

Sandringham Harbour – Local Ports Area Plan Project

Stakeholder focus groups key findings

About the project

For over 100 years, Sandringham Harbour has been an iconic yachting and boating destination within Port Phillip and an important focal point for the community. More recently it has become a popular place for ‘off the beach’ boating activities such as kayaking and paddle boarding.

To ensure that it continues to be a safe and efficient maritime precinct and responds to changing community needs for many more years to come, Parks Victoria is developing the **Sandringham Harbour Local Ports Area Plan**. Consultants AW Maritime have been appointed to prepare the draft and final plan.

The plan, which focusses on the ‘on water’ components of the precinct, aims to:-

1. define the vessel channels,
2. propose a future for Hampton Pier,
3. provide direction regarding the future of public swing moorings and berths within the harbour,
4. identify and provide for existing and emerging off the beach boating activities.

A future ready plan will help guide Victorian Government local ports infrastructure investment priorities and provide a more sustainable approach to meeting economic, tourism and community needs.

Consultation overview

A project reference group (PRG) comprising representatives from Parks Victoria, Bayside City Council and Department of Transport will advise on the project.

Stakeholder and community input will be sought at key stages of the development of the plan as follows:-

- Stage 1: September 2021. Key stakeholders and user groups will be engaged to gather early information that will help inform the draft plan.
- Stage 2: First Quarter 2022. The broader community will be invited to view the draft plan and provide feedback to inform the final plan.

This document provides a summary of the outcomes of the Stage 1 stakeholder consultation conducted in September 2021. It does not reflect the agreed position of all participants or Parks Victoria, however provides a summary of points raised to be considered in the preparation of the draft plan. See Table 2 for the list of user groups that participated.

Key findings

Sandringham Harbour is a thriving precinct on Port Phillip. While the harbour has traditionally supported a strong sailing and motorised boating presence, the fast growing ‘off the beach’ non powered boating sector is also evident at this precinct.

Hundreds of vessels like yachts, dinghies, kayaks, canoes, personal watercraft (PWC), stand-up paddle boards (SUP’s), sail boards, tenders and motor boats call the harbour home using it as the key point of access to Port Phillip for recreational, competitive and commercial boating activities.

Focus group participants conveyed the value the environment and sense of community that the harbour and foreshore also supports. It provides for more than just boating; with dog walking, swimming, cold water walking, bird watching and quiet areas, and a network of paths to explore.

There is strong evidence of the clubs / tenants / interest groups working collaboratively to support each other in their activities creating a sense of community.

Hampton Pier condition, sedimentation and compliance with the Australian Standard for marina design are evident as key challenges for the harbour.

Further information

For further information visit the project page at parks.vic.gov.au/projects. For general enquiries email engage@parks.vic.gov.au or call Parks Victoria on **13 1963**.

Table 1 - Summary issues and suggested solutions

A successful pier will provide for	Managing coastal processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All abilities access. • A low landing for emergency vessels, paddle craft pick up and drop off, etc. • Open up the water area on the western side of the current pier for off the beach sailboat access. • Space for the Hampton Sailing Club rescue boat to moor (berth) at pier. • On shore storage and on water tender berths for swing mooring permit holders. • Passive activities – fishing, angling, sightseeing, sitting, wading. • Vehicle access for maintenance of vessels (key only access). • Provision of some private short-stay vessel berths with power, pump out and freshwater supply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of sedimentation on harbour access. • Need to better understand the impact of the new groyne, breakwater and wave screen on coastal processes. • Acknowledgement that maintenance dredging is required to provide access to Hampton Pier and the Sandringham Yacht Club marina. • Manage the “black sludge”, and possible option to address the impacts of sedimentation on other harbour activities e.g. swing moorings, kayak and tender launching. • Consider marine environment impacts.
Supporting emerging other boating uses	Swing moorings – Coastal process impact and compliance with updated Australian Standard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access and accommodation e.g. SUP, kayaking, ocean kayaking. • Drop off and pick up zones. • Storage for tenders and paddle craft (both on water and land). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Victoria to undertake housekeeping – remove un-used moorings and un-seaworthy vessels to create space to reconfigure the mooring ground layout for the active swing mooring users. • Install fore and aft pile moorings to make more efficient use of the limited area on a full cost recovery basis. • Dredging the swing mooring area. Parks Victoria provided advice some 10 years ago that dredging to provide space for more swing moorings at Sandringham was not a feasible option. • Explore viability for wave protection measures to the north to create additional space for swing moorings. • Consider ways to provide more wave protection to the north to create additional space for swing moorings.



Detailed findings

Table 2: Current situation by each stakeholder user group

User group	Current situation
Black Rock and Sandringham Conservation Association (BRASCA)	BRASCA involvement in the harbour is around caring for the foreshore environment and vegetation planting on the breakwater and foreshore, not so much activities on the water. They observe a lot of yachting, juniors sailing, paddle boarding and sea scouts on the water and dog walking on the beach. They have observed less swimming or snorkelling within the harbour. The grassy area in front of the kiosk is valued open space.
East Coast Kayaking (ECK)	A Licensed Tour Operator (LTO). ECK provide many services such as kayak safety training, schools programs, hire, sales and repairs, outdoor education. They have thousands of participants every year. A concern is the loss of paddling space due to the siltation. Hampton Pier could be a great place for launching paddle craft for people with disabilities.
Hampton Life Saving Club (HLSC)	HLSC has observed that the pile with a ladder near the main wall of marina attracts young adults to swim to the pole, climb the ladder and leap off. This requires time to educate them of the risks and is a concern to the HLSC. Need to prevent people accessing the Aids to Navigation. Clubhouse is north of the Existing Conditions Maps and was built 25 years ago, and it lacks space for storage. Need for storage within the precinct.
Hampton Sailing Club (HSC)	Number 10 on plan. Boat storage on the northern side of the clubhouse (between Sandringham Yacht Club and Hampton Pier access), launch into pondage (to the west side of the pier), run races north of the breakwater. Need continued access to western side of pondage, but would also be useful to access boat launching on eastern side of the pier and give more space for off the beach launching. About 40 to 50 vessels stored at club, share some sailing events with Sandringham Yacht Club. Some kayaking members, swing mooring members store dinghy's in club. When pier was open, used to moor rescue boats on low landing. Sandringham Yacht Club is providing assistance to the club to store rescue boat due to pier closure.
Hampton Swing Mooring Association (HSMA)	Number 6 on the plan. Has 33 members who have swing moorings – within the 60 odd swing moorings within the harbour. Moorings inspected every 12 months as per the permit conditions. Require access to the pier for crew pick up and vessel maintenance. Of the 15 wet berths available on the existing pier eight HSMA members had vessels in the wet berths on the pier prior to pier closure. The other seven empty pens were unusable as the Parks Victoria pylons had broken away or were unusable. Mentioned a long waiting list (confirmed by Parks Victoria) for the wet berths proving the longstanding demand for these by the public. Tender situation - loss of tender berths on the pier is an issue, the rack for six tender all with permits is positive, however need more. Access difficult to get to boats, siltation main issue within the on pier tender area. Need to reinstate pier, 15 wet berths, vehicle access on pier (key access for maintenance of vessels only), low landing and wheelchair access. Believe there is an impact on sedimentation from the groyne and wave screen. There to assist each other, main focus is on getting the pier operational. The harbour is a bigger issue. Swing moorings are a social equity offering in particular for people to enjoy sailing without spending a lot of money. Siltation caused by breakwater and wave screen with the main benefit given to Sandringham Yacht Club at the cost of other users. Reported that letter to mooring holders in 2011 states Parks Victoria will be reducing the number of moorings available with a view to reconfiguring due congestion and changing environmental conditions. Noted certain types of boat owners like swing moorings. First swing mooring 1835. Pier used by elderly people, social connection e.g. advice on where to fish. Community all over Melbourne come to the site – over 250,000 harbour visitors annually. Observed the sedimentation of the harbour. It was noted that users could see the water from the Kiosk in 1984 and used to race sailboards in the harbour in water 2 to 4m deep. Groyne seems to have accelerated trapped sedimentation. Question whether the dredging had an impact on Pier. <i>Parks Victoria advised that the piles are in poor condition (deck replaced in 2002 on existing piles) dredging works kept clear of piles.</i> Observed that in a northerly wind, waves from the wave screen deflection causes issues for outer swing moorings. Co-ordinated petition regarding desire to save the pier with 5,000 signatures tabled in Parliament. Some of the comments regarding the pier: walking on the jetty, married on the jetty, read books, taught to fish, not just the boating use. Raised that Parks Victoria yet to return to build six more racks for swing mooring row boats (six already built).

<p>Sandringham Anglers and Triathlon Club (SATC)</p>	<p>Number 7 on the plan. Most members fish away from the harbour, some fish from a kayak with 20 to 30 kayaks stored under the club. Kayakers launch into the harbour out the front of the club and fish out near the wave screen. Siltation as mentioned by swing mooring holders is making it harder to launch kayaks. Comment was made that there is a timber boat ramp buried under sand near the club. Looking to get more people into kayak fishing. Siltation impact on getting disabled people into vessels. Hampton Pier needs a low landing and infrastructure to assist disabled access into boats.</p>
<p>Sandringham Foreshore Association (SFA)</p>	<p>SFA's membership includes approx. 2,000 people (mostly local residents). A major role of Association (a not-for-profit), is to actively conserve and nurture the local natural environment especially along the Bayside foreshore - including indigenous flora, fauna, geology, palaeontology, geomorphology, and air-soil-water quality. SFA are active in mindful and constructive communication, with all of the main management authorities, and frequently volunteer their time and resources to promote knowledge and awareness of independent science-based, best-practice environmental management approaches. The unifying characteristic of SFA members is their high level of environmental awareness, but they are a diverse group, partaking in many different land and water-based activities such as nature walking, bird watching, dog-walking, and general enjoyment of Bayside's quiet and peaceful urban forests and foreshore park zones. SFA members also enjoy and value clean and healthy water in the bay for swimming, sea kayaking, SUP, cold water walking, including wheelchair access via the Hampton Pier. Many SFA members value accessing the harbour area via soft surface access points (sandy paths), such as the restricted, gated laneway to the Anglers Club / Sea Scout Club – which is a very special and quiet lane surrounded by a magical small forest of mixed native trees and shrubs, and indigenous flora and fauna – where children often play. SFA understands that the harbour's history includes 80 to 100 years of progressive silting-up because water here (waves and currents) enters a low energy environment sheltered by breakwaters / wave screens. Generally water will carry sand and silt particles of different weights, but as the energy of the water-currents progressively drops, only the finest particles are carried, hence fine silt makes its way into the calm harbour. This has happened over a very long time and is the reason the land in front of the Sandy Beach HQ is naturally reclaimed. Whilst the reclaimed land is a great benefit, other consequences are more challenging, such as the smelly mud (at periodic times), which is not clean for beach users and is a barrier to kayak paddlers accessing deeper water. As well, Sandringham Beach (mainly the southern end) experiences coastal / cliff erosion, and a net-loss of sand annually which becomes trapped in the harbour, unable to return by seasonally circulating currents. The existing rock breakwater was originally constructed with a 20 metre gap, which was later filled in due to a sand spit forming in the harbour. The breakwater, wave screen and newest groyne (north end of dog beach) provide protected water for moorings, however result in increased sedimentation which is impacting on area available for the swing moorings. There is a need to dredge routinely to keep water access open for sailing and reaching the pier. SFA question whether the new groyne has had an impact on increased sedimentation in the harbour and advocate coastal-geomorphological dynamic sediment modelling based on bathymetry data, and modern software. SFA question whether a permanent sand by-pass system to pump sand back south, from the harbour, could form part of a solution, or whether this would introduce too much fine and muddy material to the main Sandringham beach? Design of the repairs to the Hampton Pier should not attract sediment accumulation, and leave room for maintenance dredging. SFA strongly states that it would NOT support a new public boat ramp anywhere in the harbour, nor would it support the introduction of any infrastructure to promote motorised boating. SFA will support primarily non-motorised vessels on a basis similar to the current levels of activity (not significantly expanded) in the interests of respecting and maintaining quiet spaces for enjoying the natural environment – the reason why this area is so attractive and peaceful in the first place. SFA values preservation of this precious natural environment zone, above all else, and hence would strongly oppose ANY increased level of commercialisation and/or carparking, within the Sandringham Harbour zone.sa</p>
<p>Sandringham Yacht Club (SYC)</p>	<p>Numbers 2,4,5,10 on the plan. Holds a current lease over 6.5ha of the water, 360 berth marina, providing for recreational boating, competitive racing, 490 boats in the club (stored on water and on land), some boats are stored at home. The club provides access and egress to the water, sell fuel to visiting vessels, landing pontoon provide access for emergency services (as the pier is currently closed), repair and maintenance facility, bunch of other related activities. Racing – off the beach (number 4 on existing conditions plan) racecourses to west or north of harbour.</p>

Sandy Beach Kiosk & Watersports Centre (SBKW)	<p>Number 9 on the plan. Been in operation since 1983 with the kiosk and water sports school. Building base is a 106-year-old former boatshed and has and continues to be a community meeting place. The dog beach became a focal point about 15 years ago. Water sports school offering wind surfing, SUP and kite boarding at Hampton Beach. Lots of schools come down for curriculum purposes. Convened peak body: Windsurfing Victoria and Kite Boarding Victoria – long relationship with community since 1983. Pandemic has highlighted the value of the conservation areas. Bird watching along the amazing dirt track so precious. Do not support a new public boat ramp in the harbour or any infrastructure to encourage motorised boating. Non-motorised vessel use (at current rate) is sustainable and promotes calm water environment suitable for families, pets and reduces noise levels.</p>
Scouts Victoria State Sailing & Powerboating Team (Centre)	<p>Number 8 on the Plan. The Centre has approximately 100 youth members who participate in various water-based activities on weekends from either association (Guides and Scouts) over the summer sailing season. That comes to around 5000 children participating in various activities of canoeing, swimming, paddle boarding (derigged windsurfers) in the shallow water adjacent to the beach and beach activities per year. That figure doesn't include around 250 leaders and parents supporting these activities over each season. Use three PWC's to provide safety cover for these activities as the outboard powered safety boats cannot operate safely in the shallow water due to sand compromising their engine cooling systems with resultant servicing expenses so would need the PWC's to be operationally acceptable if the area was designated PWC restricted. Centre has 8 Corsairs, 6 Pacers that are used for short sailing trips into the waters of the harbour as well as to the waters beyond. Those waters are also used for dinghy sailing training courses as well as for powerboat and safety boat training courses throughout the season utilising six outboard powered vessels covering IRB, RIB, Polycraft and Aluminium vessels all registered as safety boats with Marine Safety Victoria and all operators are appropriately licenced as well as holding Scout and Australian Sailing Safety boat qualifications. Provide Race Management vessels to Sandringham Yacht Club in consideration of the use of their launching ramps for our larger Safety boats during the season. There was a lagoon at the front of the beach when operator first started supporting the Centre some 35 years ago before the wave screen, but that has now silted up as has the red gum launching ramp outside the beach access shared with Sandringham Anglers. The Centre utilises a road registered tractor to launch and recover some of the sailing and safety vessels due to difficulties traversing the sand on the beach that the council has raked regularly to remove dangerous objects. Youth members from both associations enjoy the shallow at various stages of the tide.</p>
SUP Victoria (SUPV)	<p>Club has around 160 to 200 members, not all the users at this location. Sandringham Hampton / Half Moon Bay pod that paddles in the morning. Issues with silt, sludge and access to the pier. Suggested a launching site on the pier and the need to cater for SUP access/launching in the low light of the morning. Looking for a home base to have meetings and for storage.</p>
Victorian Ocean Sports Club (VOSC)	<p>New club for ocean sea kayaking and SUP. Have a need for boat (kayak) storage. Has been established to meet the growth in kayak paddling on the bay. Do a lot of training in mornings and afternoons with an aim to hold races in the future. Big growth in kayaking as a sport and recreation.</p>



Detailed findings

Table 3: Summary of challenges, ideas and solutions provided by participants

	Challenges	Ideas and Solutions
Environmental considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black sludge - acknowledged that it will come back. Sedimentation – questions raised regarding whether the groyne has increased the rate of sedimentation, and the implications on the swing mooring area. Near the head of the breakwater and Aids to Navigation (AtoN). Ongoing renourishment of the breakwater. “What do the fish want?” Protection of the foreshore vegetation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Engineers vs Coastal Geomorphologists views on the coastal processes differ and that we need to ensure that the right advice is obtained to ensure that impacts are well understood to inform decision making. Proposed groyne/breakwater could deflect some of the sand away from the harbour. This would require detailed numerical modelling to determine if it would achieve the desired outcome. Big problem – black sludge – issue has been addressed for the moment. New groyne built a few years ago and new beach is a positive outcome, very popular in summer. Maintenance dredging either by-pass system or mobile dredge.
Channel widths & swing moorings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with updated Australian Standard (AS3962:2020). Swing moorings face specific challenges with sedimentation encroaching into the mooring ground, un-suitable wave climate in the northern area of the swing mooring ground and the requirements for the access channel to comply with Australian Standards. Swing moorings being squeezed out by expansion of the dog beach and impact from north westerly winds wave screen deflection is a concern for swing moorings Moving swing moorings north may not be viable due to conditions. Improving safety of western boundary of swing mooring ground (especially in easterlies) – increasing use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question whether we should keep providing for larger and larger vessels? Consider limit on vessel size within harbour. Suggested an offshore breakwater/bombora. Consider moving the swing moorings further out into the water space - will need sediment modelling / coastal processes and consideration of accessibility for tenders.
Hampton Pier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor condition of the existing piles. Impact of the current pier head on channel width. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority is to resolve future of the pier. General support the idea of reconfiguration to provide greater access to the water on eastern side of the current pier. Design of the pier could be floating to make it easier to dredge in the future. Consider contemporary design options to provide safest access. Needs to be designed for dredging access. Enhance access to the water for boaters (paddle craft / all abilities) from the pier. Greater access for boating users on eastern side of pier. Consider enabling use by police and ambulance as a training venue e.g. low landing to practice lifting people out of vessels. Consult with emergency services to determine needs. Consider pontoons facing north east. Fishing opportunities and facilities on the pier. Potential to relocate the pier to the east.

Amenity and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire to store off the beach boating equipment and tenders (e.g. more tender racks). • Power boats – out board motors and jet skis (PWC’s) not part of the harbour, better suited to Black Rock and Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron boat launching facilities. • Noted dog owners and people in the water / paddle boarders, mixing with motorised craft in a small area is a risk. • Availability of existing buildings. • Loss of land to car parking – vehicles drive through the area where people are sitting. Air pollution and noise pollution in the area. Oil spills around the harbour. • Lack of an area to unload SUPs and kayaks near the water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking and more vehicles in the area creating congestion, noted the desire to bring car up to pier. • Suggested a drop off area for non-motorised vessels. • Consider reinstating boat ramp back out the front of the Angling Club (public access?). • Potential to remove some vegetation to enable access realignment provided there is an offset area.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial sustainability. • Safety in the harbour. • Access to the beach / pier access track. • Bottle neck with people parking on grassed area near kiosk. • People accessing through locked gate (when open) and driving along dirt track /public parking at Anglers / Scout Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the few marine employment precincts around Port Phillip. Suggestion to recognise economic value and build on the precinct as a major employment precinct. • <u>Improve ‘Safety’</u> in the safe harbour – pontoon for emergency, western corner of the swing mooring ground in easterlies. Improved education and signage for paddle craft users and swimmers.

IMPORTANT: This report is intended to provide a summary interpretation of the focus group attendee responses. It does not reflect the agreed position of all participants or Parks Victoria, but will be considered in the preparation of the draft Maritime Precinct Plan. Any landside matters raised such as parking, drop off areas, storage which are outside the scope of the project will be forward to Bayside City Council for consideration.

Plan 1: Existing conditions site plan



LEGEND

- 1 Hampton Pier
 - 2 Parks Victoria fixed moorings
 - 3 SYC boat lift
 - 4 Off the beach sailing area
 - 5 SYC Marina
 - 6 Parks Victoria swing moorings area
 - 7 Sandringham Anglers & Triathlon Club
 - 8 Guide & Scout Water Activities Centre
 - 9 Sandy Beach HQ & The Kayak Shop
 - 10 Hampton Sailing Club
 - 11 Public carpark
 - 12 Sandy/gravel track beach access
 - 13 Hampton dog beach
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- SYC T-Head marina berths
 - Parks Victoria swing moorings
 - Approximate seabed contours
 - SYC lease boundary
 - Tender rack

