



The Victorian Government has introduced a new Marine and Coastal Act which improves management and oversight arrangements for the state's marine and coastal environment.

What's changing?

On 1 August 2018 the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* came into effect.

The new Act provides a simpler, better integrated and coordinated approach to planning and managing the marine and coastal environment:

- enabling protection of the coastline and the ability to address the long-term challenges of climate change, population growth and ageing coastal structures
- ensuring all partners work together to achieve the best outcomes for Victoria's marine and coastal environment.

Key elements of the new Act

New guiding principles

The Act establishes clear objectives and new guiding principles that specifically recognise climate change and Traditional Owners. It also provides better direction for managers 'on the ground'.

Simpler advisory arrangements

Regional Coastal Boards have been discontinued and simpler advisory arrangements introduced.

A new Marine and Coastal Council (effective 1 August 2018) will provide independent advice to the government on a range of matters including:

- the development and implementation of statewide policy and strategy (and other plans developed under the Act)
- significant decisions relating to the marine and coastal environment
- matters requiring scientific research.

Integrated policy and strategy development

From 1 August 2018, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will be responsible for developing a statewide policy and strategy, with advice and guidance from the new Marine and Coastal Council. This will enable a more integrated and coordinated whole-of-government approach with a greater focus on the marine environment.

Marine Spatial Planning framework

Victoria's first marine spatial planning framework will be included in the statewide policy to help achieve integrated and co-ordinated planning and management of the marine environment.

Marine and Coastal Environment report

Part of the new Act includes the development of Victoria's first 'State of the Marine and Coastal Environment' report. Information collected will not only improve current knowledge of Victoria's marine and coastal environment, but track its health over time as well.

Stronger regional and strategic partnerships

A new approach to regional planning will be established that focuses on strengthening regional and strategic partnerships. These improved partnerships will help address significant, long-term issues like planning for climate adaptation, visitor management and environmental protection across jurisdictional boundaries.

Environmental Management Plans

Environmental Management Plans will be developed and implemented for Port Phillip Bay (and other areas) as a result of the Act. These plans will align government, industry and community groups on actions to manage future challenges resulting from population growth, urbanisation, and climate change.

Improved local planning

Local planning and management will be improved by linking multiple coastal and marine managers so they can work together to develop clear and relevant local plans.

Additionally, improved controls will be created for access, use, and development in the marine and coastal environment. This will mean greater penalties for non-compliance and better tools to implement policies, plans and strategies on the ground.

Better management of coastal erosion

In recognition of the need to fill a technical skill and knowledge gap, DELWP will work with agencies to establish statewide objectives, standards, databases and guidance to build understanding of coastal erosion and flooding.

Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Transition Plan

Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan, released 1 August 2018, complements the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

It identifies a program of policy reforms and on-the-ground actions, many already underway, to transition to the new system over the coming years.

The plan has been updated to reflect the new Act. It also includes recommendations made in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report, *Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets*, released March 2018.

The plan contains 45 actions that will help implement the complete package of marine and coastal environmental reforms. Each action item listed includes:

- brief background/description
- lead partners
- likely delivery timeframe
- scope of work
- measures of success.

More information

To access a copy of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, go to: www.legislation.vic.gov.au

To access a copy of Victoria's Marine and Coastal Reforms Transition Plan, go to: www.coastsandmarine.vic.gov.au

For specific queries about the Act, please email marine.coastalact@delwp.vic.gov.au.

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