

St Kilda Pier

A Melbourne Landmark

St Kilda Pier has traditionally been one of Melbourne's most popular tourist attractions. Providing panoramic views of the Melbourne skyline and Port Phillip Bay, the pier is a popular destination for strolling, cycling, in-line skating and fishing. Catch a ferry to Williamstown, try to spot the penguins and native water rats, or enjoy a scenic walk to the end of the pier. Whatever your preference, the St Kilda Pier provides an unforgettable experience right in the heart of Melbourne.

History

St Kilda Pier has been the centre of recreational activity in St Kilda since the 1850s. Both the shelter at the pier entrance and the pavilion at the end are part of Victoria's heritage.

In 1853 the St Kilda Pier and Jetty Company constructed a wooden jetty to assist the early settlers in unloading timber and building materials to St Kilda. Not long after its construction the small jetty fell victim to a stormy Port Phillip Bay and was washed away.

Various forms of piers were constructed at St Kilda in the 1800s as the demand for a larger pier grew with the ever increasing trade to and from the area. Since then the pier has grown to its present size, the most recent concrete section was constructed in the 1970s.

Attractions

- Take a scenic stroll along the pier.
- View the Little Penguin colony from the viewing platform or by charter boat.
- Cycle, in-line skate, walk or jog along the pier and adjacent St Kilda foreshore.
- Catch a ferry to Williamstown or Southgate.
- Fish off the pier or join a fishing charter.
- Visit the popular Esplanade Art and Craft market on Sundays.

Facilities

The St Kilda Pier has safe wheelchair access, lighting, handrails, drinking fountains, toilets, adjacent car parking, barbecues and a picnic and playground area.

The St Kilda Breakwater

The St Kilda Breakwater was constructed for the 1956 Olympic Games to provide a safe harbour for yachts from the unpredictable winds and waves of Port Phillip Bay. Capable of supporting mooring facilities for up to 300 vessels including members of the Royal Melbourne Yacht Squadron, the breakwater consists mainly of bluestone, urban rubble, soil and sand.

St Kilda's Little Penguins

Approximately one hundred Little Penguins make the rocky and isolated St Kilda Breakwater their home - remarkable given their proximity to the urban centre of Melbourne.

The first breeding of a pair was recorded in 1974, making the St Kilda Breakwater the only confirmed breeding site for the penguin that is directly attached to the mainland.

Penguins are not the only animals to have colonised the breakwater. Native Water Rats (Rakali) can sometimes be seen among the rocks or swimming in the shallows.



The breakwater is also an important roosting area for seabirds, including cormorants and gulls.

Vegetation

Vegetation on the breakwater has resulted either from natural recolonisation or planting by local community groups. Many plants, including Coast Saltbush, Rounded Noonflower, Austral Seabligh, Bower Spinach and Beaded Glasswort are established on the breakwater and adapted to the harsh salty and exposed environment.

Extensive seagrass beds surround the breakwater and provide a nursery area for the Little Penguins and Rakali.

Pier Management

Parks Victoria is responsible for the management of the recreational use of the waters of Port Phillip Bay and Western Port. This includes the management of piers and jetties including St Kilda Pier and the placement and maintenance of recreational boating signs in accordance with the Marine Act.

Parks Victoria's role is to carefully preserve the natural conservation values of the bays while sensitively integrating the endless range of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Earthcare St Kilda

Earthcare St Kilda are a local community group actively involved in the protection, conservation and enhancement of flora and fauna on the St Kilda Breakwater. Volunteers can become involved in research, revegetation, erosion control or public education programs by writing to Earthcare St Kilda, PO Box 287, Elwood, 3184.

How to get there

Only 5km from Melbourne, St Kilda is well serviced by public transport. Take the tram or light rail right from the heart of the city. Alternatively, car parking is available in the vicinity of the foreshore (Mel 57 J10).

For more information about the St Kilda Pier, call the Parks Victoria Information Line on 13 1963.

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Caring for the environment

The Little Penguins and Rakali at St Kilda Pier are just two of the 1000 species of marine animals and plants who live in Port Phillip Bay. Please help care for these species by following these guidelines:

Take rubbish home with you

Launch or retrieve your craft at designated launching ramps and avoid destroying native vegetation

Keep clear of bird nesting and roosting areas

Prevent pollutants such as petrol, oil, sewage and detergents from entering the water

Observe recreational fishing regulations

Take care with fuel storage on the beaches and be considerate and responsible towards other beachgoers, especially children