



Victorian National Parks Association

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www.vnpa.org.au

New research shows action needed on marine protection

A highly anticipated scientific report into the urgent need to better protect Victoria's marine environment was released by the Victorian National Parks Association today.

Launching the report at Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary on Port Phillip Bay, VNPA Executive Director Matt Ruchel said the association would not be deterred by this week's knee-jerk decision by the Brumby Government to rule out new marine parks in the next term of government.

"This report is based on two years of scientific research. It spells out where and why Victoria needs new marine national parks, and we urge our politicians to keep an open mind and look at the scientific evidence," he said.

"However, even without new marine parks, there is a lot of work to be done to safeguard the state's amazingly diverse marine habitats for future generations.

"We are calling on all political leaders to support a comprehensive package of marine initiatives in the run-up to the state election and show their commitment to a healthy marine environment for Victoria."

Based on the new research the VNPA says the next state government should:

- Undertake a comprehensive, independent, science-based assessment of Victoria's marine habitats, values and threats;
- compile a detailed statewide marine action plan to address marine pests, pollution and climate change impacts;
- introduce new marine planning legislation to protect and manage all of Victoria's marine area; and
- create a new Victorian Marine & Coastal Council, which expands and strengthens the role of the existing Victorian Coastal Council, which will soon be abolished.

Marine policy specialist Associate Professor Geoff Wescott, from Deakin University, said there had been a lot of misinformation spread about marine parks.

"There is overwhelming scientific support for the value of marine national parks in protecting important habitats and species for the long term," he said.

"The evidence shows that marine parks increase fish stocks, and have positive economic benefits as well.

"A well planned, comprehensive marine national park system could be a win-win solution - we can have our fish and eat them too," he concluded.

The full report, summary and briefing materials can be downloaded at www.marinereport.vnpa.org.au

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