

Does Marine Mapping Today Affect your Sense of Place?

... **Andy Gray – Member Friends of Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary**

... **Drawings by Kaye Traynor (Not to scale)**

Sometimes, walking on a surf coast beach, it's hard to think beyond the salt water, seaweed and cuttlefish bones. Perhaps the lapping of the waves and the squawk of a Pacific Gull keep us in the moment.

Next time you go for a walk, let your imagination run wild. Take away the fish, marine mammals and rock-pool critters. Strip back the ocean, and move some of the accumulated sand aside. Imagine following the banks of your local estuary (once an inland river) into the Bassian Plain.

In geological, ecological and indigenous terms, 8,000 to 14,000 years is not so long ago. It makes perfect sense that indigenous people are as deeply connected to the land beyond the seashore as they are to Country. The rivers, lakes, wetlands, billabongs, basalt plains and granite boulders under the sea, have the same cultural significance to them, as those that are so sacred on the land.

This topography, now underwater, supports different ecosystems, from sea grass beds to sponge gardens, seaweed forests, basalt and sandstone reef to rhodolith colonies (those colourful, unattached, branching, crustose, benthic marine algae that resemble coral).

Our understanding of underwater topography, particularly in Bass Strait from the Surf Coast to the Twelve Apostles, has recently improved tenfold.

Deakin University scientists released imagery of our coast in 2008, obtained using cameras towed behind small vessels at varying depths, and sonar technology. The images would not suit the format of this publication; however, they are well worth the time taken to log onto YouTube.

These three dimensional maps and images will not replace our imagination, but they are already enhancing our understanding of the Victorian Coast far beyond the seashore.

"These results will redefine conservation planning, improve fisheries management, and improve infrastructure planning to limit impacts on the environment. More than ever before we will be better informed about ways to conserve these areas and the life they contain for future generations to enjoy." (Dr Daniel Lerodiaconou, Mapping Victoria's Surf Coast Sea Floor, YouTube, Atmosmedia, 2008)

This research has put a whole new meaning to 'a Sense of Place'. Hopefully it enhances your next walk on the sandy divide.

Check it out on YouTube:

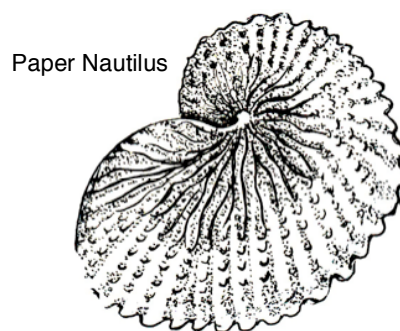
- **Mapping Underwater Victoria.mp4**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPv2z6qwGNU&feature=channel&list=UL>
- **Mapping Victoria's Surf Coast seafloor**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0XVYPOQOcY>



Big-bellied Seahorse



Giant Cuttle



Paper Nautilus



Draughtboard Shark's Egg

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