

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PORTS FRAMEWORK

It's important that we manage and maintain our Victoria's local port infrastructure in a fair, consistent and sustainable way.

That's why we've developed the Sustainable Local Ports Framework (the Framework) to guide decision making about which assets should be prioritised for investment to meet critical economic, tourism and community needs.

The Framework will provide a consistent and clear strategy for the Victorian Government to engage with key stakeholders including local port managers, local councils, port users, Traditional Owners and the community.

Local port infrastructure includes many reaching end of life historical assets which were last renewed around 50 years ago.

At the time they were first built, these assets' primary purpose was to enable core economic and transport services. The use of these assets has changed over the decades, however most assets continue to provide important social and economic benefits by supporting local businesses and tourism.

The Framework will use a place-based approach to help the Victorian Government prioritise investment and deliver critical local port infrastructure that works in a way which is fair for all Victorians.

Our vision for local ports

Local port infrastructure require significant investment to maintain and renew. A number of the State's assets are reaching their end of life. In the past, the Victorian Government has assessed and contributed to the upkeep of these assets on a case by case basis through its annual budget cycle and relevant grant programs.

The Framework is the Victorian Government's plan to manage this challenge through implementing a consistent framework that informs and prioritises investment in a transparent way. The Department of Transport (DoT) will work with local port managers, port users and the community to plan for the future of these assets in a way that's fair for all Victorians.

Our vision for local port infrastructure:

Collaborate with community and local port managers to protect and manage our thriving local port precincts in a way that is fair and sustainable. Together, we will protect and create premier cultural, maritime, and boating destinations that cultivate economic and social prosperity.



What is the Sustainable Local Ports Framework?

The Framework establishes a consistent planning and decision-making pathway on how investment for local ports infrastructure should be prioritised.

The Framework has been developed to reflect the role of State Government in managing local port infrastructure. It focuses on four key principles which are outlined in detail below.

These principles reflect the wide range of state or regionally significant uses of local ports assets, which provide important services to businesses and communities as well as interstate and international visitors.

The weighting of these principles will be tailored for each precinct, to ensure a place-based approach to the Framework.

Local ports provide enabling infrastructure and services supporting marine businesses, local recreation and broader tourism opportunities on the Victorian coast.

2,100

assets

14

local ports

40

vessels

\$650 M

value of
port assets

\$982 M+

annual value-add
to regional and
local economies

\$16.6 M

annual funding
through our Local
Ports Program

9,920+

direct and
indirect full-time
equivalent' jobs
supported





Local Economy and Jobs Growth:

Thriving local economies and jobs growth across Victoria are key drivers of the State's post-pandemic recovery. This principle reflects a state significant and key regional function of local ports as critical enablers of business activity such as commercial fishing, boat lifting and repairs, berths and moorings, and ferry and freight services.

On-going maintenance and renewal of assets that support this economic activity and jobs is a key investment driver for State Government.



Tourism and Recreation:

Tourism and recreation are important drivers of economic activity and contribute to the health and well-being of our communities. Local port infrastructure supports safe and accessible waterways by promoting largely seasonal recreational activities such as boating and angling. Local ports also underpin tourism activities such as charter boat operations and cruise services while enabling the retail and hospitality services that rely on visitation through these activities and events.

This will be an important consideration in the Framework as local ports are strongly related to the State's policy commitments to grow the visitor economy and increase participation in recreational fishing and boating.



Emergency Response:

Local ports play an important role in the State's emergency response framework – a functionality that must be maintained to support safety and increase community resilience as extreme weather and climate events are forecast to increase. Examples of the emergency response support and climate resilience in local ports provide include:

- **Emergency rescue:** Local ports provide important mass evacuation options in emergency events such as bush fires. A recent example is the navy's emergency rescue of more than 1,300 people from the fire ravaged Mallacoota, who were transported to safety. With roads cut off, the local port also became a vital transport hub for fuel, medical supplies and food.
- **Providing 'safe haven':** In severe weather conditions, local ports such as Apollo Bay, Warrnambool, Gippsland Lakes and Port Fairy and in facilities within local ports provide shelter and protection for small vessels. Local ports are places where small vessels can access medical services for an injured or ill crew member or access repairs in the event of a breakdown.
- **Other emergency response activities:** Local ports support numerous other emergency response activities such as search and rescue, water police operations and marine pollution response.



Community and Cultural Value:

Local ports contribute to the liveability and wellbeing of our communities as places to walk, relax, exercise, boat, fish and learn. Our local port infrastructure including much loved coastal assets forms part of a community's identity. Social and cultural values exist through public open space, proximity to landscapes, biodiversity, heritage and culture. These places to visit in Victoria's natural environment are vital community assets supporting the physical and mental health of all Victorians.

Engagement with Traditional Owners will be an important component of preserving the cultural heritage of our local ports by developing a coordinated approach to understand, protect and celebrate indigenous values and aspirations for local ports.



How will the Framework be implemented?

The local ports assessment tool kit will be further developed, including engagement with a range of stakeholders, to guide decision making about which assets should be prioritised for investment to meet critical economic, tourism and community needs.

The Framework will be implemented via 'local port area plans', which will be guided by community and stakeholder engagement. This will ensure a place-based approach which leverages local expertise to the development of a plan for the future of local port infrastructure and services.

How will Local Port Area Plans be developed?

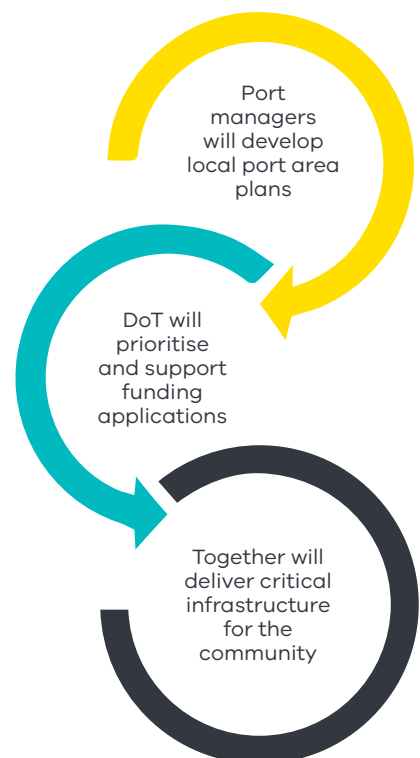
Local port area plans will be developed in conjunction with local port managers to allow prioritisation of asset investment based on the broader local port precinct. This will more effectively achieve economic, environmental and community outcomes.

The local port area plans will include:

- Stakeholder and community consultation and engagement

- Designing a funding model for government consideration that will seek to balance asset renewal and management with fiscal sustainability
- Developing guidelines for commercial fishing and recreational access infrastructure
- Precinct planning governance and delivery, with local port managers and DoT working closely together to complete strategic planning and scope works.

Once the scoping is completed, day to day management of the plans will be transferred to local port managers.



How will stakeholders be able to get involved?

Community and stakeholders will be involved through public engagement processes associated with planning and development of local precinct plans.

How is the Sustainable Local Ports Framework being funded?

The Framework is being funded through the Local Ports Program and specific investments focused on the implementation of the Framework and prioritised local precincts.

When will we see improvements in local port assets in Victoria?

The Victorian Government is continuing to invest in local port assets through the Local Ports Program, Stimulus packages and other initiatives, including:

- Works to re-open closed local port assets including Tooradin Jetty and Middle Brighton Pier.
- Critical repairs to the western training wall at Lakes Entrance.
- Critical breakwater repairs at Apollo Bay.
- Upgrades to Portarlington Pier.
- Extension of the pontoon at the Portland Trawler Wharf.
- Repairs to Queenscliff South Pier Lifeboat Shed. Rebuild of Altona Pier, the inner section of Rye Pier and the loading section of Port Welshpool Marginal Wharf.

- Development of a maritime precinct plan for Williamstown.
- Redevelopment of St Kilda Pier.
- Preparation of a recreational boating precinct plan for Warneet.
- Precinct planning for Sandringham Harbour.

Next steps?

DoT will commence implementation of the Sustainable Local Ports Framework in the coming months as a critical first step to improving local port management. This will include engagement with a range of stakeholders to further develop the local ports assessment tool kit. Engagement with Traditional Owners and port users will be a key part of community engagement.

