

MARINE INVESTIGATION

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change requests the Council to carry out an investigation into the outcomes of the establishment of Victoria's existing marine protected areas¹.

The purpose of the marine investigation is to examine and provide assessment of:

- (a) the performance and management of existing marine protected areas in meeting the purposes for which they were established, particularly the protection of the natural environment, indigenous flora and fauna and other natural and historic values; and
- (b) any ongoing threats or challenges to the effective management of existing marine protected areas, particularly in relation to the biodiversity and ecological outcomes.

In addition to the considerations in section 18 of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Council must take into account the following matters:

- (i) all relevant State Government policies and strategies, Ministerial statements and reports by the Victorian Auditor-General;
- (ii) all relevant national and international agreements, policies and strategies, including ecosystem-based management approaches; and
- (iii) relevant regional programs, strategies and plans.

Three public submission periods are to be held and a discussion paper and a draft proposals paper are to be prepared.

The Council must report on the completed investigation by February 2014.

¹ For this investigation, marine protected areas means the 13 marine national parks, 11 marine sanctuaries, and 6 marine parks, marine reserves or marine and coastal parks established under schedules seven, eight and four respectively of the *National Parks Act 1975*.