



OCTOBER 2023

Board Communiqué

On behalf of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) Board, I'm pleased to share our October 2023 Communiqué to inform stakeholders about the work of the Board.

We held our Board Meeting in Torquay on Wadawurrung Country, which provided a wonderful opportunity to gather to discuss a number of important initiatives for the Great Ocean Road region.

POINT IMPOSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIIP)

The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority is leading development of the Point Impossible Improvement Plan (PIIP), focussed on managing the foreshore at Point Impossible, 5km north-east of Torquay.

Funded in 2021, the project focuses on protecting and enhancing cultural values, conducting a coastal hazard assessment, developing a landscape master plan, and understanding environmental values. Notably, it follows a human-centric approach, with decision-making power given to the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners through a governance structure involving the Authority, DEECA, and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

The master plan decisions will adhere to land use planning requirements and involve consultation with stakeholders such as surfing and environmental groups. The project also considers potential impacts on recreational user groups and the broader community, balancing cultural preservation with practical considerations like car parking and access path realignment.

STATE OF THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST AND PARKS ENVIRONMENT REPORT

In September, the Authority released a suite of environmental and social indicators to be considered by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability for incorporation into the inaugural State of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Environment Report.

The Acting Director Environment and Coastal Operations presented to the Commissioners 'Reference Group' on 13 September to discuss the process we employed to develop our suite of indicators. The reference group includes executive members from agencies and groups such as Victorian National Parks Association, Victorian Marine and Coastal Council and Vic Catchments.

The Authority will now function as a member of the 'Reference Group' specific to this report.



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EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENT - NEW DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COASTAL OPERATIONS

Dr Lisa Mills has been appointed to the role of Director Environment and Coastal Operations with a commencement date of 16 October 2023.

By way of background, Dr Mills is an Environmental Engineer and Occupational Hygienist committed to improving the work environment from both a health and safety and environmental perspective. Dr Mills comes to the Authority from the Geelong Port where she helped to achieve its vision to be Australia's most environmentally sustainable bulk port.

OHS STRATEGY 2023-28

The Board considered and approved the Authority's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) 5-year strategy, developed in collaboration with consultant Sarah Martin from SMARTin Safety.

The consultant's work involved reviewing existing OHS systems, facilitating workshops with the OHS Committee and Leadership Team, integrating Board input, and creating a 12-month action plan in consultation with the WHS team and key stakeholders.

The strategy focuses on high-level goals in leadership, responsibility, resources, systems, psychological health, and communication. It also includes an annual action plan with specific targets for the development of our organisational safety management and aims to implement a management review process which will provide an opportunity to evaluate the Authority's safety performance, review measures against the action plan and establish objectives for the coming year.

APOLLO BAY RECREATION RESERVE MASTERPLAN

The Board considered and unanimously endorsed the

Masterplan for the Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve, providing a clear direction for its future. For many, the Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve holds a special place in their hearts, serving as a favourite escape for holidaymakers and a dynamic sporting hub for both locals and visitors.

The newly endorsed Masterplan provides a comprehensive ten-year roadmap, guided by the collective aspirations of the community. Its aim is to transform the Reserve into a thriving, year-round community hub, offering a diverse range of activities including sports, recreation, events, and a welcoming spot for holidaymakers.

The plan, guided by extensive community engagement and incorporates additional open space, increased riverfront access, more parking, bike hoops, and a canoe/kayak launch. The Masterplan prioritises inclusivity, accessibility, and resilience to environmental challenges.

As the plan moves forward, the immediate focus is on collaboration. The Authority will work closely with sporting clubs, the local council, and key stakeholders to secure the essential funding for the implementation of this transformative plan.

While all works will be subject to available funding and feasibility assessments, grant funding is expected to play a key role in many instances. Next steps include the detailed design for the campground upgrades as funded through the Camping Uplift grant and supporting sporting clubs to progress grant applications for design and construction of infrastructure within the sporting precinct.

It is anticipated that the first stage of works will commence in early 2024.



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GREAT OCEAN ROAD SMART COAST STRATEGY

The Board noted the development of the Draft Smart Coast Strategy, which aims to identify, prioritise, inform and deliver on smart technology opportunities, and to identify fit for purpose data-driven approaches to improve the management of the Great Ocean Road coast and parks.

A smart coast refers to a coastal region where data, technology and innovation are integrated to enhance information sharing, decision making, sustainability and the wellbeing of communities and ecosystems.

The Authority's Smart Coast Strategy is the first smart strategy in Australia to be focused on a coastal region and aims to set the standard for improved data driven decision making, coastal land management, conservation, and the visitor economy across Australia.

The Authority has engaged management consulting company Delos Delta to facilitate the development of a Smart Coast Strategy (the draft Strategy) to optimise the Authority's use of integrated smart technology, to support decision-making and deliver benefits to the environs, economy, culture, and communities of the Great Ocean Road.

GREAT OCEAN ROAD COASTAL TRAIL

The Board noted the progress of the minimum viable product assessment for the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail (GORCT). The project, funded by a \$23.8m grant from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) and \$1.43m from DEECA, seeks to

boost tourism revenue, enhance visitor experience, and improve the well-being of local communities.

The GORCT is a 95km walking trail project aimed at connecting various townships along the Great Ocean Road in Australia. Led by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), with project partners including the Authority and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC), the trail incorporates suspension bridges, lookouts, and day loop walks.

The Master Plan for the GORCT, finalised in December 2022, identified a preferred trail alignment and supporting infrastructure. An independent review by Deloitte in January 2023 highlighted strategic risks, including insufficient funding and the absence of an MVP assessment to align with allocated funding. In response, World Trail was engaged by DEECA to develop an MVP methodology and assessment.

Consultation on the proposed trail route occurred in late 2021 and February-March 2022, with the draft Trail Master Plan undergoing community consultation in June-July 2022. A communications plan for the MVP process is yet to be developed but is expected to involve updates on the Engage Victoria website and the Authority's website, led by DEECA.

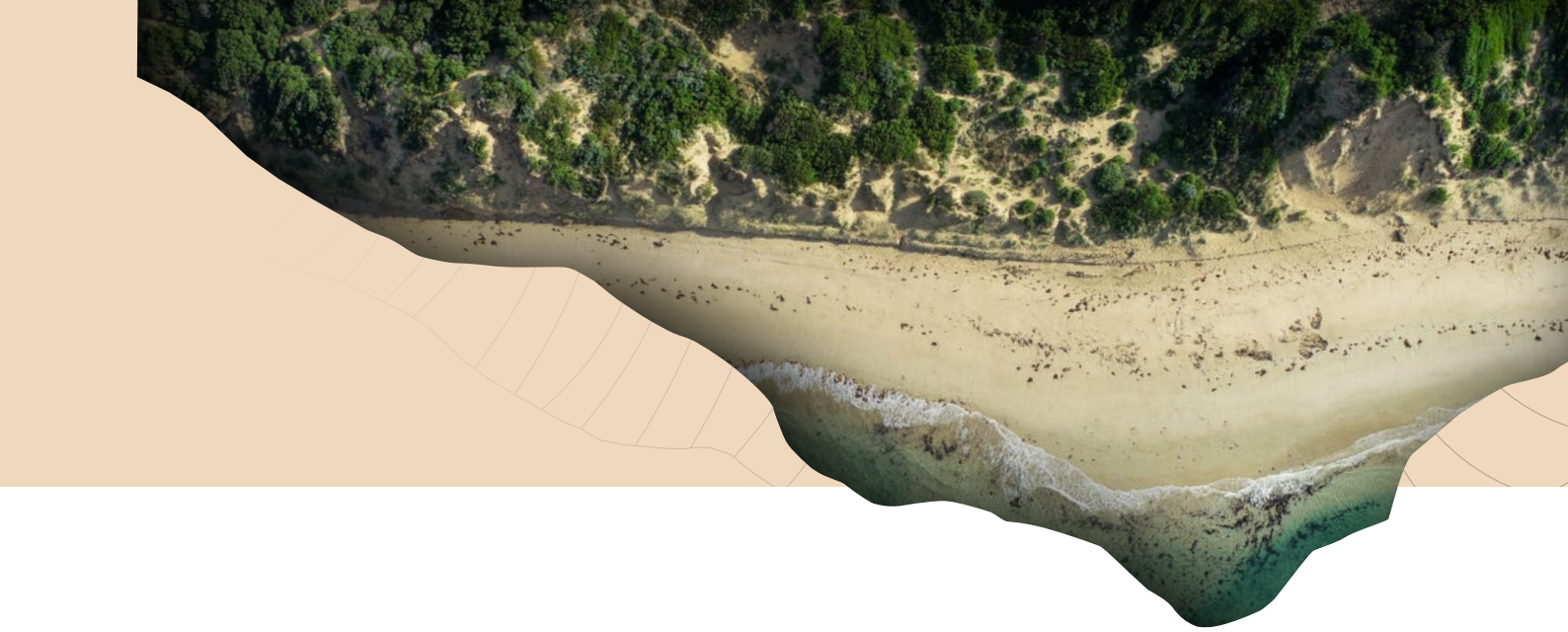


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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Board noted the ongoing progress in developing the inaugural Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy for the Authority.

This strategy is a key action item in both the Five-Year Business Strategy and the 2023-2024 Corporate Plan. The 2024-2029 Communications & Corporate Affairs Strategy aims to bring the Authority's vision, purpose, values, and principles to life through engaging storytelling, focusing on environmental management and sustainable tourism along the Great Ocean Road and beyond.

The strategy will outline a vision of becoming a unified and trusted leader, with a roadmap to 2029 defining the audiences, channels, and narrative needed to achieve this vision. It emphasises a shift towards proactive, campaign-driven communication activities to inspire greater understanding and empower audiences to amplify the Authority's story. The strategy also seeks to align the organisation, elevate the role of the communications function, and provide tools for collaborative storytelling.

Bastion Reputation has conducted preliminary work, including workshops and interviews with key stakeholders, to understand sentiment and awareness, informing the creation of the strategy and roadmap.

The strategy will be developed utilising internal expertise, and a draft strategy will be presented at the December Board Meeting.

I look forward to updating you further on our progress as we work towards our shared vision of a Great Ocean Road region thriving as one, integrated, living entity.

Sincerely,

Libby Mears

Board Chair, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.



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