



**BOROUGH OF QUEENSCLIFFE**

# **Tourist and Services Sign Policy**

**April 2000**

## **Tourist and services sign policy**

### **Contents**

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<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Scope.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Policy.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<b>Policy background .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Responsibility for tourist and service signs .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Strategic framework .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Tourist Signing Guidelines: Guidelines for Tourist and Services Signing in Victoria (1999) .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Queenscliffe Planning Scheme.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>City of Greater Geelong Tourism and Directional Sign Policy (1997).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>Local context.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Existing signs .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>1. Types of road signs .....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>2. Design, construction and installation of signs.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>3. Eligibility for signing .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>4. Application, assessment, and administration.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>5. Transitional arrangements.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>6. Tourist Signing Schemes .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix 1.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix 2.....</b>	<b>34</b>

# Executive Summary

## Scope

This policy applies to tourist, direction and street signs erected within road reserves and on land owned by the Borough of Queenscliffe. It must be read and applied in conjunction with the State Government's *Tourist Signing Guidelines: Guidelines for Tourist and Services Signing on Roads in Victoria* (1999). Terms highlighted in bold are defined elsewhere in the text.

## Policy

### 1. Types of road signs

A. The installation of **direction signs** should be restricted to Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road.

B. The installation of the following types of **tourist attraction signs** is strongly discouraged:

- Gateway/Introductory signs;
- Advance signs;
- Intersection signs;
- Reassurance signs;
- Temporary signs.

C. **Tourist attraction 'route marker' signs** should only be installed along tourist routes approved by the Regional Tourist Signing Committee.

D. The installation of **services 'advance' signs** is strongly discouraged except where necessary for reasons of traffic safety.

E. **Services 'intersection' signs**:

- should be restricted to Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road;
- should display generic descriptions (eg. 'motel') and symbols in preference to the names of individual businesses;
- should be located on a single structure where there is more than one sign, rather than on multiple structures (subject to design guidelines listed elsewhere).

## **2. Design, construction and installation of signs**

*A. When designing and locating tourist and service signs, in addition to traffic management and road safety considerations, the road authority should take into account the potential impact of the sign on the scenic, environmental, and cultural heritage characteristics of the locality.*

*B. In locations of scenic, environmental, or cultural heritage sensitivity (as identified in the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme) the road authority should consider:*

- reducing the number of signs on display to the minimum number acceptable according to reasonable traffic management and safety standards;*
- minimising the size of signs and lettering, and the amount of information displayed within the range of applicable standards;*
- ensuring that signs are located and installed in a manner that is sensitive to the immediate context.*

*C. In areas on or adjacent to the coast or coastal reserves, regard should be had to the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998) which state:*

- Signs should be clear and informative but unobtrusive.*
- Signs should be grouped or concentrated at particular locations, where most visible with least impact on the landscape. Signs should be located and designed in detail to minimise impacts on views. Common structures should be used, where possible.*
- Signs should occur on the landward side of roads, so as not to interrupt views.*
- Signs should not be higher than the roofline of adjacent buildings or vegetation, or be moving, or consist of flashing lights. These restrictions may not be appropriate for temporary signs or signs in designated development zones or areas of intensive urban development.*
- There is a need to strive for consistency of signage on a local and regional basis. Signs should announce a common geographical region or form, reinforcing the qualities of the coastal environment, rather than municipal boundaries, for example.*
- Signs and associated structures should be designed to avoid injury to pedestrians and especially joggers and cyclists. This has clear implications for the height and location of signs and sharpness of their materials.' (p. 28)*

*D. Tourist attraction, services, and community facility signs should not indicate distances.*

E. *Businesses and tourist enterprises located on Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road should not be eligible for signs in the road reserve unless the visibility of private signs located within the property boundary is permanently obstructed by topography, buildings or vegetation.*

F. *Where practicable, **position signs** should:*

- *be located on existing power poles or street sign poles;*
- *never be positioned above a street sign if located on the same structure as a street sign;*
- *not be located on the same structure as more than two other position or street signs;*
- *match as closely as possible the shape and dimensions of existing signs located on the same structure;*
- *be double-sided and positioned so as to be visible from two directions.*

### **3. Eligibility for signing**

#### **Tourist accommodation signs**

A. *Applications for **tourist accommodation signs** should comply with all 'essential', 'desirable' and relevant 'specific' criteria under the Tourist Signing Guidelines 1999 and the provisions of this policy.*

B. *Only one **tourist accommodation sign** should be approved per establishment, except where an additional sign or signs is strictly necessary for reasons of traffic safety.*

C. *Tourist accommodation signs identifying **bed and breakfast establishments** (as defined in the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme) are strongly discouraged.*

#### **Services and community facilities signs**

E. ***Services and community facilities signs** should not be displayed in circumstances where the service or facility is located adjacent to Bellarine Highway (B110) or Point Lonsdale Road and is readily visible to persons travelling in vehicles along those roads.*

F. *Where a service or facility is eligible for a **services and community facilities sign** only one sign should be displayed unless an additional sign or sign is strictly required for traffic safety purposes.*

G. *Where practical **services and community facilities signs** should display standard symbols instead of words.*

*H. Services and community facilities signs should only be displayed where it can be demonstrated that the service or community facility is regularly used by tourists or visitors who are unfamiliar with the Borough. Documentary evidence may be required to establish this.*

*The following table provides a guide to decision making and should be used in conjunction with the above recommendation. Column A identifies a number of common types of service or community facility. Column B, C and D identify whether services and community facility signs should generally be:*

- *permitted (column 1);*
- *permitted where the primary purpose is to serve visitors (column 2); or*
- *discouraged (column 3).*

Table: Eligibility of certain uses for services and community facilities signs.

Type of service or community facility	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Aged care facility			✓
Art gallery		✓	
Barbecue (public)			✓
Boat ramp/jetty	✓		
Cemetery			✓
Community service			✓
Emergency service	✓		
Ferry	✓		
Golf course		✓	
Library		✓	
Medical centre	✓		
Museum		✓	
Parking areas (public)	✓		
Picnic facilities			✓
Place of assembly		✓	
Place of worship	✓		
Post office	✓		
Railway station	✓		
Recreation centre		✓	
School			✓
Service station		✓	
Surf life saving club	✓		
Toilets (public)	✓		
Tourist information bay	✓		
Town hall/municipal offices	✓		
Visitor information centres (accredited)	✓		
Visitor radio services	✓		
Yacht club		✓	

### Other signs

I. *In order to establish uniformity and avoid confusion with tourist and service signs all new **street name signs** should:*

- *match the traditional Borough street name signs, that is, white signs with black text;*
- *not include a Council logo or postcode;*
- *be positioned so as to be visible from both directions and so as not to endanger vehicles or pedestrians;*
- *where located on the same structure as other position signs, be located above other signs;*
- *where possible, be located on or near poles with street lighting to assist with night time identification.*

J. *Signs identifying the route to streets remote from an intersection (eg. 'To Douglas Ct.') should not be installed and existing signs of this type should be removed.*

K. *Council should develop a suite of standardised signs for use on land owned and/or managed by the Borough (eg. identification signs, by-law signs, warning signs, information signs, etc.). Such signs should gradually replace existing redundant or ineffective signs.*

L. *Council should liaise with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Parks Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Otway Tourism, the Regional Tourist Signing Committee and other relevant authorities seeking their co-operation in:*

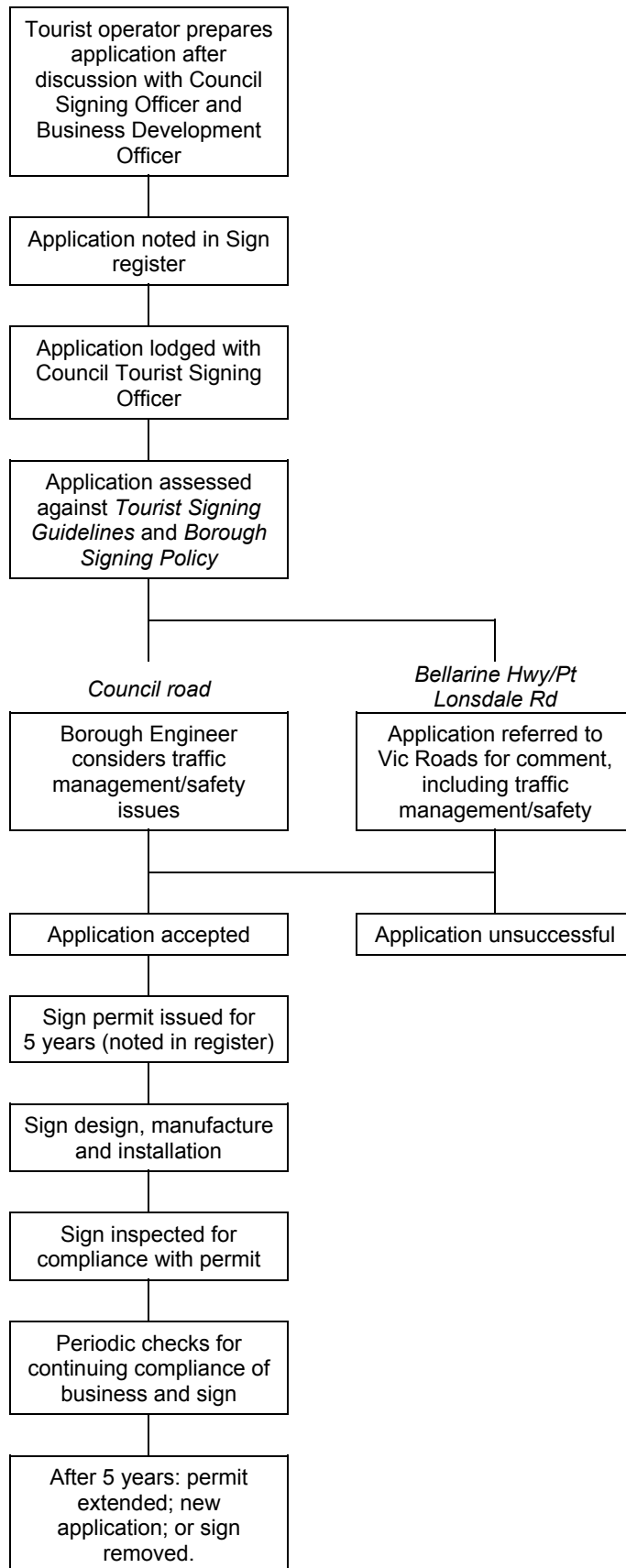
- *removing excessive or redundant signage;*
- *standardising, coordinating and/or rationalising signs in areas under the relevant authority's control, eg. foreshore areas;*
- *consulting with the Borough regarding the future development of signing schemes and the installation of new signs.*

## **4. Application, assessment, and administration**

A. *A register of tourist and services signs be established to keep a record of the type, size, location, wording, and expiry date of all sign permits issued under this policy (additional information, such as the name and contact details of applicants may also be included).*

B. *Council administrative fees should match those charged by Vic Roads.*

C. The following assessment procedure be adopted.



## **5. Transitional arrangements**

- A. Conduct an audit of existing tourist and services signs throughout the Borough, collecting the following data about each sign: location; type; size; wording; state of repair.*
- B. Publicise the Borough's efforts to rationalise signs and invite the public to identify signs that are in poor repair, are redundant, or are inappropriately located.*
- C. Based on the sign audit and public input, identify opportunities for sign rationalisation or removal. These should be classified as either 'high' or 'low' priority depending on the prominence of the signs and the severity of existing clutter or visual obstruction.*
- D. In 'high' priority locations:*
- remove redundant and illegible signs;*
  - remove Borough signs that do not comply with this policy;*
  - liaise with businesses and services to identify appropriate methods of sign rationalisation, whether short or long term;*
  - liaise with Vic Roads concerning appropriate rationalisation methods.*
- E. In 'low' priority locations, subject to budgetary constraints:*
- remove redundant and illegible signs;*
  - remove Borough signs that do not comply with this policy;*
  - write to businesses and service notifying them of the policy and advising that their sign(s) will be reviewed in three years' time; and*
  - after three years, liaise with businesses and services to identify appropriate methods of sign rationalisation.*
- F. Rationalisation and/or removal of signs on declared roads will be undertaken in consultation with Vic Roads.*

## **6. Tourist Signing Schemes**

- A. Signing schemes associated with Tourist Drives should be designed to maximise effectiveness without contributing to a loss of visual amenity due to sign clutter or resulting in disruption of views and vistas.*

## Policy background

Tourist and service signs play an important role in attracting and guiding visitors to tourist-oriented regions, precincts and businesses; and to community facilities. As the economic importance of the tourism industry has grown, so to has the number of tourist-related enterprises and the number of signs displayed identifying them.

The proliferation of signs, particularly in areas of environmental or cultural heritage significance not only detracts from the appearance of the locality but also diminishes the effectiveness of individual signs. In order to attract attention new signage must be larger or bear colours, logos or wording that is distinctive.

The *Queenscliffe Planning Scheme* contains provisions that effectively control signage on private and public land. However, in most cases a planning permit is not be required to erect tourist or direction signage in a road reserve.



The lack of planning control over such signage means that no matter how effective the planning scheme is in controlling signs on private property, signage in the road reserve still has the potential to undermine the heritage, environmental and urban character values identified in the *Municipal Strategic Statement*.

At present tourist and service sign applications are determined by the municipal Council or Vic Roads, depending on which authority is responsible for the road in question. Applications are assessed in terms of their compliance with standard sign formats and with respect to traffic safety and management issues. Signage currently displayed throughout the State demonstrates a lack of consistency with respect to sign design and eligibility criteria.

Tourism Victoria, Vic Roads and the Department of Infrastructure have recently released *Tourist Signing Guidelines* aimed at providing a standardised hierarchy of signage across the State and implementing detailed eligibility and design standards. The clear aim of these guidelines is to provide a single, logical system of tourist and service signing that will improve the effectiveness of the sign network and enhance the image of tourist areas. The guidelines apply to all tourist and service signs erected in Victoria after 1 June 1999 and are currently being used by Vic Roads in the assessment of signs on declared roads for a trial period of twelve months.

Although the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* provide an excellent foundation for a local tourist and service sign policy, they are necessarily broad in their application. This policy seeks to implement the *Guidelines* at a local level and to provide complementary policy recommendations that will further the objectives of the *Guidelines* and the *Municipal Strategic Statement*.

### **Responsibility for tourist and service signs**

The Borough of Queenscliffe is the road authority responsible for signs displayed in all road reserves throughout the Borough with the exception of Bellarine Highway (B110) and Point Lonsdale Road, for which Vic Roads is the road authority. Bellarine Highway extends from the western boundary of the Borough, through the urban areas, to the vehicle ferry terminal at the eastern tip of the peninsula. The highway includes sections of roads otherwise known as Queenscliff Road, Flinders Street, Bethune Street, King Street, Hesse Street, Wharf Street, Harbour Street and Larkin Parade.

The procedures outlined in the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* (1999) are intended to apply equally to roads controlled by the Borough and to those controlled by Vic Roads. In both cases applications are received and processed by the Borough and a referral system is applied in order to obtain the comments and approval of Vic Roads. This policy recommends an application and referral system that provides for appropriate levels of consultation with Vic Roads.

The policy also makes broad recommendations regarding signs that do not fall within the ambit of the *Tourist Signing Guidelines*, namely signs on land owned or controlled by Council land and street identification signs.

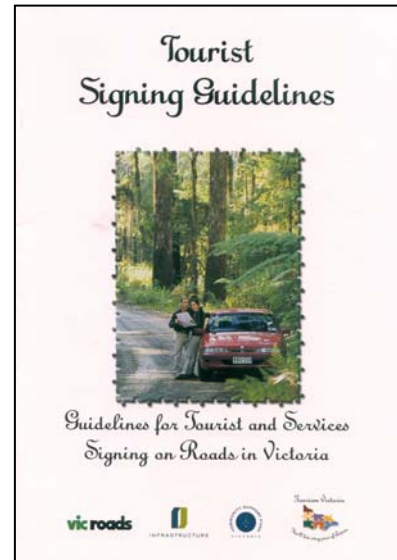
## Strategic framework

### Tourist Signing Guidelines: Guidelines for Tourist and Services Signing in Victoria (1999)

In March 1999, following extensive consultation, Vic Roads and Tourism Victoria released *Tourist Signing Guidelines: Guidelines for Tourist and Services Signing in Victoria*. The document establishes a hierarchy of tourist signs in Victoria and provides guidelines for local government, Vic Roads and Regional Tourist Signing Committees concerning:

- the appropriate use of tourist signs;
- design, construction and installation standards;
- eligibility criteria for businesses; and
- implementation.

Importantly, the guidelines form only part of an integrated tourism information strategy which emphasises that tourist signage should serve a directional rather than promotional role. Promotional elements of the strategy are to be pursued through the State tourism strategy and the accreditation of visitor information centres as important means of promoting tourism product regions and businesses.



The objective of the guidelines is *'to facilitate an efficient and effective tourist and services information system throughout the State, which meets the requirements of the travelling public, the tourism industry and government'*. The objective includes:

- 'a high standard of direction signing, including support to a network of accredited visitor information centres;
- coordinated and complementary tourist and service signs; and
- widely available, highly relevant marketing material.' (p. 4)

Specifically, the guidelines aim to:

- 'emphasise that tourist signing is directional, not promotional (ie. not for advertising purposes);
- recognise the State's tourism strategies ... as principle points of reference in developing and enhancing signing schemes;

- ensure ease of visitor navigation by using the most effective combination of tourist and services signs, direction signs, marketing/promotional material and accredited visitor information centres;
- adopt technical standards, which not only facilitate motorist recognition and comprehension but meet road safety objectives and requirements;
- reduce roadside clutter and visual pollution created by uncontrolled and inappropriate signs; and
- provide consistent application and administration across the State.' (p.4)

Given the underlying objective of the guidelines, the extensive consultation that has preceded their release, and their State-wide emphasis, it is appropriate that they form the basis of the Borough of Queenscliffe's own tourist and services signing policy. The State guidelines provide comprehensive and objective criteria for assessing all tourist signage applications. The purpose of the Queenscliffe policy will be to refine and extend the guidelines and procedures so that they may be appropriately applied in the context of the Borough.

The guidelines outline the roles and responsibilities of the municipal authority, Vic Roads, the Regional Tourism Manager, and the Regional Tourist Signing Committee. These issues will be discussed at greater length below.

## **Queenscliffe Planning Scheme**

### ***Municipal Strategic Statement***

The Borough of Queenscliffe *Municipal Strategic Statement* forms part of the new planning scheme adopted 4 March 1999. The *MSS* sets out long term directions for land use and development in the Borough, sets out a range of local policies, and provides the foundation for the application of zone and overlay provisions.

The *MSS* emphasises the importance of tourism to the local economy, but also notes the need for a balanced approach which seeks to ensure that the Borough's environmental, heritage and urban character values are not compromised by tourist activities. This concern is relevant to the tourist and services signing policy, as inappropriately located, profligate, or excessively large signs have the potential to detract from these key values.

The *Advertising Sign Local Policy* (cl. 22.01) includes the following objectives which are directly relevant to this policy:

- 'To ensure all signage takes account of the heritage and urban character of the area in which it is being placed and the Municipality as a whole.'
- 'To ensure that road signs are well presented and have regard to streetscape and urban character.'

As far as is relevant to present purposes, it is policy that:

- 'a study of signs and their effect on the Borough will be carried out. This review will produce a set of guidelines for the design and assessment of signage.'
- 'signs on reserved land should generally be restricted to Direction signs or signs which identify the site or provide Interpretive or Educational information.'

The policy does not directly cover the present policy because the type of signs under consideration are not (or should not be) advertising signs and generally do not require a planning permit. However, the broad principles applied to all signs are equally relevant to the appropriate utilisation of tourist and services signage whether or not a planning permit is required.

### **Zone and overlay controls**

Many signs to which this policy applies do not require a planning permit. In all zones the *Queenscliffe Planning Scheme* (cl. 52-05.3) the following types of signs are exempt from the need to apply for a planning permit:

- 'A sign identifying the functions or property of a government department, public authority or municipal council, but not a promotion sign displayed at the direction of any of these bodies.'
- 'A sign controlling traffic on a public road, railway, tramway, water or in the air, provided it is displayed at the direction of a government department, public authority or municipal council.'
- 'A sign required by statute or regulation, provided it is strictly in accordance with the requirement.'

Although a planning permit is generally required to '*construct or display a sign*' in areas affected by a Heritage Overlay, clause 43.01-1 exempts '*traffic signs*' from the definition of 'building'. There is no definition of 'traffic sign' provided in the Scheme.

It is considered reasonable that tourist and services signs be regarded as traffic signs in order to maintain consistency with clause 52-05.3 (see above) and because the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* state that a planning permit is not required where a sign permit is issued by the relevant road authority (p. 6).

It should, however, be borne in mind that any application for a sign that does not fall within the ordinary meaning of 'traffic sign' may require a planning permit under either the provisions of the zone or of the Heritage Overlay.

## **Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998)**

The Victorian Coastal Council's *Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast* (1998) is intended to assist in the implementation of the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* (1997). The guidelines apply to the construction of structures and facilities on coastal Crown land and provide siting and design guidance applicable to the coastal hinterland.

The guidelines for signs are as follows:

*'(a) Signs should be clear and informative but unobtrusive.*

- Signs should be grouped or concentrated at particular locations, where most visible with least impact on the landscape. Signs should be located and designed in detail to minimise impacts on views. Common structures should be used, where possible.
- Signs should occur on the landward side of roads, so as not to interrupt views.
- Signs should not be higher than the roofline of adjacent buildings or vegetation, or be moving, or consist of flashing lights. These restrictions may not be appropriate for temporary signs or signs in designated development zones or areas of intensive urban development.
- There is a need to strive for consistency of signage on a local and regional basis. Signs should announce a common geographical region or form, reinforcing the qualities of the coastal environment, rather than municipal boundaries, for example.
- Signs and associated structures should be designed to avoid injury to pedestrians and especially joggers and cyclists. This has clear implications for the height and location of signs and sharpness of their materials.' (p. 28)

These guidelines should be applied to all sign applications, whether tourist signs or not. Some of the broad objectives are entirely consistent with the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* (1999), while others will need to be included as additional decision criteria as part of the Borough's own policy.

## **City of Greater Geelong Tourism and Directional Sign Policy (1997)**

The City of Greater Geelong's *Tourism and Directional Sign Policy* provides a valuable discussion about the role of tourism and directional signage and the inter-relationship between signage and tourism policies. The principles outlined in the policy are mirrored in the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* (1999) and for the purposes of the Borough of Queenscliffe the State guidelines provide a more relevant policy direction.

## Local context

While this policy is clearly aimed at supporting the application of consistent State *Guidelines* it also seeks to ensure that these are implemented in a way that is sensitive to the aesthetic, cultural and environmental qualities of the Borough. In particular, there are a number of important characteristics of the Borough that should influence the use of tourist and service signs. These characteristics include:

- Throughout the Borough there are precincts that are extremely sensitive to inappropriate development due to their prevailing cultural heritage, environmental and/or scenic values. The importance of these values is reflected in the *Municipal Strategic Statement* and in the relevant zone and overlay controls that have been applied under the *Queenscliffe Planning Scheme*. Despite the fact that most of the signs affected by this policy do not require planning permission, it would be counter-productive to the successful implementation of the *Scheme* if the decision-making process regarding tourist and services signs were to result in outcomes that compromised its fundamental objectives and policies.
- The Borough is located at the end of a narrow peninsula. It has direct road links only to Geelong and Ocean Grove; and a sea link to Sorrento. As the number of road destinations is so limited, so too is the need to display direction and reassurance signs.
- The volume of through traffic is severely restricted by the capacity and frequency of the Sorrento vehicle ferry. This means a substantial majority of visitors enter and leaves the Borough from the west. The need for direction and reassurance signs is therefore reduced because many travellers are likely to leave via the same routes by which they arrived.
- The Borough is small in size and predominantly urban in character. The road layout is simple and low speed limits apply throughout. This means that roads are generally safe and accessibility is high. This in turn limits the need for roadside signs erected for the purposes of road safety or directional guidance.
- There only two main roads running through the Borough. Many tourist businesses and attractions are located on or adjacent to these roads. Where private signage is visible from these roads there is no need for additional signage within the road reserve as this would only serve to contribute to visual clutter.
- The local economy relies heavily on tourism and a small number of other facilities and attractions. The intensity of tourist-related activity, combined with the small geographical size of the Borough, means that most attractions and businesses are easily found without the need for roadside signage. Further, the intensity of such uses creates the potential for sign competition and clutter if signs were to be erected for all tourist-related businesses and attractions.

- The Queenscliffe Tourist Information Centre is easily accessible on the Bellarine Highway. Businesses should be encouraged to utilise the centre as part of their promotional strategy. Likewise, visitors should be educated to utilise the centre and road maps rather than signage to locate individual attractions.
- The Borough's relatively small population, combined with its compact geographical area, mean that permanent and semi-permanent residents are likely to have a detailed knowledge of community facilities available to them. As a consequence, service and community facilities signs need only be displayed where there is demonstrated need to provide guidance for tourists or visitors.

### Existing signs

A review conducted as part of this study identified over 90 locations where individual or groups of signs were displayed. The survey excluded signs displayed within public parks and reserved land, and most Vic Roads directional and traffic signage.

The purpose of the review was to gain a general impression about the extent and impact of signage in the Borough. It was not possible to comprehensively audit signage or identify individual signs that should be removed. It was, however, noted that a majority of signs currently on display would not comply with the standards outlined



in the *Tourist Signing Guidelines*. The study also revealed the need to develop standards for the installation and grouping of signs that go beyond the generalised level of detail provided in the *Tourist Signing Guidelines*.

The review revealed a clear lack of consistent standards with respect to the form, installation and content of signs. The result is a proliferation of signs, loss of meaning and impact, and visual discordance. The following list summarises common problems associated with existing signing:

### Sign standards

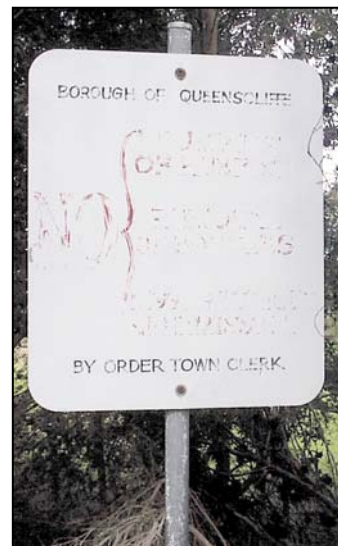
- Lack of consistency in the size and shape of signs and lettering.
- Inconsistent use of borders and arrows.
- Colours used for letters and backgrounds do not accord with relevant standards based on the type and purpose of signs.

- Intersection signs used inappropriately, either after the intersection or too far in advance of it.
- Non-standard (some possibly illegal) advertising signs erected in road reserves and on Crown and Council land.
- Poorly presented and inconsistent Council signs, particularly by-laws notices.
- At least four different types of street name signs are displayed.
- Use of non-standard words and symbols, eg. 'BOAT RAMP' words crossed with arrows.
- Lack of consistency in signage displayed by Dept. Natural Resources and Environment and Parks Victoria.
- Use of non-standard and complex symbols.
- Use of business logos.
- Excessive information (eg. 'Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute' + logo).
- Installation of signs identifying minor or seasonal businesses or attractions.
- Uses of words rather than standard symbols, eg. 'PUBLIC CONVENIENCES'.



### ***Installation and maintenance***

- Signs not horizontal, due to: poor installation; deterioration of materials due to age; vehicle impact; or vandalism.
- Signs installed in positions that are not visible in one or both directions.
- Different types of signs installed on same structure in an inappropriate manner, eg. overlapping.
- Faded, rusted, damaged and poorly designed signs.



### ***Clutter***

- Excessive numbers of freestanding signs.
- Doubling up of signs at single locations, eg. redundant signs not removed when new signs installed.

- Installation of a number of signs on different poles where opportunities for consolidation exist, particularly at major intersections.
- Use of symbols in addition to separate signs identifying individual businesses.
- Excessive numbers of signs for single businesses or facilities.
- Proliferation of signs at major tourist attractions, eg. Borough, Parks Victoria, Vic Roads and DNRE signs competing for attention.



- Proliferation of signs installed by government agencies and other organisations, eg. Federal roads project, safety houses, etc.
- Excessive use of reassurance signs, eg. 'TO DOUGLAS CT'.
- Position signs identifying businesses or attractions that are readily visible from main roads.
- Excessive numbers of letter and symbol signs identifying the route to the ferries.
- Excessive number of signs of various types displayed at intersections, eg. corner of Hesse and King Streets, Queenscliff.
- Use of position sign trees as tourist guides, eg. adjacent to Queenscliff main pier.
- Excessive number and size of signs identifying the route to the Great Ocean Road.
- Proliferation of freestanding charter boat signs at harbour.

### ***Lack of effectiveness***

- Position signs erected above street name signs (causes confusion).
- Outdated and redundant signs, eg. business closed or changed name.
- Postcode displayed on street signs (unnecessary given that a single postcode applies to entire Borough).

In addition to the observations listed above, it was also noted that a large number of businesses, attractions and community services were specifically identified by **intersection, position, and in some cases advance** signs. Some of these may qualify with the relevant criteria under the *Tourist and Signing Guidelines*, others may not. A list of businesses and facilities specifically identified by tourist and direction signs is provided at Appendix 1.



## Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999

The *Tourist Signing Guidelines 1999* (the *Guidelines*) are divided into sections which explain the technical and operational details of the system. This section of the policy should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines* so that its full context is clearly understood.

Each sub-section includes recommendations made with respect to the implementation of the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* in the Borough of Queenscliffe. In each case the policy recommendations are intended to supplement but not supersede the *Guidelines*. The recommendations follow on from:

- the objectives and provisions of the *Tourist Signing Guidelines*;
- the 'Strategic Framework' section above;
- the 'Local Context' section above.

### 1. Types of road signs

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 4, pages 10-16.*

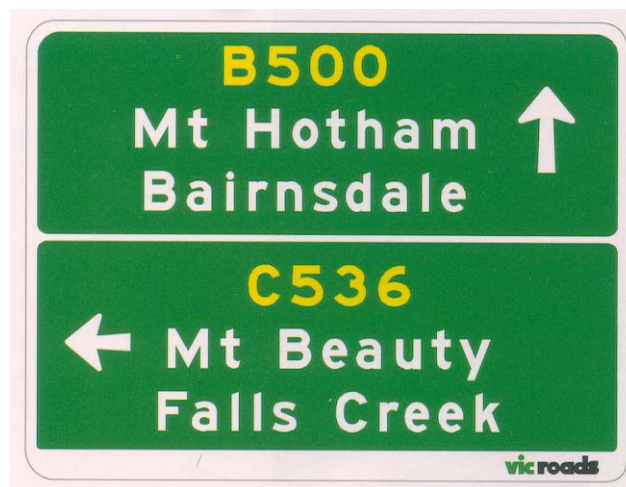
The *Guidelines* outline a hierarchy of tourist and service signs to be applied throughout Victoria. Five levels of signage are described in terms of their physical characteristics, purpose and cost. Responsibility for cost, installation and maintenance depends on the type and location of signs. The sign hierarchy is summarised as follows:

#### **Level 1 - Direction Signs**

Description: White lettering on green background, may include route number and standard symbols.

Purpose: Provide directions to towns, cities and particular locations.

Costs: Paid for by the relevant road authority.



### **Level 2 - Tourist Attraction Signs**

Description: White lettering on brown background, may include standard tourist attraction symbols.

Purpose: Indicate features and tourist attractions of significant recreation and cultural interest. Businesses must comply with criteria outlined below.

Costs: Paid for by the applicant, except in the case of signs to natural features which may be paid for by the road authority.

Types: Gateway/Introductory  
Advance  
Intersection  
Position  
Reassurance  
Route markers  
Temporary



### **Level 3 - Services Signs**

Description: White lettering on blue background, or white symbol on blue background. Can be combined with tourist attraction signing.

Purpose: Direct the travelling public to essential and desirable facilities and service businesses.

Costs: Paid for by the applicant, except in the case of signs to public facilities and emergency services which are paid for by the road authority.

Types: Advance  
Intersection  
Position





#### **Level 4 - Community Facilities Signs**

**Description:** White lettering on blue background, or white symbol on blue background.

**Purpose:** Used for essentially community based facilities whether or not these are also used by visitors.

**Costs:** *Generic signs (eg. 'church') paid for by the road authority, specific signs paid for by the user.*



### **Recommendations**

- A. The installation of **direction signs** should be restricted to Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road.
- B. The installation of the following types of **tourist attraction signs** is strongly discouraged:
- Gateway/Introductory signs;
  - Advance signs;
  - Intersection signs;
  - Reassurance signs;
  - Temporary signs.
- C. **Tourist attraction 'route marker' signs** should only be installed along tourist routes approved by the Regional Tourist Signing Committee.
- D. The installation of **services 'advance' signs** is strongly discouraged except where necessary for reasons of traffic safety.
- E. **Services 'intersection' signs:**
- should be restricted to Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road;
  - should display generic descriptions (eg. 'motel') and symbols in preference to the names of individual businesses;
  - should be located on a single structure where there is more than one sign, rather than on multiple structures (subject to design guidelines listed elsewhere).

## **2. Design, construction and installation of signs**

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 5, pages 17-21.*

The design, construction and installation standards outlined in the *Guidelines* are of critical importance in ensuring consistent State-wide standards for signing to enhance legibility and road safety. In this context it is inappropriate for individual municipalities to diverge from the broadly accepted standards. As with all of sections of this policy, the following recommendations are therefore intended to supplement rather than supplant the operation of the *Guidelines*.

### **Recommendations**

- A. When designing and locating tourist and service signs, in addition to traffic management and road safety considerations, the road authority should take into account the potential impact of the sign on the scenic, environmental, and cultural heritage characteristics of the locality.

*B. In locations of scenic, environmental, or cultural heritage sensitivity (as identified in the Queenscliffe Planning Scheme) the road authority should consider:*

- *reducing the number of signs on display to the minimum number acceptable according to reasonable traffic management and safety standards;*
- *minimising the size of signs and lettering, and the amount of information displayed within the range of applicable standards;*
- *ensuring that signs are located and installed in a manner that is sensitive to the immediate context.*

*C. In areas on or adjacent to the coast or coastal reserves, regard should be had to the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast (1998) which state:*

- *Signs should be clear and informative but unobtrusive.*
- *Signs should be grouped or concentrated at particular locations, where most visible with least impact on the landscape. Signs should be located and designed in detail to minimise impacts on views. Common structures should be used, where possible.*
- *Signs should occur on the landward side of roads, so as not to interrupt views.*
- *Signs should not be higher than the roofline of adjacent buildings or vegetation, or be moving, or consist of flashing lights. These restrictions may not be appropriate for temporary signs or signs in designated development zones or areas of intensive urban development.*
- *There is a need to strive for consistency of signage on a local and regional basis. Signs should announce a common geographical region or form, reinforcing the qualities of the coastal environment, rather than municipal boundaries, for example.*
- *Signs and associated structures should be designed to avoid injury to pedestrians and especially joggers and cyclists. This has clear implications for the height and location of signs and sharpness of their materials.’ (p. 28)*

*D. **Tourist attraction, services, and community facility signs** should not indicate distances.*

*E. **Businesses and tourist enterprises** located on Bellarine Highway (B110), Point Lonsdale Road, and Lawrence Road should not be eligible for signs in the road reserve unless the visibility of private signs located within the property boundary is permanently obstructed by topography, buildings or vegetation.*

*F. Where practicable, **position signs** should:*

- *be located on existing power poles or street sign poles;*
- *never be positioned above a street sign if located on the same structure as a street sign;*
- *not be located on the same structure as more than two other position or street signs;*
- *match as closely as possible the shape and dimensions of existing signs located on the same structure;*
- *be double-sided and positioned so as to be visible from two directions.*

### **3. Eligibility for signing**

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 6, pages 22-24.*

Part 6 of the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* outlines stringent eligibility criteria for **tourist attraction** and **tourist accommodation** signing. No criterion are provided for **services signs** (other than tourist accommodation) or for **community facilities signs**.

#### ***Tourist attraction signing***

The *Guidelines* set out both ‘essential criteria’ and ‘desirable’ criteria which apply to all applications for tourist attraction signing. In addition ‘specific criteria’ are provided for the following types of tourist attraction (pp. 22-23):

- nurseries and garden centres;
- art galleries and craft outlets;
- antique galleries/stores;
- museums and historic properties;
- primary and secondary industry based attractions;
- wineries;
- seasonal attractions.

The eligibility criteria are strict and, when applied in accordance with the other recommendations of this policy, will provide for an appropriate balance between tourism and amenity objectives in the Borough of Queenscliffe.

#### ***Recommendation***

There are no additional recommendations with respect to eligibility criteria for tourist attraction signing.

### **Tourist accommodation signing**

The *Tourist Signing Guidelines* state (p. 23):

Signing to accommodation establishments within major urban areas or within the urban limits of rural towns is generally in the form of a fingerboard sign from the nearest designated road.

However:

- the facility must be located within two kilometres of the intersection;
- further reassurance signs will be considered only in cases of extreme directional hardship; and
- special provisions may apply to facilities located off divided roads.

Larger size signing, including advance signing, may be available to caravan parks because of the difficulty in manoeuvring caravans in urban areas.

Once again, the *Guidelines* provide 'essential', 'desirable' and 'specific criteria' for different types of tourist accommodation. Specific criteria are provided in relation to:

- caravan parks;
- camping areas;
- bed and breakfast establishments;
- farm stays/host farms;
- resorts.

Tourist accommodation signs comprise a significant proportion of all tourist signing in the Borough of Queenscliffe. Prominent signs identifying individual establishments have been erected on the Bellarine Highway on either side of its intersection with Point Lonsdale Road. Furthermore, with the relaxation of planning provisions applicable to Bed and Breakfast establishments there is potential for a proliferation of this type of signing.

Additional policy recommendations are therefore warranted.

#### **Recommendations**

- A. Applications for **tourist accommodation signs** should comply with all 'essential', 'desirable' and relevant 'specific' criteria under the *Tourist Signing Guidelines 1999* and the provisions of this policy.*
- B. Only one **tourist accommodation sign** should be approved per establishment, except where an additional sign or signs is strictly necessary for reasons of traffic safety.*
- C. Tourist accommodation signs identifying **bed and breakfast establishments** (as defined in the *Queenscliffe Planning Scheme*) are strongly discouraged.*

### **Other services and community facilities**

The *Tourist Signing Guidelines* do not provide criteria regarding the eligibility of services and community facilities for signing other than those already referred to above. Applications relating to other uses are likely to be rare as the Council normally takes responsibility for the display of such signs. Nevertheless, it is appropriate that eligibility criteria be developed to enable the Council to assess any applications that might be lodged, and to provide for an objective means for reviewing existing signs.

Permanent and semi-permanent residents will be well aware of the location of most services and community facilities within the Borough. In order to minimise the amount of signage displayed, it is therefore appropriate that **services and community facilities signs** are only displayed where the service or facility is one which is frequently used by visitors.

Some services and facilities, such as public barbecues, although used by visitors, are of such minor significance that signage merely contributes to visual clutter. Visitors should be able to access information about minor services and facilities through the tourist information centre or their street directory.

#### **Recommendations:**

- E. **Services and community facilities signs** should not be displayed in circumstances where the service or facility is located adjacent to Bellarine Highway (B110) or Point Lonsdale Road and is readily visible to persons travelling in vehicles along those roads.*
- F. Where a service or facility is eligible for a **services or community facilities sign** only one sign should be displayed unless an additional sign or sign is strictly required for traffic safety purposes.*
- G. Where practical **services and community facilities signs** should display standard symbols instead of words.*
- H. **Services and community facilities signs** should only be displayed where it can be demonstrated that the service or community facility is regularly used by tourists or visitors who are unfamiliar with the Borough. Documentary evidence may be required to establish this.*

*The following table provides a guide to decision making and should be used in conjunction with the above recommendation. Column A identifies a number of common types of service or community facility. Column B, C and D identify whether **services and community facility signs** should generally be:*

- permitted (column 1);*
- permitted where the primary purpose is to serve visitors (column 2); or*
- discouraged (column 3).*

*Table: Eligibility of certain uses for services and community facilities signs.*

Type of service or community facility	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Aged care facility			✓
Art gallery		✓	
Barbecue (public)			✓
Boat ramp/jetty	✓		
Cemetery			✓
Community service			✓
Emergency service	✓		
Ferry	✓		
Golf course		✓	
Library		✓	
Medical centre	✓		
Museum		✓	
Parking areas (public)	✓		
Picnic facilities			✓
Place of assembly		✓	
Place of worship	✓		
Post office	✓		
Railway station	✓		
Recreation centre		✓	
School			✓
Service station		✓	
Surf life saving club	✓		
Toilets (public)	✓		
Tourist information bay	✓		
Town hall/municipal offices	✓		
Visitor information centres (accredited)	✓		
Visitor radio services	✓		
Yacht club		✓	

### **Additional recommendations**

The following recommendations apply to signs not covered by the *Tourist Signing Guidelines*. They arise from observations made during the survey of existing signage conducted as part of this study.

#### **Recommendations**

*I. In order to establish uniformity and avoid confusion with tourist and service signs all new **street name signs** should:*

- *match the traditional Borough street name signs, that is, white signs with black text;*
- *not include a Council logo or postcode;*
- *be positioned so as to be visible from both directions and so as not to endanger vehicles or pedestrians;*
- *where located on the same structure as other position signs, be located above other signs;*

- *where possible, be located on or near poles with street lighting to assist with night time identification.*
- J. Signs identifying the route to streets remote from an intersection (eg. 'To Douglas Ct.') should not be installed and existing signs of this type should be removed.*
- K. Council should develop a suite of standardised signs for use on land owned and/or managed by the Borough (eg. identification signs, by-law signs, warning signs, information signs, etc.). Such signs should gradually replace existing redundant or ineffective signs.*
- L. Council should liaise with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Parks Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Otway Tourism, the Regional Tourist Signing Committee and other relevant authorities seeking their co-operation in:*
- *removing excessive or redundant signage;*
  - *standardising, coordinating and/or rationalising signs in areas under the relevant authority's control, eg. foreshore areas;*
  - *consulting with the Borough regarding the future development of signing schemes and the installation of new signs.*

#### **4. Application, assessment, and administration**

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 7 'How to apply for signs' and section 8 'Financial and administrative arrangements', pages 25-27.*

Section 7 of the *Guidelines* deals with procedural matters. A standard application form is established (see Appendix B), which clearly outlines the type of information required with an application. Although applications are to be submitted to the Council, each will be assessed by the relevant road authority - either the Council or Vic Roads. This is effectively a parallel system which may prove cumbersome to administer.

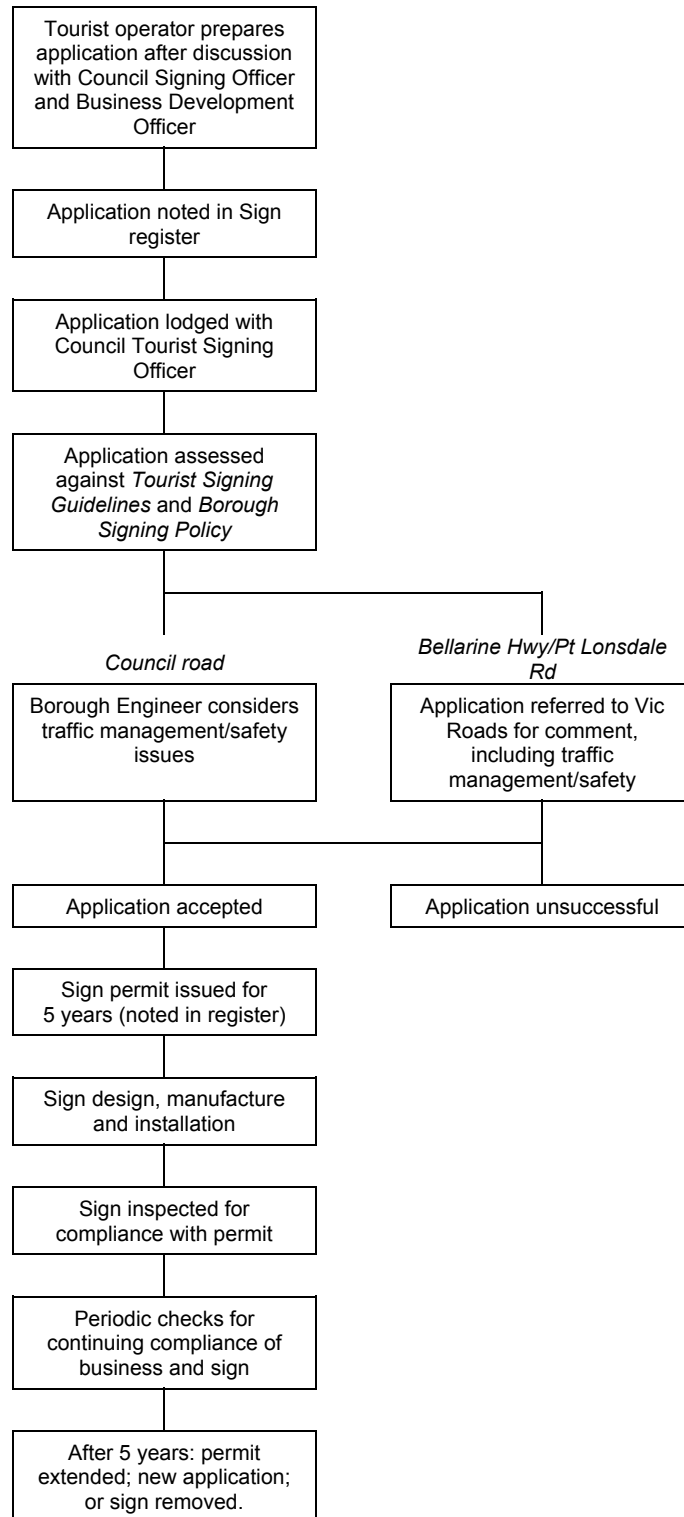
Discussions with Vic Road's Tourism and Signing Officer indicate that a Council controlled process involving informal referral of relevant applications to Vic Roads may be preferable. The recommendations include a suitable alternative application process.

#### **Recommendations**

- A. A register of tourist and services signs be established to keep a record of the type, size, location, wording, and expiry date of all sign permits issued under this policy (additional information, such as the name and contact details of applicants may also be included).*

B. Council administrative fees should match those charged by Vic Roads.<sup>1</sup>

C. The following assessment procedure be adopted.



<sup>1</sup> Vic Roads fees published in the *Tourist Signing Guidelines 1999* are: \$50 for a single sign; \$100 for two or more signs or for a tourist signing scheme

## 5. Transitional arrangements

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 9 'Rationalising and aggregation', page 28.*

Although it was not possible to complete a comprehensive sign audit as part of the background research for this policy an informal review of existing signing was conducted. As discussed above, the review revealed that a high proportion of existing signing would not comply with the *Guidelines* or this policy.

The *Guidelines* suggest that a combination of methods be used to rationalise existing inappropriate signing. These include:

- removal of old or outdated signs;
- aggregation of existing signs under a generic reference;
- creation of a wayside information bay, with appropriate 'i' intersectional signing;
- creation of a major tourism signing scheme; and
- use of promotional materials (maps, guides, audio tapes etc) to reduce dependence on signing (p. 28).

Dealing effectively with existing signing is an important issue given that there is already a sense of visual clutter and inconsistency apparent throughout the Borough. Unfortunately it is not possible to simply remove all of the existing signs. This would be an excessively expensive exercise, attracting costs associated with the removal and replacement of hundreds of signs. Furthermore, many of the signs have been purchased by the business which they advertise, therefore they are not actually owned by the Borough.

Sign rationalisation is necessary, but it needs to be done in a sensitive way and with the full support of the community. The following recommendations set out a process aimed at clarifying the existing situation, engendering community support, and ultimately rationalising existing signing.

### **Recommendations**

- A. *Conduct an audit of existing tourist and services signs throughout the Borough, collecting the following data about each sign: location; type; size; wording; state of repair.*
- B. *Publicise the Borough's efforts to rationalise signs and invite the public to identify signs that are in poor repair, are redundant, or are inappropriately located.*
- C. *Based on the sign audit and public input, identify opportunities for sign rationalisation or removal. These should be classified as either 'high' or 'low' priority depending on the prominence of the signs and the severity of existing clutter or visual obstruction.*

*D. In 'high' priority locations:*

- *remove redundant and illegible signs;*
- *remove Borough signs that do not comply with this policy;*
- *liaise with businesses and services to identify appropriate methods of sign rationalisation, whether short or long term;*
- *liaise with Vic Roads concerning appropriate rationalisation methods.*

*E. In 'low' priority locations, subject to budgetary constraints;*

- *remove redundant and illegible signs;*
- *remove Borough signs that do not comply with this policy;*
- *write to businesses and service notifying them of the policy and advising that their sign(s) will be reviewed in three years' time; and*
- *after three years, liaise with businesses and services to identify appropriate methods of sign rationalisation.*

*F. Rationalisation and/or removal of signs on declared roads will be undertaken in consultation with Vic Roads.*

## **6. Tourist Signing Schemes**

*This section should be read in conjunction with Tourist Signing Guidelines, 1999, section 10 'Tourist signing schemes', pages 29-31.*

Tourist signing schemes are generally developed on a regional basis and assist travellers wishing to visit a number of attractions during a single trip. Being regional in scale, decisions are generally made by the Regional Tourist Signing Committee.

The *Guidelines* establish criteria for the approval of tourist drives and signing schemes. The Borough, through the Regional Tourist Signing Committee, should seek to ensure that any schemes approved in future involve the introduction of minimal additional signing as excessive signing will subvert the intent of this policy.

### **Recommendation**

*A. Signing schemes associated with Tourist Drives should be designed to maximise effectiveness without contributing to a loss of visual amenity due to sign clutter or resulting in disruption of views and vistas.*

## Conclusion

Tourist and services signs are an important source of direction and reassurance for visitors to the Borough. Used properly they may enhance a visitor's experience by allowing them to travel directly to their destination, or to discover attractions they may have been unaware of before arrival.

Uncontrolled signage, on the other hand, has a negative impact on the experience of both residents and visitors. Excessive and inappropriate signage detracts from the cultural heritage, environmental values, and residential amenity of the Borough. These are attributes that the community strongly values and which the Borough seeks to preserve and enhance through the *Municipal Strategic Statement*.

This policy seeks to take the opportunity offered by the introduction of State *Tourist Signing Guidelines* to rationalise its approach to tourist and services signing. The policy does not seek to rewrite or compromise the *Guidelines*, rather, it seeks to enhance interpretation by taking into account local characteristics, and to fill some obvious implementation gaps.

The policy cannot be successfully implemented without the support of stakeholders. Residents and ratepayers need to be aware of the policy so the complex process of rationalising existing signage may gather momentum. Businesses and services potentially affected by rationalisation need to be involved in a collaborative manner so that their promotional objectives are taken into account. All aspects of the policy should be implemented in a collaborative fashion so that the benefits of improved signing become clearly manifest.

## References

- Queenscliffe Planning Scheme, 1999.
- Victorian Coastal Council, 1997, Victorian Coastal Strategy.
- Victorian Coastal Council, 1998, Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast.

# Appendix 1

## Survey of existing signs

Advance, direction and position signs identifying the following businesses, attractions, and facilities were observed during field surveys undertaken in the Borough of Queenscliffe on 11-12 May, 1999. Note that the wording has been taken directly from the signs, therefore there is a degree of overlap and repetition, for example 'Historic Fort Queenscliff' and 'Fort Queenscliff'.

### Accommodation

Athelstane  
Lighthouse resort motel  
Maytone guesthouse  
Point Lonsdale motel  
Riptide motel  
Sims lodge  
Spring hill caravan park  
Spring hill holiday park  
Terminus b & b  
Wyuna motel

### Attractions

Car ferry  
Fishermans wharf  
Fort Queenscliff  
Golightly park  
Hardie lookout  
Historic fort Queenscliff  
Historical centre  
Marine and freshwater resources institute  
Marine discovery centre  
Maritime centre  
Narrows beach  
Queenscliff harbour  
Queenscliff marine station  
Queenscliff memorial garden  
Rip view lookout  
Royal park  
Tourist railway

### Businesses (general)

Impulse charters & fishing  
Kyena fishing & charters  
Sea all dolphin & seal swim  
Teri fishing & charters

### Community facilities

Community health centre  
Lions electric bbq  
Lonsdale child care and development  
Neighbourhood house  
P (Parking)  
Pedestrian access harbour and car ferry  
Pilot service  
Point Lonsdale primary school  
Point Lonsdale surf life saving club  
Police  
Pre school centre  
Primary school (Queenscliff)  
Public barbeques  
Public conveniences  
Queenscliff nursing home  
Toilets  
Town-hall  
Walk/cycle path to ferry terminal

### Food and drink premises

Garden cafe  
Ocean view kiosk

### Places of assembly and worship

Anglican church  
Catholic church  
Masonic temple  
Uniting church

### Sporting and recreational facilities

Boat ramp  
Bowling club  
J A Monaghan sporting complex  
Lonsdale golf club  
Queenscliff golf club  
Squash courts  
Yacht club

## Appendix 2

**BOROUGH  
OF QUEENSCLIFFE**



# Application for Tourist or Service Sign

Name of applicant:	
Applicant's address:	
Telephone:	Facsimile:

Name of establishment:
Address of establishment:

Location of proposed sign(s):
-------------------------------

Briefly describe the nature and operation of the business:
Hours of operation:

After examination of the criteria for tourist signing, do you believe that you meet:

1. Essential criteria? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	2. Specific criteria? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
---	--

Are there other tourism facilities in the vicinity that could benefit from a group signing scheme?

--

Are there any existing signs which will become redundant and/or could be removed if new signs are approved?

--

**Please attach the following information in support of your application:**

- map(s) of proposed sign location(s);
- photograph(s) of proposed location showing existing sign(s);
- proposed signface design;
- record of visitor numbers (if available);
- copies of relevant licences or approvals to operate, including town planning permit and any subsequent amendments;
- an outline of your promotional plan, including examples of existing materials;
- details of on site signing at your business; and
- evidence of prior consultation with Tourist Signing Officer and/or Regional Tourism Manager.

**When you have completed the application form and attached the supporting material, please submit the application to:**

Borough of Queenscliffe                      Telephone: (03) 5258 1377  
Tourist Signing Officer                      Facsimile: (03) 5258 3754  
50 Learmonth Street  
(P O Box 93)  
Queenscliff 3225

The Tourism Signing Officer will assess your application and forward to Vic Roads if necessary.

Failure to supply all necessary information will delay the assessment of the application.

The following fees apply to cover administrative work in determining a sign application:

- Single sign - \$60;
- Two or more signs, or a tourist signing scheme - \$120.

Note that these fees are application fees and will not be refunded should your application be unsuccessful.

The Tourist Signing Officer will contact you within 14 days of the application being lodged.