

CHARTING THE COURSE:

Victorian recreational boating strategy

2021 – 2030





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Minister's foreword

Locals and visitors alike flock to Victoria's waterways. Whether it's water skiing on one of our stunning inland lakes or game fishing in the wild waters off the south-west coast, record numbers of people are getting out in boats.

One-in-10 Victorians participate in boating in some shape or form, such is the attraction of the state's coastline and waterways. Every year, more and more people are discovering what a great destination Victoria is for boating.

The Victorian Government is a strong supporter of boating. In the past three years we've introduced free boat ramp parking and established the Better Boating Fund, ensuring every cent of boating registrations and fees is funnelled into improving the boating experience.

The Victorian Government wants more people to get out on the water, but it also recognises that the growing popularity of boating brings challenges. Competition for boat ramps and car parking continues to intensify. The attraction of personal watercraft and the growth in the size of recreational boats means our waterways are catering to a greater variety of boating activities. We need careful management to ensure the environment — and the natural beauty that underpins boating's popularity — are preserved.

That's why the Victorian Government has commissioned the state's first ever recreational boating strategy. It's the result of countless hours of consultation with boaters, asset managers, local councils, the boating industry and the wider community.

In particular, the strategy strongly reflects the feedback of hundreds of recreational boaters who shared their views on improving recreational boating in Victoria.

The strategy lays out a clear pathway to ensure we meet the challenge of growth and capitalise on the opportunities that more boaters bring. It's about making sure that the aspects that have drawn Victorians to boating are preserved and that we seize the opportunity to ensure future generations will enjoy getting out on the water as much as we do.



Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Fishing and Boating

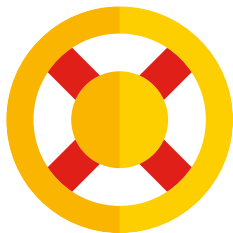
We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Nations peoples and their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners' lands and waters on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the strength of Aboriginal people, Traditional Owners and their communities, and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people to Victorian life, through their daily work, their application of Aboriginal knowledge and practice, and at key events; we recognise how this enriches us all. We have distinct legislative obligations to Victorian Traditional Owner groups related to cultural and natural heritage, that are paramount in our responsibilities in managing Victoria's resources in partnership with Traditional Owners.

Executive summary

Over 417,000 Victorians hold recreational vessel licences, and nearly 10,000 new licences are issued every year. More than one-in-10 Victorians regularly participates in recreational boating.

The growth in the number of boaters and the variety of activities they undertake present challenges and opportunities. Most of the challenges are the direct result of competition for assets like boat ramps and car parking. Some of this competition also extends to the sharing of waterways, particularly between personal watercraft and other users.





The strategy identifies and describes these challenges. They include:

- An inconsistent approach to funding priorities and resource allocation
- The poor condition of some boating facilities
- Lack of access (dredged channels and all abilities access)
- A shortage of car trailer parking
- Under-resourced waterway management and a subsequent lack of oversight over assets such as moorings, berths, channels, navigation aids and safety signage as well as compliance with local safety rules such as exclusion zones and speed limits
- Resourcing of Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR) bodies
- Improvements needed for better data sharing
- The threat to the environment and marine life posed by damaged or abandoned vessels
- Changing climate and its impacts to boating facilities



The strategy sets out a number of objectives aimed at meeting these challenges.

They include:

- Improving the maintenance of public facilities and renewing and building new boating facilities
- Improving access and navigation
- Investing in destination locations
- Investing in MSAR and boating safety and education
- Promoting boating across Victoria
- Improving the quality of data and information available to boaters

Delivery of this strategy will require collaboration and partnerships with the boating community, users of facilities, asset/land managers, Traditional Owners, government agencies and the wider community to identify opportunities and support outcomes.

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01

Why we need a recreational boating strategy

Boating is one of Victoria's most popular recreational pursuits

417,000

Over 417,000 Victorians hold recreational vessel licences

10,000

Nearly 10,000 new licenses are issued every year

1 in 10

More than one-in-10 Victorians regularly participates in recreational boating



Boating is a key economic driver, generating nearly \$8 billion in economic activity and employing thousands of Victorians. It's also a key component of the visitor economy.

Boating is popular in Victoria primarily because of the abundance of natural waterways. Victoria has some of Australia's best coastline and inland rivers and lakes, drawing locals and visitors alike to its natural beauty.



Boating is critical to many fishing activities, with coastal fishing expanding to an all-year round activity, attracting increased offshore boating, whilst our inland waters will be stocked with over 10 million fish in 2022.



Recreational boating is entertaining and provides a range of enriching opportunities, whether that's enjoying watersports, sailing, learning how to ski or simply enjoying an evening sunset. A sense of freedom and sense of adventure are common experiences cited by regular boaters.

Research suggests that people experience emotional, behavioural and psychological benefits by being near water, and that boating helps restore a connection with nature.

Just the sight and sound of water can lower cortisol levels, increase serotonin and induce relaxation, and boating is one of the easiest ways to enjoy these benefits.

Community satisfaction, pride, reduced social isolation and volunteering are also enhanced by having functional waterways.

A healthy environment also plays an important role in supporting the boating experience and all users play a role in supporting healthy waterways.

However, as participation in boating increases, some of the benefits are being diluted.



The boating experience across Victoria is underpinned by the ability to access good boating facilities, ensuring that the overall boating experience is safe and continues to be accessible. There is a need for a long-term strategy for a sustainable network of accessible boating facilities.

The Victorian Government has a role to play in ensuring that all boaters continue to enjoy one of the best activities this state has to offer.

The aim of the Victorian Recreational Boating Strategy is to provide a better boating experience through the provision of boating facilities that perform to a high standard, have adequate capacity, are well maintained, are safe and provide improved accessibility for all.

This Strategy outlines a series of actions and identifies facilities for future improvements. It should be noted that consultation and planning for upgrades will be undertaken on a site-specific basis to determine feasibility of delivering these improvements, which will be subject to an approvals process.

The condition of Victoria's public boating facilities will be significantly improved over time and will deliver improved boating experiences for all.

Funding to support recreational boating

The Better Boating Fund

The Better Boating Fund was established in 2021 and is funded through revenue collected from marine licences and vessel registration. In 2020–21, over \$33 million was collected from these sources and deposited directly into the fund which helps support the Victorian Government's 2021–2022 Boating

Action Plan. The fund can be used for:

- 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

The Better Boating Fund will be the key funding source used to deliver actions and projects identified in this Strategy.

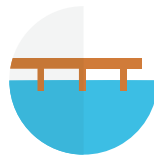
Victorian recreational boating in numbers

Waterways

Victoria has more than

120

bays, inlets and estuaries



2500km
of coastline



13,000
natural wetlands

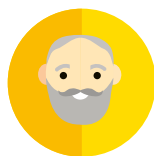
85,000km
of rivers

Recreational vessel registration



Around
197,000
registered vessels

2.5%
Average registration
growth per annum



417,000
recreational boating
licence holders

256,000
licence endorsements
for personal watercrafts



Open Cabin
131,000

Half Cabin
28,500

Personal Watercraft
24,400



87%
of registered
vessels are <6m

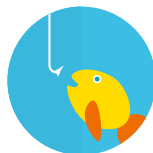
Data as of 2020/2021

Participation in boating



696,000

Approximately 696,000 people go recreational boating across Victoria



64%

of these people are also recreationally fishing



84%

use their boat during peak season (October–April)

35%

also use their boat during off peak season (May–September)

Participation activities

- Recreational fishing
- Tow sports
- Personal watercraft
- Sailing
- Pleasure touring
- Kayaking
- Hovercraft
- Houseboats

Did you know there are over:



400

boat ramps in Victoria



2000+

navigation aids

3900

public berths and moorings

Value to the economy



\$7.91b

direct and indirect output

\$2.92b

direct and indirect value added

22,055

direct and indirect jobs (FTE) to Vic in 2018–19



3400

call outs per year

1200

vessel disablements (eg battery and fuel issues)

200

serious incidents

Data sourced from licensing and registration data and marine incident data, Maritime Safety Victoria maritime incident statistics reports, Ipsos (2014) Boating Behaviour Study and Ernst & Young (2020)

02

A snapshot of recreational boating in Victoria

Although Victoria has over 400 boating facilities, most boating activity is concentrated at 20 key locations. As Figure 1 shows, Port Phillip and Western Port are the most heavily used, followed by the Gippsland Lakes, Murray River and Lake Eildon.



Figure 1
Key boating centres



Locations by popularity

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Port Phillip and Western Port | 5 Corner Inlet | 11 Blue Rock Lake | 18 Rocklands Reservoir |
| 2 Gippsland Lakes | 6 Anderson Inlet | 12 Torquay | 19 Mallacoota |
| 3 Murray River | 7 Portland | 13 Barwon River | 20 Lake Hume |
| 4 Lake Eildon | 8 Goulburn River and Lake Nagambie | 14 Cairn Curran | |
| | 9 Lake Eppalock | 15 Waranga Basin | |
| | 10 Apollo Bay | 16 Glenelg River | |
| | | 17 Warrnambool | |

Usage has been based on data available from Boating Vic, as well as former surveys undertaken by Ipsos (2014) Boating Behaviour Study and Ernst & Young (2020)

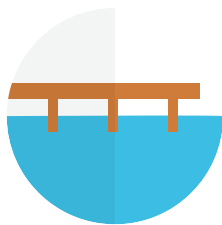
What is a boating facility?

The following assets are considered to comprise a boating facility. It should be noted that not all facilities require all the assets identified below (e.g. toilets and fish cleaning tables may only be located at selected facilities).

Management and maintenance of facilities



Boat ramps



Pontoons and Jetties associated with boating



Car and Trailer Unit (CTU) Parking



Lighting



Navigation aids



Toilets



Marinas and drystacks

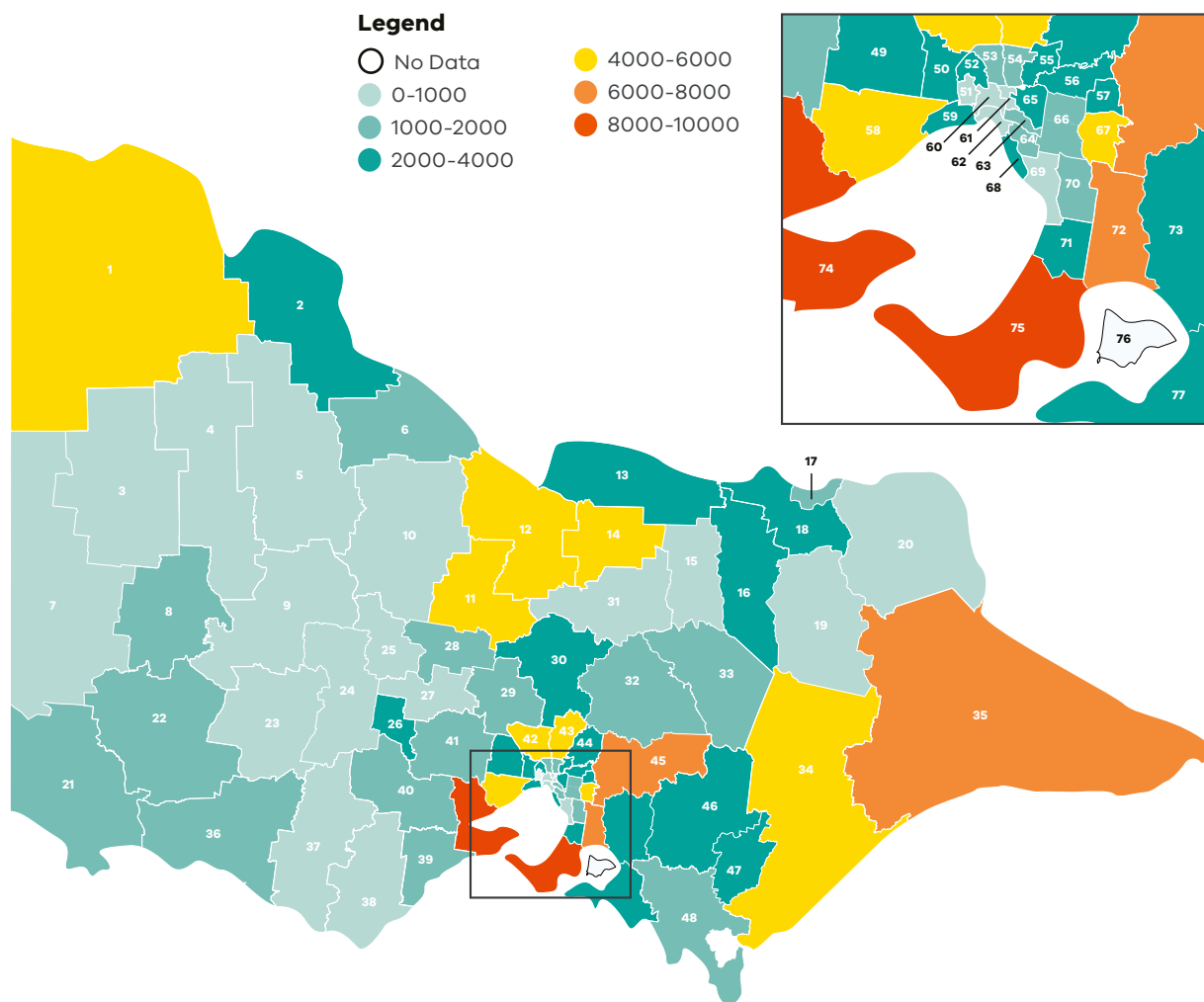


Moorings

As Figure 2 shows, vessel registration is concentrated around Port Phillip, Western Port, Gippsland and along the Murray noting boaters travel across the state to access other waterways.

Figure 2

Location of registered vessels (2020–21)



1 Mildura	17 Wodonga	33 Mansfield	49 Melton	65 Boroondara
2 Swan Hill	18 Indigo	34 Wellington	50 Brimbank	66 Monash
3 Hindmarsh	19 Alpine	35 East Gippsland	51 Maribyrnong	67 Knox
4 Yarriambiack	20 Towong	36 Moynes	52 Moonee Valley	68 Bayside
5 Buloke	21 Glenelg	37 Corangamite	53 Moreland	69 Kingston
6 Gannawarra	22 Southern Grampians	38 Colac Otway	54 Darebin	70 Greater Dandenong
7 West Wimmera	23 Ararat	39 Surf Coast	55 Banyule	71 Frankston
8 Horsham	24 Pyrenees	40 Golden Plains	56 Manningham	72 Casey
9 Northern Grampians	25 Central Goldfields	41 Moorabool	57 Maroondah	73 Cardinia
10 Loddon	26 Ballarat	42 Hume	58 City of Wyndham	74 Greater Geelong
11 Greater Bendigo	27 Hepburn	43 Whittlesea	59 Hobsons	75 Mornington Peninsula
12 Campaspe	28 Mount Alexander	44 Nilumbik	60 Melbourne	76 French Island
13 Moira	29 Macedon Ranges	45 Yarra Ranges	61 Yarra	77 Bass Coast
14 Greater Shepparton	30 Mitchell	46 Baw Baw	62 Port Phillip	
15 Benalla	31 Strathbogie	47 Latrobe	63 Stonningham	
16 Wangaratta	32 Murrindindi	48 South Gippsland	64 Glen Eira	

Licensing data sourced from Maritime Safety Victoria maritime incident statistics reports

Engagement, Regulatory and Planning Framework

Boating is regulated by a number of Acts and planning frameworks.

Engagement

When planning for upgrades, new boating facilities, or changes to boating regulations, consideration should be given to the wide range of stakeholders that must be engaged. This includes users of boating facilities and asset/land managers as well as Traditional Owners and the wider community to obtain the desired outcomes.

Regulatory and Planning Framework

This framework applies to the regulation of activities, construction and upgrade of boating facilities. It is the responsibility of the relevant asset/land managers to obtain necessary approvals prior to undertaking any works on boating assets. This includes compliance with the **Marine and Coastal Act 2018** for boating assets along the Victorian coast. The relevant legislation below is not exhaustive, but identifies key requirements.

The Marine Safety Act 2010

This provides for safe marine operations in Victoria which includes providing for the safe operation of vessels and for the safety of marine safety infrastructure and operations involving its use. The Act provides for safety (among other things) by:

- Imposing a range of safety duties
- Providing for the registration of vessels
- Providing for the licensing of masters of recreational vessels and hire and drive vessels
- Providing for the regulation and management of the use of, and navigation of vessels on, state waters

Marine and Coastal Act 2018

Coastal boating facilities must be constructed and maintained in accordance with the **Marine and Coastal Act 2018**, Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and informed by the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 2020. Use and development of and works on marine and coastal Crown land require consent under the Act.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987

This Act establishes a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria through the Victoria Planning Provisions and planning schemes. It sets out the process for obtaining planning permits for the use and development of land and the undertaking works (including upgrades and maintenance), as well as settling disputes, enforcing compliance with planning schemes and permits, and other administrative procedures.

Crown Land Legislation

Many of Victoria's recreational boating facilities are situated on Crown land, which is managed by various parties for the benefit of all Victorians. In addition to the **Planning and Environment Act 1987**, buildings and works on Crown land may be subject to additional controls including the **Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1987** and **National Parks Act 1975**.

The Transport Integration Act 2010

This is Victoria's principal transport Act. The six legislated objectives are include social and economic inclusion; economic prosperity; environmental sustainability, integration of transport and land use, efficiency, coordination and reliability; safety, health and wellbeing.

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006

The Act allows different organisations, groups and bodies to connect and better enforce and preserve policies regarding Aboriginal Heritage. Traditional Owners must be engaged when developing or upgrading boating facilities. Land within 200 metres of a waterway and coastal land are all areas of cultural heritage sensitivity under the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, which have statutory requirements.

Water Act 1989

This Act provides the legal framework for managing Victoria's water resources. The main purpose of the Act is to: promote the equitable and efficient use of our water resources; make sure our water resources are conserved and properly managed for the benefit of all Victorians; and increase community involvement in conserving and managing our water resources.



03

Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

More boaters

The number of participants in boating is growing at around 2.5 per cent per annum. In addition, the number of personal watercraft (PWCs) is increasing faster than other vessel classes.

As the Victorian population ages, so too is the average age of participants.



The number of participants in boating is growing at around 2.5% per annum

Reduced access and increased congestion

Over 90 per cent of boaters keep their vessels at a residential address, increasing the demand for boat ramps. Land-side congestion and lack of parking areas are particularly pressing issues, especially across Port Phillip and Western Port. A 2014 review* identified that of 47 facilities investigated, capacity was constrained at 38, with a further eight limited by the number of boat ramps and supporting facilities.

Lack of car trailer parking, associated overflow parking, jetty or pontoon berths and boat ramp lanes are a key challenges for some Victorian facilities. Furthermore access to dredged channels also impacts the ability for boaters to access waterways at key facilities.

Seasonal demand on the Bellarine and Mornington peninsulas and Gippsland Lakes is increasing, placing pressure on destination jetties and swing moorings in these locations.

In addition to an increase in the number of registered vessels, there has also been a shift towards vessels over 4m in length, putting additional strain on facilities not designed to accommodate such sizes.

There are limited accessible boating facilities for those Victorians requiring all-abilities access. Access when boaters are in the water is also critical, which means having all-tide access where possible, and access to dredged channels.

*Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure
- Review of boat launching capacity (2014)

The condition and location of boating facilities

Some boating facilities are too small, poorly maintained or no longer fit for purpose. Demand for boating facilities has not been matched by investment in maintenance and new facilities. Some facilities have restricted use due to lack of dredging. In some instances, the location of a boat ramp may need to be relocated to a new site to better accommodate access into the future.

Boating Safety

As a recreational activity boating is becoming increasingly popular, the safety risk is increasing comparatively. There is an ongoing challenge to reduce deaths and serious injuries on Victorian waters.

Absence of a consistent direction

A consistent direction in prioritising State-wide resources will ensure the sector can capitalise on existing boating assets which will benefit boating tourism.

In addition, fragmented and uncoordinated facility management means stakeholders are left without assurances that investment will respond to the boating community's needs.

Changing Climate

Coastal hazards and climate change (storms, erosion and inundation) will pose ongoing infrastructure challenges to our boating facilities along the coast. The changing climate is also likely to pose infrastructure challenges on our inland waterways, particularly during times of flood and drought.



Shared use of waterways and coastal environments

Victorians value our waterways and coastal environment for recreational and economic opportunities. The shared use of our waterways for boating, fishing, swimming, surfing and enjoying our beaches, rivers and lakes is important to ensure waterways can continue to support recreation and jobs for all Victorians. The shared use of Victorian waterways is also a key principle in the *Marine Safety Act 2010*.

The need for ongoing support for waterway management

Navigation aids and signage keep boaters and other waterway users safe. Waterway managers are responsible for the management of vessel activities in waters under their control using infrastructure such as moorings, berths, channels, navigation aids and safety signage. They are also responsible for formulating and compliance with local safety rules such as exclusion zones and speed limits.



The need for ongoing support for Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR)

In Victoria there are 30 volunteer MSAR providers, comprising 19 Australian Volunteer Coast Guard flotillas, seven independent providers and four affiliated with Life Saving Victoria. Collectively there are approximately 800 volunteers across the state responding to distress calls. Nearly all the MSARs will require additional resourcing to meet the expected increase in demand for assistance from boaters.

Improvements to data sharing and needs

Victoria Police, Maritime Safety Victoria, the Victorian Fisheries Authority and Parks Victoria collect and share data to monitor marine incidents and compliance, but each does so differently. Data is crucial to how the state manages boating safety, MSAR and asset investment. Data is also crucial to understand boating behaviour and experience, and to support future investment decisions.

Disposal of vessels

The use of more durable boat materials such as fibreglass and the volume of boats purchased have made disposal more challenging. Abandoned and derelict vessels can become hazards to navigation, as well as posing threats to the environment, wildlife and public health through leakage of fuel and oil and release of hazardous substances.

Opportunities

This strategy presents a number of opportunities:

- Improving the boating experience by improving the condition of infrastructure
- Providing for improved coordination, prioritisation and allocation of funding for upgrades, renewals and new facilities, many of which can be realised through partnership arrangements
- Providing visibility of prioritisation of projects and programs to Victorian boating stakeholders
- Facilitating stronger engagement with boating stakeholders including users of the facilities, asset/land managers and the wider community to identify priorities during development of the strategy
- Economic growth in the industries directly associated with vessels, vessel safety and associated sports like angling and water sports, as well as tourism
- Using technology to capture information to enhance data collection
- Enhancing our recreational boating facilities to be responsive to increased demand, user and safety considerations, as well as siting and environmental considerations
- Enhanced facilities that address climate risks (e.g. sea level rise) and water sensitive urban design and use of sustainable materials



04

Strategy framework

Vision

Victorian boaters will be provided with a better boating experience through the provision of boating facilities that perform to a high standard, have adequate capacity, are well maintained, are safe and provide improved accessibility for all.

The vision is supported by the following objectives:

1. To **enhance** the Victorian boating experience by **supporting and improving the maintenance** of our public facilities
2. To **enhance** the Victorian boating experience by continuing to **invest in renewing and building new boating facilities**
3. To **enhance** the Victorian boating experience by continuing to **invest in destination locations**
4. To **enhance** the Victorian boating experience by providing for **improved access and navigation**
5. To **improve waterway and boating safety** by investing in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education
6. To **enhance** the Victorian boating experience by **promoting boating** across Victoria
7. To **improve the quality of the data** and **implement other reforms** that will improve the boating experience

This Strategy identifies a series of priorities which will be implemented to deliver the objectives until 2030.

Action Plan

Whilst this strategy identifies the priorities to be progressed to 2030, an annual action plan will be prepared and published to advise of which projects and actions will be undertaken, responsibilities for delivery and timeframes in the forthcoming year. Several factors will influence each action plan, including maintenance needs, asset condition, facility demand, project readiness, safety concerns and emerging issues.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Delivery of this strategy will require collaborating and working in partnership with asset/land managers the community, the boating community including users of facilities and our Traditional Owners to identify opportunities and support outcomes.

Working in partnership with Government agencies and facility managers presents opportunities to navigate planning and approvals needs, integrate plans, and to identify other funding sources. In some instances, working with private landholders or private industries may be required to deliver boating outcomes.

Our Vision

Victorian boaters will be provided with a better boating experience through the provision of boating facilities that perform to a high standard, have adequate capacity, are well maintained, are safe and provide improved accessibility for all.

Recreational Boating Strategy (2021 – 2030)

Strategy Objectives

1. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by supporting and improving the maintenance of our public facilities
2. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in renewing and building new boating facilities
3. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by providing for improved access and navigation
4. To improve waterway and boating safety by investing in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education
5. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by promoting boating across Victoria
6. To improve the quality of the data and implement other reforms that will improve the boating experience
7. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in destination locations

Prioritisation will consider these factors

- Asset condition and maintenance needs
- Waterway risks
- Improved navigational accessibility
- Facility demand (current or potential)
- Improved all abilities access
- Equity and distribution of funds
- Boating safety (facilities and on water response)
- Ability to reduce congestion/increase capacity
- Project readiness
- Emerging issues
- Climate risks and adaptation

Annual Action Plan

Enabled by:

- Boaters and asset/land managers
- Analytics and Data
- Partnerships with Traditional Owners, the community and Agencies
- Better Boating Fund
- Consultation
- Transparency/Public reporting

Allocation of resources will be influenced by the following principles:

- 1.** All elements of the boating system should receive funding, including infrastructure, dredging, aids to navigation, safety, education and promotion.
- 2.** Upgrading and maintaining existing public facilities should be given a greater priority over new facilities, noting that new facilities will still need to be constructed.
- 3.** Waterways where key boating activity occurs should be prioritised.
- 4.** Funding of boat ramp facilities should be prioritised given majority of vessels are trailerable.
- 5.** Co-contributions should be sought where possible including funding and/or staffing resources to the project.
- 6.** Environmental (including climate change impacts and adaptation), social, cultural, shared spaces, Traditional Owner rights and aspirations and economic considerations.
- 7.** Emerging or urgent needs as identified by boating stakeholders.



Objective 1

Enhance the Victorian boating experience by supporting and improving the maintenance of our public facilities

A 2020 review of the management of boating facilities, primarily across Port Phillip and Western Port, identified fragmented and inconsistent management arrangements. Management of public boating facilities is influenced by key factors including skills and capability, available funding, differing priorities by asset/land managers, and a lack of maintenance standards. It is also acknowledged that many of the state's boating facilities are managed by volunteer committees of management, who may have no paid staff and limited sources of income. This reflects in the condition of boating facilities and impacts the boating experience. Whilst this review focused on Port Phillip and Western Port, the review identified that these issues also exist across regional Victoria.

Asset Management Framework

Boating facilities are public assets and are managed by multiple crown land committees of management (including Parks Victoria, and volunteer committee of management). These committees of management are the asset/land managers and have responsibility for maintaining and managing these facilities.

Asset management involves planning, acquiring assets (such as ramps and jetties), operating and maintaining facilities and disposal once they have reached the end of their life or no longer serving their original purpose. An asset management framework will be developed to better manage our public boating facilities and to have a consolidated understanding of public boating facilities. The framework will be used to help guide funding allocations to asset/land managers for improved maintenance.

Maintenance

To improve the maintenance of boating facilities, a maintenance support program will be developed that will include:

- Development of maintenance guidelines for public boating facilities.
- Establishment of a maintenance program for asset/land managers to receive funding assistance, particularly for structural maintenance.
- Investigating options for management and maintenance.

Objective 2

Enhance the Victorian boating experience by renewing existing facilities and building new ones



Design guidelines for boating infrastructure and facilities

Guidance on the upgrade and construction of boating facilities specific to Victorian conditions will be developed to support asset/land managers and provide consistency across Victorian public boat ramps. New guidelines will define the features of facilities that should be standardised, such as ramp gradient, ramp width, ramp access and car park numbers.

The guidelines will also address designing to accommodate climate change as well as universal design to ensure all users are considered when designing facilities and reflect the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, the associated Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and the Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 2020. Any upgrade and construction of boating infrastructure and facilities must obtain the relevant statutory approvals under the legislation.





Boat ramp renewal program

An assessment of the condition of facilities has been undertaken in order to prioritise renewal.

Across Port Phillip and Western Port, the prioritisation has been based on visual asset condition combined with ranking against the Central Coastal Board Recreational Boating Facilities Framework. Across regional Victoria, the prioritisation was based on asset condition, discussions with asset/land managers and demand.

Figure 3

Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals Port Phillip and Western Port



Figure 4

Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals

East Gippsland

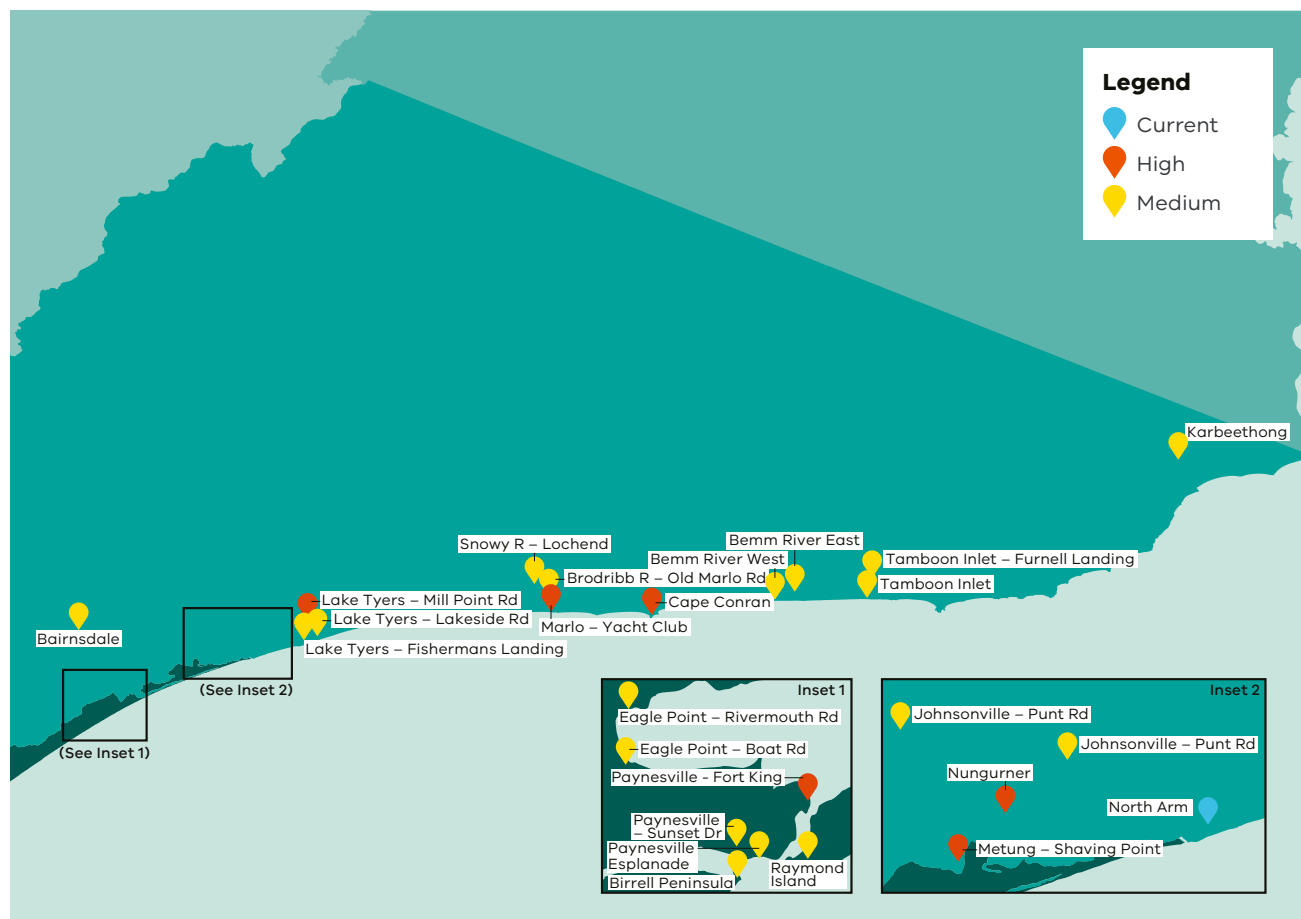


Figure 5
Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals
South and Central Gippsland

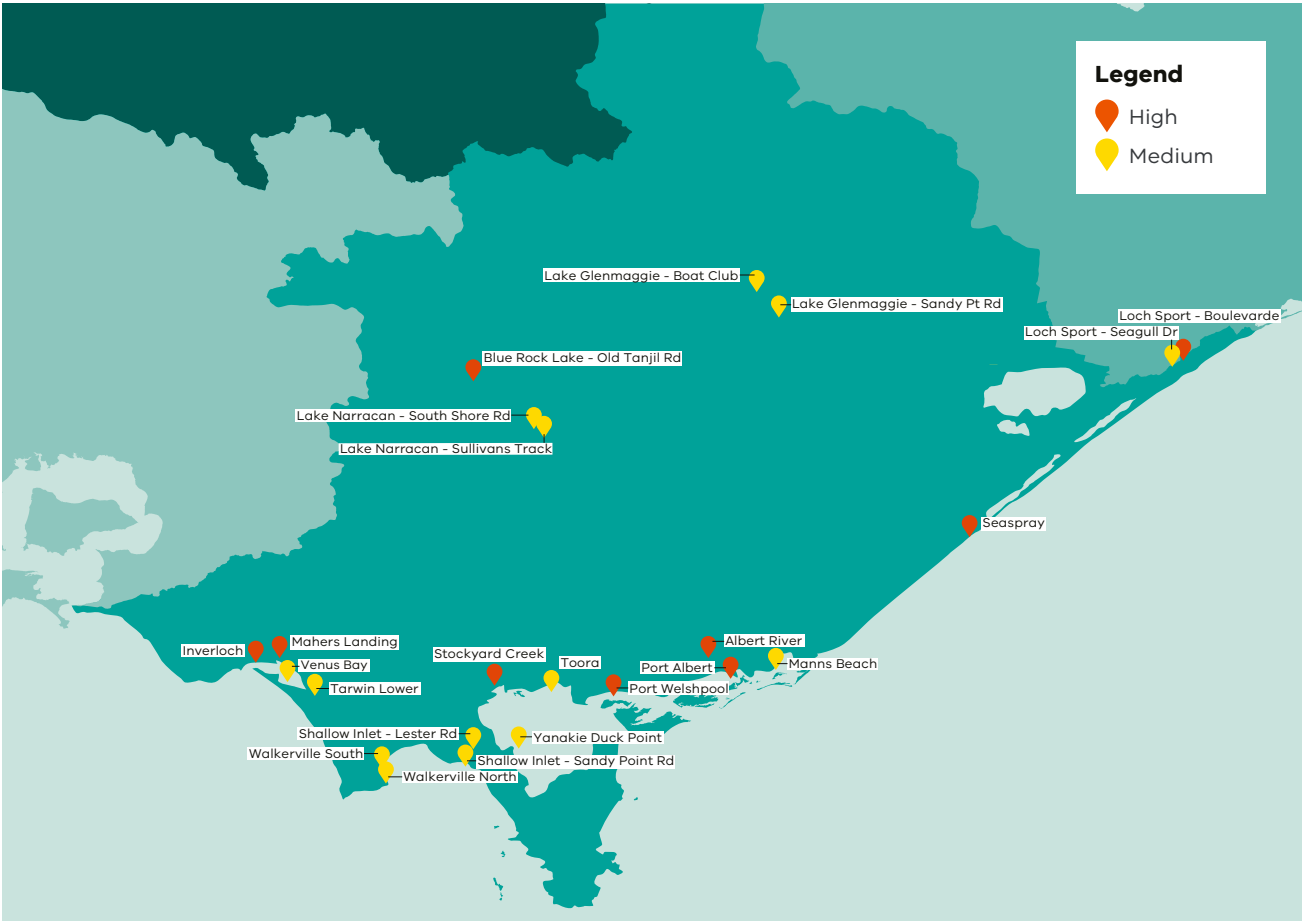


Figure 6

Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals

North East



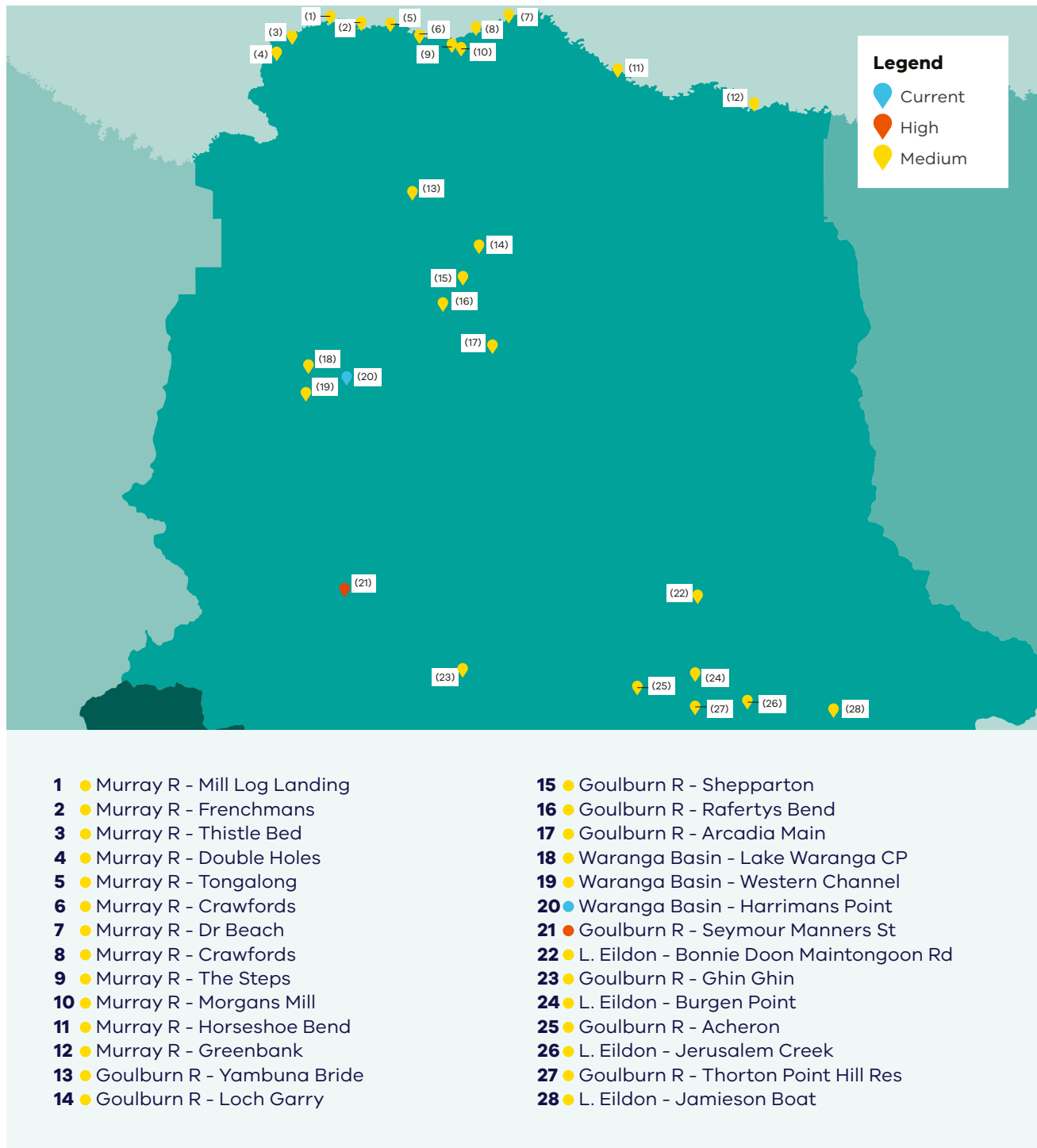
Figure 7
Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals
South West



Figure 8

Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals

Goulburn Broken



Upgrades to facilities at Lake Eildon will be considered in accordance with the Lake Eildon Recreational Boating Facilities Improvement Plan

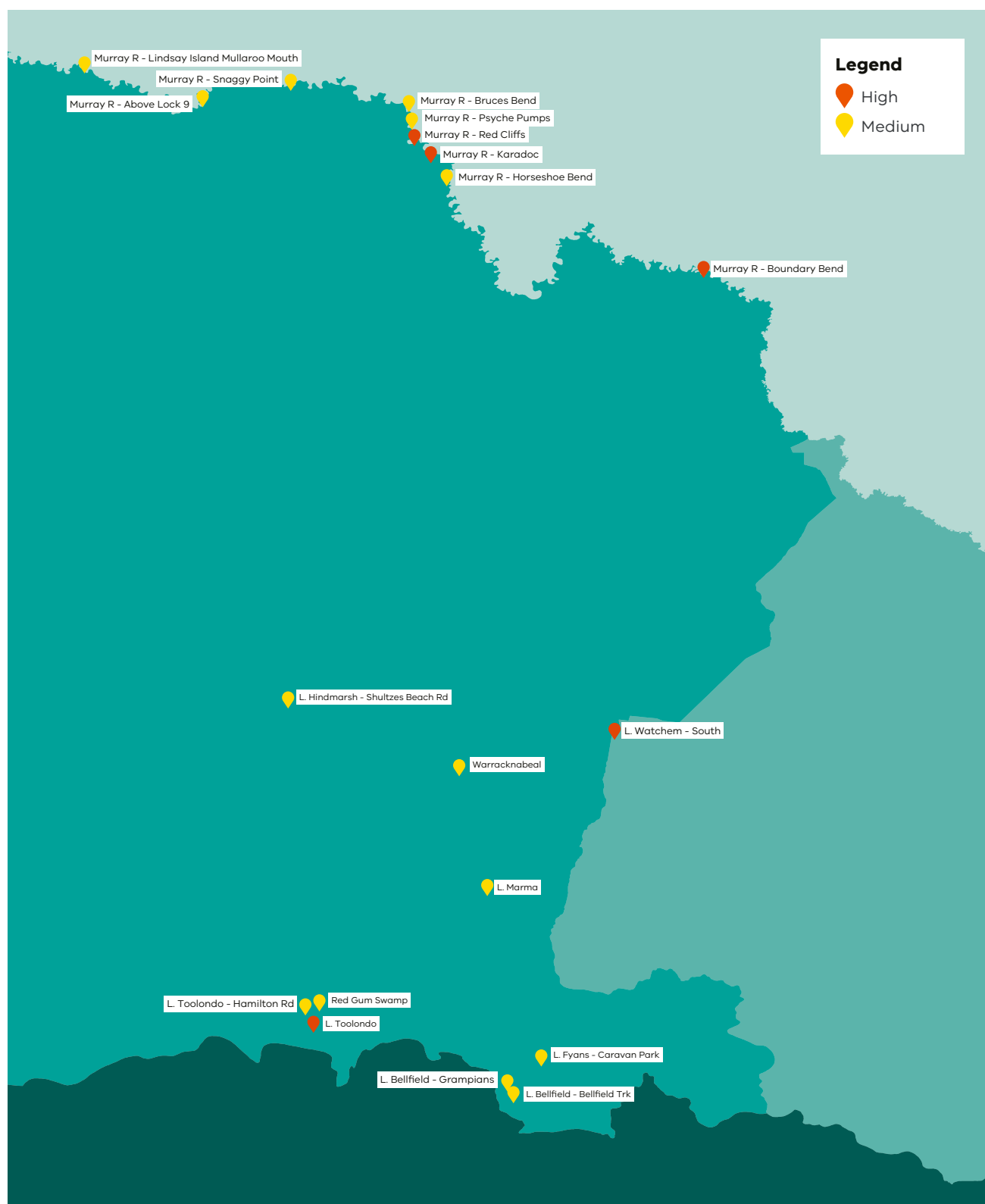
Figure 9
Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals
North Central



Figure 10

Prioritisation of boat ramp renewals

Wimmera and Mallee



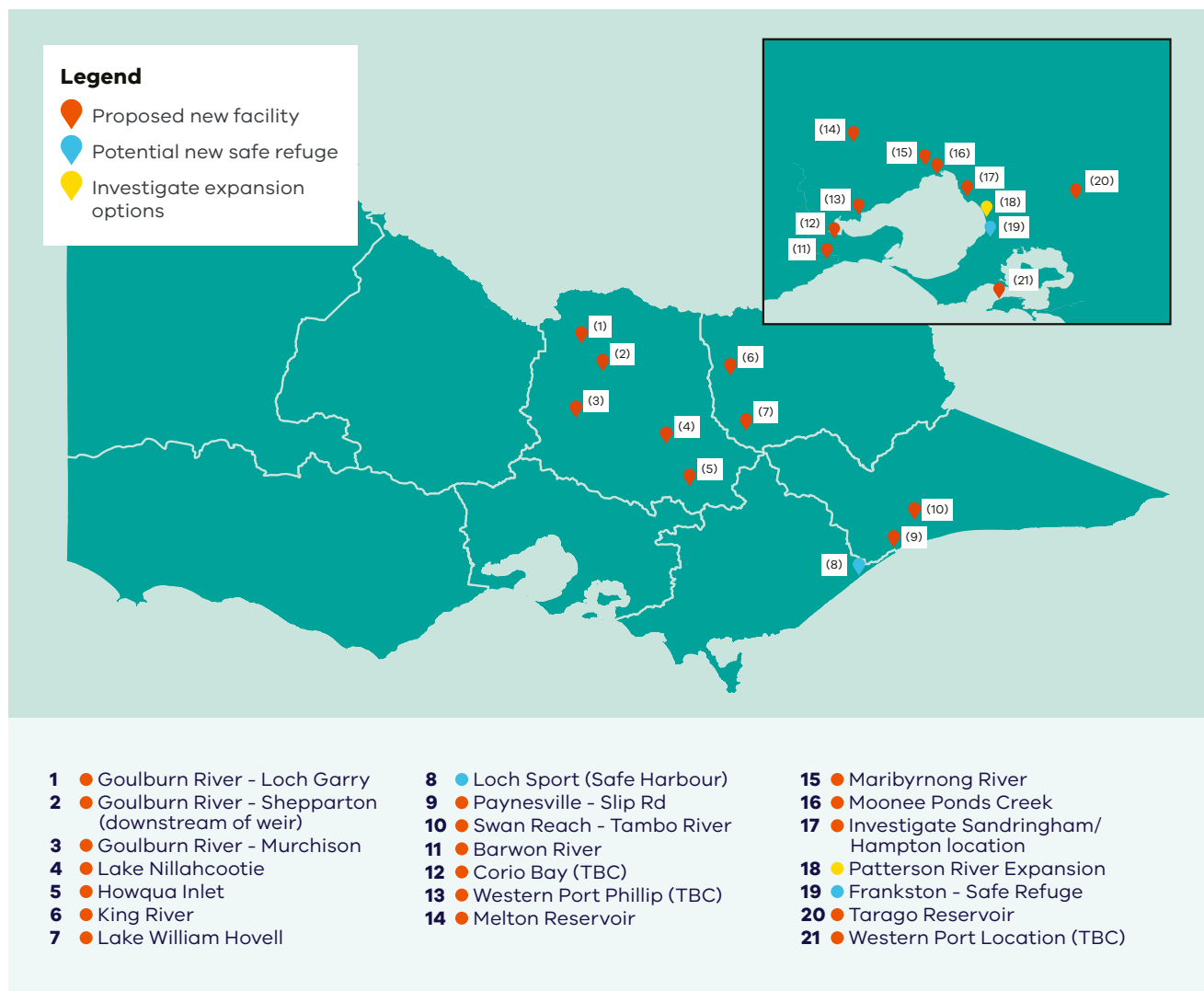


New boating facilities

Potential locations for new boating facilities have been identified. These have been based on feedback from boating facility users or asset/land managers.

Figure 11

Potential new facilities





Expanded facilities

To reduce congestion and improve access, upgrades will be progressed at a number of locations based on capacity for expansion and future growth.

Figure 12

Potential facility upgrades

Port Phillip and Western Port



Figure 13

Potential facility upgrades

Gippsland

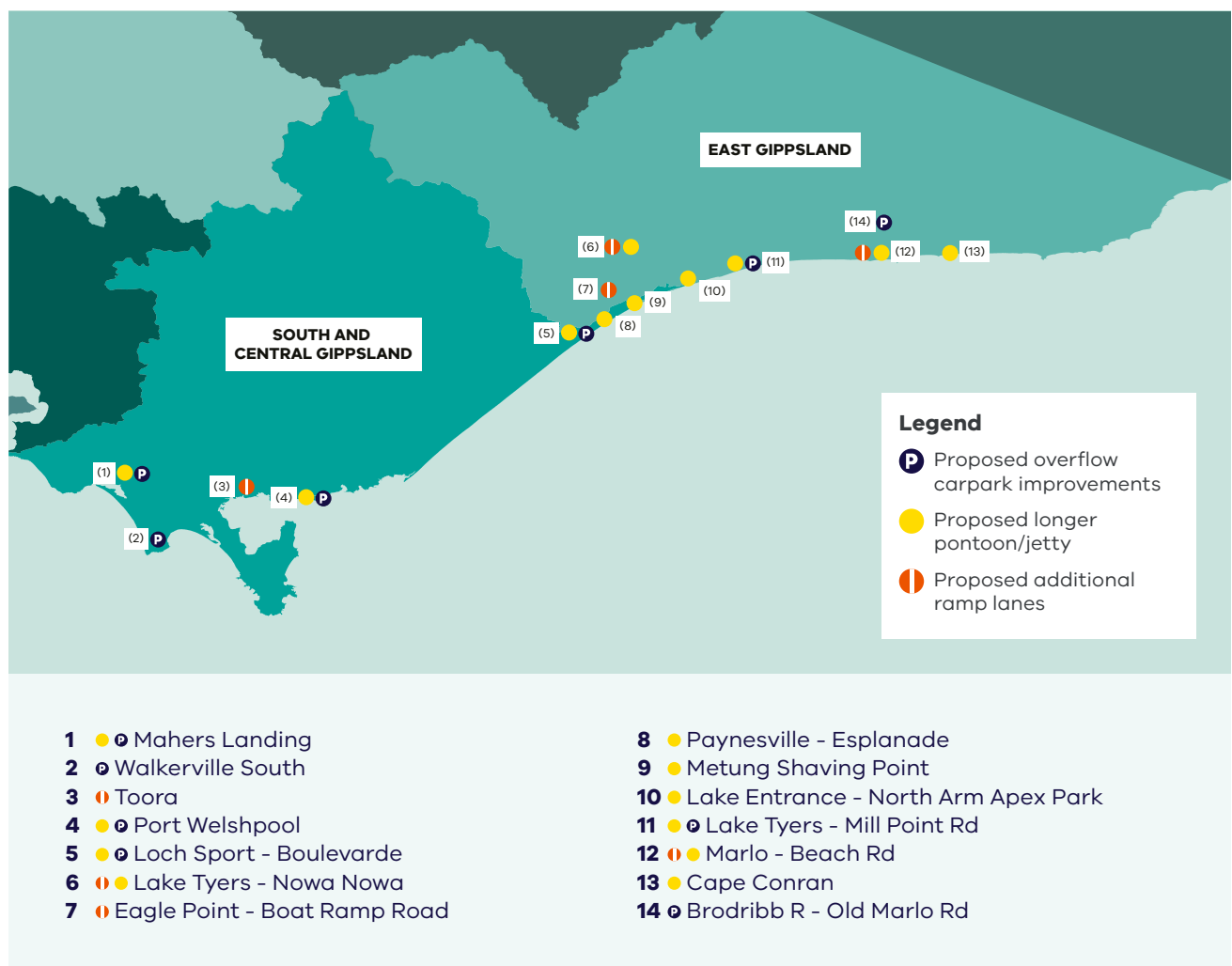


Figure 14

Potential facility upgrades

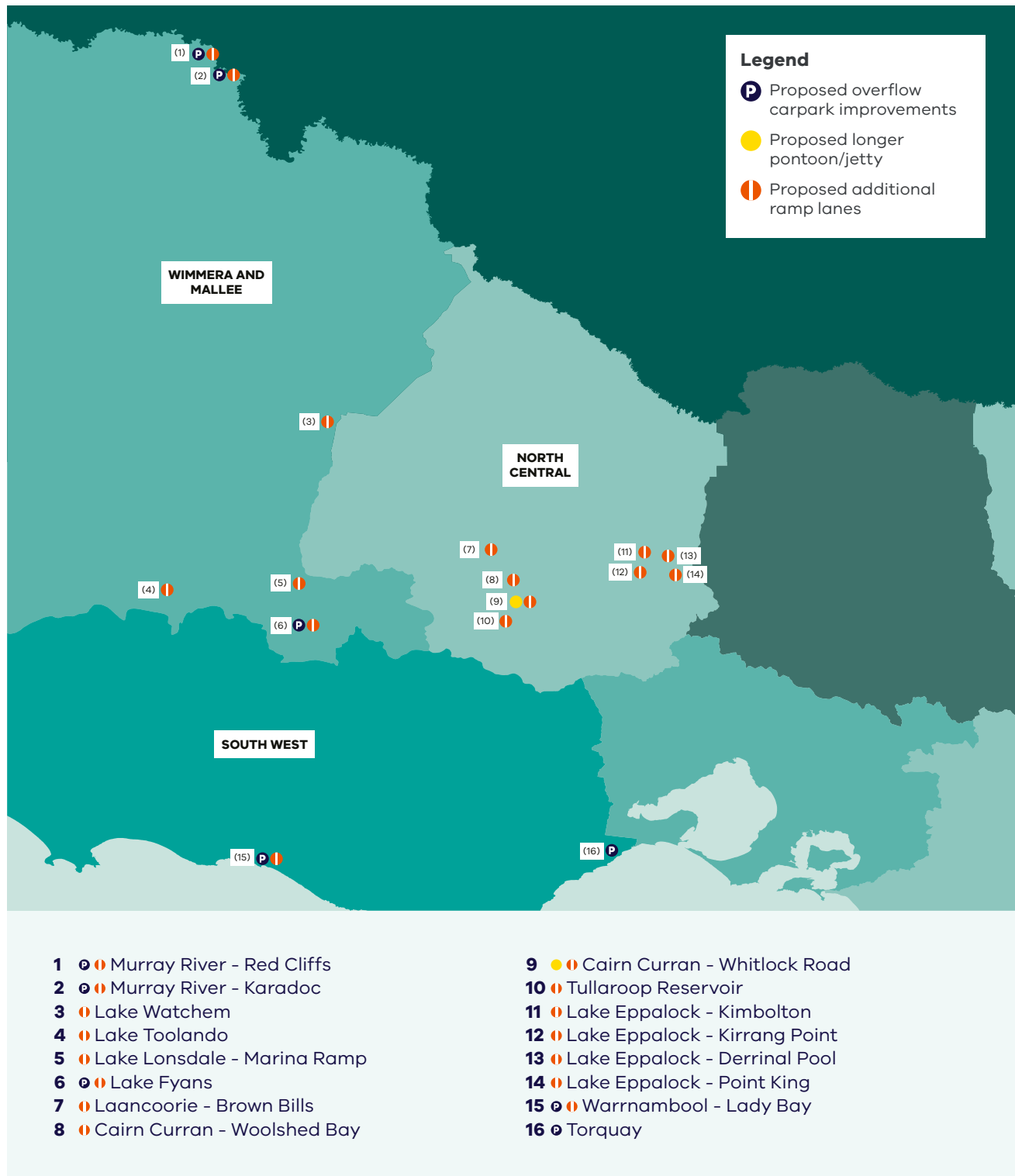
Goulburn Broken and North East



Figure 15

Potential facility upgrades

North Central, Wimmera Mallee and South West





Reducing Congestion

In addition to expanding facilities where possible, other opportunities will be investigated to reduce congestion at boating facilities, to ensure boaters are provided with the facilities needed launch and park their vessels.

Solutions to reduce congestion will be explored and where possible may include:

- additional car trailer unit parking where possible
- additional ramp lanes
- additional jetty and pontoon lengths
- improved technology i.e. web-cams
- improved facility designs and layout
- dry stacks and seasonal moorings
- investigating opportunities for overflow car/trailer parking
- partnership arrangements with asset/land managers.



Partnership Opportunities

Opportunities to partner with local government and private facilities to alleviate demand and congestion should be considered.

Availability of private facilities

Seek out opportunities to enter into arrangements during specified peak period with private facilities to make them available to the public.

Overflow car parking

Seek out opportunities to identify other overflow car parking opportunities with local governments.

Trial shuttle services

Seek out opportunities to shuttle boaters from vehicles to boat ramps with cooperative councils.

Dry stacking

Seek out opportunities to support dry stacking ventures, to alleviate the demand on our launch facilities.



Objective 3

Enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in destination locations

Berths, moorings and destination jetties

Priorities for provision of additional berths, moorings and tourist destination jetties to accommodate future growth have been identified. A program will be developed to increase the number of public berthings in marinas across Victoria.

Figure 16

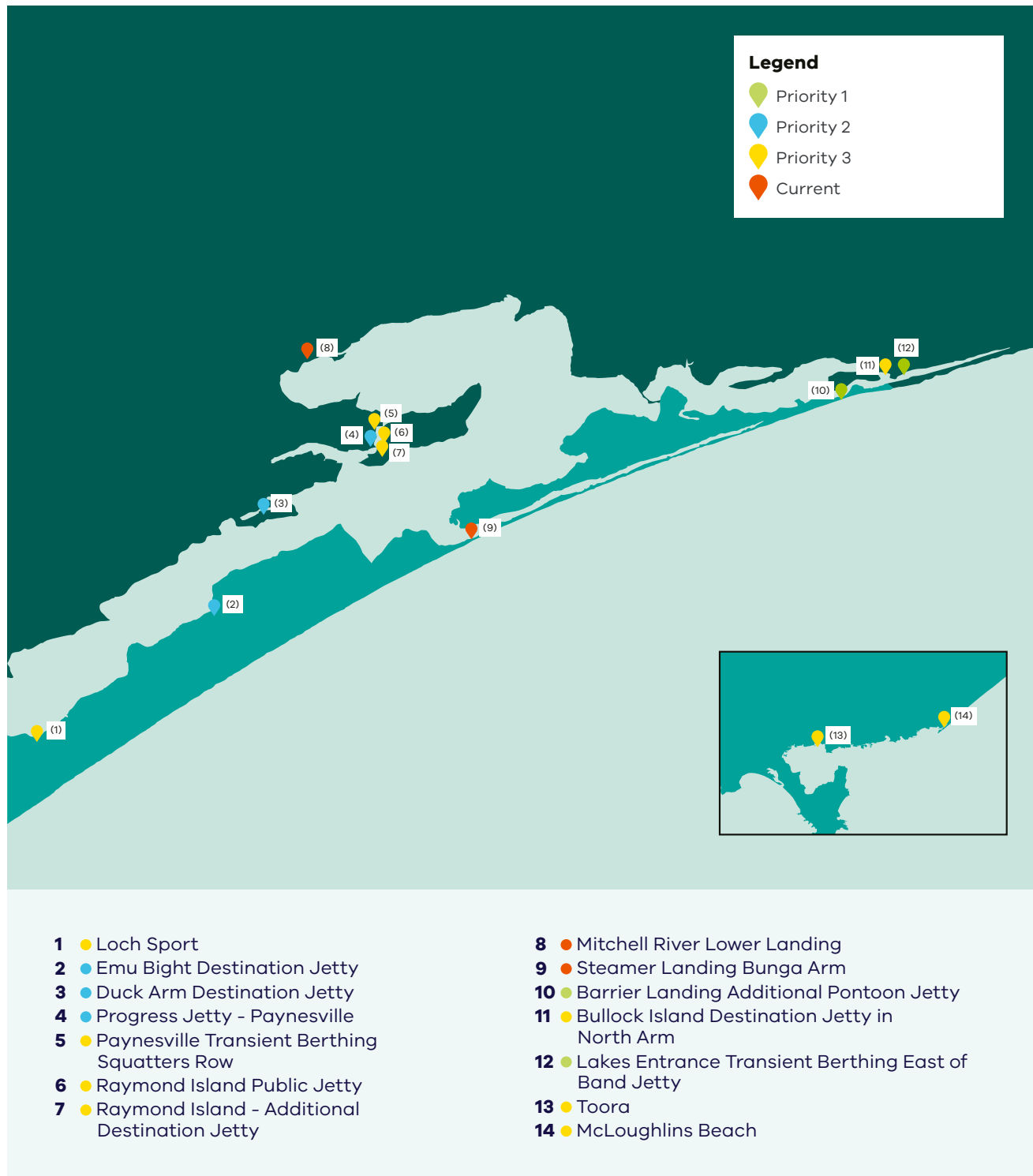
Potential additional berths, moorings and destination jetties

Port Phillip Bay and Western Port



Figure 17

Potential additional berths, moorings and destination jetties
Gippsland



Objective 4

Enhance the Victorian boating experience by improving access and navigation

Improving the boating experience includes better access (for example, dredged channels), separation of activity types (for example, swimming and powered vessels), appropriate rules, aids to navigation, visible and useful signage, and a balanced compliance, enforcement and education approach.

It also includes providing accessibility for all Victorians, particularly those who require assistance in using boating facilities.



Dredging coordination

To improve access, a coordinated best practice dredging program will be developed and centrally managed for public boat ramps across Port Phillip and Western Port, particularly for those facilities requiring routine maintenance dredging.

The dredging program will have the flexibility to incorporate new public boating facilities, should these be identified.

Figure 18

Dredging locations

Port Phillip Bay and Western Port





Accessible boating facility network

To ensure more people have access to waterways at our public boating facilities, we're looking to expand our accessible network, which will include universally designed pontoons, access davits and signage.



Waterway Management

Working with waterway managers, Maritime Safety Victoria will develop a program to review and support the delivery of waterway management requirements for recreational boating activities including regular waterway surveys and the periodic review of rules, aids to navigation, signage, compliance, education and use of operating zones.

A program will be delivered to support waterway managers by providing funding support for implementing recreational boating-related requirements.



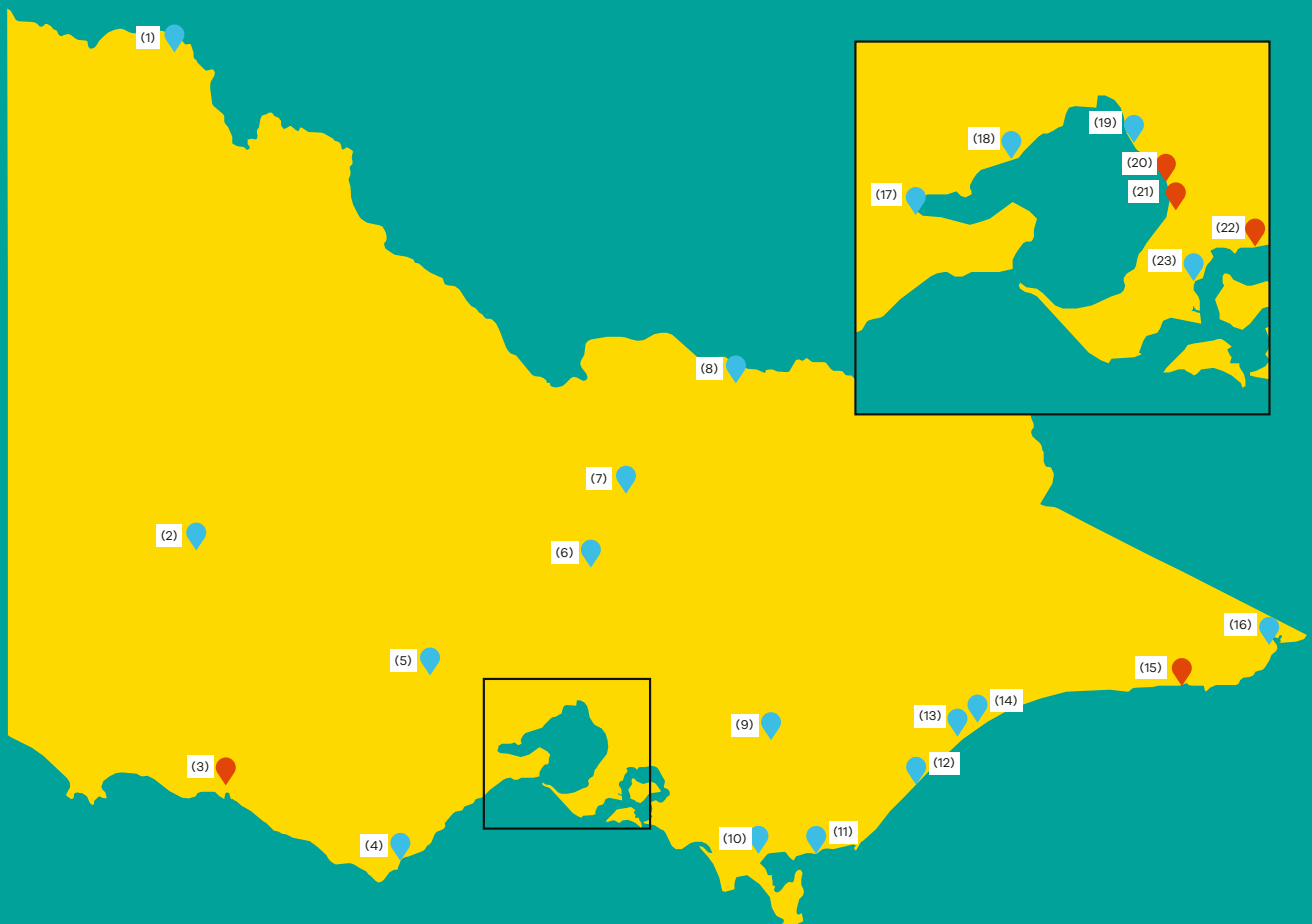
Figure 19

Potential new locations for all-access boating facilities

Legend

Existing

Proposed

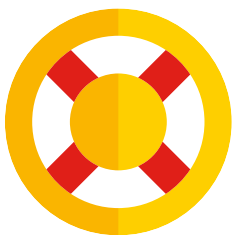


- 1 ● Murray River - Mildura
- 2 ● Wimmera River - Horsham
- 3 ● Hopkins River - Warrnambool
- 4 ● Apollo Bay
- 5 ● Lake Wendouree - Ballarat
- 6 ● Lake Nagambie
- 7 ● Goulburn River
- 8 ● Murray River - Lake Mulwala
- 9 ● Blue Rock Lake
- 10 ● Port Welshpool
- 11 ● Port Albert
- 12 ● Seacombe

- 13 ● Metung
- 14 ● Gippsland Lakes - Lake Entrance
- 15 ● Bemm River
- 16 ● Mallacoota
- 17 ● St Helens
- 18 ● Werribee South
- 19 ● St Kilda Marina
- 20 ● Mordialloc
- 21 ● Patterson River
- 22 ● Tooradin
- 23 ● Hastings

Objective 5

Improve waterway and boating safety by investing in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education



Boating safety education

Growth in the number of people enjoying the water increases congestion and can present a greater safety risk. Recreational users are competing to use the same limited waterway spaces for often incompatible activities, ongoing education regarding boating safety and vessel operation is critical to reducing injuries and fatalities.

Boating safety courses are available via accredited training providers including private industry and Marine Search and Rescue organisations. There are opportunities to expand and reinforce boating safety education through refresher or practical training course and during search-and-rescue call outs.

A revised boating education program will include campaigns, face-to-face boating safety education, and translation into other languages to assist the culturally and linguistically diverse boating community.



Boating Vic network

Boat ramp and carpark cameras have been installed or upgraded at several locations across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, creating the Boating Vic network. The Boating Vic app can be used to assess parking availability and weather conditions. To ensure more boaters can make informed decisions, the camera network will be expanded across Victoria.

Figure 20

Current and planned camera locations

Port Phillip Bay and Western Port



Figure 21

New camera locations

Regional Victoria





Australian Builders Plate and Hull Identification Number (HIN Scheme)

To improve vessel safety, improving and implementing Australian Builders Plate Standard and promotion of the desirable vessel safety features, will be undertaken in consultation with boating industry and the Australian Recreational Boating Safety Committee.

Concurrent with this process will be an examination of the implementation of a national HIN scheme, linked to the registration of the vessel and the associated vessel standard.



Review and revise waterway zoning

Maritime Safety Victoria will continue to review the Vessel Operating and Zoning Rules (VOZR) the general and local rules in collaboration with key stakeholders. The concentration of mixed water activities is giving rise to community concern for the safety of all water users. Existing waterway zoning may no longer be adequate to cater for increased extreme congestion.



MSAR priorities

Victorian boaters rely on MSAR units to respond to marine emergencies. The majority of MSAR functions is provided by volunteers.

Support for MSAR will be provided by:

- providing funding for recruitment, training, equipment, Utilities, fuel and maintenance
- developing MSAR capabilities through state-wide programs
- reducing the administration, governance and logistics burden on volunteers
- Ensure volunteers have access to modern, safe rescue equipment

In addition to supporting MSAR, the Government has delivered the provision of Marine Radio Victoria, which provides recreational vessels with a 24/7 emergency radio monitoring service on VHF and HF channels across the Victorian coastline. A review will be undertaken to assess the effectiveness and ongoing cost of the service.

Objective 6

Enhance the Victorian boating experience by promoting boating across Victoria

Boating makes an important social and economic contribution to Victoria. It plays a particularly important role in tourism. Boating and tourism are the economic lifeblood of regional centres such as Portland and Lakes Entrance.

A boating tourism plan will be developed to actively promote boating destinations in metropolitan and regional areas. The boating experience will also be promoted to encourage participation.

To enhance the boating experience, a series of boating destination trails will be developed based on suitability for different types of boating, supported by improved infrastructure, signage and tourism benefits.



Figure 22
Proposed boating destination trails



Objective 7

Improve the quality of the data and implement other reforms that will improve the boating experience



Improved data

To underpin future investments or to obtain an increased understanding of the boating experience, it is proposed that the regular boater experience and behaviour surveys and boating facility usage counts be undertaken. The collection of this data will aim to ensure a contemporary recreational boating experience, by being responsive to changing user needs and technology.

Data will be collected to test and understand Victorian recreational boaters' behaviour and attitudes toward safety, waterways and boating infrastructure. The data collected will inform the action plan priorities.



PWC Management

The growth in personal watercraft (PWC) necessitates a review of existing regulation, licensing and compliance frameworks, as well as education, engagement and enforcement activities.

These ongoing measures will help improve operator behaviour and reduce incidents on Victoria's waterways.

A holistic program will be developed to generate positive behaviour change among PWC operators through better education, engagement, enforcement and co-regulation.



Improved Licensing

Licensing reform will be considered using data to inform and strengthen the current training and assessment procedures with an aim to increase the level of understanding of operating requirements. This may consider:

- Licence testing changes which would require strengthened PWC endorsement needs
- A new licensing scheme making use of the accredited training providers
- Introducing practical licence testing including hands-on training and assessment



Improved support for enforcement

The delivery of on-water inspections are carried out by multiple agencies including Victoria Police, Maritime Safety Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority and Parks Victoria as well as port and waterway management bodies and local government.

Opportunities for improvements in the training and authorisation of Transport Safety Officers, data sharing and options for using surveillance and speed detection technology will be investigated.



Speed and distance rules

Collisions are the most common cause of serious injury and damage on Victorian waterways. Waterway rules will be reviewed and investigations will be undertaken to determine the potential extension of the Irregular Riding Rule to other waterways.



Abandoned and derelict vessels and responsible boat maintenance

There is growing interest in the concept of end-of-life for vessels around the world. Initiatives to date have focused on social responsibility, waste management, materials recovery and boat recycling. Providing a pathway where owners can appropriately dispose of derelict vessels may help resolve the situation and would also unlock berth capacity for new vessels. Any such facilities must be within proximity of boat owners wishing to dispose of their boat.

Opportunities to investigate options for boat recycling and disposal services across Victoria will be identified. Guidelines for responsible boat maintenance practices will also be developed.

05

Monitoring and performance criteria

Strategic Objective	Monitoring/Performance Criteria
1. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by supporting and improving the maintenance of our public facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition assessments of boating facilities improved year on year • Improved boater satisfaction (surveys) - Improvement in public's positive sentiment of boating facilities
2. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in renewing and building new boating facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the total number of facilities renewed • Increase in car-trailer parks year-on-year growth • Year-on-year comparison of revenue, amount of money into the fund and amount that was spent
3. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in destination locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of destination facilities provided • Improved boater satisfaction (surveys) - Increase visitation to regional boating locations
4. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by providing for improved access and navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to waterways by regular best practice dredging resulting in reduced Notice to Mariners across Port Phillip and Western Port alerting boaters to reduced water depth • Increase in the number of universal access locations
5. To improve waterway and boating safety by investing in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in boater's safety awareness (surveys) • Increased investment in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education • Reduced marine incidents - percentage incidents per 10,000 registered vessels as base
6. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by promoting boating across Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in boating registration year-on-year growth • Increase in facility-specific data counts of vessel launch and retrievals
7. To improve the quality of the data and implement other reforms that will improve the boating experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Boating Vic usage (year-on-year growth) • Increase in digital users and repeat users • Delivery of reform programs

06

Action plans and reporting

Each year, an annual action plan will be developed to put into effect each of the objectives in this strategy.

In addition, the *Marine Safety Act 2010* requires public reporting in relation to the Better Boating Fund. The Department of Transport will publish a report by 1 October each year on:

- revenue generated in marine licence and vessel registration fees
- amount of money deposited into the Better Boating Fund
- amount of money paid from the fund in the preceding financial year
- the projects and programs that have been funded
- a year-on-year comparison of revenue, amount of money into the fund and amount that was spent

Annexure

Actions Summary

Strategic Objective	Actions
1. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by supporting and improving the maintenance of our public facilities	a. Develop an asset management framework b. Develop a maintenance support program
2. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in renewing and building new boating facilities	a. Develop design guidelines for boating facilities b. Deliver boat ramp renewal program in accordance with priorities c. Deliver upgraded facilities d. Deliver new facilities e. Investigate options to reduce congestion at boating facilities
3. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by continuing to invest in destination locations	a. Develop a program to increase the number of public berths in marinas across Victoria. b. Provide for additional berths, moorings, and destination jetties in accordance with priorities
4. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by providing for improved access and navigation	a. Develop a coordinated dredging program b. Expand the network for accessible boat ramps at public facilities c. Develop a program to review and implement waterway management requirements

Strategic Objective	Actions
<p>5. To improve waterway and boating safety by investing in marine search and rescue and boating safety and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a revised boating education program b. Expand the Boating Vic camera network c. Improve and implement Australian Builders Plate Standard and promotion of the desirable vessel safety features d. Examine the implementation of a national HIN scheme e. Undertake reviews of waterway zones f. Continue to support marine search and rescue units g. Review Marine Radio Victoria to assess the effectiveness and ongoing cost of the service
<p>6. To enhance the Victorian boating experience by promoting boating across Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a program to promote the boating experience b. Develop a boating tourism plan c. Develop boating destination trails
<p>7. To improve the quality of the data and implement other reforms that will improve the boating experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Undertake regular boater experience and behaviour surveys and boating facility usage counts b. Develop a program to generate positive behaviour change among personal watercraft operators c. Consider strengthening licensing reform program d. Investigate improvements in data sharing and options for using surveillance and speed detection technology e. Investigations potential extension of the Irregular Riding Rule f. Investigate options for boat recycling and disposal services across Victoria

