

# **The Pillars, Mt Martha**

## **Long-term Management Plan**



**September 2018**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Site

The Pillars at Mount Martha is a natural cliff face adjoining an area of deep water in Port Phillip which makes it an attractive destination for visitors to the area. There are no sites nearby that offer the same natural values as The Pillars for those wanting to cliff jump and or explore Port Phillip Bay.

The Pillars also has significant cultural heritage and natural environment values. Protecting and enhancing these values is vital and a legislative requirement.

The Pillars is located within Mount Martha Foreshore Reserve between Deakin Drive and Marguerita Avenue, Mount Martha. The area to the east of The Pillars is comprised of established residential dwellings.

The foreshore area, including The Pillars, is Crown land managed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Mornington Peninsula Shire is the delegated Committee of Management and has responsibility for management of the natural environment, enforcement of local laws, and basic maintenance. The Pillars is accessible from the Esplanade which is classified as an arterial road, and is under the management of VicRoads.



*Aerial image showing location of The Pillars.*

## 1.2 Background

Over the last three years visitation to The Pillars has increased dramatically. It is understood that visitation to The Pillars has grown with increased exposure through social media (Facebook, Instagram and You Tube) and travel and adventure tourism apps (eg. Trip Advisor). Photos, videos and portrayed details of the site are spectacular and create an image of a secluded, natural, cliff jumping site with clean bright water.

The Pillars is not set up to support a high level of visitation. There are no formal access tracks, inadequate parking, and no toilets or rubbish bins. To access the site visitors must cross the Esplanade, a busy arterial road, with limited visibility and walk along the narrow verge. There are no designated pedestrian crossing locations in this area on the Esplanade. There have been serious incidents at the site that have required attendance by emergency services. Due to the physical environment at The Pillars and in the surrounding areas these issues are not easily addressed.

The increased and unmanaged visitation to the site has had a detrimental impact on vegetation, Aboriginal cultural heritage and the environment. This has resulted in trampling and damage to vegetation, erosion of the sensitive cliff areas, damage to middens and other significant cultural heritage assets, and significant amounts of litter.

Local residents have been impacted by traffic congestion and parking in nearby narrow streets, litter including broken glass and human waste and noise. There has been regular reporting of anti-social behavior in local streets and encroaching into private properties including drunkenness, swearing and fighting, urinating and defecating, and dumping rubbish. Traditional deterrents such as infringement notices for illegal parking have been somewhat effective, however it is understood that the cost of the infringement notices to some visitors is accepted as a cost associated with visiting the unique site.

Many local residents are frustrated by the imposition these issues are having on the area and the relatively sudden change from a quite coastal area to a major adventure tourism attraction.

It is acknowledged and assumed that people will continue to visit The Pillars for the foreseeable future. The management approach is to manage the issues to reduce the onsite impacts, increase safety and balance the needs of visitors and residents.



*Some of the social media images of The Pillars (source: Facebook)*

## 1.3 Current Situation

Over recent years visitation to The Pillars has increased, and it appears that the popularity of The Pillars continues to grow. Anecdotally, there has been up to 400 people onsite on reported hot days. To try and manage the impacts at the site, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, in conjunction with other stakeholders, has implemented several actions over the summer periods in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. These measures have included:

- Warning signage on the Esplanade ‘High Pedestrian Activity Nov-Apr’
- Warning signage on site and at site entrances “Cliff danger”
- Parking restrictions on one side of the nearby residential streets ‘No Stopping, Nov-Apr’
- Alcohol bans onsite
- Bollards installed along the Esplanade to prevent parking and create a space for pedestrians to walk
- Traffic counts and parking surveys in peak times in Deakin Drive, Marguerita Avenue, the Esplanade service road, Two Bays Crescent and Lempriere Avenue to understand the traffic impacts
- Patrols and enforcement of parking restrictions in local roads (three times per day, 7 days per week in peak periods)
- Rubbish collections in response to complaints, rapid response to collect litter from residents that pick-up litter onsite, weekly hand litter collections in Marguerita Avenue and Deakin Drive
- Trimming roadside vegetation along the Esplanade near The Pillars
- Regular patrols by Shire Rangers and Victoria Police



*Bollards installed along the Esplanade to prevent parking*



*Safety signage at The Pillars*

Given the increasing popularity of the Site, it is difficult to measure the exact impact of the management options which have been implemented in the area. The local community supports the implementation of management options, and general feedback from people in the local community and residents of the area suggests that the management measures implemented have made a difference in managing issues in the area.

## 1.4 Scope

This plan is focused on the long-term management of the site. It identifies options and actions to manage visitation at The Pillars, and protect the cultural and environmental values. Public safety and legislative requirements are key considerations.

This Plan must be consistent with State and local government policies and strategies, particularly the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014, Central Region Coastal Action Plan 2015, and Mt Martha Coastal Management Plan (2017 draft).

The management options presented in this plan have been developed by members of the local community key management agencies and Shire officers.

The plan has been developed with input from key stakeholders and the local community. A community workshop was held in February 2018. Local residents analysed, discussed and assessed possible management options. This information has been incorporated into this plan. Details of community input and consultation are in *Appendix C - Further Information – Community Consultation and Input*.

## 2. Site Values

The Pillars is a unique site with values that need to be recognised and protected. Long-term management of The Pillars requires focus on finding a balance in managing the different values of the site. Protecting the cultural and environmental values of the site is a legislative requirement.

### 2.1 Cultural Values

The entire extent of The Pillars is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity.

The Aboriginal archaeological sites extend from the Esplanade to Port Phillip Bay and consist of coastal shell middens and artefact places. Shell middens which are primarily located in dune systems around The Pillars where shellfish, fish and crustaceans were collected, processed and eaten. Artefact places are stone tool sites where men have sat down to prepare and maintain their stone tools prior to hunting. Radio carbon testing of these middens indicate that they were established somewhere between 900-3,500 years ago. Ground that has seen little disturbance from post-European and more modern land use practices and development may also contain in situ material (Biosis, 2017).

The shell midden material is being undermined as erosion occurs in the material around it. Erosion occurs naturally across the cliff lines at The Pillars, however has been exacerbated where informal footpaths have been made down the cliff line and have created erosion scours (Biosis, 2017).

A Draft Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the site was started in 2017 and is included in *Appendix C - Further Information – Draft Cultural Heritage Management Plan*.

### 2.2 Vegetation and habitat

A recent vegetation assessment discovered eighteen indigenous species in the area. The vegetation at the site was found to be degraded due to the presence of significant levels of introduced weed species. The area has been identified as being predominantly EVC 161: Coastal Headland Scrub (Figure 8). This EVC is listed with a Conservation Status of 'Depleted'. Pressure on the indigenous vegetation comes from weed species and erosion.

There are no planning overlays in place relating to vegetation or vegetation removal at the site. The full vegetation assessment is included in *Appendix C - Further Information - Vegetation Assessment*.

### 2.3 Local amenity and recreation

The site is important to the local community, particularly residents. It is an area that has been used for walking, viewing the unique coastal scenery and enjoying quiet and passive recreational activities. Although located close to residential areas and the Mt Martha Village, the views from the site create a feeling of remoteness.

## 2.4 Tourism and visitation

The Pillars is valued by tourists and visitors for its photogenic scenery, adjacent deep water that facilitates cliff jumping, and the feeling of being in a secluded area. The area receives significant coverage on Instagram, Facebook and other social media platforms. In the last 3 years The Pillars has attracted people from a wider area. This increase in popularity has placed greater pressure on resources and created demand for car parking, bins and site amenities.



*Tourists and visitors at The Pillars – January 2018*

## 3. Management

The Pillars is part of the Mt Martha Foreshore Reserve and is Crown Land managed by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council as the delegated Committee of Management. Management of the Reserve is guided by the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, *Victorian Coastal Strategy (2014)*, Central Region Coastal Plan (2015) and the Mt Martha Coastal Management Plan (2017, draft).

### 3.1 Stakeholders

While the Mornington Peninsula Shire manages the site, there are several key stakeholders that have a management role in the various issues and activities at the site. These agencies and their roles are summarized in the table below.

Stakeholder	Role/Responsibility/Interest
<b>Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (MPSC)</b>	MPSC is the appointed Committee of Management for the Mount Martha Coastal Reserve, including The Pillars. The Shire administers and enforces local laws and The Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme. The Shire also manages the local road network which includes all the residential streets near The Pillars (excluding the Esplanade).
<b>The Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP)</b>	DELWP is responsible for sustainable management of public land, water resources, climate change, forests and ecosystems. DELWP administers the <i>Coastal Management Act 1995</i> and is involved in planning for the coast, approval of coastal developments on Crown Land, major projects, infrastructure and coastal protective works (beach erosion works, renourishment etc).
<b>Parks Victoria</b>	Parks Victoria is the appointed Local Port Manager for Port Phillip. Responsibilities include the management and operation of the port including recreational boating activities, provision and maintenance of navigation aids, piers, jetties and other facilities. Parks Victoria manages the water adjoining The Pillars.
<b>Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)</b>	The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is a Traditional Owner organisation of the South-Eastern Kulin Nation, representing the Traditional lands of the Bunurong language group, ancestors, places and cultural environment. The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is the Recognised Aboriginal Party (RAP) for Port Phillip.
<b>Vic Roads</b>	VicRoads is responsible for managing the Road Reserve along the Esplanade.
<b>Country Fire Authority (CFA)</b>	The CFA has a role in administering fire regulations and prevention and awareness activities for bushfires and structure fires. The CFA also assists in cliff rescues and emergency operations.
<b>Victorian State Emergency Service (SES)</b>	VICSES provides emergency assistance including technical rescue and road rescue. VICSES and CFA work closely together in the Mount Martha area when cliff rescue expertise is required.
<b>Victoria Police</b>	Victoria Police are involved in managing anti-social behaviour at The Pillars and in areas surrounding The Pillars.

<b>Ambulance Victoria</b>	Ambulance Victoria attends accidents and emergencies at The Pillars and in the surrounding areas.
<b>Life Saving Victoria</b>	Life Saving Victoria has an important role in promoting water safety throughout Victoria, including conducting assessments of aquatic safety signage.
<b>Mt Martha Life Saving Club</b>	The club is made up of volunteers who patrol Mt Martha Beach, undertake rescue operations and training, and provide support to other emergency services as required.
<b>Foreshore Users and Groups</b>	There are many local foreshore users and groups, including Mount Martha Foreshore Information Group

**Table 1. Key stakeholders**

All key stakeholders will have a role to play in the implementation of this Management Plan.

### 3.2 Guiding documents

The *Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) 2014* is the guiding document for coastal management in Victoria. It sets the state-wide strategic direction for coastal management and provides a vision for the Victorian coast and the framework for integrated planning, management and use. The *VCS* outlines four principles that must be applied to management of the coast:

<b>Principle 1</b>	Ensure the protection of significant environmental and cultural values
<b>Principle 2</b>	Undertake integrated planning and provide clear direction for the future
<b>Principle 3</b>	Ensure the sustainable use of natural coastal resources
<i>Only when the above principles have been considered and addressed:</i>	
<b>Principle 4</b>	Ensure development on the coast is located within existing, modified and resilient environments where the demand for development is evident and any impacts can be managed sustainably

**Table 2 Hierarchy of Principles** (*Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014*)

These four principles are applied to the management of The Pillars in this Plan. Other legislation, policies and strategies apply to specific issues relating to the management of The Pillars.

## 4. Issues and Impacts

The increasing visitation to The Pillars has placed considerable pressure on the natural environment, adjoining residential areas and management resources. The influence of social and non-social media platforms are considered to have a significant impact on the increase in tourism and visitation to the site (*Refer to Appendix C - Further Information – Influence of Social Media*). The area is not well serviced with visitor infrastructure (such as toilets, rubbish bins, parking, footpaths, and road crossing facilities). Due to the physical layout and constrained nature of the site these issues are not easily addressed. As a result, the popularity of The Pillars is having a detrimental impact on the amenity of the local area.

The issues and impacts identified by stakeholders and the local community include:

- Parking and traffic congestion in neighbouring streets and along the Esplanade
- Danger to pedestrians and drivers
- Antisocial behaviour at The Pillars and in adjoining areas
- Falls from cliff area and safety in the water with people jumping
- Erosion of the cliff area
- Damage and loss of vegetation
- Damage to cultural heritage assets
- Litter in and around the site
- Access for emergency services to the site and surrounding area
- Shire resources trying to address the issues

These issues are explained in further detail below and options to address them have been explored and evaluated in Section 5 of this report.

### 4.1 Parking and traffic congestion

High visitation to The Pillars has created demand for car parking in the area. On warm days and particularly over summer, cars are often parked on the shoulder of the Esplanade and on both sides of residential streets. When vehicles are parked on the Esplanade shoulder, pedestrians are forced to walk out onto the road to get around the parked vehicles. There are several curves along this section of the Esplanade meaning drivers have limited visibility of pedestrians on the road. This issue has been addressed to some extent by the installation of bollards along the road verge, however is still considered to require further attention.

Vehicles parked on both sides of residential streets limit vehicle access through the streets, sometimes prevent residents accessing their driveways, and potentially impedes emergency access to these residential areas. This is particularly a problem in Marguerita Avenue and Deakin Drive, although it does also affect other streets. Many properties in these streets are in a designated bushfire prone area. Access for emergency vehicles, particularly fire trucks, is a key concern for residents and emergency response services.

## **4.2 Pedestrians crossing roads**

There are limited opportunities to create safe pedestrian crossing areas near The Pillars due to the curves in the Esplanade and a limited line of site for drivers. To access the site, visitors to The Pillars must walk along the road shoulder of the Esplanade, and in many cases also cross the Esplanade. The Esplanade shoulder varies in width but is generally around one metre wide. Generally, this is not considered wide enough for pedestrian access adjacent to a road. Due to overhanging vegetation and uneven terrain some pedestrians choose to walk within the Esplanade traffic lane rather than on the shoulder. This increases the risk of conflict with a passing vehicle and or cyclist. The road alignment of the Esplanade results in many locations where sight lines between vehicles and pedestrians is limited and exacerbates the pedestrian safety risks. A retaining wall on the other side of the Esplanade at the corner of Marguerita Avenue prevents pedestrian access along the Esplanade.

## **4.3 Anti-social behaviour**

There are reports of frequent littering by visitors to The Pillars, both at the site and in the surrounding residential streets. Residents frequently find litter on the nature strips and in their gardens. Rubbish bins are currently not provided at The Pillars and public rubbish bins are not provided in the neighbouring streets.

The consumption of alcohol at The Pillars is considered a contributing factor to the reported anti-social and offensive behaviour. Litter, broken glass, vandalism to private property, urinating and defaecating in local streets, swearing, fighting and aggressive behaviour have all been reported by residents. These occur both in the surrounding streets and at The Pillars.

A local law is in place that prohibits the possession or consumption of alcohol in public areas at and around The Pillars.

## **4.4 Falls from cliff and water safety**

Many visitors to The Pillars jump from the cliffs into the adjoining waters of Port Phillip Bay. This activity is widely promoted and encouraged on social media and travel apps. There has also been reports of tour companies taking visitors to the site to cliff jump. The images of people cliff jumping in such a picturesque environment have made it a must-do activity for many visitors to the Mornington Peninsula. The terrain to get through the reserve and access The Pillars is very steep and poses a safety risk. Due to erosion created by the high visitation some areas around the cliff edge are unstable and slippery. There have been reports of visitors climbing along the cliffs in the area looking for The Pillars.

The water depth adjacent to The Pillars varies with submerged rocks in some areas. Combined with varying tides (which visitors are not necessarily aware of) and boats and jet skis in the water, jumping from these cliffs carries a high-risk of injury. Climbing back up the rocks after jumping into the water has resulted in injuries. On busy days, when there can be up to 400 people at the site, there is also the risk of cliff jumpers landing on each other.

Major and minor injuries have occurred at The Pillars in the past few years. There have been three air ambulance extractions, one high angle rope rescue and one rescue by boat. Injuries sustained include striking head on the cliff and becoming unconscious, falling onto jagged rocks while walking at The Pillars, cuts and scrapes when climbing out of the water and jet skis colliding in the water. Mount Martha Lifesaving Club patrol The Pillars area due to the recognised risk of injury. This takes resources away from their key task of patrolling Mount Martha Beach.

Life Saving Victoria has recognised The Pillars as a potential high-risk location for drowning and aquatic recreation related injuries. Further details can be found in the LSV report on The Pillars in *Appendix C – Further Information – Life Saving Victoria Report*.

#### **4.5 Erosion of the cliff area**

Erosion occurs naturally along the cliff face at The Pillars but has been exacerbated by the large number of visitors to the site. Ad-hoc access through the area has resulted in trampled vegetation and the creation of informal paths. After rain events, these paths act as drainage channels and contribute to the increasing erosion of the cliff face. Large numbers of visitors climbing the cliff face also contributes to the erosion issues. As the intense use of the site continues, the rate of erosion of the cliff face increases.



*Cliff areas being eroded by high levels of visitation*

#### **4.6 Damage and loss of vegetation and habitat**

Based on the significant Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC), and flora and fauna species occurring within the area surrounding The Pillars, the study area is considered to be of Regional Significance (*Fauna Survey and Management Prescriptions for Mt Martha Coast from the Balcombe Creek Estuary Mouth to Bradford Road, Mt Martha, MPS 2007*). The Pillars contains Coastal Headland Scrub vegetation which has a conservation status of 'depleted' within the bioregion. There is a diverse range of local native species as well as many environmental weeds. The increasing number of visitors to the site is resulting in vegetation loss, particularly of ground cover species. Vegetation loss is particularly noticeable closer to the water where foot-trodden tracks emerge onto the rocks.

A fauna survey was conducted along this section of Mount Martha coastline in 2007 and found a diverse range of local indigenous fauna (*Fauna Survey and Management Prescriptions for Mt Martha Coast from the Balcombe Creek Estuary Mouth to Bradford Road, Mt Martha, MPS 2007*). What remains of the vegetation communities within the study site contain important habitat for fauna species. The indigenous tree communities support tree mammal and birds, whereas the ground vegetation supports terrestrial fauna and scrub-dwelling birds. The intensity of human activity at The Pillars is likely to be impacting potential breeding and roosting sites for local birds and

mammals. The proliferation of litter left around The Pillars is likely to have a detrimental impact on marine animals, sea birds and the local fauna.

Removal of weeds and revegetation are difficult at The Pillars given the steep slopes and the potential of causing further erosion.

#### **4.7 Damage to cultural heritage assets**

Several shell middens have been damaged by people accessing the site. The increasing number of visitors and uncontrolled access has resulted in informal paths directly over middens causing significant damage.

There are plans to cover the shell midden material, in-fill and then revegetate the areas. This would need to be supported by other actions to prevent erosion and damage to middens in the cliff face area. The topography of the area and difficulty with access for vehicles and equipment limit the treatment options available.

Interpretive signage is also being investigated with the Bunurong Land Council. The purpose of this signage will be to inform people of the importance of the site and request assistance in its protection.

#### **4.8 Litter in and around the site**

There is an ongoing issue of litter in and surrounding the Site area at The Pillars. Litter, including cans, bottles and packaging, as well as larger broken items, is left on rock platforms. Litter left on site often ends up in the water which has a detrimental impact on the marine environment and the ongoing amenity of the area.

Litter cannot be easily retrieved due to the complexities of complying with safety issues and the inaccessibility of the area. Investigations are currently underway to work out how this litter can be safely retrieved using qualified climbers, anchor points and ropes.

#### **4.9 Shire resources to address the issues**

Over the last three years Mornington Peninsula Shire has allocated additional resources to help understand and manage the issues at The Pillars. Additional local laws and parking patrols, litter clean-ups, information products, specialist investigations and management resources have been allocated to address the issues and reduce the detrimental impacts. This level of resourcing is not sustainable for the Shire in the long-term and better coordination and assistance, including funding, is required between the various stakeholder agencies.

# 5. Options

Several different management options have been identified, discussed and explored. These options have been developed based on ideas from stakeholder and community information sessions, and in line with the four principles outlined in the Victorian Coastal Strategy. Options have been divided into infrastructure and management options. All these options require further development and feasibility testing in line with approvals and funding. It is a potential for the options to be combined and implemented to form a long-term management approach to The Pillars. Identified management options are detailed and assessed below. The table attached to this document as *Appendix A - Assessment of Management Options and Effects* outlines the issues to be addressed and the likely effect of proposed management options.

## Infrastructure:

- Do nothing
- Fence the site (from the land side)
- Construct a boardwalk
- Change physical conditions at the site
- Provide bins, toilets at the site
- Install signage

## Management

- Do nothing
- Education and enforcement campaign
- Additional parking restrictions in streets
- Tow away zones in local streets
- Prohibit cliff jumping
- Off-site parking and walk or shuttle bus to site
- Improve boating access to site
- Handback site management to DELWP

## 5.1 Do nothing

Doing nothing is not likely to be acceptable to the local community. If nothing is done the detrimental impacts on the site and local community will continue. The risks, issues and impacts will remain.

## 5.2 Fence the site

Installation of a temporary fence was investigated by Council officers. At a Special Council Meeting in January 2017 several management options were presented to Council. Council resolved to proceed with installing a temporary fence for a trial period of two years. Subsequently, the fence was not supported by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and DELWP as it was not considered in line with State Government policies and strategies.

The proposed fencing works included the installation of concrete footings at a depth of 400mm and approximately 400 lineal meters of wire mesh style fencing at a height of approximately 2.5 meters.

The installation of the fence would have significant impacts on cultural heritage sites and vegetation within the area, as well as the visual amenity. Delivering resources to the site to install the fence was identified as a challenge. Installation of the fence would have prevented access to the site that is on Crown Land managed on behalf of all Victorians.

The cost of this option was estimated at approximately \$400,000. A full copy of the Council report and fencing investigations attached as *Refer to Appendix C - Further Information – Council reports and fencing information*.

## 5.3 Construct a boardwalk

The construction of a boardwalk has been explored as a way of increasing pedestrian safety, reducing impacts on vegetation and cultural values and controlling access to the site. It would also allow visitors to park away from the site and gain access via the boardwalk.

If feasible a boardwalk could be constructed in two or three stages:

- Stage 1 - Hearn road to The Pillars
- Stage 2 - Viewing platform at The Pillars
- Stage 3 - The Pillars to Mount Martha Life Saving Club

There are two unsealed carparks near Hearn Road that could be used by visitors to The Pillars and the site may then be accessed via a boardwalk for approximately 600m. There is no formal layout in these two carparks, however it is understood that approximately 15 cars can comfortably park in each of the car parks. There are some concerns with the safety of vehicles entering and leaving these car parks. Additionally, the carpark area could provide a more suitable location for toilets and rubbish bins within the area.

Consideration would need to be given to the impact of a boardwalk on vegetation, middens and erosion, particularly during the construction phase. The parking of cars at either end of the boardwalk and safe pedestrian crossing locations along the Esplanade require further investigation.

The construction of a boardwalk would need to be implemented in conjunction with other management options to address the other issues identified at the site including cliff jumping and safety.

The estimated cost of a boardwalk is \$1600 - \$3000 per meter. There would be approximately 600m of boardwalk required in Stage 1 and 800m required in Stage 3. This would require investigations to

determine the feasibility of the boardwalk and will also require State and/ or Federal funding and management. This option is not considered the responsibility of the appointed Committee of Management. These estimated costs do not include the costs of specialist investigations, approvals and permits, which are likely be significant.

## **5.4 Change physical conditions at the site**

There have been suggestions to change the physical conditions at the site to deter cliff jumping. Placing large boulders or other material in the water adjacent the cliffs could alter the depth of water. A management option of this kind, however, introduces potential liability risks for the Shire, DELWP or Parks Victoria as the waterway manager, if someone was to get injured. Importing boulders, rocks or other materials into the water may interfere with coastal processes and marine conditions and subsequently may increase cliff erosion at The Pillars and/or adjoining areas.

Changing the physical conditions at the site may also impact the marine flora and fauna. This option requires greater investigation including environmental impacts and effects on coastal processes.

Estimated costs would be \$200,000 - \$500,000.

## **5.5 Provide bins and toilets**

Providing rubbish bins and toilets at the site could assist in reducing litter and some anti-social behaviour in the neighbouring residential area. Servicing the rubbish bins and toilets would be a challenge due to the lack of safe vehicle stopping space along the Esplanade.

The siting of a toilet facility would require careful consideration to minimise any impact on native vegetation and cultural sites. Given the often large numbers of visitors onsite, the maintenance, cleaning and emptying of toilets and bins will be critical in deeming such facilities a positive contribution.

An estimated cost of installing a toilet and bins is \$600,000 - \$800,000. This could vary greatly depending on the type, style and location of a toilet. Funding sources for ongoing maintenance costs would also need to be determined.

## **5.6 Signage**

Signage warning of onsite dangers, in line with international standards, have been installed at the areas where people enter the site. A comprehensive review of the signage is required to identify specific signage requirements throughout the site. This would need to be considered in the context of any changes to access to the site. Signage as a management option would need to be implemented in conjunction with other options to be most effective.

Estimated cost of signage is \$30,000

## **5.7 Education and enforcement campaign**

An extensive Shire led education and enforcement campaign is considered an effective management option to target the wide demographic of visitors and the community engaged in managing The Pillars. Education and enforcement is considered to be successful in supporting other infrastructure based managements options for the site.

Developing a communications strategy is recommended to encourage appropriate behaviour and use of the site. Ideally, Council and key stakeholders would develop common campaigns, communication and strategies to ensure consistency across all organisations and the information being delivered to members of the public. Key messages should focus on the values of the site, safety and appropriate behaviour. Communications, Youth Services and Local Laws areas of Council would be required for the development and implementation of this approach.

Understanding the demographic of site visitors has been recognised as an integral part of developing successful campaigns. The use of social media, on-site signage and a physical presence on-site are examples of approaches that could form part of this strategy. Engagement with visitors and social media influences are important to the success of an education and enforcement campaign.

Estimated cost of an education and enforcement campaign is \$250,000 in the first year.

## **5.8 Traffic management and parking restrictions in streets**

The areas currently being used for parking by visitor to The Pillars are the unsealed car parks on the Esplanade (near Hearn Road and on the bend to the north of The Pillars), parallel parking on the Esplanade shoulder, Marguerita Avenue, Deakin Drive, Esplanade service road, the South East Water sewer pump station on the Esplanade near Deakin Drive, Two Bays Crescent and Lempriere Avenue. Deakin Drive and Marguerita Avenue are the two residential streets most impacted by visitors to The Pillars.

The existing parking restrictions in the area are regularly and proactively patrolled and enforced by Shire Rangers in summer (at least three times per day, seven days per week), and occasionally by Victoria Police.

Despite the regular enforcement, anecdotal evidence from residents and others suggests that the parking restrictions are purposefully disregarded (especially on Marguerita Avenue) as many occupants of the vehicles are willing to accept an infringement as a cost for visiting the site.

There have been suggestions of having harsher penalties for illegal parking, such as wheel clamping or towing away illegally parked vehicles to serve as a more powerful deterrent to illegal parking.

The cost of establishing and implementing traffic management and parking restrictions in streets is currently unknown. The feasibility of this option would need to be further investigated.

## 5.9 Tow away zones in local streets

It is possible to implement a tow away zone near The Pillars (subject to Minster approval), but it may not be feasible over what would be considered a relatively small area. There are operational issues that would need to be considered and resolved by the Shire prior to applying for designation of the area as a tow away zone. Operational issues include:

- Community consultation would be required in the affected areas
- The Shire would be responsible for towing and engaging a towing contractor to manage the tow away zones
- A depot/ yard for the towed vehicles would be required within a reasonable distance of Mount Martha. The depot would need to facilitate owners collecting their vehicle and paying the release fee
- Towing contractors that VicRoads use are generally located in inner city areas where the majority of Clearzones exist. Given the distance/location these contractors may not be willing to operate in the area around The Pillars
- Illegal parking is not consistent around the Pillars and having a towing contractor constantly patrol the area is not considered feasible. This requirement may make it difficult to attract a suitable towing contractor
- The towing of vehicles would need to be in response to concerns received through the Shire's customer service team. An acceptable response time would need to be implemented/ agreed
- Suitable processes would need to be established to be able to administer the tow away system including managing the fee for towed vehicles
- Significant resources and Shire officer time would be required to establish tow away zones in what would be a relatively small area
- The tow away zones may create an expectation for local residents that all illegally parked vehicles will be towed, leading to dissatisfaction where illegally parked vehicles are not towed
- Residents would not be exempt from having their vehicles towed if they are parked illegally
- If vehicles were to park entirely on a nature strip (rather than partly on the road), the tow away zone signage wouldn't apply
- Owners of towed vehicles may find themselves stranded and face difficulty (i.e. limited transport facilities) getting to the location of the towed vehicle depot/ compound
- Tow trucks on the already narrow street may take up more room and cause further congestion than the illegally parked vehicles
- Tow trucks may have difficulty navigating the relatively narrow streets around The Pillars

The cost of establishing and implementing a tow away zone is currently unknown. The feasibility of this option would need to be further assessed.

## 5.10 Prohibit cliff jumping

Cliff jumping could be prohibited at the site through the erection of signage under part of the General Purposes Local Law. This would require Mornington Peninsula Shire Local Laws officers and possibly Police assistance for enforcement.

This may not deter all cliff jumpers, and some people may continue to jump when the site is unattended. Patrols could be increased during peak visitor times. Enforcement of this kind would be difficult due to the geography of the site.

While being mostly a safety management measure, prohibiting cliff jumping may reduce the number of people climbing the cliff face and subsequently reduce the current rate of erosion of the cliffs.

The cost of establishing and implemented the prohibition of cliff jumping is currently unknown. The feasibility of the management options requires further investigation.

- Off-site parking and walk or shuttle bus to site
- Off-site parking and walk or shuttle bus to site

### **5.11 Park offsite and provide shuttle bus to site**

Parking could be encouraged away from The Pillars and a shuttle bus could bring people to the site. Some operational issues would need to be considered and resolved by the Shire prior for this to be implemented. There would need to be a shuttle bus contractor appointed by the Shire. It may be difficult to attract a contractor as they would need to operate seven days per week and into the evenings as visitors often stay at The Pillars later in the day on hot days. There may be instances when the shuttle bus driver has to deal with drunk and anti-social behaviour.

### **5.12 Improve boating access to site**

Having The Pillars setup as a boating or 'swimming only' destination has been discussed as a management option. However, at present there have been reports of up to 40 boats and/or jetskis in the water adjacent The Pillars at any given time. Increasing boating access to the area is considered a potential safety hazard, and may increase the already concerning issue of accidents between boats, and boats and swimmers.

A review of boating and swimming zones in the water adjacent to The Pillars is required to determine if any changes could improve water safety.

The costs of establishing and implementing improved boat access to the site is currently unknown. The feasibility of this management option requires further investigation.

### **5.13 Handback site management to DELWP**

There are challenges for the Shire and other agencies in managing The Pillars and associated issues. If the site was handed back to DELWP to manage, many of these issues would remain unresolved, and may become more difficult to resolve. The Shire would retain its role in resolving many of the issues including:

- Parking and traffic congestion in local streets
- Anti-social behaviour in and around The Pillars
- Litter in local streets
- Pedestrian safety in local streets

Coordination between DELWP the Shire (and other stakeholder agencies) is critical to successfully implementing any of the options presented. Handing back management of the site to DELWP, that has limited on-ground and local resources, is not likely to successfully address the impacts on local residents.

It is considered that it is not sustainable for the Shire to contribute the funding for the ongoing management of the site and surrounding area. An agreement between the Shire and DELWP would be required if the Shire is to remain the Committee of Management. This agreement would outline the roles and responsibilities of each agency including an equitable funding agreement

# 6. Recommendations

The management options presented in this plan have been evaluated by stakeholders and a focus group of people in the local community.

All options require further investigation, including detailed design, feasibility assessment, budget planning and detailed assessment by relevant agencies. The management options implemented would need to comply with State and local planning requirements and other legislation.

Based on the assessment of options against impacts, feedback from management agencies involved in the issues, and evaluation of options at the community workshop an integrated approach of preferred options is recommended.

An integral part of the long-term management of the site and associated issues requires:

- Written agreement between agencies on roles and responsibilities
- Written agreement between agencies on response times to issues (eg. broken bollards, signage)
- An equitable funding model between agencies to address and implement the long-term management options

To address the priority of the safety of visitors to The Pillars the following management options recommended for the site are:

1. Traffic management and parking restrictions in local streets;
2. Education and enforcement campaign; and
3. Feasibility study of the construction of a boardwalk.

The construction of a boardwalk (Option 3) will require further investigation regarding the feasibility of a boardwalk, and would require State and/or Federal funding and management. This option is not considered the responsibility of the appointed Committee of Management, and should be managed and driven by DELWP.

These three options were the options supported at the community workshop. Actions to progress these options over the next 10 years are detailed in *Appendix B - Recommended Management Options and Actions*.

# 7. Monitoring and Continual Improvement

Regular monitoring of the implementation of this Long-term Management Plan is required to ensure that progress is made, recommendations remain relevant, priorities are addressed, and management approaches and decisions remain consistent with this and other relevant plans.

An annual review should consider any new or amended local and state legislation and policy that affects coastal areas, and address:

- What has been implemented?
- What were the outcomes?
- Are timelines on track as per the plan? Do the timelines need review or adjustment?
- What were the successes or failures of the plan?
- What unforeseen issues or impacts have arisen?
- An update of priorities, timing and cost estimates

# **Appendix A – Assessment of Management Options and Effects**

**Appendix A - Assessment of Management Options and Effects**

	Do nothing	Fence site (from landside)	Construct boardwalk	Change physical conditions	Provide bins and toilets	Install signage	Education and enforcement campaign	Parking restrictions in streets	Tow away zones in local streets	Prohibit cliff jumping	Offsite parking and walk shuttle bus to site	Improve boating access to site	Hand back site management to DELWP
Parking and traffic congestion	Red	White	Green	White	White	White	White	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	White
Danger to pedestrians	Red	White	Green	White	White	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	White	Green	White	White
Antisocial behavior in the area	Red	White	White	White	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	White
Falls from cliff area and water safety	Red	Green	White	Green	White	Yellow	Green	White	White	Green	White	Red	White
Erosion of the cliff area	Red	Yellow	White	Green	White	Green	Green	Yellow	White	Green	White	Red	White
Damage and loss of vegetation	Red	Green	Green	Red	White	White	Green	Yellow	White	White	White	White	Red
Damage to cultural heritage assets	Red	Green	Green	Red	White	Green	Green	Yellow	White	White	White	White	Red
Litter in and around the site	Red	White	White	White	Green	White	Yellow	Yellow	White	Yellow	White	Red	Red



Will address management issue



May assist in addressing management issue



Will have a detrimental impact on management

# **Appendix B – Assessment of Management Options and Actions**

Management Option	Year 1 Actions	Year 2 – 4 Actions	Year 5 - 10 Actions	Year 10+ Actions	Agencies involved
<b>Ongoing coordinated management of the site</b>	Written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between key agencies on roles, responsibilities and response times to issues.	Implement MOU.	Review MOU and update as required.	Review MOU and update as required.	All
	Increased maintenance and enforcement program by all agencies to address key issues (eg. litter, parking, vandalism).	Increased maintenance and enforcement program by all agencies to address key issues (eg. litter, parking, vandalism).	Continue to implement and review this long-term management plan.		All
	Review boating and swimming zones adjacent to The Pillars identify any changes to assist with water safety.		Make changes to boat and swimming zones adjacent to The Pillars (if appropriate).		Parks Victoria
	Gain agreement and funding assistance from state agencies for ongoing management and specific projects.				MPSC
<b>Traffic Management and Parking restrictions in local streets</b>	Continue to enforce parking restrictions.	Continue to enforce parking restrictions.	Continue to implement and review this long-term management plan.		MPSC
	Identify options to extend parking restrictions in local streets from November – April.	Implement required changes to parking restrictions  Review impact of extended parking restrictions.	Review impact of restrictions and make required changes in consultation with residents.		MPSC
	Undertake community consultation for a permit system in local streets.	Implement permit system in local streets (if appropriate based on community consultation)			
	Investigate speed reductions changes along the Esplanade	Implement changes to speed reductions along the Esplanade (if appropriate).	Review impact of changes to speed restrictions along the Esplanade (if appropriate)		Vic Roads

	(November to April from the village to Hearn Road).				
<b>Education and enforcement campaign</b>	Develop Education and Enforcement Strategy including key messages and Communications Plan.	Implement and evaluate Education and Enforcement Strategy.	Continue to implement and evaluate Education and Enforcement Strategy.	Review, evaluate and adjust Education and Enforcement Strategy.	All
	Engage with users of the site to understand motivations, drivers and understanding of the management issues and impacts.				MPSC Youth Services
	Gain agreement and funding assistance from state agencies for specific components as required.				MPSC
<b>Construct a boardwalk</b>	Develop concept design for 3 stages of boardwalk.		Construct boardwalk as funds become available.	Monitor and evaluate the impact of the boardwalk.	DELWP
	Undertake detailed Feasibility Study to assess financial feasibility and planning/approval requirements (including impacts on parking at either end and road crossing options).	Assess site impacts of boardwalk construction.  Determine feasibility and funding model for boardwalk construction.			
	Gain agreement and funding assistance from State agencies.		Identify funding sources and secure funding.		DELWP

# Appendix C – Further Information

Influence of social media

Community consultation and input

Council reports and fencing information

Draft Cultural Heritage Management Plan

Vegetation Assessment

Life Saving Victoria Report