



## **Parks Victoria Manage Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries**

***Our Vision: A world-class system of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries that conserves the diversity of Victoria's marine environments, protected, and enjoyed by Victorians and visitors, forever.***

Barwon Bluff Marine Sanctuary is one of 11 Marine Sanctuaries and 13 Marine National Parks established across the state of Victoria. Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries are managed by Parks Victoria, in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries Fisheries Officers, and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

Until November 16<sup>th</sup> 2002 less than 0.05% of Victoria's coastal or marine environments were fully protected from activities that may cause damage or remove animals or plants. Over a period of ten years Victoria's marine and coastal environments were investigated through the Land Conservation Council and later the Environment Conservation Council and the establishment of a Marine National Park system was proposed. This process involved many opportunities for the public and interest groups to consider the recommendations put forward and to make submissions on their concerns.



Victoria's vision for its system of Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries is to maintain marine ecosystems in their natural state, enjoyed by visitors and protected from the effects of inappropriate activities. The system will safeguard representative examples of pristine natural marine habitats, respect cultural heritage values, and be a place of inspiration, enjoyment and renewal for all people. The system will complement our world-class national parks system on land.

These jewels in Victoria's coastal waters will provide for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of marine environments to international best-practice standards, through targeted scientific and social research. Natural values will be well understood and communicated, so that marine park managers, in cooperation with Victorian communities and other agencies, are able to confidently and effectively prevent and manage threats to these areas. Inclusive and integrated management and facilitated research will ensure that the control of marine pests is effective and well informed.

Quality marine recreational opportunities will be available for people of all ages and abilities, in a variety of settings, ranging from easily accessible sheltered sites to the more wild and remote protected areas along the open coast. A variety of tourism opportunities will be available, with a broadening of recreational boating choices, from private pleasure boats to tourism craft, being encouraged. Activities undertaken in the parks and sanctuaries will be managed to ensure there is minimal impact on the environment and on the enjoyment and safety of other visitors.

Increasingly, people will experience, enjoy and learn about marine creatures and their environments from both above the water and below the surface. Skilled and professional parks and fisheries managers and staff will be working to make sure visitors have access to the information they need to keep them safe, and make sure they have the facilities they need, where they need them.

Members of coastal communities will be actively involved in the planning for each marine national park and sanctuary, will and act as custodians for these areas for years to come. The importance of implementing fishing and other restrictions will be well communicated and understood, resulting in voluntary compliance with regulations.

### **Management.**

The responsibility for day to day management of the Marine National Park system sits with Parks Victoria. Parks Victoria is guided by the Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries Management Strategy which has been developed with the community and that focuses on Five Key Areas:

#### **1. Protecting Natural Values**

Victoria's system of Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries has been established to protect and conserve representative examples of marine and coastal biodiversity, ecological processes and important natural features.

In order to protect these important natural values Parks Victoria has established an environmental management framework that provides clear directions for looking after these areas. A Statewide strategy has been developed and individual management plans for each Marine National Park and Marine Sanctuary will be developed.

Parks Victoria identifies vulnerable habitats and threatened species, monitors and controls marine pests, works to reduce the effects of coastal and catchment activities, and responds to incidents such as whale strandings or oil spills.

Fisheries Victoria and Parks Victoria staff work together to protect the parks from fishing activity.



#### **2. Protecting and Recognising Cultural Values**

Victoria's indigenous people have a long history and ongoing relationship with marine and coastal environments based on traditional ownership, stewardship, and use of the coast and sea. Parks Victoria will manage our Marine National Park system to ensure that cultural values are protected and be guided by indigenous people in the development of management plans.

In addition our Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries also protect some places and objects from Victoria's early European exploration and settlement. These places help the community to better understand this important link to our history and development and will also be protected.

#### **3. Community Engagement**

The long-term protection of Victoria's Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries depends on communities that are well informed and aware of their importance and acting as custodians and ambassadors.

Parks Victoria is committed to improving awareness and understanding of our Marine National Park system to all Victorians and visitors. This is done through rangers and interpretive staff talking to people while on patrols, signage, delivering information through Parknotes and

through our website Parkweb, getting involved in community events and festivals, through the media, and by working with schools and community groups.

#### **4. Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Management**

Our marine and coastal environment is highly valued for many forms of recreation. These range from activities such as snorkelling and diving, surfing and boating, to more passive pursuits such as enjoying nature and open spaces. Recreation activities are also important for the health and well being of individuals and the community and our new Marine National Parks provide plenty of opportunities to enjoy them.

Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries are also significant natural attractions for visitors from within Victoria, as well as other parts of Australia and overseas. They provide important opportunities for the further growth of recreation and tourism activities.

Parks Victoria will work with tourism operators to ensure that opportunities for recreation and enjoyment do not have a negative impact on the environment and are sustainable.

#### **5. Environmental Research and Monitoring**

One of the immediate requirements for Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries is to improve understanding of what types of animals and plants live within the system. Habitat mapping provides detailed understanding of the types of habitats found within the Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries. Research will assess risks to the Marine National Park system. This information is important when decisions are being made as to the best way to protect and manage the parks.

Parks Victoria will also work with other government departments and organisations such as universities on more localised scientific research that provides clear benefits for improving our understanding of Victoria's unique and diverse marine environments.

**For more information on Parks Victoria and our role in managing Victoria's Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries please refer to our website at**

**[www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)**

**or call our Info Centre on 13 1963**