



# Rhyll Local Port Area Plan

December 2024



# Acknowledgement of Country

Victoria's network of parks and reserves form the core of Aboriginal cultural landscapes, which have been modified over many thousands of years of occupation. They are reflections of how Aboriginal people engaged with their world and experienced their surroundings and are the product of thousands of generations of economic activity, material culture and settlement patterns. The landscapes we see today are influenced by the skills, knowledge and activities of Aboriginal land managers. Parks Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these cultural landscapes, recognising their continuing connection to Victoria's parks and reserves and their ongoing role in caring for Country.

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**Cover image:** Rhyll Jetty (Source: *Better Boating Victoria*, 2023)



## Executive summary

Located on Bunurong Sea Country, Rhyll Jetty on Phillip Island provides a gateway for many maritime tourism and recreational pursuits. It plays a significant role in supporting wildlife cruises, cruise ship tenders, recreational boating and fishing as well as promenading for the local community.

Parks Victoria developed this Local Port Area Plan (plan) for the jetty to ensure it continues to be a safe and thriving maritime facility for years to come.

Local Port Area Plans are delivered under the *Sustainable Local Ports Framework 2021* to help the Victorian Government prioritise investment and deliver critical local port infrastructure that works in a way which is fair for all Victorians. The Rhyll Local Port Area Plan seeks to celebrate the character of Rhyll while responding to existing and future demands while improving safety and accessibility.

The plan provides direction for the replacement of Rhyll Jetty, including a replaced jetty approach, a widened landing for gathering, along with a new pontoon pier head. This pontoon will provide all-tide access and improve accessibility for all.

The plan is based on comprehensive technical investigations and studies, along with stakeholder and community engagement. The plan responds to identified aspirations, challenges and provides a place-based response to enhance Rhyll Jetty.

The proposals in this plan will inform future funding bids and management actions.

## Contents

|          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction .....</b>                             | <b>5</b>  |
| 1.1      | Planning process .....                                | 5         |
| 1.2      | Site location and study area.....                     | 5         |
| 1.3      | Strategic context .....                               | 6         |
| 1.4      | Vision.....   | 7         |
| 1.5      | Purpose and objectives .....                          | 7         |
| 1.6      | Policy context.....                                   | 7         |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Local Port Area Plan development approach.....</b> | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1      | Stakeholder and Community Consultation .....          | 8         |
| 2.2      | Design criteria .....                                 | 9         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Proposing a future for Rhyl Jetty .....</b>        | <b>10</b> |
| 3.1      | Preferred design solution.....                        | 10        |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Next steps .....</b>                               | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5</b> | <b>References.....</b>                                | <b>12</b> |



# 1 Introduction

Maintaining piers that are safe to the public is core business for local ports managers. This Local Port Area Plan (plan) sets out a future direction for Rhyll Jetty to ensure it responds to the current and future needs of users and continues to support local and regional tourism. The proposals in this plan will inform future funding bids and management actions.

## 1.1 Planning process

The preparation of this plan began with a review of existing condition reports, analysis of current and future demand and technical assessments (Refer to *Background Technical Report, Rhyll Jetty – Local Port Area Plan 2024* for details). Parks Victoria met with stakeholders to identify key challenges, values and their aspirations to inform the design solution for the future jetty layout. The community were also invited to provide feedback on the design, informing this final version of the plan.

## 1.2 Site location and study area

Rhyll is located on Bunurong Land and Sea Country on the north-eastern coastline of Phillip Island, 6km east of Cowes. The local port area is popular with people accessing the many great recreational boating and fishing opportunities on offer in Western Port.

Rhyll Jetty provides on-water access to Phillip Island tourism attractions and supports local tour operators. It is also an important destination for the cruise shipping industry, which brings domestic and international visitors to the region.

The number of passengers arriving at Rhyll has significant economic benefits, enhances its status as a desirable tourist destination, and provides for the Rhyll Community Association who welcome visitors and promote tourism at Rhyll.

Historically, a jetty was originally constructed at the site in 1877 and has subsequently been replaced several times. The current structure was built in the 1980s and is nearing the end of its serviceable life.



Figure 1: Site Location (Source: MapshareVic, 2024)

Rhyll is a quiet, seaside village supporting a range of water-based tourism and recreational activities. Figure 2 shows the study area for this plan, including the following notable features:

- Rhyll Jetty
- Rhyll Boat Ramp
- Rhyll Slipway

Parks Victoria is the port manager for the local port of Western Port and the Committee of Management for Rhyll Jetty. The Rhyll boat ramp is managed by Bass Coast Shire (Council) and was recently upgraded in 2022. Council is also responsible for managing the adjacent Crown Land reserve, which includes the carpark and picnic facilities.



Figure 2 – Study area (Source: FSC Range, 2024)

### 1.3 Strategic context

The Victorian Government has developed the *Sustainable Local Ports Framework 2021* (framework) which serves as a long-term strategy for the management and maintenance of piers and jetties.

The framework provides a consistent planning and decision-making pathway to support wider precinct planning through local port area plans. Four principles will be applied to prioritise future upgrades and improvements. These include Local Economy and Job Growth, Tourism and Recreation, Emergency Response Capabilities, and Community and Cultural Value.

## 1.4 Vision

**Rhyll Jetty will provide for safe and efficient commercial and recreational maritime uses, while supporting marine-based tourism for the region.**

## 1.5 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the Rhyll Local Port Area can continue to support a range of water-based tourism and recreational activities. This will be achieved by developing a future layout for a rebuilt Rhyll Jetty that:

- Provides berthing for Licensed Tour Operator (LTO) vessels.
- Provides short-term berthing for cruise ship tenders and recreational vessels to load and unload passengers.
- Provides for the safe and efficient movement of passengers.
- Provides recreational fishing, walking and viewing opportunities.
- Complies with relevant standards.
- Considers the local wave climate and climate change impacts such as sea level rise.



Figure 3 – Rhyll Jetty, and part of the boat ramp in the foreground (Source: Better Boating Victoria, 2023)

## 1.6 Policy context

The objective and principle of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* centres around the preservation and maintenance of the marine and coastal environment, with a focus on ensuring its longevity for future generations. In line with this, the *Marine and Coastal Policy 2020* (Policy) provides a 15-year vision that envisions a ‘healthy, dynamic and biodiverse marine and coastal environment that is valued in its own right and that benefits the Victorian community, now and in the future’. It serves as a strategic guide for planning processes, management approaches, as well as decision-making protocols.

Furthermore, the Policy is supported by the *Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022* (Strategy). This strategic framework outlines a series of prioritised actions to be undertaken over the course of the next five years to effectively achieve the objectives set forth in the Policy. The Strategy recognises that formal and informal collaboration is required for effective and integrated delivery. The Victorian Government, Traditional Owners, marine and coastal managers, communities, and individuals all have important roles and responsibilities in the joint implementation of this Strategy.



The Plan utilises both the *Marine and Coastal Policy 2020* and *Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022* to lead the management of Victoria's marine and coastal environment at this site.

## 2 Local Port Area Plan development approach

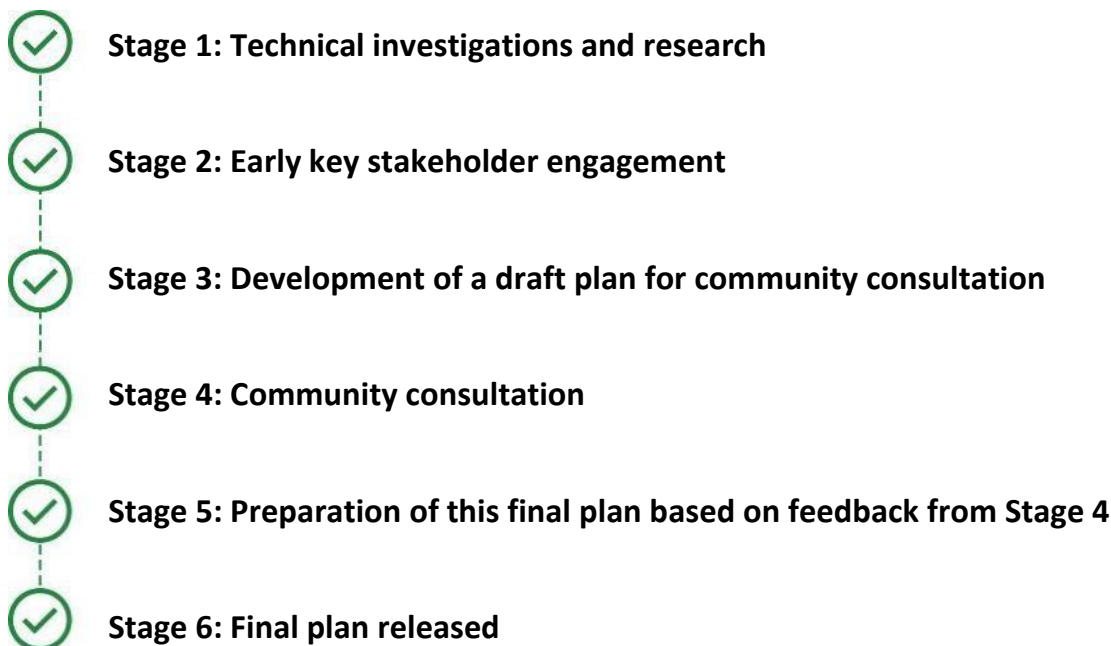


Figure 4 – Project schedule (Parks Victoria, 2024)

### 2.1 Stakeholder and Community Consultation

A Project Reference Group (PRG) was formed with representatives from key organizations, including Parks Victoria and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLAC). This group actively advises on the development of the plan, ensuring a collaborative approach that considers diverse perspectives.

BLCAC provided a Cultural Values Statement for Rhyll, Millowl (Phillip Island) outlining three key themes for interpretation; Country, People and Place. Parks Victoria will continue to engage with BLCAC on future planning and works related to the Rhyll Local Port Area Plan.

Stakeholder and community input was sought during development of this plan.

- Stage 1 (November 2023-February 2024): Key stakeholders were engaged to gather insights around current uses, key considerations, and ideas to help inform a draft plan.
- Stage 2 (July-August 2024): The purpose of this consultation was to seek community views on the draft proposal to inform the final plan. Feedback was captured through survey participation on the Engage Victoria digital engagement platform.

Key community feedback was as follows:

- There was a medium level of interest in the project with regards to views on the Engage Victoria project page, and 29 people provided feedback.
  - 64% of participants support the design, with the most important feature nominated as “*Maintaining the character of the Jetty*”.



- Several people mentioned improved accessibility as a positive, particularly around cruise ship tenders and tourism.
- The most common activity nominated was boating followed by exercising or sightseeing.

For a detailed summary of the insights and perspectives gathered during the consultation process, refer to the *Rhyll Local Port Area Plan Community Engagement Summary* (Aug 2024).



Figure 5 – Rhyll Jetty from the foreshore (Source: [www.vintagevictoria.net.au](http://www.vintagevictoria.net.au), 2024)

## 2.2 Design criteria

The team thoroughly reviewed existing condition reports, technical documents, and stakeholder feedback to establish key considerations and design criteria. These criteria serve as essential goals that will guide the proposed plan toward achieving the vision for Rhyll Jetty once funding is secured.

**Table 1:** Development of the design criteria

| Consideration  | Design criteria   |
|--|---|
| Rhyll Jetty is approaching the end of its service life and will not be able to facilitate future recreational and tourism demands.   | Ensure Rhyll Jetty continues to facilitate long-term berthing of LTO vessels and short-term berthing of recreational vessels and cruise ship tenders.   |
| The site is constrained by the proximity of the boat ramp infrastructure to the northeast and the relative shallowness of the water inside the jetty head and to the west. | Reconstruction of the jetty on the same alignment and length, ensuring size and layout of overall structure remain similar in scale to existing jetty to reflect identified site constraints. |
| There is potential for crowd congestion on the jetty when cruise ship tenders are loading or unloading passengers.   | Provide a wider section along the jetty approach to allow for crowd dispersal and reduce congestion.  |
| Safety and accessibility should be prioritised.  | Improve safety and accessibility on the jetty.  |
| Rhyll has a large tidal range, which restricts access to the fixed jetty structure at high and low tides.  | Improve functional performance across full tidal range, ensuring the structure is designed for the local wave and tidal climate.  |



**Table 2:** How the proposed plan responds to the design criteria

| Design criteria   | Proposed plan   |
|---|---|
| Ensure Rhyll Jetty continues to facilitate long-term berthing of LTO vessels and short-term berthing of recreational vessels and cruise ship tenders.                                     | Facilitates the specified berthing requirements.  |
| Reconstruction of the jetty on same alignment and length, ensuring size and layout of overall structure remain similar in scale to existing jetty to reflect identified site constraints. | On the same alignment, with the same overall length and T-head length which responds to the identified site constraints.  |
| Provide a wider section along the jetty approach to allow for crowd dispersal and reduce congestion.  | A widened landing zone will reduce congestion and allow for crowd dispersal, particularly during the arrival/departure of cruise ship tenders.  |
| Improve safety and accessibility on the jetty.  | Handrails on both sides of the jetty will improve safety, accessibility, and will result in greater pedestrian flow.<br><br>A new 1:14 DDA compliant gangway will provide the main access to the T-head, and will be wider than the current gangway.<br><br>Tourism and recreational activities using a floating berth will result in all-tide accessibility. |
| Improve functional performance across full tidal range, ensuring the structure is designed for the local wave climate.  | The proposed new pontoon provides berthing and pedestrian access across the full tidal range, which the current fixed jetty head and low landing do not.  |
| Ensure the heritage feel of the jetty is maintained   | Material selection e.g. timber, handrail design etc reflects the 19 <sup>th</sup> century fishing village character   |

## 4 Next steps

This plan provides direction for Rhyll Jetty and its surrounds which will inform future investment and management actions. Implementation of the new jetty is subject to design development, further consultation with relevant stakeholders and attaining relevant statutory approvals and funding.

Parks Victoria will continue to consult with BLCAC for the final jetty proposal as well as with Bass Coast Shire to potentially improve the car park and pedestrian access from the carpark and coach drop off to the jetty approach (which is outside Parks Victoria's area of management).

The condition of Rhyll Jetty will continue to be monitored to ensure visitor safety.



## 5 References

| Title   | Author  | Date       |
|---|---|------------|
| <i>Marine and Coastal Act 2018</i>  | Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action                    | 2018       |
| <i>Marine and Coastal Policy 2020</i>                                       | Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action                    | 2020       |
| <i>Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022</i>                                     | Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action                    | 2022       |
| <i>Sustainable Local Ports Framework</i>                                    | Department of Transport and Planning (formerly Department of Transport) | 2021       |
| <i>Bass Coast Shire Economic Impact of Cruise Ships</i>                     | Urban Enterprise, for Bass Coast Shire Council                          | May 2023   |
| <i>Background Technical Report, Rhyll Jetty – Local Port Area Plan 2024</i> | FSC Range   | March 2024 |

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