

**unChain St Kilda**  
**Response to Boating Only Zone at Brooks Jetty Beach**  
**December 2008.**

**Introduction**

Boating Zones are prepared under the Marine Act 1988 with the primary aim of providing a safe environment for water users. Parks Victoria has released a 'Review of Recreational Boating Zones for Port Phillip & Western Port'.

(see [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/3zones.cfm](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/3zones.cfm)). Comments on the draft boating zone recommendations closed on 5 December 2008.

(Boating Zone Review, Parks Victoria, P.O. Box 400, Rosebud 3939 or the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963).

The Review was to determine what zone types are required in each local area around Port Phillip and Western Port to allow safe access and use of the coast and waterways. The review recommended a 'Boating Only' Zone between the St Kilda Marina and Brooks Jetty.

This was reported in the press as banning bathers in favour of boats and jet skis. The article quoted St Kilda resident Steve Chambers, who visits the section of beach near Brooks Jetty most days with his dogs. He said there would be an outcry if it was closed to swimmers. "The locals pay to maintain this beach and it isn't the locals who come here with their boats and jet skis and cause all of the problems."

Four broad issues arise:

**1. Public Consultation:**

The opportunity for public consultation has not been satisfactory. Parks Victoria claims that 'community involvement is a vital part of planning and managing parks and reserves in Victoria. Commenting on draft park management plans, strategies and other reports is one way of engaging with park planning and improving the outcomes for parks and reserves'.

However the first time many Port Phillip residents and associations learned about the proposal was on 11 December 2008 in a Herald Sun article. This makes the provocative statement that 'submissions on the issue have closed and decisions will be revealed next year'. This is completely unacceptable.

Parks Victoria must commit to accepting submissions from Port Phillip residents and other stakeholders responding to the proposal.

**2. Impact on the use of Brooks Jetty Beach**

Brooks Jetty Beach is the off leash dog beach and many dogs love to swim there throughout the year. Because it is shallow it also attracts a lot of families with small children who play in the shallows on hot summer days. Those people who want to swim tend to go to the north Brooks Jetty Beach, where the water is deeper and less polluted.

Jet skis currently are permitted to use the Brooks Jetty Beach. However in practice it is used only on a few hot days each year. Some jet skis are permanently moored at the St Kilda marina and others use the ramp at the marina. The Review does not make any analysis of whether the proposal would significantly increase the numbers

of jet skis. This is important information that council, the community and the state government should have.

The Review does not make any analysis of the impact on neighbouring residents regarding noise and amenity.

The Review does not make any analysis of the impact on water quality.

The Review does not make any consideration of the impact on other existing users, especially families with small children and dog owners.

unChain St Kilda Inc has discussed the Review's recommendations with Wayne Hill from Parks Victoria. He says that the main aim is to prevent swimming in front of the marina entrance. He says that families and dog-walkers could still use the shallows. At a minimum this should be made explicit in the regulations and the signage.

The proposal would be significantly more acceptable if it included measures to benefit the other beach users. These may include shade cloth and play facilities for families or more accessible rubbish bins for dogs and other beach users. The possibility of fencing a section of the beach for dog users like at Brighton beach is also worth considering. This is something that the Council could take up.

### **3. Explore alternative site: St Kilda Marina**

Parks Victoria has also prepared a concept plan for redevelopment of the St Kilda Harbour precinct. unChain St Kilda Inc has made a submission on this proposal ([http://www.unchainstkilda.org/unChainStKilda\\_HarbourSubmission.pdf](http://www.unchainstkilda.org/unChainStKilda_HarbourSubmission.pdf)). There are many admirable features in the Harbour proposal which appears significantly superior to earlier schemes. Potentially there could be a win-win-win solution with significant net benefits for the public, the environment and the boating community. However the Plan envisages an Inner Harbour with a hardstand area of approximately 8000 sq metres. This poses many serious concerns. The unChain St Kilda preferred option is to relocate the boat maintenance and yacht storage to St Kilda Marina.

There is an opportunity to combine management of the St Kilda marina and the St Kilda harbour. This project could be expanded to include a new jet ski beach and ramp on the south side of the existing marina and car park. This would mean provide a significantly greater separation between the jet skis and beach users and neighbouring residents.

### **4. Improved enforcement of controls on jet skis.**

A benefit from the review of boating zones may be improved enforcement against anti-social behaviour by jet ski operators. However there are limited enforcement officers available. Port Phillip Council should therefore explore with Parks Victoria the possibility of authorizing local by-law officers to enforce controls on jet skis. This would provide a significantly more effective redress against anti-social behaviour by jet ski operators.

For comments and suggestions contact Peter Holland, Secretary unChain St Kilda [hollandp@netspace.net.au](mailto:hollandp@netspace.net.au)