

The Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy



Understanding Victoria's Boating Priorities

We know boaters want better facilities and access, less congestion, better facility maintenance, and transparency of funding used for facilities. That's why we are developing a Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy that will address long-standing issues in this sector and underpin prioritisation of future recreational boating investment.

A Victorian first, this strategy will provide the road map for future investment and the boating community will have a chance to help us shape it.

The Victorian Government has passed legislation to establish the Better Boating Fund that will return every dollar of marine licensing and boat registration fees to improving boating safety and facilities. The Fund will be operational in July 2021.

The Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy will inform how the **Better Boating Fund** will be allocated. And that's why we'll be working closely with the boating community to understand what they believe are the priorities for Victoria.

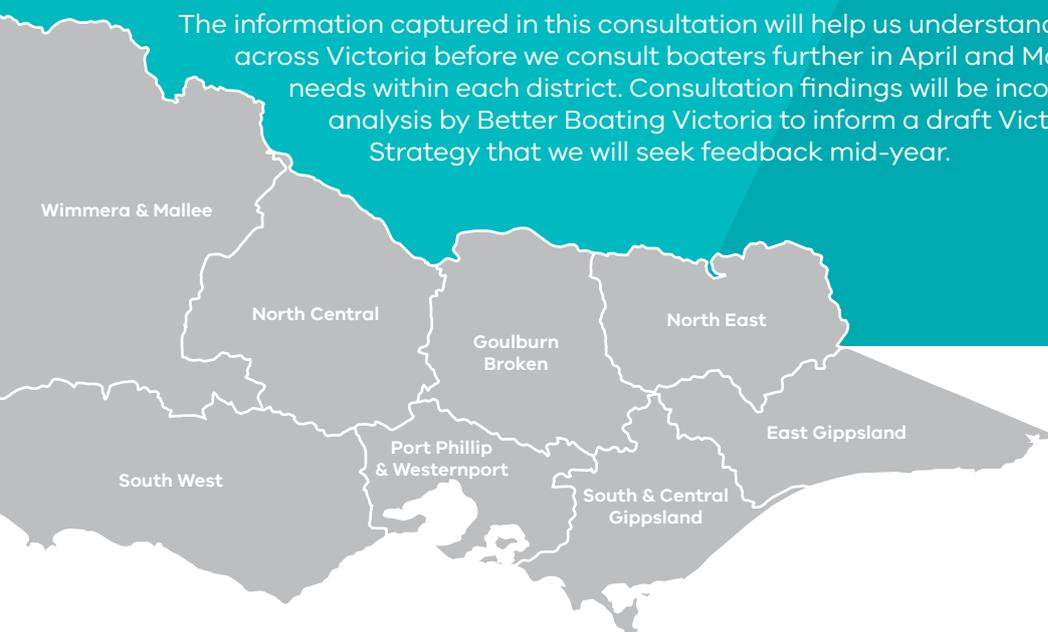
A Ministerial Boating Round Table has also been established to assist with the planning and development of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy that we hope to release by mid-2021.

What we did

We are developing the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy with boaters. As a first step, we ran an online consultation from Friday 29 January - 20 February 2021 to find out what they believe are the boating priorities across Victoria.

For the purposes of the consultation, we divided the State of Victoria into 8 boating districts and sought stakeholder views about the priorities for improving the boating experience across these districts.

The information captured in this consultation will help us understand the breadth of priorities across Victoria before we consult boaters further in April and May to confirm the boating needs within each district. Consultation findings will be incorporated with additional analysis by Better Boating Victoria to inform a draft Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy that we will seek feedback mid-year.



Q. What is the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy?



Legislation to establish the Better Boating Fund passed both Houses of Parliament in November 2020, delivering on an election commitment to establish a dedicated fund for boating.

The amount going into the Better Boating Fund will be equivalent of all revenue generated from marine licences and vessel registration.

The Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy will provide an overarching vision and plan to ensure our recreational boating needs are identified and prioritised, so funding is allocated in accordance with these priorities when the Better Boating Fund commences on 1 July.

The details of the Strategy will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and boating users.

Q. What will the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy consider?

The details of the Strategy will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and boating users. The Strategy will aim to address priorities aligned with how the Better Boating Fund can be allocated, including:

- Provision and maintenance of boating facilities and services for the public
- Boating safety, boating education and boating promotion programs
- Safe use of recreational vessels.



The Strategy will also acknowledge that majority of Victorian recreational boats are trailerable, placing considerable pressure and demand on boat ramps. Feedback will be considered to address this challenge, including potential investment in launching and retrieval facilities (ramps).

Q. What is the objective of *Understanding Victoria's Boating Priorities* consultation?

This consultation is the first step in the strategy development process comprised of an online survey that ran between Friday 29 January – 20 February. This survey sought to understand what boaters believe are the boating priorities across Victoria.

Q. Who are you consulting and why?

Throughout the development of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy we will be consulting with boat users and representatives from across the boating sector.

Q. Will this consultation result in the construction of new boat ramps and better facilities?

This is likely. The need for new facilities will be identified throughout consultation with the boating community. The location of new facilities will be identified in the boating strategy.

Understanding Victoria's Boating Priorities represents the first step in the consultation process and will run from Friday 29 January – 20 February.

Q. What happens after you've consulted on *Understanding Victoria's Boating Priorities*?

We will then run a series of face-to-face drop-in events across regional Victoria in April and May to test the priorities identified during this consultation in each region. This will be supported by an online survey for those who can't attend face-to-face sessions.

The results of the face-to-face events in April and the associated survey will be used to develop a draft Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy.



We will then release and seek public feedback on the draft Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy mid-year and use the results from this online consultation to refine the draft strategy before releasing the first ever Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy.

Q. How will stakeholders be able to have their say?

Feedback from across the boating sector is essential to helping us develop a Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy that meets community expectations.

Further information and details regarding how you can get involved are available at: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/rec-boating-strategy>

Better Boating Victoria will be promoting the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy and associated consultations and events online and through social media.

Q. How is the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy being funded?

The Strategy will be progressed by Better Boating Victoria with the Department of Transport. The Strategy will be funded from internal departmental budgets.

Q. When will we see outcomes of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy?

Elements of the strategy will be tested with the community through drop in events in April and May. The draft strategy will also be released for public consultation mid-2021 prior to finalising.

Q. When will we see new boat ramps and better facilities across Victoria?

Upgrades and new facilities will be prioritised, based on a framework that will be identified within the Boating Strategy. Upgrades have already commenced at Hastings, Rhyll, Mordialloc, Queenscliff and Point Richards. A new facility is also being progressed on the Maribyrnong River in Ascot Vale. Furthermore, Better Boating Victoria has also provided funding for an upgrade to the North Arm boat ramp in Lakes Entrance and has commenced planning for upgrades at Cape Conran, Cowes, Limeburners, Avalon, Kirk Point, Stony Point, Mahers Landing and Lang Lang.

Q. What are the key elements of the Better Boating Fund?

We have listened to our stakeholders and heard that greater transparency and certainty of funding is required to improve access and support growth in recreational boating in the future. The legislation delivers on this commitment and will provide the certainty and transparency into the future.

The amount going into the Better Boating Fund (the Trust Account) is to be equivalent of all revenue generated from marine licences and vessel registration.

The Better Boating Fund guarantees that funding can only be spent on boating related facilities, services, safety and education; and establishes annual public reporting requirements to provide the transparency that our stakeholders have requested.

Q. What can the Better Boating Fund be used for?

The legislative provisions authorise the Minister or Treasurer to approve expenditure from the fund on:

- provision and maintenance of boating facilities and related services
- boating safety, boating education and boating promotion programs
- safe use of recreational vessels
- safe use of state waters

Q. When will the Better Boating Fund be established?

The operation of the Better Boating Fund will commence on 1 July 2021.

Q. Who is responsible for developing the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy?

Better Boating Victoria will lead the development of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy.

The Strategy will be co-designed with key stakeholders, including a Ministerial Boating Round Table. We also want to hear from the broader boating community and will be engaging with boaters and seeking their feedback at key steps in the Strategy development process.

Q. Why has a Ministerial Boating Round Table been established for the Strategy?

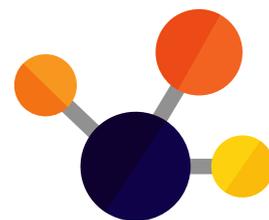


A Ministerial Boating Round Table has been established. The Round Table consists of a diverse ground of representatives from across the boating sector to help inform the development of a Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy through a co-design process, including identifying future needs and priorities.

The Round Table will not be a decision-making body.

Q. Who determined the composition of the Ministerial Boating Round Table?

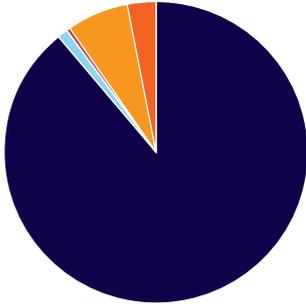
Representation from the angling, sailing and personal watercraft communities as well as the boating industry, marine search and rescue, boating facility managers, boat ramp users, waterway managers and local government will provide holistic input into the development of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy.



Survey Response: Overview

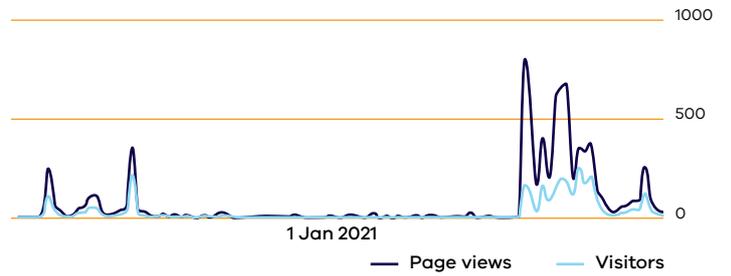
Survey was open from 29 January - 20 February 2021

Primary association with recreational boating



- **89%** I am a user of recreational boating facilities
- **7%** I represent a community group (e.g. club or association)
- **3%** Other
- **1%** I am a manager of recreational boating facilities or waterway management
- **0%** I represent an industry group

Visitors summary



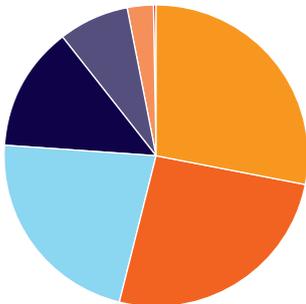
Highlights

- 3.3K** Total visits
- 252** Max. visitors per day
- 23** New registrations
- 772** Engaged visitors (people who took part in survey)
- 1.3k** Informed visitors
- 2.9k** Aware visitors



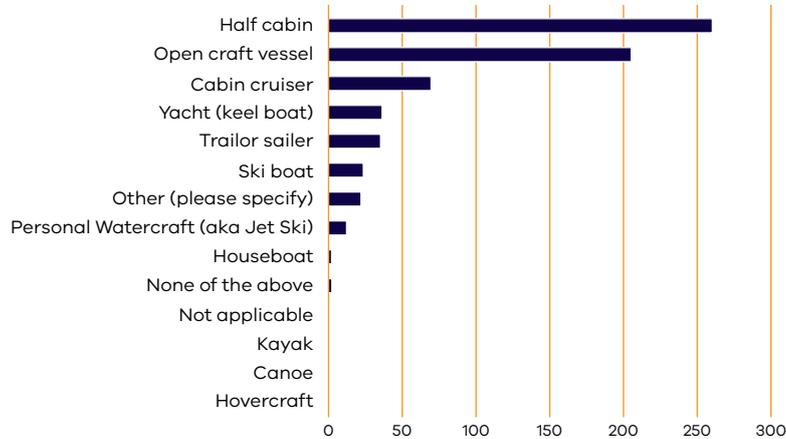
Survey Response: Demographics

Response by age group

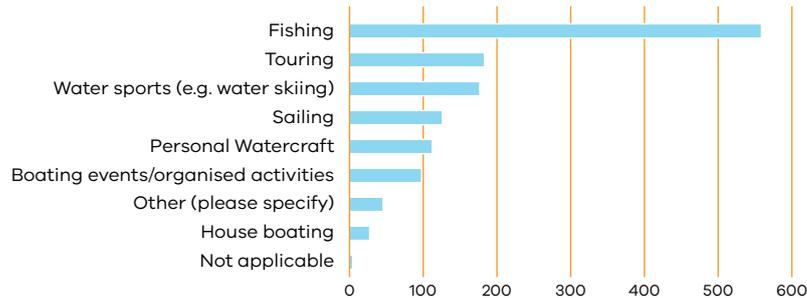


- **204** 55-64 years
- **186** 45-54 years
- **106** 65+ years
- **96** 35-44 years
- **53** 25-34 years
- **20** 16-24 years
- **2** Prefer not to say

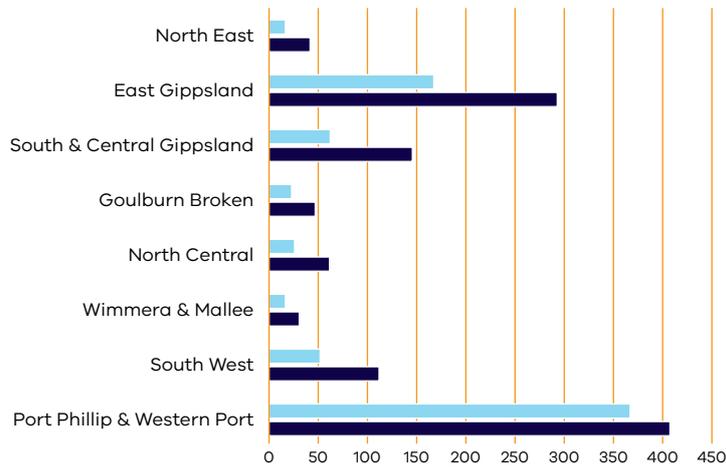
Primary vessel



Primary boating activity



Survey Response: Boating District



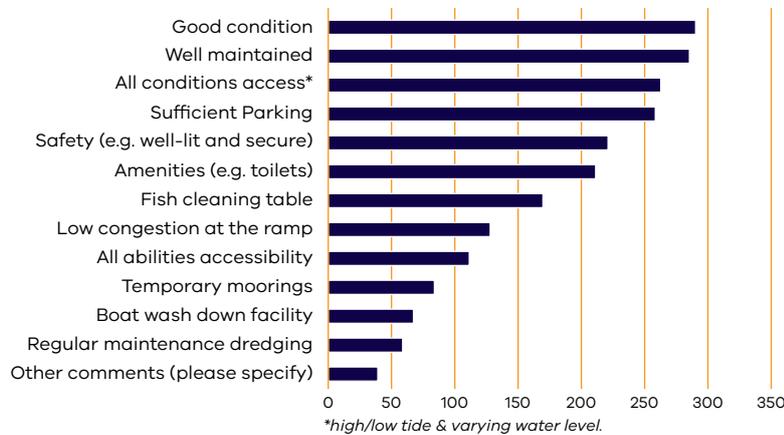
For the purpose of developing the Recreational Boating Strategy the State has been divided into 8 boating districts based on geography and waterway management.



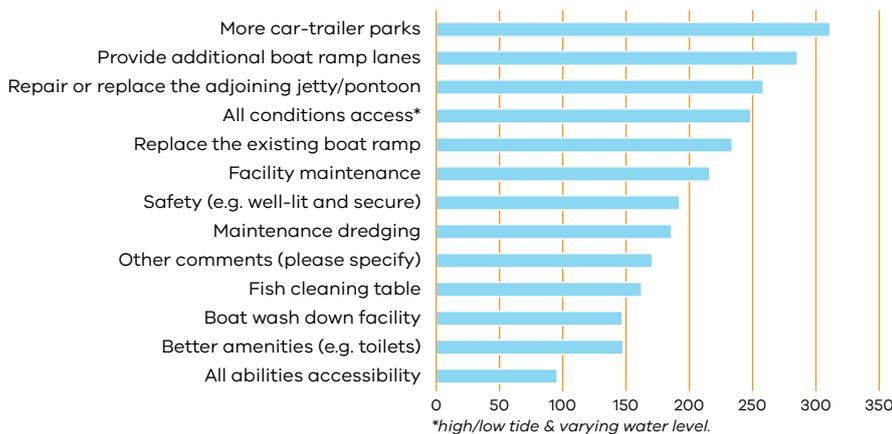
- Which of the following districts do you reside in?
- Which district do you use boating facilities?

Key Themes: Facility features

Features which make a facility a high standard



Facility features which need to be improved



Pontoons and jetties



Boat ramps



Lighting



Carparks



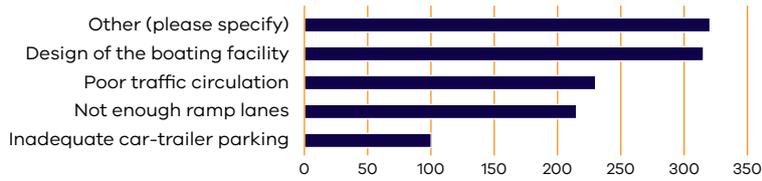
Toilets



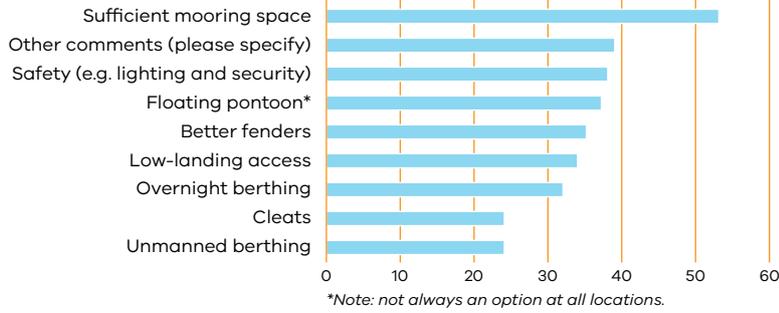
Navigation aids

Key Themes: Congestion Land side

Issues causing congestion



Features to improve the condition of jetties

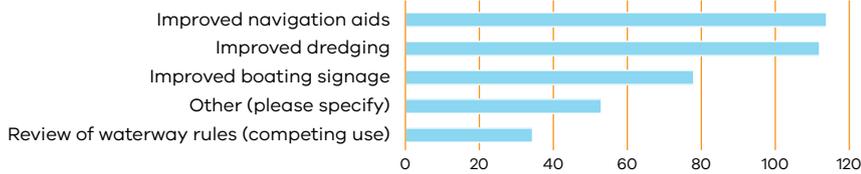


Key Themes: Congestion on water

Issues causing water congestion



Improvements required to address navigation hazards



Boating experience feedback

Theme	Other matters that need to be considered to improve the boating experience
Ramps/Pontoons/Jetties	172
Facilities (excluding ramps and parking)	77
Other	62
Parking	55
PWC	23
Enforcement	13
Dredging	12
Education	8
Lighting/Markers	2



You said...

- Make it harder to get a PWC or Boat licence, and a greater focus on enforcement. Too many water users that either don't know the rules, or choose to ignore them. Too many times to count, we have had jet skis or motor boats steaming through the middle of a sailing race course full of kids, with zero regards for distance and speed restrictions around other vessels.
- Get the job done and stick to the promises when elected.
- Now that ramps are free, Councils must ensure single cars do not utilise trailer spots which they do in summer at Mornington. Single cars often park in boat trailer parking facilities, creating congestion.
- More parking and parking management during peak season.
- More dredging to eliminate sand bars.
- Better facilities in general will make for a much better boating experience for visitors and locals alike.
- Boat launching etiquette guidelines to improve traffic flow, for example, no de-rigging/re-rigging on ramp, temporary mooring only, no parking in staging areas. Enforce speed limits in area and/or introduce no-wash requirements adjacent to boat ramp, pontoon and jetty.



Boating Safety and Education

Which of the following items are most important to help keep boaters safe.

(Please rank in order of importance, 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important)



Options	Average rank
Boating safety education	3.60
Condition and location on navigation aids	3.75
Boating rules and regulations	4.03
Licensing requirements and practical training	4.17
Content and location of safety signs	4.50
Marine search and rescue	4.61
Penalties for breaking marine safety law	5.35
Likelihood of being checked on the water by compliance officers	5.52

Theme	Other safety issues that need to be considered to improve your boating experience
Other	76
Ramps/Pontoons/Jetties	57
Education	50
Enforcement	48
Facilities (excluding ramps and parking)	42
PWC	40
Lighting/Markers	21
Dredging	6
Parking	2

You said...

- 

An education package for boaters on using boat ramps. There is not much tolerance between new boaters and experienced ones. Some sort of positive outcome where it should be applauded to assist newbies not abuse them. Most ramps during busy periods are full of onlookers entertaining themselves waiting for clashes/mistakes to happen, often cheering incidents when they occur.
- 

More information on water & ramp etiquette.
- 

There is no flow management on busy days, people trying to launch while others are trying to retrieve, need to turn ramps after a certain time as dedicated ramps to help with flow, as it's a disaster on days of snapper fishing, understand this is difficult but coming together as a working group to look at the options that could be trialled would be a good start.
- 

TSV education/compliance officers visiting ramps and undertaking vessels safety checks.
- 

All channel markers or beacons must have lights for at night. some channel markers or beacons don't have lights. Dredging at ramps entrances approaches.
- 

More police presence enforcing the 50m rule as too many boats speed too close to others.
- 

Yes, there should be a training course similar to a motorbike course for jet skis.

Next steps

We would like to thank everybody who took part in the *Understanding Victoria's Boating Priorities* consultation. Your feedback has helped us understand the breadth of priorities across Victoria.



We will be consulting boaters further in April and May to confirm which priorities you believe are the most important before releasing a draft Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy that we will seek feedback mid-year. To find out more and have your say in the consultation visit: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/rec-boating-strategy>