

# What is a map?

## View from above

A map is a visual representation of all or a part of the Earth's surface as seen from above. This is called a plan view or a bird's-eye view **C D**. Maps show the location and distribution of both natural and human features on the Earth's surface and the relationships between some of these features.

One map cannot usually contain all of a landscape's features. For example, the map of Sandringham **G** does not show the same information as the aerial photograph **C**. Maps should include BOLTSS **B**.

### B BOLTSS

- B** — **BORDER**  
shows the boundaries of the map
- O** — **ORIENTATION**  
shows direction on the map
- L** — **LEGEND**  
explains the symbols and colours used
- T** — **TITLE**  
describes what is on the map
- S** — **SCALE**  
indicates distances between places on the map
- S** — **SOURCE**  
explains the source of information for the map

**A** OBLIQUE AERIAL VIEW OF SANDRINGHAM HARBOUR, PORT PHILLIP BAY, VICTORIA



**C** BIRD'S EYE OR PLAN VIEW OF SANDRINGHAM HARBOUR, PORT PHILLIP BAY, VICTORIA



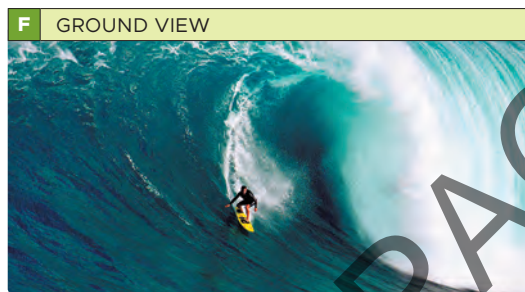
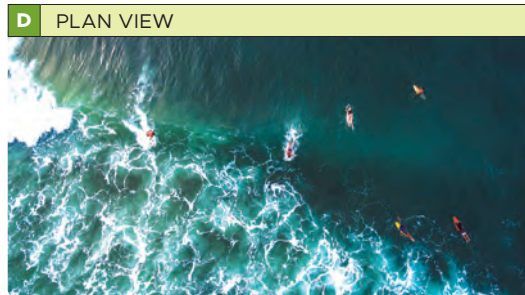
Map makers (cartographers) often use vertical aerial photographs as the basis for their maps. These photographs are always taken from directly above the area being mapped and are sometimes referred to as a plan view or a bird's-eye view. ▲

## Different views

The surfers in this *plan view* are shown from directly above **D**. One advantage of a plan view is that the viewer can easily see the location of each surfer in the water and where they are in relation to the other surfers.

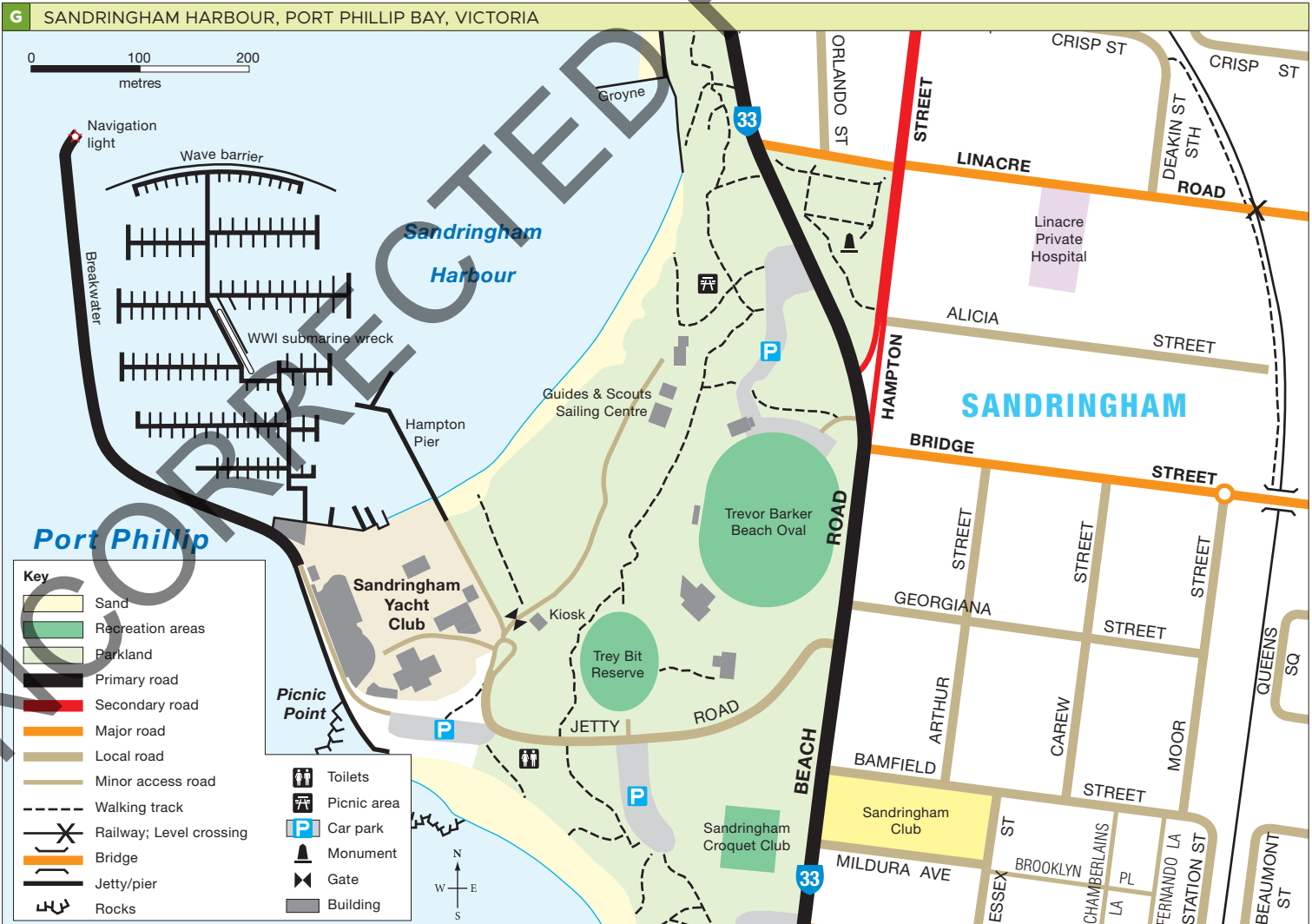
Features can also be observed from a low aerial angle, known as an *oblique view* **A E**. This gives a better idea of the height and shape of objects, but some objects in the background are hidden. Objects in the foreground appear larger than those in the background.

The *ground view* shows how a feature would look if you were standing or paddling near it **F**. A ground view gives an excellent impression of the height and shape of objects in the foreground, but those in the background are largely obscured and their scale is greatly distorted.



## ACTIVITIES

- 1 What is another term for a bird's-eye view?
- 2 Identify two similarities and two differences between the aerial photograph **C** and the map of Sandringham Harbour **G**.
- 3 Suggest one piece of information that neither of these images shows.
- 4 Suggest one occasion when you might find the map **G** useful and one occasion when you may find the aerial photograph **C** useful.
- 5 Examine the three views of the surfers **D E F**. Suggest an advantage and a disadvantage of each of these views.
- 6 Draw the following objects from both a plan view and a ground view: a road with a car on it, a house, a forest and a bridge.
- 7 Use the plan view of the surfers **D** to draw a map showing their spatial distribution. Include a key to highlight the main features.
- 8 Study the oblique aerial view of Sandringham Harbour **A**.
  - (a) Identify two ways in which this is different from photograph **C**.
  - (b) Could an accurate map of this area be drawn from this view? Explain your answer.



Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victoria

The cartographer (map maker) simplifies the aerial photograph or satellite image to show key features, represented by symbols, points and lines. ▲