

Wilson's Promontory Cruises Proposal: Summary

Parks Victoria has received a market led proposal for the operation of wilderness cruises at Wilson's Promontory National Park (the Prom). The proposal was submitted by Pennicott Wilderness Journeys, an experienced eco-tourism operator based in Tasmania.

During March 2017, Parks Victoria is undertaking engagement to better understand community and visitor views on the proposal.

A report on the engagement outcomes will be submitted to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for consideration before a final decision is made on the proposal.

Wilsons Promontory Cruises Proposal: Summary

What is this proposal?

The proposal is for the operation of three eco-boat cruises from Norman Bay, Tidal River at the Prom using amphibious boats that can travel on land, straight into the water.

The proposal seeks a 10-year term agreement for the following:

- Tour Operator Licence for tours of Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park.
- Licence for boat storage and refuelling at the Parks Victoria Depot.
- Lease for customer ticketing at the outdoor cinema site.



Figure 1: proposed location

Key proposal information

A market led proposal is one that is put forward by an applicant, rather than responding to an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

The applicant proposes the \$3.5 million venture would provide locals and visitors with the opportunity to explore the scenery and wildlife at Wilsons Promontory Marine National Park.

All operations would be based at, or operated from existing buildings and depots (see Figure 1). No new permanent infrastructure is proposed.

The venture is expected to generate \$9.7 million in economic benefit for the local community per annum and would create 30 new full-time equivalent jobs.

A summary of key proposal information is as follows:

- **Passenger numbers:** each vessel would take a maximum of 32 passengers on a two to three-hour tour. In peak times, a maximum of three trips per day (up to 288 people per day) is proposed.
- **Location and launch area:** cruises would operate out of Tidal River (shown in Figure 1), the main destination for the majority of the day and overnight visitors to the Prom coastline. The proposed launch area is at the northern end of Norman Beach.
- **Cruise route:** cruises would explore the Prom coastline and nearby outer islands. Daily routes would be tailored to suit the weather, sea state and general conditions (shown in Figure 2).
- **Boat storage:** it is proposed that boats would be stored overnight in the existing Parks Victoria depot.
- **Boat transportation:** boats required for each day would travel together from the depot to the beach each morning, and return at the end of the day. Boats would be transported at walking pace, escorted by a Pennicott staff member.
- **Ticketing booth:** during the day, a ticketing office would be located at the outdoor cinema site, allowing the existing evening use to continue.
- **Fuel storage and refuelling:** it is proposed that a portable, fully compliant unleaded storage tank would be kept at the existing Parks Victoria depot. Refuelling would only occur in this area.
- **Waste:** no waste would be kept on-site. All waste would be taken off-site for appropriate treatment and disposal.
- **Boat design:** boats would be designed to use the existing boat access ramp at Tidal River. The amphibious style of boat removes the need for any jetty infrastructure.

Assessment process and approvals

Under the National Parks Act 1975, carrying on a trade or business in a national park requires approval.

Parks Victoria is undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the proposal. Following the assessment process, Parks Victoria will submit a report on the proposal with recommendations to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change for consideration. In accordance with the requirements of the National Parks Act 1975, the Minister will consult with the National Park Advisory Council on the Lease component of the proposal, before making a final decision.

Parks Victoria is responsible for assessing and granting the Licence for the shared depot area and the Tour Operator Licence.

A decision on the proposal is expected in April 2017.

Proposal history

In February 2016, the Federal Minister for Tourism and International Education and the Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events jointly announced that Pennicott Wilderness Journeys was one of six tourism operators awarded a Victorian Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure (TDDI) grant.

The TDDI grants are funded to help the industry to meet its Tourism 2020 growth targets and ensure businesses remain sustainable and profitable into the future.

As part of the grants process, Parks Victoria expressed in-principle support for the proposed activity.

About Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria is a statutory authority, created by the Parks Victoria Act 1998 and reporting to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

We are responsible for managing an expanding and diverse estate covering more than 4 million hectares, or about 17 per cent, of Victoria.

It is our primary responsibility to ensure parks are healthy and resilient for current and future generations. We manage parks in the context of their surrounding landscape and partnership with Traditional Owners.

We work in partnership with other government and non-government organisations and community groups such as the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, catchment management authorities, private land owners, friends groups, volunteers, licensed tour operators, lessees, research institutes and the broader community.

More information

- Complete the survey: <http://lets-talk.parks.vic.gov.au/promcruiseproposal>
- Talk to staff during March at the Prom. Refer to the website for dates and locations.
- Contact us: communications@parks.vic.gov.au
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The engagement period closes on Friday 24 March 2017.



Figure 3: example of vessel type



Figure 2: indicative cruise route

