

Engagement Summary Report

Boating & Swimming Zone review

Port Phillip and Western Port

Summer 2016-17

Thank you to everyone who participated in the engagement on the Boating & Swimming Zone Review. Below is a summary of what we heard and the next steps involved in the project.

Background

A four-week community consultation period was held from 16 November – 16 December 2016 to seek feedback on the improvements to boating and swimming zones in Port Phillip and Western Port. Comments were received by email, letter, three Community Drop-in days and via an on line survey.

We sought the communities view on:

- Allowing human powered paddlecraft to use Vessel Prohibited Swimming Only Zones
- Clarifying the the naming of 'Shared Windsports Zones' to include both windsurfing and kiteboarding
- Zone boundary adjustments at Elwood, Brighton and Hampton to better separate swimmers, kiteboarders and windsurfers
- Altering Vessel Prohibited Swimming Only Zones at Chelsea, Bonbeach, Aspendale, Carrum, Portarlington Harbour
- Retaining Personal Water Craft Prohibited Zones at Carrum and Shoreham

Participants

We received over 250 responses from a variety of stakeholders including, swimmers, vessel operators, windsurfers and kiteboarders, local residents, local government, foreshore managers, stakeholder group representatives and community members. This feedback has provided us with valuable information to understand what is important for you and provided a wide range of perspectives on the proposed changes.

The majority of respondents were regular local visitors:

- Most respondents commented on the area within 5km of where they lived
- Visitors travelling more than one hour were also represented making up 7% of the survey respondents
- Several stakeholder group representatives and local government foreshore managers provided detailed submissions

Many respondents visited Boating Zones on the north eastern side of Port Phillip however Western Port Phillip and Western Port were also well represented in the responses.

- Brighton was visited by the most survey respondents - over 50%
- Elwood, Hampton, Chelsea, Bonbeach and Aspendale were also popular, receiving visits from between 30 to 45% of survey respondents
- Carrum, Point Leo and Shoreham received visits from between 20 to 30% of survey respondents
- Portarlington Harbour was visited by less than 10% of survey respondents
- Less than 5% of survey respondents did not visit the areas in the Boating & Swimming Zone Review.

The broad collection of 'local knowledge' and a wide range of insights into on water and beach behaviours will greatly assist in determining the safest and fairest solution for each improvement.



What we heard: key messages

The responses show that people enjoying Port Phillip and Western Port beaches are passionate about their lifestyle and recreations, as well as the way popular beaches are shared:

- The current range of Boating & Swimming Zones generally suits the diverse range of recreations undertaken. People value the services they provide and how they are located near amenities and clubs.
- The responses highlighted changing recreation needs and differing local beach conditions and corresponding changes in behaviour. Reasons 'for' and 'against' most of the proposed changes were received. We will utilise these inputs to inform options for safe and fair outcomes reflective of the *Marine Safety Act 1995*.
- One proposed change was relatively easy to interpret. The proposed changing of 'Kite Boarding Zones' to 'Shared Windsports Zones' to recognise use by kiteboarders and windsurfers was well received with over 80% of respondents supporting the clearer renaming.
- Compliance and appropriate behaviours by swimmers, boat operators and PWC operators was upper-most in many people's mind.

Next Steps

Parks Victoria will:

- Use the issues raised and commentary to ensure that a risk analysis of each of the changes is thorough, informed and reflective of local uses and conditions
- Develop preferred options that provide the best outcomes for the wide range of beach users and vessel operators
- Liaise with Maritime Safety Victoria (the Victorian Transport Regulator) to ensure that the preferred options are consistent with statewide management of vessels
- Confer with local government to ensure that the preferred options do not impede local planning, beach access and beach uses anticipated by councils
- Where necessary and appropriate, consult stakeholder representative groups such as Life

Saving Victoria, local lifesaving clubs, boating clubs, Windsurfing Victoria and Kiteboarding Victoria to check that the preferred options will improve safety and compliance.

- Finally a set of draft rules will be formally provided to Maritime Safety Victoria for consideration. The submission will explain how the rule will minimise risks, any alternative ways to address the matter and the expected benefits and costs of the proposed rule. Maritime Safety Victoria will then consider if the rule will be made.
- New rules will be described on Parks Victoria's Parkweb in the Bays and Waterways section.



For further information please contact info@parks.vic.gov.au or 13 1963.