



FEBRUARY 2024

Board Communiqué

On behalf of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) Board, I'm pleased to share our February 2024 Communiqué to inform stakeholders about the work of the Board.

We held our Board Meeting in Torquay on Wadawurrung Country and hosted a range of guest presenters and subject matter experts from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) and the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA).

This was followed by a second full day, with Board Members and the Authority Executive team coming together for comprehensive strategic conversations as part of our 2024 Strategic Planning Workshop.

BOARD PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the final year of the inaugural Board, we commenced 2024 by completing a self-assessment survey aligned with the organisation's Board Performance Assessment Policy. Conducted in January, the annual self-assessment entailed a comprehensive review of the Board's performance and operations, with a focus on identifying avenues for continuous improvement.

Given our skills-based board structure, the Board Skills Matrix was also revised to pinpoint any existing or potential gaps, as we prepare for the conclusion of the current Board's four-year term in November.

Following the self-assessment, we dedicated a second full day to intensive strategic discussions during our 2024 Strategic Planning Workshop, where Board Members and the Authority Executive team convened.

This session provided a valuable opportunity for all Board directors to share their strategic priorities for the year ahead with both their fellow directors and the Executive team.

We focused on the Authority's role in leading a Sustainable Visitation Strategy, emphasising collaboration with partners like Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism, DEECA and DJSIR. The Board also reviewed a Strategic Decision-making framework, providing feedback to enhance transparency in our decision-making process for stakeholders.

The collaborative exchange of ideas and goals served as an excellent foundation for guiding our actions and initiatives throughout the year.

PILK PURRIYN WADAWURRUNG TRUTH-TELLING EVENT

In January, over 2,500 individuals convened at Cosy Corner on Wadawurrung Country in Torquay for the second annual Wadawurrung truth-telling event, Pilk Purriyn. This gathering, hosted by the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in collaboration with Surf Coast Shire Council and aided by support from various organisations including the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority,



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Geelong Port, and the Give Where You Live Foundation, provided a safe environment for attendees to listen to First Nations testimonies regarding the historical significance of the day.



Aunty Mary Shuttleworth during truth telling – image by Ferne Millen Photography

The event served to acknowledge the trauma and losses suffered by First Peoples due to colonisation while also celebrating their resilience. The Authority contributed \$2,000 in funding, engaged a professional photographer, waived permit fees, facilitated waste management, assisted with post-event cleanup, managed media relations, and provided additional on-site support during the event.

VICTORIA'S RESILIENT COAST ADAPTING FOR 2100+

Significant progress has been made on coastal adaptation and resilience plans along the Great Ocean Road coastline. These plans represent a strategic shift in coastal hazard risk management, aligning with Victoria's Resilient Coast Adapting for 2100+ Framework. They employ a collaborative approach for long-term management and adaptation, ensuring best practices are in place.

With multiple projects underway simultaneously, project managers are focused on strategic alignment

to minimise duplication. Preparations for planning at Anglesea and Cosy Corner in Torquay are advancing, with community engagement activities scheduled for April 2024.

Community engagement for the Mounts Bay Adaptation plan has also begun. Addressing a beach volume deficit of approximately 40,000m² at Mounts Bay will require significant beach nourishment, supported by DEECA and Barwon Water. Sand extraction from the adjacent Point Bunbury groyne field, with all necessary approvals, will facilitate this effort.

GEELONG CITY DEAL UPDATE

Directors noted the Geelong City Deal project updates regarding the Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment, Point Grey Redevelopment, and the Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River projects.

The formation of the new Point Grey Redevelopment Community Reference Group (CRG) has been finalised, building upon the successes of the previous Community Co-design Group (CCDG). The CRG, with an expanded objective for a precinct-wide view, includes ten community members appointed based on their local knowledge and expertise in landscape design and open space thinking.

The group met for the first time in December 2023, with a series of workshops planned in early 2024, focusing on refining building concept designs and revisiting the Precinct Masterplan. The outcomes will inform wider community engagement activities starting from mid-2024.



Tourism infrastructure improvements at Kennett River are one step closer, thanks to extensive community engagement efforts, paving the way for the establishment of a Community Reference Group (CRG) for the project.

Between late 2023 and early 2024, diverse engagement initiatives were undertaken, including community barbecues, online questionnaires, and interactive workshops, both in person and online. This collaborative approach enabled Kennett River locals, visitors, and campers to share their opinions, ideas, and concerns, providing valuable insights for the project's next steps.

Feedback included 40 online survey responses, 34 additional pieces of online feedback on proposed scenarios, and over 70 registrations for scenario workshops. The key themes highlighted in the feedback encompassed congestion, traffic, pedestrian safety, visitation strategy development, bus access and parking restrictions, increased project information sharing, opportunities for greater community involvement, and environmental considerations regarding local wildlife.

In Apollo Bay, locals will be invited to join a new Community Reference Group (CRG) for the Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment, with the project entering the next phase of delivery.

The call for Expressions of Interest for the new CRG follows the completion of an independent review of the Apollo Bay Harbour Development Plan 2020, marking a crucial step forward for the project.

The review provides clarity on what refinements may be required to further progress designs while ensuring the upgrades deliver for local businesses and community and meet overall project outcomes, including increasing the capacity of commercial operations and

recreational offerings, and supporting the growth in the visitor economy.

The Authority will now appoint a Head Consultant to lead the next phase of planning and design, with the ideal appointee an industry expert that will bring experience in urban design, landscape architecture, and architectural services.

TWELVE APOSTLES PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT

Board Directors received an informative update on the Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment from representatives of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions. This pivotal project relies on the Authority Board to ensure the seamless integration of the Twelve Apostles Precinct Redevelopment into the broader tourism offering of the Great Ocean Road.

Anticipated to transform visitors' experiences in the region, the redevelopment aims to provide enhanced access to nature's wonders in a safer and more convenient manner, all while safeguarding the environment and cultural heritage of this remarkable location.

DEECA AND AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Board Directors welcomed discussions with representatives from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action to advance our strategic priority of enabling the fulfillment of First Peoples' rights.

The dialogue focused on enhancing collaboration and gaining insight into significant advancements within Victoria's Treaty process, including updates on the Eastern Maar native title determination and the Wadawurrung native title claim.



This session served as a platform for exploring opportunities for closer cooperation and deepening our understanding of key developments critical to our shared goals.

Central to our commitment is the establishment of genuine partnerships with Traditional Owners and Rights Holders, guided by the principles of self-determination and driven by their expectations.

We recognise that building a strong relationship requires embedding cultural competence into all levels of our operations and ensuring cultural safety for all Aboriginal People and parties engaging with the Authority.

ROCKY POINT COASTAL TRAIL WALK AND TALK

Board Directors concluded their strategic planning day by participating in a Rocky Point Trail Project Walk and Talk, focusing on the future of the Surf Coast Walk coastal cliff top trail between Jan Juc Surf Lifesaving Club and Rocky Point in Torquay.

The activity highlighted the need for the Authority-led adaptation planning in response to climate change impacts, such as coastal erosion caused by large swells and high tides.

Proactive measures are being taken to ensure the safety of trail users, including continuous monitoring using advanced ground and aerial assessments. Short-term safety measures have been implemented, such as safety barriers, however, some sections of the trail may eventually need to be permanently closed due to safety concerns.

The guidance of key personnel, including Caleb Hurrell, Matt Roche, and Kate Wynn, highlighted the integration of various strategies, monitoring regimes, and community engagement processes to inform

decision-making regarding coastal processes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION

In a robust demonstration of our dedication to local engagement, our Engagement Team has been actively involved along the coast, fostering connections with both residents and visitors regarding ongoing projects.

They've initiated five new engagements, facilitated four 'walk and talk' sessions, and organised four project workshops, both in-person and online, providing platforms for participants to exchange information, pose questions, and explore ideas. Utilising digital technology, they conducted nine surveys and moderated two community message boards, ensuring accessibility for all to participate.

In early December, the Authority furthered its engagement efforts by collaborating with the Great Ocean Communities Road Network and the Apollo Bay Community Voice to openly discuss issues of importance to the social, environmental, economic, and cultural future of their respective communities.

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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