



ACS

Australian Coastal Society Ltd
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Dear Editor

The Age is to be congratulated for highlighting the inconceivable stance of the Victorian Government in wishing to dismantle the Coastal Council and Victoria's coastal management system despite the high praise heaped on the system by a Federal parliamentary inquiry. (The Age, 16/12).

To rub insult into injury there has been no public consultation on this proposal and no hint that such a change would occur in the long two and half years of preparation of the Biodiversity White Paper in which this strange recommendation is contained.

The Australian Coastal Society is disappointed that this decision, which hopefully will be reversed, was made without presenting any evidence at all for the need for change or how the recommended changes will improve coastal zone planning and management in this State.

Coastal planning and management has not been performed well in the rest of the country by natural resource management agencies which are the very agencies recommended to take over the Victorian coast where the vast majority of Victorians live and recreate (70 million visitor days per year). The reason for this appears to be that natural resource management agencies are focused on resource use and not, as coastal planning and management requires, on the planning and management of human use and the challenges to the coast coming from sea level rise, increased storm surge activity and ocean acidification.

Why would a government remove a successful specialist agency with 15 years demonstrated positive experience in coastal planning and management and replace it with groups who have only been previously interested in private agricultural land use?

The proposal beggars belief and without producing any compelling evidence to suggest a revised system would be better than an existing highly regarded one, and with no public consultation having occurred on the proposed changes, the Society calls on the Government to reverse this decision immediately.

Yours sincerely

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