

Bass Coast Arc

The Bass Coast Arc – “Community Access to Public Space” concept was dreamt up by passionate members of the Bass Coast community in 2015. The project aims to support local community groups to work with the relevant public land manager to improve the environment of our public spaces and create community access to these unique areas. Some key points for this project are:

Taking necessary steps to manage pest plants and animals, to prevent their devastating impact on small native animals.

Surveying and looking after vegetation that provides habitat for native animals.

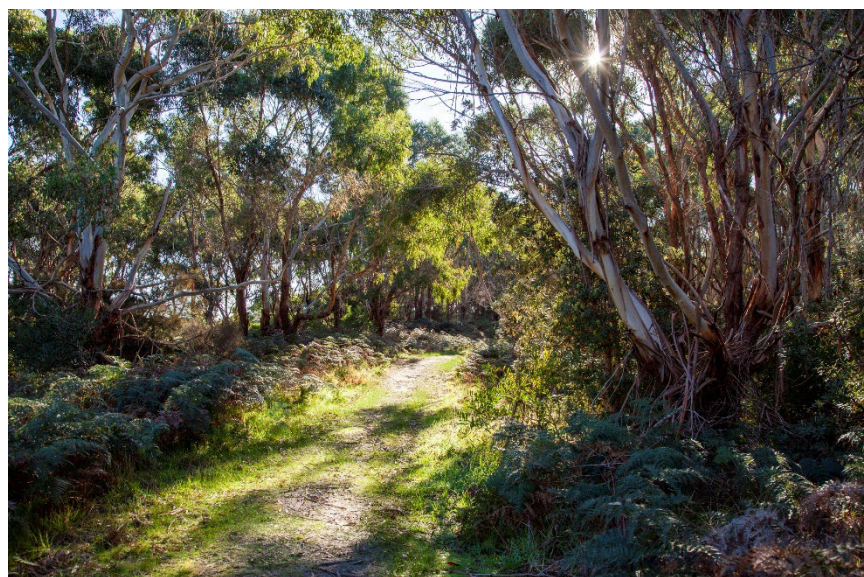
Repairing and upgrading infrastructure, including public tracks and fences.

Overview

Bass Coast Arc - community access to public space project will support targeted local community groups to undertake environmental activities including ecological vegetation class restoration through revegetation work to repair and restore threatened ecosystems and landscapes. This project will get the community out into the environment and enhance access, create wildlife corridors to improve habitat for the threatened species, and provide place-based environmental education opportunities.

Vision

The vision of this plan is to identify public land areas of high community and biodiversity value that are viable sites for enhancement works, primarily the creation of linkages and corridors, and capital improvement. From this information, we aim to introduce connectivity in the landscape to improve the capacity for native plants and animals to move and adapt to climate impacts. Repairing and building on the areas identified will provide a mechanism for community involvement and engagement, as well as increasing access to public spaces and



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starting to address the loss of ecological function brought about by habitat loss and fragmentation.

Background

The native vegetation in the Bass Coast Shire was estimated at 12% cover in 1997 from aerial maps. Since then, millions of native plants have been planted by community groups, Landcare, landowners, council and authorities.

Native vegetation cover was calculated for the entire Bass Coast Shire in 2016 with a cover of 20%. This includes native grassland and salt marsh vegetation which are threatened and are important habitats for significant species such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot and Orange Bellied Parrot. The increase in native vegetation cover is a great outcome and demonstrates that the continued efforts of the community have led to a significant increase in native vegetation across the shire.

Scope

The aim of this plan is to identify, protect and enhance ecosystems on public land and increase connectivity through Southern Gippsland and Western Port. Assessment has been done by utilising the Biodiversity Blueprint mapping developed by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and working with the Bass Coast Shire Council and Department of Environment Land Water and Planning to further assess areas of high-quality remnant vegetation across the area. Community consultation along with standard principles have been used to determine the most suitable options for biolinks and public land enhancement works.

This information will inform the high-value locations for the improvement of community assets focusing on remnant protection and re-vegetation to increase the quality and quantity of native vegetation to create connectivity in the landscape. The plan will assist stakeholders to determine revegetation and remnant protection opportunities with prospects to attract funding based on the strategic protection and enhancement of high-value biodiversity assets.

Assets

The Bass Coast Arc area contains assets including the Western Port, a Ramsar listed wetland, Phillip Island and French Island, Bunurong Coastal Reserve, Wonthaggi heathlands and wetlands, Cape Paterson Coastal Reserve, Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve, Gurdies Nature Conservation Reserve and Grantville Bushland Reserve. There are also large areas of remnant vegetation and revegetation on private land, namely the Holden Proving Ground and the Coastal Park at the Desalination Plant. There is an existing network of walking and bike paths as well as the rail trails that can be built upon.

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These areas support several EVCs including Wet Heathland, Coast Banksia Woodland, Coastal Saltmarsh, Coastal Moonah Woodland, and Mangrove Shrubland. Bass Coast contains important shorebird roosting sites and areas of cultural heritage sensitivity. This asset incorporates rare wetland types that provide habitat connectivity with the marine and estuarine systems of Southern Gippsland, supporting a range of bird species and indigenous vegetation and are remnants of a once extensive wetland complex.

Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Inform the community and supporters of the existing range, biodiversity significance, and main strategic linkages to connect remnant vegetation within the Bass Coast Landcare Network area.
- Provide an avenue for community and stakeholder feedback and engagement into the linking of biodiversity across the Bass Coast Landcare network area.
- Provide an action plan for the implementation of revegetation across land tenures
- Identify avenues and opportunities for funding.

