

Marine Investigation

FACT SHEET

The Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) is currently examining the outcomes of establishment of Victoria's marine protected areas.

Victoria's Minister for Environment and Climate Change requested that VEAC conduct this 'marine investigation' in October 2011 and provided terms of reference to direct the investigation. VEAC must provide the Minister with a final report on the investigation by February 2014.

The investigation will examine the management of Victoria's marine protected areas and assess their performance in meeting the purposes for which they were established, particularly protection of biodiversity and ecological processes. It will also look at ongoing threats or challenges to the effective management of these protected areas – paying particular attention to biodiversity and ecological outcomes.

Inputs to VEAC's assessment

In conducting the marine investigation, VEAC is required to take into account a range of matters, including government policies and strategies, and international agreements.

VEAC will use a range of other information sources including relevant published studies, expert judgement, and community and user observations

VEAC is receiving advice from a Community Reference Group, Scientific Advisory Committee, expert consultants and public submissions.

Public submissions

The investigation has three public submission periods.

- ⇒ The first followed release of the notice of investigation and closed on 25 June 2012
- ⇒ The second follows release of a discussion paper in November 2012 and closes 4 February 2013
- ⇒ The third will follow release of a draft assessment report in mid 2013.

Victoria's marine protected areas

The investigation will examine 'no-take' and 'multiple-use' marine protected areas established under the *National Parks Act 1975*. These areas are shown on the map below.

The 'no-take' areas are the 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries established in 2002 to provide a high level of protection for marine biodiversity and ecological processes.

These highly protected areas are called 'no-take' because extractive uses, such as fishing or petroleum extraction, are not allowed in these areas.

Marine national parks and sanctuaries are located along Victoria's coast and are intended to include examples of the range of habitats within each of Victoria's marine ecological regions.

No-take areas were also established as areas in which people can enjoy, understand and appreciate the marine environment.

'Multiple-use' marine protected areas are the six marine parks, marine reserves and marine and coastal parks established in the 1980s and 1990s. One of these areas is west of Inverloch and the other five areas are in the Wilsons Promontory – Corner Inlet area.

The aims of the multiple-use areas are broader than those of the no-take areas, giving some protection for marine life while also allowing the sustainable use of the area's natural resources, including fishing.

Some of these areas contain coastal land, namely the 'marine and coastal parks' at Shallow Inlet, Corner Inlet and Nooramunga.

For more information about the Marine Investigation visit www.veac.vic.gov.au

