



JUNE 2023

Board Communiqué

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

APOLLO BAY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SITE VISITS

We held our Board Meeting at the Maar Woon Neighbourhood House on Gadubanud Country, which provided a wonderful opportunity to explore this spectacular part of the Great Ocean Road and meet with key stakeholders and community members in Apollo Bay.

A highlight of our time on the ground in Apollo Bay was connecting with locals, listening and learning, discovering and discussing what makes the area so special and unique.

Board Director Doug Humann AM chaired an informative evening Q&A session at Wildlife Wonders, with guest speakers Lizzie Corke OAM, CEO, and Dr Jack Pascoe, from the Conservation Ecology Centre, to discuss the organisation's purpose and role in conservation initiatives as well as key priorities for the area including visions for the future.

We met with a range of guests including representatives from the Apollo Bay Community Voice, the Apollo Bay Chamber of Commerce, Apollo Bay Football and Netball Club, RSL, Historical Society, Fisherman's Co-op, Great Ocean Road Communities Networks, Colac Otway Shire Council, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism, Barwon Water, Great Ocean Road Health and a range of passionate local advocates.

We also undertook important site visits in the region, enabling Board Directors to deepen their understanding of future plans and opportunities for local public land, businesses and Authority assets. We explored the Cape Otway Lightstation, the Apollo Bay Harbour, the Fisherman's Co-Op, the Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve, the foreshore and Kennett River.

We would like to thank the local community members and Colac Otway Shire Councillors who joined us to work together towards a better future for Apollo Bay.

The Board maintains formal structures for regular dialogue with locals and recognises the importance of having meaningful conversations that support great community input into decision making, as we continue to work towards shared objectives.

Our visit to Apollo Bay was another practical and rewarding way of applying our values of collaboration, leadership and evidence-based decision making to the work that we do. The Board enjoyed highlighting environmental advocacy as part of our approach to land management and will continue to discuss opportunities to lead sustainable change for our unique region.

The Board remains grateful to our stakeholders and community representatives for engaging with us and for keeping our communication channels open to each other.



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APOLLO BAY, SKENES CREEK AND MARENGO COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (CIP)

In 2019, the Colac Otway Shire Council (Council) in partnership with the former Otway Coast Committee (now integrated into the Authority) commenced a Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP) for the towns of Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo.

Following endorsement in June 2022, a draft CIP was released for public consultation.

All submissions, and proposed modifications relating to concerns and comments to the CIP were outlined in the Authority's report to Council at their April 2023 meeting.

The Authority's report aligns with *Victoria's Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (MACA) which legislates the planning and management of the State's marine and coastal environment and its related Marine and Coastal Policy 2020 and provides guidance to decision makers in achieving MACA's objectives.

At the June Board meeting, Directors adopted the CIP as recommended by our officers.

The CIP presents a culmination of engagement with community, Council and key stakeholders to develop a long-term vision supported by key principles, preliminary concepts, and ideas to be tested and delivered over a 20-to-30-year delivery horizon.

The CIP provides a foundation for future detailed design, site specific analysis, costings and community engagement on the proposed built outcomes and future improvements to the coastal Crown Land.

The Authority will continue to work with the Council, community, rights holders, key stakeholders, and government to ensure planning for appropriate coastal and community infrastructure, in line with the required legislative directions.

DRAFT MASTERPLAN FOR THE APOLLO BAY

RECREATION RESERVE

Board Directors considered the draft Masterplan for the Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve.

The draft Masterplan provides a framework for the balanced redevelopment of the Reserve's established sporting and recreation facilities and campground, while improving cultural heritage protection, environmental outcomes and responding to the local impacts of climate change, including flood risk.

Importantly, the plan reflects community aspirations for the Reserve to be retained as a central hub for recreation, events, activities and general use by locals and visitors.

The draft Masterplan was informed by an Issues and Opportunities Paper developed through community and key stakeholder engagement, and is a consolidated view of expectations, Traditional Owner needs, open space provision, land use planning, risk and safety, issues as well as key state and local policy and statutory frameworks, including programs, planning schemes, strategies and technical issues influencing the site.

Approval was given by the Board to release the draft Masterplan for community engagement.

The Authority is inviting Apollo Bay locals, visitors and key stakeholders to review the draft Masterplan and have their say on the future of the Reserve. A month-long community engagement throughout June and July includes an online survey, four in-person sessions held in Apollo Bay and an online information session. Feedback received will inform the final Masterplan for the Reserve.

BUDGET FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24

Board Directors adopted the draft budget for the financial year 2023-24. The budget has a greater emphasis on future financial self-sustainability by controlling current operating costs, while concentrating available funds on income-generating investment and revenue strategies.

In this budget constrained environment, the Authority will continue to work proactively to progress our financial position.

Key strategy objectives continue to be:

- Building competency and awareness of cultural values and to advance practices that enable self-determination by partnering and engaging with Traditional Owners
- A revised organisational structure aimed to build capability and capacity to take on the broader range of public land types
- A plan which protects, conserves and enhances the land consistent with legislative principles and for the benefit of future generations
- A strategy to establish and maintain formal structures for regular ongoing engagement with local and visitor communities
- Delivering an expanded capital works program relating to visitor infrastructure and improvements through partnership with funding initiatives
- The ability to plan strategically to optimise investment across the organisation's assets and commercial opportunities.

GRANT AGREEMENT

The Geelong City Deal (GCD) is an Australian and Victorian Government initiative to deliver \$500 million of investment in the region to diversify the economy, support growth in the visitor economy and enhance the Geelong Central Business District and regional projects including sites across the Great Ocean Road.

Board Directors approved a new unified grant agreement from the GCD program via the Minister for Regional Development to enable funding of \$22.25M to deliver the Apollo Bay Harbour redevelopment; the Point Grey Redevelopment, Lorne works; and for improvements to tourism infrastructure at Kennett River, in collaboration with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR).

Forecast grant agreement completion dates are currently scheduled to mid-2025 for Kennett River and mid-2026 for Apollo Bay Harbour and the Point Grey, Lorne redevelopment.

These projects will require masterplanning to clarify grant scope, budget and stakeholder views including an overarching governance structure. The Board will oversee progress, critical timing considerations, project changes and mitigate any emerging risks as well as ensuring detailed community consultation plans and stakeholder engagement is undertaken.

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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

The Board approved the Authority's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy having provided detailed feedback to a draft plan at its February 2023 meeting.

The strategy's key deliverables across the next three years include consolidating current IT operations (to standardise network services), expand core systems (to support expanding commercial models) and embed and extend new operating environments (to embed cybersecurity maturity and to leverage predictive analytics).

The new systems will better enable the Authority to be more customer centric, evidence-based and fit for purpose.

I look forward to continuing to bring you updates from the Board and the Authority team as we work relentlessly to achieve our 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.

