



# Expression of Interest User Guide

2025



## Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engaged with their world and experienced their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

This publication may be of assistance to you, but Parks Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

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**Cover image:** Yarra River Melbourne.

**Credit:** Jim Zapsalis for Visit Victoria 2023

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## 1 Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is responsible for managing an estate of more than 4 million hectares including 3,000 land and marine parks and reserves making up 18 per cent of Victoria's landmass, 75 per cent of Victoria's wetlands and 70 per cent of Victoria's coastline. Victoria's parks are home to more than 4,300 native plants and 1,000 native animal species.

Parks Victoria's estate attracts more than 100 million visits every year and we are committed to providing accessible, enjoyable, inclusive programs and destinations while protecting and enhancing environmental and cultural values. We recognise the value and importance of working together with Traditional Owners to manage parks and reserves in a culturally sensitive and ecologically appropriate way; it is our primary responsibility to ensure parks are healthy and resilient for current and future generations.

Parks Victoria fosters commercial partnerships with other government and non-government organisations, private industry, and community groups committed to connecting people and parks, conserving Victoria's natural and cultural values, and providing benefits beyond park boundaries. Parks Victoria offers unique commercial opportunities that contribute to the health, wellbeing, liveability, and economy of Victoria.

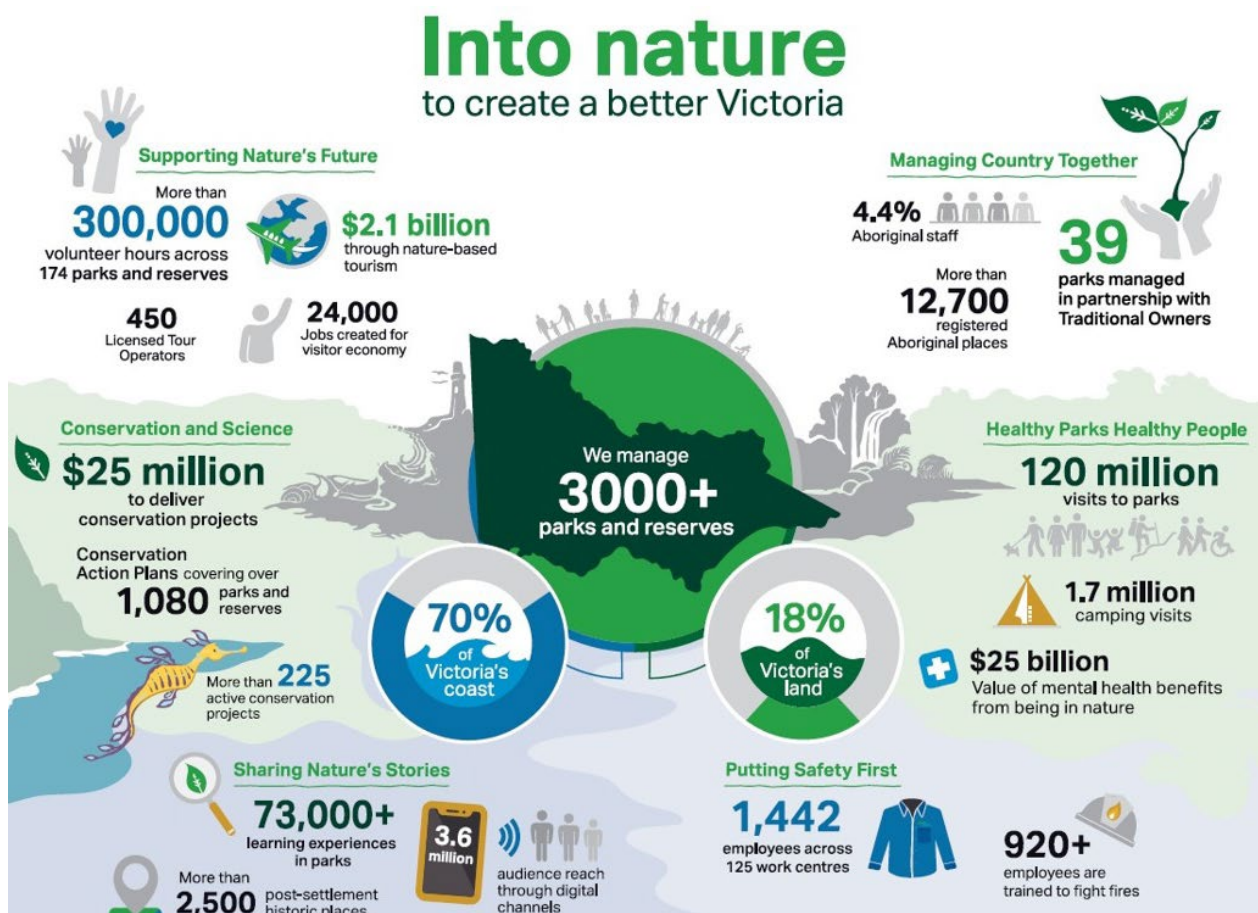


Figure 1. Parks Victoria - Into nature to create a better Victoria

## 2 Commercial opportunities at Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria offers various types of commercial agreements for businesses operating within its estates. Preferred proponents are usually selected through a competitive Expression of Interest process, with the type of agreement determined by the proposed use.

### 2.1 Types of commercial agreements in Parks Victoria

Commercial lease agreements offer a tenant the exclusive right to occupy a particular site, building or defined area of land for a specified use and lease term. The relevant legislation specifies the maximum lease term available (commonly up to 21 years).

Commercial licences give permission to the holder to carry out a permitted activity without the right of exclusive occupation. Depending on the legislation, licence terms can range from 1 to 10 years. In some instances (e.g. in a National Park), licences can only be granted if there is an associated lease in which case the licence term may align with the lease term.

Seasonal or short-term mobile trading operations require a permit to operate a trade or business on public land managed by Parks Victoria. Opportunities for mobile trading locations may go through an EOI process.

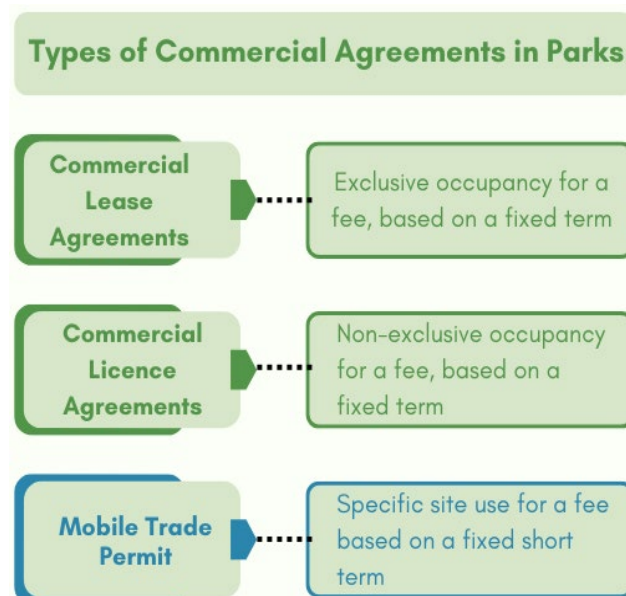


Figure 2. Types of commercial agreements at Parks Victoria

### 2.2 Legislation and regulations

Any trade or business conducted on public land is governed by a range of legislation and regulations including but not limited to:

- [Leasing Policy for Victorian Crown Land 2023](#)
- [Tourism Leases in National Parks](#)
- [Crown Land \(Reserves\) Act 1978](#)
- [National Parks Act 1975](#)
- [Parks Victoria Act 1998](#)
- [Forests Act 1958](#)
- [Forests \(Recreation\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [Land Act 1958](#)
- [Marine Safety Act 2010](#)
- [Water Industry Act 1994](#)



Figure 3. Mount Dandenong Observatory. Image credit: Visit Victoria 2024

## 3 Expressions of Interest (EOI) at Parks Victoria

### 3.1 What is an EOI?

An Expression of Interest (EOI) is a competitive process used to ensure fairness and transparency when seeking potential applicants for commercial opportunities within Parks Victoria's estate. The EOI process, abides by the Victorian government probity principles, which provide an equal opportunity for all interested parties to participate. This process ensures that each applicant is assessed based solely on their demonstrated ability to meet the EOI requirements.

An EOI may be conducted as either a single or two-stage process. A single-stage EOI requires applicants submit all information at once for review. Most EOIs at Parks Victoria have two stages, where applicants submit their vision and concept for the site during Stage One, and a full business case in Stage Two. This approach allows Parks Victoria to select the most suitable operators while maintaining a fair and open process for all participants.

Applicants are not expected to spend money on consultants for their Stage One submission, however in some instances, further assessments or supporting documentation may be required in Stage Two, for example schematic designs, consultation with a heritage architect, development of an emergency management plan, etc.

### 3.2 Victorian government probity principles

Parks Victoria is governed by strict probity principles when conducting an EOI. Probity refers to integrity, honesty, and accountability, which is essential in building market confidence and ensuring fair competition.

Key probity principles include:

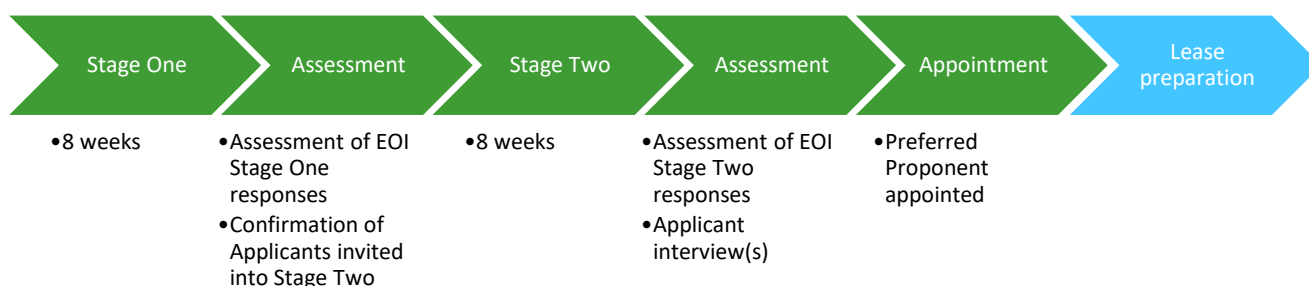
- Consistent, transparent, and auditable processes, ensuring that tenders are conducted in a manner that can be tracked and reviewed.
- Good record-keeping and audit trails, maintaining detailed documentation throughout the tender process.



- Fair decision-making and clear communication, making objective assessments and providing transparent information to applicants.
- Independent checks to address probity issues, conducting impartial reviews to identify and resolve any probity concerns.
- Securing confidential information and protecting sensitive data related to the tender process.
- Managing conflicts of interest, by identifying and mitigating any potential biases or conflicts.

### 3.3 Timeline of an EOI

An EOI process will usually take between 6-9 months, depending on if it's a single-stage or two-stage process. Below is an example of the timeline for an EOI. The timeline is subject to change; noting, all changes will be communicated in advance with registered parties where possible.



### 3.4 Buying for Victoria tender portal

Buying for Victoria is the Victorian Government tender portal, a centralised place for suppliers to explore opportunities to supply or apply for government tenders. Government tenders can range from building supplies to cleaning contracts to EOI's.

Interested parties will need to register for the [Buying for Victoria](#) online portal as a supplier to download the EOI documentation. All submissions are accepted electronically through the Buying for Victoria portal as outlined in the "Opportunity Document" for each EOI process. Upon receipt of submission, the applicant will receive an acknowledgment notification.

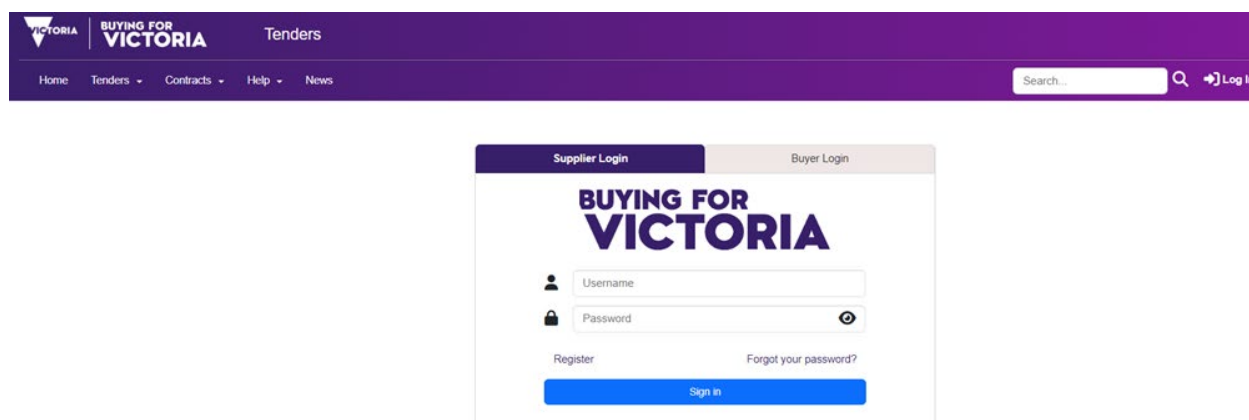


Figure 4. Buying for Victoria landing page

## Expression of Interest: Stage One

S1

### Invitation for application

Stage One allows interested parties to propose a vision and concept for the site.

Applicants describe their:

- Proposed concept and business model
- Demonstrate their experience and expertise
- Capacity to manage and fund the business

Applicants must address each of the weighted EOI evaluation criteria in detail as this is what they will be assessed on.

1.1

### Documentation review

Applicants should carefully review the documentation provided, which will include:

- EOI Opportunity Document, including the weighted evaluation criteria and useful links
- EOI Application Form, including applicant details, financial checklist and conflict of interest declaration
- Addendums, such as planning permits, plans, questions and answers etc.

1.2

### Book a mandatory site visit or online briefing

Applicants must attend at least one site briefing (online or at the site) – there is no requirement to attend more than one.

Site briefings can be booked via the relevant EOI page on the Buying for Victoria portal.

1.3

### Submit EOI proposal

Ensure all evaluation criteria have been addressed in depth.

Submit both the EOI proposal and application form via the Buying for Victoria portal, including supporting documentation such as sample menus, designs, plans etc.

1.4

### What happens next

- A Parks Victoria appointed Assessment Panel considers and scores EOI submissions
- Shortlisted applicants are invited to participate in Stage Two
- All participants are informed of EOI Stage One outcome in writing.

## Expression of Interest: Stage Two

S2

### Invitation for application

Stage Two requires the validation of the concept put forward in Stage One.

Short listed applicants from Stage One are invited to submit their validated concept, including detailed business and development plans.

More detailed site information may be provided to applicants in Stage Two.

### Documentation review

Applicants should carefully review the documentation provided, which will include:

- EOI Stage Two Opportunity Document
- EOI Stage Two Application Form
- Addendums, such as planning permits, plans, questions and answers, etc.

### Book an optional site visit

Site inspections will be available to Stage Two applicants on request.

Interested parties should contact the EOI Manager directly to organise a suitable time.

### Submit a full proposal

Ensure all evaluation criteria have been addressed in depth.

Submit both the EOI proposal and application form via the Buying for Victoria portal, including any supporting documentation such as sample menus, designs, plans etc.

### What happens next

- Assessment panel considers and scores EOI Stage Two submissions
- Shortlisted applicants may be invited to interview with the panel
- All applicants are notified of the outcome in writing
- Commercial terms negotiation with preferred proponent
- Execution of lease or licence including relevant approvals.

2.1

2.2

2.3

2.4



## 4 Stage One: Vision

### 4.1 Concept design

Stage One of an EOI process is open to anyone with an interest in the site.

During Stage One of an EOI, applicants are required to describe their proposed vision and concept for the site, outline a high-level business model to demonstrate the business viability, and evidence their experience and expertise to manage their business concept.

Applicants should carefully review the EOI documentation provided and ensure they understand the information required to inform their submission.

The documentation provided will include but not be limited to:

- EOI Opportunity Document, which includes important background information about the site and opportunity, the weighted evaluation criteria, and useful links to resources to inform submissions.
- EOI Application form, which requires the details, financial checklist, and conflict of interest Declaration
- Addendums, which may include planning permits, plans, repairs and maintenance and more.

Further documentation may be added throughout the course of either Stage One or Stage Two in the form of an addendum.

All questions posed by potential applicants via phone, email, or during site briefings will be collated and shared as an addendum to ensure that all potential applicants have access to the same information.

Applicants are not expected to spend money on their proposal submission in Stage One. There is no requirement for consultation or architectural designs. For example, a simple mood board to convey the look and feel of the applicant's concept is acceptable.



*Figure 5. Point Nepean Quarantine Station*

## 4.2 Evaluation criteria

Each EOI will have specific evaluation criteria that are relevant to that site. It is essential that applicants address each of the weighted EOI evaluation criteria in detail as this is what constitutes a complying response to the EOI, and what they will be assessed on. The answers to the evaluation criteria can be submitted in a separate document, alongside the complete EOI application form.

Other supporting documents may also be added to the application. Applicants must also ensure they have signed the application form before submitting their application.

The weighted evaluation criteria are broadly organised under the following headings:

### **Proposal concept**

- Defining your brand identity – who is it aimed at? What are your ambitions?
- Explaining your vision – type of offering, products and services, sample menu
- Proposed renovations and modifications to the site
- The look and feel of your proposed fit out

### **Strategic alignment**

- How your vision aligns with Parks Victoria's strategic goals
- Benefits to the park and communities in which the opportunity is located
- Relationships and partnerships with stakeholders

### **Business management and viability**

- Demonstration of your experience and credentials
- Marketing and promotions of offering
- Business growth projections
- Proposed lease term justification
- Investment

### **Visitor experience**

- Vision for the visitor experience
- Visitor attraction and engagement
- Target market
- Accessibility and inclusion

### **Environmental and cultural management**

- Traditional Owner engagement
- Sustainability
- Engagement with stakeholders
- Heritage and cultural values



### 4.3 Useful references

Each EOI document contains useful links that are suggested resources to support the applicant's submission to that EOI. The evaluation criteria may request information on how you would align with certain Parks Victoria frameworks or how you will apply for a heritage permit, the useful links will provide information relevant to the requested answers.

Suggested resources may include:

- Parks Victoria frameworks such as:
  - [Healthy Parks, Healthy People](#)
  - [Disability Action Plan](#)
  - [Managing Country Together](#)
- Local council planning information
- Heritage asset information
- Accessibility and inclusion resources
- Sustainability and circular economy
- Visitor Economy, e.g. [Experience Victoria 2033](#)

The useful links are not exhaustive, and applicants are advised and encouraged to do further research to inform their application.

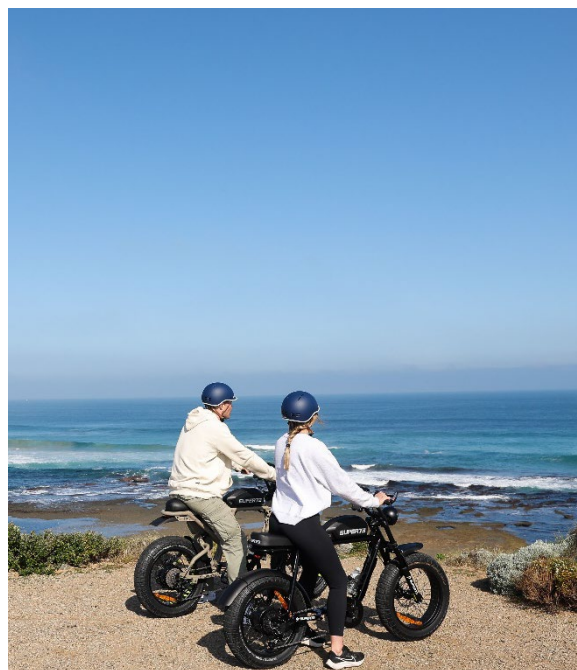


Figure 6. Bike hire at Point Nepean

### 4.4 Accessibility and inclusion

Commercial operators play a core role in supporting all-abilities access to and enjoyment of our parks across the state. Parks Victoria is committed to supporting activities that actively reduce barriers, promote inclusion, and improve the experience of all park visitors.

Applicants are required to consider how their business will support accessible tourism, adopt universal design principles, and offer products and services that cater to visitors of all abilities. Suggested actions include ensuring facilities and experiences are inclusive, updating signage to incorporate braille and tactile elements, and providing accessible communication materials.

Additionally, businesses could also demonstrate how they will support visitors in connecting with accessible tourism options, offer inclusive training for staff, and contribute to ongoing improvements.

### 4.5 Heritage asset information

There are many heritage sites within Parks Victoria's estate, and to ensure their future, activation and reuse of sites is welcomed. Sites are protected under local, state, and national heritage laws, including the *Planning & Environment Act (1987)*, *Heritage Act (2017)*, and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*.

During the EOI process, applicants will be informed if a site holds heritage significance and may receive existing reports for further guidance such as heritage assessments and Conservation Management Plans.

(CMPs). If heritage protection applies, specialist advice is recommended for developing an EOI application. Any works will require both Parks Victoria's consent and statutory approvals.

Future tenants are required to maintain heritage places in good condition and adhere to minimum standards. A maintenance plan may be included in a lease, to guide maintenance activities. Heritage Impact Statements from qualified specialists are generally required for new works.

## 4.6 Managing Country Together

At Parks Victoria, we are committed to fostering strong, respectful, and mutually beneficial relationships with Traditional Owners. We do so through [Managing Country Together](#), which sets out how Parks Victoria recognises and supports Traditional Owner rights and interests in the management and protection of parks.

Commercial operators play a key role in promoting Victoria's rich Traditional Owner cultures to the millions of visitors to our parks, ranging from the championing of cultural tourism activities and partnerships to showcasing the creative possibilities of indigenous ingredients on their menu.

Businesses interested in a particular opportunity are not expected to engage directly with Traditional Owner groups during the EOI process but should familiarise themselves with Parks Victoria's [principles for working with Traditional Owners](#).

## 4.7 Sustainability

Victoria's parks provide individuals and communities with immeasurable ecological, social, health and cultural benefits. To ensure future generations can also enjoy these benefits, Parks Victoria requires all prospective commercial operators to demonstrate how their business will work towards achieving environmental sustainability.

Some parks, due to their unique ecological values, will require operators to meet specific requirements outlined in the EOI such as water conservation or pollution abatement measures.

In all instances, prospective tenants should demonstrate the application of environmental sustainability directions aligned with the leasing of Crown land and the proposed term of their lease including:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Protecting ecosystem values
- Efficient resource usage
- Minimising waste generation and waste to landfill
- Enhancing human and ecosystem health
- Reduced biodiversity and ecological impacts
- Mitigating risks to human and ecosystem health.

## 4.8 Site visits/briefings

As part of the EOI assessment process, all potential applicants must attend at least one site visit/briefing. Site visits are usually onsite but may be held online where an onsite visit is not feasible. Registration for site visits usually closes at 4pm the day before. Below is an example of what the site visit/briefing looks like on Buying for Victoria.


It will contain the following information:


- Address of site visit
- Date and time of briefing
- Notes on where to meet or how the online briefing link will be sent
- Closing date for registration

### Werribee Gatehouse Lodge site visit

A briefing session will be held at **Werribee Gatehouse Lodge, 320 K road, Werribee South, Vic, Australia, 3030** on **17 September 2024 11:00 am**

**Notes:** Please meet at the entrance to Werribee Park from the main visitor car park

 A site visit is a pre-requisite to submission and consideration of a bid.

 Attendance at the briefing is a pre-requisite to submission and consideration of a bid.

 Registration closes on **16 September 2024 04:00 pm**



## 4.9 Conflict of interest

A signed conflict of interest declaration outlining any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest with Parks Victoria and its staff is part of the application form. If an applicant has a relationship with any Parks Victoria staff member, the applicant is asked to provide details, which will be kept on record.

If there has been a conflict of interest identified with a Parks Victoria staff member, that staff member may be asked not to participate in the EOI process.

## 4.10 Complying and alternative responses

If an applicant has a different vision for the site, they might like to submit an alternative response. An alternative response is anything that differs from what is requested in the EOI, such as proposing a wellness centre instead of or alongside the café that the EOI is requesting.

The alternative response must be submitted with a complying response that clearly addresses the evaluation criteria. It must also outline the differentiation from the complying response and why the application wishes to deviate from the EOI.

Parks Victoria may, at its discretion, choose whether or not to consider the alternative response.

## 4.11 Assessment of EOI Stage One

Once Stage One of the EOI process has closed and applicants have submitted their application, a skills-based assessment panel will consider and score all proposals based on the EOI evaluation criteria.

It is essential that applicants address each of the evaluation criteria clearly in their submission, as the assessment panel decide on which applicants will be selected to participate in Stage Two based on the scores given to each criterion answered in a submission.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification in writing at the conclusion of Stage One of the EOI process.



Figure 7. St Kilda Pier Kiosk

## 5 Stage Two: Validation

### 5.1 Validation of the concept design

Applicants shortlisted from Stage One will be invited to participate in Stage Two of the EOI process. At this stage, shortlisted applicants are expected to submit a comprehensive proposal, including a detailed business plan that outlines the financial viability and operational strategy for the site.

Applicants should carefully review the documentation provided in detail and ensure they understand the information required to inform their submission.

The documentation provided will include but not be limited to:

- EOI Opportunity Document, which includes the evaluation criteria and useful links.
- EOI Application form, which requires the applicant details, financial checklist, and conflict of interest declaration
- Addendums, which may include planning permits, plans, repairs, and maintenance and more.

In Stage Two, applicants should anticipate the need to provide more technical and detailed documentation. This may include:

- Technical reports including detailed assessments related to the site, such as environmental, structural, or feasibility studies.
- Planning advice, expert guidance on zoning, permits, and regulatory compliance.
- Quantity surveying (QS) reports that include cost estimates and financial planning for development or refurbishment.
- Financial forecasts/profit and loss statements, projections of the site's financial performance, including expected revenues, expenses, and profitability.
- Business model, including market analysis and competitive positioning.
- Enhanced plans/architectural drawings, refined versions of site development plans, including technical drawings and specifications.
- Final concept drawings and renders, including artistic representations of the project, such as visualisations and 3d renders, to convey the final look and feel of the proposed development.

Parks Victoria may also identify specific plans or expert consultations needed based on the applicant's concept and proposed development or site use.

Additionally, applicants must be prepared to provide any requested information, such as audited financial statements for the last three financial years and certified cash flow and profit and loss statements, to demonstrate their financial capacity to deliver on the proposal.

Upon completion of both Stage One and Stage Two, all applicants, whether successful or not, will receive feedback, to ensure transparency and provide insights for future opportunities.



## 5.2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria in Stage Two have similar overarching principles to Stage One, however some of the questions will be tailored for applicants to elaborate on the submissions received in Stage One.

The weighted evaluation criteria are organised under the following headings:

### **Proposal concept**

- Variations from Stage One
- Clear project timeline- stages, progress, from lease execution to commencement of operations
- Cost estimate for proposed renovations/modifications- include reports, builders quotes, research
- Detail proposed engagement of contractors, including assumptions e.g works completed by family/friends
- Detail interim offer whilst renovating- if any
- Proposed operational challenges- safety of patrons, lighting, unpaved road

### **Strategic alignment**

- How your vision aligns with Parks Victoria's strategic goals
- Technical advice around permit requirements for proposed operations
- Visitor Economy outcomes- employment, use of local products, community partnerships

### **Business management and viability**

- Current and Historical Company Extract from the Australian Security and Investments Commission (ASIC)
- Two relevant business referees
- Proposed rental amount
- Detailed business plan including but not limited to:
  - Business entity, including management structure and ownership
  - 3-year financial projection
  - Staffing model
  - Business case assumptions- dining options, functions etc
  - Levels and sources of capital funding- self funded, bank loan etc
  - Working capital and sources for working capital
  - Operational risks- including financial performance risks
  - Budgeted recurrent funding for maintenance and repairs
  - Safety and emergency management considerations
  - Recognition of consents, licensing, accreditation, certifications, insurance

### 5.3 Site visits/briefings

Stage Two applicants are encouraged to attend a site visit, but they are not mandatory. Site visits are conducted privately with individual applicants and can be organised through the EOI manager.

### 5.4 Assessment of EOI Stage Two

Once Stage Two of the EOI process has concluded, the same skills-based assessment panel from Stage One will consider and score Stage Two submissions. It is essential that applicants provide any documentation requested. The assessment panel will then determine which applicant will be selected as the preferred proponent.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification in writing at the conclusion of the EOI process.

### 5.5 Applicant interviews

Short-listed applicants may be requested to present their vision and business case to the assessment panel. This includes a short presentation of their proposed offering and questions from the assessment panel. Applicants also have the opportunity to ask questions of the assessment panel.

### 5.6 Rental considerations

Parks Victoria will consider all rental structures put forward by shortlisted applicants, noting the proposed investment of the Proponent and lead time to opening may further influence final commercial terms. The commencing rent for each site will be subject to a market valuation by the Valuer General of Victoria and rental terms will consider recommendations made through this assessment.

Both financial and non-financial benefits are sought from applicants. In addition to rent paid to Parks Victoria, applicants should highlight how their proposal will contribute to the site and the broader community. This could include partnerships, job creation, potential Traditional Owner participation, and the attraction of new visitor markets or an enhanced visitor experience.

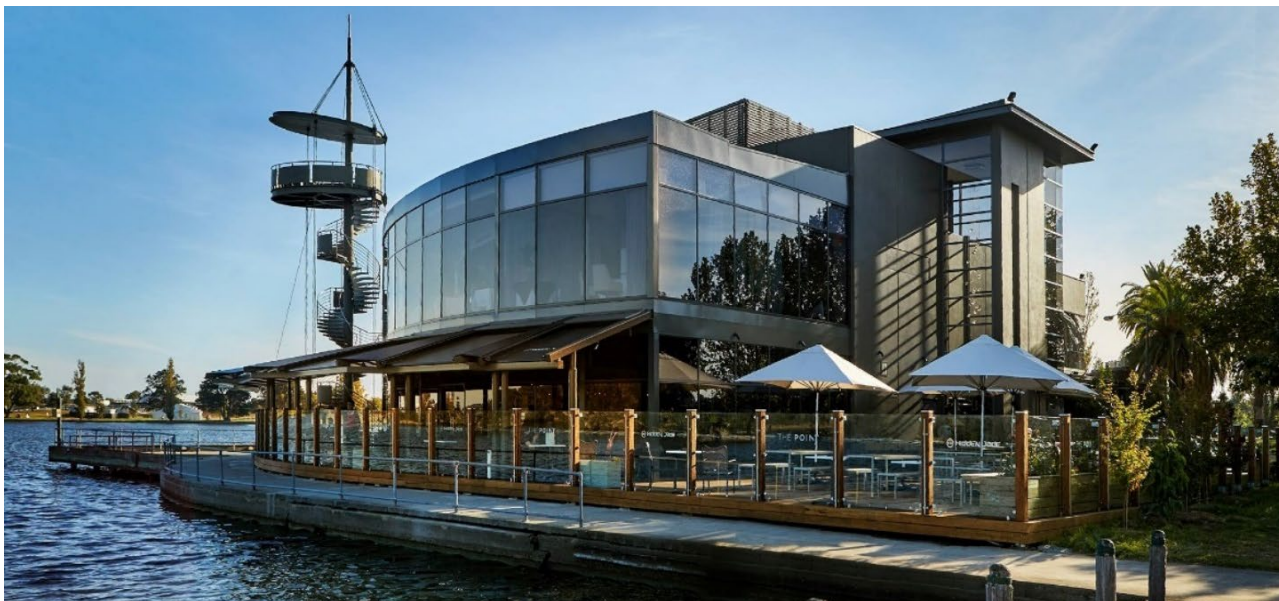


Figure 8. The Point Albert Park



