

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUES OF VICTORIA'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Pursuant to section 26B of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change hereby requests the Council to carry out an assessment of the values of Victoria's marine environment¹.

The assessment will inform the development of a state-wide marine and coastal strategy and support the development of the proposed Marine Spatial Planning Framework.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- a) identify current environmental, economic, social and cultural values of Victoria's marine environment, including their spatial distribution where relevant
- b) identify current and likely future threats to these values
- c) provide independent advice on future patterns, trends and direction related to existing and emerging uses
- d) determine a process to systematically classify data and an approach to describe social and economic values and uses of Victoria's marine waters
- e) provide an inventory of available knowledge and data on existing values, uses and threats and advise on any significant gaps.

The assessment will encompass all State coastal waters, bays and estuaries (including the Gippsland Lakes), and must have due regard to the interaction of processes and values of the coastal zone.

The Council must take into account the following matters:

- a) relevant agreements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*
- b) relevant Victorian government policies, strategies and reports
- c) relevant national and international agreements, policies and strategies.

VEAC is required to consult with technical and sector experts to gather and confirm source data, and to document any relevant caveats to these data. In addition, as specified in section 26D of the *Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001*, the Council must confer with any Department or public authority which may be affected by the provision of the assessment including the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources; and the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The Council must report on the completed assessment by 29 March 2019.

¹ For the purposes of this assessment, Victoria's marine environment means the following between the outer limit of Victorian coastal waters and the high-water mark of the sea—

- a) the land (whether or not covered by water) to a depth of 200 metres below the surface of that land;
- b) any water covering the land referred to in paragraph (a) from time to time;
- c) the biodiversity associated with the land and water referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b).

*The date for completion of the assessment was extended from 29 March 2019 to 21 May 2019.