



ASSOCIATION OF BAYSIDE MUNICIPALITIES

Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM)

Port Lease Select Committee Hearing 8 September 2015

The Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) was established in 1974 and is a membership organisation for 10 local councils surrounding Port Phillip Bay. These councils are Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Frankston City Council, City of Kingston, Bayside City Council, City of Port Philip, City of Melbourne, Hobsons Bay City Council, Wyndham City Council, City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe. Together these local government areas are home to over 1 million resident Victorians and providing services to many more. The ABM councils make up a significant proportion of local government along Victoria's coastline and have an important supportive role to play in managing the coast in partnership with the State Government and on behalf of the Victorian community and visitors.

The ABM has an adopted Charter and Strategic Direction document which guides our role and focus .

The ABM Charter determines that we will achieve our objectives by:

- Sharing information and approaches
- Investigating best practice
- Encouraging cooperation
- Promoting whole of bay activities

The means by which the ABM seeks to achieve its objectives concerning the sustainable management and health of Port Phillip Bay as stated in the adopted ABM Strategic Directions is through:

- Developing programs, implementing approaches and sharing information that benefit the sustainable use of Port Phillip Bay
- Reviewing , investigating and commenting on government initiatives that influence management of Port Phillip Bay
- Working with relevant Government Ministers or Ministers' advisers to discuss issues and recommend actions on bay wide matters.
- Influencing decision makers and stakeholders on initiatives that affect the management of Port Phillip foreshore and bay and marine areas.
- Meeting regularly with to State and Federal departments to seek resources for strategic planning, infrastructure improvements and maintenance improvements of foreshore areas.
- Developing, implementing and reviewing a four-year Strategic Directions Plan which identifies initiatives, focus and agreed key result areas for the Association.

ABM Membership position on Lease

As you can imagine the issue of the Port lease and the location of a second Port has been debated in many councils over the past few years. Understanding the negotiations and consultations which have occurred with ABM member councils and their communities is important. The benefits of a Bay West Port has been seen by some ABM member councils as a suitable outcome , while other ABM member councils have supported the development of the Port of Hastings and yet others see the benefit in the port remaining where it is. This is understandable and is driven in part by the genuine desire to provide the best outcomes for various communities.

There does appear to be unity however on the issue of no further capital dredging of shipping channels or widening/deepening of the Bay entrance.

The ABM members have not tried to debate the benefits of supporting one location over the other. However it has been agreed that the decision which will finally rest with the Parliament of Victoria should at least be built on mutually supported principles of effective management and environmental care. In this way the Port lease, and other issues, can be discussed against the adopted Vision and stated Strategic Directions of the Association. Anything outside these adopted broad guidance statements would need to go through an additional process of discussion and endorsement.

Within this context, each member council is not bound by the ABM approach or statements but rather uses these as an input to decision making and in forming positions. Each member council will also advocate on their own merits to any issue including this one.

The issue of the Port lease has been of significant interest to all ABM member councils for some time. ABM members have met through ABM endorsed events with the Treasurer, Shadow Minister, Port Transaction Unit staff and others. This is in addition to meetings held within individual local councils themselves.

In this context the information entitled Port Lease Principles – Protecting Port Phillip Bay and Environs, together with the endorsed ABM Strategic Directions document and ABM Charter objectives should be relied upon to explain the ABM's current minimum position.

Port Lease Principles – Protecting Port Phillip Bay and Environs

Through management and oversight the State will:

- Adopt the Treasurer's principle of "Do No Harm" to the environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Port Phillip Bay
- Prepare and publish a comprehensive report outlining the current health and condition of Port Phillip Bay inclusive of water quality, marine biodiversity and shoreline conditions
- Undertake annual monitoring and reporting of the health and condition of Port Phillip Bay and develop response plans in conjunction with relevant State Departments, agencies and local stakeholders
- Maintain all community based assets, existing public access and buffer zones within Port of Melbourne land
- Ensure any amenity impacts are rectified to a high standard reflecting current and future needs and community expectations
- Establish a "Fund" from the lease of the Port of Melbourne with proceeds to improve the amenity of Port Phillip Bay
- Ensure that the health, amenities, economic benefits and environment of the bay are protected for now and future generations
- Prior to any decision to lease the Port, the State Government commits to its promise to consider all options for future port operations within and outside Port Phillip Bay, and refers this investigation to Infrastructure Victoria for a decision

Presenters:

ABM Executive Committee

ABM President Cr Felicity Frederico, Vice President Cr Bev Colomb, Executive Officer Bernie Cotter

Other ABM Representatives



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Strategic Directions 2012-16



Directly representing over one million Victorians, the ten Councils of the ABM are actively managing and maintaining the Port Phillip Bay coast to achieve the highest levels of community benefit by protecting and enhancing the social, economic and environmental values of the bay.



Strategic Directions 2012-16

- Promoting integrated coastal planning including responses to climate challenges
- Enhancing management of coastal assets and infrastructure
- Promoting ecological health of marine areas and the coast

Our Purpose

The Association of Bayside Municipalities will:

- Be recognised as the peak local government association for Port Phillip Bay;
- Provide leadership through coordinated approaches to issues affecting Port Phillip Bay;
- Promote cooperation and exchange between members; and
- Promote partnerships with others on issues of bay-wide significance.

Recognising the shared responsibility for the management of Port Phillip Bay, the ABM will effectively advocate on priority issues, promote co-operative and unified approaches, and will build the capacity of its members to better understand, plan, manage, influence, and participate in priority Port Phillip Bay issues.

Our Vision for Port Phillip Bay

Port Phillip Bay, its foreshore, beaches, marine areas, coastline and adjacent land will provide a vibrant, healthy and safe recreational, living and environmental experience for the community, at the same time, protecting its important ecological and environmental values.

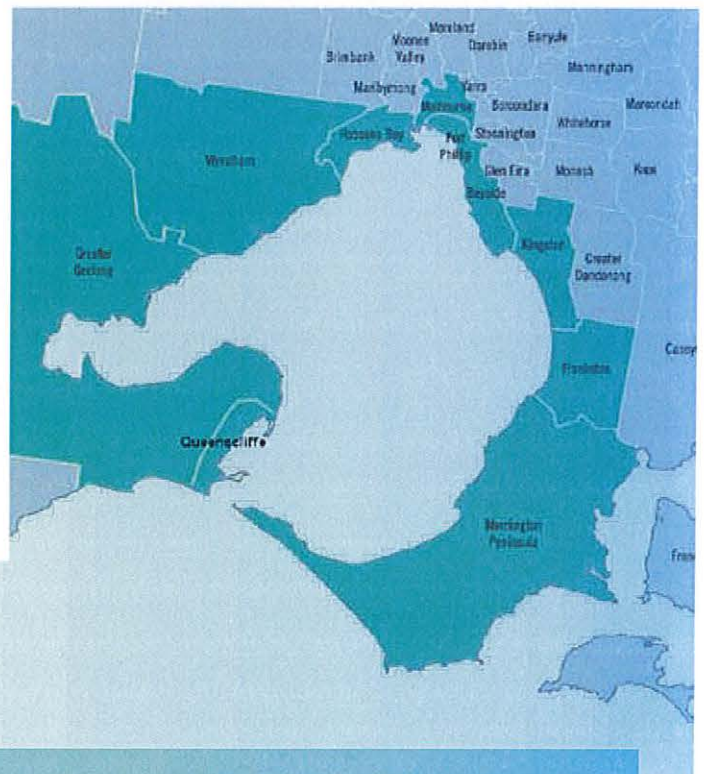
Bay beaches will be clean, its water quality improved and its marine life and habitats will be protected. Cultural and natural heritage values will be preserved. The bay's economic activities, including port, shipping, commerce, events and tourism, will all be sustainably managed.

The present and future impacts on Port Phillip Bay including, climate challenges, are seen as a shared responsibility and the bay will be planned and sustainably-managed through effective partnerships and cooperation.

Our Role

The ABM will:

- Effectively represent the collective view of member councils
- Provide leadership in advocacy and action for integrated coastal policy and management
- Advocate members' interests relating to regional, state and national coastal management issues
- Build the role and capacity of member councils to sustainably manage and influence coastal, foreshore and marine policy, planning and practice
- Create effective opportunities for networking and exchange of views between members, councils, government and other agencies and organisations
- Seek and share innovation and best practice approaches to coastal planning and management; and
- Identify and respond to current and emerging coastal and marine issues through research and project development



ABM MEMBERS: MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE • WYNDHAM CITY • BOROUGH OF QUEENSCLIFFE • HOBSON BAY CITY • BAYSIDE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF KINGSTON • CITY OF PORT PHILLIP • CITY OF GREATER GEELONG • FRANKSTON CITY • CITY OF MELBOURNE

- Encouraging sustainable and equitable recreation and social uses
- Enhanced understanding of economic, social and environmental values and benefits
- Refining and improving our organisational approach

Promoting integrated coastal planning including responses to climate challenges

Planning for Port Phillip Bay is a shared responsibility. Consistency in planning policy, regulations and development controls is expected by the community. Best available data, modelling and mapping is required. Assessment of social, cultural, economic and environmental issues must be undertaken simultaneously. Responding to the impacts of climate change, extreme weather on the coast and catchment is vital. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of agencies for effective planning is essential and building cooperative approaches will help meet our vision.

We will focus on:

Supporting a bay-wide regional coastal adaptation planning process

Comprehensive coastal processes and erosion mapping, hazard and risk assessment for the entire bay

Comprehensive future climate assessments and access to improved data including up-to-date flood and inundation data and detailed mapping

Consistent and effective planning policy, controls, indemnity, tools, monitoring, training and resources

Enhancing management of coastal assets and infrastructure

Councils plan for, and manage, numerous coastal assets and infrastructure. These range from natural foreshore and beach areas to built structures and marine and land-based infrastructure. The accelerated deterioration of marine infrastructure and the loss of beaches and foreshores due to coastal erosion is costly. The community expectation for councils to maintain, fix and build is often overwhelming. There is a continual demand for improvements due to age, changing standards, social expectations and environmental needs. New demands to meet improved standards, changes in community boating and recreation patterns and anticipating climate change requirements as well as reacting to extreme weather events, place councils under additional resource stress. Working together helps to achieve better results, avoids poor management and promotes wise resource allocation.

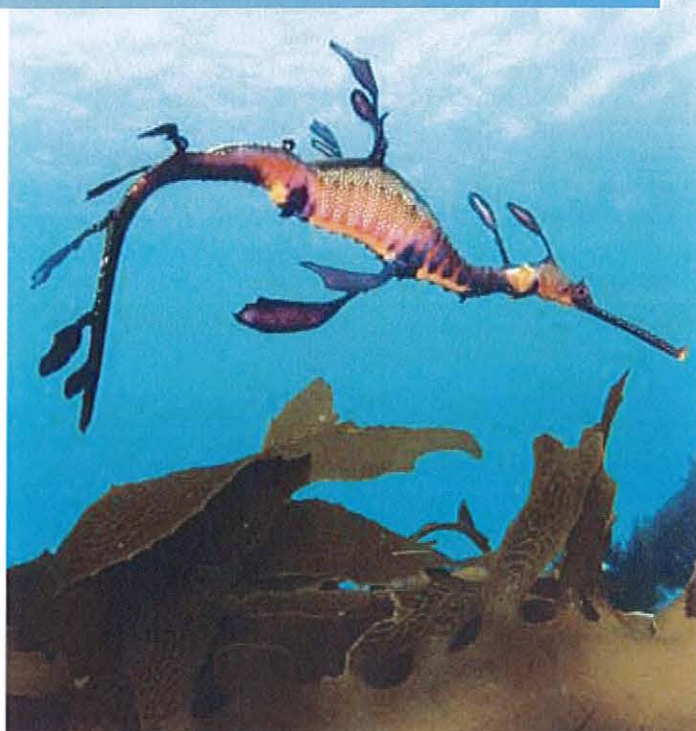
We will focus on:

Securing long term investment programs with all levels of government to address renewal and maintenance issues and clarifying management responsibilities

Coastal infrastructure improvements, including renewal and new works that are adaptive and innovative

Comprehensive beach nourishment approaches and cooperative erosion control measures

Drainage, sewerage and stormwater quality improvements through coordinated and integrated coastal and water management approaches



Promoting ecological health of marine areas and the coast

Port Phillip Bay provides a home to a diverse range of unique and valuable plants and animals that depend on and contribute to the ecological health of the marine and coastal areas. The bay contains internationally-recognised sites, marine protected areas, landscapes as well as habitats of significant regional value and importance. The health of the bay relies upon collective management of urban pollution, water quality, urban encroachment, stormwater management, invasive species and human impacts. The overall condition of the bay has important social, economic, recreational and tourism impacts. Our knowledge of the bay, its ecology and vulnerabilities needs to be improved and shared. This shared understanding and cooperative action will improve the ecological health of the bay.

We will focus on:

Supporting research and partnership to gain a better understanding of bay biodiversity ecology and health

Stormwater quality and bay health improvements enabled through community alliances and agency partnerships

Supporting programs that protect the bay's wildlife

Supporting the eradication or control of invasive marine species and enhancing indigenous habitat

Promoting long-term monitoring of the bay including its ecological systems to contribute to regular state-of-the-bay reports

Encouraging sustainable and equitable recreation and social uses

Port Phillip Bay is fast becoming a year-round centre for social and recreational activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, diving, walking and relaxing. These pressures are most in evidence in summer. The importance of bay beaches, activity nodes, open spaces and cultural places cannot be underestimated with currently more than 40 million visitations each year to the bay and its beaches by Melburnians, other Victorians and tourists. The closure of beaches due to pollution is unacceptable. The planning and provision of recreation and open space assets, improved beach renourishment and water based infrastructure to ensure equitable use and choice is crucial.

We will focus on:

Supporting improvements to water quality and pollution management to reduce beach closures

Supporting an accelerated and comprehensive beach renourishment program

Encouraging the promotion and responsible use of the bay and foreshore for events and activities

Supporting the provision of locally-appropriate infrastructure and controls to achieve regional recreational improvements

Enhanced understanding of economic, social and environmental values and benefits

The importance of Port Phillip Bay to the local and state economy is significant. The bay is home to the busiest container shipping port in Australia and is an important cruise ship destination. It supports commercial and recreational fishing and tourism. The bay's health as well as its facilities, amenity and wildlife are important for regional and international tourism. The foreshore is a driver of the local economy with small and large business taking advantage of the coastal location. The property values of buildings in close proximity to the coast provide added revenue to rates and contribute to the prosperity of the community. Social, landscape and environmental values, while harder to quantify, are important in determining overall values and must be seen as important planning criteria for decisions.

We will focus on:

Better understanding the values and pressures on coastal Crown land and protecting and enhancing these areas

Better understanding costs-benefits, value of ecosystem services, net community benefit concepts which support effective decision making

Supporting and promoting the preparation and application of detailed local plans along the coast

Supporting sustainable and safe, port and shipping related services, commercial activities, appropriate local water transport options and tourism

Refining and improving our organisational approach

The ABM has a dynamic role in representing the councils surrounding Port Phillip Bay. Its own capacity, flexibility, resources and focus needs to be regularly reviewed to stay relevant, effective and accountable. Building stakeholder relationships will be continually promoted by the association. Our methods of communication, information, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy approaches will be flexible and reflect the changing needs and issues of our members. The strategic plan will be underpinned by a focused action agenda, coupled with an effective communications and engagement approach.

The ABM's Charter will be tested regularly to ensure legal, management requirements are met. Changes to the Charter will best reflect the intention of the association, its purpose and operational focus and capacity. Action Plans will be responsive to members' directions, new opportunities and emerging issues and will be reviewed biannually to include a business plan with budget and marketing approach.

We will focus on:

Targeted lobbying approaches to State and Federal Government to meet our strategic directions

Making regular presentations to member councils on progress of the strategic directions and providing capacity-building and technical skills opportunities

Formalising partnerships with relevant Port Phillip Bay and coastal stakeholders through agreements with key organisations to help achieve our strategic directions

Regular action based initiatives that are costed, promoted and resourced to meet our strategic directions

