

# 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.

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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 Coastal Council

Function	Action
 <p>Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy - <b>development and implementation</b></p> <p>Functions: (a) and (b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VMaCC is working closely with DELWP to prepare a <b>Marine and Coastal Policy</b>. 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.</li> <li>The Policy will include a <b>Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF)</b>. VMaCC 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.</li> <li>The Policy will be followed by a <b>Marine and Coastal Strategy</b> (due end 2020). We will work with DELWP and stakeholders to inform the Strategy, with consultation expected mid 2020.</li> <li>Policy and strategy will be informed by two <b>Victorian Environment Assessment Council reports</b> 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.</li> <li>VMaCC will work with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to prepare the first <b>State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report</b>, due in 2021.</li> <li>VMaCC 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.</li> </ul>
 <p>Significant <b>decisions</b> under the Act</p> <p>Functions: (c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VMaCC will <b>provide advice to the Minister</b>, as requested, on significant decisions under the Act relating to or affecting the marine and coastal environment.</li> </ul>
 <p>Provide advice to the Secretary on preparation of <b>guidelines</b> under the Act</p> <p>Functions: (e)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1998</b> are currently being revised by DELWP. VMaCC will provide advice to the DELWP Secretary on the revised Guidelines following consultation with stakeholders. Due end 2019.</li> <li>VMaCC will provide input to guidelines for developing <b>Coastal and Marine Management Plans</b>.</li> <li>VMaCC will provide advice and input to other relevant guidelines as required.</li> </ul>

Function	Action
 <p>Matters requiring <b>scientific research</b></p> <p>Functions: (d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMaCC has convened a <b>multi-disciplinary Science Panel</b> 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.</li> <li>• VMaCC is supporting DELWP in development of a <b>marine knowledge framework</b> to facilitate integrated research efforts and improve the frequency and extent of marine and coastal habitat monitoring using new technology. Due end 2019.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
 <p>Request the Minister establish regional and <b>strategic partnerships</b> and provide advice to participants</p> <p>Functions: (f) and (g)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regional and Strategic Partnerships</b> (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.</li> <li>• VMaCC, with DELWP, will prepare general principles for establishing a RaSP.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
 <p>Preparation of <b>Environmental Management Plans</b></p> <p>Functions: (h)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMaCC will provide input to preparation of <b>Environmental Management Plans</b> as required.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

Function	Action
 <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act –<b>regulations</b> under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act</i></p> <p>Functions: (i)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of <b>regulations</b> 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.</li> <li>• VMaCC will provide feedback on the draft regulations and advice to the Minister.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>To carry out any other function</b> conferred on the Council by or under the Act or any other Act – Peak advisory capability across <i>Marine and Coastal Sector</i></p> <p>Functions: (j)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Act is complemented by Victoria's <b>Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan</b> 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.</li> <li>• VMaCC will undertake <b>strategic projects</b> that support effective delivery of its functions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2019-2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Marine and Coastal Forum:</b> 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).</li> <li>• <b>Coastal Adaptation Executive briefing:</b> strategic discussion with leaders across the marine and coastal sector exploring "who plans, pays, moves and motivates".</li> <li>• Traditional Owners have invited VMaCC to co-chair the <b>Sea Country Co-Governance Group</b>, communicating rights and aspirations, engaging in development of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, and sharing learnings from Sea Country management projects.</li> <li>• Informed by the <b>Science Panel</b> VMaCC will prioritise marine and coastal research opportunities.</li> <li>• VMaCC, with DELWP and Parks Victoria commissioned the next wave of <b>longitudinal social research</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Marine and Coastal Awards:</b> building on the former Victorian Coastal Council Awards, VMaCC will recognise and celebrate the leaders and unsung heroes of coastal and marine management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council members are:



Professor  
Alistar Robertson



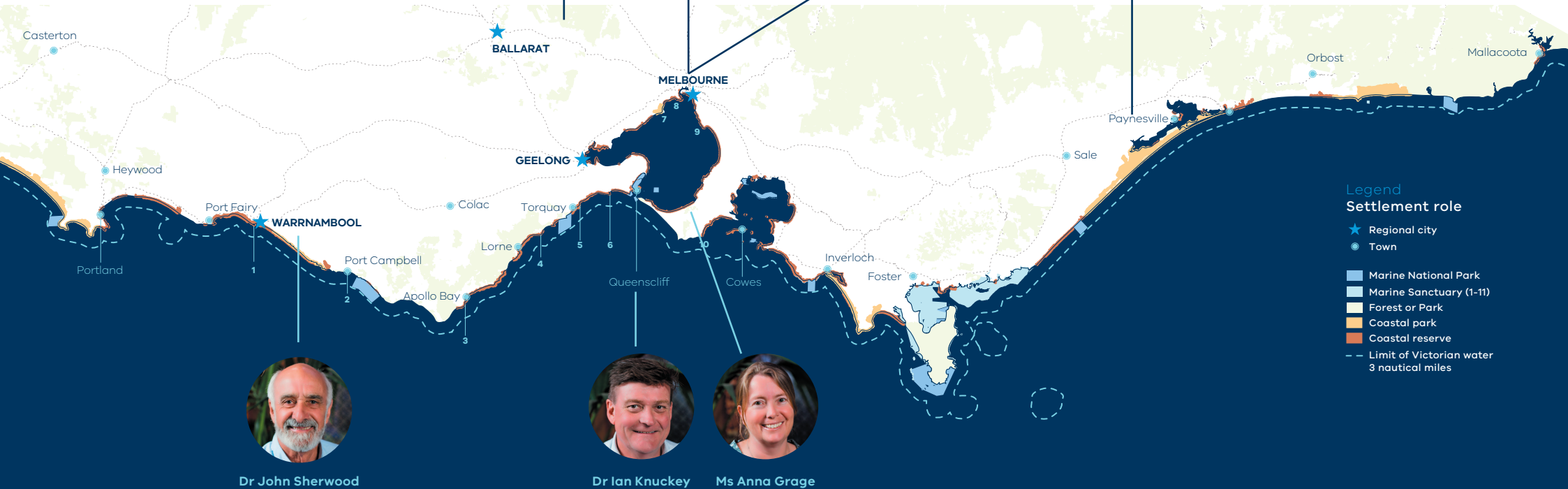
Dr Anthony  
Boxshall (Chair)



Ms Jacquie  
White



Ms Jennifer Fraser



Dr John Sherwood



Dr Ian Knuckey



Ms Anna Grage

## Message from the Chair

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.

Our focus over the first 2-3 years of the new Act is very clear. Through gathering a stakeholder informed evidence base, we will advise the Ministers responsible for our marine and coastal environments. Collectively we will create a new Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy (2019), a Marine Spatial Planning Framework (2019), and a new Marine and Coastal Strategy for Victoria (2020). We will continue the great tradition of the Victorian Coastal Council and celebrate and honour the many Victorian coastal and marine champions. We will honour the

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.

## Contact

Victorian Marine and Coastal Council  
[vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au)