

Sorrento Local Port Area Plan Project

Stakeholder engagement key findings (August 2023)

About the project

Sorrento Pier on Bunurong Sea Country, is one of Port Phillip's iconic yachting and boating destinations.

To ensure it continues to be a safe and thriving maritime precinct for many years to come, Parks Victoria is developing a Local Port Area Plan (plan) for Sorrento Pier and associated on-water activities.

The plan, which focusses on the 'on water' components of the harbour, aims to:

- Define the future use and function of Sorrento Pier,
- Define the on-water movement, use, access and berthing needs for commercial boating now and in the future, and
- Acknowledge and respect the maritime and aboriginal cultural heritage in this local port area.

A 'future ready' plan will help guide the Victorian Government local ports infrastructure investment priorities providing a more sustainable approach to meeting economic, tourism and community needs.

Consultation overview

A project reference group (PRG) comprising representatives from Parks Victoria, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Better Boating Victoria, the Department of Transport and Planning, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action are advising on the plan. The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) were unable to continue providing input into the development of the plan however Parks Victoria will continue to engage BLCAC in future planning and projects in this local port area.

Stakeholder and community input is being sought at key stages of the development of the plan as follows:

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- Stage 1: August 2023. Key stakeholders and user groups were engaged to gather insights around current uses, issues and ideas to help inform a draft plan.

- Stage 2: Early 2024. The wider community will be invited to view the draft plan and provide feedback to inform the final plan.

This document provides a summary of the outcomes of the Stage 1 stakeholder consultation which was conducted via an online focus group workshop and follow up discussions and emails with stakeholders.

It provides a summary of points raised to be considered in the preparation of the draft plan but does not reflect the agreed position of all participants or Parks Victoria.

Key findings (Stage 1)

Sorrento Pier is an iconic community asset and feature of the peninsula. Home to the Sorrento to Queenscliff vehicle and passenger ferry service, it provides an important transport connection to the West Coast and beyond for business, social and tourism opportunities.

It is a key point of access to Port Phillip for recreational and commercial boating activities and plays a vital role in the operation of a valuable working port.

There is a sense of place the precinct provides to the community and the visitors it attracts, and there is a strong desire to maintain the maritime heritage values and access for all.

Improvements to berthing facilities to enable more efficient and better access for larger vessels, as well as improvements to fairways for safer use are high priorities for the boating users.

Including infrastructure placement, potential impacts on mooring grounds when defining fairways for improved access, and wave climate are key challenges for the project.

Further information

For further information visit the project page at parks.vic.gov.au/projects. For general enquiries email engage@parks.vic.gov.au or call Parks Victoria on **13 1963**.

Detailed findings

Table 1: Current situation by each stakeholder user group

| User group | Current situation and areas of interest |
|---|--|
| Nepean Conservation Group | Dedicated conservation group to Nepean Peninsula since 1973. Focus on natural environments, history, heritage, and cultural environment. Advocacy group focussing on ensuring new development and change considers the natural environment and character of Sorrento, Portsea and Blairgowrie. |
| Wild Life Fisheries | Commercial fishing business operating out of Rye. Sustainable commercial fishery (abalone, urchin, periwinkle, and similar shell fishing) involving diving and spear fishing in Port Philip. Supplies to local restaurants. |
| Sorrento Coastal Advisory Group | Community-based organisation with local knowledge and passion for local area coasts and environments. Purpose is to play an advisory role to Council. Sorrento Coastal Advisory Group is one of 10 coastal townships advisory groups on 60+ kms of peninsula coastline. Key point of contact with community is via the Sorrento Coastal Advisory Group. |
| Polperro Dolphin Swims & Charter | Long standing family business, providing eco-tourism activities operating from Sorrento Pier, such as introducing patrons to local marine life. Most tours centre around dolphins, seals, sightseeing and wildlife in the local area. Some focus on research and education. Advocates for coastline care, and responsible usage of the peninsula’s aquatic environment. |
| Wooden Boat Shop | Traditional wooden boat builder based out of Sorrento. Build and maintain some of the local Crooner boat fleets and a variety of wooden working and pleasure boats. |
| Mullie’s Underwater Services | Working out of Sorrento Pier – offer commercial diving, vessel restoration, mooring sales, moorings, boat and caravan storage, salvage, marine services and vessel transport. |
| Moonraker Dolphin Swims | Long standing eco-tourism and adventure business operating out of the Sorrento Pier. Tours focus on dolphin and seal swims. Local guides with an emphasis on sustainable and local sourcing of food and suppliers. |
| Nepean Historical Society* | The position of the Nepean Historical Society is that every effort should be made to protect ‘what’s left’ of the pier – i.e. last few metres of timber construction and the T-head. The Society would like to see this part of the pier given ‘maximum protection’. There might also be an expectation that the original pier alignment be retained (should the 1950s stone mole be replaced with a new structure). |

*User group did not attend the focus group, however were engaged during the preliminary stakeholder engagement phase of the project.

Detailed findings

Table 2: Summary of challenges, ideas and solutions provided by key stakeholders

| Challenges | Ideas and Solutions |
|--|---|
| <p>Placemaking, activity & interfaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the most utilised piers in the bay for commercial operators. • Increased pedestrian use as part of the ferry terminal upgrade, and how this impacts on the pedestrian traffic patterns on the pier. • Heritage considerations for the pier. • Fishermen’s Shed and the low landing off pier. • Interface between the pier and the Sorrento ferry terminal upgrade. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting commercial operators that rely on the pier and respond to future demands. • Maintaining its character as a working port. • Interpretive signage to celebrate the heritage of the pier and could also include flora and fauna which may be living in the surrounding waters. • Better defined berthing for commercial operators. |
| <p>Usability, safety, and accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water provision to Sorrento Pier. • Power provision to Sorrento Pier. • Loading/unloading and mooring issues. • Defining channel widths. • Improving general safety and accessibility (including DDA compliance, pram access, etc.). • Current access to low landing is not DDA compliant. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of water under a user-pays system. • More tie off points on the front of the pier. • Overall increase capacity for bigger boats. • Front face of pier – all new rubbers and uprights including extension to the low landing. The northerly winds over about 15 knots demand some fendering on the front face. • DDA compliance planned as part of the design output. • Improving the deck to ensure surfaces are even and remain accessible. • Provide rails on both sides of the pier, only in areas where berthing does not occur and if heritage considerations allow. |
| <p>Wave climate & coastal processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wave climate and its impact on harbour use and function, including infrastructure placement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the pier is proposed to be extended, consider wave attenuation. This is important as there will be more boats. |

IMPORTANT: This report is intended to provide a summary interpretation of the focus group attendee responses. It does not reflect the agreed position of all participants or Parks Victoria but will be considered in the preparation of the draft Plan. Any landside matters raised which are outside the scope of the project will be forwarded to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council for consideration.

Sorrento Pier Local Port Area - Context Map



Legend

-  Focus site
-  Sorrento to Queenscliff ferry crossing
-  Sorrento Pier
-  Sorrento public boat ramp
-  Sorrento ferry terminal
-  Sorrento beach car park

Map is indicative only