

Boating Infrastructure Management – Regional Victoria



The Victorian Government committed to reviewing the management of boating infrastructure across Port Phillip and Western Port.

This review is nearly complete and has already identified key themes relevant to improving how boating facilities are managed across the bays.

The aim of expanding the review to consider regional Victoria was to test if the themes identified for Port Phillip and Western Port also apply to regional Victoria. In addition, it was to understand if there were other themes that were particularly relevant to assist with improving how boating infrastructure is managed in regional Victoria.

We sought feedback on a discussion paper from boating facility users, managers and boating industry stakeholders to help inform options that will improve how regional public boating infrastructure is managed. This feedback was received over a three-week period between Wednesday 13th May 2020 and Wednesday 3th June 2020.

What we did

We wanted to hear from boating facility users, managers, and industry stakeholders about how boating infrastructure is currently managed and opportunities that may exist to improve how boating facilities are managed across regional Victoria.

Due to current coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions, virtual interviews were held with 12 boating facility managers and boating industry stakeholders across regional Victoria to identify key themes relevant to regional Victorian boating facilities. These were condensed in a short summary paper 'Management of Boating Facilities in Regional Victoria', that was supported by an online survey to ask questions about how facilities are currently used, how they are managed and how stakeholders think they can be better managed in the future. The survey was launched in May 2020.

The feedback captured during consultation will be used to inform options for improving the way we manage recreational boating infrastructure in Victoria.

People reached



1,200 visits to the online project page



76 people downloaded the summary paper

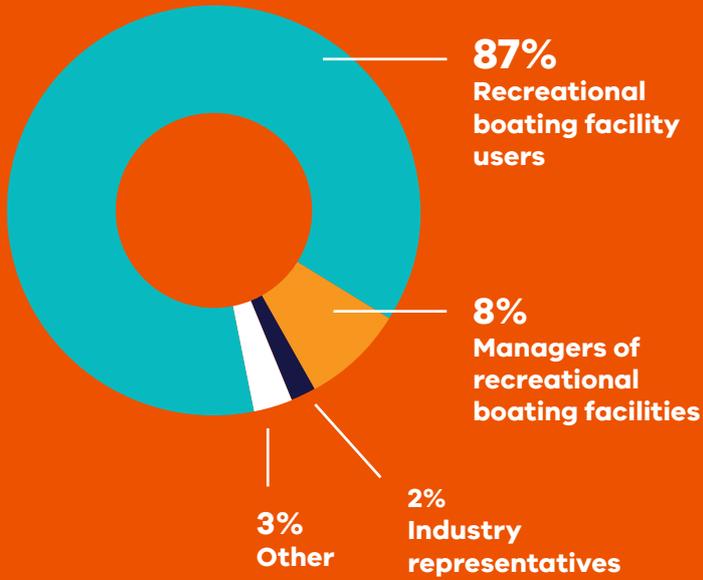


269 responses to the online survey



Over 10,000 people reached via Facebook

Who we heard from



Where you live

Most people who took part in the consultation survey live in **Central Victoria**. However, we also heard from people who live in other locations across the state.



What we heard

Through the online survey, users of recreational boating facilities told us:

Your top five regions to go boating in are:



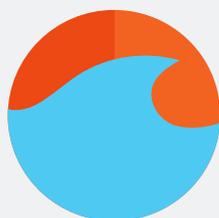
In regional Victoria, the types of waterways you go boating in are:

1	water storages and lakes
2	rivers
3	marine inlets and estuaries
4	marine coastal waters

The top five issues you would like to know more about when considering using a boat ramp are



Condition of the boat ramp



Water levels in waterways



Maintenance regime of the ramp



Parking availability



Capacity of the ramp

What we heard

Through the online survey, the managers of recreational boating facilities told us:



You manage recreational boating facilities in:

North East Victoria, Gippsland, Central Victoria, South West Victoria, North West Victoria



The most common waterways where you manage facilities are

Water storage and lakes
Marine inlets and estuaries
Rivers
Marine coastal waters

You said

During consultation, you said your six essential assets for a recreational boating facility are:



Boat ramps



Pontoons and jetties



Carparks



Lighting



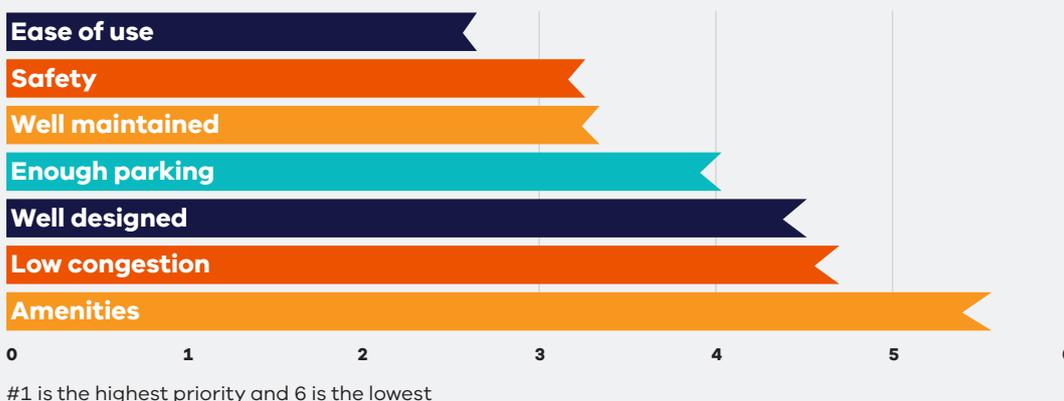
Navigation aids



Toilets

Destination jetties and moorings, and fish cleaning facilities were mentioned but not ranked as highly.

Most important facility features of a recreational boating facility



Access for people with a disability, physical impairment and old age are important factors to consider at boating facilities.

Who should be responsible for collecting and assessing feedback from users.

32%

State Government

25%

Local council

24%

Boating facility manager

16%

Industry groups

3%

Other

The top five regional boating facilities that set the standard were:

- 1 Portland
- 2 Lake Eildon
- 3 Lake Mulwala/Yarrowonga
- 4 Blue Rock Lake
- 5 Paynesville



The top five issues impacting the management of recreational boating facilities in regional Victoria are:

- 1 Inconsistent strategy and vision of facilities
- 2 Differing priorities among stakeholders
- 3 Design challenges for the unique environments
- 4 Inconsistent planning and investment in assets
- 5 Varying priorities of recreational boating and land management

The government's top 4 investment priorities should be:

- 1 upgrading existing facilities
- 2 developing new facilities
- 3 proactively maintaining existing facilities
- 4 improving access (i.e. dredging)

When it came to what facility managers needed to do their job well, 4 areas were identified as key capabilities:

Expertise in recreational boating, capacity, expertise in asset management and standard management practices



Increased parking and monitoring of parking were also highlighted as areas government should invest in.



Maintenance and repairs, capital upgrades, and asset monitoring and assessment were identified as the primary responsibilities of facility managers. There was **less emphasis** on facility managers being responsible for developing strategy and making investment decisions.

The top 4 preferred options for receiving boating facility information and providing feedback were:

- 1 a dedicated website
- 2 enews
- 3 social media
- 4 periodic surveys



You asked

What themes have been identified through this process so far in relation to improving boating infrastructure?

Themes that emerged from the review so far include:

- 1 Inconsistent maintenance and operations practices across facilities
- 2 Variable safety and useability of boating facilities
- 3 Inconsistent design of boating facilities
- 4 Unclear lines of accountability
- 5 Absence of an overarching vision, strategy and funding plan for recreational boating facilities
- 6 No clear definition of what assets are included in a facility
- 7 Lack of a holistic view of assets and asset condition across Port Phillip and Western Port

Testing these themes further in regional Victoria has confirmed that they apply fully or partly to our regional facilities. Furthermore, regionally specific issues were also identified through the survey and stakeholder interviews. These include cross-border issues, the need for water levels in lakes to be actively managed and for unique design features to be incorporated in recreational boating facilities in regional Victoria given the range of environments and conditions the assets are exposed to.

Why is the review considering regional Victoria?

The government committed to reviewing how to better manage boating facilities in Port Phillip and Western Port. This review is nearly complete, and a decision was made to expand the scope of the project to include regional Victoria given this is where most of the state's recreational boating infrastructure is located.

We know the current arrangements result in varied maintenance standards across the state. In regional Victoria differences exist between managing facilities in marine environments, for example Apollo Bay and Warrnambool, compared to inland facilities on rivers and reservoirs. We need to understand if there are issues or opportunities to improve how we manage boating facilities in regional Victoria.

What is the objective of extending the review to consider regional Victoria?

The end objective is to improve the management of boating facilities, including condition of these facilities, so that the Victorian boating community can have access to good facilities.

Why do we need your feedback about boating facilities in regional Victoria?

We know we don't have all the answers. And while we're doing our own thinking about improving boating around the state, we also need boaters, anglers, facility managers, industry groups and anyone interested using our waterways to tell us how we can improve the way boating infrastructure is managed across Victoria. The feedback we get from this consultation will be used to help make boating better in Victoria.

How are you going to conduct the review?

A considerable effort has been undertaken to identify key themes relevant to managing boating facilities across Port Phillip and Western Port, which resulted in the release of a discussion paper in December 2019.

Using this information, we have conducted focused telephone interviews with some asset managers and key stakeholders to test these findings and to ascertain if other issues are relevant to regional Victoria. We used the information we collected to prepare a summary paper and consulted the broader boating community via an online survey. This approach will help us understand how best to improve boating infrastructure management across regional Victoria.

How is the review being funded?

The government committed to this review and allocated funding in the 2019–20 State Budget to undertake the review.

Will the review result in construction of new boat ramps and what locations will they be?

The review will seek to confirm options for improving how boating facilities are managed in the future. The construction of new boat ramps is not part of the review.

How have we engaged with stakeholders?

There have been opportunities for stakeholders to have their say throughout the review through a variety of mediums. This has included interviews, release of discussion papers, and online surveys to identify limitations of boating infrastructure management in Victoria. Updates will be provided online and through social media.

What happens after the consultation on the regional boating infrastructure summary paper?

A report outlining the findings from the public consultation and the next steps in the review will be released in 2020. During this time, the review will continue to progress exploring options that will result in improving how boating infrastructure is managed across regional Victoria.

When will we see the outcomes of the review?

The review is expected to be completed in 2020. The information, including options for improving how boating facilities are managed, will be considered throughout 2020, and information will be provided accordingly.

When will we see improvements in regional Victoria?

It's too early to tell what the outcomes of the review will be. However, announcements regarding any outcomes will be provided throughout 2020.

Next steps

We would like to thank everyone who provided feedback on the management of boating facilities across regional Victoria.

All your feedback is being considered and will be used to identify options to improve the way public boating infrastructure is managed.

A final summary identifying the outcomes of the review is expected to be released this year.