

Jet ski safety



Mornington
Peninsula Shire

What we are asking

The Victorian government is responsible for the regulation and enforcement of personal watercraft (PWC) conduct. Stronger enforcement is urgently needed to address community concerns regarding PWC and the threats posed to the safety of our residents, visitors and marine life.

With the growing popularity and use of PWCs, stronger enforcement and regulation is needed, so everyone can enjoy the water safely. Council continues to receive complaints regarding PWC negatively impacting community and visitor amenity, including noise and fuel pollution.

Together with the Victorian government, it is our responsibility to make sure residents and holidaymakers can safely participate in leisure activities in our coastal and marine environments.



Council requires the following measures to be implemented by the Victorian government:

- Greater physical separation of PWC and swimmers via:
 - Expansion of swimming-only zones and targeted no-PWC areas in high-conflict locations
 - Clear markers to increase practical separation of PWC and swimmers in hotspots
- Better enforcement of the existing 5 knot speed limit when PWC are within:
 - 500 metres from the water's edge between Martha Point and Point Nepean and 200 metres of the remaining shoreline
 - 50 metres of any person, vessel or structure, 100 metres from dive flags

Regulatory changes:

- Introduce PWC 5 knot zones within 500 metres of all marine national parks and sanctuaries – including Port Phillip Heads, Yaringa and Flinders

Licensing restrictions:

- Change licensing to mirror vehicle registration power-to-weight ratio requirements

Greater enforcement:

- Additional resourcing from Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Parks Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Safe Transport Victoria and the Water Police to increase surveillance, patrolling and enforcement during summer
- Ensure PWC are not within 300 metres of whales or dolphins and abiding by defined seal setbacks, in line with Wildlife Marine Mammals Regulations 2019
- Ensure those driving dangerously are identified and have their vessel seized, as per hoon laws
- Targeted CCTV pilots and CCTV camera enforcement program after the trial
- Trial drone monitoring in high-use areas and reporting hotline for inappropriate use of PWCs
- A targeted education campaign for safe operation of PWCs, along the southern end of the Mornington Peninsula, in association with jet ski clubs



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KEY POINTS

- Expanded swimming-only zones and targeted no-PWC areas in high-conflict locations
- Clear markers to increase practical separation of PWCs and swimmers in hotspots
- Additional enforcement resources and better collaboration between authorities
- Stronger enforcement of anti-hoon laws and dangerous driving
- Greater education for users and with a campaign to engage jet ski clubs



What makes this unique

The Mornington Peninsula has 10 per cent of Victoria's coastline and welcomes 8 million visitors annually. With peak visitation over the summer months and local beaches being a major attraction – swimmers and PWC users are more frequently at close proximity. Safety issues are significantly increasing across our beaches.

The ongoing failure of some PWC users, particularly those using jet skis, to comply with the five-knot speed limit, and frequently entering swimming-only zones, continues to be a serious issue that necessitates a much stronger Water Police presence at peak times.

Why this is important

In summer 2023–2024, there was particularly shocking behavior from jet ski riders around Safety Beach and Dromana that attracted national media attention, including chasing dolphins and harassing swimmers and boaters. A community petition following these events achieved over 6,000 signatures, supporting the need for stronger enforcement.

Council is aware of many near-miss incidents that are not adequately captured or reported to the appropriate authorities. This may lead to PWCs being perceived as a lower threat to public safety compared to the reality of what is happening each summer across our beaches.

The benefits – supporting evidence and strategies

In 2018, the Shire collated 177 submissions, both written and oral transcripts, which were sent to Maritime Safety Victoria, Parks Victoria and the Water Police. The community consistently stated that current enforcement, patrolling and zoning did not satisfactorily address safety concerns. Submitters also indicated that the current swimming-only zones are not effective in managing the use of PWCs along Mornington Peninsula beaches. Seven years later, this negative community sentiment continues to grow.

The Shire sent letters to relevant Victorian Ministers in January 2025, December 2024 and October 2023, requesting action regarding significant long standing community concerns about increased PWC safety incidents.

Alignment to Council Plan 2025–2029

Strategic Objective 2.1: A safe, accessible, inclusive and healthy community.

2.1.1 Actively promote and improve the health and wellbeing of all community members.

2.1.4 Promote community safety through prevention, education and regulation.

2.2.2 Provide inclusive and accessible recreation and leisure opportunities across the Peninsula.