



Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

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Ms Libby Mears  
Chair, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority  
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Dear Ms Mears

## **STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS (GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST AND PARKS AUTHORITY)**

I am writing to outline my Statement of Expectations (SOE) for the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) for the period commencing the day on which it is signed, up to 30 November 2027, or as otherwise amended.

This SOE replaces the previous Statement of Expectations dated 28 February 2022 that expires on 31 December 2024.

This SOE should be read within the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020* (GOREP Act), public land legislation (such as the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*, *Conservation Forest and Lands Act 1987*, *Forests Act 1958*, *Land Act 1958* and *National Parks Act 1975*) and other enactments that apply to the land (such as the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* (MAC Act) and *Climate Change Act 2017*).

This board has the critical task of transforming the newly established entity from a large committee of management into a dedicated, thriving, parks manager for the Great Ocean Road coast and parks. I expect the board to focus on 5 priority areas listed below.

All public entities are obligated to take an integrated approach to corporate planning and performance reporting. For the Authority that includes statutory obligations (under the *Financial Management Act 1994*, Standing Directions issued under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and the GOREP Act).

The Corporate Plan will be the key document to outline how the priorities in this SOE will be delivered over the coming three years. DEECA has developed Corporate Planning and Reporting Guidelines to support you to meet your statutory obligations. Please submit the 2025-26 plan for my review by April 2025.

## **PRIORITIES**

### **1. Operations excellence in parks management**

As the significant scale up in the Authority's parks management responsibilities from 950 to ~170,000 hectares is nearing completion, I expect the Authority to focus on strengthening its stewardship of this precious public land and to build operations excellence in parks management. This includes:

- Building the Authority's organisational capacity and physical presence to directly manage and service the parks for which it is responsible including field management of sensitive coastal areas and higher visitation areas of national parks such as trails, trail heads and viewing platforms; camping sites and visitor destinations. This encompasses delivering all parks management activities with the exception of broad-acre forested land in the Great Otway National Park.

- Servicing and maintaining world class visitor facilities and infrastructure for signature walks and trail heads, including but not limited to, the Surf Coast Walk, Great Ocean Road coastal trail, and the Great Ocean Walk.
- Developing a land management strategy that establishes a holistic approach to managing the Great Ocean Road coast and parks and ensures that visitation is accessible, sustainable and expandable.
- Developing coastal and marine management plans for coastal Country and environmental management plans for estuary entrances in accordance with the requirements of the MAC Act.

I request you work with DEECA and Parks Victoria (PV) to develop a transition plan that aims for the direct land management of National Parks to be transitioned from PV to the Authority by 1 July 2026. This transition plan will give due consideration to risk and include milestone triggers to enable assessment of readiness as implementation of the plan progresses. Please submit this transition plan to me in March 2025.

## **2. First People's self determination**

Continue to provide a culturally safe workplace and to advance timely, respectful and culturally sensitive partnerships with the Traditional Owners to conserve cultural values and support indigenous land management practices on parks managed by the Authority. This includes working with the Traditional Owners to:

- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge into parks management practices into the management of land for which the Authority is responsible, including in the development of the Great Ocean Road coast and parks land management strategy, coastal and marine management plans, estuary entrance management plans and land use/development/construction projects.
- Identify and remove barriers to self-determination in the Authority's systems, processes and practices.
- Provide, at a minimum, six-monthly updates to the boards of Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation on activities that impact on their stewardship of Country, and decisions that have been made with the appropriate Registered Aboriginal Party involvement and consent.
- Support Aboriginal staff to advance and develop in their roles within the Authority.
- Work within the state's self-determination framework and any applicable Recognition and Settlement Agreement requirements.

## **3. Visitor enjoyment and appreciation**

The Great Ocean Road coast and parks provides people with opportunities to enjoy the natural environment, outdoor recreation, and health and wellbeing benefits. I expect you to continue to provide a great visitor experience within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks to:

- Service and maintain facilities and infrastructure that supports the enjoyment of nature-based and outdoor recreational experiences at the many beaches, coastal reserves and national parks such as toilets, access stairs and trails, and interpretative information.
- Prepare for, and take on, the operation and maintenance of the Twelve Apostles Visitor Precinct (including the current facilities and new Visitor Experience Centre under construction).
- Measure, monitor, and report publicly on the experience of visitors to the Great Ocean Road coast and parks, and to have regard to that feedback in planning for the management of land and facilities.

- Establish a balanced approach to investment in visitor facilities and infrastructure in public open spaces and facilities/areas for which visitor contributions are required.
- Engage regularly with regional tourism boards and organisations, local businesses, tourism operators and other relevant stakeholders to obtain feedback on further ways you can support the tourism industry in the Great Ocean Roads coast and parks.

#### **4. Community Engagement**

The Great Ocean Road coast and parks are loved and enjoyed by Victorians, and many are regular visitors. The Authority has built a strong track record of engaging with local communities and I expect you to build on this success, and regularly and comprehensively engage with the broader Victorian community, and visitors from other destinations to:

- increase awareness of the values of the Great Ocean Road coast and parks and opportunities for volunteering
- input into prioritising conservation initiatives, improving the visitor experience within the Great Ocean Road coast and parks
- input into planning for works projects and the management of the land.

#### **5. Long-term financial sustainability**

The Authority is a public non-financial corporation that both generates income on land that it manages and receives state appropriations for specific parks management activities and major capital works.

Government will continue to fund national parks and port operations, and funding for major new works projects may be sought through the annual State Budget processes and funding grants programs.

I expect your Corporate Planning to include due consideration of existing and new strategies towards achieving long-term financial sustainability.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SOE**

I expect you, the board, the Chief Executive Officer and Authority's staff to work closely and collaboratively with DEECA in the transformation of the Authority into a parks manager, stewardship of public land, and operational and financial performance.

Written updates documenting progress in delivering the SOE, and any performance improvements should be included in your quarterly corporate plan reporting.

#### **YOUR RESPONSE**

I look forward to receiving your acknowledgement of this SOE on its receipt.

I trust that this SOE assists in focusing your efforts in the coming three years of stewardship of the Great Ocean Road coast and parks.

Yours sincerely



**Steve Dimopoulos MP**  
**Member for Oakleigh**  
**Minister for Environment**  
 23 / 12 / 2024