

WESTERN PORT BIOSPHERE RESERVE
A LIVING STRATEGIC PLAN 2011 – 2013

Introduction/Background

The Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve (known as the Western Port Biosphere Reserve for short) was nominated by the community and designated by UNESCO under its Man and Biosphere (MaB) Program in 2002. Declaration as a biosphere reserve was sought because the area contains and supports exceptional ecological values on the fringe of expanding city.

UNESCO biosphere reserves aim to keep special places—like Western Port—special by fostering conservation and sustainable development.* They encourage the community to develop better ways to meet social and economic needs, while conserving natural processes and biodiversity. They support this through research, monitoring, education and information exchange.

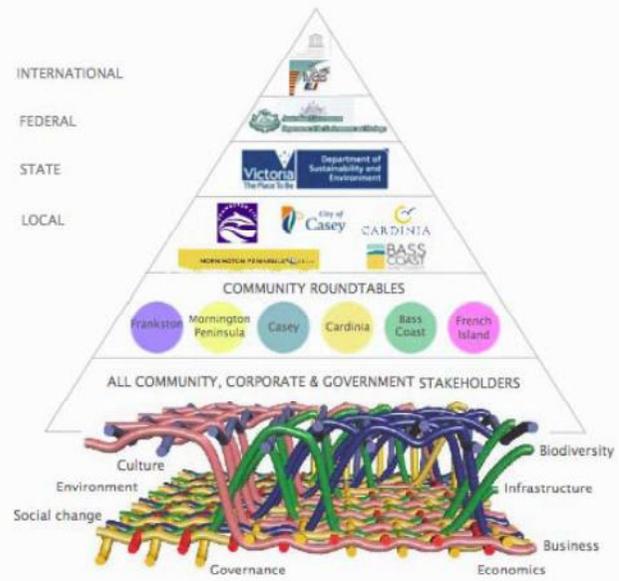
The non-profit Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd (the Biosphere Foundation) incorporated in December 2003 brings together representatives of the Victorian Government, the five local government authorities within the biosphere reserve and the community**

This document provides a concise description of the Biosphere Foundation's strategy to achieve MaB objectives in the Western Port Biosphere Reserve. Our biosphere reserve is well-placed to showcase these objectives, both to our own community and to our city neighbours.

The Biosphere Foundation has adopted a *Living Strategy* approach to strategic planning as the most practical and flexible approach, given the multiplicity of organisations, agencies and individuals operating within the biosphere reserve and sharing, wholly or in part, the objectives of the Biosphere Foundation.

**Sustainable development: "Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Report), United Nations, 1987. Sustainable development has environmental, economic and social dimensions.*

*** For more detailed information on the institutional context of the Biosphere Foundation, see Appendix 2*



A. Strategic Success Criteria

The Biosphere Foundation's strategic success criteria provide a compass to guide our progress. They describe what success would look like in our efforts to create a sustainable future for the Western Port Biosphere Reserve—environmentally, socially and economically.

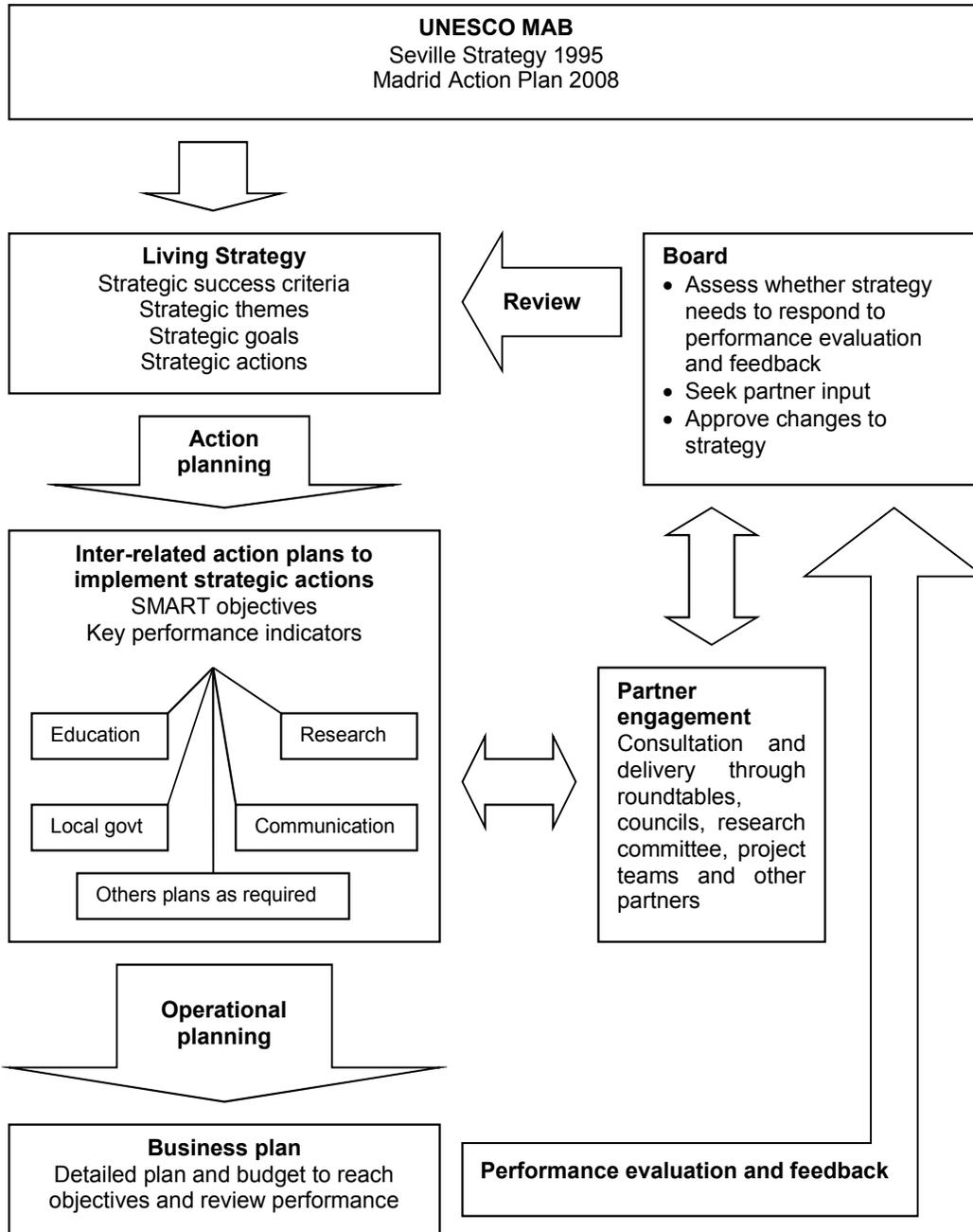
Each year, we will aim to make significant improvements in the following areas:

- **State of the biosphere reporting:** Coordinated measurement and reporting of the environmental, economic and social health of our biosphere reserve
- **Sustainable practices:** The adoption of more sustainable practices by government, business and community within the biosphere reserve.
- **Community capacity values and perceptions:** Increased business and community understanding, perception and engagement with the Foundation and its partners to improve the environmental, economic and social health of the biosphere reserve.
- **Organisational capacity:** Maintaining sound governance and stronger financial, intellectual and resource capacity of the Foundation.

B.Strategic planning, implementation and review process:

The Biosphere Foundation is required to implement the directions of Seville Strategy and Madrid Action Plan as they apply to the Western Port Biosphere Reserve.

The diagram on the following page outlines this relationship.



The Biosphere Foundation has adopted four key Strategic Themes to serve as a framework for organising our strategic objectives:

C. Strategic Themes

- 1. Natural Environment and Biodiversity Conservation**
- 2. Sustainable Development on a Regional Scale**
- 3. Logistical Support** including targeted research, monitoring, evaluation of progress in sustainability
- 4. Partnerships and Governance** to enable effective delivery of Biosphere objectives

These strategic themes are consistent with the MaB Madrid Action Plan (2008 – 2013), the key themes of which are listed below:

- **E.1 Cooperation, Management and Communication**
- **E.2 Zonation – Linking Functions to Space**
- **E.3 Science and Capacity Enhancement**
- **E.4 Partnerships**

The strategic themes are also consistent with the Biosphere Foundation's charter. For details of how each strategy theme relates to the Madrid Action Plan and charter, (see appendix 1).

The table below lists each strategic theme and its associated strategic goal and strategic action. These will be translated into SMART objectives and performance indicators during the development of specific action plans and the Foundation's business plan (see diagram in section B).

Strategic Themes	Strategic Goals	Strategic Actions
1.Natural Environment &Biodiversity Conversation	a. Contribute to national conservation of ecological systems representative of major bioregions b. Increase the extent and security of biodiversity conservation in the Reserve including protection from disturbance and threatening processes c. Review and expand the extent and efficiency of core and buffer zones, as described in the Man and Biosphere Program	Facilitation and development of integrated programs implemented with consultation and involvement of community stakeholders, agencies, state and local government including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bandicoot Regional Recovery Program • Watson Creek Integrated Catchment Management Project •

<p>2.Sustainable Development on a regional scale</p>	<p>a. Develop public awareness of the Biosphere Reserve, creating 'pride of place' regarding its special values and understanding of its three functions</p> <p>b. Stimulate and support continuous improvement in environmental, economic and social sustainability of development in the Biosphere</p> <p>c. Develop partnerships and strategic alliances for sustainable development</p> <p>d. Showcase the Biosphere Reserve regionally, nationally and internationally as a model for conservation and sustainable development</p>	<p>Further develop "Brand Biosphere" (the biosphere reserve's role, values, unique selling propositions, and the foundation's vision) and develop marketing and communication action plans to engage with governments (local, state and federal), regional businesses, NGOs (environmental, social and economic) and the broad community.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for cross-promotion and joint branding with councils.</p> <p>Conduct a gap analysis of federal and state government policies as a means of better engaging with government on sustainability issues.</p> <p>With council and industry support, promote natural features and existing sustainable tourism products within the biosphere reserve by developing a map for distribution via tourist information centres.</p> <p>Work with landholders, industry and councils to promote the actions of producers using sustainable agricultural practices, e.g. via an "eat local, buy local" campaign, a "Biosphere Product" brand, and a "Biosphere Trail"</p>
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<p>3. Logistic Support</p>	<p>a . Develop means of measuring and monitoring sustainability within the Biosphere Reserve</p> <p>b. Develop means of communication (both web-based and other types of publication) to exchange and share research, technology and education opportunities</p> <p>c. Promote sustainability related research</p> <p>d. Develop a range of accreditation schemes suitable for different sectors of the Biosphere community such as businesses, community groups , households</p> <p>e. Facilitate development of multi-faceted education and communication programs to engage all sectors of the Biosphere community in cultural change towards sustainable lifestyles and use of resources</p>	<p>Develop biosphere-wide sustainability indicators to measure environmental, economic and social health, in preparation for regular State of the Biosphere reporting.</p>
<p>4. Partnerships and Governance</p>	<p>a. Regularly review the Man and Biosphere Program objectives and strategies and adapt the Living Strategy to reflect developments</p> <p>b. Develop or update action plans for research, communication, education, local government, and other areas as required</p> <p>c. Develop and consolidate a range of appropriate partnerships and alliances</p> <p>d. Pursue diverse, long term sources of income and funding</p>	<p>Aim to raise a discretionary annual budget of at least \$250K.</p> <p>Until we improve financial capacity, only consider projects that are identified in the local government action plan or that will earn us additional funds.</p> <p>Establish partnership agreements and MOUs with relevant institutions, e.g, councils, to formalise agreed priorities, obligations, expectations, communication channels, etc.</p> <p>Review foundation policies and operations to improve</p>

	<p>e. Delegate the delivery of outcomes to stakeholders as far as is practicable, utilising the enormous and diverse range of human resources and skills within the Biosphere community</p> <p>f. Seek good governance, operational improvement and strong community involvement.</p>	<p>governance and maximise performance.</p> <p>Review the structure of board meetings to increase focus on achieving strategic outcomes, e.g. by making the Living Strategy a standing item.</p> <p>Review opportunities to increase community involvement, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the roundtable model. • Examining the merits of a Western Port Catchment Committee “peak body” model. <p>Invite community comment via roundtables on the Living Strategy and Eastern Curlew “catchment icon” proposal.</p>
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Appendix 1

The following table links the Biosphere Foundation's strategic themes and associated strategic goals with actions in the Madrid Action Plan and the Foundation's Charter.

Madrid Action Plan 2008-13 Key Themes

- Target E.1 Cooperation, Management and Communication
(Actions 1.1-1.4; 2.1-2.2; 3.1-3.5; 4.1-4.2; 5.1; 6.1-6.2; 7.1-7.2; 8.1; 9.1; 10.1-10.2; 11.1;)
- Target E.2 Zonation – Linking Functions to Space
(Actions 12.1; 13.1-13.5; 14.1;)
- Target E 3 Science and Capacity Enhancement
(Actions 15.1-15.3; 16.1-16.3; 17.1-17.2; 18.1-18.2; 19.1; 20.1-20.2; 21.1; 22.1-22.2; 23.1; 24.1-24.4;)
- Target E 4 Partnerships
(Actions 25.1-25.3; 26.1-26.3; 27.1-27.2; 28.1-28.3; 29.1-29.2; 30.1-30.2; 31.1)

Biosphere Foundation Strategic Themes	Strategic Goals	Biosphere Foundation Charter reference	Madrid Action Plan reference
1. Natural Environment & Biodiversity Conversation	<p>a. Contribute to national conservation of ecological systems representative of major bioregions</p> <p>b. Increase the extent and security of biodiversity conservation in the Reserve including protection from disturbance and threatening processes</p> <p>c. Review and expand the extent and efficiency of core and buffer zones, as described in the Man and Biosphere Program</p>	<p>4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3,</p>	<p>3.1, 5.1, 10.1, 10.2, 13.4, 13.5, 14.1, 16.1, 16.3, 19.1, 20.1, 24.3, 28.1</p>
2. Sustainable Development on a regional scale	<p>a. Develop public awareness of the Biosphere Reserve, creating 'pride of place' regarding its special values and understanding of its three functions</p> <p>b. Stimulate and support continuous improvement in environmental, economic and social sustainability of development in the Biosphere</p> <p>c. Develop partnerships and strategic alliances for sustainable development</p> <p>d. Showcase the Biosphere Reserve regionally, nationally and internationally as a model for conservation and sustainable development</p>	<p>4.1.4, 4. 2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3,</p>	<p>1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 8.1, 10.1, 10.2, 14.1, 16.2, 18.2, 20.2, 21.1, 21.2, 22.1, 23.1, 29.1, 29.2</p>

<p>3.Logistic Support</p>	<p>a . Develop means of measuring and monitoring sustainability within the Biosphere Reserve</p> <p>b. Develop means of communication (both web-based and other types of publication) to exchange and share research, technology and education opportunities</p> <p>c. Promote sustainability related research</p> <p>d. Develop a range of accreditation schemes suitable for different sectors of the Biosphere community such as businesses, community groups , households</p> <p>e. Facilitate Development of multi-faceted education and communication programs to engage all sectors of the Biosphere community in cultural change towards sustainable lifestyles and use of resources</p>	<p>4.2., 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3</p>	<p>10.1, 10.2, 15.2, 16.3, 19.1, 20.2, 22.2, 27.1, 27.2, 18.1, 28.2</p>
<p>4.Partnerships and Governance</p>	<p>a. Regularly review the Man and Biosphere Program objectives and strategies and adapt the Living Strategy to reflect developments</p> <p>b. Develop strategies and action plans for research, communication and education</p> <p>c. Develop and consolidate a range of appropriate partnerships and alliance</p> <p>d. Pursue diverse, long term sources of income and funding</p>	<p>4.1 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 4.3.3</p>	<p>1.1, 1.3, 10.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 15.3, 16.3, 22.2, 23.1, 26.2, 26.3, 27.1, 27.2, 28.2, 28.4, 29.1 29.2</p>

	<p>e. Delegate the delivery of outcomes to stakeholders as far as is practicable, utilising the enormous and diverse range of human resources and skills within the Biosphere community</p> <p>f. Seek good governance, operational improvement and strong community involvement.</p>		
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- **MAP actions not applicable to this Biosphere Reserve**
#4.1, 24.2, 24.4, 30.2

Appendix 2

Institutional Context of the – Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation Ltd

The Foundation conducts all of its business, including strategic planning, in the context of an array of institutional and statutory obligations, expectations and commitments. The Foundation's *Living Strategy* must be read, interpreted and implemented in that context. The Foundation seeks to remain true both to the spirit of the vision that drove nomination of the Biosphere to UNESCO and to the mandatory obligations that underpin the Man and Biosphere Program.

International: UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program

Current obligations applying to member biosphere reserves are detailed on the website (www.unesco.org/mab). In particular, the Seville Strategy and UNESCO's Draft Program 2006-2007 set parameters for appropriate areas of focus and action for biosphere reserves. In 2008 the Madrid Action Plan was adopted, setting out an agenda for the MAB Program for the period 2008-2013. These documents, including revised or new MAB policies, form an important part of our Foundation's operating context.

National:

The Commonwealth endorsed the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve nomination on 30 April 2002. The Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* Division 3 (sections 337-341) addresses the management of biosphere reserves. Division 3 provides for establishment of Australian biosphere reserve management principles under EPBC Regulations, as well as planning for management of Biosphere reserves and provision of Commonwealth assistance for protecting biosphere reserves. EPBC Regulations 2000 prescribe the Australian Biosphere reserve management principles through Division 4 (Regulation 10.03) and Schedule 7.

Part of the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve is listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

The Foundation was established as a company under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Commonwealth) and is obliged to conduct its corporate affairs in accordance with the Act and relevant Regulations.

The Foundation must continue to comply with the rulings of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) with respect to the Foundation's charitable status, to maintain eligibility for the tax deductibility of donations to the Foundation's Public Fund.

State:

The Victorian State Government policy on biosphere reserves, available on the internet at www.dse.vic.gov.au, sets out the parameters for assessing proposals for new biosphere reserves and for evaluating the performance of biosphere reserves. The Victorian State Government also provided advice about its requirements and expectations in letters of 28 June 2002 conditionally endorsing the nomination (signed by then Environment Minister Sherryl Garbutt), and of 1 December 2003 approving the proposed administrative arrangements for the Foundation (signed by then Minister for the Environment John Thwaites).

Local:

The nomination was endorsed by each of the five local government authorities (LGAs) that are included in part or in full within the MPWP Biosphere Reserve. These are the Cities of Casey and Frankston, and the Shires of Bass Coast, Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula.

Foundation:

The **nomination** document of the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve contains a number of commitments regarding governance and management.

The Foundation's **Constitution** was adopted at the inaugural meeting in December 2003, and in conjunction with the Corporations Act sets the statutory governance framework for the Foundation.

There is a procedural pathway prescribed for changing the Constitution, should that prove necessary or desirable. However, the Organisational Review conducted during 2005 concluded that no changes to the Constitution were warranted at that time.

The Foundation's **Charter** was also adopted at the inaugural meeting in December 2003. The Charter reflects both the aspirational objectives of the Foundation and the specific governance expectations of the State Government. It provides the broad vision for implementation of the Biosphere Reserve.

Both the Constitution and Charter can be viewed on the website www.biosphere.org.au