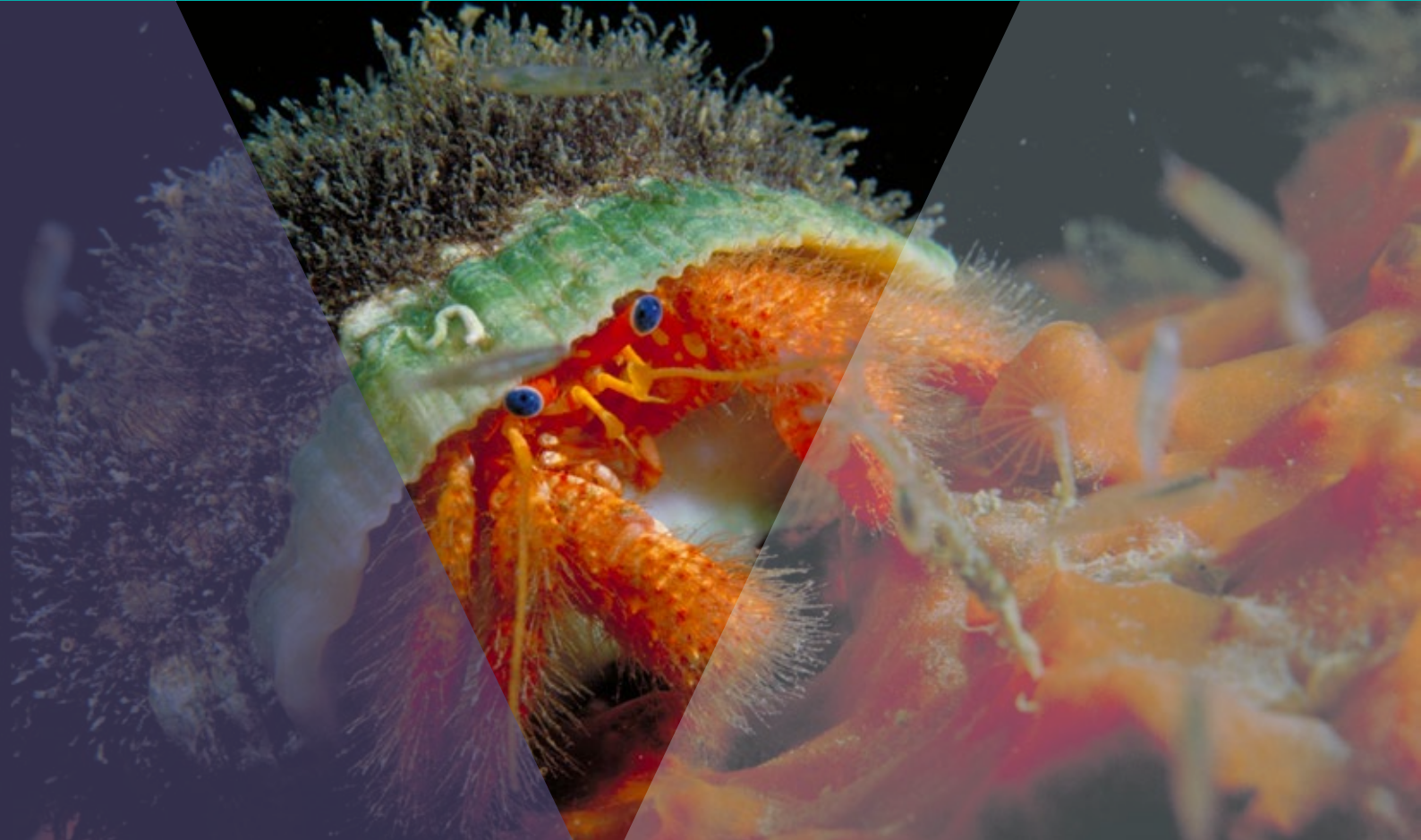


Marine and Coastal Act

Consultation Summary
March 2017



Victoria's marine and coastal environments are unique and special places with strong economic, social, and intrinsic natural values to be enjoyed by all.

The Victorian Government has committed to establishing a new Marine and Coastal Act to improve management and oversight for our marine and coastal areas. Providing a better future for these environments is a priority and putting strong, effective legislation in place is critical to achieving these positive outcomes.

The Marine and Coastal Act Consultation Paper was released in August 2016, and requested input and ideas for how the Victorian marine and coastal environments could be best protected to meet long term challenges such as impacts from climate change, population growth, and ageing coastal structures.

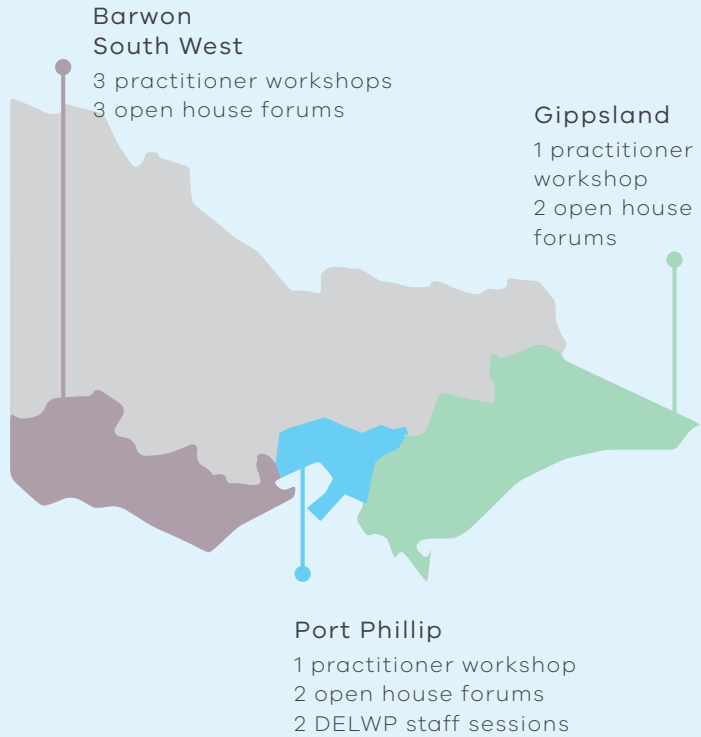
The paper outlined a series of reforms to Victoria's coastal and marine management system, including a new Marine and Coastal Act, and other policy reforms that will help Victorians manage coastal and marine areas now and into the future.

This report provides a summary of what we heard from Victorians who commented on the proposed reforms outlined in the paper.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Launched on 30 August 2016, the consultation process ran for 8 weeks and included a series of face to face forums and practitioner sessions across the Victorian coast. A total of 115 submissions were received from a wide range of stakeholders. The largest number of submissions were from individuals, followed by community/ interest groups and local government.

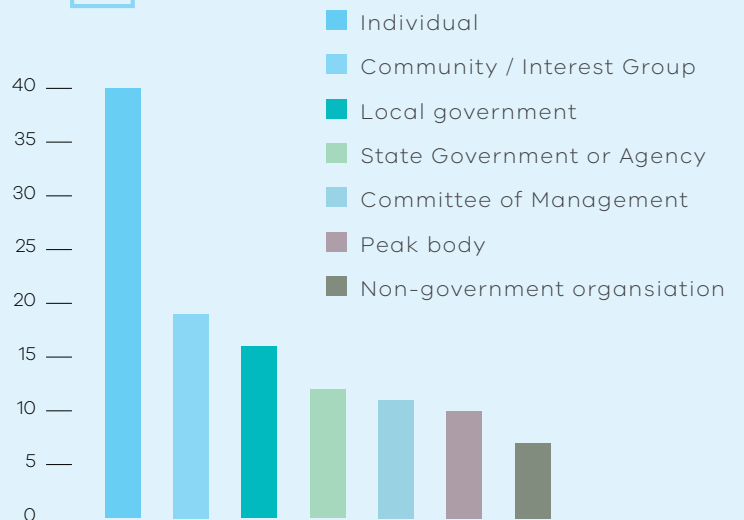
At a glance



Number of submissions by Region



Submissions received



WHAT WE HEARD



“ Overall the entire consultation paper reflects a great new approach to the way the Victorian coastal and marine environments are managed and planned for. It fills a lot of the gaps in the current system and will be a solution to a lot of the current issues ”

Clearer governance and institutional arrangements that better link capacity, resources and responsibility.

Proposed Reforms	Submission Feedback
Statewide	
An agile statewide Marine and Coastal Council that provides a conduit to the community, facilitates scientific research, advises on sustainable development and advises on the development of strategy and policy.	Support for Marine and Coastal Council as an advisory body with skills based members.
An enhanced Marine and Coastal Strategy, including an implementation plan.	Supported.
A Marine and Coastal Policy to clearly outline statewide policy positions and provide guidance to decision.	Supported.
<p>“ a Marine and Coastal Council should provide a good resource for advice, guidance and strategic direction (Glenelg Shire Council) ”</p>	
Regional	
Strengthen coastal Catchment Management Authorities and Melbourne Water, through enhanced skills and expertise to provide advice on coastal flooding and erosion.	Generally well supported for simplification of arrangements. Feedback that Catchment Management Authorities and Melbourne Water need to build on existing skills in order to provide advice on coastal flooding and erosion. Confirmation that Catchment Management Authorities should not take on non-Natural Resource Management issues.
Ensure Regional Catchment Strategies better reflect integrated catchment, coastal and marine issues.	Supported.
Regional and Strategic Partnerships that will enable communities and organisations to come together as needed to solve complex shared problems and plan for issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.	Supported, however more clarity required on what they are, scale, who will lead.
Reduce the complexity of advisory bodies by phasing out the Regional Coastal Boards.	Supported.
<p>“ Facilitating ‘Regional and Strategic Partnerships’ through the Act is supported. While the specifics of how this is to occur are unclear, it is clear that coastal management issues...do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries ”</p>	
Local	
Creating skilled and capable coastal managers by transitioning from smaller committees of management into either larger committees, local government or Parks Victoria.	Supported. Some concern about cost shifting if moving away from voluntary Committees of Management. Need a clear process involving the community.
Maintain and promote the role of volunteers in local marine and coastal management.	Supported.
Strengthen the role of Parks Victoria in planning and managing marine and coastal protected areas.	Supported. This should become a core focus for Parks Victoria.
A greater role for Traditional Owners in formal management and planning of marine and coastal areas.	Supported, however strong recognition that Traditional Owners can also be involved in other ways.



WHAT WE HEARD



“

Victoria’s marine and coastal environments would benefit greatly from an integrated eco-system based spatial planning framework (EPA)

”

Strengthening marine management

Proposed Reforms	Submission Feedback
Greater marine focus in strategy and policy.	Supported. The new Act needs to recognise the three dimensional scale of marine areas and how issues in the marine environment need to be dealt with at a state or national scale.
Developing a marine spatial planning framework to guide where future planning might be needed.	Supported.
Providing a greater focus on Port Phillip Bay by requiring an Environmental Management Plan.	Supported. Also suggested that Environmental Management Plans could be enabled in other marine and coastal areas.

“

The idea of an environmental management plan for Port Phillip Bay is warranted and supported, however ... consideration should be given to Western Port Bay, other bays and inlets and lake systems

”

Integrating planning systems

Requiring coastal management plans to be prepared.	Supported.
Maintain the ministerial veto on use and development on coastal Crown land but streamline it to focus on high risk activities.	Support for simplifying and streamlining the process, though more information is needed on how this will be achieved.
Reduce duplication between the consent process and Planning and Environment Act 1987 processes.	Supported.

“

The need to recognise climate change in the objectives of the new Marine and Coastal Act is considered to be of utmost importance

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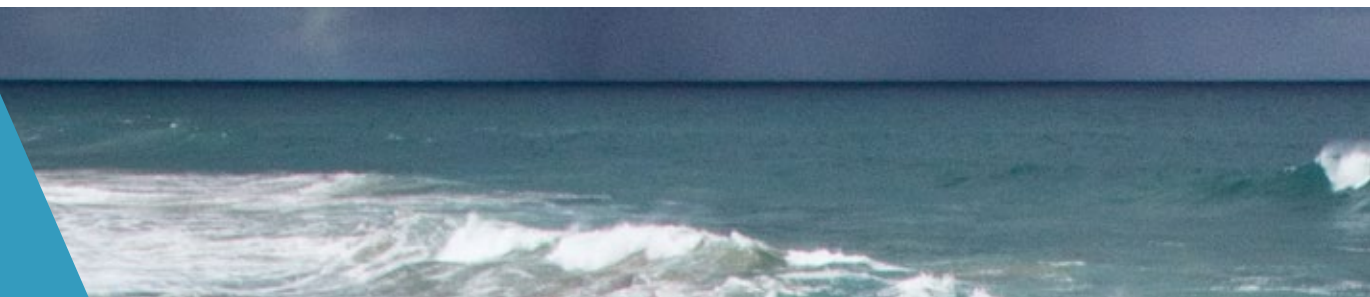
Adapting to climate change

Recognise Climate Change in the objectives of the new Marine and Coastal Act.	Supported, though liability was raised as an issue for local government.
Provide strong, policy guidance and technical expertise on the process of adapting to climate change, aligned with the revised Climate Change Act and the broader climate change agenda.	Support for DELWP to take leading role in coastal climate change. Need greater technical capacity within the system to provide guidance.

“

The need for Council to prepare such a plan [Coastal Management Plan] is supported in order to strengthen the understanding of relevant impacts and to support adaptation and mitigation projects
(Hobsons Bay City Council)

”



WHAT WE HEARD



“ Whilst the Council acknowledges that there is inequity in the ability of coastal managers to generate revenue, the Council is unsure that introducing a new levy on certain coastal Crown Land managers is the best solution (VCC)

”

Sustainable resources

Proposed Reforms	Submission Feedback
Better reporting and awareness to increase transparency of revenue and spending.	Supported. Some concern that efforts to improve transparency should not be overly burdensome or discourage disclosure of information. Transparency measures should be accompanied by education to better understand how coastal and marine management is funded.
Review fees and charges to identify where the beneficiary pays principle can be applied most efficiently and equitably.	Supported, however recognition that such fees and charges cannot be the only funding mechanism for the coast.
Improve the distribution of revenue generated on the coast to where it is most needed through a levy on some Crown land managers.	Levy not supported (unlikely to be efficient/effective), range of ideas on user pays, broad taxes/levies.
Determine appropriate cost sharing arrangements for coastal infrastructure.	Some support, though significant consultation needed, concern about cost shifting.
Continuing to invest in capacity building, sharing technical expertise and supporting volunteer programs.	Supported.

“ Improving knowledge of the existing and changing condition of marine and coastal areas will require the establishment of robust long-term monitoring programs

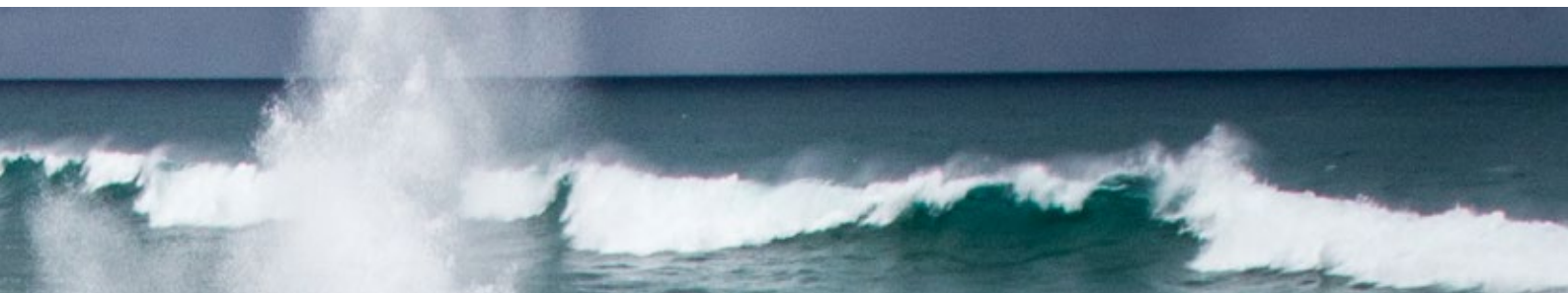
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Improving knowledge

Require a “State of the Marine and Coasts” report to be periodically prepared.	Strongly supported. Recognise the need to establish a consistent and appropriate approach to monitoring and collecting data, and outline indicators of a healthy marine and coastal environment.
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Involving the community

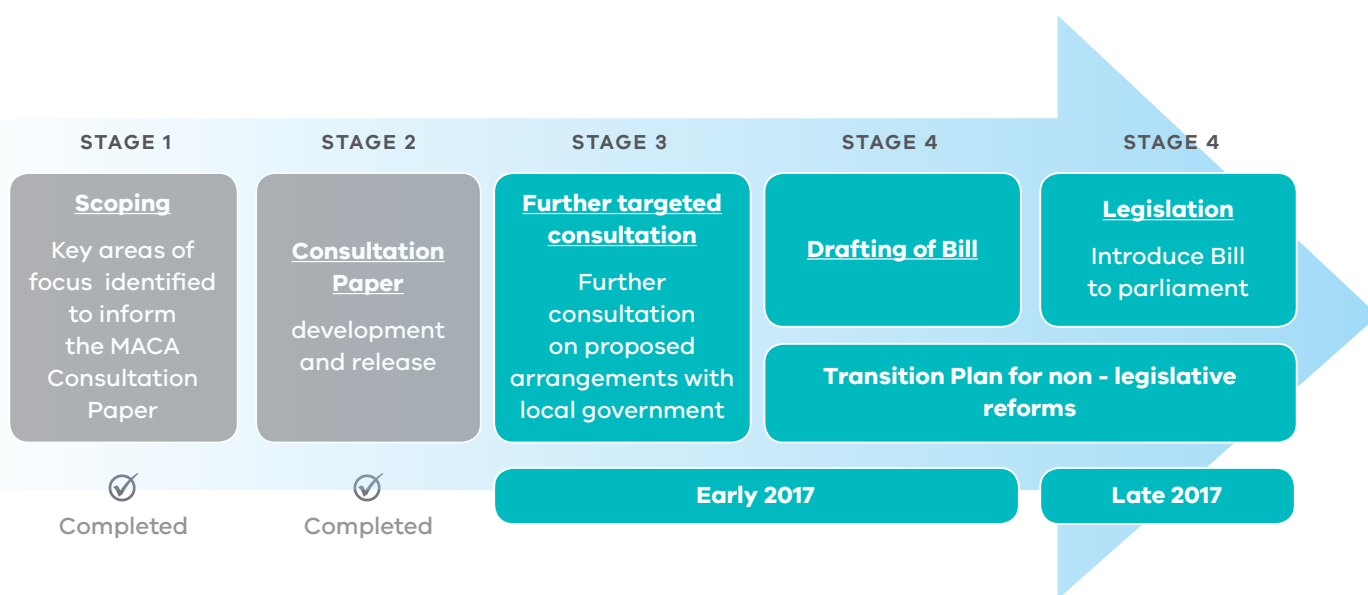
Encourage all Victorians to participate in managing and protecting our coastal and marine environments.	Supported. Community understanding of coastal and marine environment should be increased, building capacity and transfer of knowledge is critical.
Enhance opportunities for informal and formal involvement in marine and coastal management.	Supported, however more work required to understand how communities want to be engaged.
Provide clear and transparent pathways for community input to decision making.	Supported.



FROM CONSULTATION PAPER TO NEW ACT

What are the next steps?

With consideration of the submission feedback, DELWP and the expert panel are further shaping the proposed legislative reforms in preparation for the drafting of the Bill, which is expected to be introduced to Parliament in late 2017. A transition plan for non-legislative reforms is also being developed.



For more information visit DELWP

<http://delwp.vic.gov.au/marine-coastal-act>

or for queries email Marine.CoastalAct@delwp.vic.gov.au

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