



**VICTORIAN MARINE
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT 2018–19





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Photo Acknowledgements

Contact Victorian Marine & Coastal Council office for further
information.

**The Victorian Marine & Coastal Council respectfully acknowledges
the original custodians of what is now known as Victoria; their rich
culture, deep affinity with the land and spiritual connection to it.**

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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 August 2018 to 30 June 2019.



Anthony Boxshall PhD GAICD BSc
Chair, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council
24 September, 2019

Chair's Foreword

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (the Council) consists of seven members who have networks from across Victoria and expertise spanning marine environments, coasts, planning, law, physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and much more. Our purpose is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas.

The vision of the Council is a healthy marine and coastal environment, now and in the future.

In its inaugural year the Council developed its 2019 – 2021 Business Plan that outlines strategic deliverables against our eleven functions under the Act. The Plan makes tangible the principles and objectives of the new Act and continues to deliver the government's marine and coastal reform agenda outlined in *Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan*.

The major initiatives for the Council this year included supporting the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) in development of the Marine and Coastal Policy, and associated Marine Spatial Planning Framework, due for release at the end of the year; formation of a multi-disciplinary Science Panel to inform and advise Council on priority research initiatives; and co-chairing with Traditional Owners the Sea Country Co-governance Group, facilitated by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC). FVTOC aims include providing a pathway to incorporate Traditional Owner rights, aspirations and knowledge into marine and coastal planning and management.

The Council hosted Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing provided an opportunity to gain a shared understanding of the challenges of the climate change crisis and our increasing population growth for coastal communities with leaders across government and risk and planning peak bodies. This continuing conversation is an important focus for the Council to ensure Victoria is best placed to respond to the adaptations required. The Council is focused on ensuring the state's policy

and strategy settings enable a healthy and marine and coastal environment for Victorians, now and in the future.

The Council was also busy with the Act's new strategic tools of marine and coastal planning and management including consideration of Regional and Strategic Partnerships and Coastal and Marine Management Plans. It is envisaged products of these new tools will be finalised within the next twelve months and will provide a more integrated approach to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. The Council is also supporting DELWP to update guidelines that will assist coastal managers transition to the new Act, including the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast and Coastal and Marine Management Plan Guidelines.

The Council thanks the previous regional coastal boards and Victorian Coastal Council for their important work in assisting to create the new Act, policy and strategy which are built on the framework and traditions created under their oversight and guidance. We will continue to celebrate and honour the many Victorian coastal and marine champions and have begun planning for Marine and Coastal Awards next year.

We look forward to guiding the implementation of the new legislation with its clear mandate for integration of planning and managing of our marine environment with catchments and coast; acknowledgment of Traditional Owner rights, aspirations and knowledge, and planning for adaptation of our communities, industries and environment under climate change.

1. Year in Review

1.1 Establishment of Council

On 1 August 2018 the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* came into effect. The Act establishes principles and objectives for an integrated and co-ordinated approach to planning and managing the marine and coastal environment. The Council is established under the Act as an advisory body to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The responsible Minister for the period 1 August 2018 to 30 June 2019 was the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The new Act embeds the marine environment into an already complex land planning and management mix and sets up a reform agenda which emphasises integration and coordination across marine and coastal environs. Significantly, the new Act highlights climate change adaptation and the integration of the rights, aspirations and knowledge of Traditional Owner groups as key objectives. It also underscores the need for evidence-based decision making and stakeholder consultation. The functions it outlines for the new Council include a strong overarching strategic component.

In the context of this vision for strategic change and renewal, the new Council has wasted no time in consolidating and forging new partnerships to assist with the role of engaging and leading input into the reform process.

1.2 Purpose and Functions

The purpose of the Council is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas. The Council highlights, from August 2018 to June 2019, demonstrate how we have worked with Traditional Owners, researchers, government and the Victorian community to achieve our purpose.

The Act outlines Council's eleven (11) functions and accountabilities in relation to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change who is responsible for developing a statewide marine and coastal policy and strategy, along with other initiatives. The Council in its inaugural year has prioritised, and worked closely with DELWP, on development of the Marine and Coastal Policy in addition to delivering on its other functions.

1.3 Highlights

1.3.1 Marine and Coastal Policy Development

The Council worked closely with DELWP to prepare a draft Marine and Coastal Policy for public consultation including chairing the Stakeholder Reference Group that included key representative groups across the marine and coastal sectors. As part of this process, the Council has planned for regional visits to hear community views on the draft Policy from community and stakeholders.

The Policy will guide decision-makers (including local councils, coast and marine managers, and asset managers) to deliver coordinated and consistent planning and management and ensure the sustainable use of our coastal and marine environments. It will provide statewide direction on a range of issues such as dealing with the impacts of climate change, population growth and ageing coastal structures.

The draft Policy is strengthened by the principles and objectives of the new Act and builds on the strengths of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014. There is a greater focus on the marine environment, recognition and respect of the rights, and knowledge of Traditional Owners, embedding climate change in all aspects of our planning and providing guidance on roles and responsibilities.

The final Policy will be 'made' by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change by the end of 2019.



Victorian Marine and Coastal Council members 2018–19



Marine Symposium – RACV Club Melbourne, January 2019

1.3.1 Marine Spatial Planning Framework

The Council supported the DELWP co-design process in the development of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF) that commenced 31 January 2019 with a Marine Symposium held in Melbourne. Dr Anthony Boxshall, Council Chair, co-hosted the symposium and members of the Council participated in co-design workshops.

Under the new Act, the Policy must include a MSPF which outlines a process for creating marine plans in Victoria so that industry, government and the community can work together to better plan how we protect and use the marine environment.

This Framework sets out a process for achieving integrated and coordinated planning and management of the marine environment. Co-designed with marine stakeholders, it provides guidance for how the many sectors associated with the marine environment can work together to provide for existing and future uses and overcome challenges.

The MSPF will provide a reference for consideration by marine sectors when undertaking planning and management activities and decision making. It should

also be used to guide any marine spatial planning processes that occur in Victoria, outputs (marine plans) that result from these processes, and subsequent implementation

The MSPF will also address integration with land and catchment planning, and across jurisdiction boundaries (State-State and State-Commonwealth).

1.3.2 Science Panel

Building on a long tradition of independent scientific advisory capacity, the Council convened a multi-disciplinary Science Panel in February 2019. Applications were invited from a broad range of research disciplines and members were appointed based on the following criteria:

- scientific credibility and reputation of the individual
- broad range of disciplines related to management of coastal and marine ecosystems and environments
- knowledge of, and experience relevant to the Victorian coastal and marine environments
- recognition of system-wide links and the need for broad perspective, including catchment to coast to marine areas
- awareness of long-term and large-scale environmental and social change.



Science Panel Workshop - Dr Anthony Boxshall in action with other Science Panel members.

Membership also considered current and emerging leaders in their respective fields and gender diversity.

Chaired by Council member, Professor Alistar Robertson, the Science Panel provides independent, strategic, scientific advice to the Council on evolving marine and coastal issues and knowledge gaps. The Panel supports the Council to provide independent, evidence-based and credible scientific advice with an environment, social and economic “whole of coastal and marine” perspective.

Specifically, the Science Panel’s functions are to:

- provide scientific input about Victoria’s coastal and marine environment to the Council, to assist it to advise the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- advise the Council about priority coastal and marine issues requiring attention
- as requested, identify and inform the Council about emerging issues and knowledge gaps relevant to Victoria’s coastal and marine environment
- provide input and advice to the Council on preparation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, and issue/theme-based reports and other Council activities as requested.

In this endeavour, the Panel has participated in an initial workshop to review previously identified marine and coastal emerging issues and identify key activities of the Science Panel to support the Council. Priority actions will focus on development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy (2020).

Science Panel members have also been included in other Council activities, such as the Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing to promote an understanding of the Councils focus areas with the Science Panel.

1.3.3 Sea Country Co-Governance Group

The Council was pleased to be asked by Traditional Owners to co-chair the Sea Country Co-Governance Group (SeaCoGG) facilitated by FVTOC. The purpose of SeaCoGG is to listen to the strategic direction and advice of Traditional Owners highlighting the rights, interests and aspirations that have been identified

in Sea Country strategic framework, and to look for strategic opportunities to embed them through the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Act.

The aim is for SeaCoGG to be an enduring institution which is co-governed by the State of Victoria with Traditional Owners for which the following specific objectives have been identified:

- overseeing the marine and coastal (Sea Country) program
- providing a forum for Traditional Owner Corporations along the coast to be able to provide advice to the Victorian Government on Traditional Owner interests in the development of new Marine and Coastal policy and strategy
- implementing the strategic framework developed as part of the *Assessment of Aboriginal Cultural Values for the Marine and Coastal Environment* (a report recently produced for VEAC). This includes:
 - resourcing and alignment of policy plans and procedures to meet the needs of the Strategy
 - sharing learning of approaches to demonstrate Traditional Owner led planning and management of Sea Country
 - sharing understanding and further developing Sea Country knowledge and practice and its respectful integration with science.

The first meeting was held on the Tyrendarra Indigenous Protection Area where participants, governance arrangements, and terms of reference were confirmed.

In addition, the Council provided funding to support formation of a Sea Country Knowledge Holder Group to enable a forum for Traditional Owners to share Sea Country knowledge consistent with indigenous cultural customs. This knowledge will inform and strengthen discussions and directions of the SeaCoGG.

1.3.4 Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing

On 28th June, 2019, the Council hosted a Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing for senior leaders across government and industry; with a robust Q & A Panel discussion on adapting coastal communities to climate change.



Sea Country Co-Governance Group – inaugural meeting at Tyrendarra, May 2019



Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing: (l-r) Mark McCrindle, Lynette Bettio, Allan Young, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Dr. Anthony Boxshall, Ms Colleen White, Mr Karl Sullivan

We know that climate change will cause rising sea levels and more than likely we will see impacts on Victoria's marine life, habitats, ecosystems and coastal landforms, with flow-on effects to the community and economy. It is therefore inevitable that adaptation responses are required and will involve collaboration, joint planning and co-investment. The Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing provided an important opportunity for leaders across various sectors to develop a shared understanding of future risks, challenges and opportunities.

Important messages from this event were:

- our coastal communities will need to adapt over the next 20–80 years due to the impacts from climate change – which include sea level rise, changes in wind patterns, storm surges and rainfall
- due to the lag-time in the heating of the world's oceans, coastal adaptation in Victoria will be required even when/if the world meets the targets in the Paris Agreement
- we have the scientific evidence base to prepare now for the changes to come
- the role of Government is to set the parameters for transitioning via coastal adaptation pathways
- local communities must be deeply involved in developing their adaptation pathway enabled by Governments at all levels
- the voice of our youth is essential in coastal adaptation planning. Traditional engagement methods don't reach youth (talk with them how they talk with each other)
- assisted transition must become an important option for coastal communities and industries

- the market is already responding to the signals showing the need for adaptation along Victoria's coast
- markets will respond even more with strong signals from Government about the parameters for coastal adaptation of both communities and industries. Planning for equity now is essential.

1.3.5 Projects supported by Council

1.3.5.1 Victorian Marine & Coastal Forum 2019

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum 2019 was hosted by DELWP with the support of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council and Coastcare Victoria. The Council members' participation included:

- plenary session hosts for both days of the Forum
- chairing theme sessions
- assisting with facilitation of a Coastal and Marine Management Plan workshop
- facilitating the conversation piece at the networking session
- panel member at the final Discussion Panel session.

The two-day forum was held at the Crown Conference Centre on 13–14 June 2019 and brought together more than 240 people from across Victoria to explore three key marine and coastal themes:

1. Partnerships and participation
2. Policy – the next wave
3. Risks, challenges and opportunities.

The diverse range of attendees, brought together by their interest in marine and coastal issues, allowed for some great opportunities to build relationships, collaborate and share knowledge.

The forum culminated in a Panel Discussion that explored how collaboration could help solve marine and coastal challenges in the face of climate change.

1.3.5.2 Wave 5 - Community marine and coastal values – longitudinal research.

The previous Victorian Coastal Council with DELWP and Parks Victoria commissioned the next wave of longitudinal research to understand what Victorians value about the marine and coastal environment (Wave 5). The Council continues to support this research which has been conducted every five years since 1997 and consistently shows a high proportion of Victorians visit the coast (+80%) in any given year and what they value. The research continues to inform policy and strategy development. It will be made publicly available by the end of 2019.



Ms. Jennifer Fraser, Marine and Coastal Forum

1.3.6 Performance against Council functions

The *Marine & Coastal Act 2018* includes eleven functions of the Council (MACA s.16). These functions are outlined below including a summary of deliverables against each from the inception of the Council (August 2018) to 30 June 2019.

Functions	Deliverable
 Function (a) and (b) Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy development and implementation	<p>The Council worked closely with DELWP in preparation of the draft Marine and Coastal Policy – see <i>section 1.3.1</i>.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with DELWP and stakeholders in development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy to be completed by 2020.</p>
 Function (c) Provide advice to Minister on significant decisions under the Act	<p>The Council provided advice to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on the draft Marine and Coastal Policy including views heard through the Stakeholder Reference Group, prior to the Policy being released for public consultation.</p> <p>Council's Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing event was supported by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and provided an opportunity to discuss risks, challenges and opportunities for coastal communities adapting to climate change with an expert panel (science, insurance, risk managers, government) and as part of an audience of senior executives from across government and peak bodies.</p>
 Function (d) Matters requiring scientific research	<p>The Council convened the multi-disciplinary Science Panel – <i>section see 1.3.2</i>.</p> <p>The Council members have a strong science skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including National Marine Science Committee, Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature Based Coastal Defence, Strategic Reference Group for Our Catchments Our Communities, fisheries resource assessment and management, and emerging coastal and marine co-operative research centre proposals.</p>
 Function (e) Provide advice on guidelines prepared under the Act	<p>The <i>Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast</i> are being reviewed and revised by DELWP. The Council provided advice to DELWP and the DELWP Secretary prior to release of the revised Guidelines as Interim and further consultation with practitioners and users of the document. The Guidelines are anticipated to be finalised early next year.</p> <p>The Council is working with DELWP and local government to develop guidelines for the preparation of Coast and Marine Management Plans (CMMPs). Under the Act, the Guidelines must give effect to principle and objectives of the Act, and the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy. The Council must be consulted in the preparation of the CMMP.</p>
 Function (f) and (g) Request the Minister establish Regional and Strategic Partnerships & provide advice to participants	<p>Regional and Strategic Partnerships (RaSP) are a new tool under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i> which are designed to bring multiple stakeholders together to work on shared regionally significant issues across marine and coastal tenures.</p> <p>The Council is assisting DELWP in developing general principles for establishing RaSPs.</p> <p>The Council is also engaged in conversations with potential RaSP participants including around the western shoreline of Port Phillip Bay, outer east coast around Inverloch and a potential RaSP for Sea Country planning with Traditional Owners.</p>
 Function (h) Provide input to the preparation of Environmental Management Plans under the Act	<p>The Council will provide input into the preparation of Environmental Management Plans (EMP) as required.</p> <p>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 on the priorities and emerging issues and/or risks that may impact implementation.</p>
 Function (i) Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act	<p>Preparation of the Marine and Coastal Policy is the key document to assist in the administration of the Act and has been the focus for the Council this year.</p> <p>Preparation of regulations under the Act is part of government's coastal and marine reform agenda and was supported through the community consultation as an improvement to the new legislation. The regulations are being developed by DELWP in 2019 and provide clear enforceable boundaries on use and development. The intent of the regulations to enable efficiencies in the management marine and coastal management is supported by the Council.</p>
 Function (j) Carry out any other function conferred on Council by or under the Act or any other Act	<p>The Act is complemented by Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan which identifies a program of policy reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Plan reflects the directions of the Act and responds to recommendations made in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report, <i>Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets</i>. The Council has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these activities are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable stakeholders and the community</p> <p>The highlighted projects (<i>section 2</i>) all support effective delivery of the Councils functions.</p>

table continued overleaf...

...table continued

Functions	Deliverable
(2) In performing its functions Council must have regard to principles and objectives of the Act.	<p>The Council vision is for a healthy marine and coastal environment now and, in the future, and is achieved by giving effect to the principles and objectives of the Act.</p> <p>The Act sets out seven principles of environmental management that reflect International environmental law and policy, including Treaties (as ratified by Australia) within the past 50 years. The principles build on the goals of the previous Victorian Coastal Strategy and are now enshrined as the framework for decision making within the Victorian marine and coastal environment.</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.</p>

1.3.7 Presentations given by Council members and staff and workshop contributions

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 A. Boxshall	Out Catchments Our Coasts	Overview of the Act, introduction to the Council, purpose, functions and overview of priorities for following two years.	14 August 2018
Dr A. Boxshall	Western Port Biosphere	Overview of the Act, introduction to the Council, purpose, functions and overview of priorities for following two years. Cultural and environmental values of Western port.	15 November 2018
Ms J. Fraser	Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee	Overview of the Act, introduction to the Council, purpose, functions and overview of priorities for following two years.	18 January 2019
Dr. A Boxshall	Marine Spatial Planning Symposium	Provided a welcome and introduction to the Symposium. Participated in assessing the workshop component	30 January 2019
Dr A. Boxshall	Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Overview of the Act, introduction to the Council, purpose, functions and overview of priorities for following two years. Challenges facing the marine and coastal sector	26 April 2019
Dr. A Boxshall	Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum	Host Day 1 Plenary Session – introduce keynote speakers and overview of the Forum	13 June 2019
Ms J White Ms F Northeast	Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum	Assisted in facilitating a workshop on Coastal Marine Management Plans	13 June 2019
Dr A. Boxshall	Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum	Hosted networking event based on outcomes of Wave 5 – Community Attitudes to the Social Research	13 June 2019
Ms J. Fraser	Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum	Host Day 2 Plenary Session – recap on previous day at the Forum and introduce keynote speaker and overview of Day 2.	14 June 2019
Dr A. Boxshall	Victorian Marine and Coastal Forum	Discussion Panel member – challenges of climate change for coastal communities	14 June 2019
Dr. A Boxshall	Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing	Hosted Discussion Panel session on who pays, plans, moves and motivates to an audience including the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and senior executives across government.	28 June 2019

1.3.8 General Business Activities

The Council business activities involved:

- formation of the Science panel
- engaging with stakeholders and partners through forums, working groups and meetings
- providing considered feedback and input to development of the Marine and Coastal Policy including the MSPF
- providing feedback on the draft revised Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast
- providing feedback to coastal Crown land managers on preparation of Coastal and Marine Management Plans
- presenting at conferences and workshops

- advising and meeting with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

1.3.9 Council Business Plan

The Council developed a Strategic Business Plan-on-a-Page for 2019–2021 which provides the vision and strategic direction for the Council. Priorities outlined in the business plan reflect the functions of Council as outlined in the Act, key issues, outcomes and actions contained in Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan as well as responses to emerging challenges

2. Governance and Organisational Structure

The Council is resourced with a budget and Secretariat support through DELWP. On 30 June 2019 the Council employed two staff (1.6 full time equivalent).

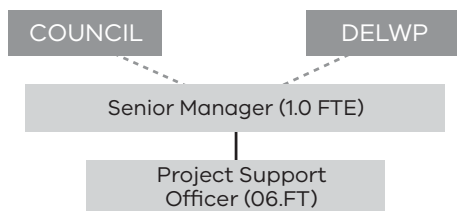


Figure 1: Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC) Organisational Structure

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

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

Telephone: 03 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 *Marine & Coastal Act 2018* by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Building on the tradition of previous coastal Councils, 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 marine environments, coasts, law, physical sciences, catchment management, fisheries and policy, which supports Council's role in gathering a stakeholder informed evidence base, to advise the Ministers responsible for Victoria's marine and coastal environments. Brief biographies of current Council members follow.

2.1.1 Members

Members of the Council were appointed on 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2021 and include:

(Chair) Dr Anthony Boxshall is a marine ecologist 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*). 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 Melbourne Enterprise Fellow in the School of Biosciences at the University of Melbourne, he was until late 2017 the Director, Applied Sciences at the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Victoria. He is a problem solver and strategist. As a hobby, he has been communicating the wonders of the marine environment to a broad audience through the award-winning "Radio Marinara" on 3RRR-FM in Melbourne for over 20 years. He is a dad to four 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 Jennifer Fraser has over 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 (DSE), she has worked in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Education. She has also consulted to different levels of government.



Jennifer has qualifications in Geography and Law and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Currently she is focussed on governance and advisory roles including the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (Member), Medley Hall Council at the University of Melbourne (Member, then Chair), Planning Panels Victoria (sessional member). In the past Jennifer was on the board of Westside Community Circus.

Dr Anna Grage has a background in marine environmental law and planning, and statutory (urban/ environmental) planning. She has a Bachelor of Laws and 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. She currently works part-time for Mornington Peninsula Shire and volunteers for the Sea Search (Parks Victoria) programme/ Friends of Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary, and the Peninsula Community Legal Centre.



Dr Ian Knuckey is the Director of Fishwell Consulting, which provides expert research advice and consulting services to encourage and promote sustainable fishing practices in Australia's commercial fishing industry. He has a PhD in fisheries population dynamics, a BSc (Hons) in Marine Ecology and over twenty years of experience in fisheries research and management.



Dr Knuckey has worked with many fisheries around Australia on numerous research and development projects about bycatch reduction, independent fishery surveys and monitoring programs. Many of these were based on strong partnerships with fishery industries. He is the Principal Investigator for several current research projects. He has expertise in a variety of areas, including temperate and tropical fisheries, invertebrate fisheries and both inshore and deep-water scale-fish and shark fisheries.

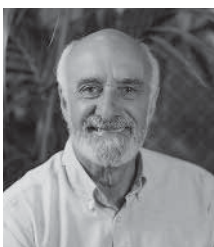
Emeritus Professor Alistar

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 state, national and international committees providing advice on the management of marine, coastal and catchment habitats. He currently also serves on the Board of the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre



Dr John Sherwood has

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 also a Board Member of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and chairs the Authority's Coast and Marine Working Group, an informal advisory and networking group for agencies and local government. He 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.



Ms Jacquie White

has over 15 years' experience working in the environment sector with specific roles in natural resource and catchment management, sustainable water management, stormwater management, community and stakeholder engagement and education, organisational change and capacity building, and social research and evaluation. She is currently the Executive Officer of the Association of Bayside Municipalities, an unincorporated association of the councils around Port Phillip Bay. Her previous professional roles include: General Manager of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Manager with the Waterways Group at Melbourne Water, Director in the Office of Living Victoria, and Manager of organisational transformation with the Country Fire Authority. She is also the owner and manager of a consultancy – Event Management and Stakeholder Engagement Services.



2.2 Council Meetings

Nine Council meetings were held on the following dates throughout the 2018–19 financial year:

- 30 August 2018
- 18 September 2018
- 19–20 November 2018
- 17 December 2018
- 7 January 2019
- 4 February 2019
- 19 March 2019
- 15 April 2019
- 27 May 2019

Member attendance for the Council's nine business meetings in the 2018–19 financial year are as follows:

Dr Anthony Boxshall	9
Ms Jennifer Fraser	9
Dr Anna Grage	9
Dr Ian Knuckey	8
Prof Alistar Robertson	8
Dr John Sherwood	7
Ms Jacquie White	9

2.3 Representation on stakeholder reference groups

Council membership on stakeholder reference groups in the 2018–19 financial year was as follows:

- Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group – Dr A. Boxshall
- Our Catchments Our Communities Reference Group – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Office of Geographic Names / Aboriginal Victoria / Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council – Place naming workshop – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Implementation of the Port Phillip Bay EMP Senior Agency Reference Group – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Senior stakeholder advisory meeting on nature-based coastal defence at University of Melbourne – Dr Anna Grage
- National Marine Science Committee – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- VIC-IMOS – Prof Alistar Robertson
- Marine Spatial Planning Co-design labs – Dr Anthony Boxshall, Dr Anna Grage, Dr Ian Knuckey
- Marine Knowledge Framework – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Coastal Industry and Coastal Health CRC – Prof Alistar Robertson
- Marine and Coastal Forum Steering Committee – Ms Frances Northeast
- Marine Spatial Planning Framework Core Team (Frances Northeast)

2.4 Council subcommittees

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

- Science Panel Subcommittee
- Communications and Engagement Subcommittee
- Sea Country Co-Governance Group

2.5 Submissions by Council

There were no Council Submissions in the year 2018–19.

2.6 Presentations received at Council meetings

The Council received the following presentations at its meetings in 2018–19.

Presenter	Topic	Date
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Jeremy Reiger (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	19 November 2018
Libby Sampson	Great Ocean Road Taskforce	17 December 2018
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Jeremy Reiger (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	17 December 2018
Ipsos Public Affairs Pty Ltd – Jennifer Brook & Calum Ravisi	Results from the Wave 5 Survey	17 December 2018
DELWP (Nicola Waldron, Project Manager MSPF)	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	7 January 2019
DELWP (Angeline Charles, Manager Statewide Coastal Programs Teams)	Statewide Coastal Programs Team	7 January 2019
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Jeremy Reiger (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF), Rohan Snartt (Policy Officer))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	4 February 2019
DELWP (Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Jeremy Reiger (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	15 April 2019
DELWP (Joanna Kormas, Senior Policy Officer, Planning)	DELWP Marine & Coastal Planning	15 April 2019
David Buntine (CEO, Port Phillip & Western Port CMA)	Regional and Strategic Partnerships Western Shores RaSP	15 April 2019
Mike Nurse (Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations)	Indigenous Heritage – Traditional Owner Marine Values	15 April 2019
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Rachel Marchbank (Manager Strategy and Policy))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	27 May 2019

2.7 Council Publications

There were no Council publications in the year 2018–19.

2.8 Conferences and Seminars

Representatives from the Council attended the following conferences and seminars during 2018–19:

- Port Phillip Bay EMP forum
- VCMP Embayments Project Expert Advisory Board Forum
- Marine and Coasts Forum
- Climate Change Adaptation Executive Briefing.

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 Review

The Council endorsed Council Performance Assessment Policy in November 2018 and will complete an annual review of its performance in accordance with this Policy. The performance assessment covers individual members, the Council collectively, and the Chair. The outcomes of the review will be documented in meeting minutes.

2.11 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 (refer to DELWP Annual Report).

2.12 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 which are used by the Council's Secretariat. Please refer to the DELWP Annual Report for further information.

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 that 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.

3. Workforce Data

3.1 Public Administration Employment and Conduct Principles

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.

3.2 Workforce Data

On 30 June 2019 the Council employed two staff (1.6 full time equivalent). The proportion of women was 100%. As a comparison, under Victoria's previous coastal legislation (*Coastal Management Act 1995*) the statutory advisory body to the minister, the Victorian Coastal

Council (VCC), employed 23 % proportion of women on 30 June 2018. Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

3.3 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 which ensures equity of processes and participation by stakeholders.

Table 2: Staff Numbers by employment status as at 30 June 2019 (full time equivalent)

Employment Type	2018–2019 (VMaCC)			2017–2018 (VCC)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Executive Officers	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Senior Managers	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Administration Staff	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.6	1.0	1.6
Field Staff	0	0	0		0	0
Total	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.6	2.0	2.6
Fixed Term*	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.6	2.0	2.6
Temporary Employees	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.6	2.0	2.6

Notes:

- All figures reflect employment levels during the last full pay period in June of each year.
- VCC figures are included for comparison purposes only.
- Excluded are those on leave without pay or absent on secondment and external contractors/consultants.
- Ongoing employees includes people engaged on an open-ended contract of employment and executives engaged on a standard executive contract who were active in the last full pay period of June.
- Fixed term staff were seconded from DELWP for the 2018–19 year.
- The self-described category is nil.

4. Other Disclosures

4.1 Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy

The *Local Jobs First Act 2003* introduced in August 2018 brings together the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPPP) and Major Projects Skills Guarantee (MPSG) policy which were administered separately.

During the year, Council did not enter into any contracts to which the Local Job First policy applied.

4.2 Government Advertising Expenditure

Government policy requires disclosure of all Government Advertising Expenditure with a total media buy of \$100,000 or greater (exclusive of GST). No Government Advertising Expenditure was incurred by the Council during the reporting period.

4.3 Consultancies over \$10,000

During 2018–19 the Council did not enter into any consultancies valued over \$10,000.

4.4 Consultancies under \$10,000

In 2018–19 the Council engaged one consultant to deliver work valued under \$10,000. Deliberate Impact was engaged to provide facilitation services and a summary report at a value of \$9080.

The Council engaged the following contractors to complete work valued under \$10,000:

- Light Media – VCC Website Management (\$850per/month from August 2018 – Feb 2019 & outstanding charges attributed to VCC for August 2017 and May 2018) – (\$7650)
- Louisa Jones Photography – Photography of the Council Members (\$230)
- Green Scribble – The Council Branding / Logo & Templates Design (\$5995)
- Green Scribble – Business Plan On a Page (\$4,600)
- Saxton – Mark McCrindle, Speaker for the Council Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing (\$8,127.90)
- Austage – Audio-visual equipment hire for the Council Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing (\$4703.88)

The total value of contractor expenditure for 2018–19 is \$31,306.78.

4.5 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure

The Council falls under the umbrella of DELWP in relation to ICT and the provision of business ICT services. Please refer to DELWP Annual Report 2018–19.

4.6 Major Contracts

During 2018–19 the Council did not enter into any contracts valued over \$10 million.

4.7 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.

From 1 September 2017, the FOI Act has been amended to reduce the FOI processing time for requests received from 45 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.

4.7.1 Making a Request

The Council operates in accordance with FOI procedures established through DELWP. There was no FOI request made to the Council in 2018–19.

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 \$29.60 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material, time consuming. Access to documents can also be obtained by writing to the Department's Freedom of Information Unit, as detailed in s17 of the Act (PO Box 500 East Melbourne 3002, Email: foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au, Tel: 03 9637 8331).

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.

4.8 Building Act 1993

The Council does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the Building Act 1993.

4.9 Competitive Neutrality Policy

The Council adheres to the principles of the Competitive Neutrality Policy to ensure that any business competition with private entities takes place in an environment where the Council has no competitive advantages.

4.10 Protected Disclosures Act 2012

The *Protected Disclosures Act 2012* (PD Act) encourages and assists people to make disclosures about improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The PD Act provides protection to people who make disclosures in

accordance with the PD Act and establishes a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and rectifying action to be taken.

The Council does not tolerate improper conduct by employees, nor the taking of reprisals against those who come forward to disclose such conduct. It is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of public resources, or conduct involving a substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to protect people who make such disclosures from any detrimental action in reprisal for making the disclosure. It will also afford natural justice to the person who is the subject of the disclosure to the extent it is legally possible.

Please note that the Council is not able to receive protected disclosures.

A protected disclosure about the Council, a Council member, or DELWP employees can be made by contacting the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC):

Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

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.

The Protected Disclosure Policy and Procedures, which outline the system for reporting disclosures of improper conduct or detrimental action by the Council, DELWP or any of its employees and/or officers, are available on the DELWP website.

4.11 Office-based Environmental Impacts

The Victorian Government's aim of improved environmental management is supported by a requirement that Departments disclose their ongoing performance in managing and reducing the environmental impacts of their office-based activities. 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, including:

- separation of reusable, recyclable, compostable and landfill waste
- use of Green power
- use of flow restricted taps and waterless urinals
- use of recycled paper and duplex printing
- environmentally sustainable fitouts; and
- regular use by staff of public transport, cycling or walking to and from work.

4.12 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Details in respect of the following items have been included in this report:

- details of publications produced and how these may be obtained
- details of major research and developments undertaken
- details of major promotional, public relations and marketing activities undertaken to develop community awareness of the entity and its services
- details of overseas visits undertaken
- assessments and measures undertaken to improve the occupational health and safety of employees
- a list of the Council's committees
- a statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests, including shares held by Council members and senior officers
- details of all consultancies and contractors, including consultants/contractors engaged, services provided, and expenditure committed for each engagement.

The following information is not relevant to Council:

- details of changes in prices, fees, charges, and levies charged
- a statement on industrial relations
- details of any major external reviews carried out by Council.

4.13 Compliance with DataVic 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.

4.14 Overseas Travel

There was no overseas travel in 2018–19.

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 2019. 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 2018–19 financial year (excluding salaries and agency staff costs) and provides a comparison with the previous two financial years of the Victorian Coastal Council.

5.2 Operating Position

5.2.1 Summary of Financial Results of the Year*

Financial Year	Council operations **
2016–2017	\$334,661
2017–2018	\$224,975
2018–2019	\$186,679***

* Previous two financial years for the Victorian Coastal Council under the previous Coastal Management Act 1995 have been included for comparison.

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

*** Includes a grant of \$25,000 to FVTOC to enable formation of Traditional Owner Sea Country Knowledge Group.

5.2.2 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Information relevant to the headings listed in Financial Reporting Direction 22H of the *Financial Management Act 1994* is held at the Council's office and is available on request, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

5.2.3 Significant Changes in Financial Position During the Year

There were no significant changes in financial position during the reporting period.

5.2.4 Major Changes or Factors Affecting Performance

There were no major changes affecting performance.

5.2.5 Subsequent Events

There were no subsequent events and therefore no disclosures required.

6. Disclosure Index

The 2018–19 Annual Report of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is prepared in accordance with all relevant Victorian legislation and pronouncements. This index has been prepared to facilitate identification of the Council compliance with statutory disclosure requirements.

FRD – Financial Reporting Direction **SD** – Standing Direction **MRO** – Model report of operations

Legislation	Requirement	Page no.
Accountable Officer's declaration		
SD 5.2.3	Responsible body declaration	2
Charter and purpose		
FRD 22H	Purpose, functions, powers and duties	5, 10
FRD 22H	Enabling Act, manner of establishment and responsible Minister	5
FRD 22H	Nature and range of services provided	5
Management and structure		
FRD 22H	Organisational structure	6
FRD 22H	Board committees	8
Financial information		
FRD 22H	Significant changes in financial position during the year	22
FRD 22H	Major changes or factors affecting performance	22
FRD 22H	Subsequent events	22
Other information		
FRD 10A	Disclosure index	23
FRD 12B	Disclosure of major contracts	20
FRD 22H	Employment and conduct principles	19
FRD 22H	Occupational health and safety policy	21
FRD 22H	Application and operation of Freedom of Information Act 1982	20
FRD 22H	Compliance with building and maintenance provisions of Building Act 1993	21
FRD 22H	Statement on Competitive Neutrality Policy	20
FRD 22H	Application and operation of the Protected Disclosure Act 2012	20
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies over \$10,000	19
FRD 22H	Details of consultancies under \$10,000	19
FRD 22H	Disclosure of Government advertising expenditure	20
FRD 22H	Disclosure of ICT expenditure	21
FRD 22H	Statement of availability of other information	21
FRD 24D	Reporting of office based environmental impacts	21
FRD 25D	Victorian Industry Participation Policy disclosures	21
FRD 29C, FRD 22H & 29B	Workforce data disclosures	19
MRO	Compliance with DataVic Access Policy	21
SD 5.2.3	Declaration in report of operations	2
Legislation		
<i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i>	Carrying out of Council functions	5
<i>Public Administration Act 2004</i>		
<i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>		
<i>Building Act 1993</i>		
<i>Protected Disclosure Act 2012</i>		
<i>Local Jobs First Act 2003</i>		

7. Abbreviations and Acronyms

CMA	Catchment Management Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FRD	Financial Reporting Direction
FOI	Freedom of Information
IBAC	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
MACA	Marine and Coastal Act 2018
SD	Standing Direction
RaSPs	Regional and Strategic Partnerships
VCC	Victorian Coastal Council
VMaCC	Victorian Marine and Coastal Council
FVTOC	Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations
VIPP	Victorian Industry Participation Policy

8. Appendix 1 – VMaCC Business Plan 2019–2021

BUSINESS PLAN 2019—2021



The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council's **vision** is a healthy marine and coastal environment, now and in the future.

Council's **purpose** is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas.



Victorians have a strong connection with the coast, with 80% of Victorians visiting the coast each year, and value the clean pristine beaches, unique marine life, diverse ecosystems and the ruggedness and natural beauty. Our marine waters and coastal areas provide social, cultural, economic and environment benefits that are important for supporting business, tourism, recreation, wellbeing and biodiversity.

The Victorian Government is committed to protecting and enhancing these values, introducing a package of reforms to improve management and oversight arrangements for the state's marine and coastal environment. This includes the *Marine and Coastal Act (2018)* to improve planning, protection, management and sustainable use of our marine and coastal environments, addressing the long-term challenges of climate change, population growth and ageing coastal structures. The Act ensures local and regional partners work together to achieve the best outcomes for Victoria.

The **Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC)** has been established under the Act to provide independent stakeholder informed, evidence-based advice to the government on a range of matters including development and implementation of statewide policy and strategy; significant decisions relating to the marine and coastal environment; and matters requiring scientific research. The **VMaCC Business Plan for 2019-2021** aims to inform and engage marine and coastal stakeholders in order to collaboratively deliver its functions under the Act 2018.

Marine and Coastal Act 2018

On 1 August 2018 the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* came into effect. The Act establishes principles and objectives for an integrated and coordinated approach to planning and managing the marine and coastal environment. Under the Act, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will be responsible for developing a statewide marine and coastal policy and strategy, along with other initiatives. The program of reforms and actions will be guided by the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, bringing a whole-of-government approach and a greater focus on Traditional Owners, climate change and the marine environment.

Marine and Coastal Act principles

The Act sets out seven principles of environmental management that reflect the United Nations treaties and conventions developed and ratified over the past 50 years. The principles build on the goals of the previous Victorian Coastal Strategy, and are now enshrined as the framework for decision making within the Victorian marine and coastal environment.

The seven principles are:

- 1 Integrated coastal zone management
- 2 Ecosystem-based management
- 3 Ecologically sustainable development
- 4 Evidence-based decision-making
- 5 Precautionary principle
- 6 Proportionate and risk-based principle
- 7 Adaptive management




Marine and Coastal Act objectives

The objectives of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* relate to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. They define rights and obligations, and set measures and arrangements designed to ensure these are met.

The nine objectives are:






- 1 to protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment;
- 2 to promote the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems, communities and assets to climate change;
- 3 to respect natural processes in planning for and managing current and future risks to people and assets from coastal hazards and climate change;
- 4 to acknowledge traditional owner groups' knowledge, rights and aspirations for land and sea country;
- 5 to promote a diversity of experiences in the marine and coastal environment;
- 6 to promote the ecologically sustainable use and development of the marine and coastal environment and its resources in appropriate areas;
- 7 to improve community, user group and industry stewardship and understanding of the marine and coastal environment;
- 8 to engage with specified Aboriginal parties, the community, user groups and industry in marine and coastal planning, management and protection; and
- 9 to build scientific understanding of the marine and coastal environment.

Functions of the Victorian Marine and

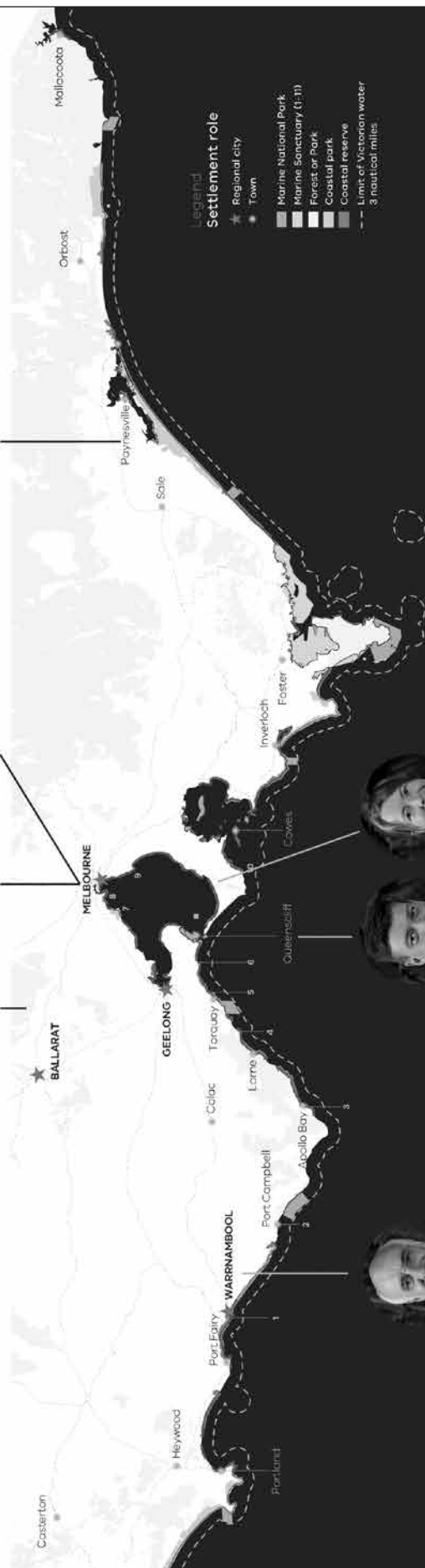
Function	Action
 <p>Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy - development and implementation <i>Functions: (a) and (b)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMAoCC is working closely with DELWP to prepare a Marine and Coastal Policy. We will host consultation with Traditional Owners, community and stakeholders to hear views and feedback on the draft Policy (mid 2019). The final Policy is due end 2019. • The Policy will include a Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF). VMAoCC is providing advice to DELWP and participating in a multi-sector co-design team to develop the Framework alongside Traditional Owner groups, marine user groups and management organisations (environment, transport, safety, resources, and fisheries). The MSPF is designed to integrate and coordinate planning and management of the marine environment. Draft MSPF out for consultation mid 2019, with final version due end 2019. • The Policy will be followed by a Marine and Coastal Strategy (due end 2020). We will work with DELWP and stakeholders to inform the Strategy, with consultation expected mid 2020. • Policy and strategy will be informed by two Victorian Environment Assessment Council reports assessing the values of Victoria's marine environment including Traditional Owners' values (as expressed by Indigenous Elders through their 'dreaming stories'), and an assessment of the values and uses of Victoria's coastal reserves. • VMAoCC will work with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to prepare the first State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report, due in 2021. • VMAoCC will provide advice to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on the draft and final Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, reflecting the evidence base and stakeholder perspectives, to achieve a healthy marine and coastal environment for all Victorians.
 <p>Significant decisions under the Act <i>Functions: (c)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMAoCC will provide advice to the Minister, as requested, on significant decisions under the Act relating to or affecting the marine and coastal environment.
 <p>Provide advice to the Secretary on preparation of guidelines under the Act <i>Functions: (e)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1998 are currently being revised by DELWP. VMAoCC will provide advice to the DELWP Secretary on the revised Guidelines following consultation with stakeholders. Due end 2019. • VMAoCC will provide input to guidelines for developing Coastal and Marine Management Plans. • VMAoCC will provide advice and input to other relevant guidelines as required.

Coastal Council

In performing functions (a) – (j) under the Act, the Council must have regard to the objectives and guiding principles set out in the Act. Council will work collaboratively to bring stakeholder informed, evidence-based advice to these functions.

Function	Action
 <p>Matters requiring scientific research Functions: (d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VMaCC has convened a multi-disciplinary Science Panel from a range of disciplines including physical, biological, chemical, and social sciences. Through the Panel, VMaCC will provide evidence-based advice on scientific matters, research needs, emerging issues, gaps and opportunities influencing implementation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy. VMaCC is supporting DELWP in development of a marine knowledge framework to facilitate integrated research efforts and improve the frequency and extent of marine and coastal habitat monitoring using new technology. Due end 2019. Council members have a strong science skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including National Marine Science Committee, Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature-based Coastal Defence, Strategic Reference Group for Our Catchments our Communities, fisheries resource assessment and management, and emerging coastal and marine Co-operative Research Centre proposals.
 <p>Request the Minister establish regional and strategic partnerships and provide advice to participants Functions: (f) and (g)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and Strategic Partnerships (RaSP) are a new tool under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i>. RaSPs are designed to bring multiple stakeholders together on shared regionally significant issues, working across marine and/or coastal areas and land tenures. VMaCC, with DELWP will prepare general principles for establishing a RaSP. DELWP is piloting a RaSP in 2019 in the central Port Phillip region, in partnership with VMaCC and relevant stakeholders a pilot has been identified along the western shorelines that brings together multiple participants and significant and interconnected regional catchment, coastal and marine issues. Establishment of the RaSP is anticipated by late 2019. VMaCC is partnering with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporation and DELWP to support Gunditj Mirring, Eastern Maar and Waddawurrung as they scope a potential Regional and Strategic Partnership for Sea Country planning in Western Victoria. The project will commence in 2019 and is anticipated for completion in 2020.
 <p>Preparation of Environmental Management Plans Functions: (h)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VMaCC will provide input to preparation of Environmental Management Plans as required. VMaCC is a member of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan Senior Agency Reference Group, providing advice on the priorities and emerging issues or risks that may impact implementation.
 <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act – regulations under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act</i> Functions: (i)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of regulations under the Act is part of government's coastal and marine reform agenda and was supported through community consultation as an improvement to the new legislation. The regulations will be developed by DELWP in 2019 and provide clear enforceable boundaries on use and development within the marine and coastal environment. They aim to ensure the principles and objectives of the Act are followed. VMaCC will provide feedback on the draft regulations and advice to the Minister.
 <p>To carry out any other function conferred on the Council by or under the Act or any other Act – Peak advisory capability across <i>Marine and Coastal Sector</i> Functions: (j)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Act is complemented by Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan which identifies a program of policy reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Plan reflects the directions of the Act and responds to recommendations made in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report, Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets. VMaCC has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these activities are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable stakeholders and the community. VMaCC will undertake strategic projects that support effective delivery of its functions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine and Coastal Forum: supporting DELWP to host an event for marine and coastal practitioners and volunteers to share knowledge and information, and identify future risks, challenges and opportunities (13-14 June, Melbourne). Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing: strategic discussion with leaders across the marine and coastal sector exploring "who plans, pays, moves and motivates". Traditional Owners have invited VMaCC to co-chair the Sea Country Co-Governance Group, communicating rights and aspirations, engaging in development of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, and sharing learnings from Sea Country management projects. Informed by the Science Panel VMaCC will prioritise marine and coastal research opportunities. VMaCC, with DELWP and Parks Victoria commissioned the next wave of longitudinal social research to understand what Victorians value about the marine and coastal environment (Wave 5). This research has been conducted every five years since 1997 and consistently shows a high proportion Victorians visit the coast (>80%) in any given year, and what they value. The research continues to inform policy and strategy development. Available mid 2019. Marine and Coastal Awards: building on the former Victorian Coastal Council Awards, VMaCC will recognise and celebrate the leaders and unsung heroes of coastal and marine management.

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Business Plan will be updated annually to reflect emerging issues and opportunities, and provide an update on implementation.



The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council consists of seven members who have networks from across Victoria and expertise spanning marine environments, coasts, planning, law, physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and much more.

important new objectives of the Act in a tangible way with focus on the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners, embedding climate change scenarios into planning and management, and integrating how we plan and manage our marine environment with our catchments and coasts.

We aim to be accountable, transparent and open, and listen actively to the views and ideas from across Victoria. We are looking for innovative and practical ideas from all Victorian stakeholders and rights holders. We encourage constructive frankness in all our dealings.

Please get in touch with us to help us improve and better integrate the planning and management of our wonderful and special Victorian marine and coastal environments.

Victorian Marine and Coastal Council
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**VICTORIAN MARINE
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

