



DAVID MORRIS MP

**Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government
Member for Mornington**

New Boating Zones Needed Now! Legislative Assembly 15 October 2009

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — The matter I raise this afternoon is for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change. Despite being only weeks away from the start of the beach season the review of recreational boating zones for Port Phillip and Western Port is not yet complete. The action I seek from the minister is that he ensures that the review of the boating zone framework is completed and that both boat owners and beach users are made aware of the outcomes prior to the Christmas break.

The review of recreational boating zones has been a long-running process, and that is not a criticism. It is recognition of complexity. Information published on the Parks Victoria website indicates that comments on the final recommendations were invited until 5 December 2008. There are a number of interests, here of course. Parks Victoria has responsibility for most of the foreshore areas, many of them managed under delegation. It also has responsibility in that it acts as the local port manager for both Port Phillip and Western Port.

The review had to be undertaken jointly with Marine Safety Victoria, which is responsible for recreational boating. Nevertheless, I would have thought that 10 months is a more than reasonable time to complete the review and to start to get the message out there about what has been decided. On Wednesday of last week a spokesman for Parks Victoria was reported in the *Mornington Mail* as saying that changes are coming but he could not say when.

We are getting to the point where even if there is immediate action, it is unlikely that the message will be put out as promptly as it should be. In my electorate I have four no-boating zones — two in Mount Martha and two in Mornington. In all other areas there is a speed limit of 5 knots.

If people do not know where the no-boating zones are and where the access zones are, it leads to conflict between boat users and swimmers, and that potentially leads to aggravation. There are significant safety aspects as well. Even a boat moving at 5 knots can do a fair amount of damage to a swimmer if they do not see it coming.

There is a real potential for conflict, but if people know the rules and if people know where they should be, then that potential is reduced. It is time — more than time — to complete the review. It is now time for action. I urge the minister to ensure that the zones are put in place prior to the summer season.