

Mornington Harbour – Local Port Area Plan Project

Stakeholder engagement key findings (July 2023)

About the project

Mornington Harbour 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 the harbour and associated on-water activities. Consultants AW Maritime have been appointed to prepare the draft and final plan.

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

- Define the on-water movement, use, access and berthing needs for recreational and commercial boating now and in the future,
- Respond to the like-for-like replacement of Fishermans Jetty, 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, and Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation will advise on the project.

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

- Stage 1: July 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: Spring 2023. 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)

Mornington Harbour is an iconic community asset and feature of the peninsula. The renewed pier and associated facilities play a central role in supporting its operation as a valuable working port on Port Phillip.

It is a key point of access to Port Phillip for recreational, competitive and commercial boating activities, and there is recognition of the potential to realise expanded social and economic benefits through future improvements. The recreational anglers and commercial vessels (Licensed Tour Operators and aquaculture industry) are a significant part of the maritime character of the area.

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 access for all.

Replacement of Fishermans Jetty, which has failed and is unsafe for pedestrians and vessel berthing, as well as improvements to fairways for safer use are high priorities for the community.

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**.

OFFICIAL

Detailed findings

Table 1: Current situation by each stakeholder user group

User group	Current situation and areas of interest
Mornington Yacht Club (MYC)	Currently has 938 members, of which 38% female. Activities of the Club include: off-the beach yachts and kayaks (which are launched from the yacht club and two boat sheds on Scout Beach); a 'Sailability' Program offered three times a week during the summer for people with a disability (with about 100 customers, 50 volunteers to assist); keel boats in the harbour; trailable boats in the yard (in use from Oct – Apr); and a maintained slipway available for commercial use, particularly yachts and fishing craft. Additional to this the Yacht Club offers functions / events. It is membership based but open to the public to use facilities for a fee.
Mornington Boat Hire (MBH)	Based at Scout Beach (Boat Shed). Current owners have been operating for 16 years. Business was originally established in 1918 – very traditional business which offers boat hire, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards, reef boards, bait and tackle sales, kiosk services, and six moorings. Services about 20,000 – 25,000 people annually – open to all, with no boat licence required. Typically provides customer's first contact with recreational boating, with some progressing to obtaining boating licences, purchasing vessels, becoming commercial operators, or get coxswain and masters tickets.
Mornington Environment Association (MEA)	Focus on preserving the environment and amenity of the precinct. Do this by undertaking planting, weeding, picking up rubbish and general maintenance of the foreshore, with some assistance from Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. Believes good community engagement during the development of the plan is critical. Keen to maintain access for all for Mornington Harbour. Concerned about Fisherman's Jetty failed condition and that it is closed off. Fishers who use these facilities (when it was open) are fishing for food, not just for recreation therefore believes it is important to maintain access for this user group. Have strong connections with commercial uses too – meals at The Rocks, use the local facilities, enjoy boating. Keen to ensure the cultural and historical values of the site are considered and preserved in the planning process.
Volunteer Marine Rescue Mornington (VMRMP)	Have a berth near commercial boats. Assist with rescue boaters who gets into difficulties in or on the waters of Port Phillip and Western Port with particular emphasis on those waters adjacent to the Mornington Peninsula Shire.
Wild Life Fisheries (WLF)	Commercial operator generally based out of Sorrento that harvests, sources and supplies local seafood. Next to no commercial facilities on eastern side of Bay (especially for those operating out of large vessels) and need somewhere to base for commercial fishing – easy secure access. Mornington has the potential to support this need. There is growing demand for sustainably wild caught seafood for supply to locals and restaurants – there is an opportunity to support local business but need access to facilities. Opportunity for direct to public sales and it's a good thing for the harbour. Working pier makes an exciting place to be.
Yumbah Aquaculture	One of the largest shellfish aquaculture companies in Australia. Potential to purchase a larger boat to cater for the increase demand in aquaculture. Would like to see aquaculture and commercial industries to be continually supported at Mornington Harbour. Would like to see Fishermans Jetty replaced, and support reinstatement of small recreational boats and Licensed Tour Operators.
The Enterprize (Tall Ship)	Replica of the tall ship which brought European settlers from Tasmania to found the city of Melbourne in 1835. Run regular programs around the Bay providing an authentic 19th Century sailing experience and education platform. The ship was visiting Mornington Harbour 5-6 times a year before the pandemic. This includes weekend sailing open to the

OFFICIAL

	<p>general public, and youth development sailing programs. Opportunities for the ship to berth overnight during these events will be required to support these programs. Would like to see the plan continue to support this ship and its events as integral to protecting the living maritime heritage of Mornington harbour.</p>
Bay Fish N Trips	<p>Tourism based business, taking customers out onto the water on The Plover (the boat). The business provides various on-water offerings such as fishing trips, cruises, and scattering of ashes. Berthing location is typically on the land end of the pier, which is where passenger pick-up/drop-off occurs. The boat enters and exits the harbour along the same fairway next to Mornington Pier. Concerned around future large vessels and impact on space, safety of divers in the fairway while vessels are arriving and departing, and replacement of Fishermans Jetty.</p>
Dolphin Research Institute (DRI)	<p>Mornington is a hub for the unique dolphin population that lives in Port Phillip. Active member of Mornington Coastal Advisory Group.</p>
Local Members Office	<p>Keen to understand the project and community / stakeholder sentiment around the Harbour and its future.</p>

Detailed findings

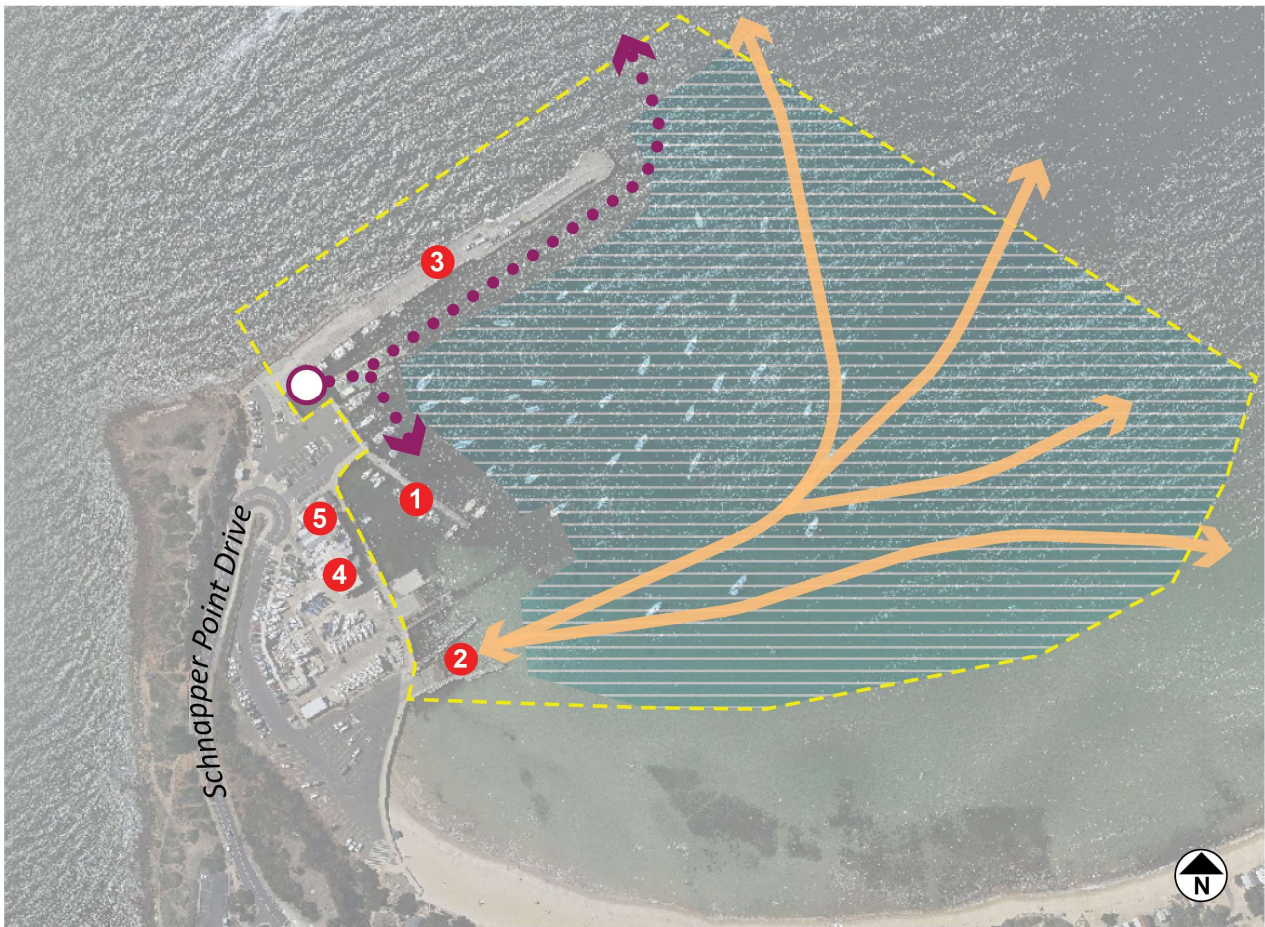
Table 2: Summary of challenges, ideas and solutions provided by key stakeholders

	Challenges	Ideas and Solutions
Placemaking, activity and uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited permanent and seasonal berths along the pier Potential to accommodate future large vessels Mornington is the only option for commercial berthing on the eastern side of the Bay. Western side of the bay has Portarlington Maintaining operation of the 'Sailability' program Issues in separating emergency / commercial vs recreational vessels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue supporting and celebrating Mornington as a dynamic 'working pier' and its living maritime heritage. Make it an exciting place to be, and part of its attraction for visitors. Continue supporting commercial fishing and aquaculture at Mornington by provide berthing opportunities and loading/unloading areas to meet future demands. Enable direct sale of fish/mussels from vessels berthed at the pier, and opportunity to educate the community on the aquaculture industry. Provide permanent and seasonal berthing opportunities. Accommodate for potential large vessels Continue accommodating for Tall Ships Future proposals should not impact on the function of the 'Sailability' program, to ensure the harbour remains accessible to a variety of users. Harbour to provide access for all – continue providing access for the public not just members and explore DDA compliance where possible (e.g. accessibility hoists). Consider future demands for the harbour and responding to this.
Safety, access and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competing uses and impacts on safety Consideration of fairway widths and channels for safer use is a key issue and long overdue. Visitors anchoring in the fairways as it is not well defined People swim from the boat ramp across to Mothers Beach, while boats are attempting to navigate towards the shore to get around swing moorings. Dolphin pylons, managed by Mornington Yacht Club, are in poor condition and is a hazard to boaters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining the fairways and clarity on where different uses can occur safely within the harbour e.g. swimmers, boaters, etc. Potential to keep the access lane further out in deeper water to avoid conflict with swimmers. Fairway needed along the pier and face of car park. More efficient arrangement of mooring ground. Mornington Yacht Club to consider removal of dolphin pylons to open up the water, provided removal does not result in a navigational hazard. Consider overnight / extended stay areas to minimise random moorings blocking on-water access. Reflective mooring buoys to make them visible at night. Consider pylon moorings instead of swing moorings.





OFFICIAL






		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with Australian Standards.
Fishermans Jetty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishermans Jetty - condition (failed), consider heritage value and future use. Space between seawall and Fishermans Jetty is already tight and should not be reduced in the re-design. Being tied to a design and purpose that was suitable 50 years ago not necessarily suitable today or the future. Timber pier in Teredo worm infested area and has not had adequate underwater maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change alignment of Jetty to allow more space between seawall and jetty, lengthen and provide fingers off it with some lockable berths for commercial use. A lockable finger on the new Fishermans pier alignment for commercial berthing. Use materials suitable for the environment and make it a maintenance friendly pier as a priority. Modern usable facility that facilitates both overnight and berthing for commercial uses, reduces wave action at the boat ramp, and considers safety as priority.
Environmental considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change impacts and changes in power sources and shift away from petroleum-based fuels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The environment is changing, and issues such as sea level rise needs to be considered. Open for change to future proof the Harbour. Accommodating for potential change in electric vessels to be factored into future design.
Wave Climate and coastal processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wave climate and its impact on harbour use and function, including infrastructure placement. Area is filling with sand due to more northwest winds – likely to wash back in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wave attenuation to protect the boat ramp and vessels pulling up to the pier. Address beach erosion and sand movement affecting boaters.

Mornington Harbour Local Port Area - Context Map



Legend

-  Focus site
-  Mornington mooring ground
-  Boat ramp access
-  Commercial berthing and access

-  1 Fishermans Jetty
-  2 Mornington Schnapper Point Boat Ramp
-  3 Mornington Pier
-  4 Mornington Yacht Club
-  5 Schnapper Point Kiosk and The Rocks Restaurant

Map is indicative only

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 such as parking, drop off areas, storage which are outside the scope of the project will be forward to Mornington Peninsula Shire Council for consideration.