

Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan 2025-2026



Prepared **in alignment with the Bass Coast and Mornington Peninsula Cross Council Water Safety Framework**

Purpose

The *Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan* provides a coordinated and inclusive approach to reducing drowning incidents, improving preparedness, and promoting safe enjoyment of the Shire's beaches, inlets and waterways.

It aims to deliver measurable outcomes under the three pillars of the *Safer Systems Approach*:

- **Safer Aquatic Users** – through education and awareness
- **Safer Aquatic Activities** – through innovation and advocacy
- **Safer Aquatic Environments** – through infrastructure and response

The Plan will be reviewed **annually**, led by the **Mornington Peninsula Water Safety Alliance (MPWSA)** ensuring collaboration between Council, emergency services, Belgravia Leisure, Life Saving Victoria, water safety experts, and passionate community representatives.

Strategic Alignment

This Plan aligns with:

- **Council Plan 2025–2029** – *People Objective 2.1; Prosperity Objective 3.2*
- **Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–2029** – *Priority Area 6 (Objectives 6.1, 6.2); Priority Area 8 (Objective 8.1)*
- **Bass Coast and Mornington Peninsula Cross Council Water Safety Framework**
- **Victorian Water Safety Strategy 2021–2025**
- **Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030**

Governance and Collaboration

The Plan will be governed by the **Mornington Peninsula Water Safety Alliance (MPWSA)**, comprising:

- Mornington Peninsula Shire Emergency Management (CREM)
- Belgravia Leisure
- Life Saving Victoria (LSV)
- Parks Victoria
- Victoria Police (Water Police and local command)
- Ambulance Victoria, SES and CFA

Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan 2025-2026



- Local surf lifesaving clubs
- Representatives from CALD, youth, and tourism sectors
- Local community and volunteer representatives
- Coastguard

This group meets **quarterly** and will coordinate **annual reviews** of this plan to assess progress, collect data, and update actions. These reviews will be designed to enhance strategic alignment with framework priorities and drive long-term, sustainable impact.

Long Term Strategy – Future Focus

To strengthen our local plan's alignment with regional framework priorities and ensure sustainable impact, we propose the following long-term strategic directions.

- **Future Roadmap Development**
Extend planning beyond 2026 to incorporate emerging risks, evolving community needs and innovative prevention strategies.
- **Funding and Grants**
Identify grant programs and funding opportunities to empower and local groups to deliver tailored water safety initiatives.
- **Technology and Data Integration**
Embed digital tools in education and awareness such as geofencing, push notifications, BeachSafe App, QR-coded signage and VicEmergency alerts to enhance multilingual education and real-time risk communication.
- **Expanded Monitoring and Evaluation**
Introduce cross-agency data sharing protocols, community feedback mechanisms and consistent incident tracking to inform evidence-based decision-making.
- **Legislative and Policy Advocacy**
Advocate for and implement access restrictions, parking controls and compliance measures at identified blackspots and mandatory safety equipment to support long-term behavioural and environmental change.

OBJECTIVE 1 – Safer Aquatic Users (Education)

Goal: To provide clear, inclusive, and accessible water safety education for all residents and visitors.

Outcomes

- Community members understand and act on water safety information.

Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan 2025-2026



- Strong partnerships enable consistent safety messaging.
- Increased community awareness and preparedness.
- Improved early response capacity in emergencies.

Initiative	Actions	Measurement	Delivered By
Community Education	Train Tourism Centre staff, foreshore volunteers, and local ambassadors in water safety awareness.	Number of trained staff and volunteers. Pre/post-training survey results.	LSV, CREM, Belgravia Leisure, Mornington Peninsula Water Safety Alliance – first session 30/10/2025, ongoing.
Inclusive Education for Children, Older Adults, and CALD Groups	Promote swimming, lifesaving skills, and rip awareness via schools, community centres, and clubs. Run seasonal campaigns (Seniors Month, Schoolies, CALD events).	At least 1,000 residents reached annually through campaigns.	CREM (lead), LSV, Belgravia Leisure. Ongoing from July 2025.
Water Safety Workshops	Hold three engagement workshops (North, South, West Peninsula) co-designed with community and emergency services.	Participant numbers and post-workshop evaluation.	CREM, LSV, Belgravia Leisure. Review annually. Held Aug 2025
World Drowning Prevention Day (July)	Co-host public event celebrating local water safety advocates and peer educators. Feature CALD water safety activities.	Event attendance, social media reach.	CREM, CALD Officers, Belgravia Leisure, Foreshore Camping. Annual from July 2025.
Water Safety Campaigns	Develop, design and execute local campaigns.	Message recall, social media reach, increased community & visitor awareness.	Mornington Peninsula Water Safety Alliance, Belgravia Leisure, CREM

Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan 2025-2026



OBJECTIVE 2 – Safer Aquatic Activities (Innovation and Advocacy)

Goal: To strengthen partnerships, advocacy, and local action that supports safer aquatic activities.

Outcomes

- Increased community led participation in preparedness programs.
- Greater awareness of local water safety risks.
- Water safety education, promotion of the Beach Safe App, multilingual QR codes
- Improved collaboration between Council, emergency services, water safety experts and community networks.
- Work with governing bodies ie. Surfing Vic on recording rescues, raising awareness with surfing community to collate data across the state to support advocacy efforts
- Explore the potential use of surf cams to enhance beach safety.
- Advocate to State and Federal Governments for funding and support to implement the actions outlined in Objectives 1 and 3.

OBJECTIVE 3 – Safer Aquatic Environments (Infrastructure)

Goal: To identify, implement, and promote safe infrastructure and systems that reduce risk and enhance response capability.

Outcomes

- Enhanced safety signage and information at beaches and inland waterways.
- Community confidence in local emergency response capacity.
- Decrease in preventable incidents and drownings.

Initiative	Actions	Measurement	Delivered By
Temporary Water Safety Signage	Install corflute safety signs seasonally at beaches and high-risk inland sites.	Number installed to date (60+).	CREM, LSV, Parks Victoria, VicPol. Review June & Dec each year.
Public Rescue Equipment (PRE)	Advocate and fundraise for installation of public rescue equipment at identified high-risk sites (modelled on Venus Bay).	Equipment installed; feedback and use reports.	TBC

Mornington Peninsula Local Water Safety Plan 2025-2026



Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

- **Annual Review:** Comprehensive review led by MPWSA with emergency services, water safety experts, and community input.
- **Annual Progress Reports:** Summary of achievements, challenges, and next steps published on Council's website.
- **Community Feedback Loop:** Ongoing via surveys, workshops, and tourism centre interactions.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**
 - Reduction in drowning and near-miss incidents.
 - Number of community members trained or reached.
 - Number of infrastructure improvements completed.
 - Increase in community confidence and awareness (survey data).