

Williamstown Local Port Area Plan Project

Stakeholder focus groups key findings

About the project

The Williamstown local port area is a premier maritime destination, and has traditionally been home to a range of recreational, commercial and community boating activities. Boasting scenic views towards Melbourne's CBD, the area supports a significant volume of maritime traffic and fosters connections to Victorian maritime history with the Seaworks maritime museum.

To ensure that it continues to be a safe and efficient maritime precinct and one which is well-placed to respond to changing visitor needs for many more years to come, Parks Victoria is developing the **Williamstown Local Port Area Plan**.

The plan, which focusses on the 'on water' components of the precinct, will address:

1. the future use and function of Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty, Boyd Street Pier (to ensure related needs are considered; Gem Pier and Ferguson Street Pier are also included)
2. on-water movement, use, access, and berthing needs
3. maritime cultural heritage
4. historic and contemporary Aboriginal connections to Sea Country
5. water-land interface opportunities

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

Consultation overview

A project reference group (PRG) comprising representatives from Parks Victoria, Department of Transport, Hobsons Bay City Council, and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation will advise on the project.

Stakeholder and community input will be sought at key stages of the development of the plan as follows:

- Stage 1: September/October 2022. Key stakeholders and user groups were engaged to gather information to inform the draft plan.
- Stage 2: May 2023. The broader 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 Stage 1 consultation with stakeholders and key users, which was conducted in October 2022. See Table 2 for list of user groups that participated.

Key findings

In Victoria, the Williamstown local port area is one of the most active in terms of boating and water-based activity. It is a key point of access to Port Phillip for recreational, competitive, and commercial boating activities, including those associated with government agencies such as Victoria Police and Marine Search and Rescue.

The Seaworks Maritime Precinct, HMAS Castlemaine, tall ships, and smaller recreational boats that visit the area are a significant part of the maritime character and heritage which attracts many visitors.

Focus group participants conveyed the value that the Williamstown local port supports and provides to the community, economy, tourism and the preservation of maritime heritage.

There is strong evidence of the clubs, tenants and interest groups working collaboratively to support each other in their activities.

The condition of failed structures (Workshops Pier, Commissioners Jetty and Boyd Street Pier), wave wash and surge, sedimentation, and the protection and enhancement of berthing facilities are evident as the key challenges for this area.

Detailed findings

The table below provides 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 Williamstown Local Port Area Plan.

Table 1: Current situation by stakeholder user group

Refer to *Plan 1: Existing Conditions Site Plan* for location of referenced numbers.

User Group	Current situation
Boating Industry Association of Victoria	Peak body for boat owners and license holders. The Williamstown local port area is of such immense value from a recreation, community, industry, and tourism perspective. Preservation and protection of the port assets should be recognised/captured, and represent a key objective of the plan.
C Blunt Boatbuilders (Number 6 on plan)	Provides short-stay berthing space for heritage type boats, undertake boat restoration (utilising the slipway to pull boats out), and sign writing on boats, plus supporting educational school group visits. 30 Ton slipway and storage area. Site has historical and heritage significance (Blunts Boatyard and Slipway – VHR H1885).
F.J. Darley Traditional Shipwrights Pty Ltd	Sub-tenant of Seaworks, they re-build and repair traditional, commercial, and private vessels. Occupies one shed directly facing Boyd Street Pier, opens up to the water. Having direct access to this pier is an advantage for the business in that passers-by could come and have a look into the shed. There's an attraction in the maintenance/refitting of large boats here. For full refits of large boats, this could not be serviced from front of the shed.
Hobsons Bay Yacht Club (Number 10 on plan)	Occupy area to the north of the site, and along Ferguson Street Pier. Concerned about wake generated by current and expected increase in maritime traffic impacting on safety and assets.
Port of Williamstown Action Group*	Advocate for improved maritime facilities in the Williamstown local port area. Has specific interest in four critical issues: 1) Wave, Wash and Surge impacting the long-term viability and safety of the port. 2) Protection of current berthing facilities, and enhancement of berthing to host future events, such as visiting Tall Ships. 3) Sufficient draught for visiting and local vessels. 4) Maintenance facilities for Tall Ships, HMAS Castlemaine and other larger vessels.
Royal Yacht Club Victoria (Number 3 on plan)	Future plans to expand the marina. Concerns regarding surge issues from the shipping channel. Cultural significance of maritime history is undervalued, and needs to be captured and protected.
Savages Wharf (Number 7 on plan)	Specialises in servicing marina crafts and berthing facilities. Issues with siltation are affecting their ability to get vessels into the facility. Shares concerns regarding the preservation and protection of existing port assets.
Seaworks (Number 1 on plan)	Seaworks plays a role in preserving maritime heritage, not just for Williamstown but also the greater Melbourne area. To do with this well, they need to have a working pier and maritime area. Without these functions, it dilutes the authenticity and legitimacy of Williamstown as a heritage port area. Shares the view that tall ships are important for Williamstown. Need for access for events. Seaworks aims to hold over 97 events per annum by 2025, with many wishing to arrive from the city via water, with Seaworks being the destination. This is not possible now. Not just about events and recreational users – also have emergency services (e.g., fire brigade, search and rescue) using the piers and jetties for training regularly, and at the moment they cannot use it.
Tall Ships Victoria	Advocating for Tall Ships in Williamstown for recreation, marine science, education, and maintenance. These will provide the basis of a business plan which provides value for investment. Williamstown is the only place in Victoria suited to these deep draught and high air draught, and is the preferred destination in close proximity to Melbourne. Docklands is difficult because of the proposed rail bridge in the Freight Strategy.
Victoria Police (Number 2 on plan)	Victoria Police Search and Rescue operates out of this office, and is a 24/7 operation. They provide search and rescue services for the State. Williamstown provides the home berths for the larger vessels in the water police fleet. Large events at Seaworks can pose a challenge to operational effectiveness and emergency communications. These includes the condition of the boat ramp,

difficulty with summer access to the ramp, and noise from events interfering with communications. There is no secure or private jetty to return to when transporting deceased members of the public with privacy and dignity. This is the only Water Police in Australia that is land locked, with no on-water boat storage. There is a requirement to engage a commercial entity to berth police vessel, which comes with its own funding and security issues. They have outgrown their footprint.

*Port of Williamstown Action Group comprises representatives from various user groups who have also provided input into these key findings.

Further information

For further information visit the project page at <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects> or scan the QR code below.

For enquiries email engage@parks.vic.gov.au or call Parks Victoria on **13 1963**.





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

	Challenges	Ideas and Solutions
Environmental considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wave wash and surge. Sedimentation and not being able to get vessels into the facilities of tenants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues around wave wash and surge needs to be a Williamstown-wide solution. Understanding of key findings from the <i>Williamstown Wave, Wash and Surge Study</i> and the recommended risk mitigation options.
Access & Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and movement for Victoria Police and Seaworks site. Providing appropriate fairway widths and alignments. Maintaining navigable waters (sufficient draught) for recreational and commercial vessels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure on-water access needs to and from the land continues on work already identified in recent strategic work.
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berthing for tall ships and maintenance facilities – can't go anywhere else. Views to Melbourne skyline should not be compromised. Events at Seaworks. Seaworks is open to the public, but the closing of the piers and jetties has impacted on the business. Emergency services (fire brigade, search and rescue) use these piers and jetties for training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Williamstown is a weekend destination and should continue to be. Potential for Workshops Pier to berth tall ships, as Ferguson Street Pier is only 2.5m draught, and funding is already allocated for fender installation at Gem Pier. Workshops Pier can accommodate greater tonnage, and its redevelopment could potentially include an additional low landing. Future redevelopment of piers support servicing larger vessels. Provide educational opportunities for school groups and general public around themes such as maritime heritage, water education, etc. Allowing large vessels to berth and maritime activity will provide interest to the public.
Public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous public access along the foreshore is difficult and fragmented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation of the waterfront through better access and programming (events, educational opportunities etc.).
Amenity, assets, and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deteriorated and failed structures (Workshops Pier, Commissioner's Jetty, Boyd Street Pier) in the precinct. Heritage of this local port area is currently inadequately captured and celebrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation and protection of the port assets should be recognised/captured and a key objective of the plan. Undertake economic modelling to enable more understanding of a) the cost of 'doing nothing', and b) the value of investing in the precinct.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not clear what the difference is between the Local Port Area Plan and the Maritime Precinct Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Port Area Plan must continue the work of the Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework, and not reinvent the wheel. Ensure multi-agency co-ordination.

Plan 1: Existing Conditions Site Plan



Legend

-  Local port area extent (Parks Victoria's Committee of Management area)
-  Focus site
- 1. Seaworks
- 2. Victoria Police
- 3. Royal Yacht Club Victoria
- 4. Melbourne Sea Planes
- 5. TS Voyager Navy Cadets
- 6. C Blunt Boatbuilders
- 7. Savages Wharf
- 8. Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club
- 9. Knights Slipway
- 10. Hobsons Bay Yacht Club
- 11. Williamstown Sailing Club and 4th Williamstown Sea Scouts
- 12. Parks Victoria swing moorings
- 13. HMAS Castlemaine

