



## **FLINDERS PIER**

# **A REPORT ON THE FAILURE TO MAINTAIN THE PIER TO ENSURE ITS PRESERVATION**

**Prepared by**  
**Flinders Community Association**

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# SAVE FLINDERS PIER

## OVERVIEW

In July 2020, Parks Victoria quietly announced the proposed demolition of the historic Flinders Pier. The decision did not become public until March 2021, when the decision was leaked to the media.

A meeting attended by more than 300 people from across the Mornington Peninsula was held in May 2021. At the meeting, all those in attendance agreed that the Flinders Pier was a valuable community amenity with significant historic value, and it should be saved. Since then, more than 35,000 people have signed a petition in favour of saving the historic Flinders Pier.

This report examines the condition of the Flinders Pier and the failings of Parks Victoria to maintain it in a fit and proper manner.



*Concrete Pier duplication under construction to separate vehicles and pedestrians to improve safety (circa 2011)*

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## PIER REPORTS

[illegible]

To the casual observer, the pier currently appears sound along its entire length apart from a dip in the deck in the inner section in the vicinity of Pile 22B.

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**Image 1:** The south side of the pier.

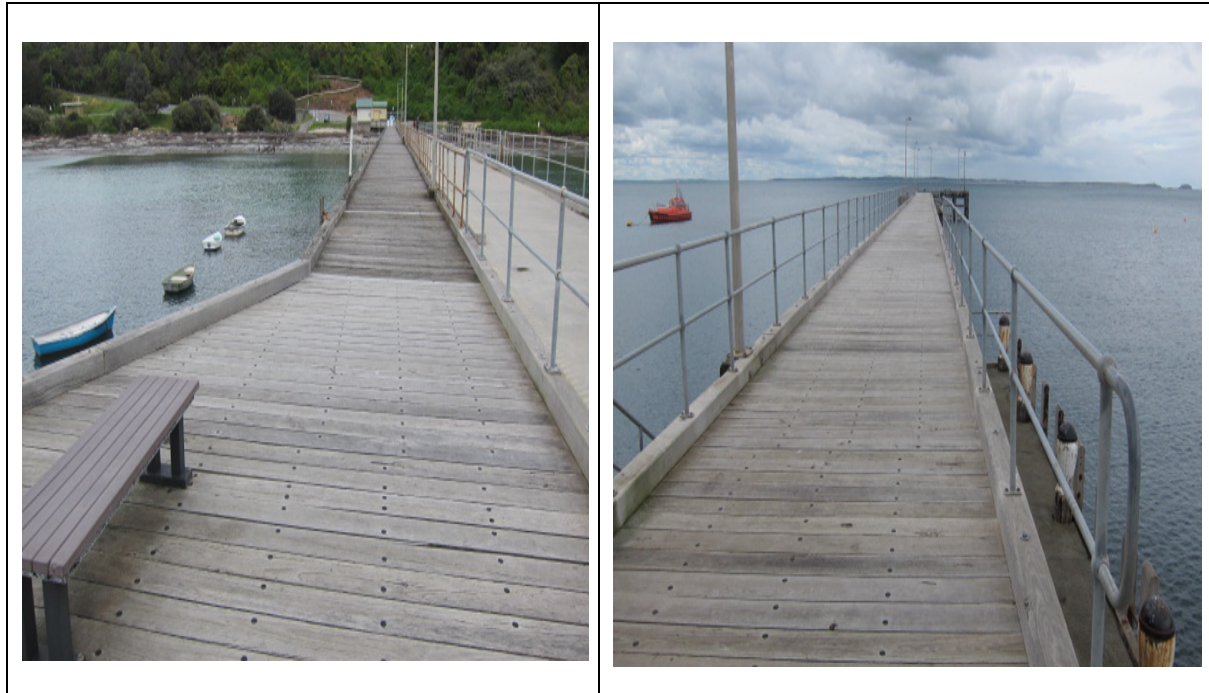


**Image 2:** Partially collapsed inner section

The dip in the deck is located at Pile 22B the location of which is shown in red on the SKM drawing.



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**Images 5 and 6:** Outer deck. Note new decking but piles remain 'as they were'.



**Images 3 and 4:** Inner section deck

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Freedom of Information (FOI) documentation obtained by the Save Flinders Pier committee (SFP) reveal that Parks Victoria commissioned a comprehensive underwater structural pile report from Kina Diving Pty Ltd which was conducted 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (KINA).

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It is noted that the inner section is supported by Piles 1 to 40 - there usually being 2 piles at each Pile referenced in the KINA Report. The outer section is supported by Piles 41 to 71 (A-E). The KINA Report concluded as follows:

The dive team tagged, photographed, visually inspected and scored all timber within the Flinders Pier pile structure. Measurements were taken and recorded as per project specifications.

The following 10 piles were reported to be in POOR condition:  
4B, 7B, 11A, 8B, 43C, 44A, 45B, 46A, 47A and 72F.

47 piles were reported to be in FAIR condition while 122 piles were reported to be in GOOD condition.

Of relevance is the following summary in the KINA Report which recommends repair work to the following Inner Section Piles. The reference to Pile 8B in the report should be Pile 28B. But investigations by SFP identifies Pile 22B as the pile that appears the most likely to be responsible for the dip in the deck.

Piles 4B, 7B, 11A, 28B – are described as in poor condition. Recommended repairs – splint, repair/epoxy. Pile 28 – epoxy encapsulation.

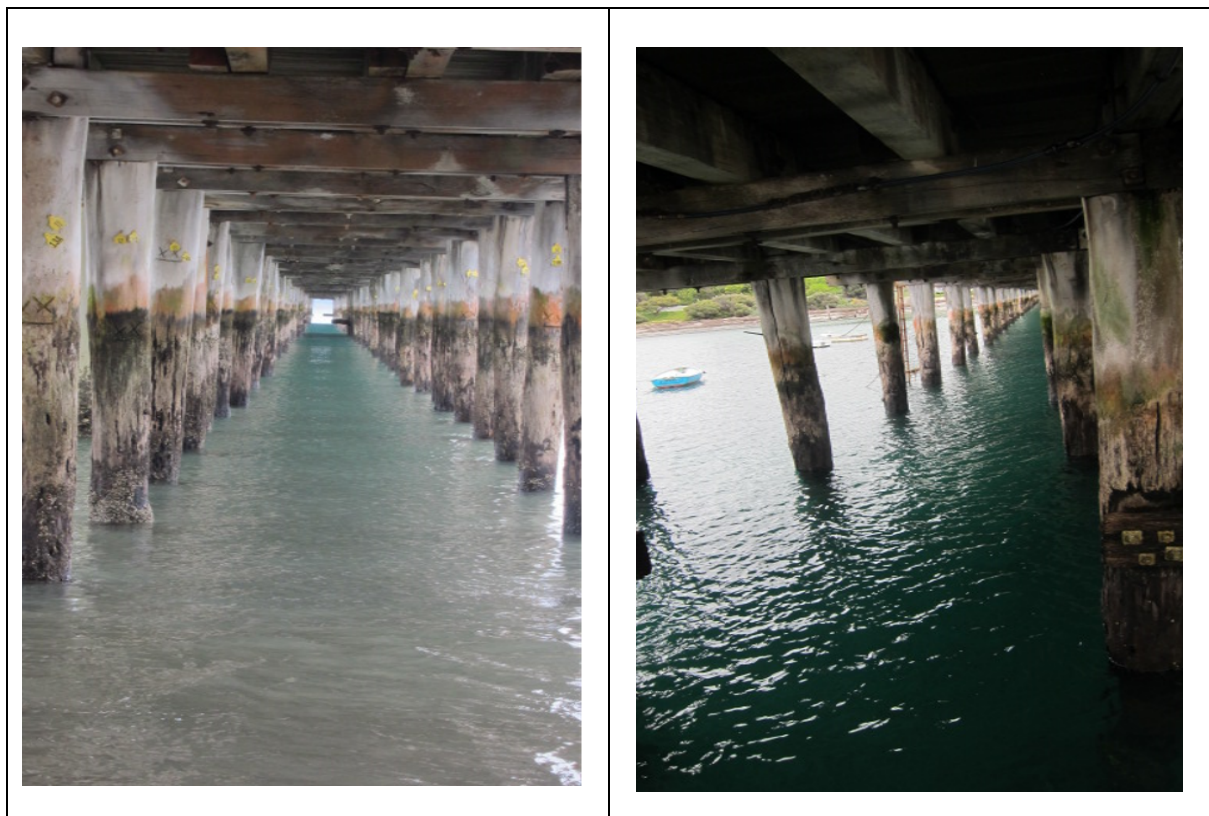
There were five outer section piles recommended for similar treatment, but this does not relate to any decision taken with respect to the inner section.



**Images 7 & 8:** Outer section piles.



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**Image 9 & 10:** Inner section piles

It is apparent from the KINA Report and the attached imagery that inner section piles are in no worse condition than the outer section piles. Whilst a new 'deck' has been installed on the outer section, the inner section has been allowed to fall into disrepair and the KINA recommended maintenance and repair for the inner section has not been undertaken by Parks Victoria despite having known of the need for works since 2016.

It is SFP's opinion that the collapse of the deck (in part) attributed to Pile 22B could be repaired by insertion of a steel pile behind the faulty pile. This could have been done as part of regular maintenance.

## NEGLECT OF MAINTENANCE

Despite the recommendations in the Kina Diving Report, no maintenance appears to have been carried out on either the inner or outer section of the original pier. If piles (both inner and outer) have, or in future will be, identified as needing replacement, there appears to have been no program to do this. Again, it is SFP's view that if outer section piles were to be identified as 'at the end of their useful life' then new steel piles could be inserted against them to preserve the pier's integrity. If this can be done for the outer section, then there is no reason why it may not also be done for the inner section.

The following photographs depict sections of the inner section of the original pier which have deteriorated and have lacked any attention to maintenance.

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**Images 11 & 12:** Deterioration due to lack of maintenance.

By any reasonable view of the status of the inner pier, it is only in worse condition than the outer section due to a lack of attention and maintenance.

## SAFETY SEPARATION

The Parks Victoria Master Plan of 2008 clearly proposes that the inner section of pier be widened to allow separation of motor vehicles and pedestrians. (refer below to the “Typical Pier Section” which formed part of the master plan).

The proposal was implemented by Parks Victoria when the inner pier was widened.

Subsequent lack of maintenance has resulted in the closure of inner timber section of the pier.

Lack of maintenance and closure of the inner timber section of the pier has resulted in a “less safe” environment for both pedestrians and motor vehicles at a time when motor vehicle and pedestrian use has increased since 2008.

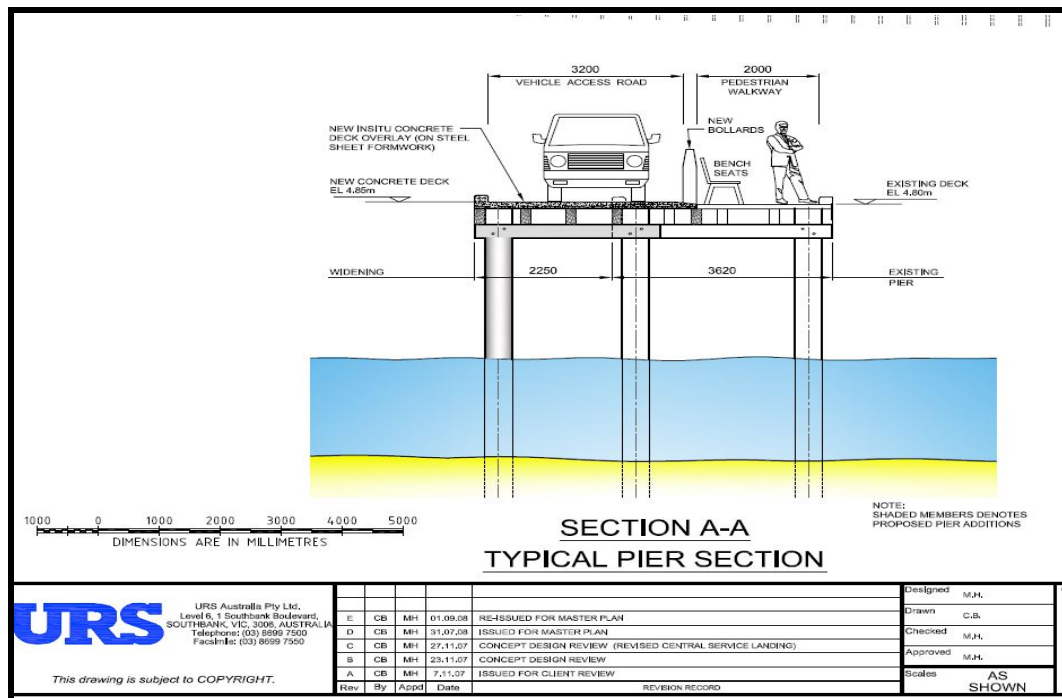
The most basic principle for the provision of public infrastructure is that a “less safe” environment is not created.

Parks Victoria now proposes to remove the neglected inner timber pier by demolition. Thereby permanently creating a “less safe” environment.

The following extract cross-section from the Parks Victoria Master Plan clearly demonstrates the intention of this separation of uses. At the time, Parks Victoria initiated consultation with the local community, forming a consultative reference group to inform the process representing the local fishing industry, mooring association, Pilot Boat operators, local community and Mornington Peninsula Shire. A record of this meeting explains that the *“Pier will be widened...to facilitate a pedestrian promenade separated from a concrete deck.”*



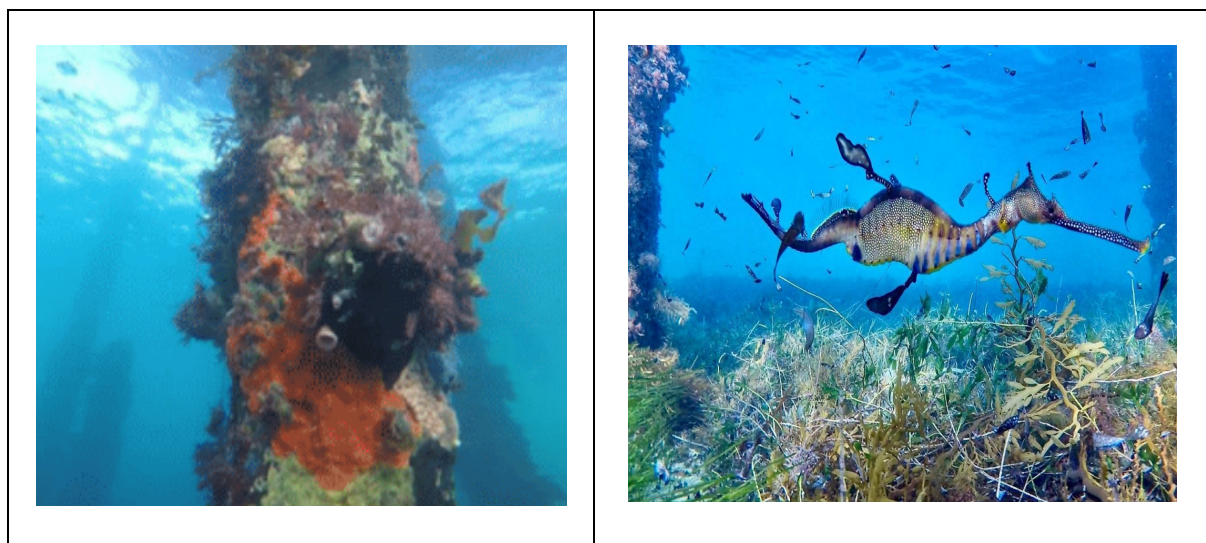
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*Cross section of proposed widening as it was presented by Park Victoria*

## MARINE LIFE AND VEGETATION

Of particular concern from demolition of the inner section of the pier is the impact on marine life and vegetation as well as the threat of disturbance to marine species, including the Weedy Sea Dragon habitat. The FCA has responded directly to Parks Victoria pointing out its 2021 Marine Ecology Report fails to provide sufficient data to support any reliable scientific conclusions, relying solely on supposition; makes only brief mention of juvenile Weedy Sea Dragons (WSD) that have been observed inhabiting the shallower waters; and leads the reader to believe that Weedy Sea Dragons are a common occurrence but fails to mention that the Mornington Peninsula hosts a unique species of the Weedy Sea Dragon found beneath the Flinders Pier.



**Images 13 & 14:** Pile vegetation and Weedy Sea Dragon beneath the pier.

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## REPAIR AND RESTORATION COMPARED TO DEMOLITION

Following the Kina Diving Report in 2016, Parks Victoria has not prepared an analysis which compares the cost of maintenance and repairs for the inner section with the cost of demolition. There is no evidence that it has prepared a schedule of maintenance and costs for the outer section either.

It is SFP's view therefore that an appropriate and proper review of the cost of repair and restoration should be undertaken. It is greatly concerned that the lack of maintenance of the outer section will lead to deterioration of the pier and based on Parks Victoria's current record on the matter, if left unattended to, could lead to a similar future decision being made to demolish the outer section as well – for no other reason than blatant neglect.

## RECOMMENDATION

Parks Victoria must undertake immediate works to again make the inner section of the Flinders Pier safe for pedestrian use; and ensure the ongoing structural integrity of the full pier (both inner and outer sections).

Furthermore, Parks Victoria must commit to reinstating a maintenance regime for the Flinders Pier to ensure that it never again falls into a state of disrepair that poses a risk to public safety.

## PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT

*This report has been prepared by the Save Flinders Pier committee on behalf of the Flinders Community Association for the purposes of promoting community awareness and informing interested parties of community concerns. It must not be used by any third parties for any reason and may not be published without the express written consent of the Flinders Community Association.*

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Parks Victoria, Asset Closure Delegate Approval Form C-0613, undated*

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