

FAQs - Caravan and Camping Parks Master Plan

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About the Master Plan

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a tool that guides and prioritises improvements for a particular area over a set period of time, while enhancing the important cultural and environmental values.

Why is a Master Plan needed?

In the Barwon Coast reserve, the caravan parks and campground have ageing infrastructure that require investment for their upgrade or replacement, as well as environmental challenges like potential leakage of old septic systems, and protecting Moonah woodlands and other native vegetation.

There is also a growing popularity of camping holidays and the ongoing challenge of enough available sites. Currently the wait list at Barwon Coast for a twelve-month permit site is at capacity, and there is a greater demand than availability for casual sites.

With pressures like population growth, ageing infrastructure and increased sea level rise, the Caravan and Camping Parks Master Plan will set the direction for improvements to the parks over the next ten years, and guide the long term mix of accommodation types and sites available to ensure a range of accessible camping and visitor experiences.

How does the Master Plan relate to the **Barwon Coast Coastal and Marine Management Plan**?

The *Barwon Coast Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020-2025* (CMMP) guides the long-term use and management of the beaches, foreshores and caravan parks in the reserve. The CMMP divides the area into six landscape precincts, and an accommodation services precinct for the caravan parks and camping grounds. An action in the CMMP is to develop a Master Plan for each precinct. The first master plan to be developed is for the 'accommodation services precinct' (which we're calling the 'Caravan and Camping Parks Master Plan').

The *Barwon Coast Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020-2025* can be found on the Barwon Coast website under 'Publications': www.barwoncoast.com.au/publications/

Who is Barwon Coast?

Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc (Barwon Coast) is delegated to manage 19km of the coast along Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula. This includes the beaches and foreshores of Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads, 13th Beach and Breamlea. In partnership with

Traditional Owners, Barwon Coast's charter is to protect and enhance the natural environment and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy these areas.

Barwon Coast operates four caravan parks and one campground in the foreshore reserve, as well as managing various commercial leases and licences. All revenue raised is reinvested to care for the natural environment and to provide facilities and infrastructure along the coast for use and enjoyment by all.

What caravan parks and camping areas does Barwon Coast manage?

Barwon Coast operates four caravan parks and one campground in the foreshore reserve. Each park provides a unique experience for locals and visitors to connect to our special part of the Victorian coast. The parks include:

- Breamlea Caravan Park
- Barwon Heads Caravan Park
- Riverside Campground (Ocean Grove)
- Riverview Family Caravan Park (Ocean Grove).

Which state government policies have provided direction for the Master Plan?

Marine and coastal environment

The *Marine and Coastal Policy 2020* provides guidance for the planning, management and sustainable use of the coastal and marine environment. Key elements include:

- Acknowledging Traditional Owners rights aspirations and knowledge.
- Protecting and enhancing the marine and coastal environment.
- Respecting natural processes and adapting to climate change.
- Use and develop sustainably.

The Policy states "*The ways in which people enjoy Victoria's marine and coastal environment are many and varied, from passive (staying near the water or beach) or active. These activities are supported by structures and facilities such as camping grounds*".

Camping on Crown land

The *Improving Equity of Access to Crown Land Caravan Parks 2011* provides guidance on managing caravan parks on Crown land to improve the equity of access to Crown land and enable affordable holidays for Victorians.

What is the purpose of the Caravan and Camping Parks Master Plan ('Master Plan')?

The purpose of the Master Plan is to:

- Support greater connection to Wadawurrung Country.
- Protect and enhance the cultural and environmental values in the parks.
- Enable flexibility to adapt to the impacts of climate change across the parks.

- Enhance connection to place, family and friends and an overall sense of stewardship of the coast.
- Support opportunities for people to access affordable coastal camping experiences.
- Provide the future layout for camping areas and accommodation types that support the financial needs of Barwon Coast in managing the whole of the coast.
- Identify key actions for improvements to the parks over the next ten years.
- Guide asset renewal priorities to ensure the visitor experience is maintained at a high standard.

What is included in the Master Plan?

The Master Plan has an overall vision, policy context, guiding principles, how the principles translate into action, draft plans showing the current and proposed layouts of the parks, key actions for improvement and information on how to have your say on the draft plans.

What is the Master Plan vision and guiding principles?

Vision: *"To provide camping and holiday experiences on Wadawurrung Country that supports connection to and caring of our unique coastal reserves."*

The Guiding Principles that underpin the Master Plan are:

1. Support connection to Country and protection of cultural values.
2. Protect and enhance the environmental values.
3. Adapt to current and future impacts of climate change.
4. Enable a financial return to support coastal management responsibilities of Barwon Coast.
5. Support affordable holiday options that can be accessed in a fair and equitable manner.
6. Enhance connection to place, family and friends and the overall visitor experience.
7. Be agile to respond to market trends and innovative opportunities.

What are the key actions or changes for each park?

Breamlea Caravan Park

- Refurbishment of the recreation room and camp kitchen.
- Relocating and upgrading the playspace to be more central in the park.
- Upgrading the toilet block facilities.
- Building some new cabins.
- Organise and consolidate the sites, so the twelve-month permit sites are grouped together, and the casual sites are grouped together. This allows better servicing and infrastructure management of the site areas.

Barwon Heads Caravan Park

- Optimise the built accommodation including one or two additional beach houses taking in the ocean views, new smaller cabins nestled in the Moonah and Tea Tree near the multi-purpose-facility, or to the south of the existing cabins and upgrading the existing cabins.
- Refurbishing the camp kitchens.
- Upgrading the playspaces.
- Redeveloping the toilet blocks.
- Enhancing the education area around the Lobster Pot.
- Organise and consolidate the sites so that the twelve-month permit sites are grouped together, and the casual sites are grouped together. This allows better servicing and infrastructure management of the site areas.

Riverside Campground

- Decommissioning the septic systems, putting in a connection to the town sewerage system, and replacement of the toilet blocks.
- Improving signage and way finding for the shared walking paths.
- Enhanced picnic facilities and clearer parking (cars at a safe distance from the picnic tables).
- Safer pedestrian access across Barwon Heads – Ocean Grove Road.

Riverview Family Holiday Park

- Improving the playspaces.
- Improving the camp kitchens.
- Upgrading toilet blocks.
- Improving the maintenance area (at the southern end of park) to create a recreational and picnic space.
- Organise and consolidate some site areas, particularly on the edge where casual sites and twelve-month permit sites meet. This reorganisation will allow the twelve-month permit sites to be grouped together and the casual sites to be grouped together, supporting better servicing and infrastructure management of the site areas.
- Opportunities to build new cabins and repurpose an existing residence on site for visitor accommodation.

Implementation and funding

How will the Master Plan be implemented?

Following the finalisation of the Master Plan, Barwon Coast will develop a detailed implementation plan that sets out the order for the actions to be completed. This implementation plan will guide Barwon Coast's operational budgets and yearly works schedule. Actions will be implemented by Barwon Coast staff, contractors and consultants (depending on the required timing and expertise). We are committed to keeping campers and community up-to-date as the Master Plan and implementation plan progresses.

Who will pay for implementing the Master Plan?

Barwon Coast's yearly operating budgets will include funds to complete the works with priority projects each year over the next ten years. The priority projects will be outlined in the implementation plan.

Revenue raised from the caravan parks will be reinvested back into the parks to complete the priority actions in the Master Plan.

Will there be enough funds to undertake all the actions?

The overall cost of all the works detailed in the Master Plan will be spread across ten years to allow for appropriate planning, budgets and resourcing to be determined.

Implementation will be a phased approach with actions that generate income, for example the creation of new 'built accommodation' (such as cabins) likely to be completed relatively early in the Master Plan period, as revenue generated from the new accommodation can support the next phase of implementation.

Community consultation

Has the community been consulted in the development of the draft Master Plan?

Campers, community members, community groups and stakeholder input has helped shape the development of the draft Master Plan.

Developing the draft Master Plan has also involved guidance from the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

Can community feedback help shape the draft Master Plan?

How our caravan parks and campground are used and managed over the next ten years is an important issue. Input from campers, the local community and foreshore users will

help shape the final Plan and enable Barwon Coast to better understand community and camper needs.

How do I have my say on the draft Master Plan?

Barwon Coast welcomes your ideas and feedback on the draft Master Plan. It is available for your comment for a six-week period, from Monday 21 August until Monday 2 October.

You can have your say by:

- Filling out an online survey.
- Providing a submission.

Please visit www.barwoncoast.com.au/projects/masterplan

Community sessions will also be available to view the draft plans and ask questions of our staff.

Hard copies of the Master Plans can be viewed at the reception of the caravan parks.

Current permits and bookings

Will I lose the casual camping site that I booked for next summer?

No, all bookings for next summer (2023/2024) for casual camping sites will be managed as part of the normal booking process.

Will I lose my casual camping site in years to come?

There may be changes to the sites that are able to be booked in coming years, however Barwon Coast will provide at least twelve months' notice to anyone affected by the changes and work with them to find suitable alternative sites.

Will the Master Plan affect my current twelve-month permit?

No, if you currently have a twelve-month permit, this remains valid in line with the 'twelve-month permit agreement' and the agreed time period.

There will be some instances where an action to reorganise the park layout means that Barwon Coast will not issue a twelve-month permit for some permit sites. In these instances, Barwon Coast will provide advance notice to the permit holder, enable opportunities to relocate to an alternate permit site and support them through the change process.

The Master Plan implementation will take place over a ten-year period.

What happens if my permit site is in an area identified as part of the park reorganisation?

The Master Plan will be implemented over the next ten years and the reorganisation of sites is likely to occur in the early part of that period. Barwon Coast will work closely with

individual permit holders to identify suitable alternative sites that are currently available or become available.

We are committed to working with our twelve-month permit holders through this process and will keep you up-to-date if you are affected by the change.

Will the fees at the caravan parks and campground remain the same throughout the Master Plan period?

Camping and accommodation fees are determined by Barwon Coast on an annual basis; this will remain the case during the ten-year life of the Master Plan. Barwon Coast is committed to meeting the requirement for 'affordable and equitable access to Crown land caravan and camping parks' as set out in the *Victorian Government Policy Statement - Improving Equity of Access to Crown Land and Caravan and Camping Parks 2011*.

Will my twelve-month permit fee remain the same throughout the Master Plan period?

Twelve-month permit fees are determined by Barwon Coast on an annual basis; this will remain the case during the ten-year life of the Master Plan.

Can I sell my caravan and annexe?

Yes, in line with Barwon Coast's Sale of Van and Annexe Process, any Permit Holder can sell their van and annexe at any time and this sale does not require approval from Barwon Coast. However, the sale of a van and annexe does not give the buyer access to the permit or the right to occupy the permit site. Once a van or annexe is sold it must be removed from the caravan park.

Can I sell my permit?

No, the permit process is managed by Barwon Coast via a waiting list process. If a Permit Holder relinquishes their permit or leaves the caravan park with time left on the Permit, they will be refunded the pro rata balance for time unused.

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