

Fact Sheet

2016-17 Boating & Swimming Zone Review - Port Phillip and Western Port

Parks Victoria has been receiving feedback regarding improvements to boating & swimming zones in Port Phillip and Western Port and is proposing changes to some existing and still to be implemented zones. Community consultation is an important part of the process to develop more effective boating and swimming zones.

What's ahead?

Improved safety

Parks Victoria is the local port manager of Port Phillip, Western Port and Port Campbell and responsible for making sure port operations are safe, efficient and effective. Boating Zones are used to improve safety for swimmers and vessel operators in the local port.

In 2009 Parks Victoria completed a comprehensive two-year review of all boating and swimming zones across Port Phillip and Western Port to determine what zone types were required in each local area around Port Phillip and Western Port to allow safe access and use of the coast and waterways. The review utilised community consultation, a standard set of zones, and criteria for Boating Zones. The review was detailed in the Parks Victoria Boating Zones Review Report delivered by BECA in 2009.

Parks Victoria has worked in partnership with Maritime Safety Victoria and in consultation with the local community to apply these zones in five stages across Port Phillip and Western Port. Four of the five stages have now been delivered as funding was made available.

You can learn more about boating and swimming zones around Port Phillip and Western Port here: <http://parks.vic.gov.au/boatzones>

Parks Victoria periodically assesses boating and swimming zones to ensure they best reflect a wide variety of recreational pursuits.

Port Phillip and Western Port beaches are world famous, popular all year and experience periods of intense use over summer. Users range from local residents to participants in international events hosted by local clubs. The popularity of different beach activities is influenced by many factors and change can be driven by shifts in:

- The number of local residents and visitors using an area (e.g. higher density housing)
- Better access and transport (e.g. East Link and Peninsula Link)
- New recreations and technologies (e.g. popularity of Stand Up Paddleboards)
- Beach and shore profiles (e.g. changes due to storm activity in winter 2016)
- Shoreline facilities improvements (e.g. Improvements to Patterson River boat ramps)



Improvement Process 2016-17

Individual boating and swimming zone users, informal user groups, local governments managing foreshores and Victorian recreation peak bodies have suggested improvements to the existing boating zones.

To propose or amend boating and swimming zone rules, Parks Victoria works with Maritime Safety Victoria (MSV), the state-wide regulator.

Steps include:

- A newspaper public notice of the proposal to request the making of the rule
- 4 weeks public consultation
- Consideration and summary of submissions received during consultation
- A request to MSV to make a new waterway rule, explaining; how the rule will minimise risks, any alternative ways to address the matter; and expected benefits and costs of the proposed rule.

Providing Feedback

Please review the information provided overleaf and in detail at: <http://parks.vic.gov.au/boatzonereview> . The feedback period opens on 16 November and closes on the 16 December 2016.

You can provide feedback by:

- Emailing your response to info@parks.vic.gov.au
- Completing a survey – (about 10 minutes for most)
- Provide responses in writing to Boating Zone Review Parks Victoria 10/535 Bourke St Melbourne VICTORIA 3000.

- Register your interest only by providing your details to info@parks.vic.gov.au to receive general updates regarding the review process.

Key issues for review

Several adjustments are under review and some of the main discussion points are listed under each topic.

Human powered paddlecraft and swimmers

Parks Victoria seeks feedback on allowing human powered paddlecraft to use Vessels Prohibited – (Swimming Only) Zones.

Human powered paddlecraft including Stand Up Paddleboards (SUPs), sit on kayaks, canoes, small dinghies, and surf skis are currently not able to be used in Vessels Prohibited – (Swimming Only) Zones.

- The popularity and availability of these paddlecraft have increased remarkably since 2009.
- Many users seek the safety of using these paddle craft close to local lifesaving clubs and away from powered vessels and sailing vessels.
- Other paddlecraft users enjoy longer journeys along the shore and feel unsafe going around the zone 200 or 500m from shore.
- Powered vessels and sailing boats operate at higher speeds outside the boating zones but must slow to 5 knots within 50m of another vessel including paddlecraft.
- Generally paddlecraft have right of way over powered vessels and sailing craft.

Clarifying the naming of ‘Shared Windsports Zones’

Parks Victoria seeks feedback on renaming existing ‘Kite Boarding Zones’ to ‘Shared Windsports Zones’.

Signs, legislation and web information refer to these popular zones in an inconsistent fashion that does not properly recognise consistent use by windsurfers. ‘Shared Windsports’ is inclusive of kiteboarding and windsurfing and better informs other beach uses that both activities are welcome in the zone.

- During the 2009 Review Kiteboarding was gaining popularity rapidly and zones were provided to allow Kiteboarders to travel at more than 5 knots close to shore provided they were more than 50m from a swimmer.
- Generally beach conditions for swimming deteriorate (strong cross or onshore winds) as kiteboarding and windsurfing conditions improve. The ‘natural’ separation has worked well.
- Kiteboarders and Windsurfers share the zones provided and different sailing angles enable both groups to use the zone safety and simultaneously.
- Kiteboarding Victoria and Windsurfing Victoria support the renaming

Zone boundary adjustments at Elwood, Brighton and Hampton

Parks Victoria seeks feedback on altering Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones ‘Kite Boarding Zones’ (sometimes referred to as ‘Shared Windsports Zones’) and 5 Knot, within 200m of the shore Zones at Elwood, Brighton and Hampton.

Windsurfing and Kiteboarding are popular at these sites when winds are stronger and cross or onshore. Generally, use by swimmers decreases in these conditions. Alterations to the boundaries of the zones in the area are expected to improve safety for shared windsports enthusiasts and better enable them to stay clear of Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones.

You can view explanatory maps for Elwood Brighton and Hampton at: <http://parks.vic.gov.au/boatzonereview>

Additions to Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones

Parks Victoria seeks feedback on altering ‘Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones’ and ‘5 Knot, within 200m of the shore Zones’ Additions to the ‘Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones’ are suggested to better align them with beach access, local parking and nearby parks. ‘Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones’ remain very popular and additions will provide more opportunities for safer swimming away from sailing and powered vessels. These zones are generally located near good access and often adjacent to a local surf lifesaving club.

You can view the proposed changes for Chelsea, Bonbeach, Aspendale, Carrum, Portarlinton Harbour additions here: <http://parks.vic.gov.au/boatzonereview>

Personal Water Craft Prohibited Zones at Carrum and Shoreham

Parks Victoria seeks feedback on retaining existing ‘Personal Water Craft Prohibited Zones’. These zones are in place north and south of the Patterson River at Carrum in Port Phillip and at Shoreham and the 2009 BECA report detailed replacing them with combinations of ‘Vessels Prohibited (Swimming Only) Zones’ and ‘5 Knot, within 200m of the shore Zones’. Currently the zones recommended in the BECA report, and agreed in principle by Maritime Safety Victoria (MSV) have not been implemented. Local community expectations and use in the area by PWC operators reflects the current arrangements. Parks Victoria seeks feedback on maintaining the current approach and not implementing the BECA recommendations.

You can view the Patterson River and Shoreham zones here: <http://parks.vic.gov.au/boatzonereview>

