

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Suburban Development



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

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HELPING VOLUNTEERS MONITOR VICTORIA'S RICH MARINE PARKS

A new app will help volunteers and citizen scientists better monitor Victoria's unique marine life.

The new Sea Search app collects valuable information on Victoria's marine national parks and sanctuaries, and allows the community to get involved in studying Victorian waters.

The app is a new, interactive approach for people who are interested in science and research activities.

Volunteers can easily contribute and access information, enabling Parks Victoria to manage protected marine areas with the best and most up-to-date information.

The Sea Search program has been running since 2005 however, up until now, volunteers have had to collect data on paper in the field – then a volunteer or ranger manually enters the observations into a computer database.

The new app helps participants identify what they're seeing – from sea snails to fishes, octopuses to sea stars, and penguins to seals – and then instantly uploads the information to Parks Victoria for review and public release.

The app has been developed in collaboration with the Atlas of Living Australia.

The Andrews Labor Government is improving the management and protection of Victoria's marine and coastal environments by developing a new *Marine and Coastal Act*.

The Labor Government has invested \$43.8 million in marine and coastal projects – tripling the investment provided over the previous four years – to address key challenges for the marine and coastal environment: climate change, population growth and ageing infrastructure.

For more information go to parkweb.vic.gov.au/get-involved

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Our protected marine environments in Victoria are incredible places to visit – getting the best information helps us manage and protect them for the future."

"This new app is an exciting way for Victorians to help monitor our marine national parks and sanctuaries."

Quotes attributable to Parks Victoria Chief Conservation Scientist Dr Mark Norman

"Victoria's state-wide network of marine parks and sanctuaries was a world first and showcases an array of creatures and habitats."

"The app enables lovers of our coasts and seas to make a difference – observations of a native snapping shrimp or an introduced marine pest can provide critical information in managing and protecting these environments."

Quote attributable to Atlas of Living Australia Team Lead, Field Data Capture & Citizen Science Peter Brenton

"In building this BioCollect tool, we have consulted with over 100 organisations who are actively involved in field data capture to ensure that the app is a user-friendly tool for collecting vital data."

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