

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Marine and Coastal Policy

### General Questions

#### Q. Why has a Marine and Coastal Policy been developed?

The development of a new Marine and Coastal Policy is required under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

The new Policy guides planning and management decisions in the marine and coastal environment consistent with the objectives and guiding principles of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

#### Q. What's new in the Marine and Coastal Policy?

The Policy builds on the strengths of the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 with new and important policy direction, including:

- recognising, respecting, and putting into practice Traditional Owners' rights, aspirations and knowledge
- improved guidance and direction on planning for climate change; and
- a much-needed focus on the marine environment, including Victoria's first Marine Spatial Planning Framework (MSP Framework) to manage new and competing uses in the marine environment.

#### Q. Where can I find more information?

The Marine and Coastal Policy and more information can be viewed online at <https://www.marineandcoasts.vic.gov.au/>

#### Q. Have stakeholders been involved in developing the Policy and Framework?

Yes, a public consultation ran from July – August 2019 through the Engage Victoria online platform. Over 200 submissions were received from key stakeholders from across marine and coastal sectors including community, industry, local government, land managers and key interest groups. DELWP staff and the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council also met with Traditional Owners along the coast.

The MSP Framework was also developed collaboratively through a co-design process with marine stakeholders.

#### Q. What impacts will the Marine and Coastal Policy have on industry?

The Marine and Coastal Policy helps industries make smart and sustainable investments in our marine environments.

It supports sustainable industries for the benefit of current and future generations, by protecting marine and coastal ecosystem goods and services on which marine and coastal industries depend.

The Marine and Coastal Policy will support the development of climate resilient marine environments and will prepare our environment, community and economy for climate change, allowing industries which rely on our marine and coastal environments to continue to thrive sustainably.

#### Q. Does the Marine and Coastal Policy propose to remove private jetties or bathing boxes?

No, the Marine and Coastal Policy does not propose to remove or relocate private jetties or bathing boxes from Victorian beaches and coastal lakes.

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The Policy maintains the long-standing policy positions for private jetties that preserve safe public use and enjoyment of Victoria's foreshores, coastal lakes and marine areas. These policies are consistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014.

As per safety standards, if any structures on Victoria's foreshores, including private jetties and bathing boxes pose a public safety risk they will need to be removed or relocated.

## **Q. I ride my horse on the beach, will this new policy mean I can't do this anymore?**

This Policy does not change any existing regulations covering horses on beaches. If you have a permit to ride your horse on the beach you can continue to do so.

The Policy provides direction to land managers to plan and manage locations and times that commercial and domestic animals can access beaches, that minimise risks to public safety and amenity and protects environmental values.

## **Q. Will the race horses be allowed on beaches like the Belfast Coastal Reserve?**

This Policy does not change any existing regulations allowing race horses on beaches. If you have a permit or licence to train a race horse on the beach you can continue to do so within the permitted conditions.

The Policy provides direction to land managers to plan and manage locations and times that commercial and domestic animals can access beaches, that minimise risks to public safety and amenity and protect environmental values.

## **Q. How does the Marine and Coastal Policy work with Traditional Owners of the land?**

An important objective of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* is to "acknowledge traditional owner groups' knowledge, rights and aspirations for land and sea country". The Policy supports a broader self-determination approach that emphasises a need to listen to, act upon and respect Traditional Owner voices and knowledge.

The Policy also guides decision makers to understand, acknowledge and act upon the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners when making any decision for planning and managing the marine and coastal environment.

## **Q. Will the Marine and Coastal Policy affect other coastal projects currently underway?**

Yes, the Policy provides the state-wide guidance and direction for planning and decision-making in the marine and coastal environment.

Location-specific projects such as the Great Ocean Road Action Plan and the Distinctive Landscapes Program will be informed and guided by the Policy.

Similarly, specific planning tools in the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, such as Regional and Strategic Partnerships, Coastal and Marine Management Plans, and Environmental Management Plans will be guided by, and must be consistent with, the state-wide direction of the Policy.

## **Q. What other marine and coastal reforms are happening?**

A number of other marine and coastal reforms are underway including:

- Boosting the successful Coastcare Program
- Partnering with Traditional Owners to increase their involvement in coastal and marine management
- Improving the monitoring of coastal erosion and flooding
- Establishing a coastal asset database and investing in assets at critical risk
- Identifying threats to Port Phillip Bay through a coastal hazard assessment
- Supporting managers to address risks to public safety on coastal land
- Protecting priority beaches and dune systems
- Delivering targeted biodiversity actions, such as living reefs, in the marine environment
- Development of Guidelines for Coastal and Marine Management Plans
- Development of revised Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast.

## Marine Spatial Planning

### Q. What is the Marine Spatial Planning Framework and why has it been developed?

Victoria's marine waters are active places and we're increasing our use of them. Common uses such as fishing, boating, shipping, recreation and tourism are changing and expanding.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is about thinking ahead and planning for how we can best make all of these uses work, while also maintaining the health of the marine environment,

In Victoria, we already designate marine space for activities including fishing, maritime transportation, oil and gas development, aquaculture and conservation. However, with increasing use and pressure on the marine environment, there is a need to better integrate and coordinate our planning and management efforts across marine sectors.

The Marine Spatial Planning Framework sets out the process for achieving coordinated planning and management of the marine environment across all sectors.

### Q. How does the Marine Spatial Planning Framework work with the rest of the Policy?

The Marine and Coastal Policy includes Victoria's first Marine Spatial Planning Framework which outlines a process for creating marine plans in Victoria so that industry, government and the community can work together to better plan how we use and protect the marine environment.

The Framework will complement the Marine and Coastal Policy by guiding long term planning and management of Victoria's marine environment.

### Q. Where does the Marine Spatial Planning Framework apply?

The MSP Framework applies to the marine environment as defined in the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

### Q. Does the Marine Spatial Planning Framework replace existing marine planning and management (e.g. fishing, shipping)?

The framework will not replace or duplicate planning and management of marine sectors such as maritime transportation, oil and gas development, fisheries and conservation. Rather, it will provide an overarching framework to guide planning, management and decision making by marine sectors.

### Q. How will Marine Spatial Planning be done under the new Framework?

The MSP Framework outlines a state-wide approach to determine the location and need for undertaking marine spatial planning in Victoria. This approach will consider and identify the areas that should be prioritised for undertaking marine spatial planning.

It supports all appropriate partners to be involved in the planning process, and mandates consultation with key stakeholders and the public.

The Framework also outlines the steps for initiating and undertaking marine spatial planning in areas identified through the state-wide approach. Detailed instructions about how marine spatial planning is then undertaken in those areas will be provided in state-wide Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines.

The Minister will need to gain approval from all ministers with interests in a marine planning area before authorising the commencement of a marine spatial planning process, and before approving any proposed marine plan.

### Q. What is the difference between the MSP Framework and a marine plan?

The MSP Framework provides high-level, state-wide guidance and a process for initiating, approving and undertaking marine spatial planning.



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A marine plan is a comprehensive strategic document generated through a marine spatial planning process. The document provides the structure and direction for marine spatial management decisions in the area of the marine environment to which the plan applies.

A marine plan must be developed in accordance with any relevant provisions of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (including the MSP Framework and MSP Guidelines) and any legislation, policies and plans operating within the planning area.

## **Q. How does the MSP Framework consider existing users and permit licence holders?**

The MSP Framework provides a process for undertaking marine spatial planning that will recognise and consider the social and economic contribution of current and future activities in the marine environment. Understanding activities within a planning area and the existing rights of users is a key step in the process of marine spatial planning.

## **Climate Change and Sea Level Rise**

### **Q. How is the Marine and Coastal Policy providing strong direction on climate change?**

Making sure our marine and coastal environments are resilient to the effects of Climate Change is a key part of this policy and for all planning in the marine and coastal environment.

The Policy guides decision makers to consider risks from coastal hazards and to better understand the impacts from climate change. It also shows how to use this knowledge to improve decisions, manage uncertainty and build resilience of people, communities and the natural environment to climate impacts.

### **Q. Why has the planning benchmark for sea level rise to 2100 not been changed?**

The policies for planning for sea level rise, including the benchmark of planning for not less than 0.8 metres sea level rise by 2100 are unchanged from the policy in the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released updated global sea level rise projections in September 2019. Under these updated projections, there was only a slight increase in the average sea level rise, however regional variations are projected to result in up to 30% difference from the global average.

DELWP and the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC) are sourcing independent scientific analysis to produce regionalised sea level rise projections that will account for variation in the global average in Victoria. This work will be completed in mid-2020 and considered during development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy.

New policy guidance has been included to consider the findings of available local coastal hazard assessments and localised projections when planning for coastal hazard risks.

### **Q. Why has the 2040 sea level rise planning benchmark been removed?**

Many coastal councils and catchment management authorities recommended removing the 2040 sea level rise benchmark. Given the long-term nature of land use planning decisions and the life-cycle of buildings and structures, a 20-year outlook was considered unnecessary.

### **Q. Does the Policy provide or commit funding to take action against challenges facing the coast?**

No. The Policy does not provide or commit funding, but it provides policies to guide future investment and ensure we prioritise available funding.

The Policy encourages co-investment in asset renewal using a strategic risk-based approach that prioritises available funding.

Actions to implement the policies and address challenges facing the marine and coastal environment will be considered when developing the Marine and Coastal Strategy, which is due early 2021.

## Land Planning

### **Q. The Policy states the marine and coastal environment extends 5 kilometres inland, what does this mean for use and development in those areas?**

The Policy provides guidance on planning and management in the marine and coastal environment (to 5km inland from the high). It informs planning for long term management and consideration of coastal hazard risks, climate change adaptation, and ecologically sustainable use and development.

The Policy provides specific direction around buildings, structures and access on marine and coastal Crown land. Marine and coastal Crown land is a subset of the marine and coastal environment including all of Victoria's marine waters, bays, inlets, Gippsland Lakes and Crown land 200 metres inland from the high tide mark. The *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* requires consent for use and development of marine and coastal Crown land that must be consistent with the Policy.