



Invitation

Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour (on water) Events

Call for Dates 2025-2026

Open: 02/12/2024

Close: 31/12/2024



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Overview

Today the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour welcomes millions of visitors to its banks each year. With a growing appreciation of the waterway, has come increased popularity of activities on the river's edge and the use of the river for commercial operations, cultural and sporting events, sightseeing and a wide range of recreational activities.

Along with a commitment to connect people and parks, conserve Victoria's special places and provide benefits beyond park boundaries, Parks Victoria is calling for applications to conduct on water events on the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour.

Parks Victoria is the waterway manager for the waters of the:

- Yarra River (upstream of the Bolte Bridge to Dights Falls)
- Maribyrnong River (upstream of Shepherds Bridge/Footscray Road to the Canning St Bridge)
- Victoria Harbour, Docklands.

As the declared waterway manager Parks Victoria is responsible for managing and permitting events under the Marine Safety Act 2023 (Vic); Marine Safety Regulations 2023 (Vic) and the State waterway rules. These waterways are the focus for a variety of events including the Moomba Festival, Rowing Regattas, Firework displays and Dragon Boat festivals.

In the issuance of event permits, Parks Victoria's objective is to ensure protection of cultural and built heritage while respecting environmental and social attributes. Parks Victoria takes an adaptive management approach by evaluating the impacts and successes of each event and using this information to inform future decisions.

This document provides advice to event organisers seeking to hold on-water events on the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour during the 2024-2025 financial year.

The Opportunity

This Call for Dates application process is for Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour on-water major public events including:

- Large scale major events;
- Community or recreational events of more than 500 people;
- Events requesting the use of Fireworks
- Events requiring boating activity exemptions or exclusion zones; and
- Ticketed events attracting more than 500 participants.

Public events on the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers and Victoria Harbour include rowing regattas and events of statewide significance which complement the vision of Parks Victoria and the values of the waterways.

Events that are cultural, charitable or cause-related which are conducted for the purpose of attracting revenue, support, awareness and/or for entertainment purposes, and include the general public, are generally encouraged on the specified waterways.

The Locations

Yarra River

The Yarra River is recognised as one of Melbourne's most important recreation and landscape assets. It is a highly utilised waterway and other river users must be considered when planning events. Only events of state significance will be considered between Spencer Street Bridge and Princes Bridge which includes applications for fireworks displays.

Maribyrnong River

The Maribyrnong River has a lower volume of both recreational and commercial vessel traffic. The Maribyrnong River ranges in depth from two to three metres in the area managed by Parks Victoria.

Victoria Harbour

Organised events that occur in the harbour must be approved by Parks Victoria. The marinas at Victoria Harbour are managed by the City of Melbourne and a private operator (D'Albora Marinas).

Dights Falls and Upstream of Dights Falls

Dights Falls has become a popular site for kayaking and canoes. The current is strong and reliable all year due to upstream flow regulation at Upper Yarra Reservoir. It has a vertical drop and a depth of 2 metres and width of

50 meters.

Protection Authority's website www.epa.vic.gov.au.

Parks Victoria manages the Yarra River upstream of Dights Falls. Access for powered vessels is restricted due to lack of launching facilities upstream of Dights Falls. There are non-powered vessel launching facilities available above Dights Falls. Please contact Parks Victoria for further information regarding events and permit requirements for this section of the River.

Vessel Management

Access

There are no public boat ramps for motorised boats on the Yarra or Maribyrnong rivers. The nearest public boat launch is located at the Warmies, on North Road, Newport. A restricted boat ramp is managed by Parks Victoria at Burnley Harbour. If a boat ramp is required, please advise your assigned Customer Support Officer of this requirement.

Exclusion Zone

Many events that take place on Melbourne rivers require sections of navigable waters to be closed for event and spectator safety. As a waterway manager, Parks Victoria is responsible to ensure the safety of events that occur on our managed waterways.

Depending on the risk, location and number of participants, an exclusion zone may be required to ensure the safe operations of an event. An exclusion zone will be managed by Parks Victoria and the costs associated with staff and vessel time will be included in the event permit fee.

Flag System

A flag system was introduced by Parks Victoria to help provide a system of communication during events, such as rowing regattas to enable recreational and commercial vessels to pass through the course either between races or during breaks in a race schedule. Events that do not require an exclusion zone may utilise the flag system to assist vessel movements.

Environmental Considerations

Noise: Event organisers will need to ensure that outdoor activities such as playing amplified music, or other elements that will be louder than general noise (PA systems, horns etc) abide by the State Environment Protection Policy (Control of Music Noise from Public Premises) (SEPP N-2). Depending on the nature and scale of the event supporting documentation may be requested. If the proposed event will involve amplified music/sound event organisers will need to inform Parks Victoria as part of the event application. For more information please refer to the Environmental

Fireworks

Applications for Fireworks will only be considered on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the display and location. Please contact Parks Victoria for further information.

Infrastructure

Parks Victoria has a limited number of pontoons (6m x 4m) and gangways that are available for hire. Hire fees for the use of Parks Victoria infrastructure apply.

Please note the following important detail:

- Events might be impacted by the **Lower Yarra River Maintenance Dredging Program** which is planned to be undertaken in 2025. During the Dredging Program, exclusion zones will be present at various locations between Burnley Harbour and the Bolte Bridge which may impact access for events.
- **Rowing events** will require an **on-water marshal** to manage movements and egress from the water at the VRA landing, to ensure that the waters are clear and safe for vessel movements at Federation Wharf and Southgate. Unless deemed unnecessary by PV.
- **Rowing events** will require an **on water marshal** to place buoys and manage the upstream end of the exclusion zone for rowing regattas on the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers. Unless deemed unnecessary by PV.
- It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that the waters inside the exclusion zone are clear prior to beginning any activities.
- A 5-knot speed (9km/h) restriction applies to all vessels.
- When traveling along the Rivers ensure the you keep to the right of the channel. Vessels traveling downstream have right of way when transiting through bridges.
- Personal Water Craft are not permitted on the Yarra River, upstream of the Bolte Bridge, or on the Maribyrnong River.
- Swimming is not permitted in the Yarra River downstream from the Gipps Street Bridge or in the Maribyrnong River downstream of the Canning Street Bridge.
- Any written or oral directives given by the waterway manager must be obeyed at all times.
- Anchoring on the Yarra or Maribyrnong River is not permitted

Things to Know Before Applying to hold an Event on water

Parks Victoria is the waterway manager under the *Marine Safety Act 2023* for the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour.

The *Marine Safety Act 2023* enables a waterway manager (Parks Victoria) to make exemptions, in consultation with Transport Safety Victoria, to relevant laws (*Marine Safety Act 2023*, *Marine Safety Regulations 2023*, Waterway rules, and/or *Port Management (Local Ports) Regulation 2004*) that govern the operation of vessels and to create activity exclusion zones on the waterways it manages.

- The *Call for Dates application* is to be completed by persons who propose to conduct a waterway event/boating activity on managed waters and who wish to apply for either an exemption or an exclusion zone and exemption or modification from the application of provisions of the:
 - *Marine Safety Act 2023* (Vic);
 - *Marine Safety Regulations 2023* (Vic); and
 - State waterway rules.
- If you are conducting a series of events at different waterways, you may need to complete a separate application form for each waterway to address the safety issues for each individual location. As part of your application you will need to provide an assessment of safety risks associated with the boating activity exemption or modification and the proposed risk controls to be implemented to eliminate or reduce those safety risks. Your application cannot be considered without a risk assessment.
- You must have a **cancellation policy** outlining when the event will be cancelled if the safety risks are deemed too high for the event to go ahead or continue.
- There is no fee to lodge the *Call for Dates Application*.

Boating Activity Exemptions

A **Boating Activity Exemption (BAE)**, granted under section 2023 of the *Marine Safety Act 2023*, allows a person or event organiser to conduct organised boating activity or an on-water event or series of events on State waters that would, otherwise, be in contravention of a relevant law, rule or regulation. For more information on boating activity please visit <https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au>.

A waterway manager can only issue boating activity exemptions and exclusion zones in relation to the operation of vessels on waters under its control. **If your**

event requires exemption and/or exclusion zones, Parks Victoria is required to advertise these in the statewide newspaper, Government Gazette and on its website. **Please note that all advertising costs incurred will be passed on to the organiser, exclusion zone times are a legal requirement and cannot be amended on the day of the event.**

In order for a waterway manager to meet the requirements under the *Marine Safety Act 2023* (Vic), including assessment, government gazette and newspaper notices, **you must lodge a complete BAE application and associated documents 12 weeks before an event**

Assessment Criteria

Events are assessed annually for inclusion in the waterways Calendar of Events. Parks Victoria reserves the right to limit the number, type and size of events per year. Assessment is based on the following:

- Consistency with the purpose of the reservation as described in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*;
- Impact of the event on other river users, tenants, facilities, general public access, the environment, local traffic and parking;
- Suitable event timing;
- Experience in conducting events;
- Alignment with Parks Victoria Healthy Parks Healthy People principles;
- Capacity to provide necessary event documentation; and
- Reference checks, at the discretion of Parks Victoria.

Selection and Event Approval

If the event is deemed suitable for the on the Yarra, Maribyrnong river or Victoria Harbour, in principle approval will be provided to event organisers based on the details submitted in their *Call for Dates application*. However, upon receipt of your event application a Parks Victoria staff member may contact you to discuss your submission, clarify any items contained within and request additional information if required. These requirements will vary depending on the type and scale of event you are proposing, and may include securing permits or approvals from other relevant parties (Transport Safety Victoria, VicRoads, and Local Council etc.).

Please note: If an event has been held on the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour previously this does not automatically provide approval or a desired date.

their status and eligibility for community event pricing.

Call for Dates Assessment Timelines

Please allow a minimum 4 weeks for the review process to be undertaken once applications close. A longer period may be required for events requiring exemptions or exclusion zones on water.

Timing will be dependent on the number of applications received, date clashes between proposed events etc. Tentative approval of dates will be provided once the calendar has been finalised. However, an event is not approved until Parks Victoria has provided written confirmation to the event organiser by way of a *signed Event Permit*. This will only be provided once all prescribed requirements have been met.

Event Permit

The event permit outlines conditions under which event organisers agree to conduct their event. The permit is not in effect until Parks Victoria receives a signed copy agreeing to these conditions and is satisfied that all other conditions have been met. Parks Victoria reserves the right to withdraw an event from the Event Calendar if conditions are not met. Should prevailing circumstances prevent or restrict the event being held at a particular time or location Parks Victoria will, where possible, work with the event organiser to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.

Important note:

In the case of the scheduled event date being declared a day of Total Fire Ban or subject to extreme weather conditions any planned event may be cancelled at the discretion of Parks Victoria.

Event Fees

An event fee is charged according to size, scale and nature of the event as determined by Parks Victoria. Upon submission of an application an indicative fee can be supplied upon request. Parks Victoria requires the **permit fee** to be paid **prior to the event**.

Community Event Fee Schedule

Where a Permittee is a registered charitable organisation or a not for profit group, then event is to be considered a community event and the permit fee is set on a cost recovery basis.

Community Event pricing will apply where:

- The Permittee is a charity, or
- The Permittee is a not for profit group; or
- All net proceed from the event will be distributed to a charity or not for profit group.

In all cases, the onus is on the Permittee to establish

For events not applying the Community Event Fee Schedule, event fees will be calculated at market rates.

If applicable, fees for advertising in statewide newspapers, Government Gazette and on its website, if safety exemptions and exclusion zones are required.

Caring for our Open Spaces

As the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour include sites of natural and heritage significance; it is an expectation that the event permittee takes responsibility for looking after these spaces while occupying them. Where damage has been caused to the permit area Parks Victoria has a legal right to recover these costs arising out of Permittee's covenants within the standard terms and conditions of the event permit.

Pre and Post-Event Site Meetings

If your event involves the use of land adjacent to the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour, Parks Victoria will invite the event permittee and or/event organiser to pre and post-event site meetings so that site conditions are recorded and noted by both parties before and after the event.

Weather Contingency Considerations

Events should have a wet weather contingency plan for bump in/out and the event day to minimise damage. The event organiser will be held responsible for the payment of any repairs required following the event.

Other Considerations

- Comply with any requests made by Parks Victoria's Rangers as it is the Ranger's responsibility to ensure that the park is protected, all park visitors are safe and their enjoyment is not compromised.

Mandatory Documents

If your *Call for Dates application* is approved, Parks Victoria will grant an Event Permit subject to the provision of a:

- A copy of **the Event Map**. Hand drawn/incomplete maps will not be considered. The map must:
 - Reference all positions using Lat/Long coordinates to WGS84 (deg/dec/min).
 - Show the area of the event.
 - Show all proposed exclusion zones including safety distances between area of use, shore, infrastructure and direction of travel.
 - Show the type and location of all infrastructure including markers/ buoys, boat ramps, moored infrastructure and moored vessels.
 - Show the emergency access point from the water and first aid location.
- A copy of a **Certificate of Currency** showing current validity of public liability insurance. You must have a minimum of \$20m public liability insurance coverage for the event, noting the interest of Parks Victoria.
- A copy of your **Communications Plan**.
- A copy of your **Safety Management Plan (SMP)**, if the event is operating under the rules/safety management plan of a national or state recognised body approved by the Safety Director.
- **Full programmed/running sheet** of the event including bump in and bump out details.
- **Other Agency** approvals as identified throughout assessment.
- A **Risk Management Plan**.
- If you have not provided your **Cancellation Procedure** at question 37, attach it as a separate document.

Additional Supporting Documents

Depending on the scale and nature of the event the following maybe requested:

- **Child Protection Plan** - if your event involves children, please consider your obligations under the Working with Children Act 2005.
- **Communications Plan** - outline how event organisers will notify affected stakeholders of the event.
- **Liquor Licence** - Parks Victoria must approve the sale and consumption of alcohol at any event, after which the event organiser needs to obtain a liquor licence from the Victorian Department of

Justice and abide by conditions of the permit. For more information, please refer to their website: www.vcglr.vic.gov.au/home/liquor;

- **Noise Management Plan** - outlining mechanisms to ensure compliance with State Environment Protection Policy abide by the State Environment Protection Policy (Control of Music Noise from Public Premises) (SEPP N-2);
- **Occupancy Permit for a Place of Public Entertainment (POPE)** - which is obtained from the City of Melbourne (please refer to City of Melbourne website for information relating to prescribed temporary structures www.melbourne.vic.gov.au). This document confirms your event complies with the Building Act and must be displayed at all times during your event. City of Melbourne will inspect the event site on the morning of your event to ensure you have met the requirements set down in this document;

Other Agency approvals identified throughout assessment;

- **Pedestrian and Crowd Management Plan** (for events that have the potential to impact the general public movements through the park);
- **Public Performance of Sound Recordings (PPCA Licence)** for events that involve the playing of sound recordings or music videos in public. For more information please refer to their website: www.pcca.com.au;
- **Resident Notification Plan** - a notification letter to residents, typically requested for events involving road closures and amplified noise. Parks Victoria staff will advise during the planning phase if this will be a requirement for your event;
- **Signage Plan** directional, promotional, emergency, flags, banners and VMS etc;
- **Temporary Food Handling Permits** Food vendors must adhere to the Food Act 1984;
- **Traffic Management Plan (TMP)** (if closing Parks Victoria managed roads). TMP prepared in consultation with VicRoads, local Council and Parks Victoria. The TMP must include parking, signage, signage distances, method of communication and **Victorian Police Major Events Unit** notification.

If **drones** are proposed at your event, you must also provide:

- Aircraft Operations Plan including:
 - Take off and land zone;
 - Proposed flight path;
 - Proposed exclusion zone; and
 - Proposed location of spotters.
- Factsheets of all proposed aircrafts;
- Remotely Piloted Aircraft Licence for all proposed pilots;
- Operator's certificate;
- Operator's certificate of currency of public liability insurance;
- Job Safety Analysis; and
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) area approval (if required).

Important note: Heavy restrictions apply to the use of Remotely Piloted Aircrafts (RPAs) within the waterways precinct. Please note LATE applications cannot be accepted for drone use due to legislative approvals required

What Happens Next?

- The waterway manager will assess your application and may forward it (and the required Notification/ declaration/ notice) to the Safety Director, Maritime Safety Victoria.
- You may be required to provide further information to support your application.
- The waterway manager will notify you of the decision.
- If granted, the exemption declaration will be published in a newspaper circulating generally throughout Victoria (exemptions from state wide advertising may be given if it can be shown that the requirement has been substantially complied with and been adequately achieved through alternative means or is impracticable or inappropriate) and on the waterway manager's website. Please note that all advertising costs incurred will be passed on to the event organiser.
- Exclusion zone notices will be published in the Government Gazette.

Further Information for Event Organisers

Event organisers are required to review the following information before submitting an event application to hold an event on the Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour:

- [Parks Victoria Bays and Waterway Guidelines](#)
- [Transport Safety Victoria Website - Maritime Safety Victoria](#)
- [Waterway Rules - Vessel Operating and Zoning Rules \(VOZR\)](#)
- [Boating Activity Exemptions and Exclusion Zones](#)
- [Recreational Boating Safety Handbook](#)
- [Recreational Boating Safety - Minimum Safety Equipment](#)
- Other useful documentation that accompanies these guidelines (located on the [Parks Victoria Website](#))

Submission Details

To lodge an 2025/2026 Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour Event call for dates application, please complete all areas on the applicable online form and submit by **Tuesday 31st December 2024** with any additional information requested via https://apac-app.priava.com/api/parks_victoria-CFD-BaysandWaterways/oem/dist/#/

Any further questions can be made via the below contacts.

Attention: Call for Dates 2025-2026 Events for Yarra, Maribyrnong rivers or Victoria Harbour

Customer Permits and Agreements Team
Parks Victoria
65 Church Street, Morwell VIC 3840
 Email: events@parks.vic.gov.au

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