



**GREAT OCEAN ROAD**  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

# **IMPROVEMENTS TO TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN KENNETT RIVER**

**ENGAGEMENT REPORT**



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the separate and distinct Wadawurrung Peoples and Eastern Maar Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Great Ocean Road's land, waters, seas and skies and recognise their cultural knowledge that has led to sustainable practices and has cared for Country over tens of thousands of years.

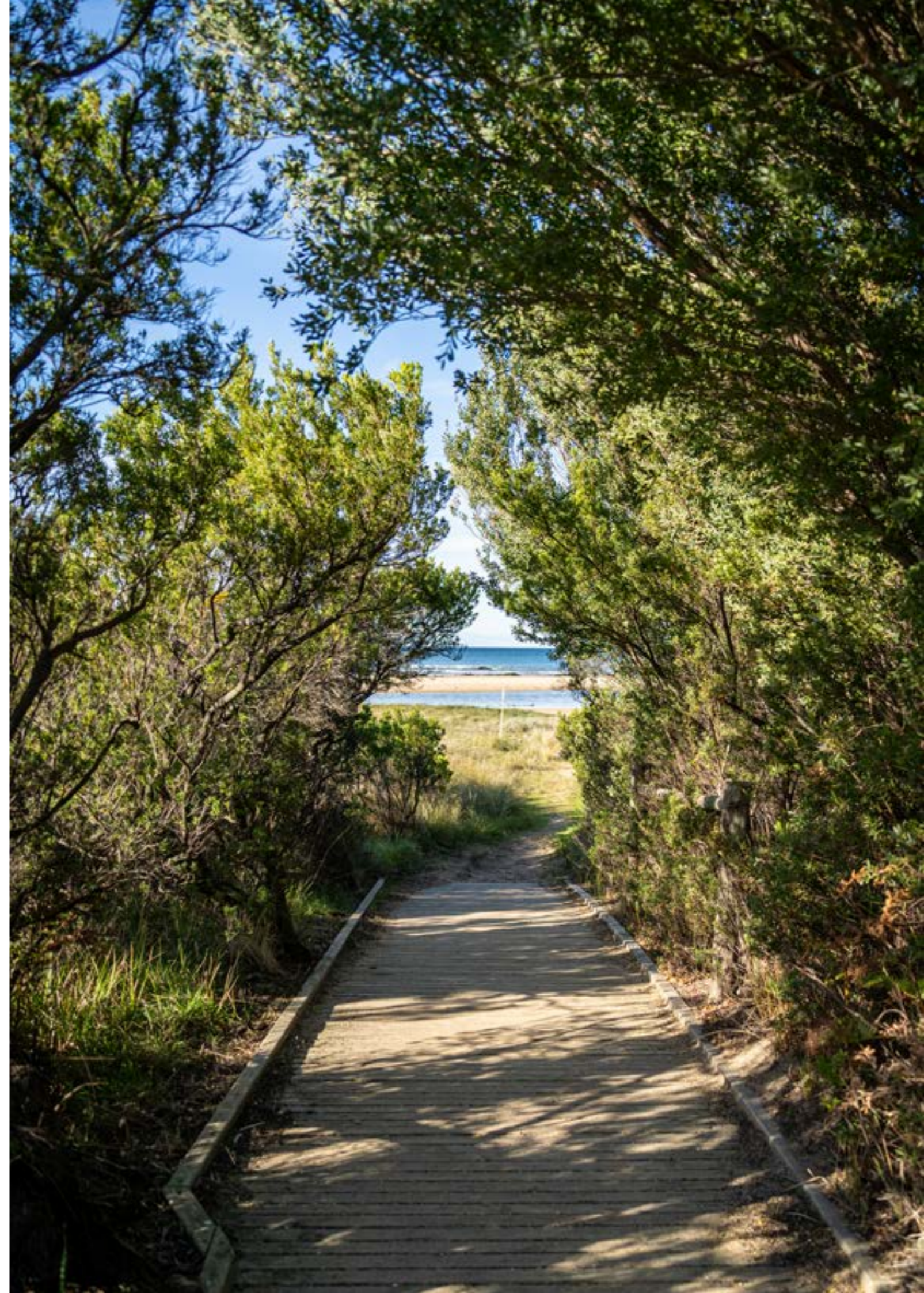
We honour Elders past and present and express gratitude for their sharing of wisdom that has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner and build meaningful relationships that reflect self-determination and enable us to work together with our Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices, and together deliver on their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>6</b>	INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BACKGROUND
<b>10</b>	ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND KEY THEMES
<b>16</b>	HOW WE ENGAGED THE COMMUNITY
<b>17</b>	WHAT WE HEARD
<b>43</b>	NEXT STEPS



# INTRODUCTION

## OUR COMMITMENT TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) is in an incredibly privileged position to be tasked with protecting and enhancing the Great Ocean Road's coast and parks on behalf of the community.

The Authority is committed to engaging, listening, respecting and reflecting community and stakeholder views in everything we do, as guided by our [Community Engagement Strategy](#).

We are committed to being transparent and open with our communities and building and deepening relationships grounded in reciprocity and trust. Through various channels, mediums and engagement spaces, we will invite feedback, robust discussion and reflection to strengthen our connections and common purpose.

## GEELONG CITY DEAL

In July 2023, we took on delivery of three highly anticipated Geelong City Deal funded projects along the Great Ocean Road. These include;

- Point Grey Redevelopment in Lorne
- Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River
- The Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment

These projects are vital to enhancing the liveability and amenity of popular destinations along the Great Ocean Road for local communities and the millions of visitors to the region each year.

The Great Ocean Road projects are being delivered as part of the \$500 million Geelong City Deal, a collaborative partnership to transform Geelong and the Great Ocean Road by the Australian Government and Victorian Government, and local council with the Authority and key partners.

## KENNETT RIVER PRECINCT

Kennett River is a small coastal area on Eastern Maar Country. Located halfway between Lorne and Apollo Bay, it has become a popular tourist stop to experience Australian wildlife such as koalas and native birds.

The large groups of tourists and tour buses have created pressure on this small community and its infrastructure, including increased traffic and safety issues in the precinct.

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

The tourism infrastructure improvement plans for Kennett River date back to 2014 when the community started a discussion about the pressures of Great Ocean Road tourism traffic in Kennett River - in particular, from touring buses (with over 1,000 visitors per day) coming year-round to see Australian native wildlife (koala spotting and parrot feeding being key attractions). This put pressure on the coastal hamlet causing difficulties with parking, traffic flow, bus congestion, pedestrian safety, public toilet demand, and general access in and around this small coastal town.

In 2020, Colac Otway Shire Council received funding through the Geelong City Deal to deliver tourism infrastructure improvements in Kennett River. Council prepared a site Masterplan, completed site investigations, designs for road and parking upgrades and for a public toilet and wastewater treatment plant, whilst leading consultation on the project up until mid-2022.

A review into the Geelong City Deal projects located along the Great Ocean Road was conducted in 2022, which paused progress. The review ultimately recommended a transfer of delivery responsibility for the three continuing Geelong City Deal projects to the Authority, aligning to our mission to protect and manage the region's iconic coast and parks. This included the highly anticipated \$3.69 million Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River project.

We thank and acknowledge Council for their work on the project to date.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

The Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River project will support the growing tourism and visitor economy by delivering public infrastructure and accessibility improvements through several initiatives.

The tourism improvements are proposed to include;

- A new public toilet and a new or upgraded wastewater treatment plant in the adjoining Kennett River Caravan Park; and
- Carpark and road improvements works.

The Precinct Plan will take in most of the public land in Kennett River. It will include the Kennett River Caravan Park, the Kafe Koala carpark stretching down to the river and a small section of the Great Ocean Road.

## PROJECT OUTCOMES

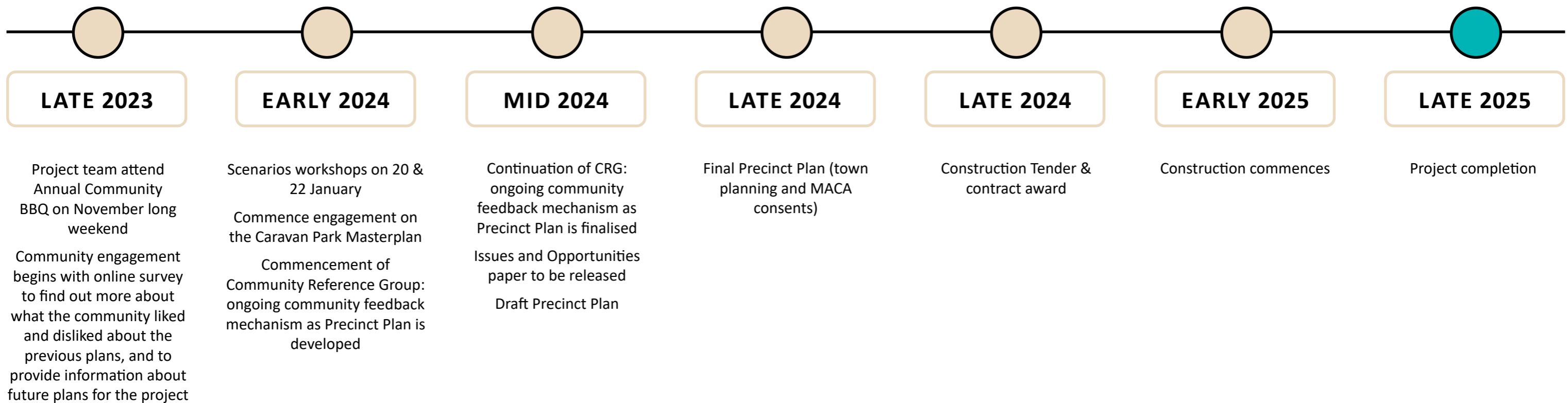
The Precinct Plan will make traffic movements safer in the town and provide a better experience for visitors. There will be efficiencies realised by sharing caravan park facilities with the public, including the public toilet and wastewater treatment plant.

One of the design principles for the project will include traffic management features that will improve the flow of tour bus traffic entering the local road network into Kennett River, providing parking for small tour buses and promoting safer pedestrian movement and driver behaviour.

Another key objective of the project is that new facilities are appropriate to Kennett River's size and unique character, retaining open space areas, and views and access to Kennett River.

The Precinct Plan and all proposed works must comply with the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018 and Policy 2020*, including recent guidelines such as the *Marine and Coastal Strategy 2022* and *Victoria's Resilient Coast Framework*.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

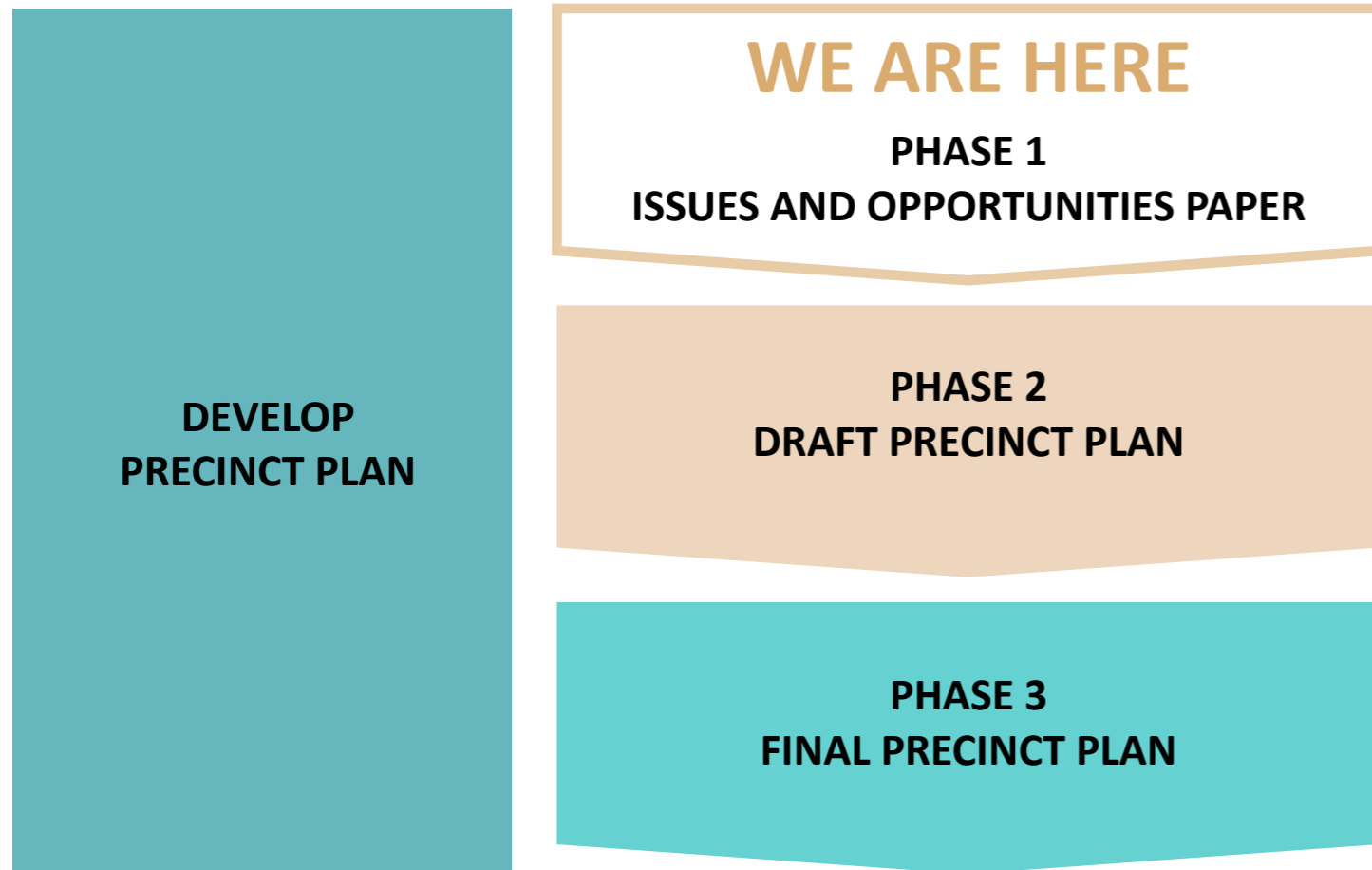


# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The first phase of community engagement was a preliminary step for the project. We made time to re-introduce the project to the community, introduce the project team, and explore issues and opportunities for the project.

We focused on finding out more about what the community liked and disliked about the previous plans, and to provide information about future plans for the project. Furthermore, we prepared three possible future scenarios to test ideas with the community for a Precinct Plan.

This preliminary step to identify issues and opportunities is the first of a 3-step process to develop a Precinct Plan.



Across late 2023 and early 2024, our engagement included a community BBQ, seeking feedback via an online questionnaire, and delivering community workshops both in person and online.

Following is a summary of the key themes raised by the community:

# KEY THEMES

## Congestion and safety concerns

Community members frequently raised concerns that a high numbers of visitors along the Great Ocean Road – combined with the rising popularity of stopping at Kennett River for a wildlife experience, particularly by tour buses – has created congestion issues in the township.

Safety concerns were raised about pedestrians mixing with vehicles within the main precinct, due to the high number of visitors and the current traffic and parking arrangements.



## Varied visitation mix experienced for a small town on the Great Ocean Road

The current situation sees Kennett River experience a considerable influx of daily traffic, encompassing tourist buses of various sizes as well as day-trippers by car. This trend has developed over time, largely influenced by social media portraying Kennett River as a wildlife-spotting destination, thus exacerbating the issue. The visitation mix and popularity of the destination requires us to consider solutions that ensure the hamlet can adequately service and support future visitation needs.

A range of issues related to visitation and tourism in Kennett River were raised including:

- **Desire for Slow Tourism**

The community would like to encourage visitors to slow down and have an opportunity for a more culturally and environmentally friendly visitor experience. Community aspirations for the precinct including promoting visitors to relax, find tranquility, and be closer to nature.

- **Strategic implementation of infrastructure**

Members of the community would like to see infrastructure plans and solutions align with a visitation mix that suits the hamlet feel, with a desire to focus on environmentally sensitive experiences – by encouraging small, manageable tourist numbers based on site carrying capacity assessments.

- **What about the buses?**

Concerns regarding increasing and uncontrolled bus tourism was another consistent theme throughout engagement. Community members are keen to see a visitation mix, which includes tour busses being managed to allow the precinct to be safe for all users.

- **Visitor etiquette**

This issue was mostly cited in relation to tour bus tourism, with concerns around inappropriate interactions with wildlife (feeding the birds and disturbing koalas), littering of rubbish and cigarette butts, and inappropriate visitor access to both public and private land.

- **Community vision and guiding principles**

The Kennett River Association and affiliated community members expressed clear views and provided us with their vision and guiding principles for Kennett River. These principles will be regularly referred to as we move towards a draft precinct plan.



Quotes from Kennett River community engagement (scenarios workshop)

## Respecting and enhancing the natural environment

The community highlighted how important the natural environment is (which is why everyone loves Kennett River so much), and how vital it is that it is respected and valued.

- **Local Environment**

Local knowledge surrounding flood risk, environmental protection, underground substances (eg. old fuel tanks next to shop), wastewater management and suggestions on drainage have been brought to our attention.

- **Sustainable infrastructure that reflects green, open space**

The community emphasised consistently the importance of retaining green space (incorporating native vegetation), the importance of utilising natural infrastructure materials that are climate resilient and ensuring that Kennett River's unique environment is protected for generations to come.

Submissions outlined opportunities for land rejuvenation and community values, presenting fantastic opportunities to safeguard Kennett River and ensuring the tourism infrastructure project enriches, rather than detracts from the natural environment.

## Public Amenities (toilet and wastewater treatment)

The proposal to place the public toilet within the caravan park garnered mixed feedback, with many agreeing the new location would reduce overall development.

While some supported the new location, concerns were raised regarding environmental considerations, view lines, pedestrian movement, and safety. Notably, that pedestrians are required to cross Hawdon Avenue from the shop/vehicle parks to access the toilet. Precinct aesthetics were also identified as important to both residents and visitors alike.

Comments suggested that amenities need to blend in with the natural surroundings, meet environmental standards, discourage visitor sprawl into the caravan park boundary by utilising natural barriers, and ensure safe pedestrian movement to and from the café, beach, and river.

## Traffic and people movement

- **Signage and designated parking**

Community submissions offered some excellent suggestions surrounding how the Kennett River Precinct can both instruct and educate visitors using positive language. Important aspects to signage include:

- Having clear designated signage and associated parking for cars, long vehicles, day visitors, and campers will mitigate confusion and congestion during peak periods.
- Provision of clear and positive signage that blends in with the natural environment.
- Taking the opportunity to educate visitors about cultural heritage and Kennett River's unique environment.
- Pedestrian movement and wayfinding signage.

- **Omission of Grey River Road**

On many occasions we were asked why Grey River Road could not be included in the budget for the tourism infrastructure project, with many regarding this as a missed opportunity. The community was divided on exactly how to activate Grey River Road – however it was clear that many would like to see Grey River Road as an option for additional parking, particularly as overflow for caravan park visitors.

### **Caravan Park Master Plan**

With the Kennett River Caravan Park Draft Masterplan being designed alongside the Infrastructure Project, there is an opportunity to deliver a set of streamlined plans that incorporate caravan park overflow parking (to alleviate parking congestion). There is also opportunity to ensure clear and intentional traffic flow alongside designated parking for caravan park visitors and day trippers.

We heard that the community feels it is important to ensure the precinct design situates the amenities block at or near the caravan park boundary (as opposed to within the caravan park) to discourage unconsidered visitor sprawl from the toilet amenities into the caravan park proper.

#### **Our response to what we heard**

With Kennett River locals being so passionate, it's been an extremely engaging and enriching journey working towards a draft precinct plan for Kennett River. Although the majority of interested community members are enthusiastically engaged, not all agree on how to address infrastructure design, tourism, and pedestrian movement.

We have received and reviewed all suggestions and will consider these as we work towards a precinct plan that represents common community values, focuses on safety and environmental sustainability, and enhances the visitor experience.





# HOW WE ENGAGED...

Approximately 50 hours of direct community engagement was undertaken between November 2023 and February 2024 as part of the Issues and Opportunities phase.



A Kennett River community BBQ



Online questionnaire from 7 December to 18 January



Email submissions and feedback channels



Scenario workshops presenting three possible precinct plans

To ensure we could hear from as many of you as possible we:

- Sent email invitations to annual campers, known community groups, and individuals who follow the Kennett River Project Page
- Posted a public invitation and registration details on our Facebook page, reaching 1452 users
- Promoted the community engagement in local newspapers
- Updated engagement opportunities on our corporate and community websites.

# WHAT WE HEARD



## KENNETT RIVER COMMUNITY BBQ

On 5 November 2023 over fifty locals gathered for the annual Kennett River community BBQ Day, where we re-introduced the Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River project. The annual community BBQ Day, which started a few years ago following the Wye River fires, provided a wonderful opportunity for community members to connect and catch up.

Here, we openly discussed the previous project plans and locals had the opportunity to hear more about the changes that have occurred since we took over the project earlier this year. The discussion covered funded aspects of the project and proposed changes, such as the strategic placement of the public toilet and wastewater treatment plant within the Kennett River Caravan Park.

This was a great day of information sharing with many questions raised surrounding the upcoming project. Key conversations included:

- Utilisation and activation of the river walk: Questions surrounding privacy and tourist behaviour to be addressed.
- Management of tour operator licences.
- Public amenities to be located within the boundary of the caravan park.
- Increasing tourist demand in Kennett River, ensuring the precinct plan is guided by results from carrying capacity assessment/s.

# ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE SEEKING FEEDBACK ON PREVIOUS PLANS AND FUTURE PLANS

From December 7, 2023, until January 18, 2024, the Kennett River community, caravan park guests, and visitors were encouraged to access an online questionnaire to start sharing their thoughts on the Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River Project.

We asked what they liked and disliked about the previous plans, and to provide feedback on future plans. We received feedback from 40 respondents – and this is what we heard.

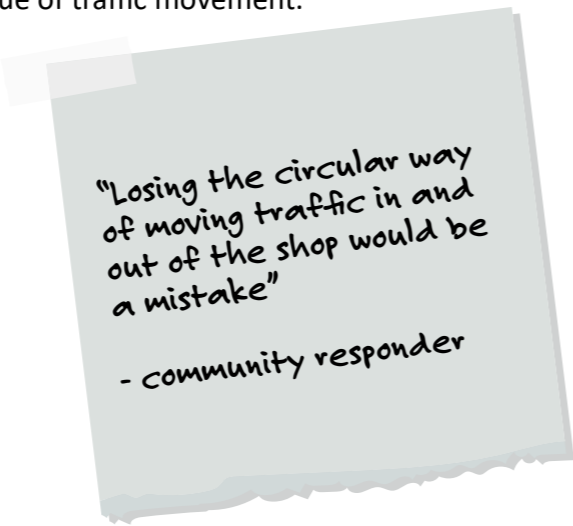
## PREVIOUS PLANS

The following key points relate to questions asked about the previous plans:

### Traffic Movement

When asked how well the previous plans addressed traffic movement, an overwhelming number (78%) of responses stated that previous plans did not address the issue of traffic movement.

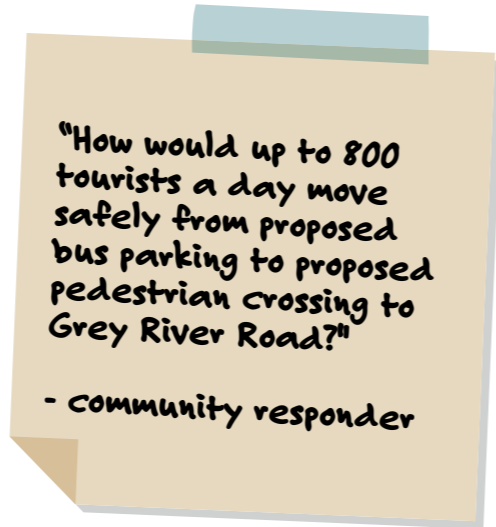
- Would like to retain the roundabout
- The turning lane into Hawdon Avenue is good
- Too much emphasis on parking for tourist buses, and not cars, or cars with caravans
- Needs more planning for long vehicles entering and exiting the caravan park.



### People Movement

53% of respondents stated that previous plans did not address the issue of people movement.

- Focus on pedestrian safety through footpaths and crossings is both important and supported.
- Too many people converge at the same time – tour buses arrive between 11am – 3pm (approximately). Kennett is too small for large numbers of visitors, especially when arriving in large numbers.

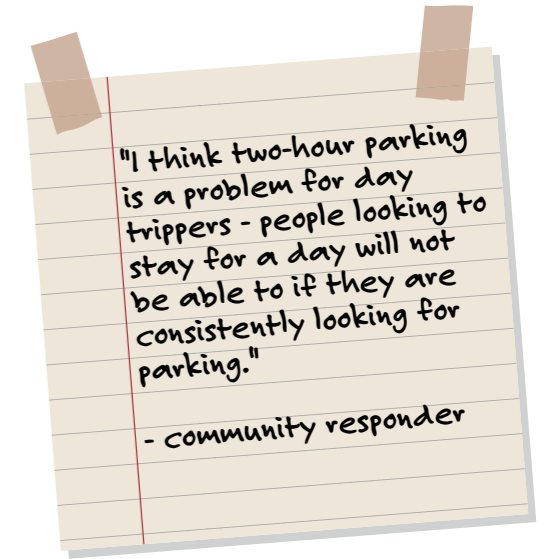


## Parking

Most responses (51%) were neutral on whether the plans addressed the issue of parking.

The conversation was dominated by bus tourism with responders requesting further clarification on potential vehicle (bus) / tourism limitations in the future. The community would like to know more about bus tourism prior to moving forward with a precinct plan.

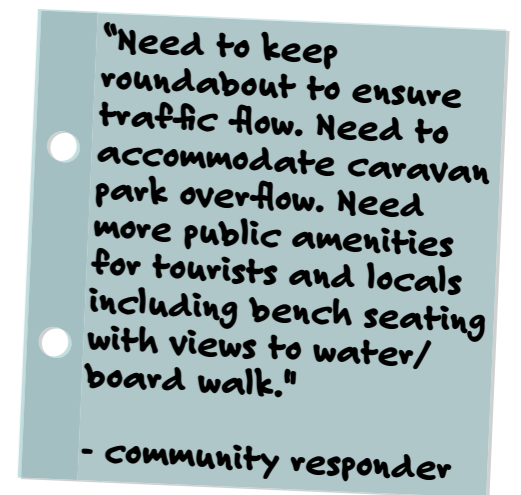
- Two-hour parking (without any other options) will be a problem for day trippers.
- Plan placed too much emphasis on bus tourism.
- Avoid cars reversing into areas of increased pedestrian movement.
- Did not consider Grey River Road.
- Caravan Park responsibility to ensure camper overflow is managed.



## Road and Path Materials

Majority (95%) of comments were either neutral or negative with a consensus that the previous plans were not supported by the community in relation to road and path materials. Excessive concrete, loss of green space, and increased parking were included as areas of concern.

- Indigenous planting needs to match this coastal site and road/building materials must consider climate change.
- Too much bitumen and hard surfaces.
- Nowhere to park our (north side residents) vehicles. Have you considered our needs? Parking Permits?
- The strong community opinion was for "soft" rather than "hard" materials to be used for paths and road/parking areas. I don't think the previous plan properly addressed this.



## Public Open Space

Majority (81%) of responders did not believe the previous plans addressed public open space. Suggestions for more green space (and native vegetation) were echoed by the community.

- The community responses highlighted concerns about using too much concrete in the design and making the turning circle by the river too large.
- Develop a public play space and BBQ area near the fishing spot.
- Converting open space to car parking to accommodate the tour operators for the brief time they visit Kennett River between 11am and 2pm seems overly generous. Are we gifting valuable land and a large amount of money to tour business operators?
- Increase shaded areas e.g., Picnic table in the roundabout with shade.



## FUTURE PLANS

The following key points relate to questions asked about the future plans:

### Amenities Block

Although the positioning of the public toilet within the Caravan Park has sparked spirited conversation, the majority of respondents (60%) thought it was a great idea. Much of the negative feedback has stemmed from questions regarding a lack of consultation with the community on this decision and evidence.

Moving forward, the community wants to be involved in decisions and given documented evidence as to how these decisions ensure positive environmental, social, and cultural outcomes. If located in caravan park, the public toilet must be facing outwards, so the public do not walk through caravan park.

Creating natural barriers around the toilet block was suggested to discourage visitor sprawl through the campground.

### Environmental Values

When it came to environmental values this is what you said:

- Must focus on water quality, both in the river and at the beach.
- Focus on the retention of indigenous flora, removal of noxious weeds, and protecting native fauna.
- Preservation of land. Use of sustainable materials for new development. Native plants. Traditional Owner engagement.
- Maintaining the green areas and the natural environment for plants and wildlife. The health of the river is most important. Maintaining a soft footprint in a fragile area.
- Kennett River is at risk of being destroyed. With large amounts of visitors and limited education / enforcement we are seeing visitors disrespecting the environment.
- Maintaining the environmental standards – river pollution is increasing due to poor septic systems and over visitation.

*"If this provides improved amenity for the caravan park users and leverages the staff to ensure cleanliness, then this is a great idea. It should be located as close as reasonably possible to the front of the caravan park for ease of access"*

*- community responder*

*"The roos come down each day, keep greens space on flats for them. Birdlife is good - limit invasive/non-Australian plantings"*

*- community responder*

### Grey River Road

With most (74%) comments ranging from neutral to positive, the option of Grey River Road for overflow parking was well received by the community. Car parking overflow and bus drop off / pick up were also flagged as beneficial options.

It is important to note environmental and safety concerns when discussing Grey River Road.

When it came to Grey River Road this is what you said:

- It is a significant safety issue if cars are allowed in the first 300m due to the volume of pedestrians who frequent the area looking for koalas.
- You can fit fifty cars up there, angle parked, and parallel where too narrow. Soft looking markers on little more than crushed rock.
- Is there space for this on Grey River Road? Seems to be a steep/unsafe flora to use for tourists. Last time I was there a bus was bogged on Grey River Road, trying to turn around.

*"Yes. This area should be part of the solution to overflow parking for caravan park users, and the overall traffic management structure in future planning"*

*- community responder*

### Suggestions on Infrastructure

A common theme in the responses highlighted a keen interest in uncomplicated infrastructure that fosters community connection. Many participants expressed support for amenities like BBQs, playgrounds, and additional seating. Some respondents preferred no infrastructure improvements at all.

When it came to Infrastructure this is what you said:

- It would be great if the cafe incorporated an outdoor area connecting to nature, not directly to traffic.
- A BBQ and small playground in the area near the river would be great.
- Sometimes less is more.
- Infrastructure which limits tourism impact – such as a riverside boardwalk.

*"More outdoor seating and tables in the greenspaces. BBQ access would encourage longer stays in the area. A more efficient waste and garbage system collected regularly to keep the recreational areas clean is essential"*

*- community responder*

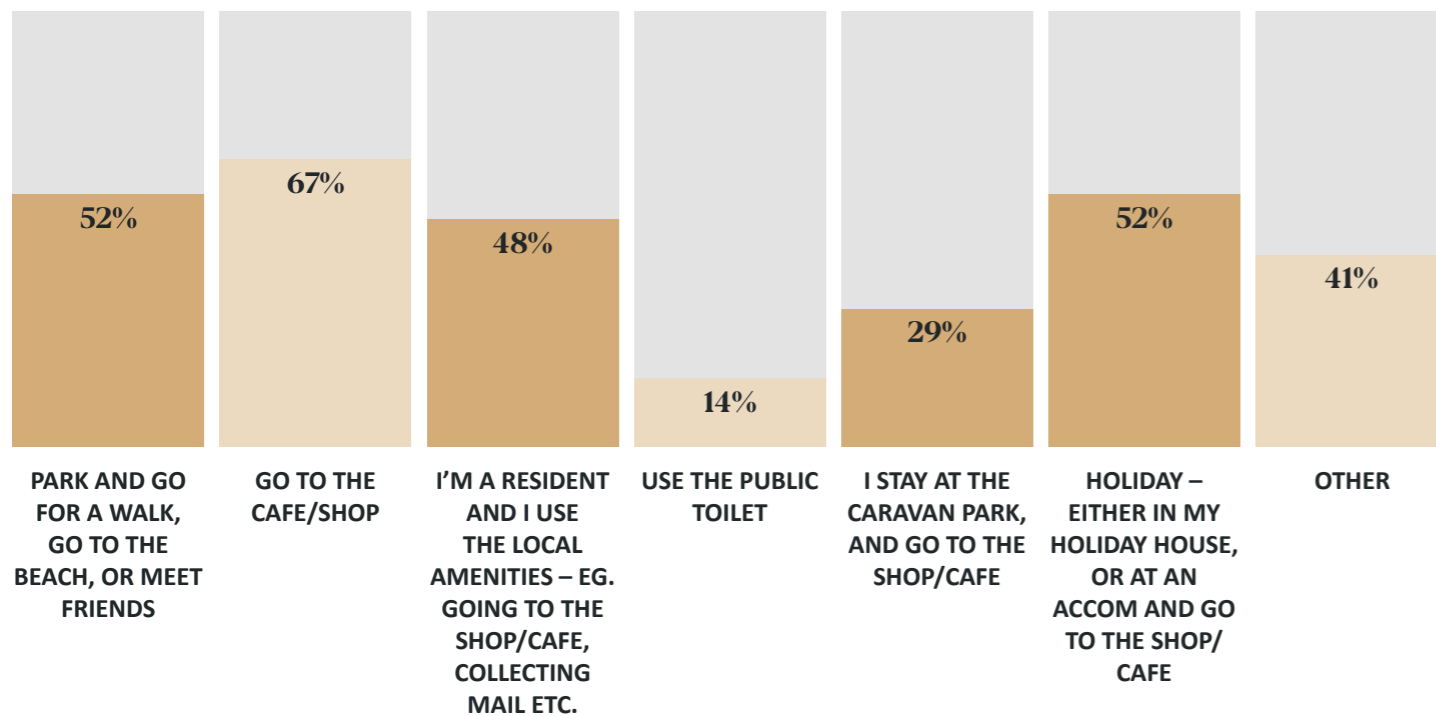
## What people love about Kennett River

When asked what people like most about Kennett River, responders were unanimous about their love for the small-size township, community and connection to nature.

- That it is a place where people can co-exist respectfully with the beautiful natural environment.
- Quiet, small scale that is still not overdeveloped which makes it very unique along the whole of the Great Ocean Road.
- Opportunities to be up close with the environment, access to the beach, how quiet it is outside of the inundation of tourist buses in the middle of the day.
- Relaxed beachside setting with easy access to beach and nature.
- Good surfing, unspoilt beach and township, peaceful, those who stay at Kennett come every year love it for its natural beauty. Heavily supported by families who come every year to the caravan park.
- Kennett is a small hamlet which allows visitors peace and quiet, and a natural environment. It is not Lorne.
- Wildlife in its natural surroundings.
- The beach, the forest and the birds.
- The quiet laid-back park.
- Tranquility.

## WHAT DO THEY DO THERE?

The majority of respondents provided feedback that they would primarily go to the café/shop, followed by park the car and go to the beach, for a walk, and enjoy a holiday.



## What do they regard as a great visitor experience in Kennett River?

Responders highlighted what they loved about Kennett River made for a great visitor experience. Responses included:

- Calm, quiet environment. Educational experience along river walk.
- The green spaces and quiet beaches.
- The natural environment being first and foremost.
- Clean beach, surf club over the busy months, shop to get essentials.
- River walk, not bird feeding, not touring up the hill in buses looking for koalas.
- Providing an environment where people can safely and respectfully enjoy the flora and fauna that KR has to offer.
- Uncrowded beach & headland rock walks.
- The wildlife, mainly the koalas and king parrots.
- Exploring the beach, walking up the river.

Other responses acknowledge that bus tourism is different to long-stay tourism. Responses included:

- It depends. There are those that live there. Those that holiday there often and know the area, enjoy the relaxing nature of the town and those that will only stay for 30mins to see the koalas. It needs to cater to all.
- To visit with time to appreciate the natural environment and to develop the understanding to preserve the flora and fauna and the environment.
- Downplay the overall wildlife experience. It's sending the wrong message to tourists about interacting with fauna. Let people stop and focus on enjoying the tranquility and beauty of the river walk.
- The ability to see a variety of wildlife - the thrill of overseas visitors when seeing a koala for the first time.
- Day trippers are a regular sight. In your new plans will they be allowed? Visitors love the river walk in the hope of finding a koala.
- Minimal tourist buses!!!
- It is a great place to relax for several days or the whole summer. It is a welcoming community whose heart is its residents and campground users.
- KR best experience is based around visitors who stay overnight - currently tourism operators are using it as a cheap offering for their tours to the 12 apostles - KR is not suitable for buses.

## Uploads to the website

Community members also uploaded some ideas and suggestions to the Have Your Say website, and we also received 'Guiding Principles Tourism in Kennett River, as prepared by the Kennett River Association. (Draft 19th January 2024).

"Kennett River is a place where people come to slow down, relax, find tranquility, and be close to nature. Tourism within the town must complement these aspirations."

- Kennett River Association

"Tourism should enrich, rather than detract from, the Kennett River community, the natural environment and the flora and fauna located in Kennett River."

- Kennett River Association

"Visiting Kennett River should be a peaceful experience for both visitors and residents, without conflict or disturbance."

- Kennett River Association

"Visitor management solutions should be innovative in their design, build and usability and should not detract from the natural resources of the area."

Tourism infrastructure, upgrades or new tourism expenditure must be in accordance with the guiding principles as outlined above."

- Kennett River Association

"Visitor management solutions should build upon and improve the amenity of the town and should not have any adverse or negative impacts upon the community."

- Kennett River Association

"Tourism volumes must be appropriate to the size and scale of Kennett River, in order to preserve the village-like feel of the township."

- Kennett River Association

## PRECINCT PLAN SCENARIO WORKSHOPS AND FEEDBACK

In January 2024, we met with Kennett River residents, campers, and visitors to discuss infrastructure plans for Kennett River.

70+ participants registered for three scenarios workshops and provided invaluable feedback. The workshops were delivered both face-to-face in Kennett River and online.

Three different scenarios were presented, painting a slightly different picture for how the precinct could be reimagined in the future. Participants provided invaluable feedback on all three scenarios while also engaging in broader conversations surrounding the Precinct Plan.

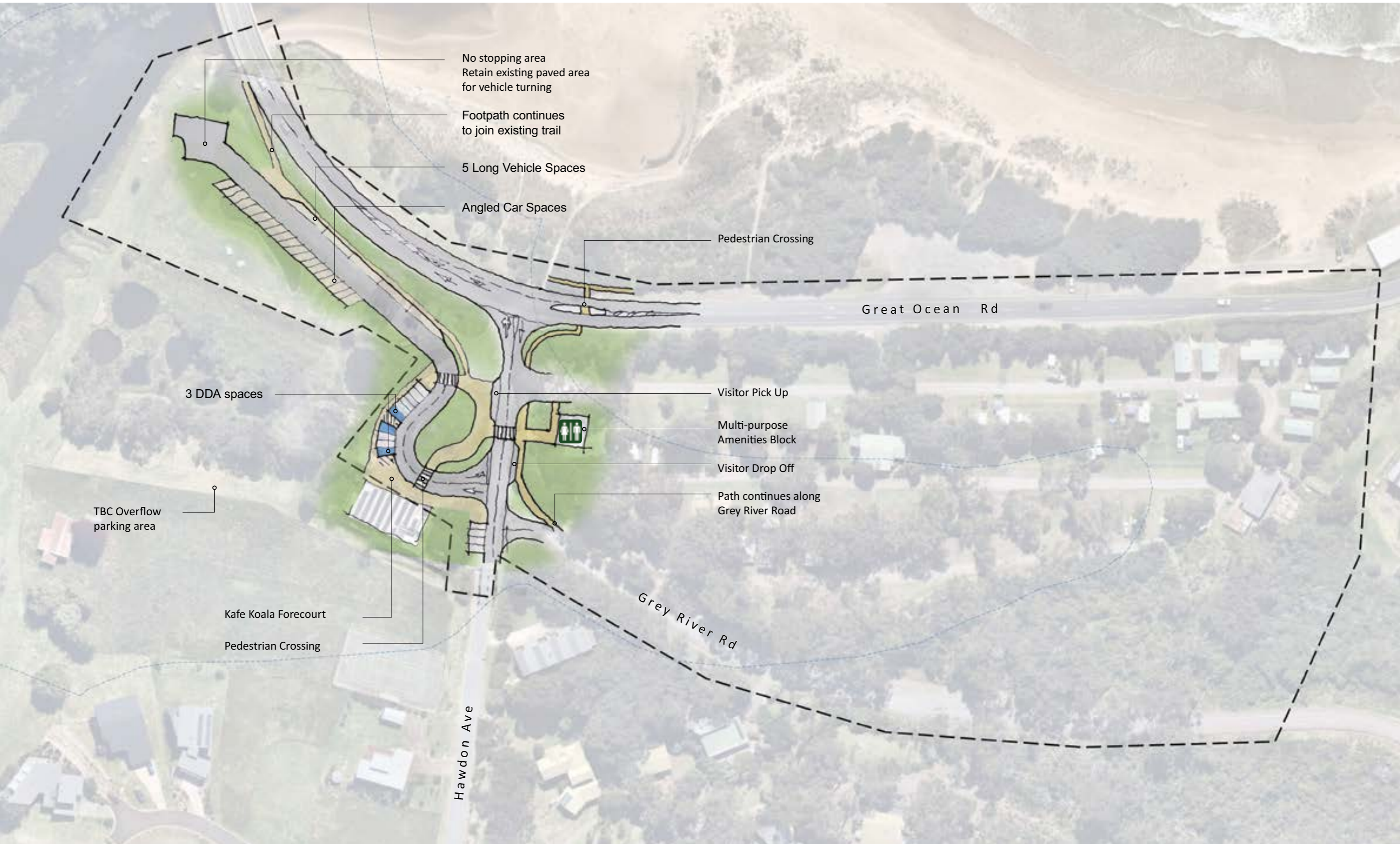
We then provided time for people to consider the scenarios and submit further detailed feedback via the Have Your Say Website. We received 34 contributions providing specific feedback on all 3 scenarios. Some people took the time to prepare their own scenario (see page 39-40).

While there was no clear winner on the three scenarios presented, the community liked Scenario B as it enhanced the green space and reduced vehicle/pedestrian activity in front of the shop, and Scenario C was also liked as it retained the roundabout and most closely represented the current situation.

Key responses from the scenarios workshops and online feedback forms highlighted a preference for:

- Increased green space
- Less of a focus on bus tourism
- Maintaining and improving the environmental integrity of Kennett River
- Utilisation of natural boundaries to guide traffic and people
- Improving safe pedestrian movement
- Ensuring clear designated parking zones.

# SCENARIO A



No stopping area  
Retain existing paved area  
for vehicle turning

Footpath continues  
to join existing trail

5 Long Vehicle Spaces

Angled Car Spaces

Pedestrian Crossing

Great Ocean Rd

3 DDA spaces

Visitor Pick Up

Multi-purpose  
Amenities Block

Visitor Drop Off

Path continues along  
Grey River Road

TBC Overflow  
parking area

Kafe Koala Forecourt

Pedestrian Crossing

Grey River Rd

Hawdon Ave

## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM SCENARIO A

- Two-way traffic at the roundabout is seen as dangerous.
- Need to retain a turning circle at end of service road - signage will not stop a large van or minibus from entering, and will create problems especially with large vehicles, trucks and cars all needing to use it.
- Should not be catering for or encouraging long vehicles to enter the precinct and look for parking areas.
- Poor road layout requiring all vehicles to fully enter Hawdon Avenue.
- Doesn't cater for delivery vehicles to the store.
- A drop off zone across Hawdon from shop is dangerous.
- Car parks across for Grey River Road are dangerous and will block Hawdon.

Comments included:

### Amenities Block

"I like the toilets in this location away from the GOR T intersection."

"Toilets are moved away from the shop. Good planning to have them located in the caravan park so further from the river in case of flooding, and not so much of an eyesore."

"I also support the proposed new toilet block within the precinct. It keeps this facility away from the direct line of site."

"Ensure there is a natural barrier to separate public toilet entrance from Caravan Park".

### Traffic and people movement

- Prefer a roundabout.
- Keep traffic one-way near cafe.
- Two-way road would be dangerous at peak times.
- A poorly designed vehicle turning area at the end of the sealed service lane will create problems especially with large vehicles, trucks and cars all needing to use it.
- A drop off zone across Hawdon from the shop is dangerous.
- Traffic across the front of Kafe Koala lends itself to a clash between pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic.
- The through traffic will not effectively discourage long vehicular traffic having witnessed on several occasions the extent long vehicle drivers will go to park their vehicles.
- Doesn't cater for delivery vehicles to the store.
- In this scenario bus and cars would disturb amenity in central locality.
- I like 90-degree parking on the service road is good with no roundabout at the end.
- Visitor drop off involves too many pedestrians that need to cross the road.
- Visitor pick up area will congest traffic and pedestrians entering the area.

### Pedestrian Movement

- Proposed pedestrian crossings are located on an extremely busy corner and would be dangerous here.
- Connect the two pedestrian crossings together.
- I like the focus on footpaths.

### Green Space

- Vast amount of green area handed over to tour operators.
- I can't understand why an overflow parking area is being considered in an existing greenspace.
- Massive opportunity to work with EMAC and tell a special story about the King Parrot or share stories that are appropriate (Telegraph line and old story from Gadubanud people).

### Parking

- I like overflow parking behind the store - for campers and others.
- Car parks across from Grey River Road are dangerous and will block Hawdon. I am concerned about cars reversing out of parking into Grey River Rd intersection. This is not a great spot for parking - potential for accidents with other cars, cyclists, or pedestrians.
- The parking on Hawdon Avenue is not safe.

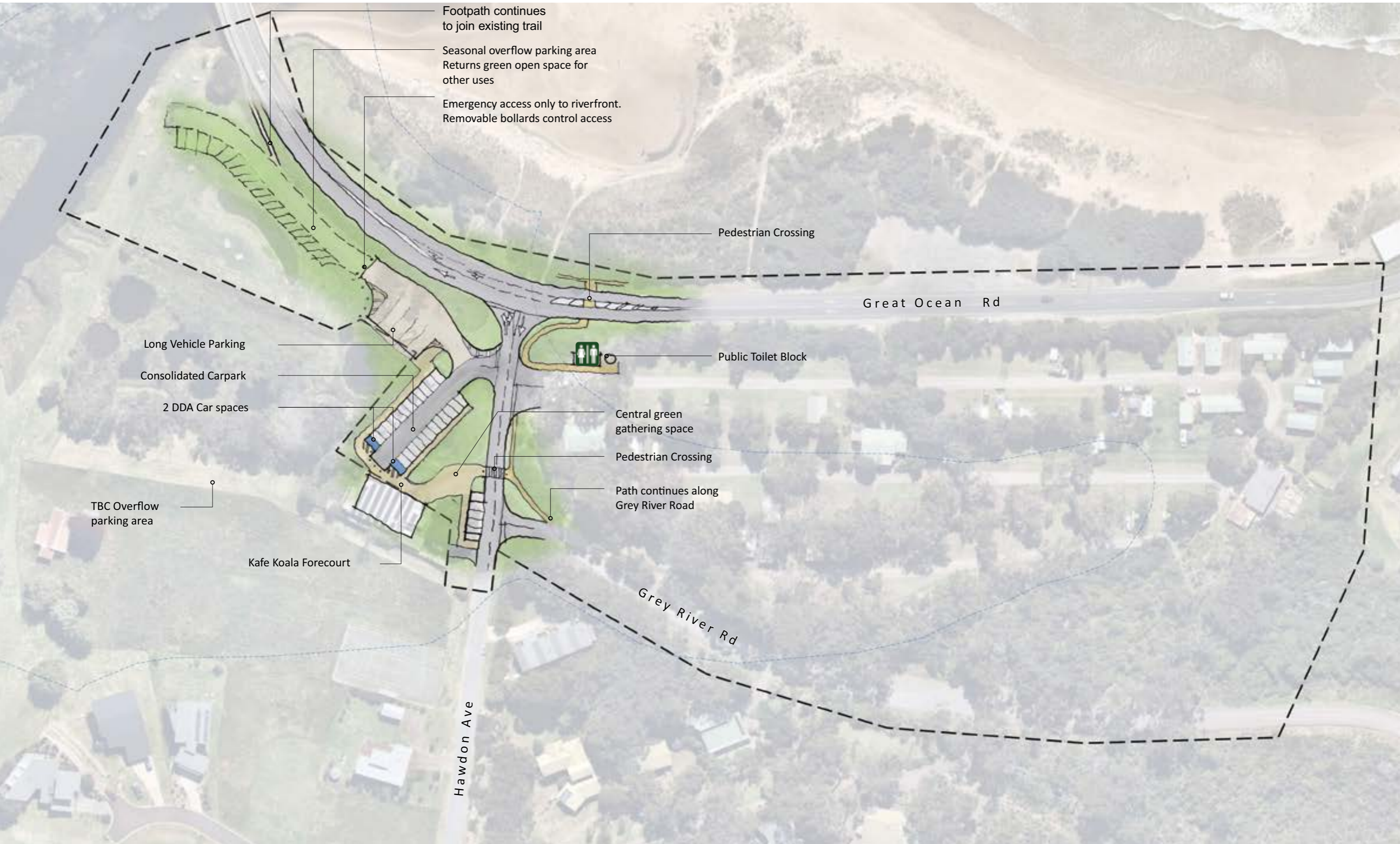
"2-way traffic with parking on both sides not possible without going into green space along access road."

- community responder

"Too much traffic flow in front of shop and pedestrian crossing."

- community responder

# SCENARIO B



Footpath continues to join existing trail

Seasonal overflow parking area  
Returns green open space for other uses

Emergency access only to riverfront.  
Removable bollards control access

Pedestrian Crossing

Great Ocean Rd

Long Vehicle Parking

Consolidated Carpark

2 DDA Car spaces

Public Toilet Block

Central green gathering space

Pedestrian Crossing

Path continues along Grey River Road

TBC Overflow parking area

Kafe Koala Forecourt

Grey River Rd

Hawdon Ave



## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM SCENARIO B

- Not supportive of toilet block location closer to Great Ocean Road - creates major conflict point with pedestrians and vehicles entering/exiting the caravan park.
- Road layout will create significant traffic issues with the parking access road & entrance/exit to the caravan park opposite each other. Traffic queues will form at the T intersection to the Great Ocean Road preventing vehicles from entering or leaving the internal parking access road.
- Should not be encouraging/providing long vehicle parking in such a constrained location. This will create major conflicts and accidents.
- Closure of the internal access road down to the river based on a seasonal overflow need is questioned.
- Appeals because there is no roundabout meaning increased safety for pedestrians.
- Creates a user-friendly precinct area around the shop one without cars, buses and other vehicles.

Comments included:

### Amenities Block

- The toilet block as shown will be dangerous crowding, wandering crowds, on blind corner.
- Would prefer the toilets to be shifted near the pedestrian crossover within the caravan park. The location of the toilets is too close to the GOR and presents as a safety issue, particularly for parents with young children. I also believe that the toilets in this location would cause people to congregate at the entrance to the caravan park, creating a safety concern for both guests trying to enter the park towing vans, and visitors waiting to use the toilets.
- Toilet block will be an eyesore.
- Good position of toilet block: close to the beach. Should have showers / outside access for beachgoers.
- Must ensure a natural barrier for people using this toilet stopping them from heading into the caravan park or onto the street.

### Traffic

- Why bollards – Just have the space or don't have the space. Choose one.
- Closure of the internal access road down to the river based on a seasonal overflow need is questioned. Who makes this decision based on what data & need?
- Importantly, it has a designated zone for long vehicles and buses away from the cafe. Separate zones for buses, people and small cars is commonsense.
- The absence of a drive-through line will effectively restrict long vehicle traffic.

### Pedestrian Movement

- It provides a line for pedestrian traffic to access the café without needing to cross any line of vehicular traffic.
- I have an affinity with this option when compared with A and C, as this concept has the potential to create a user-friendly precinct area around the shop - one without cars, buses and other vehicles - which is pedestrian and children friendly.
- Pedestrian crossing from the beach is a good idea.
- The whole area outside the shop should be pedestrian zone, swings, picnic tables, and natural parkland, perhaps educational information about Koalas, birds etc. Drop / off and pick up zones either behind the shop or at the beach.

### Green Space

- I like the central green gathering space, this would create a community common.
- Good provision for more clear green space in the off season (provided the green space is usable after heavy parking traffic).
- Vast amount of green area handed over to tour operators.
- One positive is that some of the front of the shop is open to green space, however this positive is reversed by the other half of the shop facing car-parking in close proximity.
- Allows better development of the green area leading to the river, hopefully encouraging more focus on the river nature walk instead of wandering up the Grey River Road.
- This scenario may provide a nice space for the community to congregate and to welcome walkers to the town.

### Parking

- It provides a line for pedestrian traffic to access the café without needing to cross any line of vehicular traffic.
- Way too many car spaces, car park is ridiculous.
- Seasonal overflow parking might be confusing and not guaranteed to be an improvement.
- Potential for more day visitors than now with further overuse damage to the Kennett River walk.
- Think that if all buses, including small buses were banned from entering Hawdon Avenue (we do have two other car parks) then far fewer car parks in the limited grass area would be needed. This space could then be used for picnic tables and other long day use. We could then just have a roundabout with limited parking for the shop.
- Consolidating the car parks will be too much hot bitumen.
- Parking looks good because it appears to integrate better with the environment and allows for public space to be used for community events. Also allows for more vegetation and less concrete and asphalt.
- Is there potential for timed parking in front of café?

*"Not supportive of toilet block location. Create a major conflict point with pedestrians and vehicles entering/exiting the caravan park."*

*- Community Responder*

# SCENARIO C



## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM SCENARIO C

- Toilet block centrally located in caravan park which is supported.
- One way road configuration is good to control traffic flow, although conflict in road design exiting onto Hawdon Avenue & entering/exiting the caravan park.
- Long vehicle angled parking is dangerous reversing into a congested space.
- The redesign of the service road is poor with no turning circle and provision for a very large number of car spaces. This will be very unattractive, as it is now. If its gravel or another permeable surface this will deteriorate very quickly when its wet and during the long winter months in the Otways.
- Central green gathering space is an island surrounded by vehicles, not a great landscape design outcome.
- Pedestrian crossing in dangerous location on busy corner.
- The river access service road is good, but suggest car spaces should be straight in, not angled to allow efficient exit back as well as entry to the car spot.
- Question the proposed overflow parking area location, very difficult to access and very low lying, often holds water for extended periods.

Comments included:

### Amenities Block

- Toilet block location is good - set back not an eyesore.
- Toilets moved to caravan park. Good location for toilets.
- Toilet block position reduces danger to pedestrians crossing from the car parks and store.
- Toilet block location is good - assuming it is within the camping ground, but this location has also flooded on many occasions.

### Traffic

- One way road configuration is good to control traffic flow.
- Shared space roundabout is a safety hazard.
- The roundabout will not effectively discourage long vehicular traffic and may in fact encourage a higher volume of longer vehicle traffic to route across the front of the café.
- I like the one-way traffic around the shop area- but am concerned that having parking on both sides in this zone could cause issues.
- The river access service road is good, but suggest car spaces should be straight in, not angled to allow efficient exit back as well as entry to the car spot.
- Keep access road narrow concrete without encroaching on green space.
- One way "loop" avoids disruptive interaction between buses and cars.

### Pedestrian Movement

- I don't like the buses in this location, as this scenario will not change the behaviour of buses pulling up in front of these toilets, idling along Hawdon Avenue while people wait to use the toilets, and then taking photos of the wildlife along Grey River.
- Any model with a roundabout where cars, coaches and pedestrians converge will never be safe.
- A roundabout will lead to a severe clash between pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic. A real safety concern in a high pedestrian traffic area in front of the café.
- Pedestrian crossing in dangerous location on busy corner.
- Think about upgrading DDA access on river walk, e.g. Boardwalk.
- Don't like the pedestrian crossing – Makes it worse as someone can pop out if they do not follow road rules.
- Question about safety of people as they get off the bus to where they need to go.

### Green Space

- I like that this scenario retains service road, roundabout and central green gathering space.
- We want a good cafe space with room to sit and enjoy. It would be good to increase this area, focusing on green space.
- Concern regarding the TBC overflow parking area going into environmentally sensitive land.

### Parking

- Far too much parking.
- Long vehicle angled parking is dangerous reversing into a congested shared space.
- I like the fact that no parking has been allowed for big coaches in this scenario. No turning circle at the end of the river road parking is an option.
- Long vehicle parking could create congestion in front of the shop when long vehicles are backing out and other vehicles are trying to access the parking nearest the river.
- There should be a caravan park holding zone to allow for parking.
- There's an issue with backing out of the park near the cafe – unsafe for pedestrians.

"Any model with a roundabout where cars, coaches and pedestrians converge, will never be safe."

- Community Responder

"Traffic and pedestrian-wise, it's simple, flows intuitively, allows easy access in and out, and seems to work reasonably well on the ground without significant problems at present."

- Community Responder

## Summary of General Community Responses across all scenarios

- Maintain/increase green space (river end, and in front of Kafe Koala).
- Keep the roundabout with one-way traffic.
- Maintain a natural boundary between caravan park and public toilet.
- Toilet block positioned away from Great Ocean Road to improve pedestrian safety and congestion.
- The number of car spaces to be decided by capacity assessment.
- Public safety is important.
- Request to analyse both the benefits of tourism in Kennett River alongside how tourism will continue to impact the local environment.
- Culture and storytelling are important.
- Worth revisiting utilisation of Grey River Road.
- Overflow parking from the caravan park must be managed.
- Leave the main beach carpark alone, you can see how people already manage over 40 cars in there safely, much less the previous option of a dozen or so formalised carparks.
- It is difficult to isolate the infrastructure plans from a tourism strategy, which we understand is being developed, however the two go hand in hand and so we have made certain assumptions on this.
- Our favoured position, which we believe is in line with that of the broader community, is that the tourism strategy focuses on environmentally sensitive tourism.
- We would suggest there be a roped / fenced viewing area at the bottom of Grey River Road which should be done simultaneously. We know tourists are likely to head that way and it would help to control numbers and keep them safe. That would probably require another pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Hawdon Road.
- Direct all overflow parking to the parking lot on the GOR on the bridge at the river mouth (including campers) so that the beach parking can be kept for day use.
- GORCAPA, we want you to deliver on your protection principles Part 3, point 16 (2), which says, management and development of the GOR coast should improve use and enjoyment within the environmental carrying capacity of those spaces.
- Car parking should be minimal and green areas maximised.
- When considering and implementing proposals it should always be with Kennett River's natural environment in mind.
- I suggest adopting conservation land management principles to tourism at Kennett River. It's good to see you looking at how to cater for disabled access, could you also include a means to provide disabled access to the beach?

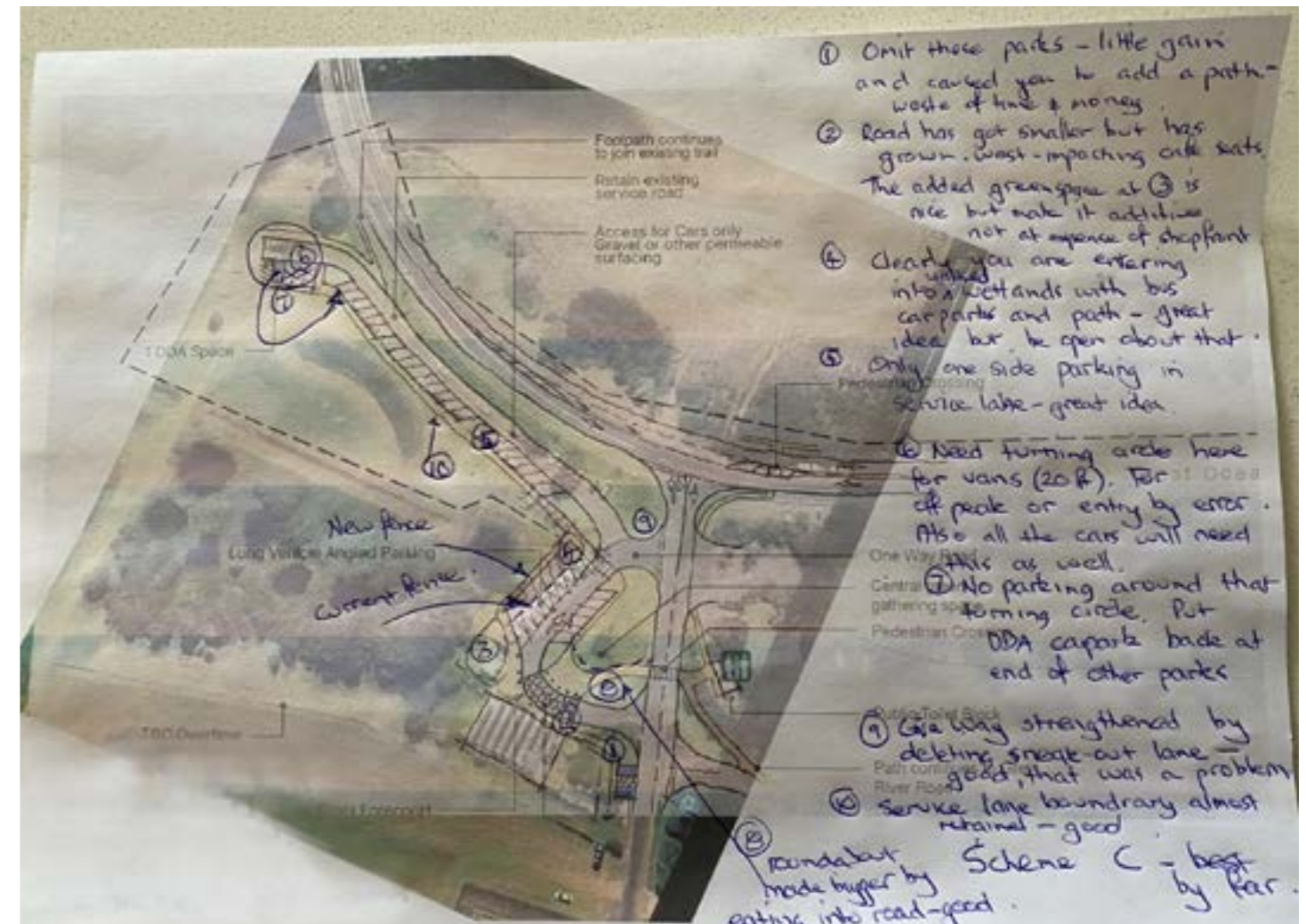
"Preservation of natural environment and small hamlet feel, where people are in respect of and in balance with environment is key."

- community responder

## COMMUNITY MEMBER UPLOADS

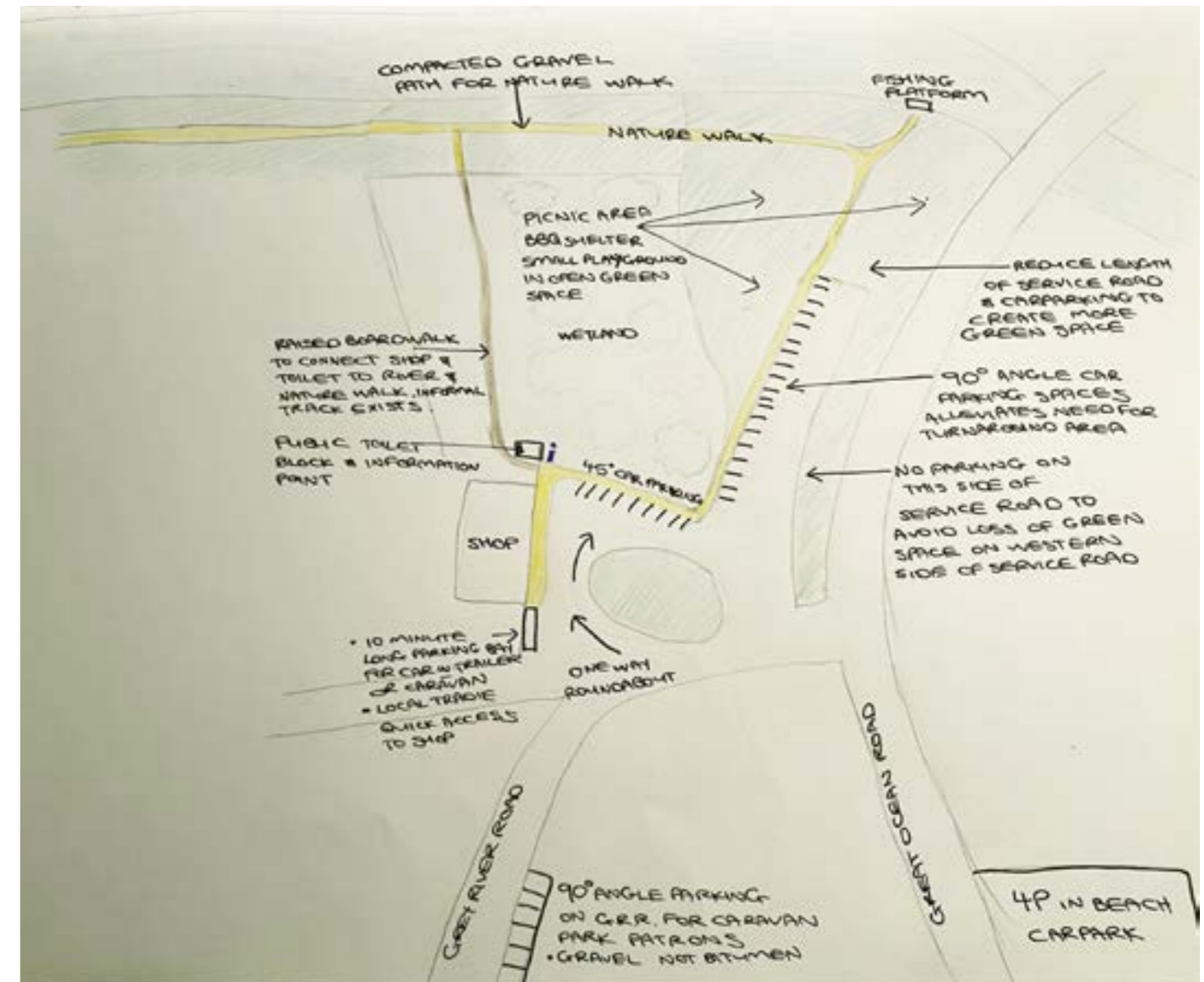
Thank you to the community members who sent in their own scenarios.

1. Omit these parks – little gain and creates need for path – waste of time and money.
2. Road has got smaller but has grown west- impacting café seats.
3. The added green space is nice but not at expense of shopfront.
4. You are clearly entering into wetlands with the carpark – great idea but be open about that.
5. Great idea for only one-sided parking in service lane.
6. Need turning circle here for vans (20ft) – even if entry by error. Cars will also need to turn.
7. No parks in the turning circle – Put DDA carpark at end of other parks.
8. Roundabout made bigger by eating into the road - good.
9. Give way strengthened by deleting sneak out lane – good. It was a problem.
10. Service lane boundary almost retained – good.





- Focused on preserving and protecting for future generations.
- Privacy for campers.
- Quieter amenity for residents.
- Directing visitors to a purposefully created space, which is also fully wheelchair accessible, incorporating design elements that allow children to play and interact directly with nature, nestling 'hard infrastructure' into the design without impeding our landscape and creating a space to slow people down...
- We are hoping to attract the regenerative tourist.
- Our design also acts as a hub, where the community will benefit significantly for the first time and into the future.



- Focus on improving the nature walk.
- 90-degree parking along access road.
- Metered parking.
- Increased green space between river walk and shop.
- Boardwalk to connect shop and riverwalk.
- Public toilet and information point alongside shop.

## HAVE YOUR SAY INBOX

Between November 2023 through to February 2024, our engagement team received more than 60 emails relating directly to the Kennett River Infrastructure Project. Many hours were spent reviewing and responding to these emails to ensure community members remained up to date with project activities. Community suggestions were taken into consideration and shared with relevant agencies and contractors.

Key communications, often with other government agencies included:

- Waste management.
- Visitation / tourism.
- Demand for ongoing evidence-based decisions relating to project activities.
- Utilisation of alternative purpose-built tourism hubs surrounding Kennett River such as Apollo Bay, Lorne, and Wildlife Wonders.
- Environmental/carrying capacity of Kennett River.
- Community led precinct plan submissions.
- Wildlife protection.
- Traffic & parking – congestion, safety, and enforcement.
- Signage.



- Rejuvenation proposal:
  - Rejuvenating the “triangle” is a concept to reimagine the corner of Hawdon Ave & Grey River Road.
  - It aims to ensure the area is improved for future generations to enjoy through ground remediation (native beautification) and visitor education.
  - Members of the Kennett River community to reimagine this space with a community representative facilitating the implementation of this initiative.
- Request for education and positive signage to be implemented within the Kennett River Precinct.
- Access for longer vehicles motorcycles, and bicycles.
- Clear direction / designation relating to traffic flow and parking.
- Guiding Principles for Tourism.

## NEXT STEPS

### CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Four major conversation themes emerged throughout the engagement process. We look forward to continuing these conversations as we work towards the draft precinct plan.



### WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Community members have expressed a keen interest in continuing to have their say on ongoing precinct planning. A Community Reference Group (CRG), will be established with scheduled meetings to review Technical Working Group advice and submit feedback to the Project Working Group.



### PREPARING AND PUBLISHING THE ISSUE AND OPPORTUNITIES PAPER

The community will have access to all evidence and project rationale through the Issues and Opportunities Paper to be published in mid-2024.

## PREPARING A PRECINCT PLAN

We will continue to work alongside the community to submit a draft Precinct Plan for review in mid-2024.

### Kennett River, Tourism Infrastructure Improvement Indicative Project Area



## DRAFTING THE CARAVAN PARK MASTERPLAN

We will be engaging with campers and the local community to discuss your ideas surrounding the Caravan Park Masterplan.



## GET IN TOUCH

If you have further questions about the project, please visit the [Have Your Say](#) webpage.

The project team can be contacted at: [haveyoursay@GreatOceanRoadAuthority.vic.gov.au](mailto:haveyoursay@GreatOceanRoadAuthority.vic.gov.au).