



Snapshot

Victoria's caravan parks study: using social and economic information to support coastal adaptation

Summary

A study of caravan parks on Crown Land in Victoria shows how adaptation decision-making can take into account social and economic considerations. Managed by the Western Coastal Board, Victoria, the study looked at market and non-market values and social equity in caravan parks in the region as part of their planning for climate change adaptation. Conducted at five caravan parks, the study found there were significant non-market values associated with recreation and protection of these parks on Victorian Crown Land and beaches. It also found that campers and residents want to retain low-cost coastal camping and believe that campers should contribute more to fund coastal adaptation. Residents do not believe the funds for adaptation should come from the local area.

Coastal caravan and camping parks in Victoria provide affordable holiday destinations and access to many of the recreation and tourism opportunities available on the Victorian coast. These camp grounds are important to local economies, and also provide a range of social benefits. Typically situated close to beaches, estuaries and bushland, these facilities are at risk from the impacts of climate change such as sea-level rise inundation, beach erosion and flooding.

A project to study values and equity project was developed by the Western Coastal Board and Deakin University and was funded by the Australian Government, together with a range of contributions from regional partners. Using a literature review and the results of field research, the researchers developed a decision support framework to illustrate how to generate, interpret and apply social economic information in climate change adaptation.

The study focussed on two key aspects: total economic value and social equity. Total economic value includes market and non-market economic values, and enables consideration of the economic value of holidaying close to or on beaches, foreshores, or bushland reserves and of the benefit of taking a holiday. Social equity is based on social justice.

Keywords

Social, economic, adaptation, recreation, coastal

Key findings

About Users

- Land values were not available because the caravan parks are on Crown Land.
- Buildings, operating costs and revenues were obtained.
- Demographics of campers varied to those of town residents. Campers were younger, had more children and more were still in the workforce.
- Most campers had previously stayed at the camp site.
- Residents also use the camp site.
- Camp sites were an important resource for people who enjoyed the amenity, the experience and accessibility to the beach.

What did they learn?

- Campers were willing to pay more for the camping sites than they were charged, which is an indication that they are prepared to bear the costs of funding climate adaptation.
- Campers would use other caravan parks if their regular park became unavailable; however residents would be unlikely to move if their local coastal reserves including caravan parks became unavailable.
- Adaptation options favoured by residents and campers included allowing nature to take its course. Campers preferred options that included beach nourishment and relocation of the caravan park: residents and campers preferred construction of a seawall if necessary to protect current access to campsites.
- A high proportion of residents and campers felt that caravan park users should pay more to cover the cost of adaptation (although more residents felt strongly about this than campers).

- Campers like the idea that more camping sites could be made available to increase available funds. Campers wanted Crown Land camping to continue to be available on the coast.

This information helps to establish the real economic and social values of these coastal caravan parks, and the most acceptable ways that costs and benefits can be shared across different groups and communities. This will support the long-term planning to adapt to climate change.

Further reading

The official website of the Victorian Western Coastal Board: www.wcb.vic.gov.au (accessed 15 June 2017).

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Figure 1: Campers enjoying the Surfside Caravan Park at Warrnambool. Photo: Warrnambool City Council, 2011.



Figure 2: Barwon Heads Caravan Park. Photo: Barwon Coast.



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