

Victorian Marine and Coastal Council

Annual Report 2021–22



**VICTORIAN MARINE
& COASTAL COUNCIL**



Prepared by the Victorian Marine & Coastal Council
8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

October 2022

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Photo Acknowledgements

Contact Victorian Marine & Coastal Council office for further information.



We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the Original Custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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Responsible Body Declaration

In accordance with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* I am pleased to present the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Annual Report for the reporting period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.



Anthony Boxshall PhD BSc GAICD
Chairperson, Marine and Coastal Council
30th June, 2022



Nairn (Port Phillip) coast at Point King, Portsea. Scott Watson

Chair's Foreword

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC or the Council) is appointed under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (the Act) to advise the Minister for Environment and Climate Action and the Secretary to the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) on a range of matters relating to the marine and coastal environment in Victoria.

The Council consists of nine members with expertise across a broad range of complementary disciplines. Council members have skills and experience in marine and coastal environments, planning, law, the physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and more. With additional appointments during the year, Council now includes two members with First Nations backgrounds. Our purpose is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to encourage and enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas.

This year marked the fourth year of VMaCC's term in office. COVID19 continued to drive our engagement online as a Council and with stakeholders. With the Act and the Marine and Coastal Policy (the Policy) in place, this year saw the publication of the Marine and Coastal Strategy (2022, the Strategy) drawing to a conclusion the initial phase of marine and coastal reform.

Our business plan, although intended to expire in 2021, remained relevant through to this milestone and guided activity over the year. In parallel with the release of the Strategy, the Council has developed a new business plan, to be published in the second half of 2022. The new plan will guide the Council's effort in the next phase of implementing the marine and coast reforms of 2018.

Two notable project achievements occurred in 2021-22. First, in November 2021, VMaCC published the literature review entitled *Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments and their human communities*. The report, prepared by Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray, will serve as a foundation in helping communicate the uncomfortable but inevitable need for coastal adaptation.

Second, we made substantial progress toward finalising our project exploring *'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts'*. The project proved demanding as we sought to understand and prepare to communicate the complexity of the draft findings from the economic work led by Professor Tom Kompas (University of Melbourne). The project, commissioned in partnership with Life Saving Victoria, was at the cusp of completion at the end of the financial year.

During the year VMaCC also sought feedback from our Science Panel ahead of the renewal of the terms of panel members. This led to a shift in the composition of the Panel (to include more social scientists in particular) and the renaming of the group as the VMaCC Expert Advisory Panel. The Panel is a continuing tradition for VMaCC that draws on the extraordinary depth of experience and knowledge from academics and experts across Australia, strengthening our capacity to provide leading edge, evidence-based advice.

The Council also advised DELWP on the development of other tools and guidance under the Act including Marine Spatial Planning, Coastal and Marine Management Planning, Victorian Resilient Coast Guidelines, guidelines for bathing boxes and boat sheds and high-level planning considerations for the development of a proposed offshore windfarm industry.

The Council continued to contribute to initiatives including the National Marine Science Committee, the associated Integrated Ecosystem Assessment National Pilot and we supported a Blue Carbon Centre of Expertise proposal led by Professor Peter Macreaddie of Deakin University.

As always, we continued to build on our stakeholder relationships through engaging stakeholders directly in planning and policy.

The Council is proud of achievements to this point with members working effectively to set a foundation for excellence and innovation in marine and coastal planning and management. We are excited by the prospect of continuing collaboration with stakeholders to deliver the Strategy. In all that we tackle, we are committed to the recognition of Traditional Owners and their journey towards self-determination, broad and deep ongoing stakeholder engagement, and making decisions that are underpinned by the best available science.

1 Year in Review

1.1 Fourth Year

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is the state's peak advisory body for coastal and marine issues. It is established under the Act to provide independent advice on marine and coastal issues to the responsible Minister. The responsible Minister was

- from 1 July 2021 to 27 June 2022 the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- from 27 June 2022 to 30 June 2022 the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Action.

From 1 August 2021, the Minister renewed members for a further two or three years and made two new appointments.

	Member new or continuing	Period of appointment
Ms Marianne Atkinson	New	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Dr Anthony Boxshall (Chair)	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Ms Jennifer Fraser	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Dr Anna Grage	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Dr Rohan Henry	New	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024
Dr Ian Knuckey	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Prof Alistar Robertson	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Dr John Sherwood	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2023
Ms Jacquie White (Deputy Chair)	Continuing	1 August 2021 – 31 July 2024

Over the year the Council has continued to work closely with policy makers, rights' holders and stakeholders to build on the reform agenda established under the Act for a co-ordinated approach to the planning and management of Victoria's marine and coastal environment.

The Council continued to place particular emphasis on leadership through a rigorous, equitable and inclusive approach to gathering and disseminating information and on providing for stakeholder views to be heard and integrated.

In particular, Council has emphasised:

- evidence-based research and advice
- engaging with stakeholders through continuing consultation and direct reporting
- the embedding of Traditional Owner groups in policy and planning partnerships
- identifying and prioritising current and emerging issues and opportunities

Council continued to engage and lead input into the coastal reform process set up under the Act, by providing considered and expert advice; through its research initiatives; and through providing a conduit for Traditional Owners and stakeholder voices.

1.2 Purpose and Function

Section 16 of the Act outlines Council's functions and accountabilities in relation to the Responsible Minister. Council has continued to prioritise, and work closely with DELWP, throughout the finalisation of the state-wide Strategy and on providing guidance and strategic advice to the Minister on matters requiring scientific research.

1.3 Advice to the Minister

Council maintained an active advisory role both in responding to requests for information and through raising topics of importance, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Council provided advice to the Minister throughout 2021-22 in a number of areas:

- Publication of the *'Literature Review on Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts'*.
- 'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts' project updates (due to be completed late in 2022).

- Emphasising the importance of State leadership on marine and coastal issues and of empowering land managers with the confidence to lead decisions on complex issues.

Indirect advice to the the Minister occurred through advice to DELWP leadership covering several topics:

- Advice to assist the finalisation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- Contributions to the draft Coastal and Marine Management Plan Guidelines
- Contributions to the ongoing development of the framework and guidance for Marine Spatial Planning
- Contributions to the Victoria's Resilient Coast Guidelines,
- Contributions to guidelines for existing bathing boxes and boatsheds and
- High level advice regarding planning considerations for the development of a proposed offshore windfarm industry in Victoria, and the potential opportunities provided by the Marine Spatial Planning framework in the Marine and Coastal Policy to assist with large scale multi-sectoral planning.

1.4 Highlights/performance against functions

1.4.1 Traditional Owner Partnerships

Since its inception, the Council has been committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully empower Victoria's diverse Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and achieve their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

During this term, the Minister appointed two members with a First Nations background to Council, broadening the diversity of experience and perspectives in the Council. New members also added vital additional expertise to Council across the areas of environment governance, aquatic science, small business, and the application of policy and regulation. The Council continues to support broader Traditional Owner inclusion and self-determination in marine and coastal planning and management.

1.4.2 Developing the Marine and Coastal Strategy

Throughout its first term, the development of the Policy and Strategy have been a primary focus of the Council as key tools in progressing the reform agenda of the Act. This phase concluded with the launch of the Strategy toward the end of the financial year in May 2022.

VMaCC continued to use stakeholder informed and evidence based advice to influence and support the finalisation of the Strategy. The final documents

include a range of actions for stakeholder collaboration aligned with objectives of the Policy and Act, with a strong focus on Traditional Owner guidance as well as adapting to climate change and associated sea level rise, storms and erosion.

The Strategy development process was a successful opportunity to strengthen Traditional Owner and stakeholder participation in marine and coastal planning by building and integrating robust collaborative relationships into the process.

1.4.3 Research and Evidence Base

Under the Act, the Council is required to advise the Minister on research needs and gaps. Chaired by Council member, Professor Alistar Robertson, the multi-disciplinary Science Panel supports the Council to provide independent, evidence-based and credible scientific advice with an environmental, social, and economic 'whole of coastal and marine' perspective. During this term the following research, projects and advice were either commissioned or delivered:

- **The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts.** This study led by the University of Melbourne, was commissioned by Council in partnership with Lifesaving Victoria and with support from DELWP in 2021. The study is investigating and modelling the costs of projected climate change damages on coastal communities and assets, and will consider the relative costs of investment in adaptation measures to avoid or mitigate these impacts. Research, modelling and drafted of the report was advanced, with a further body of work developed to ensure the necessarily complex economics can be understood by a non-economist audience. The work will be finalised in late 2022. Council considers this a critically important project that will enable the provision of robust, evidence-based and costed advice to the Victorian Government and community on preparing for sea-level rise (SLR). Work is ongoing and the intention is to release the report publicly following work across Government to understand the implications of the findings for Victorians.
- **Literature Review – Communicating climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments to their human communities.** The review was finalised and published in November 2021. The review, led by the University of Adelaide, was commissioned by Council to aid the development of an effective strategy for Victoria on public communication about the impacts of climate change on coastal and marine environments. The Council sought a review of scientific literature on multi-target communication strategies and recommendations on best-practice approaches to optimise communications with the community about the impacts of climate change in marine and coastal

environments. The objective was to deliver strategic advice to support immediate and long-term planning. The report is available online at https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/558664/VMCC0009_Climate_Change_Impacts_Report_v13.pdf.

- **State of the Marine and Coast Reporting.** The report was published by the Commissioner Environmental Sustainability in December 2021. VMaCC together with members of the Science Panel previously assisted with the development of Marine Indicators. The VMaCC Chair is a member of the Commissioners Reference Group, with Councillor Dr Rohan Henry also serving as an independent expert on the Reference Group. Under section 37 of the Act, a State of the Marine and Coastal Environment (SMCE) Report is required within 5 years of making a Marine and Coastal Policy. The Office for the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) is the responsible body for delivering this work under the Act.

The Council also wrote a letter of support for a proposal to develop a Blue Carbon Centre of Expertise led by Professor Peter Macreddie of Deakin University.

1.4.4 Stakeholder Informed

The Council continued to use stakeholder insights from this year and previous extensive workshops with stakeholders from across the marine and coastal sector. One of this Council's signature commitments has been the enabling the voice of stakeholders to be heard in marine and coastal planning and management both through the development of the Strategy, and through ongoing advocacy.



Port Cambell National Park. Scott Watson

1.4.5 Highlights against Council functions

Section 16 of the Act includes 11 functions of the Council. These functions are outlined below including a high-level summary of deliverables against each from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Functions	Deliverable
<i>Function (a) and (b)</i> Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy development and implementation	The Council worked closely with DELWP in finalising the Marine and Coastal Strategy (see section 1.1.2). A continuing focus was inclusion of Traditional Owners in the development of the Strategy as well as facilitating a stakeholder-informed process.
<i>Function (c)</i> Provide advice to the Minister on significant decisions under the Act	Council maintained and consolidated its strong relationship with the Minister by providing advice on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate change and associated storm surge and sea level rise leadership and management on marine and coastal issues
<i>Function (d)</i> Matters requiring scientific research	The Council worked with members of the multi-disciplinary Science Panel (later revised as the Expert Advisory Panel) to develop and deliver projects as part of priority focus areas (see section 1.4.4). A key project that was significantly progressed over the year was the Economic Impacts from Sea Level Rise and Storm Surge. The Council members have a strong skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Marine Science Committee (NMSC) Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature Based Coastal Defence Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) Stakeholder Reference Group Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan's (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group (SARG) Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC IMOS) A national pilot of the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment approach (a priority action of the National Marine Science Strategy led by the NMSC).
<i>Function (e)</i> Provide advice on guidelines prepared under the Act	Council provided advice on preparing the following draft guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal and Marine Management Plan guidelines Victoria's Resilient Coast guidelines Guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds on marine and coastal Crown Land Marine Spatial Planning guidelines
<i>Function (f) and (g)</i> Request the Minister establish Regional and Strategic Partnerships(RASP) & provide advice to participants	Council liaised with the Inverloch RaSP (known as the Cape to Cape resilience project) and provided advice to DELWP regarding the proposed Western Port and Port Phillip Bay RaSP (now in transition). Council strongly advocated developing RaSP Guidelines to guide these partnerships. The Minister did not seek VMaCC advice regarding establishing any other RaSPs, nor did VMaCC make any suggestions to Minister regarding further RaSPs during the year.
<i>Function (h)</i> Provide input to the preparation of Environmental Management Plans under the Act	The Council will provide input into preparing Environmental Management Plans (EMP) as required. Currently the Port Phillip Bay EMP is the only EMP under the Act. The Council is a member of the Port Phillip Bay EMP Senior Agency Reference Group providing advice (as required) on the priorities and emerging issues and/or risks that may impact implementation.

<p><i>Function (i)</i></p> <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act</p>	<p>Supporting the preparation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy as a key document to assist in the administration of the Act has been the focus for the Council over the past year.</p> <p>In this year, Council had no requirement to draw the Minister's attention to any specific matters relating to, or affecting, the administration of the Act.</p>
<p><i>Function (j)</i></p> <p>Carry out any other function conferred on Council by or under the Act or any other Act</p>	<p>The Act is complemented by the Marine and Coastal Policy and the Marine and Coastal Strategy which identify a program of reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Policy and Strategy reflect the objectives and guiding principle set under the Act.</p> <p>The Council has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these reforms and actions are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable Traditional Owner voices, stakeholders and the community.</p>
<p>(2) In performing its functions Council must have regard to principles and objectives of the Act.</p>	<p>The Council vision is that of the Policy: for a healthy marine and coastal environment now and, in the future, which is to be achieved by giving effect to the principles and objectives of the Act. . The principles are used as the framework for decision-making for the Victorian marine and coastal environment within the Marine and Coastal Policy (DELWP, 2020).</p> <p>The objectives of the Act relate to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. They define rights and aspirations, and set measures and arrangements designed to ensure these are met. Council always considers the principles and objectives of the Act in its decisions, activities and advice.</p>



Above: Dr Ian Knuckey presenting a Marine and Coastal Award to Ralph Roob, Strategic Coastal Planner, City of Greater Geelong

1.4.6 Presentations given, and workshop contributions, by Council members and staff

Council members and staff gave the following presentations and contributed to workshops and panel discussions shown in the table below.

Presenter	Presented To	Topic	Date
Dr Boxshall	Coast to Coast 2021 Conference – Cairns (Online Attendance only)	Addressing the (sea) elephant in the room: coastal climate resilience, commerce and communities – collaboration is key. The presentation is available online here: https://coasttocoastconference.com.au/2580	26-29 July 2021
Ms Fraser	Gunai Kurnai Land and Waters Corporation	Marine and Coastal Awards presentation	8 July 2021
Dr Boxshall	DELWP and the Council	Workshop - Implementing Victoria's Marine Spatial Planning Framework Update and discussion on marine and coastal data	6 August 2021
Dr Boxshall Ms Atkinson Dr Henry	DELWP	Marine and Coastal Strategy briefing	2 September 2021
VMaCC	DELWP and TO Corporations	Marine and Coastal Strategy Consultation Debrief Meeting	27 September 2021
Dr Knuckey	Ralph Roob, Strategic Coastal Planner, City of Greater Geelong	Marine and Coastal Awards presentation (see image below).	14 October 2021
Dr Boxshall	Stakeholders	Climate Change and Coastal Erosion: The Great Ocean Road	18, 19 & 21 October 2021
Dr Boxshall	DELWP	Aboriginal Self Determination Director Program	17 November 2021
VMaCC	DELWP	Public Entity Director Governance - Director Program	22 November 2021
Dr Boxshall	Minister's Office	Brief on VMaCC Coastal economics impact report progress	15 December 2021
Dr Boxshall	Deputy Secretary, Environment and Climate Change, DELWP	Briefing: VMaCC Coastal Climate Economics report progress	21 December 2021
Dr Boxshall	VAGO	VAGO & Victorian Marine and Coastal Council - planning meeting for Protecting Coastal Assets follow up review	25 March 2021
Dr Boxshall	Port Phillip EcoCentre	Marine and Coastal Award Presentation	20 April 2022
Dr Boxshall	New South Wales Coastal Council	Victorian Marine and Coastal Management priorities, and the new Act	26 April 2022
Dr Boxshall	Nous Group	Nous, Allens and the Marine and Coastal Council - Victoria's Planning Framework for Offshore Wind	29 June 2022

1.4.7 General Business Activities

The Council business activities involved:

- advising and meeting with the office of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- providing considered feedback and input to the finalisation of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- supporting DELWP in public consultation sessions as part of the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- partnering with Traditional Owners in the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy by joint participation in Strategy development sessions with DELWP
- engaging with Traditional Owners to understand healthy Country objectives and how best to embed a Traditional Owner voice in Council business.
- engaging with stakeholders and partners through forums, working groups and meetings
- engaging the Science Panel members for involvement in Council priority projects
- progressing and finalising Council priority projects including
 - the *'Literature Review on Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts'*.
 - the *'Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts'* together with preparation of a comprehensive summary report that includes VMaCC recommendations.
- responding to local government councils with comments on draft Coastal and Marine Management Plans
- providing feedback to DELWP and lead agencies on preparing and developing the following draft Guidelines:
 - Coastal and Marine Management Plan guidelines
 - Victoria's Resilient Coast guidelines
 - Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines
 - Guidelines for the management of existing bathing boxes and boatsheds on marine and coastal Crown Land

1.4.8 Council Business Plan

The Council continued to adopt the Strategic Business Plan 2019–21 which provides the vision and strategic direction for Council activities. A copy of the existing business plan can be found online at: https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/447168/VMCC0002_Plan_On_A_Page_A4_Brochure_v12_FINAL.pdf.

Priorities outlined in the Business Plan continued to reflect the functions of Council as outlined in the Act, key issues, outcomes, and responses to emerging challenges. It remained relevant into 2022 as its key activities included the finalisation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy.

As the Strategy drew to completion, VMaCC held two workshops to create the Business Plan for the operation of the Council over the next two years, to be finalised in October 2022.

COVID-19 Adjustment Statement

The constraints of COVIDSafe settings required continuation of an agile and flexible approach to enable the operation of the Council and, in particular, to ensure the access and input of stakeholders into the development of the Strategy. During the last year, Council continued to adapt its timetable to facilitate stakeholder engagement to maximise safety and connection while maintaining a high standard of service delivery.



Red Algae. John Sherwood.

2. Governance and Organisational Structure

The Council is resourced with a budget and Secretariat support through DELWP. On 30 June 2022 the Council was supported by 2 staff (1.6 full time equivalent).

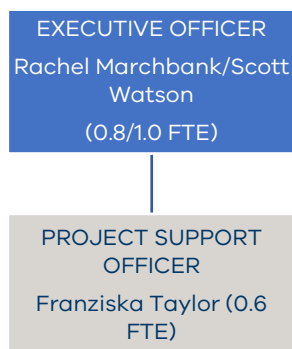


Figure 1: Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Secretariat Organisational Structure

The Council's office is located at 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne Victoria 3002.

The postal address for the Council is PO Box 500, East Melbourne Victoria 8002.

Telephone: 9637 8893

Email: vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au

Website: www.marineandcoastalcoouncil.vic.gov.au

2.1 Council Membership

Appointments to the Council are made under the provisions of the Act by the Minister for Environment and Climate Action. Both professional experience and capacity in networking and stakeholder engagement were key considerations in appointing the Council. This resulted in a high calibre membership whose expertise covers a broad range of marine and coastal disciplines. This expertise, combined with stakeholder-informed evidence gathered by Council, provides a base for advice to the Ministers responsible for Victoria's marine and coastal environments. Brief biographies of current Council members follow.

Members of the Council were appointed on 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2023 (J. Fraser, I. Knuckey, A. Robertson and J. Sherwood) and to 31 July 2024 (A. Boxshall, M. Atkinson, A. Grage, R. Henry, J. White) include:

(Chairperson)

Dr Anthony Boxshall is a marine ecologist by trade who has worked in Australia and the USA across government, academia and private industry. He is the founder and Principal of Science into Action Pty Ltd, a science impact company turning great science into greater actions. He was the valedictory Chair of the Victorian Coastal Council. Anthony is a former National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) – the largest learned society for professional marine scientists in Australia; he has worked at UC Santa Cruz USA; Deakin University; and has been on several innovation boards. A current Melbourne Enterprise Fellow in the School of Biosciences at the University of Melbourne, a Board member of Parks Victoria, he ran the Science area at the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Victoria for nearly a decade.



As a hobby, he has communicated the wonders of the marine environment to a broad audience through the award-winning "Radio Marinara" on 3RRR-FM in Melbourne for more than 26 years. He is a dad to 4 children who continually amaze, inspire, frustrate and leave him in awe of the potential of the future and hence more determined to leave a positive coastal and marine legacy.

Ms Jacquie White (Deputy Chair)

has over 20 years experience working in the environment sector across coastal management, catchment management, integrated water management, community and stakeholder engagement, organisational change and capacity building, and social research and evaluation.



She is currently the Executive Officer of the Association of Bayside Municipalities and runs a consultancy providing event management and stakeholder engagement services.

Jacquie's previous professional roles include: General Manager of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Manager Community Programs at Melbourne Water, Director at the Office of Living Victoria, and Manager of Organisational Transformation with the Country Fire Authority.

Ms Marianne Atkinson has a professional history in the areas of Government, Human Services, Education & Training, Family Violence Policy, Systems & Reform, Aboriginal Affairs and community organisations. Ms Atkinson is expert in developing policy and strategy, providing advice to regional and strategic partnerships, and understanding of issues relevant to Aboriginal people. She has expertise in working with community members and professionals to co-design and develop effective processes for the evaluation and validation of programs, systems and structures.



She has broad experience leading, coordination and liaising with community groups and preparing and facilitating state-wide strategies in response to community needs that work toward improving outcomes through adoption of new practices and systems of change that progress ideas and transform thoughts into action driven solutions.

Ms Atkinson is currently in partnership as a business owner specialising in creative design, innovation, and development of a range of products, in addition to employment at RMIT in the role of VE Co facilitator delivering the Diploma of Community Services. Her fields of study include Business, Business Analytics, Education, and Data Analysis.

She is currently the Co-Chairperson Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group (National representatives), Australian War Memorial, Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management, and the subcommittee Audit and risk committee for 8 years.

Ms Jennifer Fraser has several governance and advisory roles. In addition to membership of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, she is a Commissioner with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. Previously she was a board member of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, a sessional member of Planning Panels Victoria, a member, then Chair, of the Medley Hall Council at the University of Melbourne and a member of the board of Westside Community Circus.



She has consulted to different levels of government and has 20 years policy, legislative and management experience across the Victorian public sector. In

addition to a range of senior water and natural resource management roles within the (then) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Jennifer has worked in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Health, and Education.

Jennifer has qualifications in Geography and Law and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors

Dr Anna Grage has a background in marine environmental law and planning, and statutory (urban/environmental) planning. She has a Bachelor of Laws, a Bachelor of Planning and Design (Hons), and a PhD (University of Wollongong) that focuses on Australian legal frameworks for marine environmental impact assessment. In the past, Anna has worked as a lecturer at the Australian Maritime College/University of Tasmania, teaching in the areas of international ocean governance, environmental advocacy, and marine environmental and fisheries law and policy.



Anna has also worked in Victoria and Western Australia as a statutory planner for local government, and as a solicitor in the areas of planning and environmental law; with her most recent local government role being with Mornington Peninsula Shire. Anna is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide, is on the Deakin University Environmental Science Advisory Board, Principal Consultant of Earth-Sea Planning, and a volunteer for the Sea Search (Parks Victoria) program/Friends of Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary, and the Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

Dr Rohan Henry is an experienced project manager with over 20 years working extensively in the environmental sector, in the areas of policy development and environmental impact assessments and approvals. He's a skilled Indigenous engagement adviser with significant experience collaborating and partnering with Traditional Owner Corporations and their communities. He possesses a unique understanding of water, marine and coastal-related policy, programs and approvals and the critical interactions these have with Traditional Owner groups and their communities.



Rohan continues to practice as an independent consultant working across water, renewable energy, and fisheries sectors in both Victoria and NSW.

Rohan is currently a Non-Executive Director, South East Water Corporation; Non-Executive Director, One Basin CRC; Deputy Chair, Committee on Aboriginal Water Interests (DCCEEW); Chair, Maribyrnong Integrated Water Management Forum; Member, Independent Panel for the Central Region & Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy; Independent Member, Project Control Group, Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project; and member, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council.

Rohan has a PhD in marine and coastal ecology and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Ian Knuckey is the Director of Fishwell Consulting, a company that provides expert research advice and consulting services to encourage and promote sustainable fishing practices. He has a PhD in fisheries population dynamics, a BSc (Hons) in Marine Ecology and over 25 years of experience in temperate and tropical fisheries research and management, encompassing a wide variety of invertebrate, finfish and shark fisheries.



Ian has worked with many fisheries around Australia and in South-east Asia, providing research advice and running various fishery-independent surveys, monitoring programs and bycatch reduction projects. More recently, he has been leading capacity building programs to ensure Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers can have greater understanding and input into fisheries research and management.

Professor Emeritus Alistar Robertson has had extensive field research experience as a marine and freshwater ecologist in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Western Australia, Canada, USA, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. He has worked in universities and research agencies in Australia, Canada and the



USA. At the Australian Institute of Marine Science he was Senior Principal Research Scientist and leader of the Coastal Processes and Resources Program. At the University of Western Australia he was Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) before retiring in 2013.

Awards have recognised his commitment to multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research on marine and coastal research and the translation of that research into action. He has been a member of many state, national and international committees providing advice on the management of terrestrial, marine, coastal and catchment habitats in the face of local and global change. He also provides advice to universities and government agencies on research, research collaborations and research impact.

Honorary Associate Professor John Sherwood

holds qualifications in science, education and environmental studies, with extensive experience as a research scientist in freshwater, marine and estuarine systems and environmental management. He is Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University in Warrnambool. John is chair of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority's Coast and Marine Working Group, an informal advisory and networking group for agencies and local government.



John has chaired the former Fisheries Co-management Council, served as National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association and has been a member of the Western Coastal Board and the Victorian National Parks Advisory Council. John was recognised as Warrnambool City Council's 2017 Citizen of the Year and holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Victorian Coastal Council.

2.2 Council Meetings

In a COVID interrupted year, Council held 7.5 meetings on the following dates throughout 2021-22 as follows:

- 5 July 2021
- 6 September 2021
- 18 October 2021
- 29 – 30 November 2021
- 13 December 2021 (0.5)
- 7 February 2022
- 28 March 2022
- 23 May 2022

Member attendance for the Council's 7.5 business meetings in 2021-22 are as follows:

▪ Dr Anthony Boxshall	7.5
▪ Ms Marianne Atkinson	6.5
▪ Ms Jennifer Fraser	7.5
▪ Dr Anna Grage	7.5
▪ Dr Rohan Henry	5
▪ Dr Ian Knuckey	7.5
▪ Prof Emer Alistar Robertson	7.5
▪ Dr John Sherwood	7.5
▪ Ms Jacquie White	7.5

*Noting M. Atkinson and R. Henry were appointed from 1 Aug 2021 and hence did not attend the 5 July 2021 meeting.

2.3 Representation on stakeholder reference groups

Council membership on stakeholder reference groups in 2020-21 financial year was as follows:

- National Marine Science Committee – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) Stakeholder Reference Group – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Senior Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting for Nature-Based Coastal Defence at University of Melbourne – Dr Anna Grage
- Technical Advisory Group for the State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report 2021 (SMCER 2021) Professor Alistar Robertson
- Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan's (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group (SARG) – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC IMOS) – Professor Alistar Robertson
- Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group – Ms Jennifer Fraser

2.4 Council sub-committees

The Council members were involved in the following Council committees to guide and progress strategic projects and activities:

- Science Panel Sub-Committee, which was redefined as the Expert Advisory Panel in April 2022.
- Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards Sub-Committee
- Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee
- Economics Project Sub-Committee
- Marine Spatial Planning Sub-Committee
- Sea Country Co-Governance Group



Diverse coastal users, Williamstown. Franzi Taylor.

2.5 Presentations received at Council meetings

The Council received the following presentations at its meetings in 2021-22:

Presenter	Topic	Date
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy)	Other functions under the Act and reflections on working with VMaCC.	5 July 2021
DELWP (Elizabeth Patterson and Nicola Waldron, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	6 September 2021
DELWP (Karen Lau, Deputy Secretary Environment and Climate Change and W. Guthrie, Director Land Policy)	Critical priorities for VMaCC and for the coast and marine.	6 September 2021
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer; Tarryn Coward, Policy Officer) & Traditional Owner Corporations (Lisa Hocking, GLaWAC; John Clarke, Eastern Maar; Damien Bell and Jodie Honan, Gunditj Mirring)	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	18 October 2021
Dr Vanessa Bowden, Research fellow and Lecturer, University of Newcastle	Lake Macquarie Climate Change Adaptation	16 November 2021
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Elizabeth Patterson, Co-Managers Policy & Strategy)	DELWP and VMaCC strategic planning (DELWP priorities and directions and VMaCC actions in the Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy)	30 November 2021
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Elizabeth Patterson, Co-Manager Policy & Strategy Unit; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	7 February 2022
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron, Co-Manager Policy & Strategy Unit; Dr Rachel Manassa, Senior Policy Officer)	Marine Spatial Planning	28 March 2022
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Elizabeth Patterson, Co-Manager Policy & Strategy Unit; Dr Elisa Zavadil, Project Manager, Victoria's Resilient Coast; Rohan Snartt, Senior Policy Officer, Victoria's Resilient Coast)	Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+	28 March 2022
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Elizabeth Patterson and Nicola Waldron, Co-Managers Policy & Strategy Unit; Angeline Charles, Manager Statewide Coastal Programs; Dr Elisa Zavadil, Project Manager, Victoria's Resilient Coast)	The application of the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and associated guidance into practice	28 March 2022
DELWP (Angeline Charles, Manager Statewide Coastal Programs)	Statewide Coastal Program governance and delivery	28 March 2022
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Colleen White; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Update on the Marine and Coastal Strategy process and release, and Statewide regional coastal matters and connecting VMaCC with regional coastal managers.	23 May 2022

DELWP (Kate Edwards, Project Director, Offshore Wind)	DELWP Offshore Wind Policy	23 May 2022
Port Phillip EcoCentre (April Seymore, Executive Officer; Neil Blake OAM, Port Phillip Baykeeper)	Port Phillip EcoCentre citizen science-based community outreach program	23 May 2022
Prof. Tom Kompas, University of Melbourne	VMaCC Economics Project Q&A Session with Prof. Tom Kompas	24 May 2022



Gannet Colony, Portland. John Sherwood.

2.6 Submissions by Council

There were no Council submissions in 2021-22.

2.7 Council Publications

In 2021-22 Council commissioned and published a 'Literature Review on Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts' by Professor Melissa Nursey-Bray. The paper provides information on how the State of Victoria could build an effective communications strategy for its marine and coastal communities.

The literature review is available on Council's website at:

https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/558664/VMCC0009_Climate_Change_Impacts_Report_v13.pdf

2.8 Conferences and Seminars

There was one conference attended by Council members during 2021-22. Three Council members (Anthony Boxshall, Jennifer Fraser and Anna Grage) attended the National Coast to Coast Conference, online from 27 to 29 July 2021.

2.9 Statement of Pecuniary Interests

All members of the Council and the Executive Officer have completed declarations of pecuniary interest for the current reporting period including details of shares held by members.

2.10 Performance

Due to COVID and the recent appointment of two new Councillors, the Council delayed conducting a self-assessment of performance this year. Instead, an independent review is planned for 2022-23.

2.11 Risk Management

While the Council examines the risks associated with the delivery of its work functions and objectives on an ongoing basis, it relies on DELWP's risk management framework and internal audit of financial and other administrative systems used by the Council's Secretariat as outlined in the DELWP Annual Report.

2.12 Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Operations are managed in accordance with DELWP procedures and guidelines for occupational health and safety, industrial relations, and related issues as outlined in the DELWP Annual Report.

2.13 Employment and Conduct Principles

The Council uses DELWP processes. The Council and DELWP are committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably based on the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination. Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

Consistent with requirements of the *Public Administration Act 2004*, the Council has adopted a range of policies designed to promote good governance in all its decision making and operations. These policies comprise: Code of Conduct; Conflict of Interest; Dispute Resolution; Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality; Meetings and Decision Making; and Performance Assessment.



Dinghy regatta below the McCrae Lighthouse, Victoria. Scott Watson

3. Workforce Data

3.1 Workforce Data

On 30 June 2022 the Council was supported by two staff (1.6 full time equivalent). Across the year, the proportion of women employed was 93 per cent.

3.2 Women, Youth and Indigenous Affairs

The Council is committed to involving Victoria's community, including women, youth and Aboriginal

Victorians in the management and enjoyment of the coast. The Act identifies actions to implement indigenous cultural outcomes and to improve communications with Aboriginal communities in coastal areas. Council's Business Plan includes actions to strengthen community involvement in coastal planning and management and the Council operates in an environment that ensures equity of processes and participation by rights' holders and stakeholders.

4. Other Disclosures

4.1 Freedom of Information (FOI)

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by the Council. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by the Council. This comprises documents both created by the Council or supplied to the Council by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes.

The FOI Act allows the Council to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include Cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to the Council in-confidence.

The FOI Act has been amended to reduce processing time for requests received to 30 days. However, when external consultation is required the processing time automatically reverts to 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur a number of times.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by DELWP, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

4.2 Making a Request

The Council operates in accordance with FOI procedures established through DELWP. No FOI requests were made to the Council in 2021-22.

The Council has determined that DELWP is its

authorised officer. FOI requests can be lodged online at www.foi.vic.gov.au. An application fee of \$30.60 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material is time consuming. Access to documents can also be obtained by writing to the Department's Freedom of Information Unit, as detailed in section 17 of the FOI Act:

Manager FOI

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
PO Box 500 East Melbourne Victoria 3002

Email: foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au

Phone: (03) 7022 6530.

Further information about the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act, regulations made under the FOI Act and foi.vic.gov.au.

4.3 Compliance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body. The Council is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

What is a public interest disclosure?

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

'Detrimental action' is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

How do I make a public interest disclosure?

You can make a public interest disclosure about the Council or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

The Council is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

The Council has established procedures for the

protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about the Council, its members, officers or employees. You can access the Council's procedures on its website at: www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-us/about-vmacc.

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Internet: www.ibac.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

4.4 Office-based Environmental Impacts

The Council makes use of DELWP offices and facilities to perform its functions and the reporting requirement

of the office is met by DELWP. The Council Secretariat participates fully in a range of environmental programs operating within DELWP.

4.5 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Other information held at the Council's office is available on request, subject to the FOI Act.

4.6 Compliance with Data Vic Access Policy

Consistent with the Victorian Government's DataVic Access policy, the Council intends that data tables which it may produce in the future will be available at:

<http://data.vic.gov.au/> in machine readable format.

4.7 Overseas Travel

There was no overseas travel by Council members for VMaCC purposes in 2021-22.



5. Council expenditure

5.1 Expenditure and Financial Management

Council's operating budget is provided within the budget of DELWP. Financial operations of the Council have not been separately audited. Audited statements are incorporated into the overall financial statements of the DELWP Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2022. It is considered unnecessary for Council to retain a separate audit committee.

DELWP undertakes an annual assessment of financial management compliance with all applicable requirements in the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Standing Directions and Instructions. This includes the financial management of the Council's activities. DELWP also periodically audits this compliance.

The following table shows the operating expenditure of the Council for the 2021-22 financial year (excluding salaries and agency staff costs) and provides a comparison with the previous year. Costs were less overall due in part to online meetings and a smaller number of projects.

5.2 Operating Position

Summary of Financial Results of the Year

Financial Year	Council operations*
2021-22	\$216,682
2020-21	\$332,337

* Includes all members' sitting fees, reimbursements, payroll tax, superannuation contribution, WorkCover levy, secretariat expenses, training, and items such as annual report, consultants and events.

5.2.1 Consultancy Expenditure

Nil

5.2.2 Government Advertising

Nil

6. Abbreviations and Acronyms

DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FOI	Freedom of Information
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
IPCC	United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MSPF	Marine Spatial Planning Framework
OCES	Office for the Commissioner of Environmental Sustainability
PPB EMP	Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan
RaSP	Regional and Strategic Partnership
SRG	Stakeholder Reference Group
SMCE	State of the Marine and Coastal Environment
VIC IMOS	Victoria Integrated Marine Observing System



Australian Fur Seals, Cape Bridgwater. John Sherwood.