

# BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL

## Tourism and Facility Signage Plan

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# Background

## 1.1 Tourism Review 2009/10

The Bega Valley Shire is known and marketed as the 'Sapphire Coast'.

Council reviewed its role in tourism and marketing during 2009/10, resulting in an Options Paper considered by Council in April 2010. That Paper revised the structure and relationships of council and key tourism bodies operating in the shire and region. The model delineates the proposed roles, relationships and funding between:

- Australia's Coastal Wilderness (ACW) - (Masterplan, web portal, international marketing via Tourism Australia),
- Sapphire Coast Tourism Ltd (SCT) - (business plan, strategy, domestic marketing, Sapphire Coast web portal, research, education)
- Chambers of Commerce or industry/community bodies (VIC, local information/marketing, events, town web portal, accommodation service)
- Business (attractions, accommodation, charters, services, marketing)
- Council (tourism infrastructure, in kind/support, economic development, signage)

## 1.2 Position

The review also confirmed council's position on Tourism:

*Council recognises tourism as a key driver of the local economy, providing jobs and investment. In recent years, Council has significantly reduced its direct financial support for tourism marketing and promotions, considering these activities are the role of the tourism industry itself. Council considers its long-term role as providing 'hard' tourism infrastructure, visitor information centre premises, parks, boardwalks, toilets, bbq's etc.*

In its response to the Local Government Tourism Survey, and based on its position statement, council suggested the role of local government should be, amongst other things:

- strategic development and placement of tourist/recreational council infrastructure and signage to reflect 'brand'
- facilitate development of key federal/state infrastructure such as highway or ports
- develop economic/tourism strategy to generate investment and employment, including expanded tourism product and facility

### 1.3 Brand

The Options Paper suggested the current ACW brand rollout will discern the market penetration of Sapphire Coast or the towns, and the niche market that ACW may penetrate. Once that 'brand' is established, then web sites, signage and marketing material can be badged via the brand manual. It is expected Sapphire Coast and the towns would retain their identity with differentiating themes and icons picked up on route and town signage.

### 1.4 Signage

Following meetings with the Chambers of Commerce, discussions were held with RTA regarding highway and tourist route signage. It is understood RTA will progressively replace/update Princes Highway signage to mirror the 'A1' classification system similar to Victoria. It was suggested council work with TASAC and Sapphire Coast Tourism Ltd to formally delineate tourist and alternate routes from the Princes and Snowy Mountain Highways at key entry and exit points. The white-on-brown signs may indicate distances to towns/villages along those alternate routes, including key services and town 'icons' established through ACW.

To clean up and consolidate directional signage in major towns, a signage plan should be prepared to rationalise white-on-blue recreation/facility signage at key intersections indicating name and distance; and white-on-brown attraction signage at key intersections indicating the type of attraction and distance. Subject to council budgets, these may be progressively installed/replaced.

Advertised attraction signage may be established at town/village boundaries indicating the name of attraction and distance, based on a standard sign and frame template, subject to council and SEPP64 development requirements. Council's Exempt and Complying DCP 4 applies to business identification and advertising signage.

## Heritage Tourism Strategy

SCT launched its Heritage Tourism Strategy in September 2010, promoting the generation and signposting of stories, in the theme areas of:

*Killers of Eden - The stories behind the Killer Whales incorporate both Indigenous and European culture and link directly to some of the region's most popular tourism ventures*

*In the Shadow of the Mountains –interprets the geological, natural and human history of the fertile valleys, rugged coastline and the mountains that created them - Gulaga (Mt Dromedary), Mumbulla and Balawan (Mt Imlay).*

*Meeting of the Waters – is a story of two ocean currents meeting to produce one of the richest marine playgrounds on earth. The story highlights the maritime history, its enterprises and attractions and features some of the region’s mysteries.*

The Strategy seeks council’s role in signposting tourist routes, localities and interpretive material. Much of that work can be integrated into the draft Tourism Signage Plan, subject to financial and in-kind assistance from SCT and NPWS

The Strategy proposed development of interpretive signage at:

<b>Killers of Eden</b>	<b>Shadow of Mountains</b>	<b>Meeting of Waters</b>
Eden Rotary Lookout	Bermagui Park (Gulaga)	Blue Pool Lookout
VICs	VICs	VICs
Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre	Bega Heritage Centre	Bermagui Fishing Co-op
Davidson Whaling Station	Tilba	Tathra Memorial Park
Seahorse Inn	Cobargo	Merimbula Airport
Boyds Tower	Pam’s Store Tilba Tilba	Merimbula Wharf
Jigamy Farm	Biamanga National Park	Old Coast Road
	Green Cape	Green Cape
	Mt Imlay National Park	Sapphire Coast Lakes

## Tourism and Facility Signage Plan Objectives

The draft Plan aims to make navigation for visitors and residents into and through the shire easier through appropriately colour coded, branded, badged and sited signage. This supports SCT and ACW objectives to improve the visitor experience in Bega Valley. The Plan relies upon appropriate application of TASAC guidelines in assessment of applications and siting of signage. The Plan also aims to confirm an identity for the settlements and gain consistency in council facility site signage.

The draft Plan proposes, in road reserves in accord with draft Policy, to:

1. Update tourist routes and relevant brown route and directional signage at key highway entry points
2. Incorporate brand (SCT/ACW/SMCD) routes and town icons into signage
3. Consolidate and update relevant brown attraction and directional signage
4. Consolidate and update relevant blue facility and directional signage
5. Consolidate and update relevant blue service and directional signage
6. Integrate relevant attraction, service and facility information into green road signage
7. Facilitate update of NPWS attraction, service and facility information into road signage
8. Update town entry/information bay signage incorporating icons adopted or confirmed with SCT/ACW and Chambers
9. Facilitate attraction information and directional signage at town exit bays

The draft Plan also proposes, in council reserves, to:

1. Consolidate and update relevant facility site signage
2. Integrate Heritage Tourism Strategy directional and interpretative signage

This draft Plan illustrates existing signage, often mixing colours and purpose regarding tourist, service and facility information. A number of Figures illustrate proposed alternatives. Nonetheless, the proposed Tourist, Service and Facility Signage Policy will guide eligibility, type and siting of signage.

It is proposed an audit of tourism, service and facility signage be undertaken in road reserves and council reserves, marking up council and business for updating or replacement against the policy criteria, and nominating replacement or consolidated signage using TASAC sign coding.

## 2 Tourist Routes

### 2.1 Tourist Route Signage

The Sapphire Coast (Bega Valley) is central to Australia’s Coastal Wilderness (ACW) Masterplan and represents around 200km of the Sydney-Melbourne Coastal Drive (SMCD).

Touring routes link experiences, attractions and services offered by different destinations. They generally seek to encourage visitors to explore tourism products not located on highways. Ideally, to capture visitors travelling in both directions, touring routes should start and finish at points on a highway.

The name of a touring route would only appear on signage at the start and finish and visitors would navigate the route by following signage that depicts the route’s logo, in the same manner as the Grand Pacific Drive.

Thus consideration should be given to extending the route to Pambula in the south so that both start and finish points are on the Princes Highway to encourage visitors to explore the route from both directions.

The existing white-on-brown route signage is tired and uninformative. To coincide with the brand rollout of ACW Masterplan; to align to SMCD route delineation; to illustrate iconic themes and key services of main settlements; and to sequence with RTA updating of Princes Highway signage, it is proposed RTA, Bega Valley Shire Council, SCT, NPWS and local business work together to upgrade and update tourist route signage into perhaps stylised triangles, with the following features.

Should the larger sign not be acceptable to TASAC - a north, south and central version of the sample sign below in Figure 2 will be placed at highway points as marked in Figure 1.



Figure 1

### 2.1.1 Route Signage Features

1. Town title
  - ACW Icon (marlin, whale, wharf etc), subject to TASAC
  - Service Icon (information, ramp, fuel, food, accommodation), subject to TASAC
  - Key facility Icon ( hospital, airport)
2. Distance
3. Tourist drive/Highway badge
4. SMCD/ACW badge

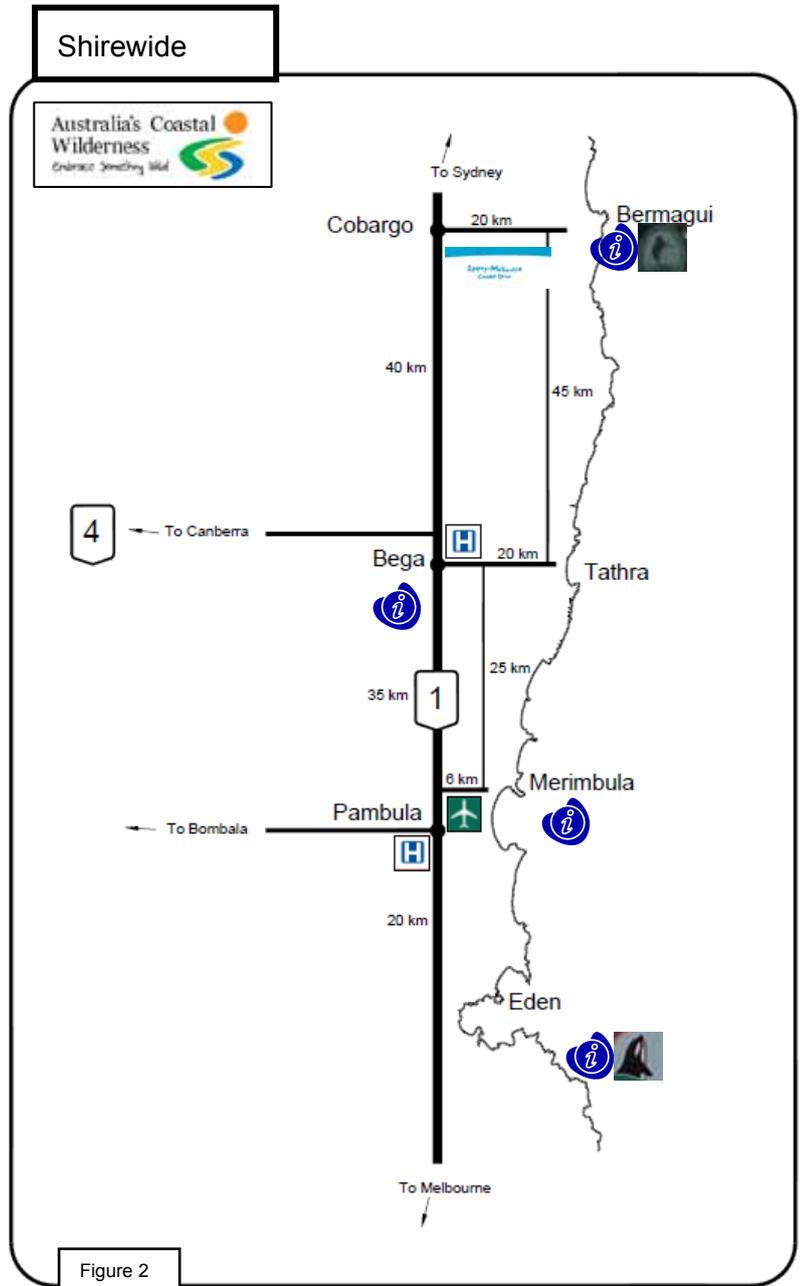


Figure 2



Proposed Style to apply at Shire/Route entry points



Current

### 2.1.2 Distance Signage

Should icon and service symbol signage on route signage not be acceptable to TASAC, once along that route, the standard green or brown town and distance signs, preferably with service icons, would apply.

### 2.1.3 Assessment Criteria

Subject to TASAC guidelines, it is proposed Tourist Routes be reviewed along the following criteria in conjunction with to ensure safety and serviceability of the routes:

- classified road
- maintained, sealed by Council/RTA
- two wheel drive or bicycle capable

In addition, single road Destination Drives should be reviewed along the following criteria to ensure safety to iconic attractions such as Green Cape (NPWS), to align with, or connect to, ACW identified tourist product (Light to Light Walk):

1. public/crown road
2. maintained by Council/NPWS
3. two wheel drive
4. bushfire risk

## 2.2 Placement

### 2.2.1 Shire Entry

1. The standard shire-wide white-on-brown tourist/alternate route signs should be placed at key entry points to the Shire (refer maps):
  - A1 Princes Highway – north of Bermagui exit
  - A1 Princes Highway – south of Eden entry
  - Snowy Mountains Highway – west of Bemboka entry

While it is preferred to place a standard shire-wide sign at those points, TASAC may require the signage broken in north, south and central sections.

### 2.2.2 Route Entry

At key entry points, white-on-brown tourist/alternate route signs to alert travellers to the particular routes, and badged with the tourist route number, or SCMD icon, where relevant. The routes may be named as below, or a single drive such as ‘Sapphire Coast Drive’ be badged from the exit/entry points from the highway at Tilba and Pambula.

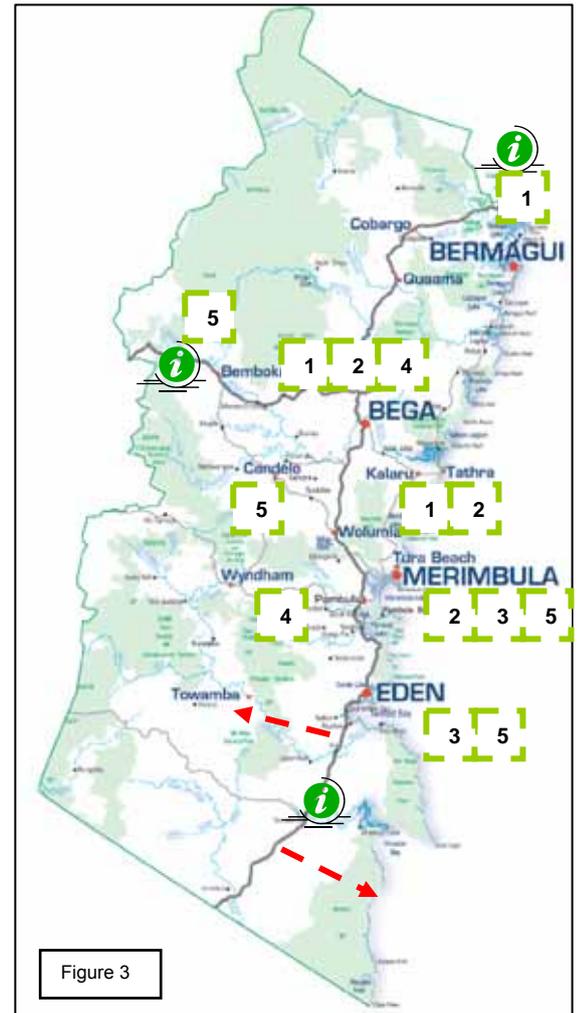
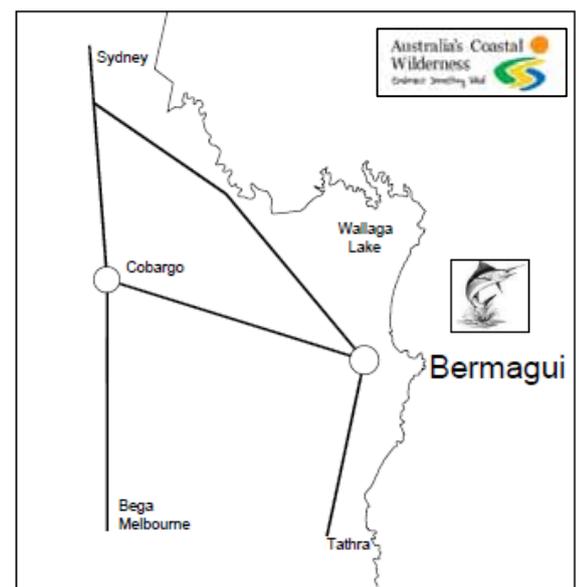


Figure 3

-  ▪ **Bermagui-Cobargo-Tathra-Bega**  
(Marlin Run)
-  ▪ **Bega-Tathra-Merimbula**  
(Wharf Run)
-  ▪ **Merimbula-Eden-Pambula**  
(Whale Run)
-  ○ **Pambula-Wyndham-Bega**  
(Gold Run)
-  ○ **Bega-Bemboka-Candelo-Merimbula**  
(Valley Run)

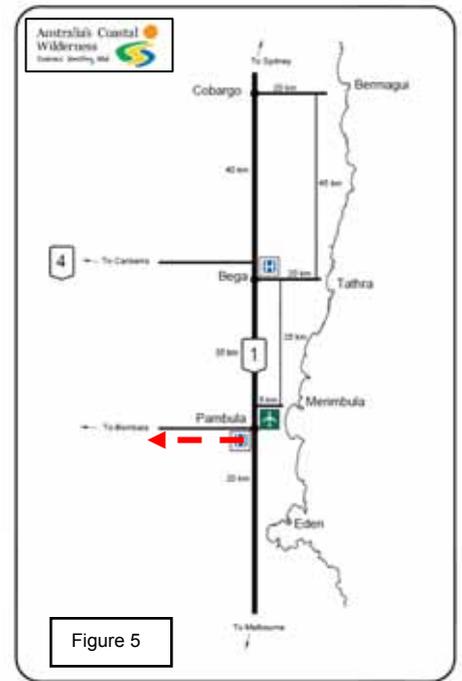


 Marlin Run

Figure 4

**2.2.3 Destination Routes** - - - - ->

Specific tourist routes to ACW destinations such as Green Cape, or Eden-Bombala roads as an alternate to Snowy Mountains Highway, should be marked in advance of the exit. This approach may then be consistent with the signage in East Gippsland.



**2.2.4 Town and Distance**

Once a traveller has embarked on a particular Route, the standard white-on-green signs would then inform distances to towns and confirm Route Number badges or route icons.



### 2.3 The Driving Experience

The Sapphire Coast Tourism Business Plan and Australia's Coastal Wilderness Masterplan have recognised some drives through the shire (along SMCD) as iconic and to be marketed as unique – the Tathra-Bermagui Road with its unique timber decked and white railed bridges – driving experiences.

Bermagui Chamber of Commerce has previously sought TASAC support for the Historic Bridges Route.

Consideration should be given to extending the tourist route (perhaps named *Sapphire Coast Drive*) to Pambula in the south so that both start and finish points are on the Princes Highway to encourage visitors to explore the route from both directions.



### 3 Town Signage/Information Bay

Each town has developed/is developing a theme. They may reflect the heritage of the settlement (Cobargo), icon (Tathra) or the marketing point (Merimbula). The themes and icons can be progressed through the community consultations with the initial Community Strategic Plan.

The current themes or proposed icons are:

- Bega - Dairy
- Bemboka – Village in the Valley
- Bermagui – Marlin
- Candelo - NA
- Cobargo – Working Village
- Eden – Killer Whale
- Merimbula – Sapphire
- Pambula - NA
- Tathra – Wharf
- Wolumla - NA



Progressively, and as budgets allow, town entry signage may be upgraded to reflect the agreed theme or icon, potentially in conjunction with landscaping or information bay works at those sites, pending grant and volunteer support.

Current Bega Valley Shire Council branded signage to settlements, including population information, would remain. Some town entrance signage has already been upgraded, such as Eden and Merimbula, and would remain.



#### 3.1 Street Signage

Council has commenced updating street name fingerboard signage as signs are replaced with the BVSC logo. It is proposed that program continue, to reinforce brand.



## 4 Attraction Signage

### 4.1 Directional

Sapphire Coast Tourism are collaboratively listing attractions and categorising broadly into Family, Natural and Recreational. It is proposed major attractions will be identified on the following basis:

- identified in SCT Business Plan and/or ACW Masterplan
- meet TASAC criteria
- named/badged on white-on-brown Tourist Route signs
- named/badged on white-on-green intersection signs
- distance to attraction nominated on sign



The new Tourism, Service and Facility Signage Policy will guide the type and application of those signs.



Along the highway or tourist route, an advance finger board sign (brown) would indicate the exit and distance (where appropriate) to the attraction, or facility (blue).

Route signs may also be badged with the route icon.



Rationalisation of out-dated or inappropriate attractions, accommodation or service finger board signage, may be required, with retention reliant on the proposed Policy.



## 4.2 Site

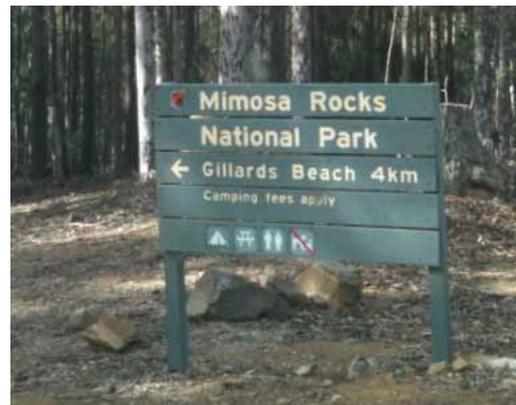
Subject to TASAC, council, NPWS and SEPP sign codes, attraction signage may be placed at the boundary or entry to the attraction/facility.



## 4.3 NPWS/State Forest attraction

Sapphire Coast boasts 75% of its land mass as national park or state forest. Signage already developed by National Parks and State Forests are identifiable to the traveller, promoting or directing destination sites or facilities.

It is understood NPWS will be updating directional and facility signage to accord with TASAC guidelines.



## 5 Facility and Service Signage

At various intersections in the towns, there is often a plethora of finger signs nominating council facilities, attractions by type or individual services or attractions. It is proposed to progressively replace those signs, with the collaboration of SCT and the Bega Valley Business Forum and Chambers of Commerce, establishing a set of 'rules' per Policy by which an attraction or service may be signed.



An illustration of a rationalised approach is attached.

Council has already established a signage template and installed at various reserve sites.



### 5.1 Intersection Directional Signage

At key intersection points, an advance white-on-green sign would be placed indicating:

- Town
- Route number/icon
- Facility name or Service Icon and distance (white on blue plate), including council recreation site, police, hospital, parking
- Attraction name and distance (white on brown plate)



Once a traveller has embarked on a particular Route, the standard white-on-green signs would then inform distances to towns and confirm Route Number badges

### 5.2 Exit/Turn Signage

To inform the traveller along the highway or tourist route, an advance finger board sign would indicate the exit and distance (where appropriate) to the facility, service (blue) or attraction (brown).



### 5.3 Assessment Criteria

The criteria for nominating an attraction, service or facility on signage:

- attraction identified in SCT Business Plan and/or ACW Masterplan
- facility identified as regional/district in council Recreation Strategy
- service identified for health or emergency purposes
- meets Policy criteria / TASAC guidelines



#### 5.4 Facility entry signage

Council would progressively, subject to budgets, upgrade Facility entry signage in accord with the hierarchy (regional, district, local) established through the Recreation Strategy.



#### 5.5 Service entry signage

State services (police, health, SES, RFS etc) would be responsible for own entry/site signage, in accord with relevant sign codes.



## 6 Town exit signage/Information Bay

At suitable exit points from towns on tourist routes that are capable of signage or information bays, subject to budgets, a standardised attraction plated sign could be established at the cost of the attractions, identifying:

- o tourist route number and ACW/SCMD icon on top banner
- o attraction name and distance on plates



To inform the traveller along the highway or tourist route having left that town, an advance finger board sign would indicate the exit and distance (where appropriate) to the facility, service (blue) or attraction (brown), with acceptable icons.



## 3 Brand, Information & Icons

### 3.1 Brand

Through the leadership of SCT, it is anticipated a 'brand' for the shire and/or the towns may be confirmed or refined to reflect the Sapphire Coast (Bega Valley) brand established domestically, and align with Australia's Coastal Wilderness brand, marketed internationally. Research to indicate the penetration of the brand/s in traditional and emerging markets may be required.

Websites and other material used by SCT and the Visitor Centres and town (chamber) websites, are urged to be progressively redesigned to accord with the images and navigability of the Tourism Australia ACW website, or as guide by the ACW brand rollout.

Ultimately, Bega Valley Shire Council may revise its brand to complement the 'experience' and 'service' promoted through ACW, noting the existing council logo is a complimentary style and colour to ACW.



Produce from the Shire may also be considered to re-brand to establish a recognisable imprimatur to buyers and markets outside the Shire, and perhaps be reflected on properties or sites that generate that produce, in a similar way to that of Bega Cheese producers.



### 3.2 Information

Signage should be placed at sites to accord with RTA and council requirements, so that a driving decision can be made without confusion or distraction.

The names of towns, public services and facilities should be consistent with Geographic Names Board, state and council requirements.

The names of private attractions, facilities or services should be consistent with SCT categories and council requirements – and may require rationalisation. The generic type of service or attraction is preferred to specific names to reduce need to replace signs. Some discretion may be required in remote/village areas and be reflected in council sign codes.



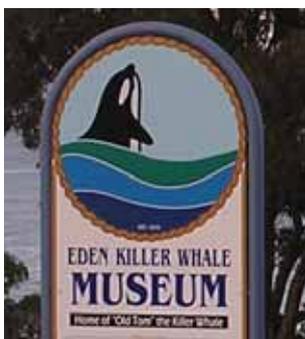
### 3.3 Icons

Icons for inclusion on signage should be assigned from the following sources:

- o Australia’s Coastal Wilderness (ACW) logo
- o Sydney Melbourne Coastal Drive (SMCD) logo
- o standard services and facilities: ramp, accommodation, caravan parks, food, fuel, tourist information
- o standard public services: police, hospital, airport, port, parking



Icons for the towns would be based on key stylised images/themes – modified to ACW branding, per section 2.3 above.



## 4 Responsibilities and Funding

Reference is made to the TASAC signage guidelines, as well as council's and RTA sign codes.

### 4.1 Highway and Tourist Route

It is proposed highway signage (brown tourist route and green highway route) signage remain the responsibility of RTA. However, to accelerate the replacement and/or establishment of signs proposed in section 2 of this Strategy, it is suggested the RTA and council jointly fund highway and tourist route signage over 2010/12.

On the basis that 8 white-on-brown signs are proposed to be updated or installed, a shared budget of \$200,000 is proposed.

Council may have stanchions capable of reuse for the large signs.

### 4.2 Facility and Attraction

Facility directional (white-on-blue) and facility site signage is the responsibility of Council. Facility directional (intersection) signage capable of inclusion on highway (green) or route (brown) signage, may require assistance from council.

In some cases, a blue facility or brown attraction or icon plate may be inserted on existing suitable RTA green signage, with assistance by council or NPWS.

Upgrading recreation facility site signage is the responsibility of council, with funding potentially sourced from 'sport and recreation rate levy'.

Attraction/information signage would conform to a design standard and be funded by the attractions or NPWS.

## 5 Conclusion

The Tourism and Facility Signage Plan is an element of the Tourism Options Review completed by Bega Valley Shire Council in 2010.

Coincidence with RTA updating of Highway signage and alignment with the Australia's Coastal Wilderness Masterplan and brand rollout, has prompted a revision of route, service, facility and attraction signage in the Sapphire Coast (Bega Valley Shire).

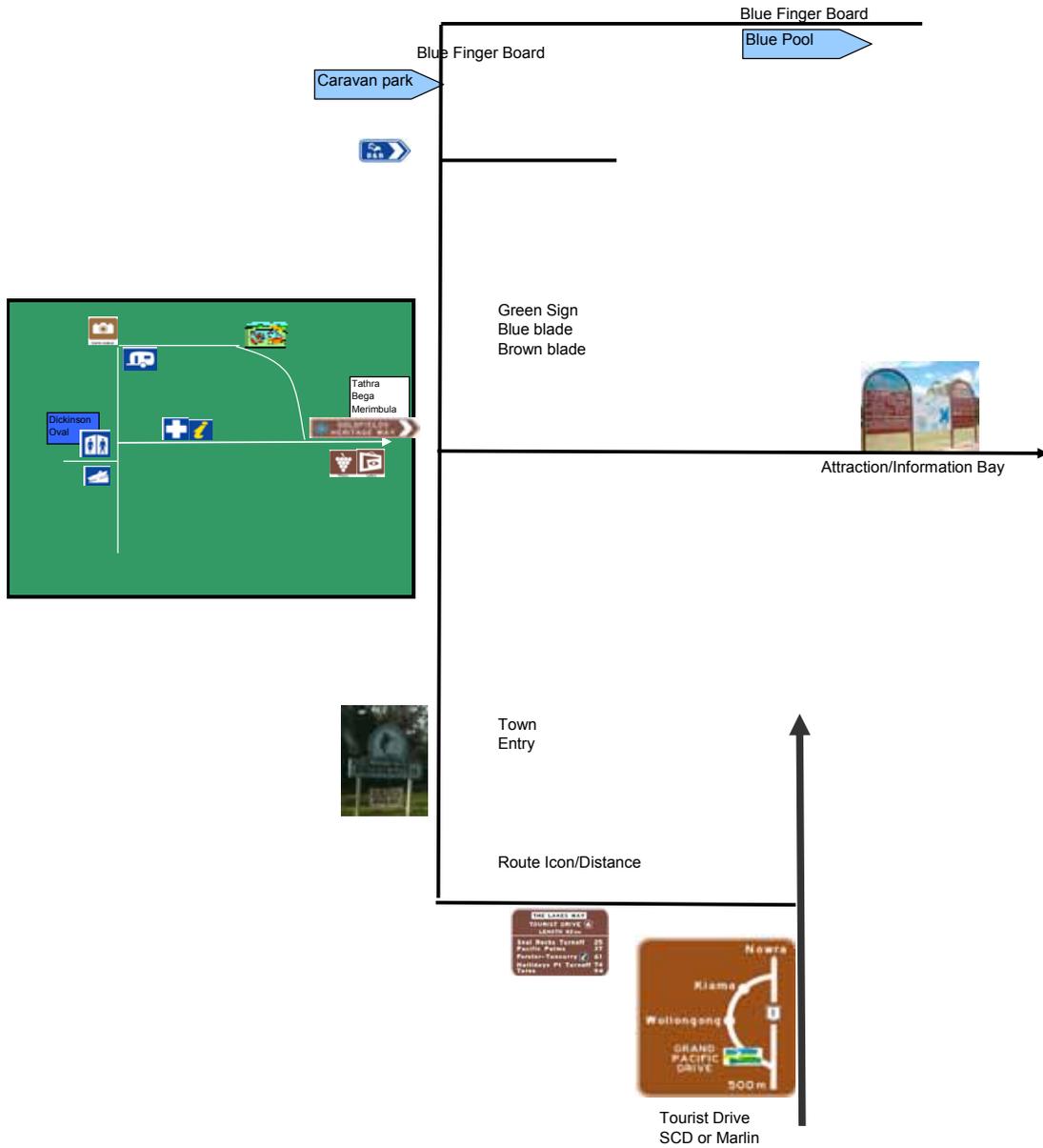
A proposed joint and progressive investment by RTA, Council, NPWS and the tourist industry will assist realisation of that Masterplan and make travel decision making or guidance to a facility or service much easier, and the experience much greater, to visitors to the area. Reference and compliance with TASAC guidelines, and RTA and Council codes is acknowledged.

Finally, the rationalisation of existing uninformative, confusing and outdated signage and replacement with consistently coloured, coded and branded signage, will ease the visual pollution and traffic confusion in the Shire.

## 6 Recommendations

1. a Tourism, Service and Facility Signage Policy and Guidelines be prepared, consistent with TASAC guidelines
2. an audit be undertaken of tourism, service and facility (council) signage in road reserves, and facility, grant project and warning signage in council reserves
3. a priority plan be prepared, guided on the Policy, scheduling installation, update or replacement of signage for consideration of budgets, following advice of support funding from RTA, NPWS and ACW
4. tourist routes be reviewed having regard to the proposed assessment criteria
5. consideration be given to naming individual tourist routes, or combining into a single route from the entry and exit points to the Princes Highway
6. consideration be given in future budgets to progressively updating/replacing town and village entrance signage and establishing information bays with community assistance
7. town icons, perhaps modified to ACW branding, be developed in conjunction with Chambers of Commerce and SCT, during the consultation process of the Community Strategic Plan
8. progressive replacement of street signage incorporating Bega Valley Shire Council logo continue
9. rationalisation or removal of outdated or inappropriate attractions, business and services be undertaken in accord with TASAC/council policy, in conjunction with Chambers of Commerce and SCT
10. progressive upgrade of facility signage pending outcomes of Recreation Strategy

Sample: Intra Tourist Routes



Shire-Wide: Tourist Routes

