



**VICTORIAN MARINE  
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2019–20**





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**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 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.



**Anthony Boxshall PhD GAICD BSc**  
**Chair, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council**

**30 June 2020**

## 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 our second year the Council had a year that mirrored that of many Victorians – a year in two halves. One without coronavirus (COVID-19) and one with COVID-19. It was reassuring and unsurprising that after the first lockdown ended, Victorians flocked to our coastal and marine spaces despite the early winter weather. It highlighted the value of our beaches, public open space, and nature for our health and wellbeing. Aside from the inherent value of natural places, this reinforced our belief that our coasts and marine areas are fundamental to our leisure, economy, recreation, and tourism. As 80% of all Victorians think (Wave 5, 2019), these areas are the most important valuable natural "asset" in Victoria. Our marine and coastal systems are something we need to protect, live with differently, and nourish for a climate-resilient future.

In this annual report you will see the achievements of stakeholders in marine and coastal Victoria during this last year, many of whom continued with only minor bumps in progress due to COVID-19, others that were deeply affected. It is hard to pick the most important, so I will highlight a set that are important:

- **Policy:** Establishment of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy and associated Marine Spatial Planning Framework.
- **Traditional Owners:** Council is partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners as they move towards self-determination. This has been especially visible in the initial stages of the Marine and Coastal Strategy development; with an open invitation for Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations to join Council in key

discussions with the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DEWLP) about the Marine and Coastal Strategy. This is Strategy development done differently.

- **Strategy:** Starting to develop the Marine and Coastal Strategy under COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Focus Areas:** While all the objectives of the Act are crucial, Council has focused specifically on understanding the economic implications of climate change and raising the profile of resilient coastal adaptation, the importance of nature underpinning our wealth and wellbeing, and enabling smart climate-resilient investment decisions for Victorian communities. Along with our commitment to Traditional Owners as rights holders, you will see this focus spread throughout our activities in 2019–2020.
- **Science-based:** The Council has continued to draw on the expertise, networks and knowledge of the Science Panel. While the planned Science – Indigenous Knowledge Workshop has had to be delayed until COVID-19 normal is found, the Science Panel has played a crucial role in advising Council on the upcoming report on Victorian State of the Marine and Coastal Environment (2021), and a new project about the economic opportunities from early investment in coastal climate adaptation.
- **Stakeholder-informed:** In 2019–2020, the Council reconfirmed the value of meeting people face to face and getting 'on Country' via a series of regional visits (during 2019) and deep online stakeholder engagement under COVID-19 restrictions (during 2020.). Council has heard from more stakeholders in more ways, which sharpens our ability to provide stakeholder-informed advice.
- **Tools of the Act:** The gazetting of the first Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) in June 2020 titled "Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership" (Victorian Government Gazette 6 August 2020).

We look forward to our continued work with people in Victoria's marine and coastal region during 2020–21, in the provision of evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to build resilient coastal communities (human, business and natural).



# 1. Year in Review

## 1.1 Second Year

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (the Council) is established under the Marine and Coastal Act 2018 (the Act) as an advisory body. The responsible Minister for the period 1 August 2019 to 30 June 2020 is the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The Act establishes principles and objectives for an integrated and co-ordinated approach to planning and managing the marine and coastal environment.

In its second year the Council has continued to champion the Victorian government's reform agenda for marine and coastal planning and management by emphasising the need for climate-resilient settings in both Victoria's Marine and Coastal Policy (the Policy) and in development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy (the Strategy) that will ensure Victoria is best placed to meet future climate change challenges. Consistent with the vision for strategic change, and in accordance with the Act, the Policy includes a Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSPF) that enables marine planning with an emphasis on sustainable management and integration and co-ordination across government, industry and users.

In performing its functions under the Act, the Council has prioritised fostering Traditional Owner groups' rights, aspirations and knowledge in marine and coastal planning and management and is working with Traditional Owners on an appropriate framework to integrate Traditional Owner voices into the Council. Partnering with Traditional Owners to support DELWP in the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy is one aspect of how the Council is working with Traditional Owners to embed healthy Country objectives into Victoria's marine and coastal planning and management framework.

Under Council's statutory functions tools such as CMMPs and RASPs have been put in place through the development of criteria and guidance materials. This has been achieved by working with DELWP and other practitioners, with the aim being to support the preparation and development of these tools.

In order to achieve its purpose of providing evidence based and stakeholder-informed advice to the Minister, the Council has formed and consolidated new relationships, and focused on identifying and prioritising current and emerging opportunities as well as knowledge gaps that require further investigation. This will continue to be a focus for the Council as it continues to engage and lead input into the reform process.

## 1.2 Purpose and Functions

The Act outlines Council's eleven functions and associated accountabilities. In its second year the Council has prioritised, and worked closely with DELWP, on establishment of the Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy.

## 1.3 Highlights / Performance against functions

### 1.3.1 Establishment of Marine and Coastal Policy

On 6 March 2020, the Victorian Government released the Marine and Coastal Policy. A requirement under the Act, it supersedes the policy sections of the Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS) 2014 and sets the State's policy directions for the marine and coastal environment for the next 15 years. The actions elements of the VCS 2014 will remain current until the Marine and Coastal strategy is approved. The Policy includes a Marine Spatial Planning Framework that sets out steps for achieving integrated and coordinated planning and management of Victoria's marine environment.



Council members regional visit to Gippsland with Bass Coast Council and South Gippsland Conservation Society – Inverloch, August 2019



**Council members regional visit to Gippsland with Wellington Shire Council, Parks Victoria and DELWP – Sale, August 2019**

The Policy is a long term approach intended to last for the next 10–15 years, with identified goals (intended outcomes) and associated policies designed to deliver a healthy, dynamic and biodiverse marine and coastal environment that is valued in its own right, and that benefits the Victorian community, now and in the future. It recognises the many benefits gained from ensuring that uses, activities and developments are sustainable.

The Council worked closely with DELWP on the development of the Policy attending regular meetings and a number of workshops, and providing detailed feedback on drafts including on the policy framework i.e. how to use the Policy and the Planning and Decision Pathway, and each of the 14 Chapters. The Council members attended and supported DELWP led state-wide community engagement sessions as well as presented at various stakeholder and community forums to encourage feedback. Council Chair also chaired the governments' Stakeholder Reference Group, which provided an important forum to align sectoral differences, focus on the mutual benefits and assist in the eventual endorsement of the Policy across multiple Ministers.

#### **Marine Spatial Planning Framework**

Council members participated in the MSPF co-design process and promoted and championed the benefits of integrated, coordinated and sustainable management of the marine environment. The MSPF consists of both policies to guide (Part A) and the process for initiating, approving and undertaking marine spatial planning (Part B). The Council supports the next steps in establishing the Marine Spatial Planning Framework which includes a state-wide assessment to identify areas for marine spatial planning and guidelines that will provide detailed instructions about how to undertake marine spatial planning in the identified areas.

### **1.3.2 Developing the Marine and Coastal Strategy**

The Council is partnering with Traditional Owners to provide guidance to DELWP on the planning and development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy (the Strategy). Under the Act, the Strategy is to be developed

within twelve months of making the Policy and will give effect to the Policy. Given the disruptions due to COVID-19 and the desire to build a Strategy owned by the sector, this twelve month timeline may not be achieved. The Strategy will outline priority actions over a five-year period, establishing the pathway for achieving long term outcomes for our marine and coastal environment. As a new strategy is to be prepared every 5 years this means that each strategy will reflect a point in time in the 15-year life of the Policy and it is therefore feasible, and encouraged, to strategically design short, medium and longer term actions to achieve policy outcomes. The first strategy will be developed during 2020 and finalised in 2021. A draft strategy will be released for public comment and will include an implementation plan.

To support the development of the Strategy, the Council has established a multisector stakeholder engagement program. Its dual purpose is to promote engagement in development of the Strategy and for Council members to gain deeper understanding of stakeholder priority needs and actions. In addition, Council will be seeking input from its Science Panel's social, physical, biological and economic expertise to input and / or review priority actions.

### **1.3.3 Partnering with Traditional Owners**

The Council, with Traditional Owners from the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), co-chaired the second Sea Country Co-Governance Group (SeaCoGG) on Gunaikurnai Country with secretariat support provided by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC). The first of the two day gathering was held on Country with a visit by boat to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park which Gunaikurnai jointly manage with Parks Victoria. The group listened to current and future works based on Gunaikurnai Country Plan objectives.

The second day was held at GLaWAC headquarters at Forestec, Kalimna West. The discussion included confirmation of the SeaCoGG Terms of Reference, clarification of the role of FVTOC as secretariat support, approval of the request from Parks Victoria for membership of the group, an update on the draft Marine





**Fur seal at Cape Bridgewater**

and Coastal Policy, timelines for the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy and initial discussions on working with Traditional Owners on the Strategy planning and development. There was general support for a further SeaCoGG meeting and this was tentatively planned for March 2020. Unfortunately this meeting has been postponed due to impacts of COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition, the Council funded a project to support formation of a Sea Country Knowledge Holder Group. Its initial workshop to enable sharing of Traditional Owner Sea Country knowledge and indigenous cultural customs alongside western science has also been postponed to 2021 due to impacts of COVID-19.

#### **Working together in planning & development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy**

The Council is committed to working in partnership with Traditional Owners in the planning and development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy. This includes ensuring Traditional Owners are invited to participate in all meetings with DELWP regarding the development of the Strategy, and assist in guiding format, content and engagement in the Strategy development.

#### **1.3.4 Evidence Based**

Chaired by Council member, Professor Alistar Robertson, the multi-disciplinary 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.

The Science Panel was formed in February 2019 and in August 2019 the Science Panel Chair developed a list of priority projects based on the Council’s focus areas. Four projects have progressed as follows:

- **Regionalise to Victoria IPCC Oceans and Cryosphere Report 2019**

The Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) assesses new knowledge since the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) 5th Assessment Report (AR5), October 2014,

and the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C (SR15) 2018, on how the ocean and cryosphere have and are expected to change with ongoing global warming, the risks and opportunities these changes bring to ecosystems and people, and mitigation, adaptation and governance options for reducing future risks. The Council is supporting DELWP in regionalising to Victoria the new knowledge in the SROCC. This will include assessment of future sea level rise and implications for existing Victorian Planning Provisions to reduce future risk when making use and development decisions.

- **State of the Marine and Coast Reporting (Commissioner Environmental Sustainability) – Indicator development**

Under 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 Act s.37). The Office for the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) is the responsible body for delivering this work under the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003. This Report will be developed by the OCES by 2025. To fulfil the Government’s 2014 election commitment of a five yearly State of the Bays Report (2016), and commence the transition to a full SMCE Report in 2025, the OCES is updating and expanding the State of the Bays Report 2016 as the inaugural State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report by December 2021. The State of the Bays scope will be expanded to include:

- Port Phillip Bay
- Western Port
- Gippsland Lakes
- Corner Inlet
- Victoria’s System of Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries.

The OCES has been following a co-design process with stakeholders to develop a list of indicators for this report. The Council has worked closely with OCES through this process and Science Panel members have provided review of indicators under one of the three sub-chapter groups of indicators (Table: 1).

**Table 1: The Council's Science Panel Members contributing to State of the Marine and Coast Report – indicators development**

Indicator Sub-groups	Reviewers
<b>Climate, coastal hard risk and climate change impacts</b>	A/Prof Dan Ierodiaconou, A/Prof Vanessa Wong, Mr David Provis, Dr Kathy McInnes, Dr Brian Coffey, A/Prof David Kennedy
<b>Communities, Governance, collaborative management and capacity</b>	A/Prof Ruth Lane, A/Prof Melissa Nursey-Bray, Prof Ruth Beilin, Dr Brian Coffey, A/Prof Joanna Vince, Dr Tanya King
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Prof Perran Cook, Dr Randall Lee, Dr Carly Cook, Prof Steve Swearer, Prof Greg Jenkins

- **Short review of international and national efforts at co-management using traditional owner knowledge and western knowledge of natural resources (with a focus on marine and coastal Communities).**

Desk top study commenced by Science Panel Chair to identify suitable reference material to support members capability uplift on this topic.

- **The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts**

The Council sought to deliver a Victorian-focused report on the costs of projected climate change damages on coastal communities and coastal assets and the relative costs of investment in adaptation measures to partially and fully avoid these damages. The study will provide a deep insight into the costs to the Victorian economy. The study has the following scope:

- Articulate the economic cost to Victoria of the projected coastal climate change impacts on coastal infrastructure (including properties/houses, schools,

hospitals, shopping centres, port facilities, coastal road systems, seawalls, groynes, boat launching facilities and jetties and piers) and coastal agriculture by Council region (amalgamated loss results to have total annual compound losses);

- estimate loss of revenue from disruption and thus the impact to the Victorian economy; and
- model the benefits of different policies and adaptations on costs.

Council is working with University of Melbourne and consultant specialists focussed on developing systems to understand the complex play of climate change variables that impact an organisation's physical assets, human resources and management processes. In addition the Council has engaged with DELWP and across whole of Victorian Government and identified that the project will fill a gap in knowledge and provide valuable information to support climate-resilient and smart investments for Victorian communities. It is anticipated the Report will be finalised early 2021.

### 1.3.5 Stakeholder Engagement

The Council focused on getting out to regional Victoria, meeting stakeholders and listening to their priorities, opportunities and challenges. Council is extremely grateful for the time and effort of our hosts in making these visits the highlight of the year.

In July 2019 the Council was hosted by Glenelg Shire Council and spent a full day looking getting to know the coastal environment of Portland and Cape Bridgewater and planning and management challenges in responding and adapting to impacts from coastal hazards. The Glenelg Shire Council highlighted the need for all levels of government to be working collaboratively to support coastal communities in adapting to future climate change scenarios.

The Council travelled to Gippsland in August 2019 starting with an overnight stay at Inverloch and travelling via South Gippsland to Lakes Entrance the following day. Council was hosted by DELWP Gippsland Region



**Thunder Point and islands, Warrnambool**



and touched base with West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria, South Gippsland Shire Council, Wellington Shire Council, East Gippsland Shire Council and GLaWAC at various site visits. The Council was impressed at the collaboration between agencies and willingness to work together in getting (often long term) outcomes. The Council hosted an afternoon tea for community and stakeholders at the TAFE Facilities on Bullock Island, Lakes Entrance with GLaWAC presenting and sharing knowledge about Gunaikurnai country and how we can work together.

Further regional visits had been planned by Council for 2020 however with travel and gathering restrictions imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 a new way of connecting and staying stakeholder-informed

was required. The Council has implemented an online schedule of marine and coastal sector stakeholder sessions from June to December 2020 and to support development of the Strategy. The first stakeholder session included Better Boating Victoria and the Boating Industry Association Victoria. Following sessions will include local government, emergency management, the water sector, ports, fisheries, coastal management decision makers, Parks Victoria, and volunteer support organisations. So far, these deep dives into the stakeholders' experience, needs and aspirations have indicated a strong alignment for a healthy, dynamic and sustainable marine and coastal environment in Victoria. Many sectors see the same challenges, and at times similar solutions. The Council is grateful for this opportunity to deeply engage across stakeholders.

### 1.3.6 Highlights 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 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.









Functions	Deliverable
 <b>Function (a) and (b)</b> Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy development and implementation	<p>The Council worked closely with DELWP in preparation of the Marine and Coastal Policy which came into effect on 6 March 2020 – See section 1.3.1.</p> <p>The Council is working with DELWP and Traditional Owners in planning and development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy. For the Council this also includes seeking views of key stakeholders across marine and coastal sectors – see section 1.3.2 and 1.3.5.</p>
 <b>Function (c)</b> 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 development of the draft Marine and Coastal Strategy, including in relation to key themes, the engagement approach, the importance of partnering with Traditional Owners as rights holders, and the need for an extended timeline for Strategy development due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>
 <b>Function (d)</b> Matters requiring scientific research	<p>The Council worked with members of the multi-disciplinary Science Panel to commence projects as part of priority focus areas – see 1.3.4</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, and fisheries resource assessment and management.</p>
 <b>Function (e)</b> Provide advice on guidelines prepared under the Act	<p>The Council provided advice both to DELWP and the Secretary of DELWP prior to the release of the revised <i>Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast</i>. The Guidelines will be used by practitioners for 12 months and following this period DELWP has committed to seeking feedback and making further refinements if required.</p> <p>The Council continues to work 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 the principles and objectives of the Act, and the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy. The Council must be consulted in preparation of CMMPs.</p>
 <b>Function (f) and (g)</b> 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> designed to bring multiple stakeholders together to work on shared regionally significant issues across marine and coastal tenures. The Council has been engaged in conversations with potential RaSP participants including the gazettal of the first RaSP based around Inverloch where significant coastal erosion is impacting on public infrastructure including buildings and roads.</p> <p>Other potential RaSPs include around the western shoreline of Port Phillip Bay, and with Traditional Owners.</p> <p>The Council is assisting DELWP in developing criteria for establishing RaSPs.</p>

table continued overleaf...

...table continued

Functions	Deliverable
 <p><b>Function (h)</b> Provide input to the preparation of Environmental Management Plans under the Act</p>	<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>
 <p><b>Function (i)</b> Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act</p>	<p>Preparation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy are the key documents to assist in the administration of the Act and has been the focus for the Council over the past 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 with timelines for completion extended to 2021 due to impact on resourcing from COVID-19 restrictions. The Regulations will provide clear enforceable boundaries on use and development.</p>
 <p><b>Function (j)</b> Carry out any other function conferred on Council by or under the Act or any other Act</p>	<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 to be taken 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, that Traditional Owners are recognised as rights holders in all aspects of planning and management in the marine and coastal environment and stakeholders and the broader community are effectively engaged. The Council's COVID-19 Re-prioritisation Plan included new ways of working including continued engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>The highlighted projects (section 1.3.4) all support effective delivery of the Council's functions.</p>
<p><b>(2) In performing its functions</b> Council must have regard to principles and objectives of the Act.</p>	<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>



Council members regional visit to Glenelg Shire Council – Discovery Bay, July 2019

### 1.3.7 Presentations given by Council members and staff and workshop contributions

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

Presenter	Presented To	Topic	Date
Dr A. Boxshall	Inverloch Coastal Resilience Project launch event – including South Gippsland Conservation Society. DELWP Gippsland Regional Director and Director Land Policy.	Coastal Hazard management and potential use of the Regional and Strategic Partnership tool available under the MACA to form a legally binding partnership in response to managing coastal hazard management challenge at Inverloch.	2 August 2019
Dr A. Boxshall	Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association – draft Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy.	Overview of the draft Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy focusing on key areas for input.	6 August
Dr A. Boxshall	Engineers Australia (Victorian Chapter)	Overview of the draft Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy focusing on key areas for input	28 August
Dr A. Grage	Participated in Coastal Marine Management Plan workshop	CMMP Workshop organised by DELWP with support from VMaCC and ABM.	12 November
Dr A. Boxshall	Australian Coastal Society (VIC) – AGM Guest Speaker	Overview of the draft Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy.	29 November
Dr A. Robertson	Participated in the Technical Advisory Panel for the State of the Coast and Marine Environment Report	Technical Advisory Panel to support development of the State of Environment Report Marine and Coasts organised by OCES.	
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.	2 March 2020

### 1.3.8 General Business Activities

The Council business activities involved:

- engaging the Science panel members for involvement in VMaCC priority projects
- scoping VMaCC Project – *Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts* – by assessing the need across government, confirming financial contributions from DELWP Climate Change and Marine and Coastal Policy areas and Life Saving Victoria, and aligning with Infrastructure Victoria strategic planning.
- partnering with Traditional Owners in development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy by ensuring participation at meeting sessions with DELWP
- engaging with Traditional Owners to understand health Country objectives and how best to embed TO voice in VMaCC business.
- 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.

- supporting the department in public consultation sessions as part of development of the Marine and Coastal.
- providing considered feedback and input to development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy including MSP.
- providing feedback to coastal Crown land managers on preparation of Coastal and Marine Management Plans.
- providing feedback to the department and lead agencies on preparation of Regional and Strategic Partnerships with the development of draft Criteria.
- presenting at stakeholder events and workshops
- advising and meeting with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

### 1.3.9 Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards

The Council planned to host the inaugural Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards (the Awards) in May 2020. This was in recognition of the previously successful Victorian Coastal Awards hosted by the Victorian Coastal Council and positive feedback received from the Minister,

						
<b>Leadership in climate change adaptation</b>	<b>Innovative applied researcher</b>	<b>Distinction in biodiversity and ecosystem conservation</b>	<b>Excellence in marine and coastal design or development</b>	<b>Embedding Traditional Owner cultural practice</b>	<b>Inspiring community engagement and education initiatives</b>	<b>Recognising individual achievement and an emerging leader</b>



community and stakeholders. The Awards recognise and celebrate the many people and organisations contributing to the sustainable management and protection of coastal and marine environments throughout Victoria. The 2020 Awards highlight the vital role of community members who volunteer their time to ensure the many values of our marine and coastal areas are protected and enhanced for all to enjoy.

Nominations for the Awards opened in mid-January and closed at the end of March. There are seven categories with several categories split into sub-categories to recognise a) volunteers and b) organisations and agencies with paid staff. The categories include:

- Embedding Traditional Owner cultural practice
- Leadership in climate change adaptation
- Innovative applied researcher
- Distinction in Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation
- Excellence in marine and coastal design or development
- Inspiring community engagement and education initiatives
- Recognising individual achievement and an emerging leader.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria the awards gala ceremony has been postponed and is more than likely to be an online event later in 2020, with a networking celebration planned for 2021.

### 1.3.10 Council Business Plan & COVID-19 Re-prioritisation 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 *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, key issues, outcomes and actions contained in Victoria's Marine

and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan as well as responses to emerging challenges.

On July 1 2019, the Council participated in a planning and review workshop to discuss ways in which members could be most effective in guiding the development of the forthcoming Marine and Coastal Strategy and concluded with the Council identifying focus areas to assist in prioritising effort. Councils five focus areas include:

- 1) Significant and new investment and incentives in marine and coastal climate adaptation.
- 2) Normalise the conversation about marine and coastal climate adaptation.
- 3) Step change towards co-management and ultimately Traditional Owner self-determination
- 4) Influence decision-making to recognise the fundamental importance of marine and coastal ecosystems.
- 5) Simplify whole of government institutional arrangements and governance (in marine and coastal planning and management).

In March 2020, the Council developed a **COVID-19 Re-prioritisation Plan** and identified focus area 2) and 3) as core priorities. In addition, the Council identified new ways of working that would split the VMaCC full day meeting over two half days with the Council business and the Marine and Coastal Strategy development in one half day and engagement with stakeholders in the second half day. The aim of the stakeholder session was to capitalise on availability of people using online platforms and to connect broadly and more deeply with stakeholders in the new environment and thereby improve Council's understanding of organisations, industry and peak bodies working across the marine and coastal sector.



Online council meeting

## 2. Governance and Organisational Structure

The Council is resourced with a budget and Secretariat support through DELWP. On 30 June 2020 the Council employed 2 staff (1.6 full time equivalent).



**Figure 1: Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC) Secretariat 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](mailto:vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.marineandcoastalcoouncil.vic.gov.au](http://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 Councils 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 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 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 as a Director and Co Deputy Chair of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, and as a Commissioner of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. Previously Jennifer has been a member, then Chair of the Council of Medley Hall, at the University of Melbourne, a sessional member of Planning Panels Victoria and a board member 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 provides advice on research strategy to several Australian universities.



#### **Honorary Associate Professor**

**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 a former Board member of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and currently chairs its 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 25 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 Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Manager 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**

Eleven Council meetings were held on the following dates throughout the 2019–20 financial year:

- 2 July 2019
- 30 July 2019
- 27 August 2019
- 30 September 2019
- 28 October 2019
- 29 November 2019
- 31 January 2020
- 24 February 2020
- 24 March 2020 & 8 April 2020
- 27 April 2020
- 1 June 2020

Member attendance for the Council's eleven business meetings in the 2019–20 financial year are as follows:

Dr Anthony Boxshall	11
Ms Jennifer Fraser	10
Dr Anna Grage	11
Dr Ian Knuckey	9.5
Prof Alistar Robertson	10
Dr John Sherwood	11
Ms Jacquie White	11

## **2.3 Representation on stakeholder reference groups**

Council membership on stakeholder reference groups in the 2019–20 financial year was as follows:

- Marine and Coastal Policy Stakeholder Reference Group – Dr A. Boxshall (Chair)
- 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
- Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC-IMOS) – Prof Alistar Robertson

## **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
- Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee
- Economic Assessment of damages and costs on Victorian communities from coastal climate change – Sub-Committee
- Sea Country Co-Governance Group
- Marine and Coastal Awards Sub-Committee



## 2.5 Submissions by Council

There were three Council Submissions in the year 2019–20 and these included:

- 26 August 2019** Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities. Victorian Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee.
- 28 February 2020** Offshore Clean Energy Infrastructure – Discussion Paper. Australian Government. Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources.
- 6 March 2020** Review – Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council input into the Victorian Government Response.

## 2.6 Presentations received at Council meetings

The Council received the following presentations at its meetings in 2019–20.

Presenter	Topic	Date
OCES, Dr Rebecca Koss & Scott Rawlings	UN system environmental economics Science Panel input SoE Marine & Coasts	2 July 2019
DELWP (Carol McMillan, Gippsland Regional Manager, Land and Built Environment)	Key issues for Gippsland Region	27 August 2019
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	30 September 2019
Genevieve Mortimer, Climate KIC	Information about Climate Kic and potential collaboration. The organisation is an independent, not for profit, that aims to <i>link government and research to drive transformational climate action</i> . Climate KIC is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (European Union).	30 September 2019
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF))	Marine and Coastal Policy & Marine Spatial Planning Framework	28 October 2019
DELWP (Ryan Bath, Senior Project Officer)	Marine and Coastal Act 2018 Regulations	28 October 2019
DELWP (Angeline Charles, Manager Statewide Coastal Programs Teams)	Statewide Coastal Programs Team	28 October 2019
DELWP (Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	North western corner Port Phillip Bay RaSP update. Draft RaSP Criteria	29 November 2019
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer), Nicola Waldron (Project Manager MSPF), Jenny Symons (Policy Officer))	Marine and Coastal Policy update and development of Marine and Coastal Strategy development update. IPCC Sea Level Rise Regionalisation approach.	31 January 2020
OCES, Dr Rebecca Koss & Scott Rawlings	SoE Marine and Coasts indicator development update.	31 January 2020
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Nicola Waldron (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Marine and Coastal Policy establishment & development of Marine and Coastal Strategy	24 February 2020
DELWP (Lana Kovak, ED Climate Change, Rhynah Subrun, Director Climate Change Adaptation & Risk, Jill Fagan, Manager Climate Change Policy)	Overview of Climate Change Act, Strategy and Sector / Regional Adaptation Planning	24 February 2020
Darren James, Tamara Van Polanen Petel, Lawrance Ferns	Overview of CoastKit and Decision Support Capabilities; overview of PPBCHA and Decision Support Capabilities	24 February 2020
DELWP (Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Nicola Waldron (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Marine & Coastal Strategy working in partnership – themes and timing	24 March 2020

table continued overleaf...

...table continued

Presenter	Topic	Date
DELWP (Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Nicola Waldron (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Marine & Coastal Strategy working in self-determination mode – themes	8 April 2020
DELWP (Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Nicola Waldron (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Development of Marine and Coastal Strategy	27 April 2020
DELWP (Will Guthrie (Director Land Policy), Liz Patterson (Manager Strategy and Policy), Nicola Waldron (Manager Strategy and Policy), Rebecca Price (Principal Policy Officer))	Development of Marine and Coastal Strategy	1 June 2020

## 2.7 Council Publications

There were no Council publications in the year 2019–20.

## 2.8 Conferences and Seminars

Representatives from the Council attended the following conferences and seminars during 2019–20:

- Port Phillip Bay Major Projects Update – Association Bayside Municipalities
- Offshore Clean Energy
- Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program Annual Scientific Advisory Workshop
- Office for the Commissioner Environmental Sustainability Marine and Coast Indicator Workshop 1 and 2
- Regional and Strategic Partnership North Western Corner Port Phillip Bay Workshop

## 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 completed an annual review of its performance in accordance with this Policy. The performance assessment covers individual members, the Council collectively, and the Chair. The Council also sought external performance assessment from a range of stakeholders. The outcomes of the

review were documented in the January 31 meeting papers and the results were used when considering business planning priority focus areas. Some of the feedback heavily influenced the Council drive for a deeper relationship with a broad range of stakeholder groups across Victoria.

## 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 2020 the Council employed 2 staff (1.6 full time equivalent). The proportion of women was 100%.

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.

## 4. Other Disclosures

### 4.1 Consultancies over \$10,000

During 2019–20 the Council did not enter any contracts valued over \$10,000.

### 4.2 Consultancies under \$10,000

In 2019–20 the Council engaged two consultants to deliver work valued under \$10,000. Melanie Turner (Plan to Perform – \$5,016) and Patrick O’Callaghan (Deliberate Impact – \$5,417.50) were engaged to provide facilitation services and summary reports for Victorian Marine and Coastal Strategy workshops.

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

- Judy Bennett Design – Design and print of the VMaCC Annual Report (\$2,717)
- Green Scribble – Animations and collateral for VMaCC Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing (\$9,032.10)
- Green Scribble – Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards Branding and collateral (\$6,627)
- Austage – Lapel microphone hire for VMaCC Coastal Adaptation Executive Briefing (\$165)
- eAwards – Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards Online Platform (Stage 1 & 2 – \$4,356)

The total value of contractor expenditure for 2019–20 is \$22,897.10.

### 4.3 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 2019–20.

### 4.4 Grants

In 2019–20 the Council did not undertake any grant programs.

### 4.5 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.

### Making a Request

The Council operates in accordance with FOI procedures established through DELWP. There was no FOI request made to the Council in 2019–20. The Secretariat did respond to a request from Edward O’Donohue MP, regarding the Portsea front beach, as two documents identified are letters from the Victorian Coastal Council (VCC). While governed by a different Act, the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is the successor to the VCC and determined these documents were a) not provided in confidence, and b) if they were released would not discourage the Council from communicating similar matters in future.

The Council has determined that DELWP is its authorised officer. FOI requests can be lodged online at [www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://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](mailto:foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au), Manager FOI, DELWP, Tel: (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](http://foi.vic.gov.au).

### 4.6 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 Victorian Marine and Coastal 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 VMaCC or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

VMaCC is not able to receive public interest disclosures.



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

## 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 2020. 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 2019–20 financial year (excluding salaries and agency staff costs) and provides a comparison with the previous year.

There were changes in financial position during the reporting period with underspent project funds due to COVID-19 restrictions requiring postponement of the Marine and Coastal Awards Gala ceremony and delays in finalising the scope and funding agreement for the Councils project – Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts. The underspent funds for these projects have been carried over to be used in

### 4.7 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.

### 4.8 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Other information held at the Council's office is available on request, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. 4.14 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.

### 4.9 Overseas Travel

There was no overseas travel in 2019–20.

2020–2021. The Victorian summer bushfires followed by the COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for the Council in continuing to regularly meet and stay connected with its science community (including physical, biological and social scientists) and other subject matter experts, be stakeholder-informed and partner in self-determination mode with Traditional Owners. The Council's COVID-19 Re-prioritisation Plan (1.3.10) ensured members focused on priority areas and found new ways of working to maintain performance.

### 5.2 Operating Position

#### 5.2.1 Summary of Financial Results of the Year

Financial Year	Council operations *
2019–2020	\$135,416.49 + \$110,000 (Carried over funds) TOTAL = \$245,416.49

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

\*\* The carried over funds are for committed projects including Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards (\$50,000) where the event has been postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions & VMaCC Project – Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts. (\$60,000).



Mount Oberon, Tidal River

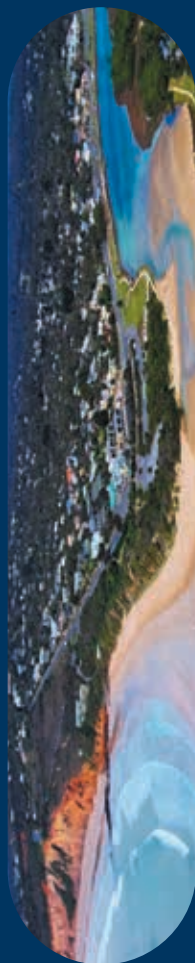
## 6. Appendix 1 – VMaCC Business Plan 2019–2021

# 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 - <b>development and implementation</b> <i>Functions: (a) and (b)</i></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</b> (MSPF). 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 2020.</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 <i>Functions: (c)</i></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 <i>Functions: (e)</i></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>



# Coastal Council

In performing functions (a) – (i) 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 <b>scientific research</b> 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 Functions: (f) and (g)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regional and Strategic Partnerships (RaSP)</b> 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> 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>
 <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act – <b>regulations</b> under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act</i> 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> 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> </ul> </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 Business Plan will be updated annually to reflect emerging issues and opportunities, and provide an update on implementation.

## The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council members are:



Professor  
Alistair Robertson



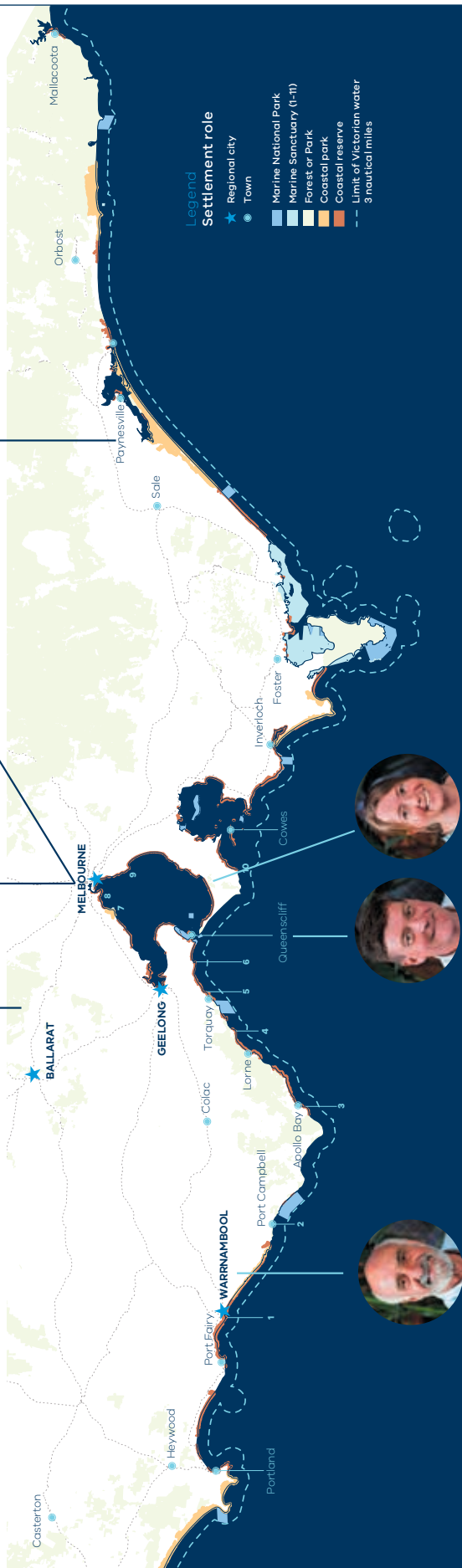
Dr Anthony  
Boxshall (Chair)



Ms Jacquie  
White



Ms Jennifer Fraser



## 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

## Contact

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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.

## 7. Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>DELWP</b>	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
<b>EMP</b>	Environmental Management Plan
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>IBAC</b>	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
<b>MACA</b>	Marine and Coastal Act 2018
<b>MSPF</b>	Marine Spatial Planning Framework
<b>RaSPs</b>	Regional and Strategic Partnerships
<b>VCC</b>	Victorian Coastal Council
<b>VMaCC</b>	Victorian Marine and Coastal Council

Recreational use of the marine and coastal environment is highly valued by Victorians and our visitors – Pier to Pub. Lorne 2019.







**VICTORIAN MARINE  
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

