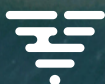




# WAVE 5

## Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes & Behaviour Report



VICTORIAN MARINE  
& COASTAL COUNCIL



Environment,  
Land, Water  
and Planning



### Acknowledgements

This report is part of longitudinal social research on community attitudes and behaviours on the Victorian coastal and marine environment, in order to inform the strategic review and development of the state's Marine and Coastal Policy. Four previous 'waves' of research have been conducted between 1995 and 2011. The Wave 5 – Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes & Behaviour Report is the fifth 'wave' of this research, undertaken in partnership between DELWP, Parks Victoria, the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (initiated by the former Victorian Coastal Council).

### Author

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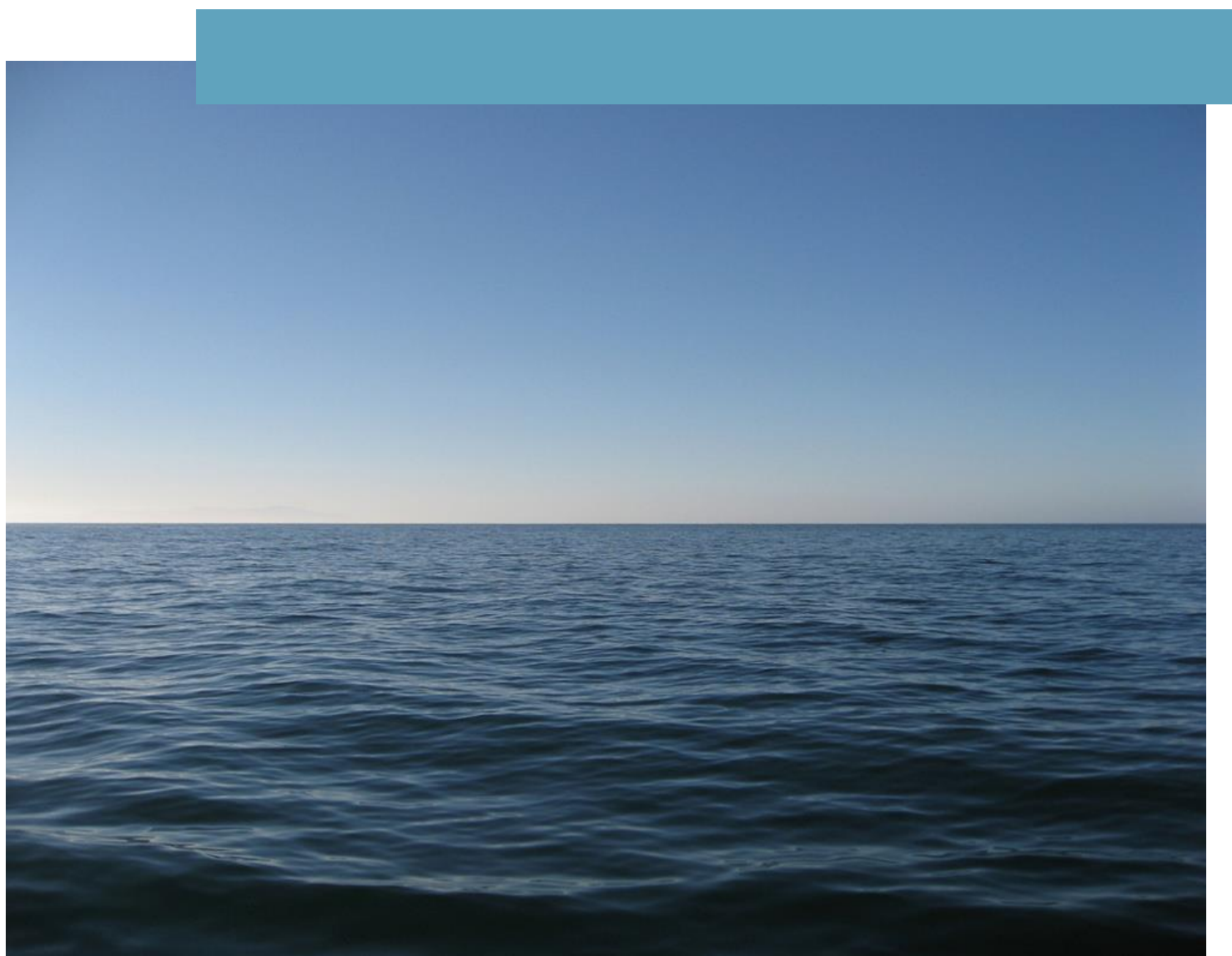
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# Wave 5 – Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes and Behaviours Research 2018

## *Final Report*

For the Department of Environment, Land, Water and  
Planning



# Table of contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Key findings	4
<b>1. Research Context</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Background and objectives	7
1.2 Research Design	7
Methodology	7
Sampling and Recruitment	8
Weighting	9
Presentation and interpretation of results	9
<b>2. Quantitative Findings</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.1 Use of the Victorian coast</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1.1 Day and overnight trips	11
2.1.2 Location of coastal trips	12
2.1.3 Activities at the coast	13
2.1.4 Local foreshore trips	14
2.1.5 Activities undertaken at local foreshore	15
<b>2.2 The coastal experience</b>	<b>16</b>
2.2.1 Quality of experience	16
2.2.2 Contributors to a positive experience	16
2.2.3 Values associated with the Victorian Coastline and Marine Environment	17
2.2.4 Functions of coastal and marine environments	19
<b>2.3 Aboriginal communities</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2.4 Issues and threats</b>	<b>24</b>
2.4.1 Overall issues and threats	24
2.4.2 Perceived impact of threats	25
<b>2.5 Climate change and sea level rise</b>	<b>27</b>
2.5.1 The impact of climate change	27
2.5.2 Sea level rise	28
2.5.3 Managing for climate change and sea level rise	29
<b>2.6 Population growth and coastal development</b>	<b>32</b>
2.6.1 Population movement and holiday houses	32

2.6.2	Coastal character	33
2.6.3	Impact of coastal development	33
2.6.4	Managing development and population growth	34
2.6.5	Managing for development and population growth	35
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Planning and management</b>	<b>36</b>
2.7.1	Perceptions of management	36
2.7.2	Responsibility for management	40
2.7.3	Awareness of management tools	42
2.7.4	Awareness and support for Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries	42
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Knowledge, participation, information and engagement</b>	<b>45</b>
2.8.1	Knowledge and Understanding	45
2.8.2	Topic of conversation and information sources	46
2.8.3	Participation	47
<b>3</b>	<b>Qualitative Findings</b>	<b>49</b>
3.1	Interactions with Victorian coast and marine environments	49
3.2	Perceptions and knowledge of Victorian coast and marine environments	49
3.3	Functions and values of Victoria's coast and marine environments	50
3.4	Key threats and issues	50
3.5	Management and planning	53
3.6	Cultural heritage	54
<b>Appendices</b>		<b>55</b>
	Demographics	55

# Executive Summary

## Key findings

### Use of the Victorian coast

*Most Victorians have visited the coast in the past year. Walking/hiking remains the most common activity on the coast.*

- More than three-quarters of surveyed Victorians had made at least one trip to the coast in the previous 12 months (77%). More than a third (37%) made more than five trips to the coast in the previous year.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of those living close to the coast visited their local foreshore at least monthly.
- Half the survey sample (51%) reported going on an overnight trip along the Victorian coast in the previous past 12 months.
- Walking/hiking remains the most common activity. More than half (55%) of those who had visited the coast in the previous year cited this. Other common activities were swimming/surfing (44%), eating/drinking (30%) and relaxing/lying on the beach (20%).

### The coastal experience

*Interactions with the coast are overwhelmingly positive – a coast or marine environment free of rubbish is the main contributor to Victorian's enjoyment of these environments. Victorians place a high value on local coast and marine environments and natural features are the most highly valued aspects of the Victorian coast.*

- Victorians enjoy visiting the State's coast; 98% reported a positive experience last time they visited the coast.
- The absence of litter, picturesque scenery and clean water were key to enjoyment of the coast.
- Victoria's coast and marine environments were the State's most important natural feature, according to 80% of surveyed Victorians.
- The top three things Victorians said they valued about the coast were the scenery/natural beauty, cleanliness of the beaches and wildlife found in these environments.

### Aboriginal communities

*Despite a limited understanding of local Aboriginal communities' connection to the coast, a majority of surveyed Victorians reported that local Aboriginal communities have a role to play when it comes developing and implementing management strategies.*

- Just one-third (33%) of respondents agreed they had a good understanding of local Aboriginal communities' connection to Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

## **Issues and threats**

*There has been an increase in the perception that Victoria's marine environments are under threat. Victorians are less sure of what might pose a threat to coastal and marine environments, but threats that are more visible were more likely to be identified. Threats posed by climate change, such as sea level rise, erosion and flooding, are regarded as less impactful than other phenomena, including rubbish, pollution and overfishing.*

- When asked unprompted what things might be threatening the Victorian coast and marine environment, the top five issues mentioned were: pollution/poor water quality; rubbish; inappropriate development; over or illegal fishing; and climate change.
- More familiar threats, such as litter and pollution, seem to be the ones deemed to have a bigger impact.

## **Climate change and sea level rise**

*There is widespread acceptance that climate change poses a threat to Victorian coastal and marine environments and that more needs to be done to mitigate the impacts. Despite this, neither climate change nor sea level rise is viewed as the major environmental threat to coastal environments amongst surveyed Victorians.*

- An overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) agreed that sea level rise poses a threat to the Victorian coast and marine environments in the coming decades and that climate change was causing sea levels to rise, leading to coastal erosion and flooding.
- Half of surveyed Victorians believed they would be affected by climate change in the next five years (48%).
- Three-quarters of respondents felt that managing the effects of climate change on the coast should be a Government priority (77%).
- Respondents were most likely to report that the Federal Government was mainly responsible for addressing the impacts of climate change on the coast. There was a marked increase in the proportion of respondents who felt that individuals and the local community should play a greater role in managing the risks posed by climate change.

## **Population growth and coastal development**

*All measures indicate that population growth and over-development along the coast is a key issue. One-in-10 raised the concern unprompted and three-in-10 ranked it in their top three threats to Victorian coast and marine environments.*

- A majority of surveyed Victorians agreed that Victorian coastal towns are looking increasingly like Australian suburbs.
- Nearly half the respondents felt that coastal developments are negatively affecting Victoria's native coastal environments.
- There was a minor increase in confidence that the current Government planning and building guidelines will protect the character of coastal towns.

## **Planning and management**

*There is a growing sense that a collective approach to managing Victoria's coast and marine environments will be the most effective method. Although only half the surveyed Victorians are confident these environments are currently well managed, there is more optimism about strategies being in place for future management.*

- There was a major increase in respondents reporting that they felt individuals and the local community had a responsibility in managing our coastal environments.
- Although Victorians think more ought to be done, a third felt well-informed about planning and management of these environments.
- About one-third of respondents were familiar with the new Victorian Marine and Coastal Act, and a similar proportion with the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan. Half felt they had a good understanding of marine protected areas.

## **Knowledge, participation, information and engagement**

*Half the surveyed Victorians feel they have a fair understanding of Victoria's coastal and marine environments though only a small proportion have discussed the health and management of these environments.*

- There is some appetite to personally contribute to preserving the coast. Two-in-five respondents reported that they would be willing to offer financial support to manage the Victorian coast and marine environments.
- Higher levels of understanding about planning and management typically represented higher levels of satisfaction with current management approaches.
- Providing Victorians information about the health and management of the Victorian coastal and marine environments is likely to be most effective using online channels.



# 1. Research Context

## 1.1 Background and objectives

This report presents the findings of Wave 5 of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes and Behaviours Research Study conducted in late 2018 on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP). The previous four 'Waves' were conducted in 1996, 2000, 2007 and 2011, although the study has evolved considerably over time.

The overall objectives were to:

- understand and track community views toward the Victorian coast and marine environments
- identify community values, issues and concerns related to these environments
- contribute to informing future policy, planning and management of the Victorian coast
- refresh and, where possible, contribute to the previous research data.

## 1.2 Research Design

### Methodology

The 2018 Victorian Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes and Behaviours Research included qualitative and quantitative research components.

#### Qualitative Method

The qualitative component of the study comprised six focus groups held in three locations. The first two groups were conducted in metropolitan Melbourne. The following four were in regional Victoria - two along the west coast in Warrnambool and two on the east coast in Sale. A discussion guide was used to help direct the conversation and ensure that each of the key subject areas was discussed. The groups were conducted on Tuesday 14 August or Wednesday 15 August 2018 and each ran for about 90 minutes.

#### Quantitative Method

For the first time since the study's inception, two methods were employed to collect quantitative data. The quantitative survey was delivered online for self-completion and via CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview). Both the online and CATI survey tools were developed to be completed within 15 minutes. It usually takes longer to complete a telephone interview than self-completing online survey, so the CATI survey was shortened to fit within the 15-minute timeframe. Minor adjustments to wording were also made between the survey tools, allowing the question wording to be tailored to the mode of survey delivery. Aside from survey length (the CATI being an abbreviated version of online survey) and minor wording differences, the two survey tools were the same. Where appropriate, questions used in the Wave 4 study were included to allow for a time series comparison.

The online survey achieved 1,500 responses and the CATI survey 1,001 between Thursday 4 October and Monday 29 October 2018. The average completion time was 19.9 minutes for the online survey and 14.2 minutes for the CATI survey.

## Mode Effect

The effect of the survey delivery mode in shaping a participant's response became evident for several questions. To account for the dual method approach, steps were taken in the questionnaire development phase to tailor questions to suit the mode in which they were to be delivered. The differences in responses between survey delivery modes for this study were largely confined to the following points:

- Online respondents were more likely to select the 'don't know' option. The ease with which a respondent self-completing the survey could select 'don't know' in contrast to a CATI respondent disregarding the probes of the phone interviewer resulted in a higher proportion of the online sample stating they 'don't know'. Given most analysis was conducted excluding 'don't know' responses, this trend had only a minor impact when comparing findings.
- A respondent's inclination to provide positive responses to attitudinal questions when being administered the survey over the phone was evident in the results. CATI respondents tended to report having a good knowledge/understanding of issues and, similarly, were less likely to report unfavourable ratings of current management approaches when compared to online respondents.
- Online respondents were more likely to 'neither agree or disagree' than CATI respondents. This resulted in lower proportions of online respondents providing a 'socially desirable' response to attitudinal questions.

Where survey delivery mode has affected responses, this is noted in the commentary in italics and in some instances a separate chart or table is presented.

## Sampling and Recruitment

### Qualitative Recruitment

Professional recruiters, Stable Research, were engaged to recruit participants for the focus groups. Participants were sourced via a panel of Victorian residents whom expressed interest in participating in the qualitative study. The groups consisted of members of the public and were made up of a mix of genders and ages as well as varying attitudes and interactions with Victoria's coast and marine environments. There were between six and eight participants in each of the group discussions.

### Quantitative Sample

To ensure the sample was representative of the Victorian population, age and gender quotas based on ABS census data were set. In addition, quotas were set for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. The metropolitan/regional boundaries were defined by the ABS Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA). As was done in Wave 4 of the study, quotas for proximity to the coast (within five kilometres or further than five kilometres) were also set. The proximity to the coast quota was based on the perceived distance of a respondent's place of residence from the coast. In instances where respondents were 'unsure' if they lived within five kilometres of the coast, they were allocated to a location cohort based on their residential postcode.

Quotas were applied to ensure that Victorians residing in the State's west, east and north, as defined by the Victorian Electoral Boundaries, were all represented. A respondent's postcode was used to categorise their location. Where postcodes covered multiple regions, they were allocated according to the population centre of that postcode and/or where the highest ratio of people reside. For instance, postcode 3211 falls across the Western Victoria and Metropolitan boundaries. Given the ABS

data states that 61% of population live in Greater Melbourne, any responses from this postcode were treated as metropolitan.

The quotas were replicated for both the online and telephone components of the survey. Due to difficulties reaching the online target quota for Eastern Victorians living within 5km of the coast, the quota target for Western Victorians living within 5km of the coast was increased to ensure that the metro/regional and proximity to coast sample mix was consistent with Wave 4 of the study.

**Table 1 – Sample mix by location**

	%	n
Western Victoria (within 5km of coast)	12	305
Western Victoria (further than 5km from coast)	10	250
Eastern Victoria (within 5km of coast)	8	194
Eastern Victoria (further than 5km from coast)	10	250
Northern Victoria (further than 5km from coast)	10	250
Greater Melbourne (Metropolitan) (within 5km of coast)	20	500
Greater Melbourne (Metropolitan) (further than 5km from coast)	30	752
<b>Greater Melbourne</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,252</b>
<b>Rest of Victoria (Regional)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,249</b>

### Weighting

Weighting was applied to adjust the results to ensure they are a true reflection of the Victorian population. Responses have been weighted according to ABS Census data for location (metro/regional), gender and age to correct for any discrepancies between the Victorian population as defined by ABS Census data and the population of the participants in this survey.

### Presentation and interpretation of results

The following report details findings from Wave 5 of the Marine and Coastal Community Attitudes and Behaviours Research Survey. Where comparable, Wave 3 (2007) and Wave 4 (2011) results have been included to provide an indication of changes in attitudes and behaviours over time.

Where a question was asked using an agreement scale (1-10 or Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree), results have been grouped to determine whether a respondent ‘agreed’ or ‘disagreed’ with the statement. Where a respondent has provided a rating of between six and ten or ‘somewhat’ or ‘strongly’ agreed with a statement, they have been considered to have ‘Agreed’ with the statement. The same process of grouping the positive/negative responses has been applied when evaluating the degree of impact, importance and confidence.

Tests of significance were conducted on all questions. When we refer to two results showing a ‘significant difference’, this means we can be 95% confident the difference observed reflects a true difference in the population of interest and is not a result of chance. Statistical significance is determined by the size of the difference between the groups’ averages, the sample size and standard deviation of the groups. For instance, if we say there has been a significant increase in Wave 5 compared to Wave 4 results, we are confident that the results observed are a true reflection of the change in the reported attitudes/behaviours of the Victorian population between 2011 and 2018. A significant difference does not necessarily equate to the finding being meaningful – it is merely a

statistical measure that is able to reliably highlight how the attitudes and behaviours differ between population groups, and how results have differed over time. The reader is encouraged to make a judgement as to whether the differences are ‘meaningful’ or not.

The tests take into account all margin for error calculations.

Tests of significance were conducted for all questions between Waves (3, 4 & 5) and between location area (Greater Melbourne & Regional Victoria), location within regional Victoria (east, west and north) and proximity to coast (within 5km and further than 5 km). Significance testing was also conducted between those who visit their local foreshore frequently (at least monthly) and those who visit infrequently (rarely or never).

Where significant differences are present between Waves 4 and 5 of the study, a block arrow is displayed (↕). Where significant differences between mode (CATI and Online) have been observed, these are shown with an arrow (↗). Where significant differences exist across key population groups, these have been noted in the commentary.

An example detailing how the results for each question have been reported is detailed below.

### 2.8.3 Participation

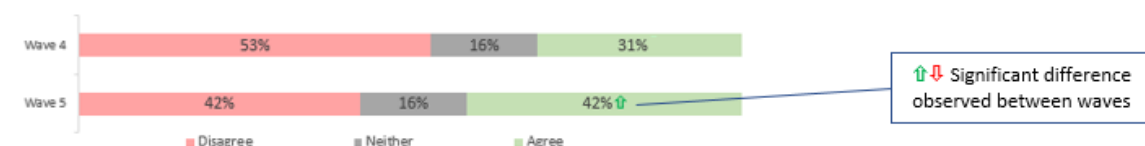
#### Interest in joining volunteer group

Two-in-five (42%) respondents suggested they would be interested in joining a volunteer group to assist preserve the coast.

- Results observed in wave 5 reflect a significant increase when compared against wave 4 (31%).
- Reported interest in joining a volunteer group amongst respondents residing in Greater Melbourne was significantly higher when compared against those residing in regional Victoria (44% vs 34%).

*Results indicate that the online sample are less inclined to provide a ‘socially desirable’ response - in this case to agree that they are interested in volunteering. Based on this it could be expected that less people would agree with this statement when completing survey online. Taking the mode of survey delivery into account make this increase is even more notable.*

Chart 40 - I would be interested in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast



AQ1\_F. I would be interested in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast. Wave 4 (n=988); Wave 5 (n=1,345, ONLINE ONLY).



## 2. Quantitative Findings

### 2.1 Use of the Victorian coast

- More than three-quarters of surveyed Victorians reported making a day trip to the coast and half reported making an overnight trip in the previous 12 months.
- Nearly all Victorians living near the coast had interacted with their local foreshore in the previous 12 months.
- Walking/hiking is the most common activity for Victorians when spending time on the coast. Swimming/surfing, eating/drinking, and relaxing/lying on the beach were other common activities.

#### 2.1.1 Day and overnight trips

##### **Visitation – Day Trips**

More than three-quarters (77%) of surveyed Victorians reported making at least one trip to the Victorian coast over the preceding 12 months.

- Decreases have been observed in frequency of visitation to coast when looking at results over time, the average number of day trips reported in Wave 5 is 16 – significantly fewer than 23, as was reported in Wave 4.
- Those who reside closer to the coast visit the foreshore with greater frequency. In Wave 5, nine-in-10 coastal residents (90%) reported making at least one trip, significantly more than inland residents (69%).
- Northern Victorians on average visited the coast twice, significantly fewer than those in Western and Eastern Victoria (22 and 25 times respectively).
- Those in regional Victoria were significantly more likely to have visited the coast zero times when compared to Melburnians.

Table 2 – Visitation (day trips) by Wave

No. of day trips	Wave 4	Wave 5
0	16%	23%↑
1-5	34%	40%↑
6-10	17%	14%
11 - 20	15%	10%↓
20 or more	19%	14%↓
<b>At least one day trip</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>77%↓</b>
<b>More than five trips</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>37%↓</b>

Q67a. In the past 12 months, how many day trips for recreation or leisure did you make to the Victorian Coast? Wave 4 (n=971); Wave 5 (n=2,230); 'Don't know' excluded.

## Visitation – Overnight Trips

Half of all Wave 5 respondents (51%) reported spending at least one night on the coast in the previous 12 months.

- The proportion of Victorians making at least one overnight trip to the Victorian coast decreased when compared to Wave 4 findings (57%). The average number of overnight visits in Wave 5 was four, a decrease since 2011, where the average number of reported overnight trips was six.
- Those in coastal locations take more overnight trips than those inland, and Northern Victorians were more likely to have not taken an overnight trip in the past 12 months compared to those living in East and West Victoria.
- More than half of Melburnians (53%) reported making at least one overnight trip. This proportion was significantly higher than regional Victorians (44%).

Table 3 – Visitation (overnight trips) by Wave

No. of overnight trips	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
0	46%	43%	49%↑
1-5	41%	40%	40%
6-10	8%	9%	5%↓
11 or more	5%	8%	6%↓
<b>At least one overnight trip</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>51%↓</b>

↑↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q67b. In the past 12 months, how many overnight trips for recreation or leisure did you make to the Victorian Coast? Wave 4 (n=971); Wave 5 (n=2,339); Regional (n=1,178), Melbourne (n=1,161). 'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.1.2 Location of coastal trips

As in Wave 4, Phillip Island received the highest frequency of reported visitation. Fourteen per cent of respondents (14%) who said they had visited the Victorian coast in the previous 12 months reported that Phillip Island was the last location they visited. St Kilda and a general mention of Port Phillip Bay (both 12%) were the next most common responses.

Reported visitation along the West Coast was highest in Torquay, with 11% of mentions, while Sorrento was the most frequented town on the Mornington Peninsula (8%). The East Coast, including towns along the Mornington Peninsula, Phillip Island, Inverloch and Lakes Entrance, received a higher frequency of reported visitation (35%) than towns along the West Coast, including Torquay, Lorne, Anglesea, Apollo Bay, Warrnambool and Port Fairy (27%).

- Residents of Greater Melbourne were significantly more likely to report visiting towns along the East Coast (37%) than the West Coast (29%).
- East Coast residents' last visit was significantly more likely to be to an area on the East Coast (53%) than the West Coast (6%) and West Coast residents' last visit was significantly more likely to be to towns along the West Coast (57%) than the East Coast (8%). The most frequently reported destination visited by residents in Northern Victoria was St Kilda (15%).

*Both CATI and online respondents were able to report multiple locations visited, but online respondents reported more than one location much more regularly than CATI respondents. This resulted in much*

higher visitation numbers for the online sample and a lower 'Other' proportion. While online responses are likely to provide a more accurate measure of actual visitation behaviour, for a true comparison between Waves 4 and 5, it is recommended that only the CATI results are evaluated. Comparing the CATI samples from Wave 4 and Wave 5, there appears to be little shift in coastal towns and areas being visited by Victorians since 2011.

Table 4 – Location of last visit by Wave and Mode

	Wave 4	Wave 5 CATI	Wave 5 Online	Wave 5 Total
Phillip Island	7%	5%	21%	14%
St Kilda	3%	5%	19%	12%
Port Phillip Bay*	-	13%	10%	12%
Torquay	5%	7%	14%	11%
Sorrento	6%	4%	11%	8%
Lorne	5%	6%	9%	8%
Apollo Bay	5%	4%	10%	7%
Lakes Entrance	4%	4%	9%	7%
Rosebud	3%	2%	10%	6%
Anglesea	3%	3%	7%	5%
Rye	2%	3%	7%	5%
Warrnambool	4%	2%	6%	4%
Portsea	2%	2%	6%	4%
Inverloch	3%	2%	6%	4%
Port Fairy	2%	1%	4%	3%
Other	51%	56%	15%	34%

Q7. What coastal area or town was it that you visited? Wave 4 (n=838); Wave 5 CATI (n=810); Wave 5 Online (n=991). 'Don't know' excluded. \*Port Phillip Bay general mentions were not recorded in Wave 4

## 2.1.3 Activities at the coast

### **Interaction with coast - activities**

More than half of all respondents who reported visiting the Victorian coast in the previous 12 months reported walking or hiking (55%). More than two-in-five (44%) indicated they had used the coast for swimming or surfing and nearly one-third (30%) used the coast for eating or drinking. Lying on the beach or relaxing was the next most common response (20%).

- Walking/hiking was the most popular activity for in the two most recent Waves of the study. Water-based activities such as swimming/surfing, fishing and boating/jet skiing all experienced a significant decline in Wave 5 compared to Wave 4 (see note below for contributing factors).
- Fishing was more commonly reported by regional Victorians (22%) than Melburnians (12%). Those in Eastern Victoria were significantly more likely to report going fishing in the previous 12 months (29%) than Western Victorians (17%). Aside from fishing, there was little disparity between locations.

*Despite the question referring to past 12 months, care should be taken when interpreting these results due to the time of year the survey was administered. The decrease in water-based activities could be*

because the Wave 5 survey was administered following winter, while the Wave 4 survey was administered following summer.

Table 5 – Activities by Wave

	Wave 4	Wave 5
Walking/Hiking	63%	55% ↓
Swimming/Surfing	57%	44% ↓
Eating/Drinking	18%	30% ↑
Lying on the beach/Relaxing	22%	20%
Other sporting activities (running, cycling, etc)	22%	17%
Fishing	23%	14% ↓
Nature-based activities	20%	12% ↓
Sightseeing/Photography	13%	10%
Socialising/Family time	5%	7%
Shopping/Visiting markets/Wineries	3%	5% ↑
Boating/Jet skiing	15%	5% ↓
Playing (general mention)	5%	4%
Walking the dog	5%	4%
Camping/Caravanning	3%	2%
Driving	2%	2%
Other	10%	12%

Q68. Can you list up to three activities you did while visiting the Victorian coast in the last 12 months? Wave 4 (n=812); Wave 5 (n=1,774).  
'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.1.4 Local foreshore trips

### Local coastal visitation – Frequency

Ninety-five per cent (95%) of surveyed Victorians who resided within 5km of the coast reported visiting their local foreshore for short visits. The highest proportion reported visiting weekly (34%).

- The proportion of Victorians residing along the coast who visited their local foreshore frequently (at least monthly) decreased significantly since Wave 4 (from 86% to 74%).
- A significantly greater proportion of regional respondents than Melbourne respondents reported visiting their local foreshore at least monthly (80% vs. 72%). Six per cent (6%) of Melburnians who live within 5 km of the coast reported 'Never' visiting their local foreshore; only one-in-50 (2%) of regional Victorians who live on the coast reported that they 'Never' visited the local coast.

*One possible contributing factor to this decline in reported visitation was the time of the year the survey was administered. The Wave 4 survey was conducted in April (following the peak summer period) while the Wave 5 survey was in October (following the winter period). Wave 4 respondents could have been more likely to report a higher frequency of visitation than the Wave 5 respondents (despite the question not referring to a specific time period).*

*Survey mode appeared to have little impact on reported visitation; 75% of CATI respondents met the criteria to be considered frequent users, much the same as online respondents (74%).*



Table 6 – Local Visitation Frequency by Wave

Column %	Wave 4	Wave 5
Daily	26%	13% ↓
Weekly	39%	34%
Fortnightly	10%	13%
Monthly	11%	14%
Less often (than monthly)	13%	21% ↑
Never	1%	5% ↑
<b>Frequently (at least monthly)</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>74%</b> ↓
<b>Infrequently/Never</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>26%</b>

Q66a. How often do you go to your local foreshore for short visits? Wave 4 (n=377); Wave 5 (n=999). 'Don't know' excluded. Question only asked to those who reside within 5km of coast.

## 2.1.5 Activities undertaken at local foreshore

Walking or hiking was again the most common activity conducted by coastal residents on their last visit to their local foreshore (52%); considerably more than the next most frequent response of eating or drinking (15%).

- The significant changes since Wave 4 include a higher proportion of people eating/drinking, lying on the beach/relaxing and enjoying the scenery.
- When looking across locations, there was only one significant difference – 6% of regional residents reported fishing compared to just 1% of Melbourne residents.

As previously stated, the time of year the survey was administered is likely to have contributed to the change in reported activities over time.

Table 7 – Local Visitation Activities by Wave

	Wave 4	Wave 5 (online)
Walking/Hiking	47%	52%
Eating/Drinking	3%	15% ↑
Lying on the beach/Sunbathing/Relaxing	2%	12% ↑
Walking the dog	13%	9%
Enjoying the scenery	2%	8% ↑
Swimming/Surfing	11%	7%
Fishing	5%	4%
Playing/Visiting park	3%	4%
Other sporting activities (running, cycling, etc)	3%	4%
Socialising/Family time	2%	4%
Boating	2%	2%
Other	7%	11%

Q66b. What did you do when you last visited your local foreshore for a short visit? Wave 4 (n=330); Wave 5 (n=443); 'Don't know' excluded. Responses with less than 2% not shown

## 2.2 The coastal experience

- Experiences with the coast are overwhelmingly positive. Experiences were reported to be more positive along the West and East Coast compared with metropolitan beaches such as St Kilda.
- A coastline or marine environment free of rubbish/litter, with picturesque scenery and clean water are key to Victorians' enjoyment of the coast.
- Victoria's coast and marine environments were the most important natural feature of Victoria according to 80% of surveyed Victorians.
- The top three things respondents said they valued about the coast were the scenery/natural beauty, cleanliness of the beaches and wildlife found in these environments.
- The most important function of the Victorian coast and marine environments (of a range of aspects tested) was to provide habitat for flora and fauna.

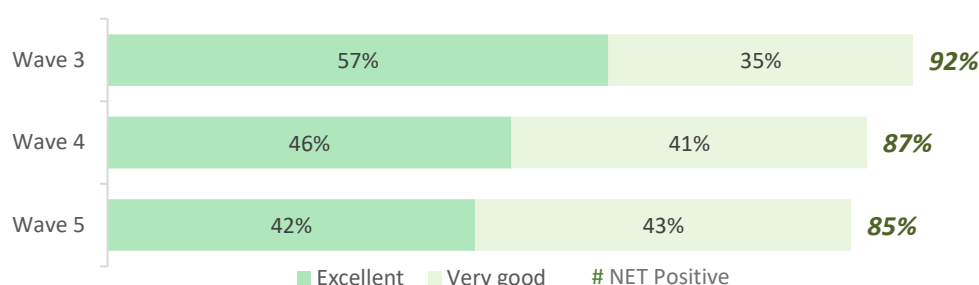
### 2.2.1 Quality of experience

#### **Overall Experience**

Eighty-five per cent (85%) of respondents reported their last day/overnight trip to the coast as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good'. Just 2% rated their last experience as 'fair' and 1% as 'poor' in Wave 5. The remaining 12% reported their experience as 'Good'.

- Despite reported experiences with the coast remaining overwhelmingly positive, those reporting their last day/overnight trip to the coast as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' has decreased over time.
- Those who reported their last day or overnight trip being to Rye reported the most positive experiences, 97% indicating the trip was 'excellent' or 'very good'. Those whose last visit was to St Kilda recorded the lowest levels of satisfaction (78% reporting 'excellent' or 'very good').

Chart 1 – NET Positive ratings of last trip to coast by Wave



Q23. How would you rate the overall quality of your experience of this most recent visit to the Victorian Coast? Wave 3 (n=464); Wave 4 (n=838); Wave 5 (n=1,801). 'Don't know' excluded. Only asked to those who reporting visiting coast in last 12 months.

### 2.2.2 Contributors to a positive experience

#### **Contributors to a good coastal experience - Unprompted**

Online participants were asked to describe what contributed to a good coastal or marine environment experience. The absence of rubbish and litter was the most common response, with more than half (54%) mentioning this. Other aspects contributing to a good experience were things to do with the

scenery and beauty of the location (14%), clean water (12%), good weather and being able to experience the natural environment – both being mentioned by 10% of respondents. When grouping responses related to facilities (toilets, walking tracks, signs, seating, boat ramps, etc) 23% of respondents mentioned that these aspects contribute to a positive experience.

- Differences were observed between Wave 4 and Wave 5, but it is likely that timing of the survey contributed to these variances, with Wave 4 being conducted at the end of summer and Wave 5 in spring. It is likely that during Wave 4 people may have been thinking about spending time physically in the water rather than just observing the scenery when answering this question. This may have contributed to the increase in the proportion of mentions of scenery in Wave 5 and the decrease in mentions of clean water.
- Being able to experience the natural environment in an undeveloped coastal and marine environment received significantly more mentions from regional respondents (14%) than metropolitan respondents (8%). No other significant differences were observed between locations.

Table 8 – Key Values by Wave

	Wave 4	Wave 5
No litter/Rubbish/Debris	40%	54%
Scenic view/Good beach scenery/Picturesque outlook	2%	14% ↑
Clean/clear water	37%	12% ↓
Good weather	9%	10%
Pristine/Unspoilt/Undeveloped/Natural environment	25%	10%
Kiosk/Cafe/Teahouse	2%	6% ↑
Good/Well-maintained facilities	5%	6%
Good/Easy/Safe access to beach	13%	6% ↓
Not too many people/Not overcrowded	8%	5%
Provision/Availability of car parking	6%	5%
No pollution	10%	5%
A safe environment	5%	5%
Other	69%	65%

Q28. What do you feel are the things that contribute to a good coastal or marine environment experience? Wave 4 (n=998); Wave 5 (n=1,148, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded. Responses with less than 5% not shown have been grouped as 'other'.

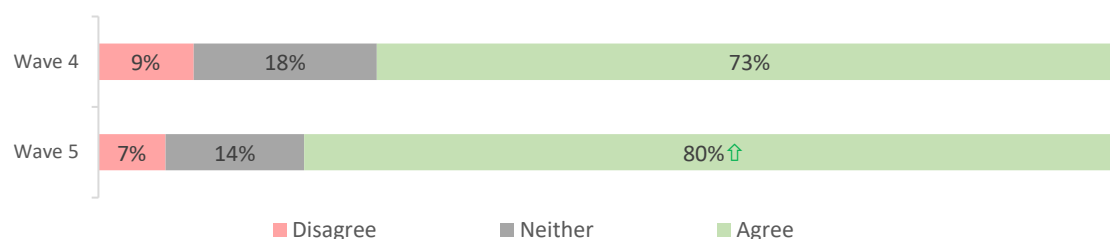
## 2.2.3 Values associated with the Victorian Coastline and Marine Environment

### Coastal and marine environments' importance to Victoria

Four-in-five respondents (80%) agreed that the coast and marine environments are Victoria's most important natural feature.

- Agreement with this statement increased significantly from 73% in Wave 4.
- Those living closer to the coast were more likely to agree with the statement; 84% of those living within 5km of the coast agreed that coast and marine environments are the most important natural feature of Victoria compared with 77% of those who lived inland.

Chart 2 – Our coast and marine environments are the most important natural feature of Victoria (Agree – Disagree %)



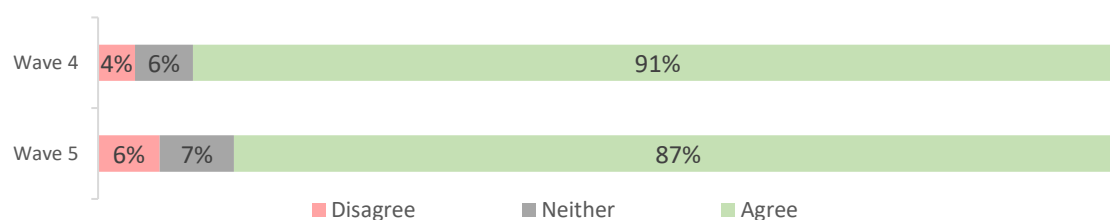
AQ1. Our coast and marine environments are the most important natural feature of Victoria. Wave 4 (n=997); Wave 5 (n=2,439). 'Don't know' excluded.

### **Importance of flora and fauna**

Eighty-seven per cent (87%) of Victorians agreed that the flora and fauna that live in marine environments are important to all those who live in the State.

- This figure is consistent with Wave 4 study (91%) and demonstrates that Victorians continue to place a high value on marine flora and fauna. No differences were observed by location.

Chart 3 – The flora and fauna that live in marine environments are important to all Victorians (Agree – Disagree %)



AQ1. The flora and fauna that live in marine environments are important to all Victorians. Wave 4 (n=997); Wave 5 (n=1,449, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded.

### **Values relating to Victoria's coastal and marine environment - Unprompted**

When asked (unprompted) what they most valued about the Victorian coast and marine environment, participants tended to cite aspects related to the natural environment. They most commonly mentioned aesthetic aspects (natural beauty and scenery, etc) with about two-in-five (38%) listing this. One-third (33%) said clean or pristine beaches were what they valued most and 12% mentioned wildlife.



Table 9 – Key Victorian Coast and Marine Environment Values (% mentions)

	Wave 5 (Online Only)
Natural beauty/Scenery/Uniqueness	38%
Clean/Pristine beaches	33%
Wildlife/Marine life	12%
Accessibility/Facilities/Parking	10%
Quiet/Peaceful	9%
Coastal vegetation	3%
Diversity	3%
The sand/White sand	2%
All of it/Everything	2%
Safety	2%
None/Nothing	2%
Other	45%

Q69. What, if anything, do you value the most about the Victorian coastal and marine environment? Wave 5 (n=1,093, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded. Responses with less than 2% grouped as 'other'.

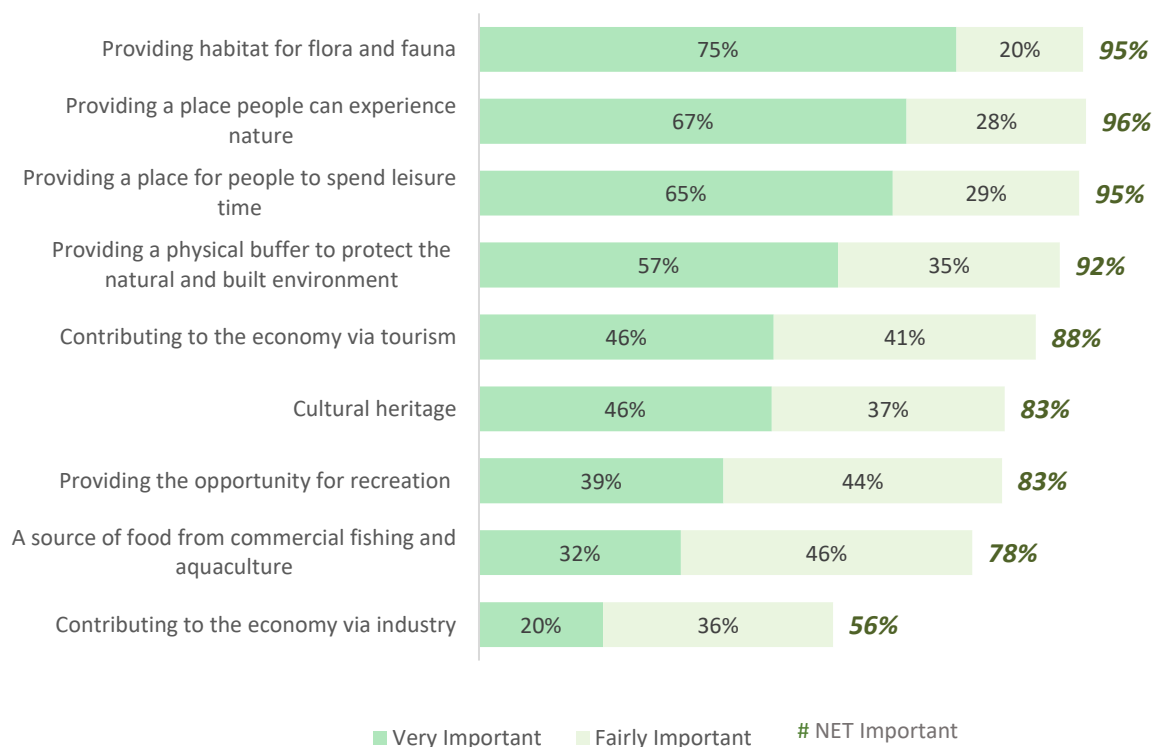
## 2.2.4 Functions of coastal and marine environments

### **Importance of aspects and functions - Prompted**

In Wave 5, survey participants were asked how important they regarded a range of aspects and functions of the Victorian coast and marine environment to them personally. Of the nine aspects tested (depicted in Chart 4), *Providing habitat for coastal and marine flora and fauna* was considered the most important with three-quarters (75%) saying this was 'very important' (combined with 20% reporting this was 'fairly important' equated to 95% reporting this aspect as important).

*Contributing to the economy via industry and commercial use (e.g. extracting natural gas)* had the least personal importance with only one-in-five (20%) saying this function was 'very important'. No significant differences were observed when analysing results by location.

Chart 4 – Importance of functions

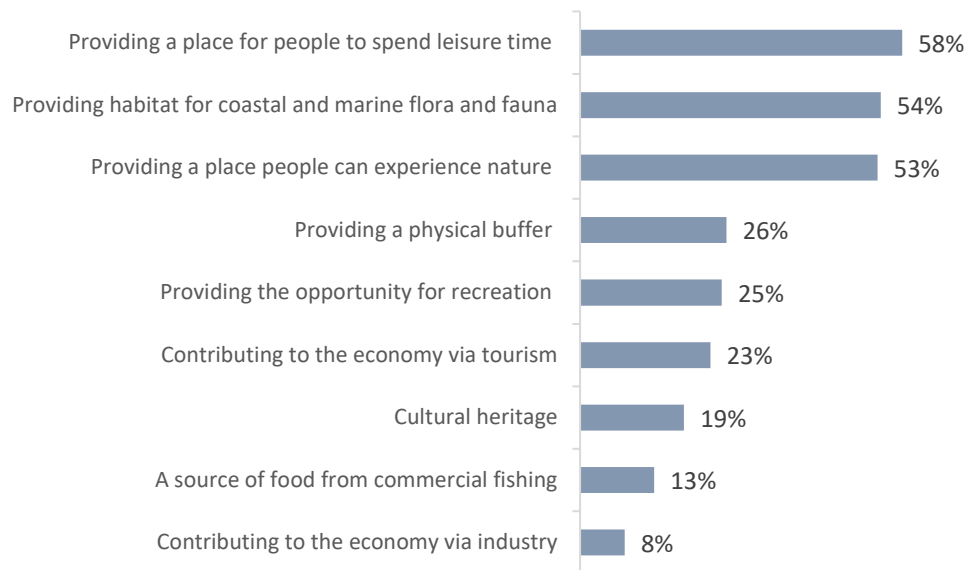


Q70. How important do you consider the following aspects and functions of Victoria's coast and marine environments to you personally?  
Wave 5 (n=2,471). 'Don't know' excluded.

### Ranking of aspects and functions

After asking online survey participants to indicate how important the nine aspects and functions were, they were then asked to select the top three aspects/functions in terms of importance to them personally. *Providing a place for people to spend leisure time, such as walking and holidaying* was the function most likely to be named as a top three (58%). The coast and marine environment contributing to the economy appears of secondary importance to Victorians.

Chart 5 - Ranking of functions



Q71. Please can you indicate which three aspects or functions are most important to you personally? Wave 5 (n=1,500, online only)).

## 2.3 Aboriginal communities

- A majority felt that local Aboriginal communities have a role to play in developing and implementing management strategies.
- There was limited understanding among Victorians of local Aboriginal communities' connection to Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

### **Understanding of Aboriginal communities' connection to coast**

One-third of all respondents (33%) 'somewhat' or 'strongly' agreed that they had a good understanding of local Aboriginal communities' connection to Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

- Regional Victorians reported a greater level of understanding than Melbournians (37% and 31% NET agreement score respectively).

*Mode of survey delivery affected the NET agreement score. Phone participants' tendency to report greater levels of understanding was evident in this question; 43% of telephone respondents agreed with the statement, significantly more than online respondents (25%).*

Chart 6 - I have a good understanding of local Aboriginal communities' connection to Victoria's coastal and marine environments (% Agree)



*Q31\_13. I have a good understanding of local Aboriginal communities' connection to Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Wave 5 (n=2,347). 'Don't know' excluded.*

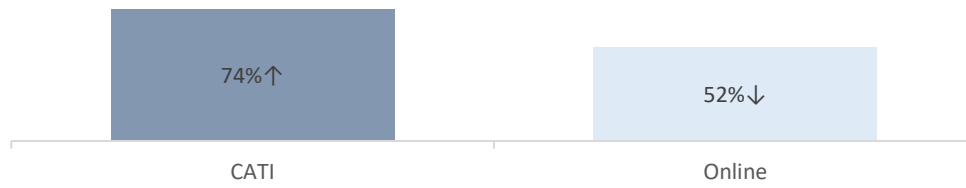
### **Involvement of Aboriginal communities in coastal management**

Three-quarters of CATI respondents (74%) and half of online respondents (52%) agreed that Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal communities should be more involved in the planning and delivery of coastal management strategies.

*The difference in results can be attributed to a significantly higher proportion of online respondents stating they 'neither agree or disagree' with the statement. This suggests that while many CATI respondents may have had no opinion either way they were more inclined to agree with the sentiment.*



Chart 7 - Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal communities should be more involved in the planning and delivery of coastal management strategies (% Agree)



Q31\_14. Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal communities should be more involved in the planning and delivery of coastal management strategies. Wave 5 (n=2,389). 'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.4 Issues and threats

- There has been an increase in the perception that Victoria's marine environments are under threat. Victorians are less sure of what might pose a threat to coastal and marine environments, but threats that are more visible were more likely to be identified.
- Pollution/poor water quality, rubbish, inappropriate development and illegal fishing were all perceived to be equal or greater threats than climate change to the Victorian coast and marine environment.
- Victorians appear most concerned about visible and perhaps easier to understand threats. Rubbish was rated the most impactful threat to Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Pollution and overfishing were the next most impactful threats.

### 2.4.1 Overall issues and threats

#### **Level of threat to marine environments**

Around three-quarters (76%) of surveyed Victorians agreed with the statement *I think our marine environments are under real threat*.

- There was a significant increase in the proportion of respondents that agreed that marine environments are under threat since Wave 4 (72%). No differences were observed by location.

*Mode appears to have had no effect on this question – both online and CATI samples provided similar agreement scores and the significant difference was still present when comparing only telephone responses from previous Waves.*

**Chart 8 - I think our marine environments are under real threat**



AQ1. *I think our marine environments are under real threat.* Wave 4 (n=985); Wave 5 (n=2,383). 'Don't know' excluded.

#### **Key threats and challenges**

When asked (unprompted) what the key threats and challenges to Victorian's coastal and marine environments are, the most common response was 'don't know', with about a quarter (26%) saying this. Of the threats and challenges listed, the most commonly mentioned (by 21% of respondents) related to pollution and poor water quality. Rubbish, inappropriate development, inappropriate fishing and climate change rounded out the top five issues and were each mentioned by at least 9% of respondents. Twelve per cent (12%) considered that there were no key threats or challenges for the Victorian coastal and marine environments.

- Greater Melbourne residents were significantly more likely to report that there are no major threats or challenges than regional residents (13% vs 8%). A significantly greater proportion of respondents from regional areas than Melbournians (13% vs 8%) felt that overfishing was

a major issue. Poor human behaviour or crime received more unprompted mentions as a threat in regional than metropolitan Victoria.

Table 10 – Key threats and challenges (% mentions)

	Wave 5
Pollution/Poor water quality	21%
Rubbish/Litter/Cigarette butts	15%
None/No threats	12%
Inappropriate development	9%
Overfishing/Illegal fishing	9%
Climate change	9%
Overcrowding on the beaches	8%
Poor human behaviour/Crime/Vandalism	7%
Environmental damage (unspecified)	6%
Erosion of dunes/Beaches	5%
Poor management/Lack of government support	3%
Fracking/Mining/Oil and gas exploration	2%
Other	9%
Don't know	26%

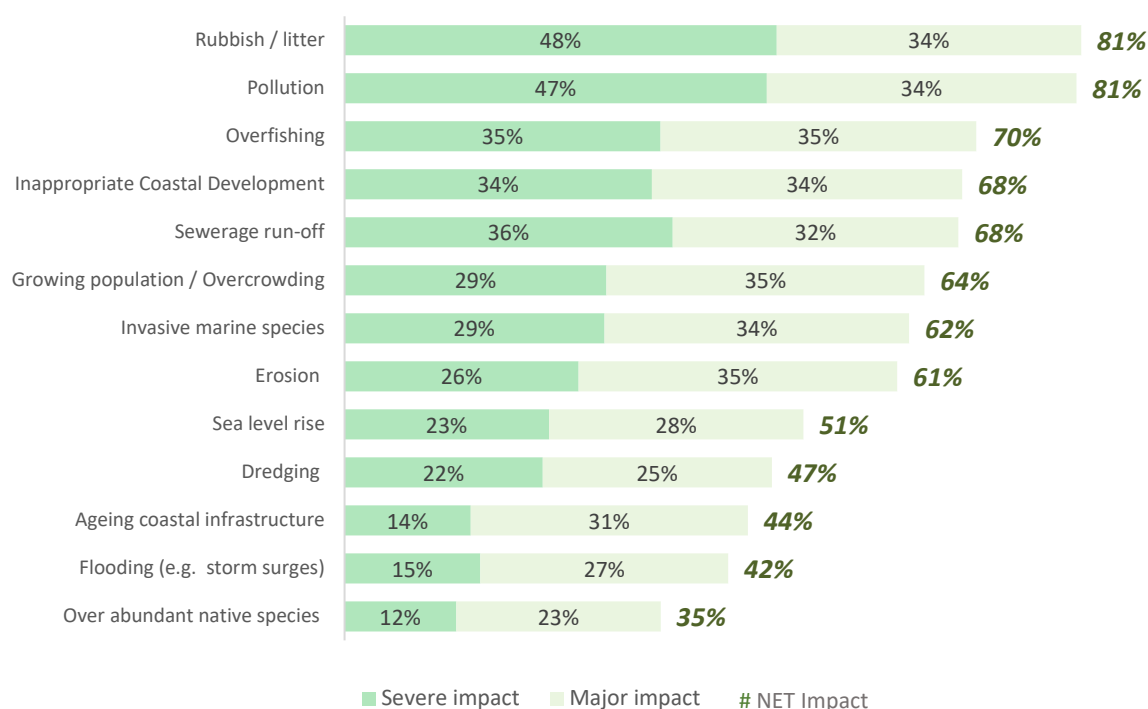
Q72. What do you think are the key threats and challenges facing Victoria's coast and marine environments? Wave 5 (n=1,500, online only).

## 2.4.2 Perceived impact of threats

In Wave 5, participants were asked to consider 13 potential threats to Victorian coastal and marine environments and indicate what degree of impact they felt each posed. Reflecting the unprompted levels of concern regarding pollution and rubbish, these were considered the top two threats in terms of severity of impact (thought to have a 'severe impact' by 48% for rubbish/litter and 47% for pollution). Similarly, overfishing/illegal fishing and inappropriate coast development occupied the next two most severe threats (35% and 34% 'severe impact' respectively).

The threat considered the least severe was overabundance native species (when native species become too numerous), just 12% considered this as having a 'severe impact'. This was also the least familiar threat to Victorians with 17% saying 'don't know'.

Chart 9 – Perceived impact of threats



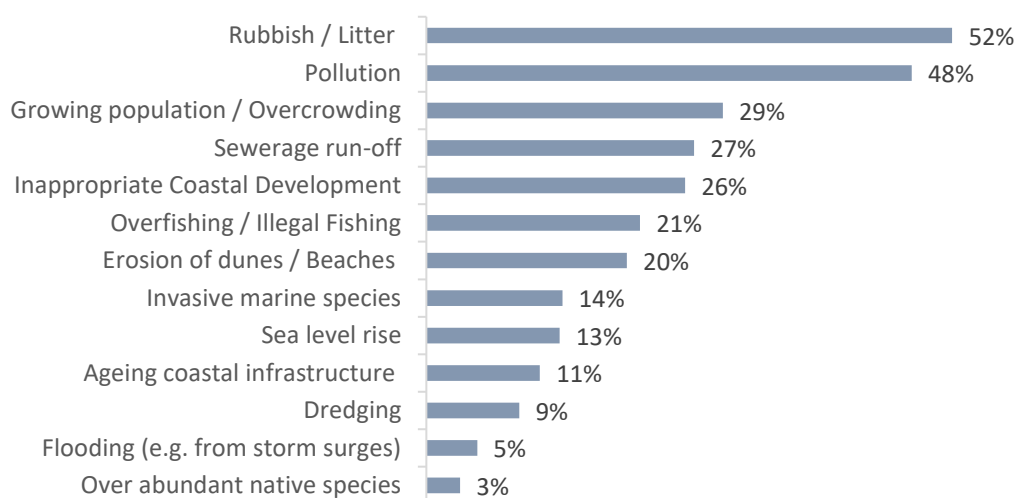
Q73. To what extent do you consider the following issues will impact the Victorian coast and marine environments in the future? Wave 5 (n=2,501).

### Ranking of threats and challenges

When online respondents were asked to select which of the 13 listed threats they considered to be the most important three to address, rubbish/litter, pollution and increasing population/overcrowding were the most commonly selected (by 52%, 48% and 29% respectively).

- Significant differences between location only occurred when it came to the threat of overfishing – 29% of regional Victorians ranked this threat in the top three to address, significantly more than in Melburnians (19%).

Chart 10 - Ranking of threats and challenges



Q74. Of the listed issues, can you please indicate which three you feel are the most important to address? Wave 5 (n=1,458, ONLINE ONLY).

## 2.5 Climate change and sea level rise

- Most surveyed Victorians agreed that climate change is causing sea levels to rise, and three-quarters of respondents felt that sea level rise poses a threat to coastal and marine environments. Half believed they would be affected by climate change in the next five years.
- Threats posed by climate change such as sea level rise, erosion and flooding were regarded as less impactful than other phenomena, including rubbish, pollution and overfishing.
- There was widespread agreement that managing the effects of climate change on the coast should be a Government priority.
- Respondents were most likely to report that the Federal Government is mainly responsible for addressing the impacts of climate change on the coast, followed by the State Government. Results also show an increase in the proportion of respondents who feel that individuals and the local community should play a greater role in managing the risks posed by climate change.

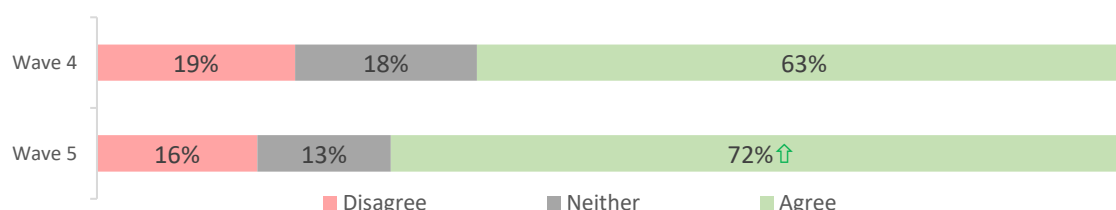
### 2.5.1 The impact of climate change

#### **Current impact of climate change on coast and marine environments**

Seventy-two per cent (72%) of surveyed Victorians agreed that climate change is already affecting the Victorian coastal and marine environment.

- A significantly greater proportion of Victorians felt that climate change was currently affecting the natural environment compared with Wave 4 (63%).
- Agreement among metropolitan residents was significantly higher than that of regional respondents (73% vs 67%).
- Frequent users of the coast were more likely to agree that climate change is already affecting the coast (76%) when compared to infrequent beach goers (66%).

Chart 11 – I believe the Victorian coast and marine environment is already being affected by climate change (Agree – Disagree %)



AQ1\_R. I believe the Victorian coast and marine environment is already being affected by climate change decades. Wave 4 (n=996); Wave 5 (n=1,354). 'Don't know' excluded.

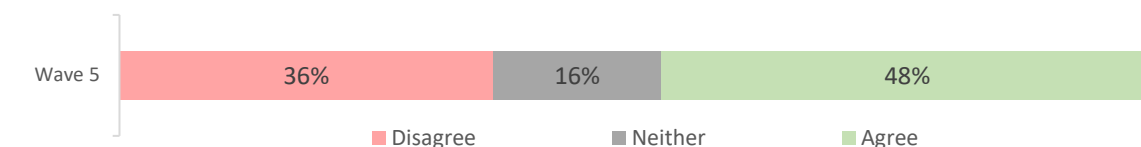
#### **Personal impacts of climate change**

Half the surveyed respondents (48%) agreed that they would be affected by climate change in the next five years.

- This proportion was significantly greater among those residing in greater Melbourne when compared against regional Victorians (50% vs 41%). Similarly, those living on the coast were

more likely to agree that they would be personally affected (54%), than inland respondents (41%).

Chart 12 - I will be personally affected by climate change in the next five years (Agree – Disagree %)



AQ2\_G. I will be personally affected by climate change in the next 5 years. Wave 5 (n=1,278, online only). 'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.5.2 Sea level rise

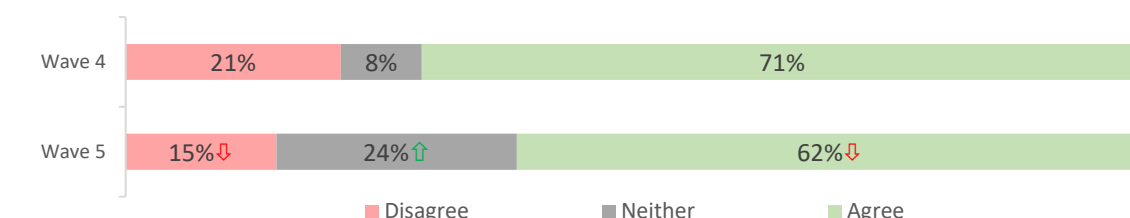
### Climate change impact on sea level rise, erosion and flooding

Three-in-five (62%) Victorians agreed that *climate change is causing sea levels to rise leading to coastal erosion and flooding in vulnerable, low-lying areas of Victoria's coast*.

Despite this majority agreement on the impacts of climate change, only 51% reported that sea level rise would have a major or severe impact (61% thought erosion posed a major or severe threat and 42% that flooding posed a major or severe impact). This suggests there is a gap in understanding of the magnitude of the impact of climate change on these environments.

*In Wave 4, 85% agreed with this statement, with fewer giving a 'neither agree nor disagree' response (4% in Wave 4 vs. 18% in Wave 5). This change in results could be attributed to the mode of survey delivery as online respondents were more inclined to report 'neither agree nor disagree' responses than telephone respondents.*

Chart 13 - Climate change is causing sea levels to rise leading to coastal erosion and flooding in vulnerable, low-lying areas of Victoria's coast (Agree – Disagree %)



Q31\_11. Climate change is causing sea levels to rise leading to coastal erosion and flooding in vulnerable, low lying areas of Victoria's coast. Wave 4 (n=937); Wave 5 (n=1,371, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded.

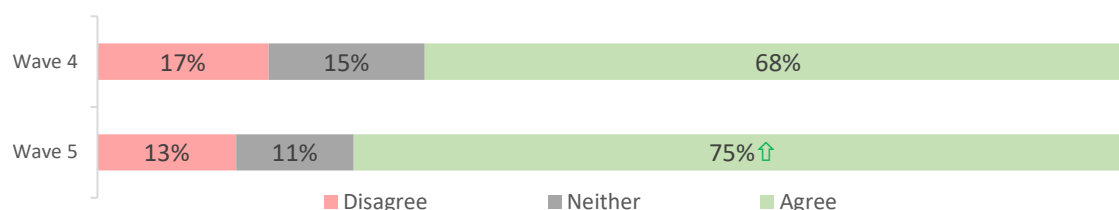
### Threat of sea level rise

Three-quarters of respondents (75%) reported that they felt sea level rise poses a threat to coastal and marine environments in future decades. Of relevance is that only 13% of the online sample in Wave 5 mentioned that sea level rise was one of the top three issues facing coastal and marine environments. This would suggest that while it is widely acknowledged that sea level rise is going to have an impact, the common perception is that there are more demanding issues at present.

- A significant shift in attitudes was observed since Wave 4 of the study when 68% of respondents agreed that sea level rise poses a threat.
- There were no significant differences between locations.



Chart 14 – Sea level rise poses a threat to the Victorian coast and marine environment in the coming decades (Agree – Disagree %)



AQ1\_H. Sea level rise poses a threat to the Victorian coast and marine environment in the coming decades. Wave 4 (n=974); Wave 5 (n=1,358). 'Don't know' excluded.

### 2.5.3 Managing for climate change and sea level rise

#### **Responsible for managing impacts of climate change**

One-quarter of respondents (25%) felt that the Federal Government should be mainly responsible for addressing the impacts of climate change on the coast, while 22% suggested that the State Government should be the primary actor.

- The most common response in Wave 5 was 'All of these', with 26% of respondents suggesting that all listed groups should be responsible, a significant increase on findings from Wave 4 (1%). This result demonstrates the increasingly common notion that managing climate associated risk is not solely the responsibility of the Government and that individuals and communities should play a greater role in managing the impacts of climate change.
- Interestingly, one-in-ten Western Victorians (9%) felt that Local Government should be primarily responsible for managing climate change impacts along the coast; this figure was significantly higher than Eastern Victorians (2%).

Table 11 – Responsible for managing climate

	Wave 4	Wave 5
Federal Government	24%	25%
State Government	30%	22%↓
Local Government	15%	8%↓
Environmental groups/non-government organisations	4%	5%
Individuals and their families	4%	5%
Business/Industry	2%	3%
The international community	5%	2%
All of these	1%	26%↑
Other	4%	1%↓
None of these	11%	3%↓

Q56. Who do you think should be mainly responsible for action on the impacts of climate change and sea level rise on the Victorian coast? Wave 4 (n=991); Wave 5 (n=1,354). 'Don't know' excluded.

#### **Priority of managing effects of climate change and sea level rise**

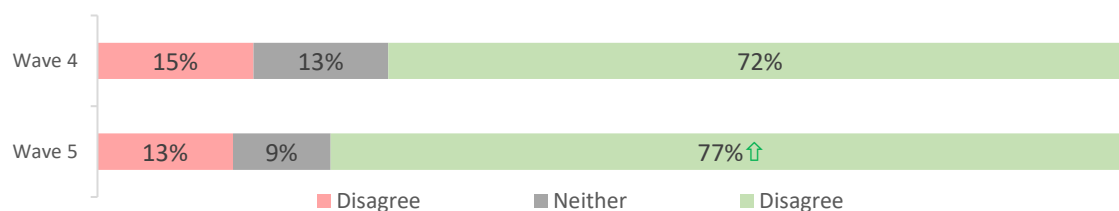
More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) indicated that they believed the effects of climate change on the Victorian coast should be a key current Government priority. This was despite only 12%

(online sample only) of respondents reporting that climate change was a major threat to the preservation of the Victorian coast.

- Agreement that addressing climate change on the Victorian coast should be a key current Government priority is significantly greater in Wave 5 than Wave 4 (72%).

Mode had no discernible impact on the responses to this question; only minor differences were observed between the CATI and online samples.

Chart 15 – I believe the effects of climate change on the Victorian coast should be a key current Government priority (Agree – Disagree %)



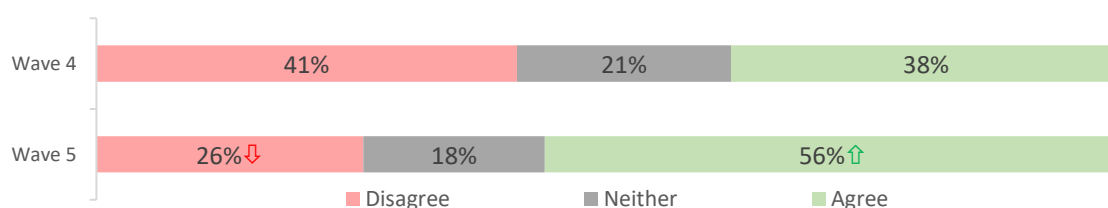
AQ1\_E. I believe the effects of climate change on the Victorian coast should be a key current Government priority. Wave 4 (n=996); Wave 5 (n=2,399). 'Don't know' excluded.

### **Responsibility of individuals managing risks of sea level rise**

More than half the respondents in Wave 5 (56%) agreed that *Individuals who live in coastal areas likely to be affected by sea level rise should be responsible for managing their own risk*. This result demonstrates that managing the effects of sea level rise is not viewed as solely the responsible of government and that individuals and, more broadly, local communities have a role in maintaining the State's coastal environments.

- In Wave 4 of the study just 38% of respondents agreed that individuals should be responsible for managing risks, this is significantly fewer than in Wave 5.

Chart 16 – Individuals who live in coastal areas likely to be affected by sea level rise should be responsible for managing their own risk (Agree – Disagree %)



AQ2\_B. Individuals who live in coastal areas likely to be affected by sea level rise should be responsible for managing their own risk. Wave 5 (n=1,388, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded.

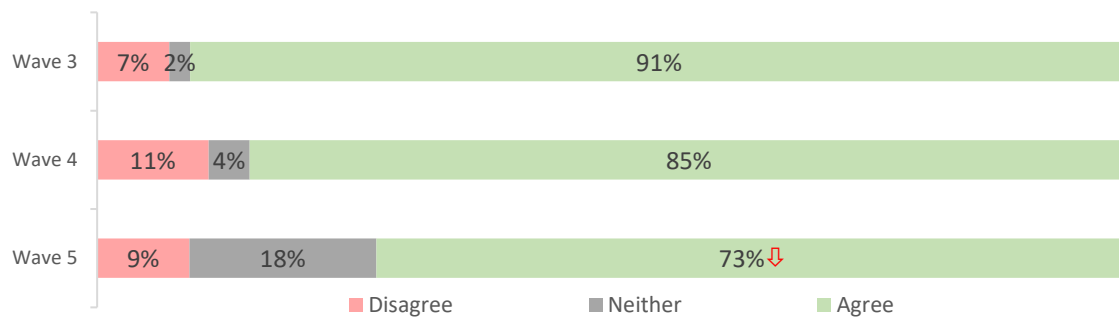
### **Support for more climate change research**

Almost three-quarters (73%) of Victorians agreed ('strongly' or 'somewhat') that more research is required about the impact of climate change on Victorian coastal and marine environments.

- Agreement that more research is needed reduced significantly in Wave 5, down from 85% in Wave 4. The Wave 5 figure represents a 18% decrease in agreement since this question was first asked in Wave 3.

The change in survey mode led to a higher proportion of respondents reporting they 'neither agree nor disagree' with the statement. This is likely to have fostered the significant shift in results when compared to Waves 3 and 4.

Chart 17 - More research is needed about how climate change will affect the Victorian coastal and marine environments, and what this means for Victorians (Agree – Disagree %)



↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_10. More research is needed about how climate change will impact upon the Victorian coastal and marine environments, and what this means for Victorians. Wave 4 (n=981); Wave 5 (n=1,434, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.6 Population growth and coastal development

- A similar proportion of respondents in Wave 5 had access to a 'beach house' as in Wave 4, though more respondents were considering a move to the coast.
- A majority of surveyed Victorians agreed that Victorian coastal towns were looking increasingly like Australian suburbs and cities.
- Nearly half of respondents felt that coastal developments were affecting Victoria's native coastal environments.
- Confidence that the current Government planning and building guidelines would protect the character of coastal towns increased marginally.

### 2.6.1 Population movement and holiday houses

#### **Access to beach house**

In 2018, one-in-five respondents (18%) reported having access to a beach house in Victoria. This figure is similar to that reported in 2011 (17%).

- A significantly greater proportion of Melburnians had access to beach house than those in regional Victoria (21% vs 12%).
- One-quarter of respondents (24%) who resided within 5km of coast had access to a beach house other than their place of residence. This was significantly greater than those who live away from coast (14%).
- Interestingly, regional Victorians living in the east of the State were significantly more likely to have access to a coastal holiday house than those living in the west of the State (18% vs 8%).

#### **Moved to coast**

Two-in-five (42%) coastal respondents moved to the coast after living inland or in an urban centre. This figure is consistent with Wave 4 (39%).

- Among those currently residing within 5km of the coast, significantly more regional Victorians moved to the coast after living inland than metropolitan respondents (56% vs 37%).

#### **Considering move to coast**

Thirteen per cent (13%) of respondents who lived further than 5km from the coast were considering making a move to the coast within the next five years. This figure represents a significant increase since Wave 4, where 7% of the same population indicated they are considering a 'seachange'. Locations along the West Coast of Victoria, such as Torquay, Ocean Grove and Anglesea, received the most mentions when those who are considering a move were asked where they would be likely to move. The Port Phillip Bay and Mornington Peninsula also received numerous mentions.

- Melburnians were significantly more likely to be considering a move to the coast than regional Victorians (14% vs 9%).

## 2.6.2 Coastal character

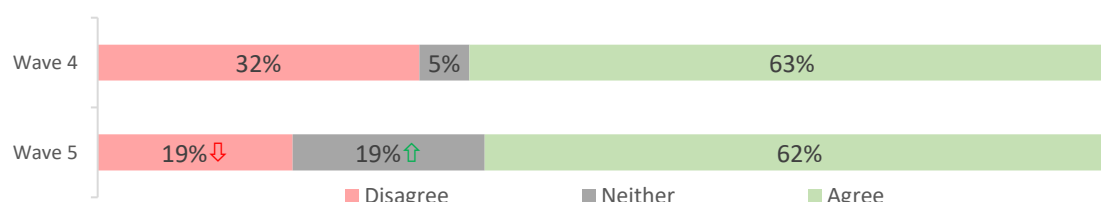
### Concern that coastal towns are losing character

Close to two-thirds of respondents (62%) ‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’ agree that Victorian coastal towns are looking increasingly like Australian suburbs and cities, with one-in-five (19%) sharing an opposing view.

- Concern among Wave 5 respondents was consistent with Wave 4 results (63% agree).

*The online sample was the key driver in the significant increase of respondents reporting ‘neither agree nor disagree’ (from 5% in Wave 4 to 19% in Wave 5). Removing the online sample from analysis does reduce the increase although the difference in those reporting ‘neither agree nor disagree’ between Waves 4 and 5 does remain significant.*

Chart 18 – I am concerned that our Victorian coastal towns are increasingly looking more like ordinary Australian suburbs or parts of the city



Q31\_9. I am concerned that our Victorian coastal towns are increasingly looking more like ordinary Australian suburbs or parts of the city. Wave 4 (n=971); Wave 5 (n=2,406). ‘Don’t know’ excluded.

## 2.6.3 Impact of coastal development

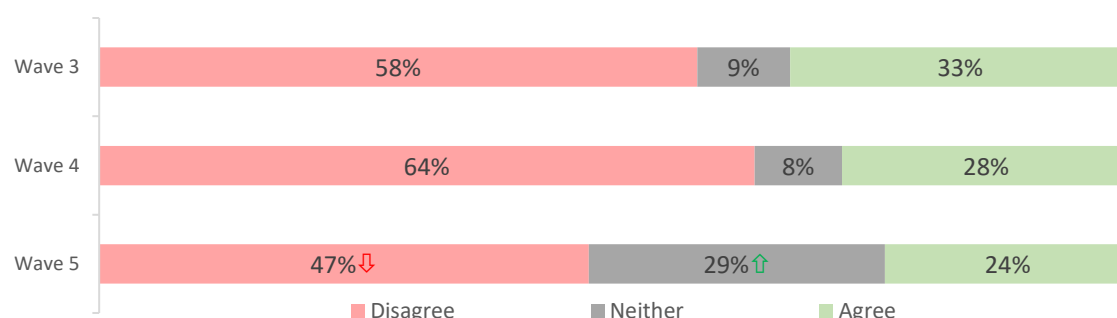
### Impact of coastal developments on flora and fauna

Close to half the respondents (47%) indicated that they felt coastal developments were affecting Victoria’s native flora and fauna. Just one-quarter (24%) agreed that coastal developments were **not** having a significant impact.

- Wave 5 marked the smallest proportion of respondents agreeing that coastal developments are **not** having a significant impact since the question was first asked – down from 33% in Wave 3 and 28% in Wave 4. As noted below, mode may have affected this measure.
- Coastal residents were significantly more likely to agree that developments are **not** affecting flora and fauna when compared with inland residents (28% vs 21%). This suggests that those living further away from the coast perceive coastal developments to be more detrimental to the wellbeing of coastal environments than those experiencing the urbanisation along the coast.

*The change in results between Waves 4 and 5 can be attributed to the mode of survey delivery. Given this question was only asked to the online sample, a larger proportion of respondents reported that they ‘neither agree or disagree’ with the statement. Removing all respondents who were unsure indicated that there has been no significant shift in attitudes since 2007 – about one-third agreed that coastal developments do not affect native flora and fauna (36% in Wave 3, 31% in Wave 4 and 33% in Wave 5).*

Chart 19 – Coastal developments do not seem to be having a significant impact on Victoria’s native flora and fauna (Agree – Disagree %)



↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_8. Coastal developments do not seem to be having a significant impact on Victoria’s native flora and fauna. Wave 4 (n=916); Wave 5 (n=1,343). ‘Don’t know’ excluded.

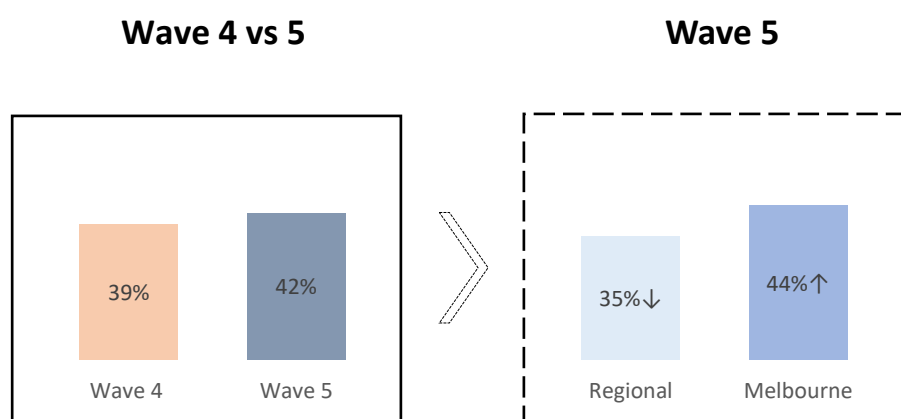
## 2.6.4 Managing development and population growth

### Confidence in current Government to protect character of coastal towns

Two-in-five respondents (42%) indicated that they were ‘Very’ or ‘Fairly’ confident that current Government planning and building guidelines would protect the character and feel of towns along the Victorian coast.

- Residents of Greater Melbourne expressed a significantly greater amount of confidence than regional Victorians (44% vs. 35% NET Confidence). There were no differences observed between inland and coastal residents or Eastern, Western and Northern Victorians.

Chart 20 – Confidence in current Government (% Confident)



Q33. How confident are you in current Government planning and building guidelines in protecting the character and feel of towns along the Victorian coast? Wave 4 (n=851); Wave 5 (n=2,254); Regional (n=1,132), Melbourne (n=1,122). ‘Don’t know’ excluded.



## 2.6.5 Managing for development and population growth

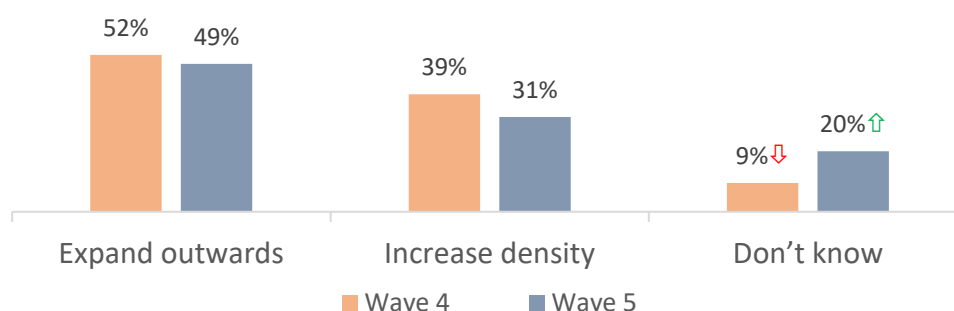
### **Accommodating increased housing demand**

Half the respondents (49%) felt that expanding outwards would be the best way to accommodate the increasing populations migrating to our coastal towns. This figure increases to 58% if the online sample is excluded. It appears there has been no noticeable shift in attitudes since Wave 4.

- Interestingly, metropolitan residents were significantly more likely than regional residents to feel that increasing density was the best approach (33% vs 27%).

*The increase in 'Don't know' responses can be attributed to the addition of online in the survey delivery mode. One-third (30%) of online respondents reported being unsure how to best accommodate increased housing demand in 2018; just 6% of CATI respondents responded, 'Don't know'.*

Chart 21 – Accommodating increased housing demand



Q55. The number of people living on Victoria's coast has increased considerably in the last two decades. Which of the following do you think is the best way to accommodate the increased demand for housing? Wave 4 (n=1001); Wave 5 (n=2,501).

## 2.7 Planning and management

- More than half of surveyed Victorians believed that coastal and marine environments were well managed.
- A similar proportion was confident that there were strategies in place to ensure the Victorian coastal and marine environment will be preserved and protected for future generations.
- There is a high level of agreement that more needs to be done to maintain and protect Victoria's coastal and marine environments.
- There is a strong sense of a collective approach to management with the Victorian State Government, local councils and local communities (in that order) being considered best placed to manage Victoria's coastal and marine environments.

### 2.7.1 Perceptions of management

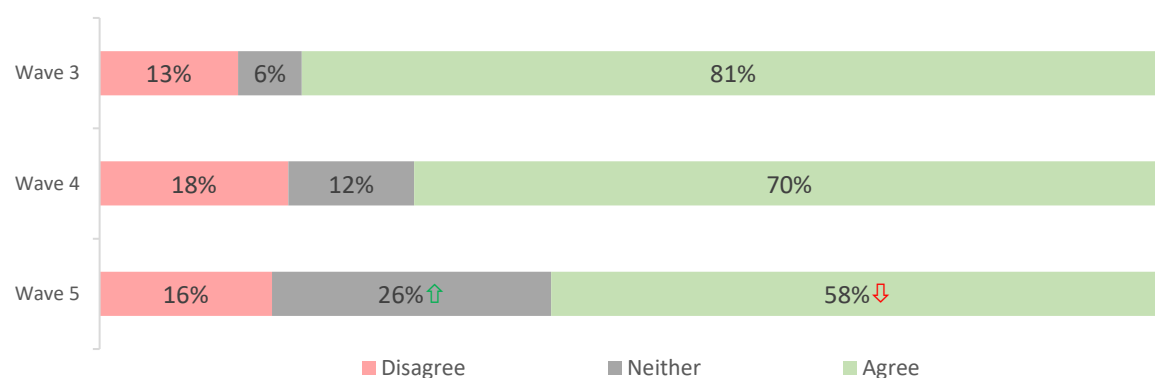
#### **Management of Victorian coast**

The proportion of respondents that agreed that the Victorian coast was well managed dropped to 58%.

- Satisfaction with management of the coast has decreased each Wave, from a high of 81% (agreement that the coast is well managed) in Wave 3.

*Mode of survey delivery appears to have exaggerated the decrease – removing online respondents from the analysis shows that agreement that the Victorian coast is well managed remains stable with seven years ago. A significant difference with those who 'somewhat' or 'strongly' agree with the statement from Wave 3 is still present when applying this approach. This question illustrates the tendency for online respondents to report lower levels of satisfaction with coastal management strategies.*

Chart 22 – The Victorian coast is well managed (Agree – Disagree %)



↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_4. The Victorian coast is well managed. Wave 4 (n=920); Wave 5 (n=2,313); 'Don't know' excluded.

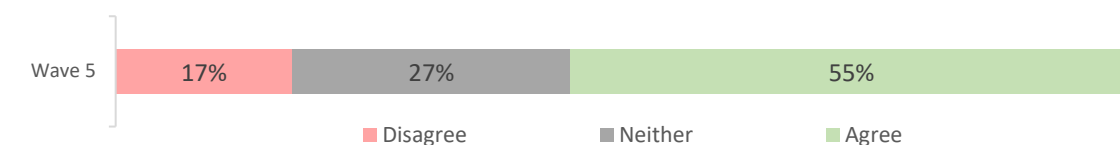
## **Management of Victorian marine environment**

Similar to views regarding the management of the Victorian coast, 58% of respondents reported that they felt the Victorian marine environment is well managed.

- Respondents in Northern Victoria returned the least favourable response. Less than half (47%) 'somewhat' or 'strongly' agreed the marine environment was well managed, compared with 54% from Western Victoria and 57% from Eastern Victoria.

*Those responding via telephone were significantly more positive in their assessment of management strategies, with 66% agreeing with the statement compared to 47% of online respondents.*

**Chart 23 – The Victorian marine environment is well managed (Agree – Disagree %)**



Q31\_12. The Victorian marine environment is well managed. Wave 5 (n=2,256) Not asked in Wave 4.

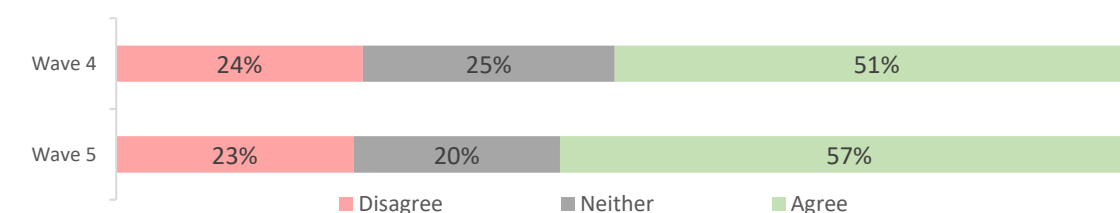
## **Confidence in current strategies to protect coast and marine environments**

Close to three-in-five respondents (57%) indicated they were confident that there were strategies in place to preserve Victorian coastal and marine environments.

- While not significant, 57% represents a 6% increase on the Wave 4 measure.

*Given the inclination for online respondents to be less favourable when assessing management and governance this is a very positive result as in Wave 5 this question was only asked online.*

**Chart 24 – Confidence that current strategies preserve coast and marine environments (Agree – Disagree %)**



AQ1\_D. I am confident that there are strategies in place to ensure the Victorian coast and marine environment will be preserved and protected for future generations. Wave 4 (n=986); Wave 5 (n=1,352, online only); 'Don't know' excluded

## **Preservation of Victorian Coast**

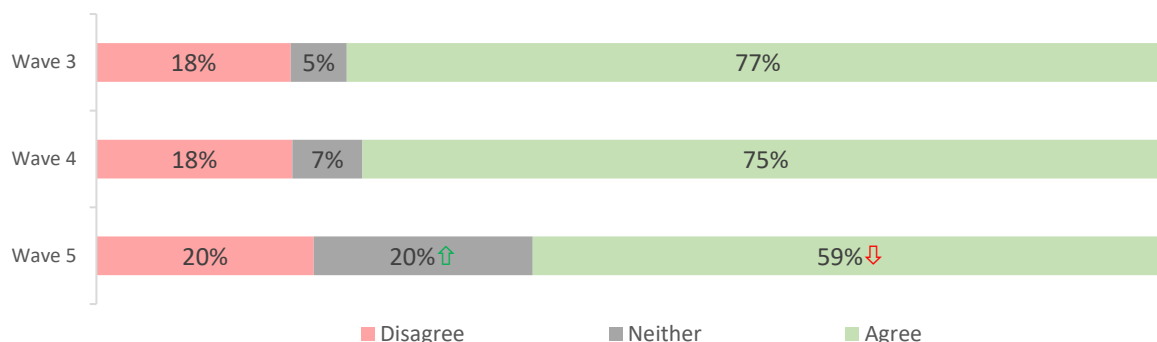
Three-in-five (59%) of respondents agreed that the Victorian coast was being preserved in a natural state.

- This figure represents a significant decrease in agreement that the Victorian coast is being preserved in a natural state, from 75% in Wave 4.

It appears that the mode of survey delivery has influenced this reported shift in attitude. When comparing results from the CATI sample, the reduction is less drastic – those who 'somewhat' or

‘strongly’ agree in Wave 5 was 69%, significantly more than online respondents (52%). Acknowledging that a respondent is more likely to provide positive responses to attitudinal questions over the phone means it difficult to definitively conclude whether there has been a significant shift in community attitudes over time. What the results do confirm is that for the second consecutive Wave a smaller proportion of respondents feel the Victorian coast has been preserved in a natural state.

**Chart 25 – I think most of the Victorian coast has been preserved in a very natural state (Agree – Disagree %)**



↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_1. I think most of the Victorian coast has been preserved in a very natural state. Wave 4 (n=970); Wave 5 (n=2,385); ‘Don’t know’ excluded

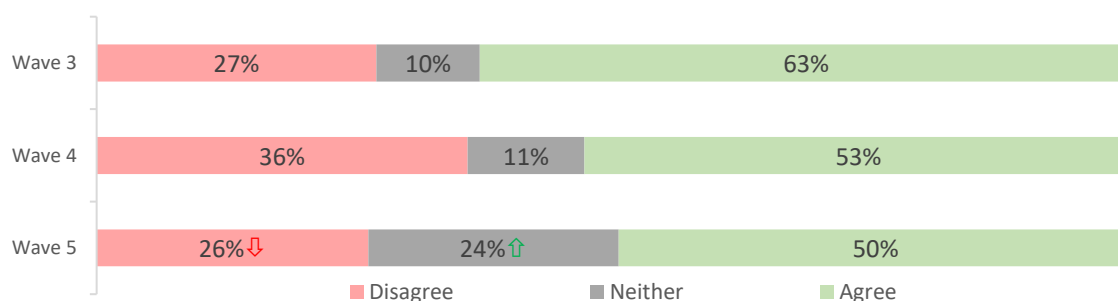
### **Condition of Port Phillip Bay**

Half the Wave 5 respondents (50%) agreed that Port Phillip Bay was a clean environment, a three-percentage point decrease since Wave 4 (53%) and a 13-point drop since Wave 3 (63%).

- Interestingly, Melbournians were significantly more likely to agree that Port Phillip Bay was clean compared with regional Victorians (51% vs 44%) and frequent users of the coast more likely to report that they felt the bay was a clean environment than infrequent users (54% vs 40%). These findings suggest that attitudes might be based on ‘perception’ rather than ‘experience’ for many respondents.

*Responses by telephone were only slightly more positive than online responses (52% and 48% NET Agree respectively). The similarity between the telephone respondents in Wave 4 and Wave 5 suggests that there has been little shift in perceived cleanliness of the bay since 2011.*

**Chart 26 – Port Phillip Bay is a clean, natural marine environment (Agree – Disagree %)**



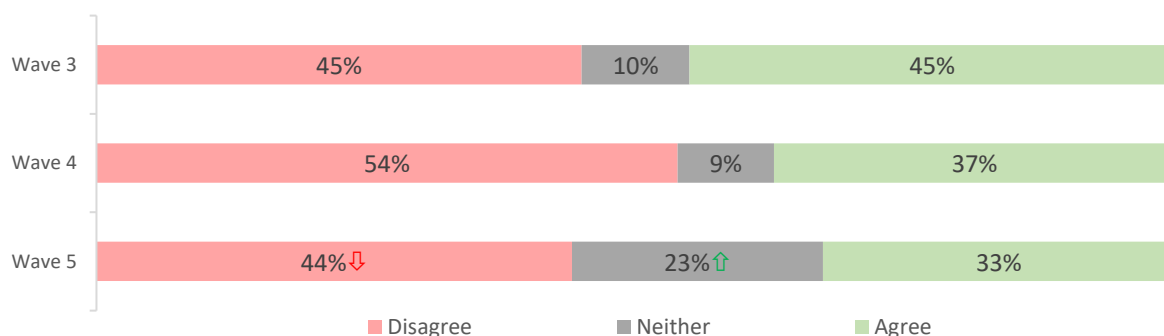
↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_2. Port Phillip Bay is a clean, natural environment. Wave 4 (n=884); Wave 5 (n=2,230); ‘Don’t know’ excluded.

### **Input of communities in Government planning decisions**

One-third (33%) of respondents in Wave 5 felt that communities had sufficient input towards planning decisions that affect their local area.

- This figure marks the second consecutive decrease, from 45% in Wave 3 and 37% in Wave 4. Excluding online responses increases the NET Agreement to 35%, a less pronounced decrease.
- Just over one-quarter (27%) of regional Victorians agreed that communities had enough say in planning decisions, this figure was significantly lower than that reported by Melbournians (35%).

**Chart 27 – I feel local communities generally have enough say in Government planning decisions affecting their own area**



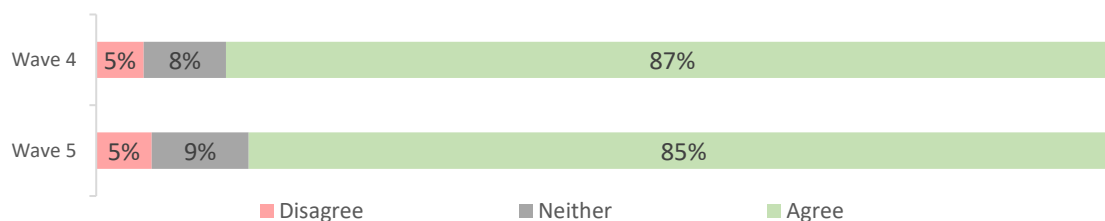
↑ ↓ Denotes significantly higher or lower when compared against Wave 4. Q31\_7. I feel local communities generally have enough say in Government planning decisions affecting their own area. Wave 4 (n=933); Wave 5 (n=2,345); 'Don't know' excluded.

### **Coast and marine environments should be more carefully maintained and protected**

Eighty-five per cent (85%) of surveyed Victorians agreed that Victoria's coast and marine environments should be more carefully managed.

- Wave 5 results were consistent with Wave 4 (87%).

**Chart 28 – Victoria's coast and marine environments should be more carefully maintained and protected**



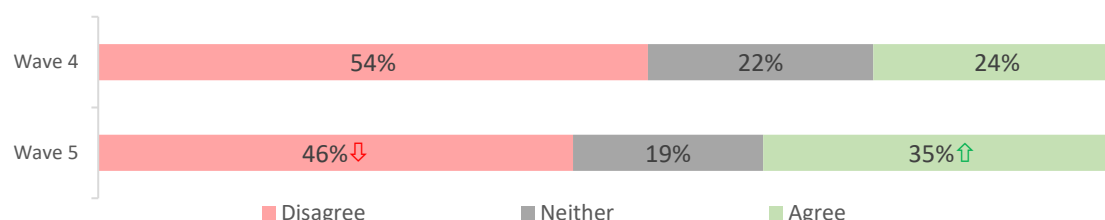
AQ1\_J. Victoria's coast and marine environments should be more carefully maintained and protected area. Wave 4 (n=991); Wave 5 (n=1,402); 'Don't know' excluded.

## Understanding and information

One-third (35%) of respondents indicated that they feel well informed about planning and management of Victoria's coast and marine environments.

- The proportion of respondents who reported being well informed was significantly greater in Wave 5 than in Wave 4 (24%).
- Melbournians appear to feel better informed. Agreement with the statement among respondents residing in Greater Melbourne was 37%, significantly higher than respondents in regional Victoria (29%).
- Half (49%) the respondents who frequently used the coast agreed that they were well informed; this proportion was significantly greater than infrequent users (25%).

Chart 29 – I feel well informed when it comes to planning and management of Victoria's coast and marine environments



AQ1\_Q. I feel well informed when it comes to planning and management of Victoria's coast and marine environments. Wave 4 (n=991); Wave 5 (n=1,422); 'Don't know' excluded.

## 2.7.2 Responsibility for management

### Responsible for managing coast and marine environments

Three-quarters of all respondents (73%) felt that the Victorian State Government should be responsible for managing the State's coastal and marine environments. Similarly, three-in-five (61%) indicated that they thought that local council(s) had a role to play.

The Wave 5 results suggest that there has been a marked shift in attitudes, and that a more 'collective' approach towards coastal management is favoured. This is best highlighted by the significant increase in respondents saying that the local community had a responsibility in coastal management, from 22% in Wave 4 to 58% in Wave 5. In addition, the proportion of respondents reporting that each of the levels of Government was responsible increased – further demonstrating that there has been a shift away from the notion that one branch of Government or an organisation is responsible for preserving the coast and marine environments within Victoria.

- Respondents living in Greater Melbourne were significantly more likely than regional Victorians to report that the State Government and local council(s) should be responsible.

*Mode of survey delivery appeared to have only a minor impact on responses to this question – comparing only CATI samples, the same significant differences between Waves were present. The perceived role of the local community in coastal management has increased regardless of how the survey was delivered.*

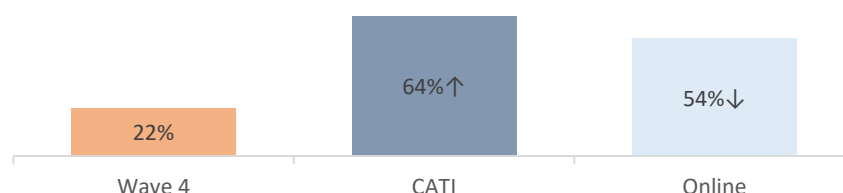


Table 12 – Who should be responsible for managing coast and marine environments?

	Wave 4	Wave 5
Victorian Government	52%	73% ↑
Local council/s	35%	61% ↑
Federal Government	17%	38% ↑
The local community	22%	58% ↑
Other	24%	10% ↓

Q54. Who do you think should be responsible for managing Victoria's coastal and marine environments? Wave 4 (n=927); Wave 5 (n=2,353); 'Don't know' excluded.

Chart 30 – Local community should be responsible (% YES)



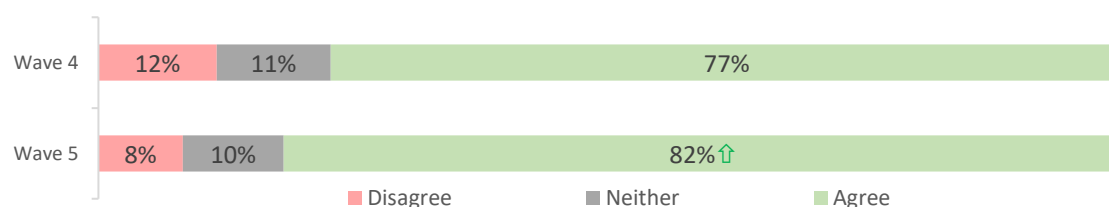
Q54. Who do you think should be responsible for managing Victoria's coastal and marine environments? Wave 4 (n=927); Wave 5 (n=2,353); 'Don't know' excluded.

### **Responsibility of planning laws managing the impact of sea level rise**

Four-in-five respondents (82%) agreed that planning laws should limit development in areas at risk of being impacted by sea level rise. This represents a significant increase on Wave 4 (77%).

- There were no significant differences when analysing results by location or frequency of visitation.

Chart 31 – I believe planning laws for the coast should limit development in areas likely to be affected by sea level rise



AQ2\_C. I believe planning laws for the coast should limit development in areas likely to be affected by sea level rise. Wave 4 (n=990); Wave 5 (n=1,388). 'Don't know' excluded.

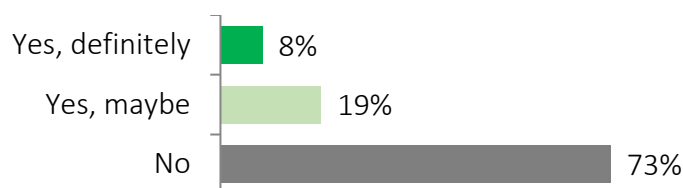
### 2.7.3 Awareness of management tools

#### **Victorian Marine and Coastal Act**

Online respondents were asked if they had heard of the new Victorian Marine and Coastal Act. A total of 27% indicated the act was familiar – 8% had ‘definitely’ heard of the act and 19% had ‘maybe’ heard of the act.

- Familiarity of the Marine and Coastal Act was significantly greater among coastal residents than inland residents; 34% of those living on the coast had ‘definitely’ or ‘maybe’ heard of the act compared to 22% of those living further from coast.

Chart 32 - Heard of the new Victorian Marine and Coastal Act



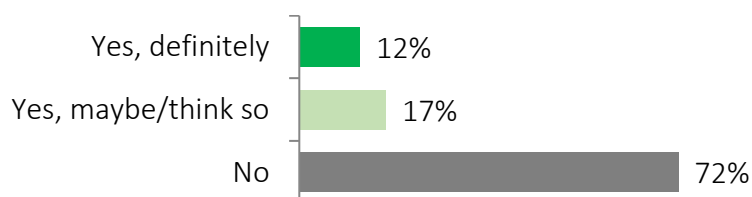
Q75. Have you heard of the new Victorian Marine and Coastal Act? Wave 5 (n=1,500, ONLINE ONLY).

#### **Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan**

Awareness of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan (EMP) was marginally higher than the new Marine and Coastal Act; 12% of online respondents reported they had ‘definitely’ heard of the EMP and 17% had ‘maybe’ heard of the plan.

- A significantly higher proportion of coastal residents had heard of the plan than inland residents (35% vs 24% ‘definitely’ or ‘maybe’ heard of). Interestingly there was no difference in awareness of the plan when comparing Melbournians and Regional Victorians (both 28%).

Chart 33 - Heard of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan



Q76. Have you heard of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan? Wave 5 (n=1,500, ONLINE ONLY)

### 2.7.4 Awareness and support for Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries

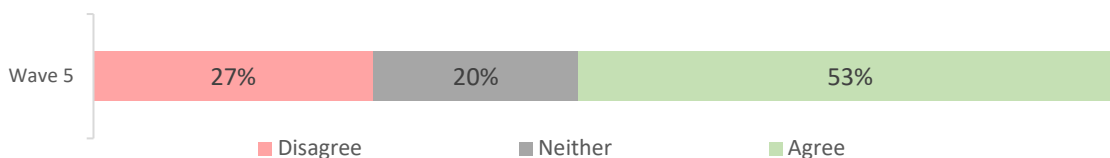
#### **Understanding of Marine Protected Areas**

More than half the Wave 5 respondents (53%) agreed that they had a *good understanding of marine protected areas and their importance to Victoria*.

- Agreement with the statement from residents in Eastern Victoria was significantly higher than residents from Western Victoria (58% vs 48%).

*This figure was significantly higher among telephone respondents (60%) than online respondents (47%). This indicates that the mode of survey delivery and a participant's inclination to demonstrate a good knowledge/understanding of issues on the phone may have affected this question.*

**Chart 34 - I have a good understanding of marine protected areas and their importance to Victoria**



AQ1\_T. I have a good understanding of marine protected areas and their importance to Victoria. Wave 5 (n=2,401). 'Don't know' excluded.

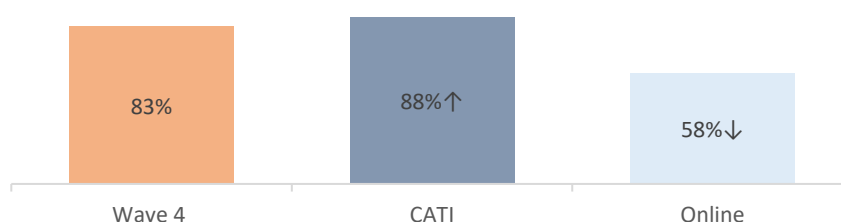
### **Awareness of Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries**

Nine-in-ten CATI respondents (88%) and six-in-ten (58%) online respondents reported that they were aware that Victorian has Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries, a total awareness rating of 71% in Wave 5.

- Excluding the online sample and comparing only the phone respondents from previous Waves, this is the second consecutive increase in awareness – up from 72% in 2007 and 83% in 2011.
- Regional respondents reported significantly higher awareness than metropolitan residents (77% vs 69%) and Eastern Victorians significantly higher awareness than Western Victorians (83% vs 73%).

*Mode has undoubtedly affected responses to this question. Telephone participants' disposition to report a good understanding of coastal issues has contributed to a much higher awareness level among the CATI sample.*

**Chart 35 - Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries Awareness (% Aware)**



Q46. Are you aware that Victoria has Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries? Wave 5 (n=2,501).

### **Support for Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries**

All respondents were asked whether they support or oppose Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. Three-quarters of online respondents (75%) indicated they 'strongly' or 'mildly' support.

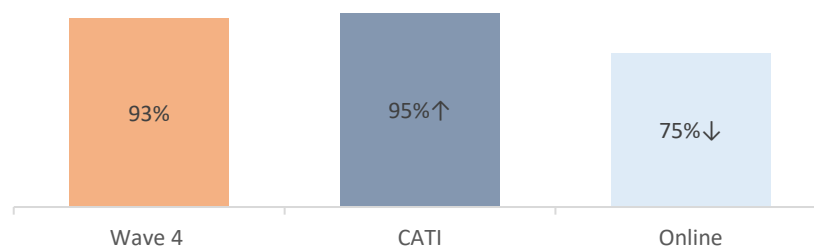
This was significantly fewer than telephone respondents, 95% of whom indicated they support marine parks and sanctuaries.

Of those who had heard of marine parks and sanctuaries, 93% supported them while only 3% opposed. The remaining 4% reported having no opinion either way.

- When comparing the telephone samples exclusively, support for marine parks and sanctuaries has increased marginally each Wave – from 91% in Wave 3, to 93% in Wave 4 and 95% in Wave 5. There were no significant differences between locations.

*The tendency for telephone respondents to report an answer in a way they deem to be more socially acceptable appears to have influenced the responses to this question. It could be argued that the online response provides a truer read of Victorians support for marine parks and sanctuaries.*

Chart 36 – Support for Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries (% Support)



Q47. Do you support or oppose the Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries? Wave 5 (n=2,501).

## 2.8 Knowledge, participation, information and engagement

- Half the surveyed Victorians reported that they had a fair understanding of Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Only a small proportion had discussed the health and management of these environments.
- There is some appetite to personally contribute to preserving the coast with around two-in-five respondents giving some level of interest in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast. A similar proportion agreed that they would be willing to offer financial support to ensure a much higher level of preservation of the Victorian coast and marine environments.
- Providing Victorians information about the health and management of the Victorian coastal and marine environments is likely to be most effective using online channels. This was the preferred source of information for a majority of respondents.
- Only a third of respondents felt well informed about planning and management of these environments. Higher levels of understanding typically represented higher levels of satisfaction with current management approaches.

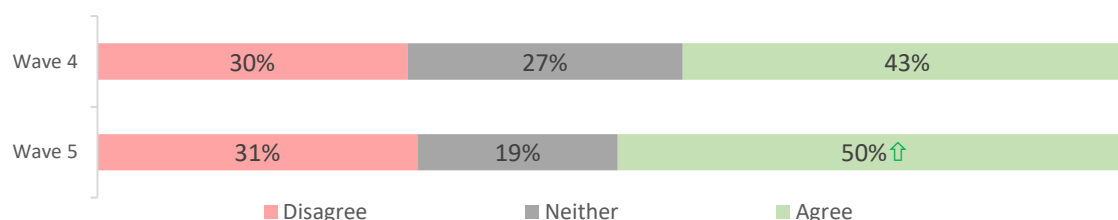
### 2.8.1 Knowledge and Understanding

#### **Knowledge of Victoria's coastal and marine environments**

Half the surveyed Victorians (50%) agreed that they know a 'fair bit' about Victoria's coastal and marine environments, a significant increase on the Wave 4 (43%).

- Removing the online sample and comparing only CATI responses from Waves 4 and 5 makes this increase more pronounced – 58% of the Wave 5 telephone responses agreed that they knew a 'fair bit' about these environments.
- Frequent beach users were significantly more likely than infrequent users to agree that they knew a 'fair bit' about coast and marine environments (63% vs 41%).
- Agreement amongst coastal residents was significantly higher than respondents who reside further than 5km from coast (58% vs 45%).

Chart 37 - I feel I know a fair bit about Victoria's coastal and marine environments



AQ1\_C. I feel I know a fair bit about Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Wave 4 (n=995); Wave 5 (n=2,429). 'Don't know' excluded.

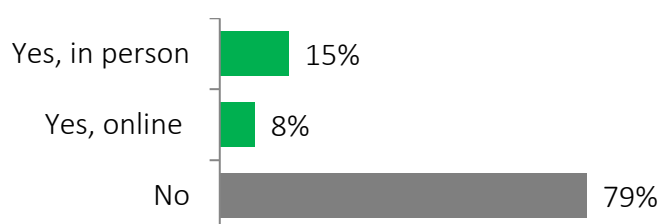
## 2.8.2 Topic of conversation and information sources

### **Discussion of Victorian Coastal and Marine Management**

One-in-five online respondents (21%) had discussed the health and management of Victorian coastal and marine environments – 15% in person and 8% online.

- Eastern Victorians were the most likely to have had a discussion, 26% reporting they had spoken with friends, family or colleagues about the health and management of the Victorian coast. This figure was significantly higher than those in Western and Northern Victoria (15% and 13% respectively).

Chart 38 - Discussed management of Victorian coast and marine environment



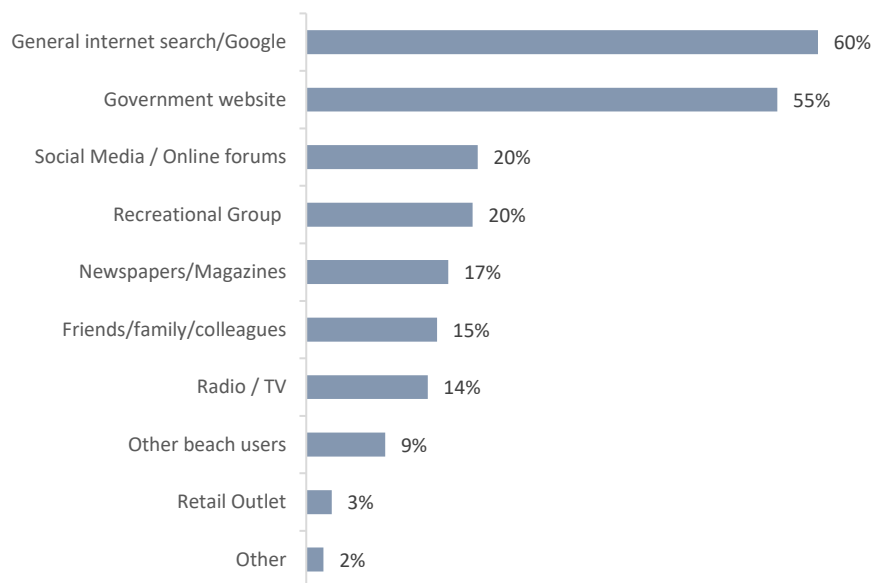
*Q77. Thinking of everyday discussions with friends, family members or work colleagues, have you discussed the health and management of the Victorian coast and marine environment in the past month? Wave 5 (n=1,500).*

### **Preferred source of information**

Online respondents were asked where they would go for information about the health and management of the Victorian coast and marine environment. Three-in-five (60%) said they would be likely to conduct a general internet/Google search, 55% would go to a Government website and 20% would seek out information via social media channels or through a recreation group. Given this question was only asked online, it is unsurprising that online sources were the three most common responses.

Chart 39 – Information source





Q78. If you were looking for information about the health and management of the Victorian coast and marine environment where would you go? Wave 5 (n=1,318, ONLINE ONLY). 'Don't know' excluded.

### 2.8.3 Participation

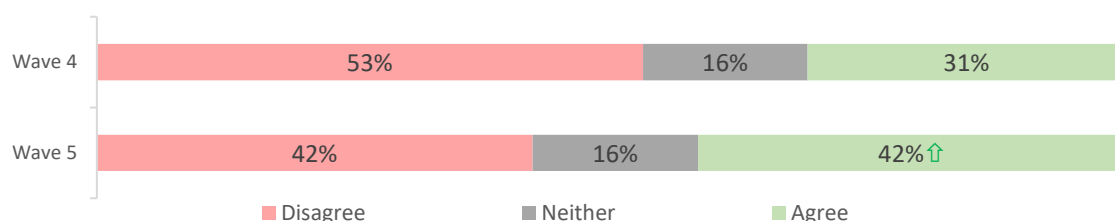
#### Interest in joining volunteer groups

Two-in-five (42%) respondents suggested they would be interested in joining a volunteer group to help preserve the coast – a significant increase on Wave 4 (31%).

- Among coastal residents who visited their local foreshore at least monthly, 61% reported being interested in joining a group. Agreement among respondents residing in Greater Melbourne was significantly higher than those residing in regional Victoria (44% vs 34%).

*The online sample was less inclined to provide a 'socially desirable' response, taking the mode of survey delivery into account make this increase is even more notable.*

Chart 40 - I would be interested in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast



AQ1\_F. I would be interested in joining a volunteer group to improve and protect the coast. Wave 4 (n=988); Wave 5 (n=1,345, ONLINE ONLY).

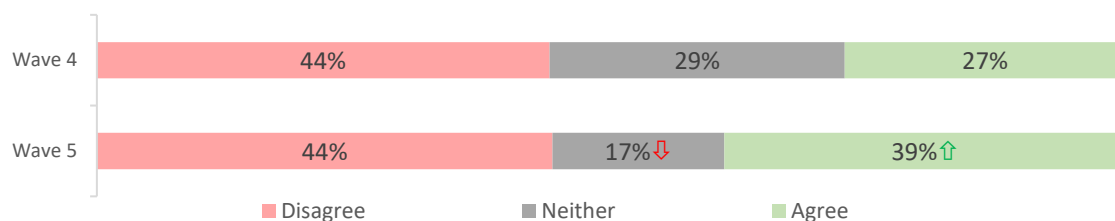
#### Willingness to offer financial support

Two-in-five respondents (39%) in Wave 5 suggested they would be willing contribute financially to improve coastal management. This marked a significant increase compared to Wave 4 (27%).

- Significantly fewer infrequent beach users reported that they would be willing to pay more compared to those who regularly visit the coast (26% and 51% respectively).

- Melburnians appear more likely to offer financial support (43% NET agree) than regional Victorians (33%).

Chart 41 - I would be willing to offer financial support to ensure a much higher level of preservation of the Victorian coast and marine environments



AQ1\_G. I would be willing to offer financial support to ensure a much higher level of preservation of the Victorian coast and marine environments. Wave 4 (n=989); Wave 5 (n=1,345, online only).

## 3 Qualitative Findings

### 3.1 Interactions with Victorian coast and marine environments

Participants in the metropolitan and Sale groups reported visiting the coast more sporadically than participants in the Warrnambool groups, where the coast was often part of daily life.

Participants described diverse uses of the coast, however, interactions usually involved beach environments. A common sentiment was that the coast – more specifically the beach – provided a peaceful environment that allowed people to relax and provided them with a “sense of freedom”. Walking along the beach, swimming and picnicking were regularly discussed activities.

Holidaying along the coast was common across all groups. Participants suggested that many of their holidays consisted of visiting coastal locations, both in and outside of Victoria. This contributed to a sense of sentimentality about the coast.

### 3.2 Perceptions and knowledge of Victorian coast and marine environments

Participants across all groups appeared to have a strong sense of what constituted ‘coast’ and ‘marine’ environments. Typically, participants associated the coast with the shoreline and beaches, while marine environments were more likely to be regarded as ‘underwater’ and further away from land. Beaches were the most commonly thought of coastal environment, although cliffs and sometimes dunes were mentioned. Saltmarshes and estuaries were not top of mind environments when thinking about the coast.

Despite being able to differentiate the coast from the marine environment, participants displayed little understanding of the interconnectedness of issues facing coast and marine environments (and even less awareness of the impact of terrestrial environments, including built areas, on marine environments).

Although those who described more frequent interactions with Victoria’s coastal and marine environments seemed to be more informed about these environments, all participants indicated that the coastline was a significant characteristic of their local area and, more broadly, of Victoria and Australia. Regional groups in particular, deemed their local coast to be fundamental to their town’s character.

The coast was perceived to be an important feature of Victoria and all participants demonstrated a basic understanding of features that make the Victorian coastline both ‘special’ and ‘unique’.

Both the Sale and Melbourne groups were more likely to provide generic responses when asked to detail unique characteristics of both the local and Victorian coastline. As well as the local marine life, the isolation and ruggedness of many Victorian beaches, the quality and quantity of sand, and clarity of the water along the coast were features that were commonly raised. Warrnambool groups displayed the greatest level of ‘local knowledge’ in terms of being able to detail the characteristics of their local coast.

When prompted to discuss unique or special qualities of the Victorian coastline marine species were often raised, key species included:

- whales, particularly in Warrnambool, where there was an understanding of migration patterns
- seals, sharks, penguins and dolphins
- weedy and leafy sea dragons.

When prompted to discuss Victoria's coastline, participants typically mentioned features that pertained to the beach and natural environment. Contrastingly, coastal towns or man-made infrastructure associated with the coast was not 'font-of-mind' amongst participants when discussing the coast.

Participants were able to name a diverse range of 'users' of Victorian coastal and marine environments. These tended to focus on recreational functions and were not as strongly representative of environmental and economic functions, such as fishing, tourism and ports.

### 3.3 Functions and values of Victoria's coast and marine environments

When asked about the benefits of these environments, top of mind responses were often of a social/personal benefit, such as relaxation and health. There was little mention of collective social benefits to society more generally. The opportunity the coast provides to conduct recreation activities, such as swimming, surfing and scuba diving, was also raised.

Economic benefits were usually secondary mentions and were almost exclusively linked to tourism. Fishing and other primary industries (natural resource extraction) were seen as secondary benefits. Fishing was of greater significance to groups held in Sale.

### 3.4 Key threats and issues

#### Unprompted awareness of issues

When asked think about any key issues or threats to Victoria's coast and marine environments, participants provided a simplistic list of topics. Issues that were commonly raised included:

- litter/rubbish
- pollution; oil spills
- erosion
- dredging
- overfishing
- social issues (including antisocial behaviour and homelessness).

Climate change, urbanisation (population growth), sewage runoff, dredging and habitat loss were also raised – but usually after the above issues had been mentioned.

#### Understanding of issues

Participants' understanding of the issues raised was, for the most part, quite limited. Awareness of key issues, while high, did not translate to an understanding of the implications or impacts. There was

little consistency in understanding of key issues and participants typically felt 'in the dark' about the extent to which these issues were impacting the coast.

*"I know the issues exist, but I don't know about them"*

*"It's probably worse than we realise"*

*"It's only what you hear"*

Exposure to an issue correlated to its perceived impact – for example dredging was seen as a significant issue by some. This perception is likely to be a residual impact of the media exposure the issue received nearly 10 years ago. The regularity with which the plastic bag ban (a major media issue at the time the groups were conducted) was raised further validates this notion.

*"You only hear about marine environments when it's in the news"*

## Erosion

Erosion was seen as a key issue yet there was a very limited understanding of the implications other than loss of nice sandy beaches and potentially loss of built infrastructure on the coast - although this was usually regarded as due to the foolishness of development too close to the coast. There was agreement that erosion was probably mostly a natural phenomenon.

## Climate change and sea level rise

Climate change was only raised spontaneously as an issue by some, and there was limited understanding of the likely implications and how Victorians were likely to be affected. Climate change and associated risks were often a secondary thought and was not front of mind.

Although some participants felt climate change to be (more broadly) a significant issue facing humans, there was a prevailing sense that it was big and complicated, and many opposing opinions meant it was hard to be sure whether the phenomenon was definitely occurring (or to a magnitude worth worrying about).

*"There are so many theories, I just don't know"*

Sea level rise was not necessarily mentioned as an implication of climate change. Participants found it hard to perceive that sea level rise was necessarily going to have a monumental impact. There was a sense that the process would be so gradual that it would be fairly easy to adapt to a changing situation.

*"There is nothing new about the water levels rising, it's been happening for 50,000 years"*

*"I think it will have a big impact, but it will happen gradually, so we won't notice it as much"*

*"I have wondered if warmer waters will move down and kill off our marine life"*

Some participants were able to link climate change to an increased frequency of erratic weather events and therefore increasing the likelihood of the Victorian coast experiencing a natural disaster. Some participants discussed the idea of climate change having possible adverse social and economic impacts, such as less tourism and collapse of, or pressure on, the fishing sector.

*“Businesses on bay will be unsustainable, people will be laid off work and they have to leave town”*

### Population growth and development

Metropolitan groups were more likely to suggest that coastal towns were under threat due to population growth than regional participants. However, when raised as an issue, regional groups (more so Sale participants) did think that population growth would have an adverse impact on coastal towns (and their own communities). Participants felt that infrastructure was already strained during peak tourism season, they pointed to this as evidence that a surge in population would not be appropriate. Some regional participants felt that there weren't sufficient economic opportunities to attract and maintain a growing population.

Metropolitan groups more likely to identify coastal towns as at risk of losing their 'charm' and 'character' as a result of a burgeoning population, reflecting their more sentimental feelings towards Victorian coastal towns.

Geelong's coastline was regarded as having been developed in a respectful and pleasant way. Those participants who mentioned this commented on the wide foreshore area with buildings set back from the foreshore, and a good mix of retail, hospitality and recreational facilities.

Ideas on whether towns should 'grow up' or 'grow out' were mixed. The notion of developing high-rise buildings to accommodate more people was largely disliked.

- Sprawl-related issues: more infrastructure to service a community and would likely increase pollution due to the need to travel greater distances if the town was spread over a larger area.
- Densification-related issues: more traffic/less parking, pollution isolated to town rather than spread along the coastline.

*“Don't want it to be like the Gold Coast”*

*“You go to the coast to escape high-rise buildings”*

*“It's a fact of life that as population grows coastal towns will grow”*

Some participants felt that the Victorian coast was sufficiently large to support more communities and townships, so the best way to accommodate an increase in population was to potentially have new towns while ensuring that large tracts of the coast remained untouched.

The threat of overdevelopment was regarded as a greater risk to coastal rather than inland ecosystems as it was felt that coastal and marine environments were less resilient, and damage would be irreparable.

## 3.5 Management and planning

### Indicators of healthy coastal and marine environments

Participants were confident of what the evidence of healthy coastal and marine environments would be. As with much of the discussion, the default context was thought to be a beach environment and therefore consisted of: clean sand; an absence of rubbish; clean, clear, blue water; obvious marine life and birdlife. Other features associated with well-managed coastal and marine environments included well-maintained infrastructure and clean toilets. Boardwalks that kept people directly off more delicate coastal ecosystems were also noted as a sign of good management. There was a sense that any human interference often had an adverse impact on nature.

### Expectations and perceived management responsibilities

Participants had simplistic expectations of who did and ought to take management responsibility for coastal and marine environments in Victoria: government in a generic sense was usually their response. Participants did feel that Federal and State Government had a role to play and that local councils had on-the-ground, day-to-day responsibilities, especially in terms of decision-making around development and local planning.

Overall, there was a general lack of clarity around which institutions were responsible for what – although there was a feeling that many actors (including government bodies and departments) were involved. For some, this added to their (soft) anxiety that perhaps not enough was being done to look after these environments. There was little thought that industry should be responsible for management other than general maintenance and complying with the relevant rules and regulations.

There was no awareness of any regulations, strategies, plans or policies that related to Victoria's coastal and marine environments. Some felt that they wanted to know more about who was responsible for different aspects of coastal and marine environment management and care. This amounted to wanting reassurance that individuals or companies that broke the rules would be appropriately punished.

When asked about the role of Traditional Owners in managing these environments, participants felt they probably had a role to play but, given the lack of understanding regarding Indigenous Australian communities' connections to coast and marine environments in Victoria (other than the Warrnambool groups), this wasn't a strong conviction and some even mentioned that these groups should only be consulted if they had a real connection to these environments.

### The role of community in management and protection

Participants commented that there was an overall community responsibility in terms of looking after coastal and marine environments, but that only really extended as far as 'doing the right thing' in terms of not littering and obeying rules about recreational fishing. A few mentioned the role of volunteer groups such as Coastcare or having seen volunteer groups in action along the coast (picking up litter, planting native vegetation).



Although there was high ‘in principle’ support for community involvement, there was certainly no real personal appetite to be involved. Some commented that, overall, this ought to be left to the experts (even if these were members of the community with greater expertise), and others felt that the realities of modern life meant there was not time to give to this sort of activity.

Participants were unaware of opportunities for volunteer involvement. They seemed to think those opportunities probably did exist and felt they should be promoted more through traditional and online media channels.

Education to impress upon the Victorian community the importance and value of these environments was raised consistently.

### 3.6 Cultural heritage

Warrnambool group participants commented spontaneously on the cultural heritage value of the local coastal environment reflecting the shipwreck heritage of the local area and a stronger familiarity with the Great Ocean Road.

Local Indigenous sites of significance meant that Warrnambool participants also had greater awareness of the interactions and history of traditional owners with coastal and marine environments. When the history of Aboriginal communities and the coast was raised in the other groups, most were not aware of a particular connectivity and were more likely to comment that they associated Aboriginal communities with inland parts of Australia.

# Appendices

## Demographics

*\* All demographic data is unweighted*

### Q1. What is your gender?

Base n = 2,501	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Other	0%
I'd prefer not to say	0%

### Q49. Which age category do you fall into?

Base n = 2,501	
18-24 years	10%
25-34 years	15%
35-49 years	25%
50 years plus	49%
I'd prefer not to say	0%

### Q63. Which of the following best describes you?

Base n = 1,500 (Online sample only)	
Employed full time	28%
Employed part time	20%
Retired or pensioner	28%
Home duties	10%
School or secondary student	1%
TAFE or university student	4%
Unemployed	6%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	1%

**Q51. Do you have any children aged under 10 living with you? And aged 10 to 17 years?**

Base n = 1,500 (Online sample only)	
Yes, aged under 10 years	18%
Yes, aged 10-17 years	11%
No	74%

**Q64. Do you mainly speak a language other than English at home?**

Base n = 1,500 (Online sample only)	
Yes	10%
No	87%
I'd prefer not to say	2%

**Q52. Which of the following best describes your household's total annual income before tax?**

Base n = 1,500 (Online sample only)	
Less than \$35,000	18%
Between \$35,000 and \$60,000 (i.e. up to \$59,999)	19%
Between \$60,000 and \$85,000	16%
Between \$85,000 and \$100,000	11%
Between \$100,000 and \$125,000	11%
More than \$125,000	13%
I'd prefer not to say	14%

**Q65. What is your highest educational attainment?**

Base n = 2,501	
No formal education	0%
Primary School	1%
Secondary School	28%
Technical College (TAFE)	24%
University Degree or above	45%
I'd prefer not to say	1%