



MOYJIL ABORIGINAL PLACE
POINT RITCHIE
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Point Ritchie / Moyjil is the western headland where the Hopkins River mouth meets the Southern Ocean at the eastern edge of Warrnambool, South West Victoria.

Through tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal people have utilised natural resources and the high vantage point offered by Point Ritchie / Moyjil – known to the traditional owners as Moyjil.

When it has been a coastal location Aboriginal people have harvested shellfish, crabs and fish from the sea. They have left evidence of this in the form of middens - accumulations of the hard parts of their food (skeletons and shells) - charcoal and fireplaces.

The geological significance of Point Ritchie / Moyjil has long been recognised, as has the presence of archaeological sites, in the form of shell middens and associated artefact scatters dating to the late Holocene (up until c. 6,000 years ago), in the dunes along this section of the Victorian coast. However, recent research has confirmed deposits at Point Ritchie / Moyjil contain evidence of human activity of much greater antiquity.

1.2 Precinct Area

The Point Ritchie/Moyjil Precinct includes land which extends south from the Hopkins River Bridge to the mouth of the Hopkins River. It includes Granny's Grave to the east and ends at Logan's Beach to the west.

It is largely covered by native vegetation which is classified as Coastal Dune Scrub. In terms of

infrastructure, the precinct includes a single road to the headland, three car parks, walking tracks, viewing platforms, public toilets and a playground located off Hickford Parade.

1.3 Ongoing Protection Declaration

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 allows the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to make declarations that preserve important Aboriginal cultural heritage places as 'protected areas'. From 2 August 2013, an Ongoing Protection Declaration was legislated over a part of the precinct (Point Ritchie / Moyjil (Area 1)).

An Ongoing Protection Declaration is a permanent declaration that:

- Restricts activities likely to harm the Aboriginal cultural heritage values within the declaration area;
- Provides for any necessary maintenance or management activities; and

- Applies maximum penalties for contravention of the declaration.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this Conservation Management Plan is to document sound and agreed conservation management actions to protect and enhance the precinct.

The goals of the Conservation Management Plan are:

- Provide an overview of the historical values and physical analysis of the precinct.
- Document the precinct's heritage significance.
- Identify conservation issues which threaten, or may threaten, its heritage significance.
- Develop policies which identify the most appropriate ways to maintain this significance.
- Generate a management plan, based on these conservation policies, to inform future management of the precinct.



2. PRECINCT AREA

The precinct has been divided into four (4) management areas each of a different priority for the purposes of this Conservation Management Plan (Figure 1).

High Priority:

- Point Ritchie / Moyjil (Area 1) – This comprises the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Ongoing Protection Declaration, including the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Car Park, the mainland headland and the two rock stacks to its south – the ‘West Stack’ and ‘East Stack’. This area is the highest priority.

Lower Priority:

- The Western Dunes (Area 2) – This comprises the western portion of the precinct, covering approximately half of its area. It includes all land between Hickford Parade and the beach, extending from the western edge of the precinct at Granny’s Grave to Point Ritchie Road.
- The West Bank of the Hopkins River (Area 3) – The area between Point Ritchie / Moyjil Road and the Hopkins River, extending north from Point Ritchie / Moyjil as far as the Hopkins River Bridge. This includes the Fishermen’s Car Park.
- The East Bank of the Hopkins River (Area 4) – This area includes the eastern bank of the Hopkins River and extends east to include the sea front as far as the eastern edge of the precinct. This area includes the sand bar on the eastern side of the Hopkins River mouth and the Blue Hole Road Car Park.

Figure 1. The four management areas within the Precinct.



3. HISTORY

3.1 History Relevant to the Precinct

It has long been accepted, from archaeological evidence, Aboriginal people have occupied south eastern Australia for at least 40,000 years. Aboriginal people in the Western District of Victoria, moved from one locality to another to make use of seasonal resources, as well as to trade and meet ritual and kinship obligations. Aboriginal middens, present in a number of sedimentary contexts in the precinct, provide evidence of Aboriginal activity in this area. The majority of the precinct is considered archaeologically significant on the basis of the numerous concentrations of Aboriginal middens which occur in the Holocene dune sequence reflecting exploitation of extant intertidal resources, possibly beginning 6,000 years ago, if not earlier.

Visits by European sealers and whalers to the coastal regions of south west Victoria may have begun as early as the late 18th century. They had established a settlement in Lady Bay by the mid 1830s, and by 1850 maps show the Point Ritchie / Moyjil area as 'Township Reserve'. In 1848 there was a rough crossing near the mouth of the Hopkins River which depended on low tide, and this was replaced by the first bridge near the mouth in 1862.

With the arrival of European settlers in the Warrnambool area, disease, conflict and denial of access to land and resources reduced the Aboriginal population dramatically. Most Aboriginal people were moved to the Framlingham Aboriginal Mission, which was established in 1861.

Today, Aboriginal people in the Warrnambool area are represented by the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners

Aboriginal Corporation based in Heywood, the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation based at Halls Gap, and the Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation based in Warrnambool.

This part of the Hopkins River estuary and the Granny's Grave section of the coast continue to provide recreation for the population of Warrnambool. Point Ritchie / Moyjil has provided a popular location for whale watching, and the 'Blue Hole' has historically been a popular location for swimming.

3.2 Land Management within the Precinct

i. Warrnambool City Council

Warrnambool City Council (WCC) is responsible for managing the majority of coastal Crown land within the Municipality as the delegated Committee of Management.

As set out in the Coastal Management Act 1995, the relevant Committee of Management of coastal Crown land, reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, may prepare a Coastal Management Plan. This action has been completed, with the Warrnambool

Coastal Management Plan providing direction on the future use, development and management of this coastal reserve.

This Conservation Management Plan sits under the Coastal Management Plan as a supporting document providing specific advice and actions in relation to the precinct.

ii. Point Ritchie Project Committee

The current forum for stakeholder discussion and advice regarding the management of the precinct is the Point Ritchie Project Committee which comprises representatives from WCC, the three Traditional Owner Corporations (Eastern Maar, Gunditj Mirring and Kuuyang Maar), Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV), Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and academic researchers from various universities. The Project Committee, meets bi-monthly to discuss funding, research, protection and management issues within the precinct.

WCC is committed to continuing to work with and seek ongoing advice and involvement from each stakeholder organisation through the Project Committee.



Figure 2 - Relationship of the Coastal Management Plan to other regional and State coastal planning documents

3.3 Significant People and Groups Associated With the Precinct

i. Traditional Owners Groups

Today, Aboriginal people in the Warrnambool area of south west Victoria are represented by the following corporations:

- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.
- Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, who have a Native Title claim over the area.
- Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

A Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) is yet to be appointed for the area. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council has current applications from Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation for registration as Registered Aboriginal Parties for areas which include the precinct. Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation has a current Native Title claim over the area including Moyjil. All three Traditional Owner corporations have been engaged on this project.

In the absence of a Registered Aboriginal Party for the area containing the precinct, the task of evaluating Cultural Heritage Management Plans for the area, and assessing permit applications, falls to OAAV.



4. HERITAGE VALUES OF THE PRECINCT

A number of heritage values are attached to the precinct, but the precinct is primarily of heritage importance for the significant deposits that it contains.

These have recently been the subject of three main investigations. Two have focussed on the identification and characterisation of sub-surface archaeological sites, whilst the third has focussed on specific deposits exposed in the Point Ritchie / Moyjil management area (Area 1). This management area consists of a sequence of calcarenite sand/soil couplets deposited during successive Interglacial periods over the last 200,000 – 300,000 years. The last Interglacial period sea level peaked at 125,000 years ago and has left wave cut notches cut into these older deposits as well as the large dune to the north of the headland (up to 35m above present sea level). Last Interglacial beach deposits of sand and shell occur at multiple sites within the precinct and are of geological significance.

Above these older calcarenites are two calcrete layers (the Upper and Lower Calcrete) and between these is a poorly cemented sand layer containing marine shells which appears to have been deposited 70,000 – 80,000 years ago. There has been extensive research into the origins of these shells. An equivalent deposit is found on the surface of West Stack. Above the Upper Calcrete are soils blanketed by ash from the Tower Hill volcano which erupted about 35,000 years ago. Hearths occur on the Upper Calcrete and below the ash. A shell scatter in soil containing ash also occurs above the Upper Calcrete. The uppermost layers are Holocene (i.e. the last 10,000 years) soils and sand containing shell middens.

4.1 Significant deposits below the Upper Calcrete

There has been considerable research into an ancient shell bed exposed in two locations within the precinct. These are discussed below.

Headland Deposit

The Headland Deposit contains a high diversity of species, although the counts of species other than *Turbo undulatus* are relatively small. It is an unusual assemblage in that it contains species from several environments along with rhizomorphs and charcoal layers. Marine fossils, predominantly *T. undulatus*, have been found, along with common rocky coast species which currently occur in Western Victoria, and the site has yielded partial crustacean (crab) claws as well as a single otolith (ear bone) of a marine fish (mulloway) which often enters estuaries. In contrast, two groups of terrestrial gastropods are present which inhabit inland lakes and drier coastal woodland, scrub or heath environments. Foraminifera (marine plankton) collected from this layer are predominantly open estuary/intertidal species, but their low abundance indicates that they were transported by wind along with sand grains from nearby aquatic environments rather than deposited directly.

In addition, a series of possible hearths, characterised by groups of discoloured stones, are present along the surface of the Lower Calcrete where it is exposed on the headland cliff edge.

West Stack Deposit

The West Stack Deposit comprises a cemented lens less than 100mm in thickness, underlain by a calcrete of variable thickness (<5mm to 300mm). Embedded in the sand is highly fragmented and angular shell material, along with some near - or complete shells, and possible rhizomorphs which run through the calcarenite and along the surface of the Lower Calcrete. The deposit appears to contain a very limited fauna, comprised largely of *T. undulatus*, but the presence of an incomplete *T.*

torquatus operculum gives the deposit a minimum age older than the Holocene. The size range of the shells is limited and may reflect predator selection, whilst the near absence of Foraminifera in the deposit supports a terrestrial rather than marine origin (Nair & Sherwood 2007).

The West Stack Deposit has been included on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (as part of 7421-0006) since 2005.

Origin of the deposits

The accumulation of marine shells in the Headland and West Stack Deposits mean that Point Ritchie / Moyjil must have been located in reasonable proximity to the coast at the time of their deposition. But the lack of wear on the shells suggests that they were not deposited directly from such a high energy environment, and furthermore the shells were deposited in association with terrestrial species and charcoal lenses. The significant deposits are located between 8 metres and 10 metres above the current sea level, and age determinations indicate that the deposits were formed when sea level was lower than present and the coastline was at least 2 kilometres away (Nair and Sherwood 2007) and perhaps as far as 10-15 kilometres (Prof. Jim Bowler, Professor Ian McNiven and Associate Professor John Sherwood, pers. comm.).

Deposition of marine shell material several kilometres from the coast and at least 8 metres above sea level therefore implies transport of shell material to the site, for which Nair and Sherwood (2007) identified and investigated three possibilities:

- transport by natural forces (i.e. tsunami);
- transport by humans; and
- transport by animals other than humans.

The first possibility was discounted on the grounds that the West Stack and Headland Deposits lack most of the characteristics of a tsunami deposition. The second possibility built on the distribution of Late Holocene Aboriginal middens in the region which indicate that

shellfish could be carried up to 3 kilometres from the shore where they were collected (Luebbbers 1978, Godfrey 1989). But this was tempered by the third possibility in that sea birds are known to form shell middens (e.g. whilst cracking shells open).

The characteristics of human and animal shell middens have received little study, and their characteristics are not mutually exclusive (Sherwood et al 1994). A number of the characteristics generally attributed to middens with human origins; the presence of charcoal, blackened shell, possible hearth stones or other evidence for the use of fire are superficially present in the Point Ritchie / Moyjil deposits – for example, blackened rocks occur together with the shell material on the West Stack. Thermoluminescence TL analysis suggests at least some of these stones have not been strongly heated and so may not be hearth stones as their appearance suggests (Sherwood et al 1994). However, materials which would constitute more positive proof, such as artefacts or human skeletal material, have not been discovered in these deposits.

Nair and Sherwood (2007) concluded that the West Stack and Headland Deposits resemble Aboriginal middens in a number of respects, but the involvement of other animals in their creation could not be conclusively ruled out.

Dating of the deposits

A number of techniques have been used to date the Headland and West Stack Deposits at Point Ritchie / Moyjil. These proceed from the baseline established by the Tower Hill Tuff (ash deposits) - the deposits must exceed the age of this material (35,000 years; Sherwood et al, 2004) owing to their relative stratigraphic positions (shell beds are below the tuff).

Analysis by a range of techniques, Amino Acid Racemisation (AAR), Electron Spin Resonance (ESR), Thermoluminescence (TL) and radiocarbon dating has produced a broad age estimate of 40,000 to 80,000 years (Sherwood et al 1994). The site materials are older than the limit of radiocarbon (~40,000 years) and research

to refine the age estimate is continuing using new techniques such as Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) and Uranium /Thorium dating. This work is still (2016) to be published.

Stratigraphic analysis using a number of lines of evidence indicates a likely age of 70,000 to 80,000 years.

Extent of the deposits

Professor Jim Bowler of the University of Melbourne has applied geological and geomorphic logic to define how far back (north) the significant Headland Deposit may extend into the headland. The midden sand is trapped between two layers of calcrete (upper and lower), which may meet at some point subsurface, further north. The midden sand layer is visually exposed only on the vertical headland cliff cutting and on the eroded West Stack. Augering within the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Car Park has demonstrated the shell bearing layer extends at least 35 metres inland but shells may not always be associated with this sand.

Implications

The very ancient age of formation and likely human origin of the material at the precinct make it potentially the oldest known Aboriginal site in Australia.



4.2 Significant deposits above the Upper Calcrete

At two headland locations opposite East Stack there is evidence of pre-Holocene human occupation of Point Ritchie / Moyjil.

Potentially the oldest of these is a collection of at least three hearths firmly cemented onto the Upper Calcrete and overlain by a dark soil containing traces of Tower Hill ash. These are older than 35,000 years (Sherwood et al 2004). Associated with the hearths are a small but significant number of blackened shell fragments firmly cemented to some of the hearth stones. Nearby is an unusual linear stone arrangement of potentially human origin.

Further to the west of these (in front of the East Stack Lookout) is a small collection of white thin-walled shells cemented within a dark soil containing Tower Hill ash. These appear to be younger than 35,000 years but their cemented nature suggests they are older than the Holocene (possibly 20,000 years; J Sherwood pers. Com.). The shells appear to be non-marine and may have been harvested from the Hopkins River when it was in a freshwater or earlier estuarine state.

Irrespective of the ultimate findings regarding the older site described in section 4.1 these deposits support human occupation of Point Ritchie / Moyjil for at least 35,000 years.

4.3 Deposits elsewhere in the precinct

Around the headland and the mouth of the Hopkins River, the Holocene dune systems within the precinct feature various contexts of Aboriginal midden material which together form a relatively extensive midden landscape.



Investigation of these deposits, including through the recent survey of the Western Dunes management area, has recorded cultural material dominated by marine molluscs that were harvested from the nearby rocky shores, with the densest area around the headland, showing that this was a focal point for past cultural activity in the area.

4.4 Other places of cultural heritage significance

The only extant site in the precinct which is listed for its non-Indigenous cultural heritage significance is Granny's Grave, the site of a concrete cairn which marks the burial of one of Warrnambool's earliest colonial inhabitants.

5. SIGNIFICANCE:

The precinct is significant as it represents the summation of the place's natural and cultural development.

The importance of the various areas is based on their relative archaeological value and their value to Traditional Owners, the aesthetic and social value of the precinct generally being reflected throughout.

Future management of the precinct will prioritise some elements and areas over others. In order to inform these decisions, these elements have been rated according to the relative degree to which they reflect the significance of the place.

5.1 Significance of Point Ritchie to Aboriginal people

The three Traditional Owner Corporations have explained that the precinct is significant for the reasons described below..

Eastern Maar perspectives

For its role in creation stories - The whole river is significant, with the Blue Hole a place singled out in particular, as is the coastline on both sides of the river. The Eastern Maar representatives pointed out whale watching is not a new phenomenon, but one which would have had important cultural significance for Aboriginal people, and whales beaching and the whale nursery are both part of important creation stories, as are swans on the river.

As a site of gatherings and burial - The Eastern Maar

representatives are sure there will be burials in the vicinity as the precinct represents a typical spot for gatherings and those who died would be buried virtually on the spot.

As a place for gathering resources - The mouth of the Hopkins River was very important for gathering resources. As well as fishing from the sea, as evidenced by the many middens along the coast, Aboriginal people have always fished on the Hopkins River, from the river's mouth all the way back up to Framlingham and Mount William, with each family or clan group having their own spot. Eels were caught in the rock alcoves beneath the headland by hand, and the area also attracted mutton birds although they don't come anymore.

Gunditj Mirring perspectives

As an affirmation that the area is Gunditj Mirring Country - All places on Gunditj Mirring Country are important and

significant in their own right, but this site is additionally significant owing to the archaeological deposits contained within it. Gunditj Mirring consider the shell midden sites of the precinct to be of great importance and significance, and they see the research pertaining to their archaeological contents, age and context in the world as reiterating that these are their lands.

As a site for resource gathering and meeting, up to the present day - Gunditj Mirring use the precinct as a place for cooking and eating, as a gathering place and a place to express kinship values and cultural practices. Burials may possibly exist within the precinct.

Gunditj Mirring continue to use the precinct as a meeting place, using the site to view Country and interpret the land. There are stories and traditional knowledge about the area, but Gunditj Mirring hold this knowledge closely and are mindful of how they share it.



Kuuyang Maar perspectives

For its spiritual associations - The Kuuyang Maar representative cited Aunty Patricia Clarke's book *The Rainbow Serpent of the Hopkins River* (Clarke 2008) in pointing out the spiritual significance of the river and its role in creation stories.

As a crossing and meeting place - The sand bar at the mouth of the Hopkins would have provided an important point for crossing the Hopkins, a journey that would require a long swim further up river. The river would have provided a boundary between different groups but it would also have been a corridor for inter-community interaction and there would also have been 'dual occupancy' shared country on this border, as at Yambuk further to the west. Point Ritchie / Moyjil and areas to the north of the dunes on both sides of the river would have been ideal for meetings and gatherings of these groups, between which strong kinship ties will have existed.

As a place for gathering resources - The rocky outcrop of Point Ritchie / Moyjil provided shellfish, as well as fishing holes offshore, and the Kuuyang Maar representative echoed the information on the headland interpretation panel pointing out that the Hopkins River is important for fish and eel restocking further upstream. Coastal wallabies were also a big source of food in the area, and the presence of all of these resources would suggest the use, and therefore likely archaeological presence, of a full range of tools across the precinct.

5.2 Assessment against heritage criteria

Recognising the level of significance of the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct, it has been assessed by Context Pty using the Heritage Criteria (HERCON). These criteria were adopted by the National Environment Protection and Heritage Council and are a

consistent set of national criteria employed to identify and manage heritage across Australia.

Further detail relating to the methodology on this assessment, including full Statements of Significance for the Point Ritchie / Moyjil management area (Area 1) and the wider precinct, can be found in the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct, Warrnambool - Conservation Management Plan Background Report 2013.

Why is it significant primarily?

HERCON National Heritage List Criterion (a) - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history

Most significantly, the site records unique evidence of early human occupation in the form of evidence of marine shells collected and transported from a shoreline up to 10-15 kilometres further south, and discoloured stones, now confirmed as resulting from the thermal effects of sustained fire, and a lenticular fire place in sands with charcoal fragments - evidence which is consistent with a human hearth.

Preliminary OSL analyses suggests ages at or slightly beyond 60,000 years, 10,000 years older than previous evidence of occupation anywhere in Australia.

The precinct potentially reveals an extraordinary picture of people camping on a rocky outcrop at least 60,000 years ago while harvesting marine shells from a distant shoreline during this time of glacially (Ice Age) lower sea level.

Point Ritchie / Moyjil is a rare example of joint natural and cultural features of heritage importance. If confirmed, this extraordinary human story, in its context of complex and dramatic environmental change, would place the Point Ritchie evidence at the very forefront of Australia's Natural and Cultural Heritage. In placing Victorian Heritage at the centre of Australia's archaeological history, it would stand as a landmark of international significance in the global human migration story.





HERCON National Heritage List Criterion (b) - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history

This coastal region combines evidence of a wide range of natural processes and landscape forms of special environmental significance. Landscape records include benchmarks showing the influence of Quaternary sea level changes and associated coastal dune building spanning perhaps the past 500,000 years, and they demonstrate a legacy of soil and groundwater processes which are key indicators of special carbonate accumulation relevant to soil formation across the State.

The area including Point Ritchie / Moyjil contains Australia's first detailed dated record of ancient earthquake, a seismic event which shattered rocks and swept shells and fire affected stones across the rock surface. It also preserves a volcanic ash mantle, a legacy of the dramatic Tower Hill eruption 35,000 years ago. The extraordinary evidence speaks of a phase of earliest human occupation shattered by an earthquake, with liquefaction effects sweeping camp sites and fire stones aside in its path, only later to be buried by volcanic ash.

HERCON National Heritage List Criterion (c) - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's potential to provide information that makes a contribution of national importance to the understanding of Australia's history, cultures, or the natural world

The potential for extension of present evidence of human continental occupation by 10,000 years or more has profound effects both within and beyond Australia. It provides an entirely new identity of the first arrivals. It is no less than remarkable that the first human footprints on the continent should be preserved here on the southern coastline, several thousand kilometres from assumed northern entry points.

At over 60,000 years, the Point Ritchie / Moyjil shell bed would represent one of the earliest expressions of modern human migration out of Africa, with important implications for colonization routes across southern Asia and across the seas to Australia.

HERCON National Heritage List Criterion (i) - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance as part of Indigenous traditions

Although Traditional Owners have long understood the antiquity of human occupation in this part of Victoria, and across Australia, the information described above is hugely significant in that it provides physical evidence which pushes Aboriginal occupation back at least 10,000 years in Australia and many more in Victoria. Hearths on the Upper Calcrete are older than 35,000 years – irrespective of the origin of the older shell bed.

Other heritage values

Point Ritchie / Moyjil is socially significant at State level for its association with the works of geomorphologist Edmund Gill (1908-1986), curator at the National Museum of Victoria who in 1986, whilst in declining health, first demonstrated the antiquity of the shell middens along the Hopkins River (HERCON Criterion H). It is also regionally significant for its social and aesthetic value to the local community.

5.3 Levels of significance

The levels of significance which have been attributed to the various elements are set out on the following pages, together with the rationale in support of these grades. It should be recognised that these levels are relative and that in objective terms the whole Precinct is significant to at least some level.

High significance

Point Ritchie - the headland and West Stack deposits

The entire area of the Point Ritchie management zone itself is deemed to be of high significance. However, it should be recognised that this derives from varying characteristics with different, albeit complimentary, bearings on the above assessment of significance.

Both East and West Stacks and other locations at the estuary entrance provide evidence of Quaternary sea level changes in the form of wave cut notches and the deposits contained within them, whereas the possible anthropogenic deposits on the headland and the West Stack provide the evidence of ancient human activity which is the basis for the recommendation for National Heritage Listing (NHL).

Other pre –Holocene archaeological deposits on the headland are amongst the oldest known in Victoria.

The two site localities preserve related but entirely different records of both environmental and archaeological significance.

The West Stack deposit is distinctive in preserving the only record of multiple shells resting directly on the basal calcrete. No such occurrences have yet been found on the headland. The stack also provides evidence of calcrete plate fracture, block dislodgement and “plowing”

into mobile shell matrix, of which no record is preserved on the headland. The West Stack preserves very limited post-shattering evidence and it lacks evidence of features less than 60,000 years.

The headland preserves a record of relatively continuous deposition before and after the seismic event. It contains the stratigraphic key to environmental and depositional origins of the deposits, especially for the time after initial shell accumulation and seismic shattering. That includes the important phase of continuing shell and sand accumulation with later formation of calcrete, volcanic ash deposition and formation of the Holocene middens. The headland deposit provides the main focus for ongoing study, for excavation and new data collection. The site preserves the location of fire, with many fire affected stones, some of which have lain in undisturbed cemented positions since their time of heating.

The two locations, though complimentary to each other, are very different in style and content preservation. They are however assessed as of equal significance for the purposes of this management plan.

Moderate significance

The foreshore dunes along the length of the Point Ritchie Precinct are of moderate relative significance in that they are known to preserve extensive midden deposits relating to late Holocene habitation, but of less antiquity and rarity than those present at Point Ritchie.

Calcrete and other rock exposures along the seaward edge of the western dune contain evidence of seismic activity and re-enforce stratigraphic evidence at Point Ritchie.

The coastal aspect and views across Lady Bay from the south side of the dune ridge lend this area, perhaps along with the areas lining the Hopkins River mouth, a greater aesthetic significance than the inland parts of the Precinct.

Low significance

The open areas behind the coastal dunes at the northern edge of the Precinct, on both sides of the river, are of relatively low significance. These areas exhibit less archaeological evidence for later Holocene habitation than do the foreshore dunes, although it may be that these areas contain deposits that remain to be discovered.

Road corridors, including those of Hickford Parade and Point Richie Road, as well as the three car parks within the Precinct, would also be of lower significance. In and around the footprints of these features, road construction and related disturbance, including human traffic, is likely to have truncated, if not completely removed, archaeological deposits.



6. KEY ISSUES:

The following table provides a summary of some of the key management issues as outlined in the Background Report (Context Pty 2013), and the implications for conservation policy arising from each issue. The table has been updated to reflect work undertaken since 2013.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a. Precinct Management</p> <p>The coastal parts of the precinct are subject to physical deterioration in the face of natural erosive processes. This is affecting significant deposits as well as the structural elements which support them.</p> <p>This is particularly pronounced in the case of the West Stack which is partially collapsed and liable to further, perhaps catastrophic, failure which would completely destroy the remaining West Stack Deposit.</p> | <p>d. Confirming significance / further investigation</p> <p>There is a lack of knowledge surrounding the use and significance of Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct, before European colonisation. There is a lack of knowledge on the extent of significant deposits, and this has obvious implications for their management.</p> |
| <p>b. Statutory registration and funding</p> <p>There are several different Aboriginal groups which have a claim to the area.</p> <p>Resourcing of future management of the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct.</p> | <p>e. Interpretation and promotion</p> <p>The name Point Ritchie / Moyjil was gazetted on 26 November 2015, following an Aboriginal Place Names Report being prepared by Ngootyoong Yakeen which identified Point Ritchie / Moyjil as the most appropriate Aboriginal name for the precinct. All agencies and Traditional Owner Corporations involved endorsed this name.</p> <p>To manage the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct, or any part of it, and to be able to present and interpret the place, it will be necessary to create an individual identity for it.</p> <p>The likely increase in the profile of the precinct means that some level of interpretation will be necessary.</p> |
| <p>c. Protection and control of access</p> <p>Pedestrian impact by way of veering from established paths and viewing areas is causing erosion. This is a particularly pressing issue with regards to the significant Headland and West Stack Deposits</p> <p>Unauthorised activities may damage cultural deposits within the precinct</p> | |



7. CONSERVATION POLICY:

a. Precinct Management

i. Management

Management objective

- To set out the mechanisms through which the precinct will be managed in the future.
- To establish general management approaches for the precinct.

Policy basis

This policy acknowledges major management decisions remain to be made with regard to the future of the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct, and mechanisms need to be established to make these decisions. It also directs the manner in which these mechanisms should function.

Management

7.1

Conservation Management Plan

The precinct will be managed in accordance with a Conservation Management Plan adopted by Warrnambool City Council.

7.2

Review of the Conservation Management Plan

The Conservation Management Plan will be reviewed every five (5) years, or earlier if warranted by any of the following:

- Significant physical changes within the precinct management areas.
- Separation of components of the precinct under different management bodies.
- Future discoveries which have a major impact on the assessed significance of the place.

7.3

Formalisation of the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct

The precinct will be formally recognised as Point Ritchie / Moyjil to reflect the important cultural significance of the area (in accordance with the Geographic Place Names Act 1998).

Management

7.4

Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct Advisory Committee

The management of the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct will be supported by an Advisory Committee to:

- Advise WCC on management issues within the precinct.
- Make recommendations to WCC on priority actions and projects within the Conservation Management Plan.
- Review the Conservation Management Plan and make recommendations for change.

The Advisory Committee should include representatives from WCC, OAAV, DELWP and the three Traditional Owner Corporations (Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Kuuyang Maar Aboriginal Corporation). Researchers/specialists should also hold places on the committee.

7.5

Traditional Owner governance

All three Traditional Owner Corporations will continue to have the opportunity to be directly involved in the management of the precinct through representation on the Advisory Committee (see Policy 7.4).

This should be reviewed in the event one group is awarded Registered Aboriginal Party status or Native Title for an area within the precinct.

7.6

Holistic management

The precinct will be managed in a way which recognises the wider heritage context and the national importance and significance of the precinct.

7.7

Management processes

Management processes will respond to the significance of the precinct and to any threats to that significance.

7.8

Prioritisation of resource allocation

The allocation of funding and resources will be prioritised according to identified levels of significance.

b. Statutory registration and funding

Statutory registration and funding opportunities objective

- To raise the profile of the precinct and its component cultural heritage sites

Policy basis

To ensure that the management of the precinct is resourced so as not to endanger the significant cultural heritage within it.

Statutory registration and funding opportunities

7.9 Heritage listing

There should be recognition of the significance of the precinct and a determination to protect important sites within all levels of government.

7.10

Heritage funding

Sufficient funding will be secured to protect and enhance significant sites within the precinct. Where possible, WCC will pursue co-funding opportunities with other significant Indigenous sites within the region (Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) National Park, Tower Hill, Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, Lake Condah and Dean Maar).

c. Protection and control of access

Protection and control of access objective

- To support the continued public amenity use of the precinct in a way which does not compromise the identified cultural significance of the place
- To guide efforts to protect significant components within the precinct.

Policy basis

The precinct is, and should continue to be, an important public space for the local and wider community. However, the presence of highly significant cultural heritage deposits means that this use must be carefully monitored and managed.

While decisions will need to be made in response to particular circumstances and management pressures, these decisions should be made within the framework provided by the following.

Protection and control of access

7.11

Supporting continued use of the precinct

The continued use of the precinct as a public space will be encouraged and managed.

Protection of highly significant cultural heritage deposits and associated cultural values however, remains of primary importance within the precinct (i.e. Point Ritchie / Moyjil Ongoing Protection Declaration area (Area 1)).

7.12

Access restrictions

Measures will be implemented to discourage visitors from deviating from established pathways and impacting significant sites (e.g. the headland and West Stack Deposits).

The aesthetic values of the precinct and its various components are an important consideration when making decisions.

7.13

Undertaking regular monitoring and interim protective measures

Monitoring will be undertaken of the known cultural heritage sites in the precinct to assist with protection of heritage values. Appropriate measures should be taken to reduce the risk to significant deposits.

Monitoring and artefact salvage will be undertaken by certified researchers with the correct approvals and qualifications. Salvage is to occur where artefacts are at immediate risk of being lost (e.g. through erosion). These measures could include temporarily restricting access to certain areas, clearing vegetation, deploying brush matting or geotextile to slow erosion or installing improved fencing and signage.

Where possible, maintenance will be preventative rather than reactive. Care and due diligence must be taken so as not to disturb significant deposits in the course of these works.

7.14

Long term protective measures

The highly significant Headland and West Stack Deposits (Area 1) are under threat from continued natural, and to a lesser extent human, erosion. The position of West Stack is at risk, and further deterioration could result in the loss of this structure, as has been confirmed by the Preliminary Geotechnical Assessment undertaken during preparation of the Background Report (Context Pty 2013). Further investigation on the risk of erosion and timing will be undertaken in consultation with the Traditional Owner Groups.

Protection and control of access

7.15 Development within the Precinct

'Development' in this instance means any activity which will involve the disturbance or removal of physical fabric, or that will impinge on the setting of the precinct. Examples could include the construction of buildings or roads, which will require disturbance through preliminary groundworks, or coastal engineering works which require the disturbance or removal of material.

Limited development should occur within the precinct. As visitor numbers increase, renewal and upgrade of existing facilities and public amenities may be required.

The *Coastal Management Act 1995* and Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 provides important policy and guidance on development in coastal areas. Consent under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* is required from DELWP for any proposed development.

7.16 Installation of services

The installation of reticulated services within the precinct should be avoided. Should the installation of underground services within the precinct be unavoidable, they should be located to minimise negative impacts on heritage significance, and an archaeological assessment will be undertaken in advance of installation. Areas of previous disturbance, such as road corridors, will be employed wherever possible.

- minimises the impact upon the significance of the precinct or its constituent elements.

Policy basis

Good conservation practice depends on a thorough understanding of the place, and the pursuit of additional information is to be encouraged. Further investigation needs to be carried out to provide additional information on the precinct's significance, to inform its management and to mitigate the effects of physical deterioration.

Confirming significance/ further investigation

7.17 Archaeological testing and monitoring of interventions

While some proposed activities would not trigger a requirement for a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, a voluntary CHMP / archaeological assessment should be undertaken prior to any intrusive site works in order to identify any significant deposits and enable their recording (including consultation with OAAV).

7.18 Preservation of archaeological deposits in situ

Archaeological deposits within the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct will be left in situ wherever possible.

d. Confirming significance / further investigation

Confirming significance/further investigation objective

- To ensure the heritage values of the precinct are fully understood prior to making decisions which might impact on significant materials
- To ensure physical disturbance of the fabric of Point Ritchie / Moyjil for research or investigative purposes is minimised
- To ensure all future investigative works are planned and undertaken in a manner which:
 - reveals significance, and/or provides information of assistance in the management of the precinct.



Confirming significance/ further investigation

7.19

Non-intrusive research

Non-intrusive research within the precinct will be encouraged.

This could include the following:

- Ethnographic research
- Historical research
- Academic discussion and conferences
- Oral history recording
- Cultural mapping with both Traditional Owners and the wider public.

All research must be undertaken with the knowledge and permission of the PRMPC and the Traditional Owners where appropriate. The results should be vested with WCC.

7.20

Intrusive research

Proposals for intrusive research (i.e. archaeological investigation) may be considered where they will provide additional information about the precinct and its significance.

All research must be undertaken with the knowledge and permission of WCC, the Traditional Owners, OAAV (and other relevant heritage authorities) and DELWP. The results should be vested with WCC.

7.21

Archaeological site definition

Known sites are listed on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. The extent of the West Stack Deposit is clear, however the full extent other archaeological deposits is not known. There is less clarity and confidence in the management of these resources – whether actions in certain areas will impact on archaeological materials for example.

This is the case for the Holocene middens recorded in the foreshore dunes, although it is probably the case that archaeological material exists throughout this system. This is also the case for the highly significant Headland Deposit as the extent to which it continues into the headland is not currently known.

The requirement for knowledge about the true extent of this deposit is particularly pressing because the urgency of preservation efforts depends on the amount of material remains.



7.22

The presence and extent of archaeological deposits within the precinct will be further investigated to assist in their management.

Conserving removed material

Significant material which has been removed from the precinct (such as artefacts and scientific samples) will be catalogued and protected in accordance with the relevant regulations and guidelines and with the heritage significance of the component to which it relates.

Where possible, and culturally appropriate, removed significant material should be kept at the site.

e. Interpretation and promotion

Interpretation and promotion objective

- To reveal the significant values of the precinct in a manner which is conducive to its effective conservation
- To ensure the precinct is presented and promoted in a culturally sensitive and holistic manner.

Policy basis

“The development and implementation of interpretive programmes must be an integral part of the overall management and planning process for a cultural heritage site” (ICOMOS Ename Charter for the Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Sites, ICOMOS 2004).

Interpretation is concerned with communicating the significance of a heritage resource. It assists in fostering public awareness of the resource and in communicating its significance “...including ...tangible and intangible values, natural and cultural setting, social context and physical fabric” (Ename Charter, ICOMOS 2004).

Interpretation and promotion

7.23 Interpretation and promotion will be based on significance

Each site's significance will determine the themes for interpretation and promotion.

7.24 The role of interpretation in conservation

Interpretation is integral to the conservation process as it assists in protecting and sustaining heritage values by communicating significance.

Interpretation of the precinct will contribute to the conservation of heritage values by:

- Communicating the significance of the site
- Promoting appreciation of, and care for, the place.

7.25 Dissemination of information

The Traditional Owners should be encouraged to record and document knowledge amongst their own communities, to supplement what is known about the significance of the precinct. Non-sensitive information could be released for the information of the wider public.

It is recognised, whilst education and the dissemination of information is often a means to better protecting cultural sites by explaining their significance and vulnerability, in rare instances drawing attention to sensitive sites leaves them vulnerable to abuse. In some cases, the best protection is in anonymity.

7.26 Nature and location of interpretation

The siting of interpretation must be carefully thought through and must be suited to the purpose for which it is needed. It is not desirable to add unnecessary infrastructure which has to be maintained and updated, and may detract from the natural values at the site.

Interpretation should be in accordance with the Visitor Feasibility and Interpretation Strategy (developed in 2014).

7.27 Presentation and promotion of the precinct

The precinct will be portrayed as part of a wider cultural landscape with reference to other significant geological, archaeological and contemporary cultural sites beyond the precinct (e.g. Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) National Park, Tower Hill, Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, Lake Condah and Dean Maar), as befits its national, and perhaps global, importance.

Interpretation and promotion should include the use of Aboriginal names for the components of the precinct, if these can be agreed by the Traditional Owners.

The cultural heritage of the precinct will be used to raise the profile of Aboriginal culture in the local area, nationally and potentially internationally.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

Management Themes

The Implementation Table outlined below gives actions under each of the 5 Key Management Themes.

Reference	Management Theme
1	Precinct management
2	Statutory registration and funding
3	Protection and control of access
4	Confirming significance/further investigation
5	Interpretation and promotion

The issues and associated actions have been assigned a priority status however, implementation may not occur in that order. An adaptive management approach to implementation will be taken as projects are completed, funding opportunities arise, new information becomes available and new issues and threats emerge.

Council will respond to changing priorities and management strategies during annual priority setting.

High priority actions

These actions are considered to be essential to ensuring the effective conservation of the precinct now and in the long term. It is vital they be undertaken as soon as possible to adequately prepare the precinct for the increase in attention and visitation which is likely to result from publication of the forthcoming research articles.

They include immediate actions to undertake essential conservation works, as well as actions and procedures to ensure the heritage values of the precinct are properly understood and considered in its immediate and future management. Failure to undertake these actions may result in damage to significant fabric that will adversely impact upon the significance of the precinct and may also diminish the ability to undertake identified medium term actions. WCC has an obligation to appropriately manage this significance under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Medium priority actions

These actions are important to ensuring the future conservation of the precinct, but that do not have to be carried out immediately. In some cases they are actions that must wait until High priority actions are completed.

Low priority actions

These are actions important to reinforcing the significance of the precinct and ensuring its long-term conservation, but are of generally lower priority than those listed above. These actions could be undertaken if and when funding opportunities arise.

Task	Action	Priority	Responsibility
1	Precinct Management		
1.1	Adopt the Point Ritchie / Moyjil – Moyjil Aboriginal Place Conservation Management Plan to inform the future management of the precinct.	High	WCC
1.2	Provide adopted Conservation Management Plan to key stakeholders. These include relevant WCC departments and management partners, Traditional Owner Corporations, OAAV, and DELWP.	High	WCC
1.3	Review the Conservation Management Plan every five years or more frequently if required.	Med (ongoing)	WCC and PRMAC
1.4	Formally recognise the precinct as Point Ritchie / Moyjil in accordance with the Geographic Place Names Act 1998.	Complete	Complete
1.5	Finalise governance around the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Advisory Committee (PRMAC) for the precinct. The Advisory Committee's main role is to advise WCC (as the Committee of Management) on matters which relate to the management of the cultural and natural heritage values within the precinct. The Advisory Committee will include representatives of Traditional Owner Corporations and relevant government bodies, and have access to specialists in archaeology, geology and heritage management.	High	WCC

Task	Action	Priority	Responsibility
1 Precinct Management			
1.6	Review relevant management and/or maintenance plans, procedures and guidelines to determine whether amendments are required as a result of the Conservation Management Plan and subsequent developments within the precinct. The PRMAC will develop and recommend to WCC a regular monitoring programme. A key focus should be on the condition of the significant deposits on the West Stack and the headland.	High	PRMAC
1.7	Develop and implement a training programme which informs relevant WCC staff of the heritage values of the precinct and how to use the Conservation Management Plan and conservation policies.	Med	WCC
2 Statutory registration and funding			
2.1	Nominate the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Management Area (Area 1) for inclusion on the National Heritage List. Seek assistance from the OAAV and/or Traditional Owner Corporations in accordance with the recommendations made in of the Background Report (Chapter 3).	High	WCC and PRMAC
2.2	Refine the existing Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register site designations in the light of recent investigations undertaken in the precinct.	High	WCC
2.3	Identify future avenues for funding in advance of the need for the related works.	High (ongoing)	WCC and PRMAC

Task	Action	Priority	Responsibility
2 Statutory registration and funding			
2.4	Progress the National Heritage List nomination. Following on from Task 2.1, WCC will cooperate with other organisations, including Traditional Owner Corporations and OAAV.	Med	WCC and PRMAC
2.5	Investigate links with the Budj Bim Heritage Landscape and significant local Indigenous heritage sites, such as Tower Hill, Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) National Park, Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area, Lake Condah and Dean Maar, to identify possible co-funding or co-promotion opportunities.	Med	PRMAC
3 Protection and control of access			
3.1	Develop policy outlining whether to conserve or salvage the West Stack Deposit.	High	WCC, PRMAC, DELWP, OAAV
3.2	Seek funding for design and implementation of stabilisation works for collapse of the block “wall” at the west end of the headland.	High	PRMAC
3.3	Seek funding for design and construction of stair access from the car park to the beach on the east side of West Stack to allow all-tide access between beaches either side of West Stack. This would prevent further damage to the deposits and provide safe access to the beach.	High	PRMAC

Task	Action	Priority	Responsibility
3 Protection and control of access			
3.4	Develop from a coordinated visitor management plan in line with, the draft Visitor Feasibility and Interpretation Strategy to control movement around the precinct, with particular focus on sensitive areas. This should include the development of a Communications Plan outlining the best way to disseminate information, and what information is to be disseminated.	Med	WCC, PRMAC
3.5	Confirm if any new or updated signage is required across the precinct to assist with interpretation and to prevent deviation from formal paths and walkways that might endanger significant deposits (in accordance with pathway audit as per action 3.6). Any signage is to be developed in accordance with the draft Visitor Feasibility and Interpretation Strategy.	Med	WCC, PRMAC
3.6	Undertake an audit of existing pathways to assist in the management of the precinct.	Med	WCC
4 Confirming Significance/further investigation			
4.1	Establish or confirm an appropriate repository for material recovered from the Point Ritchie / Moyjil Precinct in the course of archaeological works.	High	PRCP
4.2	Encourage additional and on-going research into the heritage values of the Precinct. Ongoing archaeological investigation will be undertaken where possible and feasible to further determine significance of the precinct to improve knowledge	Med	WCC, PRMAC, OAAV

Task	Action	Priority	Responsibility
4 Confirming Significance/further investigation			
	of these precinct and assist in ongoing protection and management.		
4.3	Prepare a Precinct deposit model as a guide to management and further research.	High	PRMAC
4.4	Undertake controlled archaeological excavation of the calcarenite sand deposit exposed at the seaward edge of the headland to allow it to be shored up and conserved in an appropriate fashion.	Low	WCC, PRMAC, OAAV
5 Interpretation and Promotion			
5.1	Develop a Communications Plan to identify the best way to disseminate information, and what information is to be disseminated.	High	WCC, PRMAC
5.2	Implement actions from the Visitor Feasibility and Interpretation Strategy to inform visitor management practices.	Med	WCC
5.3	Develop a recognisable brand identity for the precinct to enable WCC and its partners to more effectively control the way the precinct is presented.	Med	PRMAC
5.4	Increased awareness of the precinct, its significance and its fragility will be fostered through a programme of public education through the implementation of the Sharing Stories of Place Project.	Med	WCC, PRMAC
5.5	Identify cultural links to nearby cultural sites and the prospects for joint promotion explored as per action 2.5.	Med	WCC, PRMAC

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