

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

May 2021



Portarlington Pier Improvement Works

What is happening at the pier?

Portarlington Pier is being upgraded and improved as part of the Victorian Government's Building Works economic stimulus initiative. Once complete, the pier improvements will include a safer all-weather covered walkway from the foreshore to the ferry service, a strengthened pier head to enable vehicle access for the aquaculture industry and emergency response, and a new accessible low landing for improved water access.

How are the works funded?

The works are part of the Victorian Government \$24 million Building Works economic stimulus. The total project cost is \$9.6 million.

When will work start and how long will it take?

The next stage of work will begin mid-April 2021 and continue for approximately 18 months to September 2022.

What work is being done and when?

Work will be carried out over five programmed stages. Timing may vary due to weather and approvals.

Stage	Activity	Timing
1	Replacement of pier head and low landing	Apr to Nov 2021
2	Removal of old pier	May to Jun 2021
3	Construction of rock groyne (proposed)	TBC
4	Construction of covered walkway	Jun 2021 to Jun 2022
5	Landscape and other improvement works	Jul to Sep 2022

What has already been done?

The first stage of upgrades was completed in 2017, and included construction of the new pier, expansion of commercial and recreational berthing facilities, and construction of the eastern groyne for greater weather protection.

Why is Portarlington Harbour significant?

Portarlington is home to Port Phillip's mussel farming industry, Port Phillip Ferries which provide an important passenger ferry link between Melbourne Docklands and Portarlington, as well as being a popular holiday destination and regional place to live. The harbour is used by commercial operators, recreational boaters, anglers and other visitors.

Why are the works needed?

The Portarlington Safe Harbour Masterplan 2009 identified a vision of creating a high-quality precinct incorporating commercial aquaculture and recreational fishing, boating, passive and active recreation and tourism activities for the local community and greater Bellarine Peninsula. The outcome will be a more functional facility that offers safer all abilities access to pedestrians, enhanced visual amenity, all weather access to the ferry terminal from the foreshore, and a longer sustainable life.

Will the new pier be closed at any time?

No pier closures are currently planned. Temporary access from the new pier walkway to the new section of the pier head will be installed to enable continued access to recreational berths and the groyne for walking and fishing.

What are the impacts to visitors and community during the work?

Maintaining safe access for commercial operators, as well as fishers, boaters and pedestrians is a priority during construction. Access may be varied (but not fully restricted) to sections of the pier and groyne at times to enable safe construction, and will be communicated through onsite signage. There may be some visual amenity and noise impacts. A fenced works site will be established in the foreshore car park for the duration of the works.

Can I still fish from the pier?

Yes fishing / angling will still be possible from the pier and groyne unless otherwise signed, but not from the low landing. This will be closed when works commence in this area until replaced.

Can I still berth my boat at the harbour?

Yes, recreational and commercial berthing facilities will remain open and accessible, with the exception of the public low landing. This will be closed for replacement once work commences in this area. Alternate berthing /unloading areas for commercial operators who use the landing will be arranged through Parks Victoria.

Will the ferry operate as usual?

Yes, the ferry service will continue to operate as usual. As is currently the case, pedestrians and authorised vehicles will continue to share access on the western side of the new pier while the covered walkway is being installed.

Where is the new groyne being built?

A new rock groyne is proposed to be constructed on the western side of the harbour to reduce wave height, protect the ferry berth and reduce sand migration into the harbour leading to reduced frequency and scale of harbour dredging. These works are subject to consent under the Marine and Coastal Act. Community engagement will be undertaken as part of the consent process.

Will the works continue in the summer?

Works will be suspended from 18 December 2021 to the end of January 2022 to minimise impacts during the peak season.

What is the Portarlington Pier Artwork Project?

The Portarlington Pier Artwork Project is collaboration between Parks Victoria and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, who are the Registered Aboriginal Party of the Portarlington area. The artwork, created through a collaboration of over 100 Wadawurrung families, is part of the broader pier improvements, specifically the covered walkway. This project began in late 2019 when options for the pier works were being discussed and Parks Victoria recognised the importance of incorporating traditional ownership in a design element. In 2020, discussions were held with the Wadawurrung and collaboration began. Over 107 families based in Victoria, interstate and internationally responded by contributing artwork.

What do the illustrations represent?

The artwork captures the stories of place, reflected through water, sand, shells and salt water species, and intended to connect people with the cultural significance of place and appreciate being on Wadawurrung Country. The artwork reflects the moving water and the water species significant to the Wadawurrung people. When walking along the water, or snorkelling or fishing, you will see the species in the water or on the sand. Wadawurrung people walked, fished, speared in this area using their Traditional Cultural knowledge, collecting and gathering, living a sustainable life with no greed or harm to Country.

How will the artwork be applied to the walkway?

The artwork will be created by computer laser cutting sheets of metal with a variety of different sized holes, ranging from 3 – 8mm diameter. The different size holes will help to create the detail of the pictures. The metal panels will be anodised with a paint-like finish. The clear viewing panels between the metal panels will have wave graphics applied at the top and bottom, creating a continuity to the design, while allowing excellent light entry and views of the water and background beyond.

How were the improvements determined?

Parks Victoria worked with local stakeholders during the Master Plan development phase for the broader improvements, and more recently in 2020 to finalise the design of the walkway, pier head and low landing, and artistic integrations for the walkway cover. Community will be given the opportunity to review the groyne design as part of the Marine and Coastal consent process.

Who is doing the work?

Parks Victoria manage Portarlington Harbour and is responsible for the upgrade works and ongoing maintenance.

When is the next dredging operation?

Parks Victoria will conduct routine maintenance dredging in Portarlington Harbour from late April to late May 2021 to ensure safer access for vessels. The dredging will focus on the recreational berths on the northern side of the harbour and the existing low landing area. The dredged material will be placed on Portarlington Beach and east of the harbour beach.

Will there be closures during dredging?

Access to some areas of the beach may be restricted while the works are in progress. Parks Victoria will liaise with owners of affected vessels berthed in the harbour to facilitate required access.

Is the dredged sand safe?

Freshly dredged sand contains organic material, mostly seaweed, giving it a dark colour and sometimes a mild odour. While the dredged sand may look and smell mildly unpleasant when it first comes out of the water, after a few days' exposure to the air and sun, the sand will bleach to the normal colour and lose the odour. The quality of water will not be affected during the dredging but may appear cloudy until the sand settles.

Further information

Learn more about the Portarlington Harbour improvements by visiting parks.vic.gov.au/projects or subscribe to regular updates via email info@parks.vic.gov.au.

