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Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park Consultation,
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Please find attached the submission of the Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group: The Friends of Harmers Haven to the public consultation on the Access and Infrastructure Plan for the Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park.

We would be pleased to discuss any aspects of our submission and provide any further information which would be of use in determining the outcome of this consultation.

Yours faithfully,

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SUBMISSION TO PARKS VICTORIA ON THE PROPOSED ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN WITHIN THE YALLOCK-BULLUK MARINE & COASTAL PARK

PREPARED BY HARMERS HAVEN RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS GROUP — FRIENDS OF HARMERS HAVEN (HHRRG-FoHH)

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INTRODUCTION

The Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group: Friends of Harmers Haven (HHRRG) is an incorporated association whose members include both permanent residents and people with weekenders at Harmers Haven, with the proportion of permanent residents growing over the last two decades. Since 2006 it has included within itself the former Harmers Haven Foreshore Committee of Management whose specific focus is the area once known as the Harmers Haven Flora and Fauna Coastal Reserve, now part of the Kilcunda- Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve managed by Parks Victoria.

The HHRRG welcomes the opportunity to participate in the public consultation over the proposed access and infrastructure plan for the Yallock-Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park and to supplement our participation in community forums with this written submission.

Our association has consulted with members on several occasions in relation to the new Marine and Coastal Park, specifically in relation to the proposed walking trail and any associated facilities. While there is broad support among members for the creation of new opportunities for the public to visit and explore the Bass Coast area, there are also concerns about the potential impacts of such a trail on environmental values, on the existing character of Harmers Haven, and on resident and ratepayers' amenity.

This submission is in six parts. Firstly, we consider the history of the Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve. We then outline the significance of the flora and fauna within the Reserve. Related to this we then discuss the significance of the biolink between Kilcunda and Cape Paterson. We touch on the importance of the Indigenous cultural heritage in the area. Having set the scene for the ecological significance of the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve we then raise some practical consequences of a walking trail through Harmers Haven. Finally, we offer some preliminary thoughts on an alternative trail that by-passes Harmers Haven.

1. HISTORY OF THE KILCUNDA-HARMERS HAVEN COASTAL RESERVE

In recent 20thC history, until 1973, the foreshore at Harmers Haven was part of a temporary Crown Land Reserve that was 'managed' or attended to by the Harmers Haven Progress Association. In 1973 the Reserve was formally gazetted as the Harmers Haven Flora and Fauna Reserve.

From 1978 to 2006 the Harmers Haven Foreshore Committee of Management (Foreshore Committee) was responsible for the day-to-day management, care and protection of the Harmers Haven Flora and Fauna Reserve — also known as the William Hovell Flora and Fauna Reserve. Since late 2006 Parks Victoria has managed this Coastal Reserve with strong support from Friends of Harmers Haven.

The reason given for creating the Reserve was clearly stated in a letter to the Foreshore Committee in 1980:

The purpose of the new reserve is quite specific in that it gives effect to the Government's concern that the coastline, more than any other land resource, is increasingly subject to the pressures of modern society.¹

At the time the Foreshore Committee was officially appointed, the then Department of Crown Lands & Survey - Division of Crown Land Management prepared a Resources Inventory in 1978² or survey of the South Gippsland Coastal Reserve which then stretched continuously from Western Port to Shallow inlet (over 100 km). The Secretary for Lands, C. E. Middleton, in a Foreword to this survey raised the following concerns:

It is evident that committees of management have been increasingly concerned about deterioration in the natural features of reserves. It is precisely these natural values that provide the attraction for the growing numbers of urban dwellers who are drawn to these reserves by the unspoilt beaches, unpolluted air, pleasant visual aspects, and relaxing atmosphere which together provide a curative balance to the stresses of city living. Unhappily this increasing appreciation of the natural environment is one of the introduced elements which are subjecting the indigenous vegetation, wildlife, and general amenity of coastal reserves to a variety of inharmonious and often injurious pressures. (1980)

1.1 Continuing pressures on the coast

More than four decades on these concerns are just as relevant. Environmental concerns raised by the Yallock-Bulluk Coastal Alliance do not stem from narrow NIMBY sentiments. If our members are deemed to have a 'vested interest' in the planned route of a coastal trail from San Remo to Inverloch it is simply because, as coastal volunteers for more than four decades, they deeply understand the pressures on the coast—from increasing visitation to Bass Coast, threats to biodiversity because of coastal development, and most seriously, the climate emergency that has increased storm and tidal surges, coastal dune & cliff erosion, sea level rise and movement of beach sand.

It is these 'inharmonious and often injurious pressures' or 'off-site impacts' on the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve—and the abutting Bunurong Marine Park, the Wonthaggi Heathlands, and remnant heathlands and wetlands - that are the subject of this submission.

We care about the coast. We understand the extent of the volunteering and land managers' commitment, and extensive funding required to weed map, weed, revegetate, control feral animals, monitor endangered beach-nesting shore birds, build and maintain infrastructure such as board walks and stair cases to protect against erosion and provide community beach access.

2. SIGNIFICANT FLORA & FAUNA HABITAT AND UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY

2.1 Bass Coast Planning Scheme, Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

Within the Bass Coast Planning Scheme, Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS), Clause 21.04, Strategic Framework Plan—Strategic Directions, Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve and Cape Paterson Foreshore Reserve are designated as *Significant Flora & Fauna Habitats to be Protected*.

This MSS strategic direction is consistent with the Bunurong Marine National Park: Bunurong Marine Park, Bunurong Coastal Reserve and Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve Management Plan (DSE, 2006:5)³ that identifies Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve as an International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Category III (national monument). Category III areas are managed primarily for conservation of specific natural features.

2.2 Natural values of the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve

The natural ecological values of the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve include:

- i. Complex vegetation communities...supporting plants of National, State and Regional significance (eg. dune wood-sorrel *Oxalis rubens*; coast blown-grass *Agrostis billardierei*) (Carr, 2003:1)⁴;
- ii. Of the eleven Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC)s identified at Harmers Haven (Oates, 2019)⁵, all but one is deemed to be endangered, vulnerable, depleted or rare within the Gippsland Plain Bioregion. The Damp Heathland/Swamp Scrub Complex is a significant vegetation type at Harmers Haven with few other known recorded locations, as is the rare grassland vegetation community growing in the damp swales of Coastal Dune Scrub/Coast Banksia Woodland, and the Estuarine Wetland around Coal Creek.
- iii. These habitats at Harmers Haven provide sanctuary for the critically endangered Orange-bellied parrot, near-threatened Southern Brown Bandicoot, Swamp Antechinus and White-footed Dunnart and vulnerable Swamp Skink & Hooded Plover.^{5,6,7,8}

2.3 Flora & fauna assessments

The purpose of creating the Bunurong Marine Park, Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve, and Cape Paterson Foreshore Reserve was to preserve and protect the natural resources and high conservation values of the coastal foreshore and off-shore areas, recognising the ecological, historical, educational, Indigenous cultural heritage, environmental and scientific values of the reserves. The Victorian Government originally created the Bunurong Marine Park⁹ and the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve to protect the unique and extensive biodiversity of the intertidal rock platforms, sub-tidal reef areas, rare remnant heath and coastal vegetation (Swamp Paperbark Heath, Swamp Scrub and Banksia Woodland), and fauna (eg. Swamp Antechinus, Swamp Skink, Common Bent-wing Bat, Southern Brown Bandicoot, Orange-bellied Parrot, and Hooded Plovers).

Of the total foreshore area included in the current Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park (from Coal Point, Harmers Haven in the west, to Wreck Creek near Inverloch in the east), the 90HA Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve represents the least degraded and most extensive area of coastal vegetation.

Botanist, Geoff Carr's 1986 report on the vegetation at Harmers Haven concluded that:

*'The public coastal reserve at Harmers Haven has high biological and hence conservation significance as a rare regional remnant. This also applies to the indigenous vegetation surviving on the adjoining private land.'*¹⁰

Almost two decades later Carr's (2003) vegetation assessment report of the Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve confirmed that:

*"The complex of vegetation communities recorded at Harmers Haven is of **State Conservation significance** (and by extension National Conservation significance). There is an unusually high diversity of vegetation types in the study area, responding to the diverse and steep environmental gradients. In addition, all of these vegetation types are now regionally rare, depleted or endangered and all are threatened in the moderate to long terms by weed invasion and other degradation processes. The vegetation is generally in good to very good condition, and it is in better condition than that of most coastal settlements" (2003:1)*

A more recent vegetation assessment of the 90HA Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve was made by Oates (2019) in order to update Carr's 1986 and 2003 findings and report on the vegetation health of the Reserve 33 years after Carr's initial assessment.

Alison Oates noted that from the time of Carr's initial survey in 1986 to the present day (2019) there has been a substantial improvement in the overall vegetation condition:

"This is largely due to the efforts of the Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers Group in obtaining funding to selectively revegetate areas within the Coastal Reserve and to control invasive weeds" (2019:20).

Successful enhancement of biodiversity in such depleted areas as the Gippsland Plains Bioregion has been achieved through many thousands of hours of volunteer weeding, revegetation and prudent oversight of remnant regeneration since the early 1980s, in partnership with the Land Manager, Parks Victoria, and with the assistance of more than \$300,000 of funding from government at local, state and national levels.

3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR OR BIOLINK BETWEEN KILCUNDA AND CAPE PATERSON

Remembering that this land was originally agricultural grazing paddocks as recently as the early 1960s, Parks Victoria and the local community have created, maintained and managed a unique 90HA wildlife corridor between the Wonthaggi Heathlands and Cape Paterson that will take many years to recreate should there be any imprudent removal of such distinctive remnant vegetation at Harmers Haven.

As Oates notes:

“the importance of the flora and fauna in Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve is of even greater significance today given that Bass Coast Shire is now one of the fastest growing rural municipalities in Victoria which will result in even more pressure being placed on existing high quality remnant vegetation patches within the Shire” (2019:20,21).

What then is the significance of such a wildlife corridor or biolink on Bass Coast? It’s important to realise that more than 85% of native vegetation has already been cleared within the Bass Coast Shire. Guidelines for native vegetation removal are included in all Victorian planning schemes and include objectives of net native vegetation gain, protection of endangered EVCs, protection of sensitive wetlands and coastal areas, and consideration of rare and threatened species habitat.

It’s for this reason that the Bass Coast Shire Council’s (BCSC) Biolinks Plan¹¹ has identified priority areas of native vegetation that need protection and enhancement for landscape-scale connectivity and have identified the main strategic linkages to connect remnant vegetation within the Shire. Oates points out that:

One of the links identified in the plan is the Wonthaggi Heathlands and the Bunurong Coastal Reserve which includes Harmers Haven and the stretch of coastline east to Inverloch. This biolink is a critical linkage of a diversity of vegetation communities and associated fauna habitat, especially the highly localised heathland communities found in the area. This stretch of coastline is so critical to biodiversity conservation and biolinks management that the whole of Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve is about to be given updated status within the National Parks Act with the declaration of a new Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park and Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve being incorporated into the new coastal park ... It is vitally important that (endangered, vulnerable, threatened & rare) EVCs be protected in the Harmers Haven area from future infrastructure development such as housing, roads and pathways (2019: 21).

4 POTENTIAL DESTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE MIDDEN SITES THROUGH POSSIBLE INCREASED DUNE ACCESS

Better authorised Indigenous individuals and representative local groups will offer full submissions to Parks Vic & DELWP on these matters, but we do want to note just a few points of interest.

Although any walking trail will be clearly signposted and marked, it is highly likely that both pedestrian traffic and cyclists will not always stick to designated pathways. It's a factor of human nature to, at will, explore plants of interest off the made trail, venture into the bush to look more closely at an interesting bird or take a photo, and even, in the absence of facilities, look for toilet opportunities in the scrub. Any such wanderings off the path could lead to inadvertent incursions in an area that should be protected.

The coastline throughout the Kilcunda-Harmers Haven Coastal Reserve is known for its significant Indigenous cultural heritage, and strategies for cultural values conservation have been thoughtfully and sensitively considered in the Management Plan for the area.³ Indigenous occupation extends back several thousands of years along Bass Coast, and as recently as 10,000 years ago Victoria was connected to Tasmania by a 'land bridge'.³

In 1997 a small group of residents and members of the Harmers Haven Foreshore Committee of Management spent a day with Russell Mullett, an Aboriginal Cultural Officer identifying and exploring sites at Harmers Haven, discussing management strategies and writing a report.¹² A couple of months later this visit was followed up by a visit from a Coastal Archaeologist, Joanna Fresløv who confirmed the scientific and cultural significance of the area and identified many midden sites. A Coastcare/Coast Action inspection in 2001 authorised by the Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council and the Kulin Nations Cultural Heritage Program¹³ reported that:

As several potential resources are clustered in this area, it would have been attractive to Aboriginal people. It is highly likely that more sites than this already located will be found in the area. The archaeological potential of the area is high. While the site preservation qualities of the area are relatively high, a small amount of disturbance can initiate erosion, expose sites and disturb and destroy them. In this area sites are commonly found where erosion has commenced this process. All areas behind the foredunes are areas of high archaeological potential (their emphasis).

The Gippsland Coastal Board's vision statement for the coast indicates that such "areas of natural and cultural significance will be identified, widely appreciated and protected"...(CAP, 2002).¹⁴ The Management Plan for the area also recommends close monitoring and protection of these sites and "encourages the identification, recording and risk assessment of Indigenous places and objects, and cultural lore relating to the planning area, in collaboration with the relevant Indigenous communities and in liaison with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria" (DSE, 2006:37).

Increased visitor usage to these parts of the coast and the inevitable informal access that visitors make through the dunes increases the potential destruction of Indigenous cultural heritage midden sites.

5 THE PROPOSED TRAIL

The HHRRG considers the central challenge in creating the proposed trail through the Coastal Park lies in reconciling what are potentially conflicting policy goals: maximising opportunities for community use (“open access”) and protecting and supporting the existing coastal environment, including any distinctive characteristics of existing settlements. At a practical level the tension between these goals can be expected to express itself not only in decisions about the final route chosen but through related questions of path widths and surfaces, provision of amenities and encouragement (or otherwise) for “break-out” or loop trails.

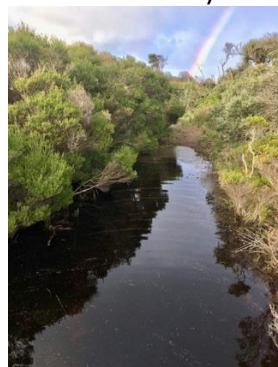
As a member of the Yallock-Bulluk Coastal Alliance, the HHRRG has been working with other Bass Coast community groups to gain a better understanding of these issues with a view to reaching a common position on a preferred trail structure. The comments below are intended to supplement this process by focussing on the particulars of our area.

5.1 Harmers Haven

Harmers Haven is a hamlet of some 70+ properties. It does not have reticulated water or sewerage, shops or a postal service. The chief road of the settlement, Viminaria Road is a dead-end road and is unsealed. Vehicle access to Harmers Haven is via Berry’s Road from Wonthaggi or via Old Boiler Road which provides a back route, looping around farmland, to both Cape Paterson and Wonthaggi. It also is unsealed.

There are currently three car parking areas at Harmers Haven, two formal and one informal, all unsealed and of very modest capacity. None provides any facility for garbage disposal and there are no public toilet blocks or water taps along either Viminaria or Old Boiler Roads. The two formal car parking spaces allow for beach access along generally well maintained paths and stairs. The informal space at the end of Viminaria Road is typically used by dog walkers and surfers who access the beach either via a narrow and less maintained track or by cutting through the dunes.

At this location too a narrow (largely one person) track winds next to the fence line of private rural property to provide access to the Wonthaggi Heathlands. This path is in parts through sand ie dunes and in parts through low lying ground and ‘Damp Melaleuca Scrub’ EVC subject to flooding (photo taken 26.6.20).



A number of other formal and informal paths allow access to the beach from the rear of properties on the south side of Viminaria Road but not necessarily to the road itself, there being no continuous east-west path/track beside or through the Coastal Reserve between the Western end of Viminaria Road and (say) the eastern-most car park at Wreck Bay, Harmers Haven.

The beaches at Harmers Haven are much used by residents, hikers and casual walkers and, increasingly, residents of Wonthaggi exercising their dogs. However, depending on the tides, they do not provide an uninterrupted walk in the direction of either Kilcunda or Cape Paterson. For instance, the rocks at the west end of the Harmers Beach (Cape Lydia to locals or Area 21 Sign) are not negotiable at high tide (photos taken 27.6.20).



Low tide, Area 21

High tide, Area 21

Wreck Bay itself (Area 23 sign), the main Harmers Haven “beach” /rock shelf, can become unwalkable during king tides or when, as recently, heavy rain swells Coal Creek Estuary and opens up deep channels across the beach (photo taken 25.6.20).



The beaches in this area are also a nesting ground for the endangered Hooded Plover. There are currently 36 Hooded Plover nesting sites on Bass Coast. Since 2006 local volunteers have monitored nesting sites in partnership with Birdlife Australia. They report that the number of nesting pairs has decreased significantly in recent years. Pressures from recreational beach visitors, unleashed dogs, predator foxes, feral cats and ravens and high tides have all contributed to the threatened status of the Hoodies.^{15, 16}

At present access during the breeding season is subject to some measures that help minimise disturbance. For instance, dogs are not allowed on the beach between 9am and

6pm between 1 December and 14 April in line with general policy throughout the Bass Coast Shire. Along the Harmers beaches, nesting areas are identified and roped off. Any large increases in traffic volumes along the beaches will however inevitably pose a major challenge for conservation policy and park management in this area.

5.2 Implications for the trail.

Harmers Haven Residents & Ratepayers Group considers that the creation of a multi-purpose trail running east-west through Harmers Haven is not feasible without seriously compromising environmental aims and, potentially, user safety (in the case of the beaches) and the existing character of the settlement. The problems involved in using any of the three potential east-west routes in the “core” trail are summarised below.

5.2.1 The Beaches

- While the beaches that lie to both the east and west of Cape Lydia (Area 21 sign) are readily accessible to **walkers**, no continuous walk from Harmers Haven in the direction of either Kilcunda or Cape Paterson can be guaranteed. These beaches are not accessible other than to the able-bodied and even then tidal conditions can compromise access.
- Even in the case of “loop walks” access is effectively limited by both environmental and practical considerations. Horse riding along these beaches used to take place but is now prohibited. Access by trail bikes to sensitive dune areas is similarly inappropriate and illegal. Access is only available to the able-bodied because of the combination of steep stairs and steep sandy dunes (e.g. at Wreck Bay).
- We note the issue of user safety has also been raised during community consultations. The beaches between Kilcunda and Cape Paterson are not patrolled and are potentially hazardous even to those familiar with them. Even the most innocent in appearance have rips that can – and have – carried off incautious swimmers. A drowning occurred at Williamson’s beach in 2016 when a sand bar on which children were standing collapsed. Locals avoid Wreck Bay towards high tide unless the swell is almost non-existent.
- Whilst the current submission takes no position on whether or not leashed dogs ought be permitted on the planned coastal trail (eg leashed dogs are currently permitted on the George Bass Coastal Walk), we do note that dogs, leashed or unleashed, *are not permitted*, throughout the year, on the beach from Wilsons Rd (Cape Paterson) to Coal Creek, Harmers Haven (DSE (2006:54).

5.2.2. The Foreshore

- The environmental significance of the Coastal Reserve of which the Harmers Haven foreshore forms a major part, has been discussed earlier. HHRRG considers that ongoing protection of this area must be a major consideration when determining the direction, scale and surface of the proposed coastal trail.
- As indicated above, there is no continuous track running east-west through the foreshore reserve on the south side of the Harmers Haven settlement and beyond. It

is possible to walk into a cleared space behind the houses at the Western end of Viminaria Road and then walk east past the car park and as far as the back of no. 56.

- There access along the foreshore stops. It resumes again further east, behind no. 86, where once a fire break and CFA access track was created, but it too is not continuous and can't be used to gain public access to either Viminaria or Berry's Road/Old Boiler Road without cutting through private property. It cannot be linked back to the west without cutting into undisturbed remnant vegetation and/or walking through dunes.
- There is a very important patch of Endangered Swamp Scrub EVC on private land between nos. 60-78 Viminaria Road (previously known as Lot 25) that has local planning restrictions on it because of its environmental significance.¹⁷ The Swamp Scrub extends into the coastal foreshore and there is no option of a trail here because the extensive swamp covers several hectares of land, eventually draining out across sand dunes via Waterfall Creek (photo taken 27.6.20).



- Further east again, at the far end of Wreck Bay, there was once an informal trail through the foreshore dunes that continued diagonally up to Old Boiler Road. That short track through the vulnerable Coast Banksia Woodland EVC is now overgrown & has been allowed to regenerate (through weeding & revegetation) for a good decade or more. It would be perverse indeed to reverse this Coastal Management process which has acted to protect significant vegetation in this area.
- In addition to these environmental issues, HHRRG members have expressed concern that a trail running through the foreshore, close to the back of the houses, could be intrusive. Many of the houses to the south of Viminaria Road do not have back fences and it is not uncommon for visitors to the area to find themselves in private backyards as they attempt to negotiate an exit from the beach.

5.2.3 The Wonthaggi Heathlands and Viminaria Road

- It is currently possible to walk to Harmers Haven from the Wonthaggi Heathlands (and vice versa) via a track created some 20 years ago. It runs along the side of the farmland that lies beyond the end of Viminaria Road. Prior to that track being cut, Harmers locals doing the "heath walk" simply crossed the paddocks to a point north-west of Viminaria Road and climbed over the fence to reach the heathlands at their eastern boundary. Once at that point the path gradually widens until one reaches the various paths, including four-wheel drive tracks, of the heath proper.

- This access track is currently in use and largely negotiable for walkers, although it is not unusual to find it partly overgrown or obstructed, suggesting that the volume of traffic along it is not large.
- It is narrow and in parts goes over sand and sections of it are subject to occasional flooding (see photo p.9). In short, considerable changes would have to be made to it in terms of width, surface and probably drainage before it could be used as part of a core access trail. Such works would involve significant vegetation removal and potential disturbance of habitat, and local hydrology which supports EVCs such as Swamp Scrub & Damp Melaleuca Scrub.
- Viminaria Road itself, as indicated earlier, is an unsealed road and in parts barely wide enough for cars to pass each other comfortably, especially at speed. While it is possible for small groups to walk safely along it, foot traffic in any significant volume would be problematic. Bikes would pose the same problem. Significant works stabilising road edges, upgrading surfaces and possibly widening the road may be necessary to make it fit for purpose as a safe shared pathway. Widening of the road would of course lead, unacceptably, to the removal of remnant native vegetation.

Association members have expressed concern that use of Viminaria Road as a core element of the trail would lead over time to demands that it be both widened and sealed, changing the current character of the location and leading to higher traffic volumes and speeds along its length.

- At the east end of Viminaria Road further problems arise. To the left, Berry's Road leads back into Wonthaggi. It currently provides a convenient route between that township and Harmers Haven for those wishing to make short trips to the latter but is likely to be of little interest to coastal walkers. To the right Berry's Road turns into Old Boiler Road and provides access via Wilson's Road to Cape Paterson. The choice here though is between a route of little visual interest along unsealed roads not optimised for pedestrian use and the creation of a new trail, again compromising high biodiversity habitats, through the reserve up to Wilson's Road.
- Again it must be emphasised that there are no public facilities and services (water, toilets, rubbish collection points) other than private ones along this route ie if following the coast from the Heathlands through to Cape Paterson.

6. WHICH WAY FOR THE TRAIL?

These above considerations have led the HHRRG to the view that the more suitable direction for the trail proper, once it reaches the Wonthaggi environs, is towards the Wonthaggi township itself rather through the Wonthaggi Heathlands and Harmers Haven.

Such a route has a number of attractions.

- It offers diversity. It could provide access to areas of environmental significance other than the coast e.g. the Baxter wetlands and to areas of historic significance at both a local and state level such as the State Coal Mine.
- It has the potential to stimulate local economic activity e.g. accommodation and hospitality services.

- It allows use of existing public facilities.
- It minimises removal of significant amounts of remnant vegetation and disturbance of high biodiversity habitats.
- It minimises the costs of creating new infrastructure.

Establishing this route as the core of the formal Coastal Walk would not preclude walkers coming to Harmers Haven along the existing tracks or cyclists accessing the area via Berry's Road and/or along Old Boiler Road. There would, however, be no continuous multi-purpose trail from Wonthaggi through the Heathland and into Viminaria Road (let alone the foreshore) and no major surface upgrades or widening of existing tracks into and within Harmers Haven.

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- ¹³ Coastcare/Coast Action Short Report (2001) Inspection No.: 00/PPE/4 at Harmer's Haven for the Aboriginal Community: Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council, Kulin Nations Cultural Heritage Program
- ¹⁴ Gippsland Coastal Board (2002) *Integrated Coastal Planning for Gippsland—Coastal Action Plan* (p. 1)
- ¹⁵ Maguire, G., Cullen, M. and Mead, R (date?) *Managing the Hooded Plover in Victoria: A site by site assessment of threats and prioritisation of management investment on Parks Victoria managed land*. BirdLife Australia
- ¹⁶ Johnson, S., Perlesz, A., Paterson, R., Maguire G et al (2013) 'Up nice and close': using birding scopes to enhance awareness of hooded plovers and alter perceptions of bird conservation strategies. Research Report, Birdlife Australia
- ¹⁷ Macmillan (2001) *Management and Environmental Significance of the Harmers Haven Foreshore Reserve*, particularly in relation to the proposed subdivision of Lot 25, Viminaria Road, Harmers Haven.