



**VICTORIAN MARINE  
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2020–21**





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#### **Photo Acknowledgements**

Contact Victorian Marine and Coastal Council office for further information.

**We acknowledge Victorian Traditional Owners and their Elders past and present as the Original Custodians of Victoria's land and waters and commit to genuinely partnering with them and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.**



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# Responsible Body Declaration

In accordance with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* I am pleased to present the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Annual Report for the reporting period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.



**Anthony Boxshall PhD BSc GAICD**  
**Chairperson, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council**  
**30 June 2021**

## Chair's Foreword

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is appointed under the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* to advise the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on a range of matters relating to the marine and coastal environment in Victoria. The Council consists of seven members with expertise across a broad range of complementary disciplines. Council members have skills and experience in marine and coastal environments, planning, law, the physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and much more. Our purpose is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to encourage and enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas.

This year marked the third year of the inaugural Victorian Marine and Coastal Council's term in office and, despite the ongoing limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been another year of achievement by Council in partnership with our coastal and marine stakeholders and champions.

Building on our record of partnerships, and stakeholder-informed and evidence-based advice established in our first years, Council achieved much of its work within the COVIDSafe setting, including:

- **Awards:** We successfully delivered the Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards 2020 as an online event on Friday 20 November, 2020, with finalists and winners announced by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP.

The Marine and Coastal Awards recognise and celebrate the people and organisations that contribute to managing and protecting our spectacular coastal and marine environments.

This year's awards were the first hosted by Council and were a tribute to the organisational, performative and engagement skills of Council members.

- **Victorian Marine and Coastal Strategy:** We worked closely with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to ensure that Victoria's new Marine and Coastal Strategy is developed through a stakeholder-informed process that is inclusive, evidence-based, and enables stakeholders to align their planning and management actions with the overall vision. The Council's role was to ensure that all the right stakeholders were engaged and their feedback was reflected in the Strategy. In addition, Council continued with our practice of including the rightsholders (that is, Traditional Owner corporations) at the table for discussions about the draft Marine and Coastal Strategy as it developed.

- **Focus areas:** We continued our focus on understanding the economic implications of climate change and raising the profile of resilient coastal adaptation by progressing work on:
  - A research report focusing on *'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts'*. VMaCC, with DELWP and Life Saving Victoria as partners, have commissioned Professor Tom Kompas (University of Melbourne) to lead this research; and
  - A literature review project commissioned by VMaCC and undertaken by Professor Melissa Nursey-Bray (University of Adelaide) around *'Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments and their human communities'*.
- **Stakeholders:** We continued to build on our stakeholder relationships through engaging stakeholders directly in planning and policy. Like everyone, we 'pivoted' and moved our stakeholder consultation programme for the Marine and Coastal Strategy to an online format. These consultations were interactive, and broad in scope; and were very well received by all involved.
- **Science-based:** We continued to draw on the expertise, networks and knowledge of the Science Panel via:
  - the reports on *'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts'* and *'Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments and their human communities'*.
  - maintaining an oversight role over DELWP's Coastal Erosion Advice project.
  - providing expert advice to the Minister on the management of Spider Crabs aggregations as well as Blue Carbon.
  - providing expert input to Planning Victoria on Sea Level Rise benchmarking.
  - Contributing to the State of Marine and Coastal Environment report by providing reviews of the draft indicator list.

Council looks back proudly on three years of achievement where members worked effectively to set a foundation for excellence and innovation in marine and coastal planning and management that elevates the rightful role of Traditional Owners and their journey towards self-determination, is informed by broad and deep stakeholder engagement, and underpinned by the best available science.

# 1. Year in Review

## 1.1 Third Year

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council is the state's peak advisory body for coastal and marine issues. It is established under the Act to provide independent advice on marine and coastal issues to the responsible Minister. For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the responsible Minister was the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP. The term of the members of the inaugural Council is from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2021.

In the third year of its inaugural term, the Council has continued to work closely with policy makers, rights holders and stakeholders to build on the reform agenda established under the Act for a co-ordinated approach to the planning and management of Victoria's marine and coastal environment.

From the outset and throughout its term, this Council has placed particular emphasis on leadership through a rigorous, equitable and inclusive approach to gathering and disseminating information and on providing for stakeholder views to be heard and integrated.

In particular, Council has emphasised:

- evidence-based research and advice
- engaging deeply with stakeholders through frequent and rigorous consultation and direct reporting
- the embedding of Traditional Owner groups in policy and planning partnerships.
- identifying and prioritising current and emerging issues and opportunities.

Council continued to engage and lead input into the coastal reform process, set up under the Act, by providing considered and expert advice; through its research initiatives; and through its championing of Traditional Owners and the stakeholder voice.

## 1.2 Purpose and Function

Section 16 of the Act outlines Council's functions and accountabilities in relation to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Council has continued to prioritise, and work closely with DELWP, on developing the state-wide Marine and Coastal Strategy and on providing guidance and strategic advice to the Minister on matters requiring scientific research.

## 1.3 Advice to the Minister

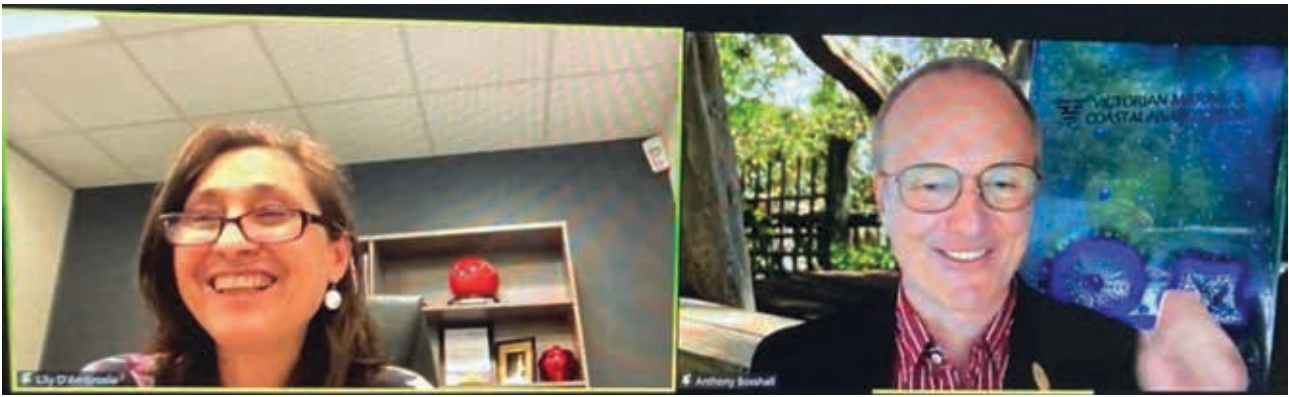
This is a key function of the Council that has established an effective working partnership with the Minister's office. Direct representations to the Minister were limited in 2020–21 due to COVIDSafe Principles but Council maintained an active advisory role both in responding to requests for information and through its strong advocacy approach.

Council provided the following advice to the Minister throughout 2020–21:

- **Giant Spider Crab management in Port Phillip Bay:** consistent with its emphasis on an evidence-based approach, Council commissioned a literature review of 'Natural invertebrate aggregations in coastal and marine environments' to form the basis of advice provided by the Council to the Minister on this issue.
- **Blue carbon:** opportunities for Victoria and a potential 'roadmap' for the future.
- Action on and normalising the conversation about **climate change on the coast.**
- **'The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate impacts'** project (due to be completed in late 2021).
- The importance of **State leadership on marine and coastal issues** and of empowering land managers with the confidence to lead decisions on complex issues.



VMaCC Member Jennifer Fraser presents a Victorian Marine and Coastal Award to Shay Terrick, Gunaikurnai Cultural Ranger (holding the award) and Corey Jack, NRM Crew. The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) won the Embedding Cultural Practices in Management Award for Protecting Traditional Owner Country of the Gippsland Lakes.



**The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Dr Anthony Boxshall, Chair VMaCC at the 2020 Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards (held online).**

Council also provided indirect advice through regular policy and advocacy updates with DELWP policy and executive officers through:

- Advice on the Revised Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast
- Ongoing input into the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- Advice to DELWP on the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) Regionalisation of Sea Level Rise for Victoria project on the most appropriate Victorian sea level rise (SLR) benchmark.
- Advice on the Coastal Erosion Advice Project.
- Ongoing input into the development of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework.
- Ongoing advice on the draft Marine and Coastal (Exempt Activities) Regulations, Coastal and Marine Management Plan guidelines, Bathing Box and Boat Shed guidelines, Regional and Strategic Partnership guidelines and Victoria's Resilient Coast – Adapting for 2100+.

## 1.4 Highlights/performance against functions

### 1.4.1 The Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards 2020

- These were the first awards hosted by the Council since the introduction of the Act in 2018. They built on the historical model and success of the Victorian Coastal Awards. The awards were held in November 2020 as an online gathering due to COVIDSafe Principles. This online event was a great success due in large part to the attention to organisational detail and to the superb hosting qualities of Council members in delivering the event. The website support provided by DELWP was also noteworthy for its excellence.
- The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate

Change, the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, presented awards to the winners, selected from finalists across 11 categories. These included programs and projects dealing with embedding cultural practices, habitat restoration, the built environment, biodiversity conservation, education and connecting with the community.

- The evening also provided an opportunity to reflect on the ongoing reform agenda of the recently released Marine and Coastal Policy and newly funded initiatives to deliver an adaptation framework for coastal communities, support the restoration of Traditional Owner knowledge and cultural practices, and to commence the implementation of the Marine Spatial Planning Framework.
- Profiles, videos and images for the award winners and finalists and the amazing achievements of all those involved can be explored at the link to an interactive map below:

<https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/news-and-events/victorian-marine-and-coastal-awards>

### 1.4.2 Traditional Owner Partnerships

- From its inception, the Council has articulated its commitment to genuinely partner, and meaningfully empower Victoria's diverse Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.
- During this term, one of Council's key priorities has been to bridge cultural gaps and to build on links with Traditional Owners and their enduring connection to Country. Specifically, Council has worked with the following Traditional Owner corporations with connection to Sea Country in Victoria: Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation,



Figure 1: Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation. Council has demonstrated strong support for a self-determination model articulated by Traditional Owners that facilitates current and future generations to have their voices heard in planning and management decisions.

- At all times, Council has emphasised the need to include and embed the participation and voice of Traditional Owners and has emphasised that the statement on the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners in the draft Strategy is a huge opportunity to reframe thinking on the coast and Traditional Owner rights.
- As part of this process, Council engaged directly with coastal Traditional Owners through the Sea Country Co-Governance Group (SeaCoGG) which is jointly chaired by Traditional Owner Corporations and the Council Chairperson. SeaCoGG provides a pathway for direct Traditional Owner input into DELWP policy and strategy and brings Traditional Owner representatives, the Council and DELWP staff together on Country. It also aims to ease pressure on Traditional Owners who are in demand from multiple government departments and agencies. In 2020–21 COVIDSafe Principles prevented the SeaCoGG from meeting in person. The connections built during the first year of SeaCoGG have established good working relationships which have translated to Traditional Owner corporations participating in Council meetings.

### 1.4.3 Developing the Marine and Coastal Strategy

Throughout its first term, the development of this Strategy has been a primary focus of the Council as a key tool in progressing the reform agenda of the Act. The Strategy development process was also identified as a major opportunity to strengthen Traditional Owner and stakeholder participation in marine and coastal planning by building and integrating robust collaborative relationships into the process.

In particular, Council emphasised the value of a stakeholder-driven process by providing opportunities to listen to stakeholders and learn from their experience during its development. The aim being to come to a shared understanding of the scope of the Strategy and to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration through listening to the stakeholder voice.

Council played a primary role in this through the conception and delivery of a multisector stakeholder engagement program with the dual purpose of promoting engagement in the development of the Strategy and for Council members to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder priority needs and actions. These stakeholder workshops were an outstanding success despite the limitation (or perhaps due to the informality) of their online delivery due to COVIDSafe Settings.

Feedback from workshop participants highlighted the effectiveness of the workshops in consolidating and building relationships. The sessions were viewed as extremely constructive and as engendering a spirit of mutual trust. The diverse expertise of the Council membership was seen as both appropriate to the task and effective in providing for informed discussions



VMAcC Member John Sherwood presents Marine and Coastal Awards trophies to Mandy Shute and Colleen Hughson of Beach Patrol 3280, and Peter Porskamp and Daniel Ierodiaconou of Deakin University

that were characterised by constructive disagreement, creative tension in solving issues, and a willingness to learn.

The draft Strategy will be released for public consultation in August 2021 and, in preparing for this, Council advocated for an inclusive communications and engagement approach to its public consultation. Council's role will be to promote this consultation through its networks and to facilitate consultation mechanisms.

### 1.4.4 Research and Evidence Base

Under the Act, the Council is required to advise the Minister on research needs and gaps. Chaired by Council member, Professor Alistar Robertson, the multi-disciplinary Science Panel supports the Council to provide independent, evidence-based and credible scientific advice with an environmental, social, and economic 'whole of coastal and marine' perspective. During this term the following research, projects and advice were either commissioned or delivered:

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

This study led by University of Melbourne, was commissioned by Council in partnership with DELWP and Life Saving Victoria to investigate and report on the costs of projected climate change damages on coastal communities and assets and the relative costs of investment in adaptation measures to avoid or mitigate these impacts.

Research, modelling and writing of the report are well advanced and preparations are being made for its formal release in late 2021.

Council sees this as a critically important document that will enable the provision of robust, evidence-based and costed advice to the Victorian Government and community on preparing for sea-level rise (SLR).

- **Literature Review – Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments and their human communities**

This review, led by the University of Adelaide, was commissioned by Council to aid the development of an effective strategy for Victoria on climate change and coastal and marine environments. The Council sought a review of scientific literature on multi-target communication strategies on this issue and recommendations on best-practice approaches to optimise communications with the community about the impacts of climate change in marine and coastal



City skyline from Canadian Bay

environments. The objective was to deliver strategic advice for immediate and long-term planning.

Council is particularly concerned the project should encourage discussions with a wide range of stakeholders as well as forming a basis for progressing the involvement of private landowners in responding to the issues.

The review is being finalised now and will be released in coming months.

- **CSIRO – Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) – Regionalisation of Sea Level Rise (SLR) for Victoria**

The report was prepared by CSIRO to provide a regionalised projection of SLR in Victoria based on the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Oceans in a Changing Climate.

The Science Panel was asked to provide an opinion on the most appropriate SLR for a planning benchmark for Victoria.

- **Spider Crab Aggregation**

In response to a request for information from the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Council commissioned a literature review – ‘Natural invertebrate aggregations in coastal and marine environments: tools used to manage populations and benefits derived from management’ to form the basis of advice to the Minister.

- **Blue Carbon, Jobs and Coastal Habitats – A roadmap for investment, adaptation, and resilience**

Responding to a request from the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Council prepared advice on blue carbon and opportunities for Victoria to establish a blue carbon market. The advice drew on Council’s networks, the Science Panel, available literature, Victorian Government projects, as well as some work done by the Victorian Coastal Council in 2018.

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

Under section 37 of the Act, a State of the Marine and Coastal Environment (SMCE) Report is required within 5 years of making a Marine and Coastal Policy.

The Office for the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) is the responsible body for delivering this work under the *Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003*. This report will be developed by the OCES by 2025.

The OCES has been following a co-design process with stakeholders to develop a list of indicators for this report. The Council has worked closely with OCES through this process and 17 members of the Science Panel made a significant and valuable contribution by providing reviews of the draft indicator list.

#### 1.4.5 Stakeholder Informed

One of this Council’s signature commitments has been the empowerment of stakeholders in marine and coastal planning and management both through the development of the Strategy and through ongoing advocacy.

As a pivotal support to the Strategy development, Council developed a comprehensive and wide-reaching stakeholder engagement plan, which was delivered online due to travel and gathering restrictions.

As part of this process, Council explored innovative ways of engaging on the draft Strategy using remote tools. In this way, the Council implemented an online, rolling schedule of discussions with the marine and coastal sector from June to December 2020. Stakeholder sessions were multi-sectoral and included the boating industry, local government, emergency management, the water sector, ports, fisheries, coastal management decision makers, Parks Victoria, and volunteer support organisations. These deep dives into the stakeholders’ experience, needs and aspirations have indicated a strong alignment for a healthy, dynamic and sustainable marine and coastal environment in Victoria. While there are important differences in emphasis, and advocacy, many sectors see the same challenges, and at times similar solutions.

The workshop sessions were generally well-received with high participation rates and positive input from stakeholders. Stakeholders felt that the Council was a very constructive group and the diversity of member expertise engendered trust and respect. Council was grateful for this opportunity to deeply engage across stakeholders.



## 1.4.6 Highlights against Council functions

Section 16 of the Act includes 11 functions of the Council. These functions are outlined below including a summary of deliverables against each from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Functions	Deliverable
 <p><b>Function (a) and (b)</b> Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy development and implementation</p>	<p>The Council worked closely with DELWP in further developing the Marine and Coastal Strategy (See section 1.4.3).</p> <p>A major focus was inclusion of Traditional Owners in the development of the Strategy as well as facilitating a stakeholder-informed process.</p>
 <p><b>Function (c)</b> Provide advice to the Minister on significant decisions under the Act</p>	<p>Council maintained and consolidated its excellent relationship with the Minister's Office by providing advice on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giant Spider Crab aggregations</li> <li>• blue carbon</li> <li>• climate change</li> <li>• leadership and management on marine and coastal issues</li> </ul> <p>(See Section 1.4.4).</p>
 <p><b>Function (d)</b> Matters requiring scientific research</p>	<p>The Council worked with members of the multi-disciplinary Science Panel to develop and deliver projects as part of priority focus areas (see section 1.4.4):</p> <p>The Council members have a strong skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Marine Science Committee</li> <li>• Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature Based Coastal Defence</li> <li>• Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) Stakeholder Reference Group</li> <li>• Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan's (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group (SARG)</li> <li>• Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC IMOS)</li> <li>• Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Report (SMCER) 2021</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Function (e)</b> Provide advice on guidelines prepared under the Act</p>	<p>Council provided advice on preparing the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast</li> <li>• Bathing Box and Boat Shed Guidelines</li> <li>• Coastal and Marine Management Plan Guidelines</li> <li>• Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) Guidelines</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Function (f) and (g)</b> Request the Minister establish Regional and Strategic Partnerships and provide advice to participants</p>	<p>Council liaised with the Inverloch RaSP and provided advice to the Western Port and Port Phillip Bay RaSP (now in transition). Council strongly advocated developing RaSP Guidelines to guide these partnerships. No requests were made to the Minister to establish RaSPs.</p>
 <p><b>Function (h)</b> Provide input to the preparation of Environmental Management Plans under the Act</p>	<p>The Council will provide input into preparing Environmental Management Plans (EMP) as required.</p> <p>Currently the Port Phillip Bay EMP is the only EMP under the Act. The Council is a member of the Port Phillip Bay EMP Senior Agency Reference Group providing advice on the priorities and emerging issues and/or risks that may impact implementation.</p>
 <p><b>Function (i)</b> Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act</p>	<p>Preparing the Victorian Marine and Coastal Strategy as a key document to assist in the administration of the Act has been the focus for the Council over the past year. (See Section 1.4.4).</p> <p>In this year, Council had no requirement to draw the Minister's attention to any specific matters relating to, or affecting, the administration of the Act.</p>
 <p><b>Function (j)</b> Carry out any other function conferred on Council by or under the Act or any other Act</p>	<p>The Act is complemented by Victoria's Marine and Coastal Policy and draft Marine and Coastal Strategy which identify a program of reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Policy and Strategy reflect the directions of the Act.</p> <p>The Council has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these activities are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable stakeholders and the community.</p>

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Functions	Deliverable
<b>(2) In performing its functions</b> Council must have regard to principles and objectives of the Act.	<p>The Council vision is for a healthy marine and coastal environment now and, in the future, which is to be achieved by giving effect to the principles and objectives of the Act. The Act sets out seven principles of environmental management. These principles are further enshrined as the framework for decision-making for the Victorian marine and coastal environment within the Marine and Coastal Policy (DELWP, 2020).</p> <p>The objectives of the Act relate to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. They define rights and aspirations, and set measures and arrangements designed to ensure these are met.</p>

### 1.4.7 Presentations given, and workshop contributions, by Council members and staff

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

Presenter	Presented To	Topic	Date
Dr Boxshall Prof Robertson Dr Grage Ms White	DELWP and the Council	Council and DELWP workshop on Marine and Coastal Strategy focus area – Sustainable Management	20 July 2020
Dr Boxshall Dr Grage Ms Fraser Dr Knuckey Prof Robertson	DELWP and the Council	Council and DELWP workshop on Marine and Coastal Strategy focus area – Marine Planning	27 July 2020
Dr Boxshall Dr Grage Prof Robertson Ms White	DELWP and the Council	Council and DELWP workshop on Marine and Coastal Strategy focus area – Natural Environment	3 August 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	East Gippsland Shire Council. City of Port Phillip. Surf Coast Shire Council. Moyne Shire Council. Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	10 August 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)	Understanding Marine and Coastal Strategy advocacy priorities for MAV	10 August 2020
Dr Grage Ms Northeast	DELWP and the Council	VPP Update with Marine and Coastal Strategy Policy	21 August 2020
Dr Knuckey	DELWP and the Council	Developing Victoria's First Marine and Coastal Strategy – invitation to the virtual launch of the Strategy development process	27 August 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Emergency Management Victoria. Victorian State Emergency Service. DELWP Forest Fire Management Victoria	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	8 September 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Life Saving Victoria	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	8 September 2020
Dr Boxshall	Future Earth Australia	Ocean and Coastal Sustainability – Victoria Workshop	14 September 2020

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Presenter	Presented To	Topic	Date
Dr Boxshall	Australian Coastal Society	Australian Coastal Society (Vic Chapter)	23 September 2020
All VMaCC members	East Gippsland CMA. West Gippsland CMA. Corangamite CMA. Glenelg Hopkins CMA. Victorian Catchment Management Council. Melbourne Water. Barwon Water. Birraring Council.	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	23 September 2020
All Members	Council, DELWP, CSIRO	Council briefing CSIRO SLR preliminary modelling	28 September 2020
Ms Fraser	Western Port Biosphere	Western Port Biosphere AGM	1 October 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Gippsland Ports. Port of Apollo Bay. Port of Portland. Port of Melbourne. Victorian Regional Channels Authority.	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	6 October 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Victorian Fisheries Authority	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	6 October 2020
<b>All VMaCC members</b>	DELWP Coastal and Marine Managers Parks Victoria	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	16 October 2020
Dr Boxshall	Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association	VPELA Panel session: Climate Resilience – who provides leadership and how do we build resilience?	21 October 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Department of Transport	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	16 November 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Barwon Coast Committee of Management. Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management. Whitecliffs to Camerons Bight Foreshore Committee of Management. Phillip Island Nature Parks.	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	16 November 2020
<b>All VMACC members</b>	South Gippsland Conservation Society. South West Environment Alliance. The Nature Conservancy. Victorian National Parks Association.	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	15 December 2020

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Presenter	Presented To	Topic	Date
<b>All VMACC members</b>	Bellarine Catchment Network. CoastCare Victoria. The Friends of Harmers Haven. Port Phillip EcoCentre. Yarram Yarram Landcare Network.	Draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	15 December 2020
Ms Fraser	Phillip Island Nature Parks	Presentation of Victorian Marine and Coastal Award	7 May 2021
Ms Fraser	Gippsland Ports	Presentation of Victorian Marine and Coastal Award	24 June 2021
Ms Fraser Dr Grage	Parks Victoria Marine Volunteers' Forum	Presentation regarding Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and draft Marine and Coastal Strategy	2 May 2021
Dr Sherwood	Deakin University Warrnambool	Presentation of Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards to Deakin University and Beach Patrol 3280	25 May 2021

### 1.4.8 General Business Activities

The Council business activities involved:

- advising and meeting with the office of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
- providing considered feedback and input to the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- supporting DELWP in public consultation sessions as part of the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy
- partnering with Traditional Owners in the development of the Marine and Coastal Strategy by ensuring participation at Strategy sessions with DELWP
- engaging with Traditional Owners to understand healthy Country objectives and how best to embed a Traditional Owner voice in Council business.
- engaging with stakeholders and partners through forums, working groups and meetings
- engaging the Science Panel members for involvement in Council priority projects
- progressing and finalising Council priority projects including the *'Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts'* and a Climate Change Literature Review by appointing project consultants and overseeing the project management.
- internal performance review of Council operations
- responding to local government councils with comments on draft Coastal and Marine Management Plans
- providing feedback to DELWP and lead agencies on preparing and developing the following draft Guidelines:
  - Revised Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast
  - Bathing Box and Boat Shed Guidelines
  - Coastal and Marine Management Plan Guidelines
  - Regional and Strategic Partnership (RaSP) Guidelines

### 1.4.9 Council Business Plan

The Council developed a Strategic Business Plan 2019–21 which provides the vision and strategic direction for Council activities. Priorities outlined in the business plan reflect the functions of Council as outlined in the Act, key issues, outcomes, and responses to emerging challenges (see Appendix 1. Council Business Plan 2019–2021).

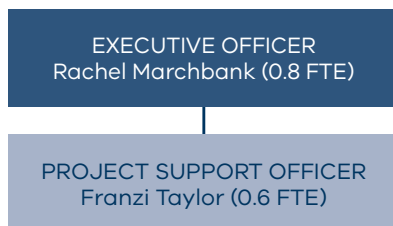
In response to the imperatives of COVID-19 pandemic impacts, a framework for prioritisation was developed and Council identified new ways of working to exercise its function and to ensure the continuity of priority tasks. Council took this opportunity to capitalise on the availability of people using online platforms and to connect broadly and more deeply with stakeholders in the new environment. As always, Council's focus was on improving its understanding of organisations, industry and peak bodies working across the marine and coastal sector consultation.

#### 1.4.10 COVID-19 Adjustment Statement

The limitations and adjustments occasioned by the COVIDSafe Settings called for an agile and flexible response to ensure the ongoing progress of Council business and, in particular, to ensure the access and input of stakeholders into the development of the Strategy. During the last year, Council has adapted its working timetable to facilitate stakeholder engagement and has developed innovative ways of keeping safe and connected while maintaining a high standard of service delivery. The planning and online delivery of the Marine and Coastal Awards in November 2020, supported by an outstanding web platform, and the multisector stakeholder engagement workshops for the Marine and Coastal Strategy in early 2021 were particularly successful examples of this approach.

## 2. Governance and Organisational Structure

The Council is resourced with a budget and Secretariat support through DELWP. On 30 June 2021 the Council was supported by two staff (1.4 full time equivalent).



**Figure 2: Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Secretariat Organisational Structure**

The Council's office is located at 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne Victoria 3002.

The postal address for the Council is PO Box 500, East Melbourne Victoria 8002.

Telephone: 9637 8893

Email: [vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.marineandcoastalcoouncil.vic.gov.au](http://www.marineandcoastalcoouncil.vic.gov.au)

### 2.1 Council Membership

Appointments to the Council are made under the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Act 2018 by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Building on the tradition of previous coastal Councils, both professional experience and capacity in networking and stakeholder engagement were key considerations in appointing the Council. This resulted in a high calibre membership whose expertise covers a broad range of marine and coastal disciplines. This expertise, combined with stakeholder-informed evidence gathered by Council, provides a base for advice to the Ministers responsible for Victoria's marine and coastal environments. Brief biographies of current Council members follow.

#### 2.1.1 Members

Members of the Council were appointed on 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2021 and include:

##### **(Chairperson) Dr Anthony Boxshall**

is a marine ecologist who has worked in Australia and the USA across Government, academia and private industry. He is the Founder and Principal of Science into Action Pty Ltd, a science impact company turning great science into greater actions. He was the valedictory Chair of the Victorian Coastal Council. Anthony is a former National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association (AMSA) – the largest learned society for professional marine scientists in Australia; he has worked at UC Santa Cruz USA; Deakin University; and has been on several innovation boards. A current Melbourne Enterprise Fellow in the School of Biosciences at the University of Melbourne, he ran the Science area at the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Victoria for nearly a decade.



Anthony is a problem solver and strategist. As a hobby, he has communicated the wonders of the marine environment to a broad audience through the award-winning "Radio Marinara" on 3RRR-FM in Melbourne for

25 years. He is a dad to 4 children who continually amaze, inspire, frustrate and leave him in awe of the potential of the future and hence more determined to leave a positive coastal and marine legacy.

**Ms Jennifer Fraser** has a range of governance and advisory roles. Currently she is a board member of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and a Commissioner with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. Previously she was a sessional member of Planning Panels Victoria, a member, then Chair of the Medley Hall Council at the University of Melbourne and a member of the board of Westside Community Circus.



Jennifer has consulted to different levels of government and has 30 years policy, legislative, management and governance experience across the Victorian public sector and related entities. In addition to a range of senior water and natural resource management roles within the (then) Department of Sustainability and Environment, Jennifer has worked in the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Health, and Education.

**Dr Anna Grage** has a background in marine environmental law and planning, and statutory (urban/ environmental) planning. She has a Bachelor of Laws, a Bachelor of Planning and Design (Hons), and a PhD (University of Wollongong) that focuses on Australian legal frameworks for marine environmental impact assessment. In the past, Anna has worked as a lecturer at the Australian Maritime College/University of Tasmania, teaching in the areas of international ocean governance, environmental advocacy, and marine environmental and fisheries law and policy.



Anna has also worked in Victoria and Western Australia as a statutory planner for local government, and as a solicitor in the areas of planning and environmental law; with her most recent local government role being with Mornington Peninsula Shire. Anna is currently on the Deakin University Environmental Science Advisory Board, Principal Consultant of Earth-Sea Planning, and a volunteer for the Sea Search (Parks Victoria) program/ Friends of Mushroom Reef Marine Sanctuary, and the Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

**Dr Ian Knuckey** is the Director of Fishwell Consulting, a company that provides expert research advice and consulting services to encourage and promote sustainable fishing practices. He has a PhD in fisheries population dynamics, a BSc (Hons) in Marine Ecology and over 25 years of experience in temperate and tropical fisheries research and management, encompassing a wide variety of invertebrate, finfish and shark fisheries.



Ian has worked with many fisheries around Australia and in South-east Asia, providing research advice and

running various fishery-independent surveys, monitoring programs and bycatch reduction projects. More recently, he has been leading capacity building programs to ensure Indigenous, recreational and commercial fishers can have greater understanding and input into fisheries research and management.

**Emeritus Professor Alistar**

**Robertson** has had extensive field research experience as a marine and freshwater ecologist in Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Western Australia, Canada, USA, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. He has worked in universities and research agencies in Australia, Canada and the USA. At the Australian Institute of Marine Science, he was Senior Principal Research Scientist and leader of the Coastal Processes and Resources Program. At the University of Western Australia, he was Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences and then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) before retiring in 2013.



Alistar has been the recipient of various Awards that have recognised his commitment to collaborative approaches to research on marine and coastal research, developing arrangements for delivery of multidisciplinary research and the translation of that research into action. He has been a member of state, national, and international committees providing advice on the management of marine, coastal and catchment habitats and natural hazards.

**Honorary Associate Professor**

**John Sherwood** holds qualifications in science, education and environmental studies, with extensive experience as a research scientist in freshwater, marine and estuarine systems and environmental management. He is Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at Deakin University in Warrnambool. John is chair of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority's Coast and Marine Working Group, an informal advisory and networking group for agencies and local government.



John has chaired the former Fisheries Co-management Council, served as National President of the Australian Marine Sciences Association and has been a member of the Western Coastal Board and the Victorian National Parks Advisory Council. John was recognised as Warrnambool City Council's 2017 Citizen of the Year and holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Victorian Coastal Council.

**Ms Jacquie White** has over 20 years' experience working in the environment sector across coastal management, catchment management, integrated water management, community and stakeholder engagement, organisational change and capacity building, and social research and evaluation. She is currently the Executive Officer of the Association of Bayside Municipalities and runs



a consultancy providing event management and stakeholder engagement services.

Jacquie's previous professional roles include: General Manager of the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand, Manager Community Programs at Melbourne Water, Director at the Office of Living Victoria, and Manager of Organisational Transformation with the Country Fire Authority.

**2.2 Council Meetings**

Council held 11 meetings on the following dates throughout 2020–21 as follows:

- 6 July 2020
- 11 August 2020
- 7 September 2020
- 5 October 2020
- 9 November 2020
- 14 December 2020
- 1 February 2021
- 1 March 2021
- 12 April 2021
- 10 May 2021
- 9 June 2021

Member attendance for the Council's 11 business meetings in 2020– 21 are as follows:

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

**2.3 Representation on stakeholder reference groups**

Council membership on stakeholder reference groups in 2020–21 financial year was as follows:

- National Marine Science Committee – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) Stakeholder Reference Group – Dr Anthony Boxshall
- Senior Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting for Nature-Based Coastal Defence at University of Melbourne – Dr Anna Grage
- Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan's (PPB EMP) annual Senior Agency Reference Group (SARG) – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Integrated Marine Observing System – Victoria (VIC IMOS) – Professor Alistar Robertson
- Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group – Ms Jennifer Fraser
- Technical Advisory Group (TAG) State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report (SMCER) 2021 – Professor Alistar Robertson

**2.4 Council sub-committees**

The Council members were involved in the following Council committees to guide and progress strategic projects and activities:

- Science Panel Sub-Committee
- Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards Sub-Committee
- Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee
- Economics Project Sub-Committee
- Sea Country Co-Governance Group

## 2.5 Submissions by Council

There was one Council submission in 2020–21:

16 August 2020 – Council submission on the Interim Report of the Review of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

## 2.6 Presentations received at Council meetings

The Council received the following presentations at its meetings in 2020–21:

Presenter	Topic	Date
DELWP (Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy Update and update on other projects	6 July 2020
DELWP (Colleen White, Regional Director Barwon South West)	Update on Statewide Coastal Programs	11 August 2020
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy update	11 August 2020
DELWP (Joanna Kormas, Manager Statutory Policy; Michael Orford, Senior Policy Officer)	Proposed VPP changes to give effect to the Marine and Coastal Policy	7 September 2020
DELWP (Cass Philippou, Inverloch RaSP Project Manager; Darren James Senior Technical Advisor – Coasts and Marine)	Inverloch RaSP Update	5 October 2020
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Liz Patterson, Co-Manager Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer; Rohan Snartt, Senior Policy Officer; Ryan Bath, Senior Project Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy update and other functions under the Act (Bathing Box Policy and MACA Regulations)	5 October 2020
DELWP (Cass Philippou, Inverloch RaSP Project Manager)	Inverloch Regional and Strategic Partnership	9 November 2020
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer, Rohan Snartt, Senior Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy update	14 December 2020
DELWP (Elisa Zavadil, Project Manager – Victoria’s Resilient Coast)	Victoria’s Resilient Oceans and Coasts Project	1 February 2021
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy Update, Other Functions under the Act and RaSPs	1 February 2021
Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority (Libby Mears, Chair; Daniel Ierodiaconou, Board Member; Daniel Aitken, Interim CEO)	Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority	1 March 2021
DELWP (Nicola Waldron, Co-Manager Policy and Strategy; Rachel Manassa, Senior Policy Officer – Marine Spatial Planning)	Marine and Coastal Strategy update and other Functions under the Act	1 March 2021
DELWP (Darren James, Senior Technical Advisor – Coasts and Marine; Liz Patterson, Co-Manager Policy and Strategy)	Coastal Erosion Advice Project	12 April 2021
Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability (OCES) (Dr. Gillian Sparkes, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability; Dr Scott Rawlings, Director Science and Reporting; Dr Fiona McKenzie, Principal Science Writer; Claire Ruedin, Communications and Engagement Advisor)	2021 State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report	12 April 2021
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Nicola Waldron and Liz Patterson, Co-Managers Policy and Strategy; Rebecca Price, Principal Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy update	10 May 2021
Prof Tom Kompas, The University of Melbourne	The economics of damages and the cost of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts.	10 May 2021

table continued overleaf...

...table continued

Presenter	Topic	Date
DELWP (Will Guthrie, Director Land Policy; Liz Patterson, Co-Manager Policy and Strategy; Jenny Symons, Senior Policy Officer)	Marine and Coastal Strategy Update and other Functions under the Act	9 June 2021
DELWP (Michael Noelker, Senior Policy Officer – Coastal Erosion Advice Project; Liz Patterson, Co-Manager Policy and Strategy)	Coastal Erosion Advice Project	9 June 2021

## 2.7 Council Publications

In 2020–21 Council commissioned and published a *'Literature Review on Natural invertebrate aggregations in coastal and marine environments'*. This review formed the basis for advice to the Minister and provides information on tools to manage populations and benefits derived from such management. The literature review is available on Council's webpage at:

[https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/527074/VMCC0007\\_Marine\\_Invertebrate\\_Aggregation\\_Review\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/527074/VMCC0007_Marine_Invertebrate_Aggregation_Review_FINAL.pdf)

## 2.8 Conferences and Seminars

There was one conference attended by a Council member during 2020–21. Dr John Sherwood attended the Inaugural International Workshop on Intermittent Estuaries in a Changing Climate, online from 15 to 18 June 2021.

## 2.9 Statement of Pecuniary Interests

All members of the Council and the Executive Officer have completed declarations of pecuniary interest for the current reporting period including details of shares held by members.

## 2.10 Performance

As part of a commitment to providing a high-level of stakeholder service, Council endorsed a Performance Assessment Policy in November 2018. A key provision of this policy is an annual review of performance whose scope includes individual members, the Council collectively, and the Chair. This year, key findings of the review were that the current Council has worked effectively with DELWP and external stakeholders. The diverse expertise of Council members provided a basis for constructive disagreement, encouraged a willingness

to learn and build trust with all involved. Council undertook valuable research that will provide a solid basis for future decision-making.

This year, Council also sought direct and frank feedback from a range of stakeholders from the Marine and Coastal Strategy engagement workshops. The outcomes of the review and the results were used when considering business planning priority focus areas. The feedback indicated that Council has made progress with its drive for a deeper relationship with a broad range of stakeholder groups across Victoria and that stakeholders felt engaged and valued.

In line with COVIDSafe Settings, the depth of external stakeholder feedback, and proximity to the end of the inaugural term of Council, members decided to pause an external independent review of Council performance initially planned for 2020–21. Council determined to leave the discussion of the need and timing of such a review to the incoming members.

## 2.11 Risk Management

While the Council examines the risks associated with the delivery of its work functions and objectives on an ongoing basis, it relies on DELWP's risk management framework and internal audit of financial and other administrative systems used by the Council's Secretariat as outlined in the DELWP Annual Report.

## 2.12 Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Operations are managed in accordance with DELWP procedures and guidelines for occupational health and safety, industrial relations, and related issues as outlined in the DELWP Annual Report.

## 2.13 Employment and Conduct Principles

The Council uses DELWP processes. The Council and DELWP are committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. The selection processes ensure applicants are assessed and evaluated fairly and equitably based on the key selection criteria and other accountabilities without discrimination. Employees have been correctly classified in workforce data collections.

Consistent with requirements of the *Public Administration Act 2004*, the Council has adopted a range of policies designed to promote good governance in all its decision making and operations. These policies comprise: Code of Conduct; Conflict of Interest; Dispute Resolution; Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality; Meetings and Decision Making; and Performance Assessment.



New fish cleaning station Warrnambool Breakwater



## 3. Workforce Data

### 3.1 Workforce Data

At 30 June 2021 the Council was supported by two staff (1.4 full time equivalent). The proportion of women was 100 per cent.

### 3.2 Women, Youth and Indigenous Affairs

The Council is committed to involving Victoria's community, including women, youth and Aboriginal

## 4. Other Disclosures

### 4.1 Freedom of Information (FOI)

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) allows the public a right of access to documents held by the Council. The purpose of the FOI Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by government departments, local councils, Ministers and other bodies subject to the FOI Act.

An applicant has a right to apply for access to documents held by the Council. This comprises documents both created by the Council or supplied to the Council by an external organisation or individual, and may also include maps, films, microfiche, photographs, computer printouts, computer discs, tape recordings and videotapes.

The FOI Act allows the Council to refuse access, either fully or partially, to certain documents or information. Examples of documents that may not be accessed include Cabinet documents; some internal working documents; law enforcement documents; documents covered by legal professional privilege, such as legal advice; personal information about other people; and information provided to the Council in-confidence.

The FOI Act has been amended to reduce processing time for requests received to 30 days. However, when external consultation is required the processing time automatically reverts to 45 days. Processing time may also be extended by periods of 30 days, in consultation with the applicant. With the applicant's agreement this may occur a number of times.

If an applicant is not satisfied by a decision made by DELWP, under section 49A of the FOI Act, they have the right to seek a review by the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner within 28 days of receiving a decision letter.

### 4.2 Making a Request

The Council operates in accordance with FOI procedures established through DELWP. In 2020–21 there was no FOI request made to the Council in 2020–2021.

The Council has determined that DELWP is its authorised officer. FOI requests can be lodged online at [www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au). An application fee of \$30.10 applies. Access charges may also be payable if the document pool is large, and the search for material is time consuming. Access to documents can also be obtained by writing to the Department's Freedom of Information Unit, as detailed in section 17 of the Act:

Victorians in the management and enjoyment of the coast. The Act identifies actions to implement indigenous cultural outcomes and to improve communications with Aboriginal communities in coastal areas. Council's Business Plan includes actions to strengthen community involvement in coastal planning and management and the Council operates in an environment that ensures equity of processes and participation by stakeholders.

Manager FOI

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
PO Box 500 East Melbourne Victoria 3002

Email: [foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:foi.unit@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 7022 6530.

Further information about the operation and scope of FOI can be obtained from the FOI Act, regulations made under the FOI Act and [foi.vic.gov.au](http://foi.vic.gov.au).

### 4.3 Compliance with the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012

The *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (PID Act) enables people to make a disclosure about corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body. The Council is a public body for the purposes of the PID Act.

#### *What is a public interest disclosure?*

A public interest disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct or detrimental action by a public officer or a public body.

'Improper or corrupt conduct' involves substantial mismanagement of public resources, risk to public health or safety or the environment, or corruption.

'Detrimental action' is action taken against a person in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure.

#### *How do I make a public interest disclosure?*

You can make a public interest disclosure about the Council or its board members, officers or employees by contacting IBAC (details below).

The Council is not able to receive public interest disclosures.

The Council has established procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a public interest disclosure about the Council, its members, officers or employees. You can access the Council's procedures on its website at:

[www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-us/about-vmacc](http://www.marineandcoastalcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-us/about-vmacc).

#### **Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria**

Address: Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234, Melbourne Victoria 3001

Internet: [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: See the website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures.

#### 4.4 Office-based Environmental Impacts

The Council makes use of DELWP offices and facilities to perform its functions and the reporting requirement of the office is met by DELWP. The Council Secretariat participates fully in a range of environmental programs operating within DELWP.

#### 4.5 Statement of Availability of Other Information

Other information held at the Council's office is available on request, subject to the FOI Act.

### 5. Council expenditure

#### 5.1 Expenditure and Financial Management

Council's operating budget is provided within the budget of DELWP. Financial operations of the Council have not been separately audited. Audited statements are incorporated into the overall financial statements of the DELWP Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2021. It is considered unnecessary for Council to retain a separate audit committee.

DELWP undertakes an annual assessment of financial management compliance with all applicable requirements in the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Standing Directions and Instructions. This includes the financial management of the Council's activities. DELWP also periodically audits this compliance.

The following table shows the operating expenditure of the Council for the 2020–21 financial year (excluding salaries and agency staff costs) and provides a comparison with the previous year.

There were changes in financial position during the reporting period with underspent project funds due to COVIDSafe Settings requiring the Marine and Coastal Awards Gala ceremony to be held on-line instead of face-to-face. COVIDSafe Settings also led to delays in finalising the Council's projects 'Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal

#### 4.6 Compliance with Data Vic Access Policy

Consistent with the Victorian Government's DataVic Access policy, the Council intends that data tables which it may produce in the future will be available at: <http://data.vic.gov.au/> in machine readable format.

#### 4.7 Overseas Travel

There was no overseas travel by Council members in 2020–21.

communities to climate change impacts', 'Normalising the conversation of climate change impacts on coastal and marine environments and their human communities' and upgrade to Council's website. The underspent funds for these projects have been carried over to be used in 2021–22.

The Council's COVID-19 Re-prioritisation Plan (1.4.9) ensured members focused on priority areas and found new ways of working to maintain performance.

#### 5.2 Operating Position

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

Financial Year	Council operations*
2020–21	\$202,337 + \$130,000 (Carried over funds**) = \$332,337
2019–20	\$245,416

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

\*\* The carried over funds are for committed projects including the Victorian Marine and Coastal Awards (\$50,000); the 'Economics of damages and the costs of adapting Victorian coastal communities to climate change impacts' project (\$60,000); and a contribution from the DELWP Climate Change Division (\$20,000)



Big seas Griffith Island Port Fairy

# 6. Appendix

Council Business Plan 2019–2021

## BUSINESS PLAN 2019 — 2021



The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council's **vision** is a healthy marine and coastal environment, now and in the future.

Council's **purpose** is to provide evidence and stakeholder-informed advice to enable leadership in the adaptive planning and management of Victoria's marine waters and coastal areas.

Victorians have a strong connection with the coast, with 80% of Victorians visiting the coast each year, and value the clean pristine beaches, unique marine life, diverse ecosystems and the ruggedness and natural beauty. Our marine waters and coastal areas provide social, cultural, economic and environment benefits that are important for supporting business, tourism, recreation, wellbeing and biodiversity.

The Victorian Government is committed to protecting and enhancing these values, introducing a package of reforms to improve management and oversight arrangements for the state's marine and coastal environment. This includes the *Marine and Coastal Act (2018)* to improve planning, protection, management and sustainable use of our marine and coastal environments, addressing the long-term challenges of climate change, population growth and ageing coastal structures. The Act ensures local and regional partners work together to achieve the best outcomes for Victoria.

The **Victorian Marine and Coastal Council (VMaCC)** has been established under the Act to provide independent stakeholder informed, evidence-based advice to the government on a range of matters including development and implementation of statewide policy and strategy; significant decisions relating to the marine and coastal environment; and matters requiring scientific research. **The VMaCC Business Plan for 2019-2021** aims to inform and engage marine and coastal stakeholders in order to collaboratively deliver its functions under the Act 2018.

# Marine and Coastal Act 2018

On 1 August 2018 the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* came into effect. The Act establishes principles and objectives for an integrated and coordinated approach to planning and managing the marine and coastal environment. Under the Act, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change will be responsible for developing a statewide marine and coastal policy and strategy, along with other initiatives. The program of reforms and actions will be guided by the Victorian Marine and Coastal Council, bringing a whole-of-government approach and a greater focus on Traditional Owners, climate change and the marine environment.

## Marine and Coastal Act principles

The Act sets out seven principles of environmental management that reflect the United Nations treaties and conventions developed and ratified over the past 50 years. The principles build on the goals of the previous Victorian Coastal Strategy, and are now enshrined as the framework for decision making within the Victorian marine and coastal environment.

### The seven principles are:

- 1 Integrated coastal zone management
- 2 Ecosystem-based management
- 3 Ecologically sustainable development
- 4 Evidence-based decision-making
- 5 Precautionary principle
- 6 Proportionate and risk-based principle
- 7 Adaptive management




## Marine and Coastal Act objectives

The objectives of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* relate to planning and management of the marine and coastal environment. They define rights and obligations, and set measures and arrangements designed to ensure these are met.

### The nine objectives are:

- 1 to protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment;
- 2 to promote the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems, communities and assets to climate change;
- 3 to respect natural processes in planning for and managing current and future risks to people and assets from coastal hazards and climate change;
- 4 to acknowledge traditional owner groups' knowledge, rights and aspirations for land and sea country;
- 5 to promote a diversity of experiences in the marine and coastal environment;
- 6 to promote the ecologically sustainable use and development of the marine and coastal environment and its resources in appropriate areas;
- 7 to improve community, user group and industry stewardship and understanding of the marine and coastal environment;
- 8 to engage with specified Aboriginal parties, the community, user groups and industry in marine and coastal planning, management and protection; and
- 9 to build scientific understanding of the marine and coastal environment.

# Functions of the Victorian Marine and Coastal Act

Function	Action
 <p>Marine and Coastal Policy and Marine and Coastal Strategy - <b>development and implementation</b>                      Functions: (a) and (b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMaCC is working closely with DELWP to prepare a <b>Marine and Coastal Policy</b>. We will host consultation with Traditional Owners, community and stakeholders to hear views and feedback on the draft Policy (mid 2019). The final Policy is due end 2019.</li> <li>• The Policy will include a <b>Marine Spatial Planning Framework</b> (MSPF). VMaCC is providing advice to DELWP and participating in a multi-sector co-design team to develop the Framework alongside Traditional Owner groups, marine user groups and management organisations (environment, transport, safety, resources, and fisheries). The MSPF is designed to integrate and coordinate planning and management of the marine environment. Draft MSPF out for consultation mid 2019, with final version due end 2019.</li> <li>• The Policy will be followed by a <b>Marine and Coastal Strategy</b> (due end 2020). We will work with DELWP and stakeholders to inform the Strategy, with consultation expected mid 2020.</li> <li>• Policy and strategy will be informed by two <b>Victorian Environment Assessment Council reports</b> assessing the values of Victoria's marine environment including Traditional Owners values (as expressed by Indigenous Elders through their 'dreaming stories'); and an assessment of the values and uses of Victoria's coastal reserves.</li> <li>• VMaCC will work with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to prepare the first <b>State of the Marine and Coastal Environment Report</b>, due in 2021.</li> <li>• VMaCC will provide advice to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change on the draft and final Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, reflecting the evidence base and stakeholder perspectives, to achieve a healthy marine and coastal environment for all Victorians.</li> </ul>
 <p>Significant <b>decisions</b> under the Act                      Functions: (c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VMaCC will <b>provide advice to the Minister</b>, as requested, on significant decisions under the Act relating to or affecting the marine and coastal environment.</li> </ul>
 <p>Provide advice to the Secretary on preparation of <b>guidelines</b> under the Act                      Functions: (e)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 1998</b> are currently being revised by DELWP. VMaCC will provide advice to the DELWP Secretary on the revised Guidelines following consultation with stakeholders. Due end 2019.</li> <li>• VMaCC will provide input to guidelines for developing <b>Coastal and Marine Management Plans</b>.</li> <li>• VMaCC will provide advice and input to other relevant guidelines as required.</li> </ul>

# Coastal Council

In performing functions (a) - (j) under the Act, the Council must have regard to the objectives and guiding principles set out in the Act. Council will work collaboratively to bring stakeholder informed, evidence-based advice to these functions.

Function	Action
 <p>Matters requiring <b>scientific research</b></p> <p>Functions: (a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VMaCC has convened a <b>multi-disciplinary Science Panel</b> from a range of disciplines including, physical, biological, chemical, and social sciences. Through the Panel, VMaCC will provide evidence-based advice on scientific matters, research needs, emerging issues, gaps and opportunities influencing implementation of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy.</li> <li>VMaCC is supporting DELWP in development of a <b>marine knowledge framework</b> to facilitate integrated research efforts and improve the frequency and extent of marine and coastal habitat monitoring using new technology. Due end 2019.</li> <li>Council members have a strong science skill base and are involved in several state and national science committees including National Marine Science Committee, Senior Stakeholder Advisory Committee on Nature-based Coastal Defence, Strategic Reference Group for Our Catchments our Communities, fisheries resource assessment and management, and emerging coastal and marine Co-operative Research Centre proposals.</li> </ul>
 <p>Request the Minister establish regional and <b>strategic partnerships</b> and provide advice to participants</p> <p>Functions: (f) and (g)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regional and Strategic Partnerships (RaSP)</b> are a new tool under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i>. RaSPs are designed to bring multiple stakeholders together on shared regionally significant issues, working across marine and/or coastal areas and land tenures.</li> <li>VMaCC, with DELWP, will prepare general principles for establishing a RaSP.</li> <li>DELWP is piloting a RaSP in 2019 in the central Port Phillip region. In partnership with VMaCC and relevant stakeholders a pilot has been identified along the western shorelines that brings together multiple participants and significant and interconnected regional catchment, coastal and marine issues. Establishment of the RaSP is anticipated by late 2019.</li> <li>VMaCC is partnering with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporation and DELWP to support Gunditj Mirring, Eastern Maar and Waddawurrung as they scope a potential Regional and Strategic Partnership for Sea Country planning in Western Victoria. The project will commence in 2019 and is anticipated for completion in 2020.</li> </ul>
 <p>Preparation of <b>Environmental Management Plans</b></p> <p>Functions: (h)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VMaCC will provide input to preparation of <b>Environmental Management Plans</b> as required.</li> <li>VMaCC is a member of the Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan Senior Agency Reference Group, providing advice on the priorities and emerging issues or risks that may impact implementation.</li> </ul>
 <p>Matters relating to or affecting the administration of the Act – <b>regulations</b> under the <i>Marine and Coastal Act</i></p> <p>Functions: (i)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development of <b>regulations</b> under the Act is part of government's coastal and marine reform agenda and was supported through community consultation as an improvement to the new legislation. The regulations will be developed by DELWP in 2019 and provide clear enforceable boundaries on use and development within the marine and coastal environment. They aim to ensure the principles and objectives of the Act are followed.</li> <li>VMaCC will provide feedback on the draft regulations and advice to the Minister.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>To carry out any other function</b> conferred on the Council by or under the Act or any other Act – <b>Peak advisory capability across Marine and Coastal Sector</b></p> <p>Functions: (j)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Act is complemented by Victoria's <b>Marine and Coastal Reforms Final Transition Plan</b> which identifies a program of policy reforms and on-the-ground actions over the coming years. The Plan reflects the directions of the Act and responds to recommendations made in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report, Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets. VMaCC has an oversight and advocacy role in ensuring these activities are carried out, and to effectively engage and enable stakeholders and the community.</li> <li>VMaCC will undertake <b>strategic projects</b> that support effective delivery of its functions, for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2019-2020</b></li> <li><b>Marine and Coastal Forum:</b> supporting DELWP to host an event for marine and coastal practitioners and volunteers to share knowledge and information, and identify future risks, challenges and opportunities (13-14 June, Melbourne).</li> <li><b>Coastal Adaptation Executive briefing:</b> strategic discussion with leaders across the marine and coastal sector exploring "who plans, pays, moves and motivates".</li> <li>Traditional Owners have invited VMaCC to co-chair the <b>Sea Country Co-Governance Group</b>, communicating rights and aspirations, engaging in development of the Marine and Coastal Policy and Strategy, and sharing learnings from Sea Country management projects.</li> <li>Informed by the <b>Science Panel</b> VMaCC will prioritise marine and coastal research opportunities.</li> <li>VMaCC, with DELWP and Parks Victoria commissioned the next wave of <b>longitudinal social research</b> to understand what Victorians value about the marine and coastal environment (Wave 5). This research has been conducted every five years since 1997 and consistently shows a high proportion Victorians visit the coast (+80%) in any given year, and what they value. The research continues to inform policy and strategy development. Available mid 2019.</li> <li><b>Marine and Coastal Awards:</b> building on the former Victorian Coastal Council Awards, VMaCC will recognise and celebrate the leaders and unsung heroes of coastal and marine management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council Business Plan will be updated annually to reflect emerging issues and opportunities, and provide an update on implementation.

**The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council members are:**



**Professor Alistar Robertson**



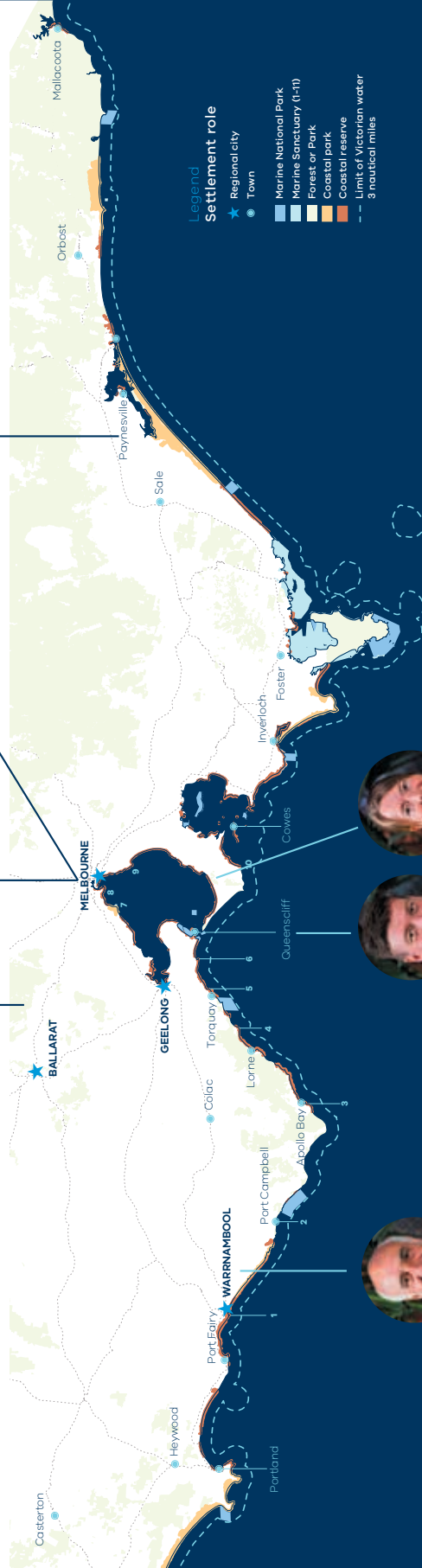
**Dr Anthony Boxshall (Chair)**



**Ms Jacquie White**



**Ms Jennifer Fraser**



**Dr John Sherwood**



**Dr Ian Knuckey**



**Ms Anna Grage**

**Message from the Chair**

The Victorian Marine and Coastal Council consists of seven members who have networks from across Victoria and expertise spanning marine environments, coasts, planning, law, physical sciences, policy, engagement, state and local Government, ecological sciences, catchment management, fisheries and much more.

Our focus over the first 2-3 years of the new Act is very clear. Through gathering a stakeholder informed evidence base, we will advise the Ministers responsible for our marine and coastal environments. Collectively we will create a new Victorian Marine and Coastal Policy (2019), a Marine Spatial Planning Framework (2019) and a new Marine and Coastal Strategy for Victoria (2020). We will continue the great tradition of the Victorian Coastal Council and celebrate and honour the many Victorian coastal and marine champions. We will honour the

important new objectives of the Act in a tangible way with focus on the rights and aspirations of Traditional Owners, embedding climate change scenarios into planning and management, and integrating how we plan and manage our marine environment with our catchments and coasts.

We aim to be accountable, transparent and open, and listen actively to the views and ideas from across Victoria. We are looking for innovative and practical ideas from all Victorian stakeholders and rights' holders. We encourage constructive frankness in all our dealings.

Please get in touch with us to help us improve and better integrate the planning and management of our wonderful and special Victorian marine and coastal environments.

**Contact**

Victorian Marine and Coastal Council  
[vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:vmacc@delwp.vic.gov.au)



## 7. Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>DELWP</b>	Department of Environment, Land, Water, and Planning
<b>EMP</b>	Environmental Management Plan
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>IBAC</b>	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission
<b>IPCC</b>	United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>MSPF</b>	Marine Spatial Planning Framework
<b>OCES</b>	Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
<b>PPB EMP</b>	Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan
<b>RaSP</b>	Regional and Strategic Partnership
<b>SRG</b>	Stakeholder Reference Group
<b>SeaCoGG</b>	Sea Country Co-Governance Group
<b>SMCE</b>	State of the Marine and Coastal Environment
<b>VIC IMOS</b>	Victoria Integrated Marine Observing System



Seagull at Point Lonsdale Foreshore Reserve



**VICTORIAN MARINE  
& COASTAL COUNCIL**

