

13 December 2016

Ref: CBCO 1186

Transport – Safe and Accessible Waterways
DEDJTR
GPO Box 4509
Melbourne VIC 3001

Re: Central Coastal Board Comments on the Safe and Accessible Victorian Waterways Discussion Paper

The Central Coastal Board welcomes the DEDJTR Discussion Paper and proposed future development of a safe and accessible waterways strategy for Victoria. They progress work of the 2014/15 Ministerial Roundtable events on recreational boating. We also support moving towards a more targeted investment approach for recreational boating particularly in the context of the growing use of waterways.

As a general comment, there is a need to balance the growing demand for coastal space with equitable access for all users and to be mindful of community benefit. Victorians want a clean coast with development generally in existing towns, and natural areas protected (IPSOS 2012). We support this principle in our Recreational Boating Facilities Framework (RBFF) by promoting improvement of the level of service and efficiency of existing facilities, before considering the provision of new ones. Some locations will not be appropriate for development of boating facilities due to the proximity of marine national park and Ramsar values. We strongly support continued use of a triple bottom line approach in planning and managing boating facilities in the waterways strategy.

We feel the Discussion Paper generally provides a good overview of the value of waterways, outlines the current situation, challenges and the opportunities associated with achieving their improved management.

Some specific comments include:

- i. We support the scaled management approach for waterways (p30 of the Discussion Paper) as it is consistent with the levels of service and boating hierarchy used in the RBFF.
- ii. Central co-ordination for navigation aids and safety signage makes sense.
- iii. The need for a reduction in the complexity of governance and management arrangements for the coastal and marine environment is widely recognised. However, the proposal for local foreshore managers to be responsible for management of all waterway assets and on water safety would only add to the complexity of arrangements for Port Phillip and Western Port. Currently, Parks Victoria takes on most of this role apart from management of local boat ramps and central co-ordination would seem preferable.
- iv. With respect to revenue models we support use of the 'beneficiary pays' principle which may mean increased boating related fees and charges. Obviously, this should ensure any additional revenue directly supports the delivery of boating related services and infrastructure.

- v. An enabling environment is needed to attract private investment as a source of revenue for development of boating facilities (e.g. Martha Cove, Patterson Lakes, Queenscliff Harbour, Yaringa and Wyndham Cove have largely been possible through private investment).
- vi. Improvements in technology are an important response to the increasing demand for additional waterway facilities. For example, the use of dry stack storage can help address the pressures on boating ramps and carpark space and increased urban density which makes home storage more difficult. Similarly, the use of temporary moorings as trialled on the Mornington Peninsular over peak periods is a good way of reducing demand on boat ramps. In many instances the actual launch/retrieval of boats and parking can be more efficiently managed.
- vii. The process for issuing licences for recreational boating should require better demonstration of skills and experience as boating safety ultimately relies on safe user behaviour and ability.
- viii. The use of jet skis is not considered in the Discussion Paper. There is a need to improve water management and enforce use zones particularly for Port Phillip.
- ix. The list of associated negative effects caused by recreational use of waterways should mention the spread of marine pests and diseases, illegal fishing and overfishing. Dredging also impacts on the marine environment. As user numbers increase there may be the need to more actively manage a particular waterway and hinterland to prevent environmental damage.
- x. Environmental values should mention that coastal vegetation and sediments also provide important ecosystem services by sequestering significant amounts of carbon (known as 'blue carbon') in mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and intertidal salt marshes.

As you may be aware the Marine and Coastal Act review proposed that the Regional Coastal Boards will be phased out in 2018. This raises the question of what will be the best approach for future planning for boating facilities at a regional level (i.e. when the RBFF and Boating Coastal Action Plans need to be revised). Would you envisage that the proposed safe and accessible waterways strategy for Victoria will also provide information on an appropriate level of service for boating facilities? We believe a co-ordinated approach is needed rather than being left to the individual foreshore land managers.

We welcome discussion with you on any matters we have raised here.

Kind regards



Ross Kilborn
Chair, Central Coastal Board