



ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



Guiding the sustainable management of the coast

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ABOUT THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST COMMITTEE

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) is a Committee of Management (CoM) formed by the Victorian Government in 2004. GORCC is a not-for-profit, community based organisation responsible for managing Crown land reserves along the heritage listed Great Ocean Road in Victoria.

Areas of management

GORCC manages 37 kilometres of Crown land reserves along the coast from Point Impossible east of Torquay, to the Cumberland River southwest of Lorne.

Map 2 provides an overview of the areas managed by GORCC.

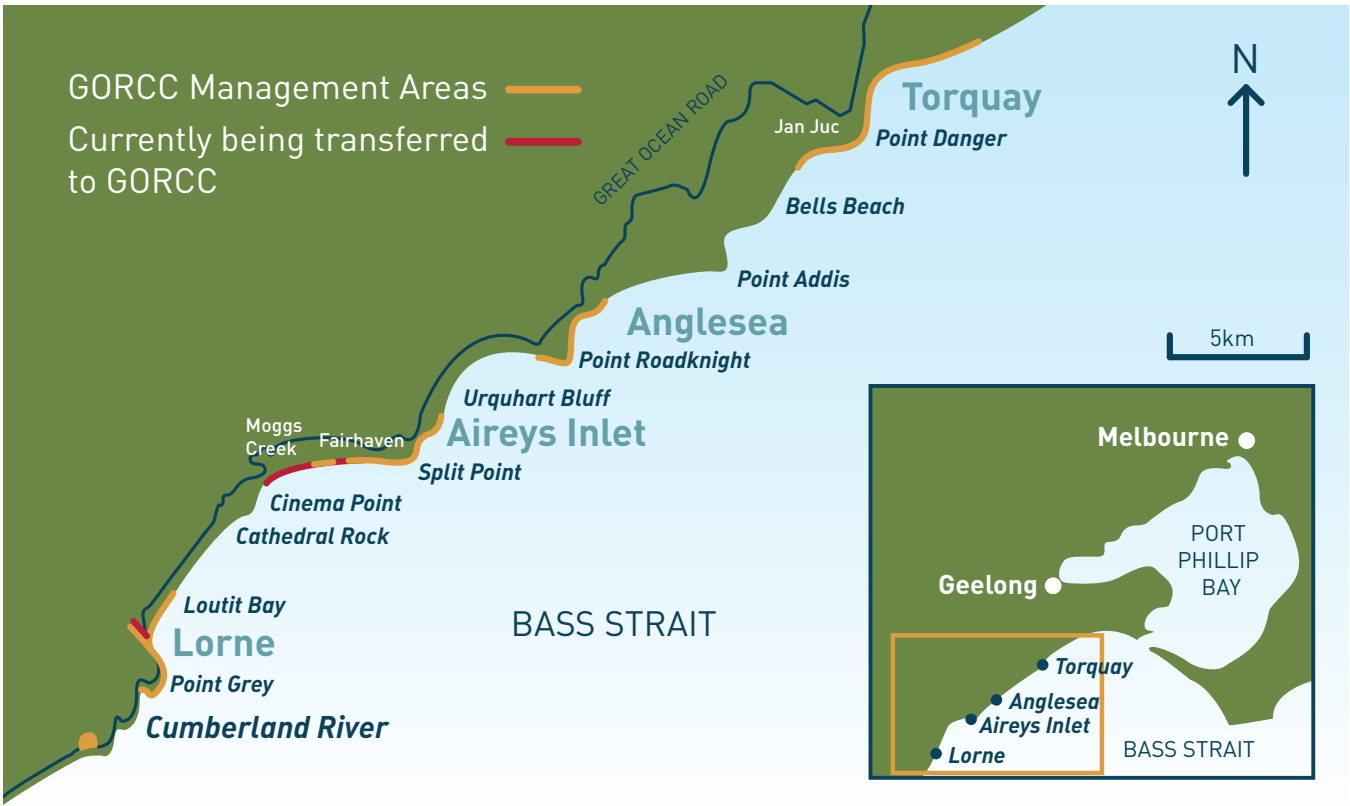
Roles and responsibilities

GORCC's main role is to manage Crown land reserves and their values on behalf of the state and for the use and enjoyment of the community. In fulfilling this role, GORCC gains a variety of powers through Section 15 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Structure

The committee members of GORCC are appointed under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* for a term of three years by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and are selected through a public, skills-based 'expression of interest' process. The 12 committee members operate in a voluntary capacity, meeting regularly to oversee and provide direction to the organisation.

GORCC also has a staff team which comprises around 30 full time employees.



Map 2: An overview of the areas managed by GORCC



Funding

GORCC currently generates around \$5 million in direct revenue annually, with 80 per cent coming from the two directly managed caravan parks in Torquay and Lorne. The remaining 20 per cent is derived from a range of sources including lease, licence and permit fees and fee-for-service delivery.

GORCC is required to reinvest all revenue it raises back into the management of its Crown land reserves, and the majority is expended on looking after the coast and operating and maintaining the caravan parks.

GORCC receives no recurrent funding from any level of government. However, revenue is often supplemented by grants which are used for special projects and environmental work.

Vision and mission

Vision

The long term aspiration for GORCC is to:

'Protect and enhance the breathtaking and iconic coastline with its diverse community, natural environment and rich social and cultural history as custodians for current and future generations'

Mission

GORCC's core purpose is to 'ensure appropriate use and effective management of the GORCC managed coast through advocacy and action'.

Guiding principles

GORCC's has developed a set of guiding principles which are specific to the coast it manages, whilst complimenting the state-wide guiding principles set out in the Victorian Coastal Strategy which are derived from the *Coastal Management Act 1995*.

GORCC believes that:

1. The natural environment is the prime value of the GORCC managed coast and its protection and enhancement is of the highest priority.
2. The GORCC managed coast has very strong community, heritage and traditional values which must be protected and enhanced.
3. The coast's significant economic values provide opportunities to generate resources to support the protection and enhancement of its natural, community, heritage and traditional values.
4. The GORCC managed coast should be managed in a transparent and collaborative way on behalf of and in partnership with all stakeholders, with the general community being our main 'client'.
5. The GORCC managed coast should remain accessible and affordable for the general community to participate in a range of passive and active recreational pursuits.
6. Fostering stewardship and volunteerism on the coast by improving awareness and understanding amongst stakeholders is integral to its long term sustainability.
7. GORCC's decisions and actions should be directed by plans, strategies and other business and planning tools that have been developed in consultation with stakeholders and using rigorous information and data.
8. GORCC will be pro-active and take a lead role in promoting and facilitating the best outcomes for the coast, including advocating and lobbying others on broader issues beyond GORCC's direct responsibilities.
9. Good governance, prudential management, organisation and structural arrangements and appropriate human and other resources are essential to ensuring GORCC operates in an effective, ethical and compliant manner.

INTRODUCING THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST COMMITTEE'S 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012 was a year of delivery for GORCC, with the completion of several significant projects resulting in extensive benefits for the coast and the community. The official opening of the \$2.8 million Fishermans Beach redevelopment marked the completion of a brand new, purpose-built community, tourism and recreation facility on the Torquay foreshore. This achievement was an important milestone for GORCC and the precinct has already become a major beachfront drawcard for locals and visitors alike.

Additionally, three of the four critically important projects that form part of the \$1.35 million, three-year, Great Ocean Road Renewal Program also drew to a close. During 2011-2012 this included:

- The completion of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Conservation Manual which will provide a foundation for the protection and conservation of cultural values on the coast.
- The completion of the Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Project which forecasts the potential impacts of and guides future responses to climate change on our coast.
- The construction and official opening of the new, and already very popular, 'Third Wave Kiosk' at the Torquay Surf Beach.
- The continuation of our work to reduce weed infestation and land degradation and to ensure the conservation of native vegetation as part of the Natural Values Project which is nearing completion.

Looking forward is also essential if we are to fulfil our role as custodians for future generations. In March 2012 \$629,000 was secured for the conservation of 13 significant sites covering 177 hectares between Point Impossible and Lorne over the next five years. This funding will also support the work of local environmental volunteer groups and secure the future of our dedicated and skilled conservation team.

Planning for the future was a priority during 2011-2012 and GORCC's new Coastal Management Plan (CMP), underwent a thorough, extensive development process over the past year. The CMP identifies the priorities and provides direction for the sustainable management of the coast over the next 5 years. The CMP has now been submitted for approval by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and will become a valuable tool for our organisation, guiding our work on the coast as we implement its actions.

Our long term aspirations for the GORCC managed coast are reflected through all our ongoing and recently completed projects and in our plans for the future. We look forward to another year of working towards this vision as the committee continues to work in partnership with others to deliver effective management of our coast.

Chairman John Carlile
Chief Executive Officer Richard Davies



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE COAST

GORCC has developed a Coastal Management Plan (CMP) which identifies priorities and provides direction for the sustainable management of GORCC managed land over the next five years. The plan has been submitted for approval by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and is expected to begin its implementation phase in July 2013.

Key features of the CMP

The CMP contains extensive background information about GORCC, the legislative and planning context in which it is being developed and the plan preparation process.

The CMP also includes four significant, high level challenges for managing the coast which were identified and were key influences in the development of the draft CMP. GORCC has developed 'strategic responses' to each of these challenges to guide how it will respond to and manage them over the long term.

Additionally, the CMP sets out GORCC's strategic framework, which includes guiding principles and six important areas of focus for GORCC. Overall objectives and priority actions for implementing the strategic framework and managing the coast over the next five years are also identified.

Development of the CMP

The CMP has been developed through an extensive, comprehensive and collaborative process which involved a number of stages and activities. This included extensive engagement with stakeholders, including the community, as well as a review of a large amount of reference material and targeted research into specific issues.



Community members have their say during a workshop held in Lorne for input into the CMP.

Stakeholder engagement

There were two key phases in which stakeholders could have input into the development of the CMP. A total of 183 community members participated in the first major phase of the consultation process, which was held from November 2011 to January 2012 and consisted of community workshops and a survey. Targeted meetings were also held with a number of relevant government and other organisations.

The second phase of consultation, held in June 2012, saw 150 participants visit open houses on the coast, 60 surveys submitted and 13 submissions received.

Opportunities for input were promoted extensively through a variety of channels ranging from local media to mail outs and newsletters to advertisements.

The CMP Community Reference Group and Agency Working Group

Additionally, a Community Reference Group (CRG) was established to provide input and feedback throughout the development of the CMP. The group's 25 members represent a wide range of coastal users with varying connections to the coast, and comprise both representatives from key community groups and the general public.

An Agency Working Group (AWG) was also formed to assist in coordinating the involvement and support of key government departments and organisations in the development of the Coastal Management Plan.

GORCC would like to acknowledge the CRG and AWG's valuable input into and commitment to the development of the CMP.

Where to from here?

The plan's implementation will be monitored and evaluated to ensure it is effective and achieving the desired outcomes along the coast. The results of this process will be used to continuously improve the implementation of the CMP and to keep stakeholders informed of progress.

The CRG will continue to play a role during the plan's implementation. Input will be sought from the community regarding their views on the effectiveness of the CMP and its actions and this will be facilitated via an annual meeting of the group.

For more information on the CMP visit www.gorcc.com.au.

CARING FOR THE COAST

Outdoor works

\$1.6 million was spent over 2010-2011 to fund the daily work undertaken by our Torquay and Lorne Reserves Teams to care for the coast.

Some of the work undertaken by these teams included:

- Asset and facility building, repairs and maintenance (e.g. beach access points, tracks, amenities and signage).
- Coastal protection works (e.g. Beach clean ups, revegetation work and weed control).
- Arbour works (e.g. Tree risk mitigation).
- Waste management and collection.
- Community event support (e.g. Lorne Pier to Pub, Anaconda Adventure Race, ANZAC Day Services).
- Provision of professional lifeguards through Lifesaving Victoria
- Cleaning of barbeques and amenities.



Outdoor works team

Protecting the environment

The natural features of the GORCC managed coast are highly valued and are locally, nationally and internationally renowned. GORCC has invested significantly in responding to the challenges posed by the many threats to the coast, and we continued our extensive environmental protection efforts in 2011-2012.

This work is led by the GORCC Conservation Team, which is responsible for our conservation efforts along the coast between Torquay and Lorne. The team undertakes a variety of environmental projects and initiatives, many in partnership with volunteer groups, schools, businesses and others. Activities range from pest and weed control to delivering GORCC's environmental education programs.



GORCC Conservation Team Officer Georgie Beale with Deakin University and BirdLife Australia staff release a Hooded Plover at Point Roadknight after banding it.

Other projects and initiatives

Examples of some of the projects and initiatives we led, partnered in or supported during 2011-2012 are:

The Otway Community Conservation Network

A network of community organisations, land managers and government agencies committed to protecting and enhancing the Otway's environment through coordinated community action.

Rip Curl Planet Day

Every year the Rip Curl Planet Day sees land managers, local community environmental groups, State and Federal Government, schools and Rip Curl combine forces to protect and enhance our coast. Since Rip Curl initiated this community exercise in the year 2000, tens of thousands of plants indigenous to the Surf Coast have been planted.

Protection of Hooded Plovers

GORCC works in partnership with Birdlife Australia to protect the endangered Hooded Plover by helping to coordinate Hooded Plover volunteer monitors, installing signs, providing protective fencing and undertaking beach patrols.

Clean Up Australia Day

Each year, GORCC registers official cleanup sites for this annual event. In 2012 GORCC worked with community members and Jan Juc Coast Action volunteers to clean up the Jan Juc Foreshore area.

Otway Eden

A project to protect the beauty and biodiversity of the Otways through an innovative approach to managing invasive weeds. The project is a partnership between the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria and local agencies.

COASTAL PROJECTS

In addition to our day to day work caring for the coast, we also undertake various key improvement projects along the coastline.

Fishermans Beach Redevelopment

On 5 April 2012, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change Ryan Smith officially opened the Fishermans Beach precinct. The event marked the completion of a \$2.8million redevelopment project and a long-term investment into the region.

The new precinct incorporates a kiosk, a beachfront community space and a public deck on the upper level maximising views to Bass Strait. The redevelopment also provided boat and trailer and car parking with improvements made to both driver and pedestrian safety.

Importantly, the project delivered vital facilities for the volunteer based Torquay Marine Rescue Service including a modern emergency management control room and provided the Torquay Angling Club with a quality site featuring new clubrooms.

GORCC would like to acknowledge the support of its funding partners, Regional Development Victoria, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Surf Coast Shire.

Great Ocean Road Renewal Program

2011-2012 saw the completion of three out of four of the critically important projects that make up the Great Ocean Road Renewal Program – a three-year, \$1.35 million program supported by funding from the Australian Government. The projects are:

1. The Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Project

A report forecasting the potential impacts of and guiding future responses to climate change on our coast was completed in July 2012. The report uses current sea level rise predictions to analyse potential future exposure of the coastline between Torquay and Lorne.

The report will be used by GORCC and other land managers in the region to understand and respond to the challenges posed by climate change as more detailed adaption planning commences.

2. The Cultural Values Project

An Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Manual for Crown land reserves between Torquay and Lorne has been completed, providing a foundation for the protection and conservation of cultural values on the coast.

The manual will provide guidance on on-ground Aboriginal heritage conservation needs and issues together with ongoing conservation of heritage sites and materials.

3. The Natural Values Project

2011-2012 saw the continuation of this project, as the GORCC Conservation Team worked to reduce weed infestation and land degradation to ensure native vegetation is conserved for future generations. This project is due for completion by early 2013.

4. The Torquay Tourism and Facilities Project

The official opening of the new 'Third Wave Kiosk' at the Torquay Surf Beach in December 2011 signified the completion of the Torquay Tourism and Facilities Project, which also included the refurbishment of the toilet blocks and changing shelter.

The project has seen \$480,000 in works to improve the standards, service levels and accessibility of facilities at the world-renowned Torquay Surf Beach in response to increasing visitation to the area.



Top: GORCC Chairman John Carlile and MP Darren Cheeseman with Bryon Powell of the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (RAP) announcing the completion of the Cultural Values Project. Below: Third Wave Kiosk, Torquay Surf Beach.

The Surf Coast Walk

Work on the Surf Coast Walk redevelopment is almost complete. The project will see the development of a continuous, coastal, 44km walk from Point Impossible to Fairhaven and will deliver a new world-class walking experience offering natural beauty and easy access.

At the time of publication, track work is almost complete and work is well underway on a diverse suite of directional and interpretive signs scheduled for installation.

This joint project between GORCC, the Surf Coast Shire, Parks Victoria and other partners has been made possible by an \$800,000 grant from the State Government.

Looking to the future

As some significant projects come to a close GORCC is looking to the future, ensuring the vital work to protect and enhance the coast continues. Some of the projects and initiatives our focus will turn to over the next financial year include:

Pt Grey planning process

A planning process to identify suitable development options for the Point Grey precinct in Lorne has now commenced. This important planning process is the first step towards providing improved infrastructure and facilities for locals and visitors to Lorne.

The process will identify the appropriate uses for the precinct, produce concept designs for the precinct, consider appropriate and potential funding opportunities for the implementation of the plan and develop a realistic and achievable plan and the process will run over 2012 and 2013.

Securing the future of coast conservation

GORCC is one of 18 successful tender applicants to the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority's CoastalTender program funded by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program.

\$629,000 in funding has been secured by GORCC for the conservation and rehabilitation of 13 significant sites covering 177 hectares between Point Impossible and Lorne over the next five years. This funding will enable us to continue the work of our dedicated and skilled conservation team.

GORCC's focus will be on environmental weed control, revegetation, pest animal control and reducing recreational impacts in vulnerable areas. The funding will also assist GORCC to support the vital work of local volunteers who contribute thousands of hours every year conserving our coast.



Redeveloped sections of the Surf Coast Walk.

Other projects

GORCC will undertake a range of other beneficial projects over the 2012-2013 year. Examples of some of these projects include a master planning process for the Erskine River Precinct in Lorne, upgrades to existing access facilities in Torquay and Lorne to ensure access suitable for all mobilities, upgrades to paths, signage and car parks and a range of conservation and cultural heritage work.

INVESTING IN OUR CARAVAN PARKS

Our caravan parks in Torquay and Lorne offer beachfront, family friendly, affordable accommodation options for visitors, and contribute around 80 per cent of the money we spend each year on caring for the coast.

The Caravan Park Improvement Masterplan

Investment into our caravan parks is vital to guarantee our revenue stream, fund our work on the coast provide a great experience for campers and, importantly , support local tourism and businesses.

Torquay

In May 2012 an \$800,000 electrical infrastructure upgrade to the Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park began as part of the ongoing Caravan Park Improvement Masterplan. This work completes a \$2.0M upgrade of key park infrastructure at Torquay.

The upgrades have provided new power heads and water supply to 300 sites in the northern half of the park to deliver safer more reliable services to the thousands of campers who visit each year.

The works are expected to be completed by the 31st of October 2012, in time for the busy Melbourne Cup long weekend.

Additionally, three new 2-bedroom cabins have been installed in the Torquay Park to compliment those installed in 2010. The 'Sea View Cabins' have proved extremely popular with park visitors and will help fund further park and coastal improvements.

Lorne

Work is underway on the first of two amenities blocks in Kia Ora at the Lorne Foreshore Caravan Park , and both will be completed by December this year. Two more Riverview Cabins are also being re-furnished along the Erskine River bank. These works form part of \$540,000 being spent in the Lorne park.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We want everyone to love, protect and enjoy our beautiful coast as much as we do, so educating others in helping to care for coastal environments is an important part of our role.

Environmental Education and Activities Program

GORCC offers free coastal, educational experiences to schools and groups, allowing participants to engage in interactive learning opportunities. The program aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to work with, understand, respect, protect and enhance their beautiful coastal surroundings. The program offers both hands on conservation activities and theory based learning.

Over the past year, 10 groups have been involved in the program and participants have ranged from primary and secondary school students to adult groups. The groups have been involved in a wide variety of activities, which have ranged from educational coastal walks and erosion prevention works to revegetation, beach clean ups and lessons in dune ecology.

Coast Guardians

In 2012 GORCC's Coast Guardians program was launched. The program will see 4 schools take ownership of the rehabilitation and conservation of 4 sites along the coast between Torquay and Lorne over the next 2-5 years.

This program is aimed at not only protecting and rehabilitating coastal sites, but teaching students about conservation and the environment and encouraging awareness of environmental issues, social responsibility and environmental stewardship

On ground activities such as weeding, planting and erosion prevention are integrated with theory based learning which covers a range of conservation topics. Students involved range from years 7-9. Schools participating in the program are Geelong Lutheran College, Lorne Aireys Inlet P-12, Northern Bay Secondary College and Surf Coast Secondary College.

Free, printable activities for schools and families

In 2012, GORCC launched a suite of printable educational activities which have been made available for free on our website. The activities range from board games to brain teasers, puzzles to excursion maps and offer fun ways for all ages to learn about the local environment either from the comfort of their home or classroom or out and about on the coast.

The activities were designed to cover a breadth of education topics, raise environmental awareness and promote discussion with others.

Education activities for campers

Each year, GORCC provides free, fun educational activities for campers in the Torquay and Lorne Caravan Parks during Easter and Christmas School holidays. In 2011-2012, these activities included kite making and flying, 'possum prowls' night walks, rockpool creations and much more.



Top to bottom: Torquay College students with GORCC Conservation Team Officer Georgie Beale and Torquay College Teacher David Pace at Whites Beach, Torquay; Campers from the Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park enjoy educational activities; Geelong Lutheran College students working on their site in Torquay as part of the Coast Guardians Program.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Communicating, engaging and working with partners, key stakeholders and the wider community is critical to looking after the coast.

Connecting with the community

GORCC works to build effective relationships with key stakeholders, the wider community and a range of partners. We use a variety of communication tools to inform others about our work, keep them up to date with coastal news and raise awareness about looking after the environment. These tools include social media, the GORCC website, our blog and regional and local media as well as a range of publications such as fact sheets, reports and plans.

From time to time we also often offer opportunities to have input into major projects or decisions, which are promoted using all of the above tools. In 2011-2012, this included extensive opportunities for stakeholders to have input into the development of the CMP.



Top: Community Reference Group members participate in a workshop at Aireys Inlet in December 2011. Below: GORCC conservation team worker Zac Hooper-Travers with Trent Lake from the outdoor works team and Luke Hynes of Jan Juc Coast Action at Clean Up Australia Day.

Supporting environmental volunteering on the coast

Environmental volunteers contribute over 10,000 hours to looking after the coast we manage each year. These groups assist us in our efforts to protect and enhance the coast, and GORCC looks to support and promote their work wherever possible. Environmental volunteer groups working in partnership with GORCC during 2011-2012 included:

- ANGAIR (Anglesea, Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna)
- ANGAIR Friends of Painkalac Creek Estuary
- ANGAIR Friends of Aireys Inlet Coastal Reserve
- ANGAIR- Friends of Anglesea Coast
- Friends of Jan Juc Creek
- Friends of Queens Park Lorne
- Friends of Taylor Park
- Hooded Plover Volunteer Monitors
- LorneCare
- SANE (Surfers Appreciating the Natural Environment)
- Surfrider Foundation Australia
- Torquay Landcare Group
- Torquay Coast Action

GORCC also supports other groups such as the Otway Community Conservation Network (OCCN) which is a network of community organisations, land managers and government agencies committed to protecting and enhancing the Otway's environment through coordinated community action.

Partnerships

Much of our work in looking after the coast is undertaken in partnership with others. Our partners range from community and indigenous groups, to businesses and government departments and agencies. Some of these partners during 2011-2012 were:

- The Department of Sustainability and Environment
- The Surf Coast Shire
- Regional Development Victoria
- Parks Victoria
- The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- Other coastal-related committees of management including Barwon Coast, Bellarine Bayside and Otway Coast Committee.
- Other coastal stakeholders such as local businesses who rely on the coast for their income (e.g. surf schools) and user groups (e.g. surf life saving clubs).
- Local community and volunteer organisations involved in recreation, rescue, environment and cultural activities along the coast.
- The Wathaurung Registered Aboriginal Party and other local indigenous groups.
- The Western Coastal Board
- The Victorian Coastal Council

Annual coastal grants program

Our annual Coastal Grants Program aims to support local groups and individuals in their coastal activities. Each year \$10,000 is allocated for community and environmental activities with a coastal focus in areas under our management.



Top: The Lorne Aquatic and Angling Club with their new drinking fountain, funded through a GORCC Coastal Grant. Below: GORCC Conservation Team members and Birdlife Australia's Grainne Maguire join Hooded Plover Monitor volunteers at a training day in Pt Roadknight.



FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

The 2011-2012 year showed an improvement in net trading operations on the previous year as camp site income increased due to improved occupancy levels during the Summer/Autumn period. Overall trading income increased by 10% while the increase in costs were lower by 5%.

Source of Funds

GORCC's total gross income for the year was \$8.8 million (see Graph 1). 56% was derived from caravan parks managed by GORCC, with another 25% of funding comprising of State and Federal Government grants for specific projects, and the remainder being derived from leases and licences.

The following project specific grants were received during the reporting period:

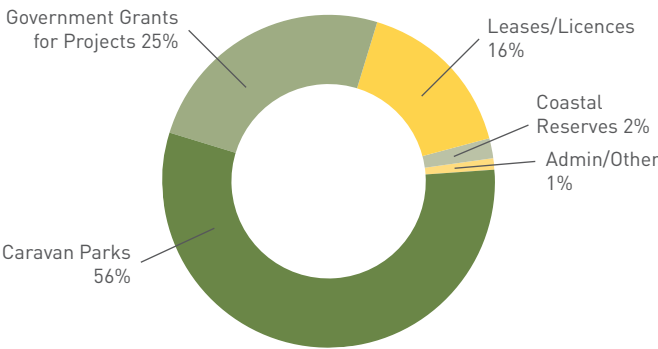
Project	Grant
Lorne Pool Upgrade	\$200,000
Coastal Risk Mitigation	\$90,000
Corangamite Catchment Authority	\$171,462
Erskine River Fishing Platforms	\$90,000
Erskine River Master Planning	\$70,000
Surfcoast Walk Redevelopment	\$557,163
Fishermans Beach	\$550,000
Great Ocean Rd Renewal Project	\$260,000
Miscellaneous Projects	\$192,909

Spending

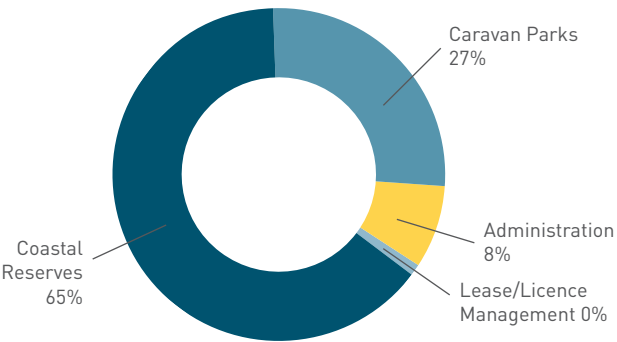
Total expenditure for the year was \$10 million. This comprised spending of 65% towards coastal reserves, 27% on caravan parks with the remainder of 8% on the administrative function (see Graph 2).

This included \$5.7 million spent on capital and special project items (see Graph 3). With the Fishermans Beach Redevelopment receiving the largest portion of capital spending at 56% of the total (see Graph 4).

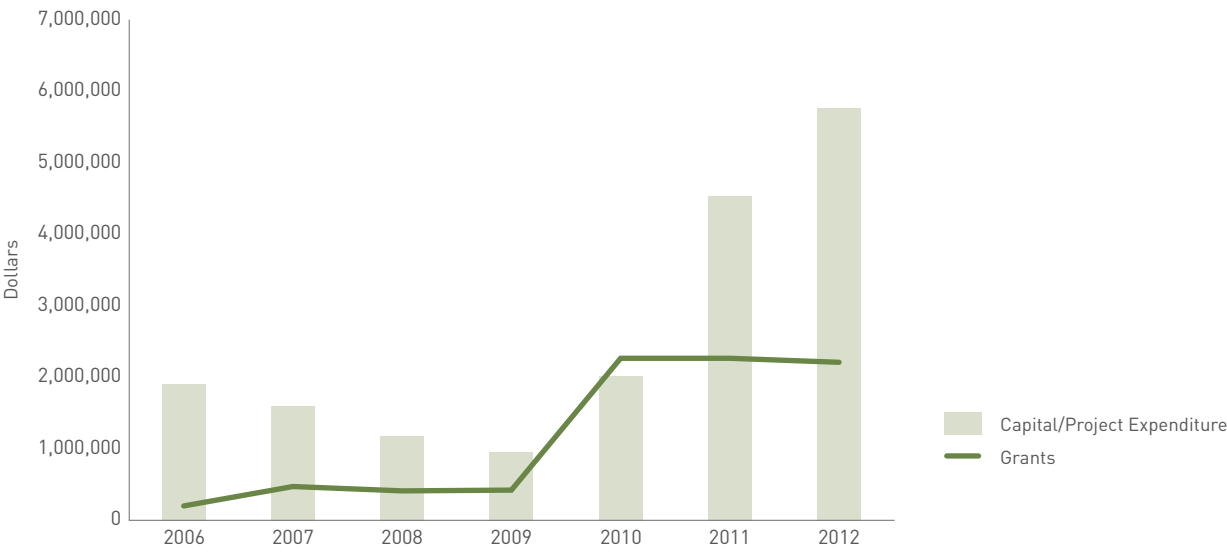
The remaining \$4.3 million related to costs incurred from normal business operations within Coastal Reserves, Caravan Park and Administration (e.g.) Care of coastal reserves, standard repairs and maintenance, utilities and wages (see Graph 5).



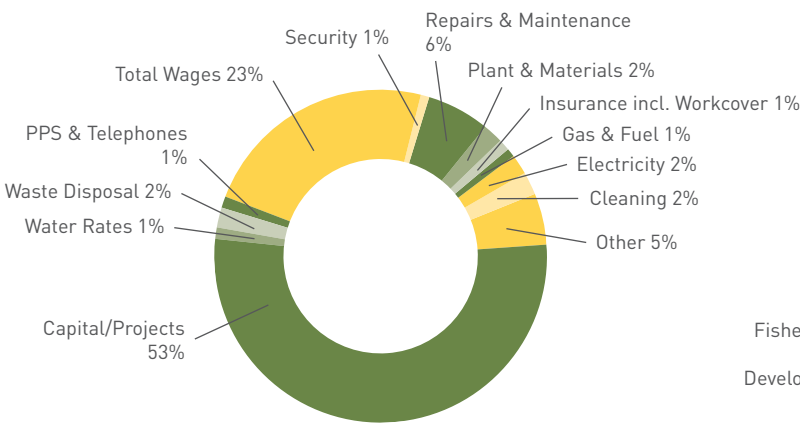
Graph 1: GORCC consolidated income including grants 2011-2012. Total \$8.8 million.



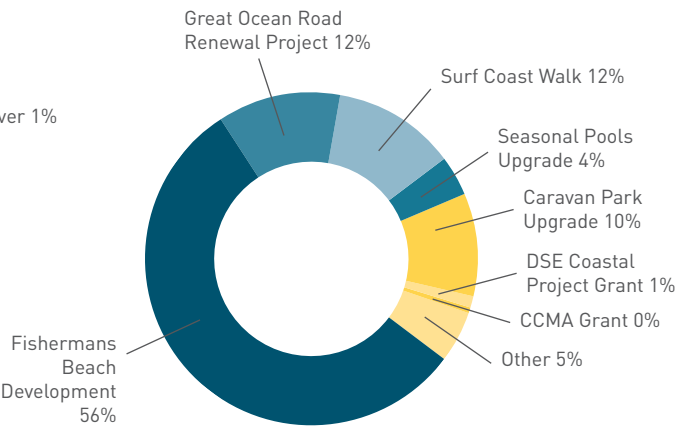
Graph 2: GORCC total expenditure 2012. Total \$10 million.



Graph 3: GORCC Capital/Project Activities



Graph 4: GORCC total consolidated expenditure 2011-2012. Total \$10 million.



Graph 5: GORCC total capital/project expenditure 2011-2012. Total \$5.7 million.





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