from all parts of the State. With increased visitation and tourism in this region the issue of balancing the economic value with the social impact needs to be managed in a more structured manner.

Torquay has developed into a major activity node with a massive increase in boating and fishing resulting in social and economic benefits for the region. There are many visitors that are now coming to Torquay to launch and retrieve boats and personal water craft (PWC). With the future development at both Torquay and Armstrong Creek there will be increased need for a significant increase in boating infrastructure.

There is a major problem with the current “sand access ramp” at Fisherman’s Beach that only provides access to the sand and not the water. It has resulted in a number of cars including four wheel drives becoming bogged in the sand, and in some cases the vehicles have been submerged in sea water and ruined. Also there is a need to install signs that designate the boating area for boating only.

The “Boating Coastal Action Plan prepared in 2010 and included in the current draft strategy assessed that “Torquay has significant potential to increase the diversity of boating opportunities”. The Club fully supports that statement and as Torquay is now designated a Regional Boating Facility, as outlined in the Boating Action Plan 2010 calls for the provision of infrastructure to support this designation.

The current demand for improved boating infrastructure at Torquay has and is increasing each year with many people choosing not to come as the facilities are inadequate and unsafe for launching and retrieving their boats, this also restricts the size of boats that can access the water. The Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee has already installed parking meters at the boat ramp and there has been major works carried out to the angling/boat clubrooms and marine safety facilities, but not the boat infrastructure to support increased visitation, also there continues to be parking problems at peak-times.

Another major problem that was identified in the Boating CAP 2010 and persists today is the concerns raised regarding the lack of facilities along the Western Coast for safe launching and retrieving of boats. the plan stated “there are currently no higher level of service facilities between Queenscliff and Apollo Bay”. At Torquay this has resulted in serious problems launching the rescue vessel and particularly during high swells or windy days, it also restricts the number and size of boats accessing the sand, there is also the risk to beach goers who share the beach area with boat owners launching and retrieving their boats on the sand, it is an accident or death waiting to happen.

In the Boating CAP 2010 it recommended that a master plan be prepared for the boating precinct at Fisherman’s Beach this plan should include the social, economic and environmental issues associated with options to provide greater safety for launching and retrieving at Fisherman’s Beach, consideration should also be given to the safety of boats when the weather turns making it unsafe to be out on the water, currently there is no provision to assist these people returning to the beach in rough conditions, and this has resulted in injury and damage to boats.

The Torquay Angling/Boat Club recommends that a management plan be commenced and completed as a matter of urgency at Torquay Fisherman’s Beach. This plan should include the options for improved infrastructure for the safe launching and retrieval of boats, including Safety rescue craft with the support of the committee of management, local government, State Government, Federal Government and the local community including users of the facility, the Club will participate in supporting and assisting in the preparation of the management plan.

Torquay Angling/Boating Club Committee

