



September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Williamstown Local Port Area Plan submission**

On behalf of the Port of Williamstown Action Group (PoWAG) members and stakeholders we would like to provide our submission on the draft area plan and express our appreciation to Parks Victoria for acknowledging the importance of the Williamstown local port which has significant historical heritage which has been ignored in times gone by and is at risk of further depletion of key maritime assets which may never be returned to service for the community.

It is encouraging to see the area plan refers to the Williamstown local port as a premier maritime destination in the executive summary, however the local port needs significant government investment to return the failing infrastructure to increase tourism and servicing maritime operations that the Port of Melbourne fail to provide. Investment in this infrastructure will significantly improve local tourism and local business investments to both the Hobson's Bay municipality and to the wider Port Phillip businesses that rely on maritime assets. We hope this plan will develop the framework for critical Government investment in this precinct.

We are concerned that this plan fails to factor in the significant impact the local area is experiencing from increased commercial and recreational vessel movements on Port Phillip which was documented in the recent Williamstown Wave Wash and Surge Study Project. The plan fails to acknowledge the damage to maritime infrastructure from this surge and the remedial options that were ordinarily tabled, we strongly believe that unless the local port has significant government investment in providing a safe harbour the long-term financial impact will outweigh the initial investment and the improvements proposed in this plan may be unsafe to use for smaller craft due to the surge activity.

We believe the plan should factor in critical investment timelines to address future Government investment requirements, due to future port expansions as outlined in the 2050 Port Development Strategy and to address the expected increased surge activity from this expansion and increased shipping.

We welcome the acknowledgement and plan to invest in dredging the local port, which we believe hasn't occurred since the Harbour Trust managed the port infrastructure and dredging. However, the dredge areas in the plan fails to include Ferguson Street Pier which is a critical Pier in the focus area.

We also note that although the plan acknowledges the investment in the existing maritime infrastructure it fails to truly address the lack of public berthing for smaller craft, currently only Ferguson Street pier is available for public berthing, however the fendering is not suitable for smaller vessels such as trailable craft and craft under say 30 feet. Berthing similar to St Kilda Pier is desperately needed in this local port area.

In closing, we commend Parks Victoria for its dedication to improving maritime facilities, and we are enthusiastic about the potential for our community's growth and prosperity through collaborative efforts.

Michael Neumann  
President  
Port of Williamstown Action Group Inc.