

Foreign geological material on Moondah Beach

The use of foreign geological material in natural areas for paths and structures is not always in keeping with nature conservation. Protecting the integrity of the natural geology, landforms and soils can be as important as the protection of flora and fauna.

A good example is [Moondah Beach](#), which is significant for its geological diversity. Three *Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance on the Coast of Port Phillip Bay* are documented for Moondah Beach (Victorian Resources Online

http://vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/portreg.nsf/pages/port_lf_ppsites_sig-map).

This geological diversity is reflected in its diversity of natural free rocks on Moondah Beach, with a remarkable 10 types of natural free rock occurring on the beach.

The Moondah Beach landing of the [Melbourne Business School – Mount Eliza](#) was damaged by a storm surge in June 2014. The [Mount Eliza Foreshore Advisory Group](#) wrote to the school regarding the damage and how it might be repaired. The concern was that the importation of unconsolidated foreign material would reduce the geological integrity of Moondah Beach as any such the material would disperse along the beach.



Moondah Beach landing, underlying landfill exposed by storm surge in June 2014

The business school and the planning department of Mornington Peninsula Shire supported this principle. However, the maintenance department of the Shire was not aware of the issue and placed unconsolidated material on the landing for beach cleaner access in March 2015.

As it is within the storm surge zone, this material will inevitably be mobilised and swept away to contaminate the beach. Not only does this affect the geological integrity of the beach but it has the potential to deposit sharp inappropriate material on the beach used by the local community and so is likely to reduce the amenity. The restored access is temporary while the contamination is permanent if the material is not removed – not a solution at all.



Unconsolidated material placed on landing in March 2015

Currently the Shire is considering removing the loose rocks and replacing them with [Flexmat geofabric](#), which is an appropriate material in this sensitive area.

It is often not sufficiently realised that nature conservation has as much to do with the geosphere as with the biosphere. Alternatives to the use of loose foreign geological material in natural areas are usually available and should be used wherever possible.

MEAFEC believes it is high time that the *Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance on the Coast of Port Phillip Bay* are protected in the Mornington Peninsula planning scheme using Environmental Significance Overlays. The City of Casey is doing exactly this with its sites at present and [other councils](#) should do likewise.

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