



ASSOCIATION OF BAYSIDE MUNICIPALITIES

POM SUBMISSION 48
PRESIDENT: Cr Felicity Frederico
ABM Executive Officer Bernie Cotter
POSTAL ADDRESS:
GPO BOX 4326
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
Website: www.abm.org.au

Port of Melbourne Select Committee
Department of the Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria, Spring Street East Melbourne 3002

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Port of Melbourne Select Committee

The Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) was invited to present to the Select Committee and subsequently was invited to make a written submission regarding the Port of Melbourne lease.

The Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) was established in 1974 and is a membership organisation of 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 residents. The ABM councils have an important supportive role to play in managing the coast in partnership with the State Government and in providing many of the facilities for over "70 million unique visits per year" (Parks Vic) by the Victorian community and visitors.

The ABM has an adopted Charter and Strategic Directions document which guides our role and focus. The ABM Charter determines that we will achieve our objectives by:

- 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.

The ABM has a long history of promoting the health and amenity of Port Phillip Bay. The ABM has been an active leader and partner with the State Government in initiating or contributing to programs regarding litter, stormwater quality, community participation, foreshore revegetation, tree vandalism to name just a few.

More recently the ABM has worked with successive State Governments regarding planning outcomes, the Yarra and Bay Action Plan, Environmental Management Plan and Better Bays and Waterways and currently on responding to coastal climate adaptation vulnerabilities, understanding coastal processes, sea level impacts and storm bite consequences now and for the future.

With specific reference to the Bay's health, the ABM , through Member contributions , undertook an independent peer review of the outcomes of the Environmental Effects Statement for the Channel Deepening Project. This resulted in a more robust monitoring program and other concessions which had a direct impact on Bay health issues. The unity from the ten councils on behalf of the citizens of Victoria ensured not only a commitment to more effective monitoring but provided the benefit of sharing information to coastal communities about the Channel Deepening project.

The ABM has had a well established and central role to play as one of the major custodians and supporter of effective efforts to improve the amenity, water quality, biodiversity, shoreline and foreshore conditions and environmental health of the Bay as a key asset for everyone now and in the future. Throughout many years the ABM has consistently stated and refined its efforts on the issue of enhancing, improving and advocating for the sustainable use of Port Phillip Bay.

ABM Membership position on the Port Lease

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 conjunction with the Victorian Treasurer the ABM has developed a set of principles. These principles establish an agreement between the Victorian State Government and the ABM. The ABM believes the responsibility of the health of the bay remains with the State Government, and cannot be transferred on the leaseholder.

It must be noted that these negotiations are ongoing, and the submission refers to principles endorsed by the ABM membership, these have not been endorsed by the Treasurer, and do not preclude member councils from making additional submissions.

In developing these principles it became clear that there are many agencies and authorities involved in the management of Port Phillip Bay. There is no overarching body responsible for the management of Port Phillip Bay, nor is there any central source of funding to ensure or quantify management and maintenance of shoreline conditions, water quality and marine biodiversity.

The issue of the Port lease and the location of a second Port has been debated in many member councils recently. 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 may see the benefit in the port remaining where it is. This is driven by a genuine desire to provide the best outcomes for our various communities.

The ABM believes that prior to any decision to lease the Port, the State considers all options for future port operations within and outside Port Phillip Bay, and refers this investigation to Infrastructure Victoria for a decision. This removes political interference and ensures informed evidence based decision making.

The ABM has a strong mandate on the issue of no capital dredging of the shipping channels or widening/deepening of the Bay entrance. In this respect it is accepted that maintenance dredging to provide for the safe passage of vessels throughout Port Phillip Bay, may be needed.

Port Lease Principles – Protecting Port Phillip Bay and Environs

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.

The ABM believes it is the responsibility of the State to maintain the environmental health of the bay and well being of the community. Conditions on any lease should ensure that the intent of these values is maintained.

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
- Prevent any capital dredging of the shipping channels or widening/deepening of the Bay entrance
- 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

The ABM thanks the Committee for hearing from us on the 8th September. As was stated at that hearing individual councils will be making separate submissions to the Committee and we would like to reinforce the request for you to hear from those Councils directly on many of the other issues contained in the Terms of Reference which the ABM has not commented upon.

Yours sincerely,

Cr Felicity Frederico

ABM President

Mayor City of Bayside

11 September 2015