

Quarantine Station plan

EXCLUSIVE
PETER ROLFE

CAMPING will be allowed at the historic Point Nepean Quarantine Station after the state government approved plans to revamp a prime part of the Portsea tourist site.

Campers have traditionally been banned from pitching tents at the picturesque coastal precinct, established in 1852, to protect its military, immigration and quarantine history.

But the government has given the green light for a \$4.5m redevelopment by engineering company CCB Envico to develop a coastal campground and facilities.

The new Point Nepean National Park campgrounds will be on the lawn outside the quarantine station, with views over the beach close to a popular dolphin spotting area.

They will be designed for people new to camping, with a camp kitchen and toilets to be built in repurposed quarantine station buildings.

Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio said it would draw more tourists to the site, the most westerly point on the Mornington Peninsula.

"Point Nepean is a great place for a low-impact campground like this and will help more Victorians connect with the park and strengthen their support for conserving the natural and cultural landscape for future generations," she said.

Work is expected to start early next year.

Pre-pitched tents will be set

up on platforms to be built between the water and heritage buildings.

Planning is also under way on a project to highlight the Aboriginal significance of the site, telling the park's Indigenous history as well as its natural, military and quarantine past.

Acting Tourism Minister Mary-Anne Thomas said it was a win for visitors looking to enjoy a special slice of Victoria and the state's economic recovery from the pandemic.

"The new campground will make it easier for more Victorians to enjoy our beautiful peninsula – and that helps to support local businesses and jobs," she said.

The Herald Sun in July revealed plans by Parks Victoria to breathe new life into the site with more opportunities for people to enjoy Point Nepean's natural beauty and heritage.

The new campground, to operate from spring to autumn, will also include a beach shower, gravel path, lighting and covered outdoor barbecue area. Caravans will not be allowed.

The quarantine station is on the Victorian Heritage Register for its archaeological, aesthetic, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance.

Heritage Victoria has approved the plans.

A second proposed phase of the development could expand the campground with tents south of the quarantine station and a reception area, lounge and barbecue deck.

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Location of campsite down near Jarman Oval, not on the parade ground.