



Great Ocean Road Coast Committee

Coastal User Transport Strategy

Final version

July 2015

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Acknowledgements

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee acknowledges the important role and contribution of key stakeholders, including the Surf Coast Shire, VicRoads and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning in this project and managing issues associated with the transport of people to the coast. The community representatives who have been involved in this project to date are also thanked for their invaluable contributions.

Executive Summary

Similar to other coastal and holiday locations, demand for access to areas of coast managed by the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) is very seasonal. Use of the coast continues to be at its peak over the traditional holiday periods (such as Christmas to Australia Day and Easter). However, coastal use is also peaking on any warm, sunny day, especially weekends and public holidays over the broader summer period. Visits to and use of the GORCC managed coast are expected to increase in the future because of:

- The growing population of local towns and nearby areas (e.g. Armstrong Creek in Geelong, Melbourne's western suburbs) and tourism to the region.
- The improved accessibility of the region from Melbourne (e.g. through the recent completion of the Geelong Bypass).

Consequently, the pressures on transport options for travel to and around the coast are also expected to increase.

The process to develop the new GORCC Coastal Management Plan in 2013 identified a number of significant issues relating to access to the coast. In particular car parks and their use and management, were identified as significant issues by the community. This resulted in an action for GORCC to develop a Coastal User Transport Strategy.

It is generally accepted that outside of the peak season there are few problems. Because of this, the focus of the strategy is on the peak tourist season and the recommended actions have been developed with peak demand in mind. Notwithstanding, efforts have been made to ensure that there is not an over-provision of car parking and other facilities that would be largely unused most of the time.

GORCC's role in managing many of the issues associated with transport to the coast is relatively small. Its primary responsibility lies in managing the car parks and some minor roads on land it manages, as well as the major 'assets' which attract visitors to the area (for example: the beach, water and open space).

Other organisations such as VicRoads and the local council (Surf Coast Shire) have a key role as they manage other transport infrastructure, such as the Great Ocean Road itself, or are responsible for other related services (such as bus companies).

As such any recommendations GORCC wishes to implement that are likely to have an impact on the management of the wider transport network must be in line with the strategies and policies of these other organisations. In summary a co-ordinated approach with these organisations on these matters is essential to a successful outcome.

Notwithstanding, GORCC is seeking direction in regard to what it can do within the limitations of its role to better manage the issues currently being faced along the coast.

A lot of work has been done as part of the development of this strategy to collect data and to engage with the community and stakeholders to establish the extent of the problem and to work through a number of options to improve things. This has included:

- Parking occupancy surveys at selected car parks during peak season to understand how busy these car parks get;
- Site visits during peak season to observe driver and parking behaviour and to conduct face to face interviews at beach car parks;
- Stakeholder workshops to discuss the results of the analysis and potential solutions to the problems being faced;

- The publication of a discussion paper which outlined the above and sought feedback from a number of possible solutions;
- Development of a draft strategy which proposed a way forward and sought further feedback from stakeholders.

This strategy pulls together the findings of the previous work to date and presents intended solutions to manage transport to the coast. It outlines a number of management objectives which set out the vision for how transport to the coast ought to be.

The strategy also presents a number of actions which address one or more of the objectives. The actions are specific measures that can be taken by GORCC to achieve the objectives and often involve some physical measures to improve transport options.

The strategy objectives are:

1. To manage visitor demand
2. To enable appropriate access to the beach for all
3. To enable emergency access
4. To improve the beach environment
5. To provide a positive user experience
6. To be safe
7. To minimise inconvenience to local residents and traders
8. To work in partnership with stakeholders

The recommended actions are:

1. Improve sustainable and public transport options
2. Provide disabled parking
3. Provide drop-off bays
4. Manage overflow areas
5. Improve way finding and information
6. Improve the standard of facilities
7. Formalise parking

It is important to note that there will be no simple fix to the problem affecting transport to the coast. The best solution is likely to involve a number of measures implemented over time and potentially additional measures if sufficient improvement is not produced initially. However, the actions presented in this strategy are expected to produce some improvement over the existing situation.

The success of the strategy will be monitored over time by comparing a number of measurable performance criteria against set targets. This will enable the effectiveness of the actions to be assessed and altered if necessary. It may be that additional actions need to be implemented to meet the set targets.

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 The project

The coastal areas under the control of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) are some of the most visited sections of beach front in Victoria (presented in Figure 1.1). GORCC manages a number of car parks as part of its role in managing the Crown land reserves, some of which are subject to very high demand by visitors and locals, particularly during the warmer summer months.

The use and management of GORCC's car parks were identified as significant issues during community consultation for the GORCC Coastal Management Plan, which was published in 2013. Subsequently it was recognised that a car parking strategy was necessary to help GORCC manage the car parks under its control both in the short term and long term.

Since the decision to produce a car parking strategy for the coast was made, it has been decided that the issue of transport to the coast should be approached in a more holistic way. While travelling by car is the most common way of getting to the coast, it is not the only way and GORCC would like to explore what options exist to encourage other modes of transport to the coast.

Therefore GORCC has engaged GHD to prepare a coastal user transport strategy for the section of coast under its control, with a view to managing the demand for car parking more effectively and promoting other modes of transport.

Prior to the publication of this document, GHD undertook a wide range of activities to develop the strategy, including:

- Parking occupancy surveys at selected car parks during peak season to understand how busy these car parks are during peak periods;
- Site visits during peak season to observe driver and parking behaviour and to conduct face to face interviews at beach car parks;
- Stakeholder workshops to discuss the results of the analysis and potential solutions to the problems being faced;
- Release of a discussion paper in January and February 2014 that outlined and sought feedback on the issues currently being experienced in relation to transport to the coast; and
- Release of a draft strategy which proposed a way forward and sought further feedback from stakeholders.

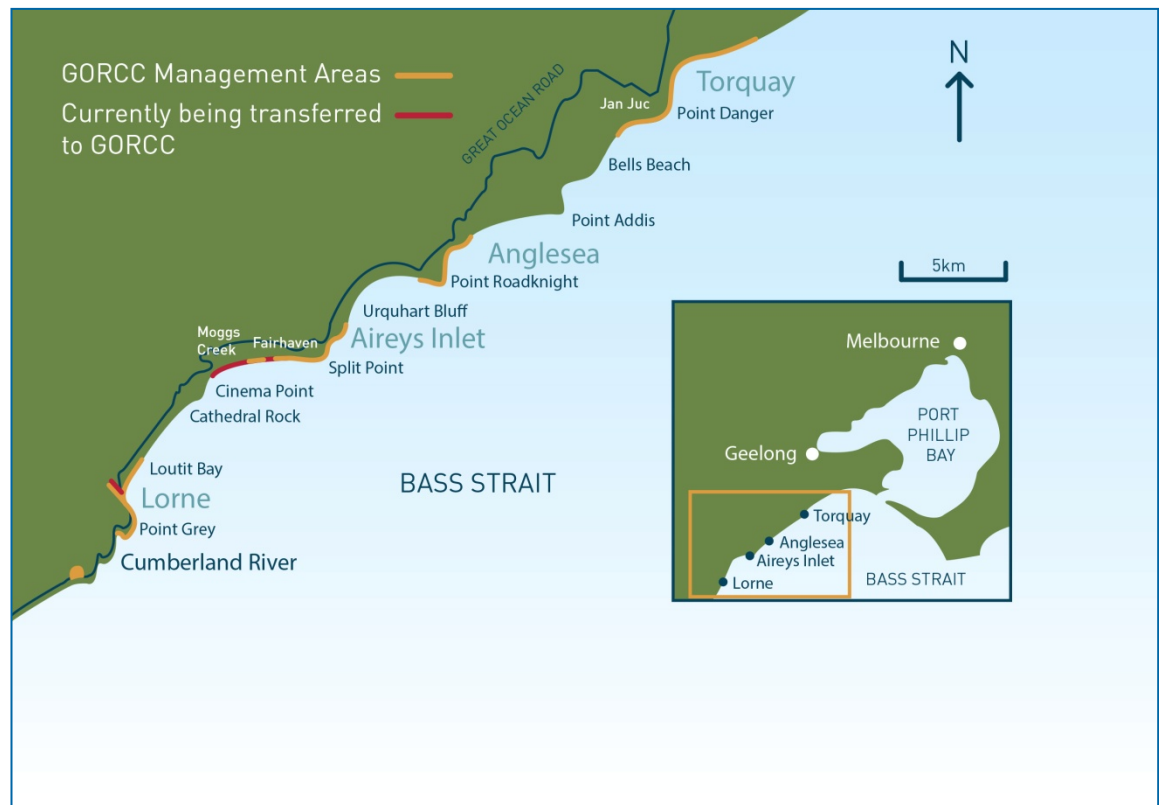
1.2 The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) is a Committee of Management (CoM) established in 2004 under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to manage 37 kilometres of coastal Crown land reserves along the heritage listed Great Ocean Road, from Point Impossible east of Torquay to the Cumberland River southwest of Lorne in Victoria.

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, including future generations.

As discussed above GORCC manages a number of car parks as part of its role in managing the Crown land reserves, some of which are subject to very high demand by visitors and locals, particularly during the warmer summer months.

Figure 1.1 The GORCC managed coast



1.3 This document

This document sets out a strategy that can be used to manage transport to GORCC-managed sections of coast more effectively, to assist in improving the local environment and local residents' amenity. It is not intended to provide sufficient detail to allow the actions to be implemented. Rather, it provides a framework within which a range of projects can be identified with the ultimate aim of improving coastal transport for all in mind.

Due to the overwhelming use of private cars to access the coast, the strategy naturally focuses on cars and car parking. However, ways in which people can be encouraged to use other modes of transport are also explored.

The actions presented are generally in line with existing strategies in the local area (for example, the Surf Coast Shire's parking strategies) and with global best practice in the field of car parking.

1.4 What is meant by the term 'transport'?

In this strategy, the term 'transport' means the way in which people get to the coast. It does not include how they then gain access onto the beach itself. For example, if someone drives to the beach, 'transport' means the journey from their point of departure (e.g. their home) to the car park at their chosen beach. It does not include their journey on foot from the car park to the beach.

Cars are by far the most common form of transport to the coast and this is expected to continue. While the scope of this project and strategy covers all transport modes, including the identification of suitable alternatives to cars, there is a strong focus on this particular form of transport.

Figure 1.2 Torquay Surf Beach – Voss’ Car Park during peak season



1.5 GORCC Responsibilities

GORCC's role in managing many of the issues associated with transport to the coast is relatively small. Its primary responsibility lies in managing the car parks and some minor roads on land it manages, as well as the major 'assets' which attract visitors to the area (for example: the beach, water and open space).

Other organisations such as VicRoads and the local council (Surf Coast Shire) have a key role as they manage other transport infrastructure, such as the Great Ocean Road itself, or are responsible for other related services (such as bus companies).

Any recommendations GORCC wishes to implement must be in line with the strategies and policies of these other organisations, so a co-ordinated approach with these organisations is essential to a successful outcome.

1.6 Study area

The study area is broadly defined as the section of coast administered by GORCC between Torquay and Lorne inclusive. This includes the settlements of:

- Torquay;
- Jan Juc;
- Anglesea;
- Aireys Inlet;
- Fairhaven;
- Moggs Creek;
- Eastern View; and
- Lorne.

In total, GORCC administers 51 car parks in the study area. Figure 1.3 provides an overview of the region, showing the number of GORCC managed car parks along the coast in each area.

Detailed maps, including a full listing of the car parks, their key characteristics and facilities are contained in Appendix A.

1.7 Public transport

There are currently three bus services which operate in the Torquay/Jan Juc area. Details are as follows:

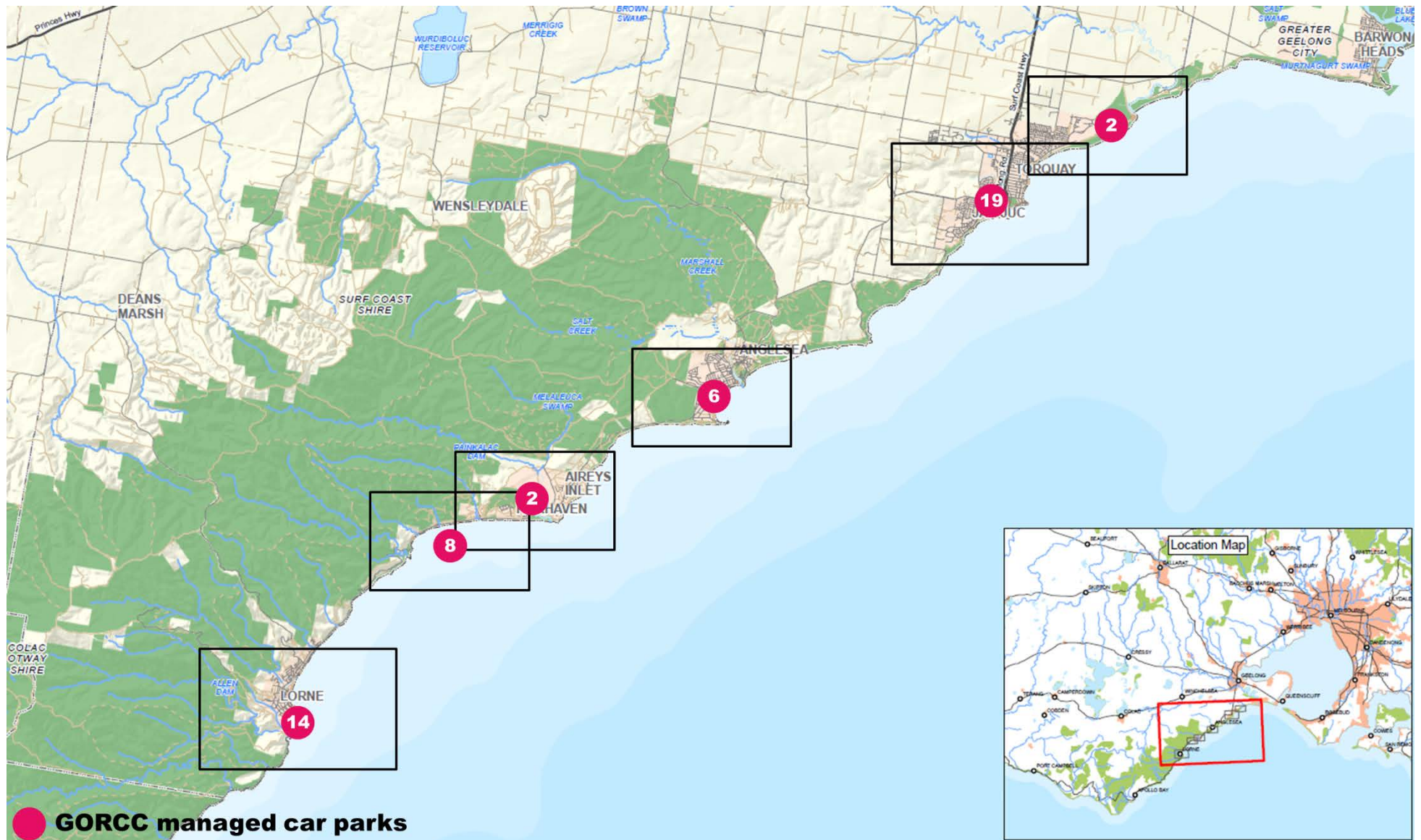
The **Route 72** operates between Jan Juc and Marshall via Torquay. Two services leave Jan Juc at 05:56 and 06:23 during the week and there are no more services until the evening, when three services at 17:47, 18:37 and 19:17 return from Marshall Railway Station. There are no weekend services. The Route 72 does not provide convenient access to a beach.

The **Route 73** operates between Torquay and Wombah Park via the Surf Coast Highway. Morning weekday services are generally at 30 to 40 minute intervals, while evening services are generally at 30 to 60 minute intervals. Weekend services are generally at hourly intervals. The Route 73 also does not provide convenient access to a beach.

The **Route 74** operates between Jan Juc and Geelong via Torquay. Weekday services are generally at 30 to 50 minute intervals, Weekend services are generally at hourly intervals. The Route 74 travels along the Esplanade close to the central Torquay shopping area.

In addition V/Line runs a coach service between Geelong and Apollo Bay, stopping in Torquay, Anglesea and other settlements along the Great Ocean Coast. This service operates three times per day.

Figure 1.3 Study area overview map



PART 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE



2.1 Issues overview

Similar to other coastal and holiday locations, demand for access to the GORCC-managed coast is very seasonal. Use of the coast continues to be at its peak over the traditional holiday periods (such as Christmas to Australia Day and Easter). Increasingly, coastal use is also peaking on any warm, sunny day, especially weekends and public holidays over the broader summer period. In particular, this is due to the improved accessibility of the region from Melbourne (e.g. through the recent completion of the Geelong Bypass).

Driving by car is the main way people get to the coast, leading to significant demand being placed on the car parking space available. This can result in congestion and indiscriminate parking behaviour, and in turn, impacts to the environmental values of the coast and to people's use and enjoyment of it.

Visits to and use of the GORCC-managed coast are expected to increase in the future because of the growing population of local towns and nearby areas (e.g. Armstrong Creek in Geelong, Melbourne's western suburbs) and tourism to the region.

Access to the coast, and in particular car parks and their use and management, were identified as significant issues by the community during the process to develop the new GORCC Coastal Management Plan (CMP) and resulted in this project being identified as an action in the CMP (no. 59). The CMP can be viewed at www.gorcc.com.au. An exploration of related but broader issues associated with population and development is given in the box below.

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT – A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE

'Population and Development' was identified in the GORCC CMP as one of the four 'Significant Challenges in Managing the Coast'. The following is an excerpt from the CMP (page 30):

"The Surf Coast Shire is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. Its permanent population is expected to grow from about 27,500 to almost 35,000 by 2026, an increase of over 27% in 15 years. Most of this growth is expected to be concentrated around Torquay, predominantly because of the attractiveness of a coastal lifestyle and significant demand from retirees in Melbourne.

The resident population already more than trebles during peak holiday times with an extra 60,000 overnight visitors. Adding a similar number of day trippers to this means the number of people currently trying to access the GORCC managed coast is huge. This is only expected to continue in the future with nearby areas also predicted to grow significantly over the next 10 to 20 years. For example Armstrong Creek (10 kilometres north of Torquay) is expected to grow by an additional 50,000 people, while Melbourne's west (within 60 minutes' driving time from the GORCC managed coast) is expected to grow by an additional 175,000 people.

This rapid growth in permanent and visitor populations, combined with associated development to accommodate it, can bring some benefits (e.g. improvements to transport), however it often creates significant environmental, social and economic challenges and threatens the very reasons people choose to move to or visit the coast.

In addition to significantly increasing in size, the population of the region and broader area is also expected to have a higher proportion of older people in coming years. For example, in the Surf Coast Shire (SCS) there is an expected 89% increase in the number of people aged over 65 by 2021. This could lead to a number of pressures on GORCC and the coast, including greater demand for improved access and other facilities that cater to older people with reduced mobility."

2.2 Existing strategies, plans and other documents

“GORCC needs to take a strategic, long term view of access requirements across the GORCC-managed coast and broader region and consider and balance a number of issues, especially the provision of safe and appropriate access to the coast in a way that does not lead to significant negative impacts on the natural environment”.

GORCC Coastal Management Plan, 2013

A significant number of existing policies, plans, reports and other documents have been identified already through this project for their relevance to coastal user transport and associated issues. GORCC and its management of these issues need to comply with some of these (e.g. Victorian Coastal Strategy) and can take guidance from others (e.g. Surf Coast Shire Council – Coastal Town Centres Parking Study). Relevant parts of key documents are summarised below, with further information in Appendix B.

2.2.1 Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014

The Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 (VCS) is prepared by the Victorian Coastal Council as the State Government’s policy for coastal, estuarine and marine environments in Victoria. It provides strategic direction for the planning, management and sustainable use of the Victorian coast and integrates relevant State, national and international principles and policies.

The VCS includes a number of policies, actions and directions relevant to coastal user transport and associated issues. For example, it encourages access by transport modes other than private vehicle, and states that ‘Management of car parking facilities and other infrastructure including demand for new facilities will need to be managed carefully in popular destinations to ensure that built infrastructure and parking does not impact on the environmental, social and cultural values of coastal and marine areas’.

The VCS 2014 can be found at:

http://www.vcc.vic.gov.au/assets/media/menu_files/VCS_2014.pdf

2.2.2 GORCC Coastal Management Plan 2013

GORCC recently prepared a new Coastal Management Plan (CMP) to identify priorities and provide direction for the sustainable use and management of the areas it manages over the next five years. The CMP is an agreement between the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), GORCC and the community about how the GORCC managed coast will be managed and must be given effect by all relevant stakeholders, including the local council (i.e. Surf Coast Shire (SCS)).

The CMP identifies that the GORCC managed coast is highly valued – environmentally, socially and economically. The CMP also identifies significant challenges facing management of the coast and protecting and enhancing these values, and guiding principles for managing the coast. Relevant examples of both of these are outlined over the page.

The CMP identifies that in responding to the challenge of population and development GORCC will:

- Work with other relevant organisations, in particular the SCS, to advocate for the coast, aiming to address detrimental impacts and maximise opportunities associated with increased population and development.
- Undertake research and planning in relation to how population and development pressures will specifically impact GORCC managed lands and assets, and prepare responsive management plans.
- Optimise appropriate and equitable access and use along the GORCC managed coast (e.g. through provision of access facilities and information) according to the values, attributes and needs of its individual sections.
- Pursue opportunities to strengthen community understanding and capacity regarding how to minimise impacts on the coast.

The CMP also sets out GORCC's Guiding Principles for managing the coast. These include that 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.
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.
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.

This project has been undertaken to help to implement GORCC's planned responses to the significant challenge of 'Population and Development' and comply with the above Guiding Principles as identified in the CMP.

This project also contributes to the achievement of a number of actions in the CMP, particularly no. 59: 'Develop a strategy to direct car park access, demand, maintenance and management along the coast'.

2.2.3 Other GORCC documents

GORCC has a range of other plans and reports that are relevant to this project and provide guidance to it. In particular, this includes the existing masterplans that have been developed for many parts of the GORCC managed coast (e.g. Torquay Foreshore, Lorne Foreshore) to set out detailed on-ground actions for their management and development. These masterplans contain a number of actions specific to car parks and other transport related issues.

Documents such as the GORCC Environment and Land Management Plan and Native Vegetation and Weed Action Plan also contain relevant information and guidance.

2.2.4 Surf Coast Shire Strategies and Studies

Torquay Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

The Torquay Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was developed to maximise the use of parking spaces within the town centre, to cater for parking demands during the peak season in the future and to ensure that the parking supply rates for future developments were adequate.

The strategy includes time restrictions, paid parking and increased enforcement, signage and monitoring to improve use and management of car parking in the town centre.

Surf Coast Shire Council – Coastal Town Centres Parking Study

This study looked into car parking in the townships of Lorne, Anglesea and Torquay, where demand for car parking is particularly high in the summer months. It made a number of findings regarding the current supply and use of car parking in these locations, as well as recommendations about how they could be improved. These included adjustments to time limits, introduction of paid parking, improved enforcement activities, introduction of a permit scheme for residents, establishment of remote parking areas with shuttle services, encouraging use of alternative, sustainable modes of travel (e.g. bicycle, walking, bus) and increasing parking supply where needed and possible.

Torquay Town Centre Parking and Access Strategy 2011-2016

This strategy aims to 'establish a clear and integrated framework for car parking provisions, access and movement in the town centre that takes into account projected growth patterns'.

Key elements of the strategy include maximising public parking, gathering further information regarding use of car parks, providing further parking for buses and other long vehicles and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. It did not propose the use of paid parking as it was felt it was not warranted at that stage.

Surf Coast Shire Long Vehicle Strategy 2014

This study was developed to manage the parking and movement of tourism buses, coaches and long vehicles throughout the Surf Coast Shire. Key actions from the study recommend increasing the number of long vehicle parking spaces. This conflicts with one of this study's objectives, which is to improve the beach environment and avoid building new parking space.

Surf Coast Shire Visitor Insights 2014

Surf Coast Shire publishes annual statistics on visitor numbers and activities. Some key findings from the 2014 document (which contains data from 2013) which are relevant to this study are set out below.

- Visitors to Surf Coast Shire inject over \$600 million into the economy.
- Both Torquay and Lorne are within the top 10 regional destinations in Victoria by overnight visitor numbers.
- Nearly 80% of overnight visitors come to the shire for holiday and leisure purposes.
- Of that 80%, 60% come from Melbourne.
- The most popular activity for overnight visitors while in the shire is going to the beach, with 545,000 people doing so in 2013.
- For domestic day trips (i.e. not overnight stays), 65% come from Melbourne.
- Again, the main activity undertaken by day trippers is visiting the beach, with 506,000 people doing so in 2013.

2.2.5 Other Australian strategies

Strategies for coastal user transport, car parking, access or similar have previously been developed for other areas in Australia. Some relevant examples are outlined below.

Colac and Apollo Bay, Victoria

Colac and Apollo Bay experience large fluctuations in parking demand between the peak and off peak seasons, a lack of way finding guidance to and from parking areas, under-utilisation of alternative transport modes and other issues similar to the GORCC managed coast.

The strategies developed to manage these issues include:

- Increasing the number of off-street parking spaces;
- Applying short term time restrictions to encourage turnover of spaces;
- Undertaking a study into the need for parking restrictions on residential streets, along with a resident permit system;
- Reviewing the accessibility of disabled parking;
- Investigating the possibility of providing more and better drop-off zones for buses and coaches;
- Installing additional directional signage to advertise less-known car parks; and
- Enhancing the enforcement of parking restrictions and reviewing the level of fines

Gold Coast, Queensland

In 2004, Gold Coast Council undertook a study to develop a region wide parking strategy to assist in future planning decisions. The Gold Coast City Parking Strategy was a comprehensive review of parking both in public and private parking facilities. The strategies developed include:

- Rationalise parking in high demand areas to ensure supply meets demand;
- Encourage high turnover of spaces in high demand areas through the use of time restrictions and paid parking;
- Reduce illegal parking by enhancing enforcement; and
- Encourage the use of public transport.

Nelson Bay, New South Wales

In 2002 the Port Stephens Council developed a framework to guide the reform of parking along the Nelson Bay foreshore.

Port Stephens is a key tourist location, with over 20,000 visitors to the foreshore during peak periods with an estimated 80% of visitors arriving by car. The parking strategy was a response to the perceived under supply of parking during peak periods.

The framework proposed three options:

- Option A was a status quo situation in which the parking along the foreshore remained unrestricted. This option was considered unsustainable due to the predicted growth;
- Option B proposed to implement free time-restricted parking to discourage long term use.
- Option C proposed to implement fee based parking for all on and off street parking near the foreshore.

Option C was recommended, as revenues from parking could be used to provide for the future parking needs of the area.

2.2.6 Parking best practices

The following list is taken from the Transportation Demand Management Encyclopedia¹ which was created by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (Canada). It describes strategies that are considered 'best practice' in parking management.

CAR PARKING BEST PRACTICE

- Parking policies should emphasise efficient use of resources. User information services, shared parking, parking pricing and overflow parking plans allow more efficient use of existing capacity and avoid the need for excessive requirements.
- The most convenient parking spaces should be managed and priced to favour priority users, such as people with disabilities, rideshare vehicles, delivery vehicles, business customers and clients.
- Parking prices should be higher during peak-periods. There should be little or no discount for long-term leases.
- Parking should be considered a high-quality service. Signs, maps and brochures should be used to provide accurate information to users. Facilities should be attractive and safe. Users' needs and potential problems should be anticipated.
- Parking services need not be one-size-fits-all. A parking facility may provide a variety of services tailored to different users, including valet services for premium users, convenient short-term parking for shoppers and delivery vehicles, longer-term parking for commuters and residents, and special arrangements when appropriate for commercial users.
- Parking facilities should be integrated with overall facility and district design and style.
- Parking management policies and programs should be coordinated through a district or region, so prices and management practices are consistent in comparable areas.
- Stakeholders should be consulted and involved in planning parking policies and programs.
- New technologies should be used to improve user information, convenience and safety, and for control of revenue.
- Parking management planning should anticipate potential spill-over problems, and respond with appropriate regulations and enforcement programs. Enforcement should be adequate to maintain a high level of compliance, be predictable and courteous.

¹ <http://vtpi.org/t dm/>

2.3 Research

Two pieces of research were undertaken as part of this project to establish car parking usage at GORCC car parks:

- Review of aerial photography; and
- On-site car parking occupancy surveys.

2.3.1 Review of aerial photography

GORCC carried out occupancy surveys by aerial photographs taken on one day in the peak season (Sunday 30 December 2007) and one day outside the summer school holiday peak season (Friday 16 December 2011). This information did not include the capacity of the car parks, so GORCC provided this information separately where it was easily obtainable from aerial photography. GHD has supplemented this data by calculating the number of parking spaces by the following relationship:

$$\text{Number of car parking spaces} = \frac{\text{area of car park in square metres}}{30}$$

This information is shown in Appendix A and the data is summarised in Table 2.1 for the peak season day of Sunday 30 December 2011. The aerial photography for Friday 16 December 2011 was not used for this analysis as it was decided that the photography for Sunday 30 December 2007 would be more representative of peak conditions at GORCC managed beaches (being during the summer school holidays).

Table 2.1 Summary of car park occupancy data on Sunday 30 December 2007

Region	Total number of spaces available	Total number of vehicles counted	Average occupancy
Torquay	1,095	801	73%
Anglesea	489	211	43%
Aireys Inlet	240	104	43%
Lorne	510	354	69%

Assumptions and limitations

It should be noted that the occupancy surveys were a snapshot of two days in two separate years and are based on aerial photographs that may not have been taken during a peak hour. The results may therefore not be a true reflection of the actual demand. For example, while the average occupancy in Torquay was 73%, six of the 21 car parks were full at the time of the survey.

The capacity of the car parks is based on the formula above which relies on calculating car parking capacity by measuring from aerial photography. The formula assumes that one parking space and its portion of access aisle occupy 30 square metres. Where the area is irregular, the capacity may be different from the calculated number. The only accurate way of determining the number of parking spaces in each car park is to physically count them (or estimate them where they are unsealed) on the ground.

2.3.2 Occupancy surveys

Additional occupancy surveys were carried out on Friday, 17th and Saturday, 18th January 2014. The weather on the survey days was fine and temperatures were 42 degrees and 20 degrees respectively. When selecting the survey days, a Friday and Saturday with good 'beach weather' were desired. A weekend in January as close to Christmas as possible to maximise the number of people being off work was also desired.

The weather forecast after Christmas was watched closely and in the end the surveyed days were selected to avoid being forced to survey potentially less suitable weekends later in the month. In the event, this was probably the most suitable weekend in January. Furthermore the weather conditions experienced on these days provided a good opportunity to compare car parking usage on a very hot day and a relatively mild day.

The surveys were carried out at the following beach car parks:

- Voss's in Torquay
- Jan Juc 3-Tier in Jan Juc
- Four Kings in Anglesea
- Point Roadknight in Anglesea
- Lorne Surf Life Saving Club in Lorne

Results are shown in Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 for Friday and Saturday respectively. Note that results for Point Roadknight include an area outside the formalised parking area which was heavily utilised by beachgoers. This has been counted as part of the normal capacity of the car park as it seemed to be a de facto overspill area for the car park.

Figure 2.1 Results of parking occupancy survey on Friday 17 January 2014

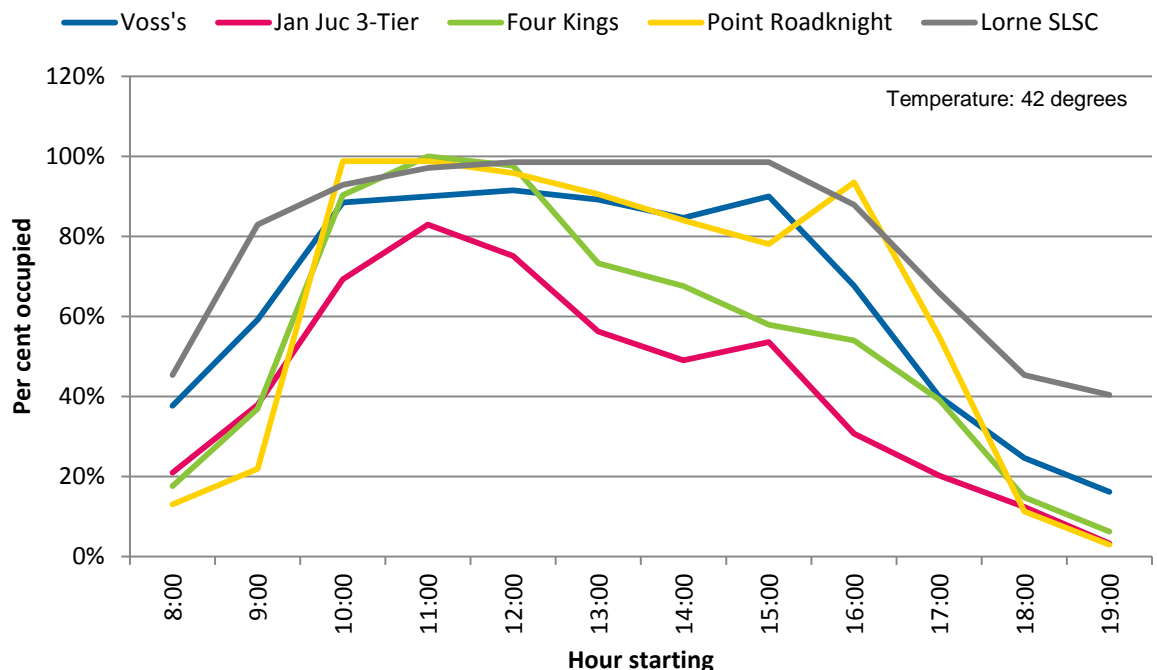
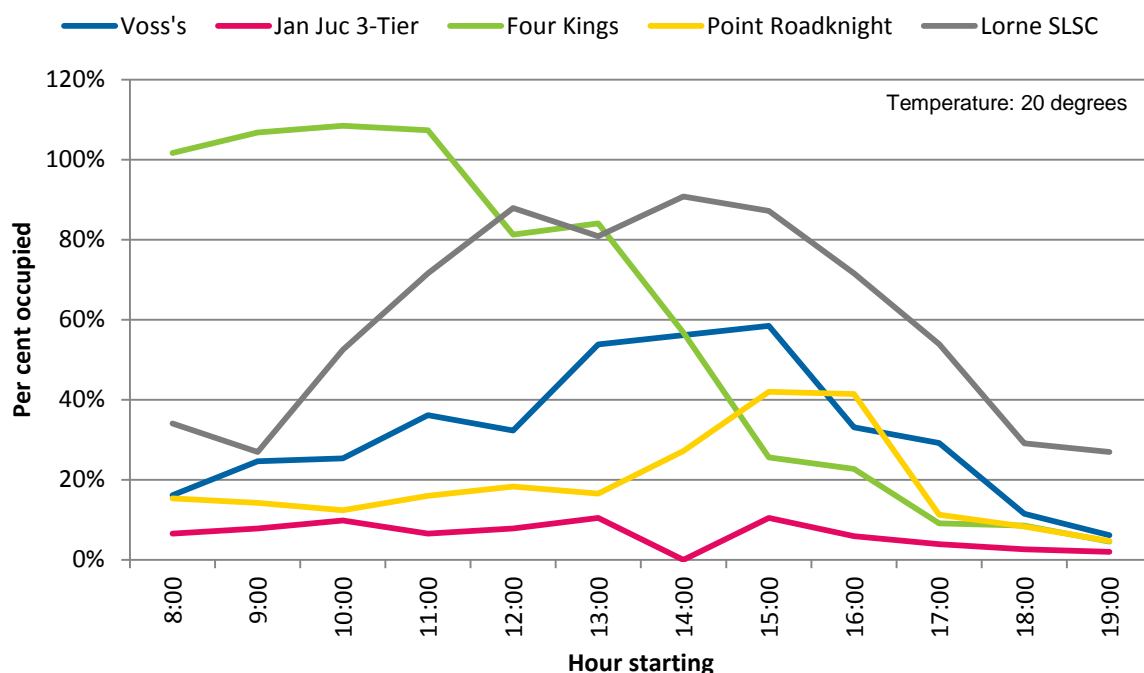


Figure 2.2 Results of parking occupancy survey on Saturday 18 January 2014



The results indicate that the car parks were much busier on the Friday, despite it being a workday. This is almost certainly due to the weather on that day, which was 42 degrees, whereas on the Saturday it was only 20 degrees. This appears to confirm that weather does have a large impact on the number of people who visit the beach.

On the Friday, Lorne SLSC car park was fully occupied between 11:00 and 15:00, while Point Roadknight and Four Kings car park were almost fully occupied between 10:00 and 12:00. All car parks were highly utilised between 10:00 and 12:00, after which time they generally became less busy. Jan Juc 3-Tier was the least busy car park overall.

Interestingly, on the Saturday Four Kings was more than fully occupied between 8:00 and 11:00. This higher-than-normal demand may be due to nippers' training which takes place on Saturdays.

In summary, the results indicate that Lorne SLSC is busy throughout the day, whereas other car parks are busiest during the morning, after which time it becomes easier to find a parking space.

2.4 Consultation

2.4.1 Stakeholder workshops

Three workshops have so far been held as part of this project. The first, a workshop with internal GORCC officials, was held on Tuesday 5 February 2013. The second workshop was held on Tuesday 19 February 2013 and attendees included officers from the Surf Coast Shire and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries. The third and final workshop was held on Friday 25 July 2014 and was attended by the organisations that previously attended GORCC workshops and VicRoads.

The following sections summarise the key issues identified by stakeholders at these workshops.

Car parking demand variability

Demand at GORCC's car parks varies for a number of reasons:

- Seasonal variations with warm weekend days during the summer months being particularly busy;
- Demand was greater at car parks which are well known and close to beaches that are perceived to be safe for families and children; and
- Community perception that there is never enough car parking with everyone wanting to visit the same areas.

Management of car parking facilities during busy periods

- Emergency access can sometimes be difficult in peak periods;
- In Lorne it is believed that many people park their cars in car parks for several weeks at a time, using their cars as a means of storing beach equipment;
- Overflow areas in the GORCC car parks are not structured or patrolled;
- Traffic flow around car parks is an issue as people look for a car parking space; and
- Patrons of the caravan park often park their cars outside of the caravan park during peak periods.

GORCC's role

- There was a recognition that GORCC should provide open space along the coast and not car parks as the principle reason for operation;
- Provision of extra car parking does not equal a better experience for people visiting the coast; and
- Surf Coast Shire businesses rely heavily on GORCC car park to service local shops and facilities.

Lack of facilities at certain car parks

- Some car parks such as Whites Beach have lots of parking but no facilities; and
- It can be difficult in places such as Fairhaven for people to cross the Great Ocean Road from residential areas to the beaches.

Buses

- Buses can be a problem, as they take up space and spoil views;
- Bus bays at Bells Beach– buses didn't necessarily use them and surfers parked in them;
- General lack of long vehicle parking in Torquay and Lorne. Buses park on the street, occupying many parking spaces and spoiling views; and
- Bus driver duty hours can be an issue meaning that buses often lay over on the street.

Car parking practices

The following is a summary of local car parking practises used by Surf Coast Shire (SCS) as well as potential future options, as identified by stakeholders at the workshops.

Time restrictions

- General consensus is that time restrictions in central Torquay are working reasonably well at present;
- Seasonal restrictions are being investigated by Council and would probably require the use of temporary signs;
- Turnover of parking spaces is a key issue for Council, more so than payment for parking. There will need to be a cultural shift away from the expectation that parking is unrestricted to one in which parking is a valuable resource that must be shared fairly and equitably among visitors to the area; and
- There is poor turnover of vehicles particularly in the Torquay car parks during the busy summer periods, which leads to spill-over problems and congestion.

Permits

- There is a permit scheme for tour bus operators currently operating at Bells Beach; and
- There are costs associated with administering a permit system, which would need to be offset by charging users for permits.

Park-and-ride

- A park-and-ride system at Torquay Football Ground is used for the ANZAC memorial and it seems to work well. Any expansion of park-and-ride to beaches would need to be run as a trial initially.

Suggested improvement options for GORCC car parks

Park-and-ride facilities

- Park-and-ride could be considered on a trial basis. Possible sites should be identified;
- It may be possible to use the new council offices car park for a park-and-ride service, but it is used extensively by sports teams and other weekend events;
- Another option for a park-and-ride car park is the Horseshoe Bend precinct soccer ground; and
- Schools could be used for park-and-ride out of school hours.

Other strategies

- The use of smart phone apps and dynamic signing should be explored as a way of disseminating information;
- A strategy would be needed to communicate any changes to car parking. A smartphone or computer app showing beach and car parking information, possibly to include car parking usage levels, could be developed. This would require additional hardware and software solutions; and
- Dynamic parking information systems such as signage with current car parking usage levels could be used. However, there is a desire to minimise sign clutter to preserve the amenity of the area and concern that such a solution is more suited to urban environments.

Improving internal car parking circulation

- Drop-off zones are supported, but they may be confusing and not observed. They could possibly be combined with emergency access areas, which are usually respected. Drop-off zones would probably be limited to the busiest car parks;
- Disabled parking should be provided at busy car parks;
- Reduced speed zones along the coast during peak periods would make it safer for pedestrians to walk through car parks and cross roads; and
- Formalising car parking in overflow areas may increase capacity.

Time restrictions

- Time restrictions should apply in GORCC car parks to encourage turnover;
- Some measures implemented would have impacts on SCS. For example, time restrictions in GORCC car parks close to employment centres may displace some commuter parking and extra capacity may need to be provided elsewhere; and
- The payment system for boat trailers at Fishermans Beach, Torquay has worked well since its implementation at Christmas 2013. There have only been three complaints.

Other comments

- Investigate dedicated bus parking away from beaches and main streets; and
- Need to rationalise car parking space rather than increase the footprint of car parks within the public reserve. For example, formalising parking in overflow areas and converting parallel spaces to angle spaces may increase the overall number of spaces provided without increasing the overall footprint. It is understood that DEPI would not support an increase in car park footprint due to concerns over scale of development and environmental and ecological amenity.

2.4.2 User surveys

Surveys of car park users were carried out on Sunday 17 February 2013 to determine parking usage and occupancy data and opinions on a number of parking practices. The surveys were carried out at the following locations:

- Four Kings Car Park, Anglesea;
- Grove Road Car Park, Lorne;
- Lorne Central Car Park; and
- Voss's Car Park - Pt Danger Car Park, Torquay.

Each car park was surveyed for approximately one hour. During this period, groups of visitors were approached and asked to answer survey questions relating to their travel behaviours. While many declined to be surveyed, a total of 54 groups of beach users were interviewed, split evenly between each of the beaches.

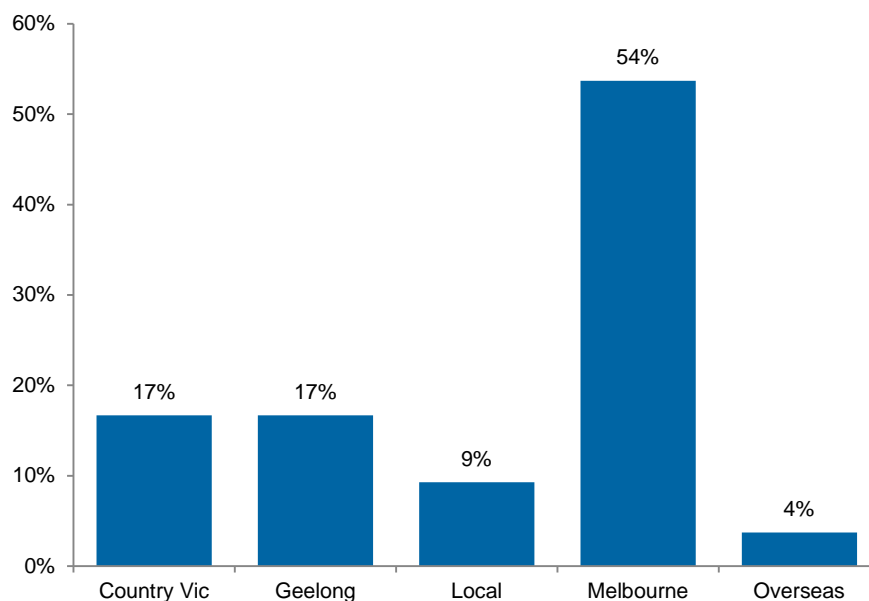
The weather during the survey was fine with a maximum temperature of 38 degrees. Nippers' training was being held in Torquay, which may have increased demand on that day, but this is a regular event and it is considered that the day was generally representative of peak parking conditions.

Origin of respondents

People were asked where they came from on the day of the survey. As shown in Figure 2.3 it can be seen that:

- The majority of people surveyed originated from Melbourne (54%);
- 17% of respondents came from country Victoria and Geelong respectively; and
- 9% of respondents were from the local community (notionally defined as the towns in the study area).

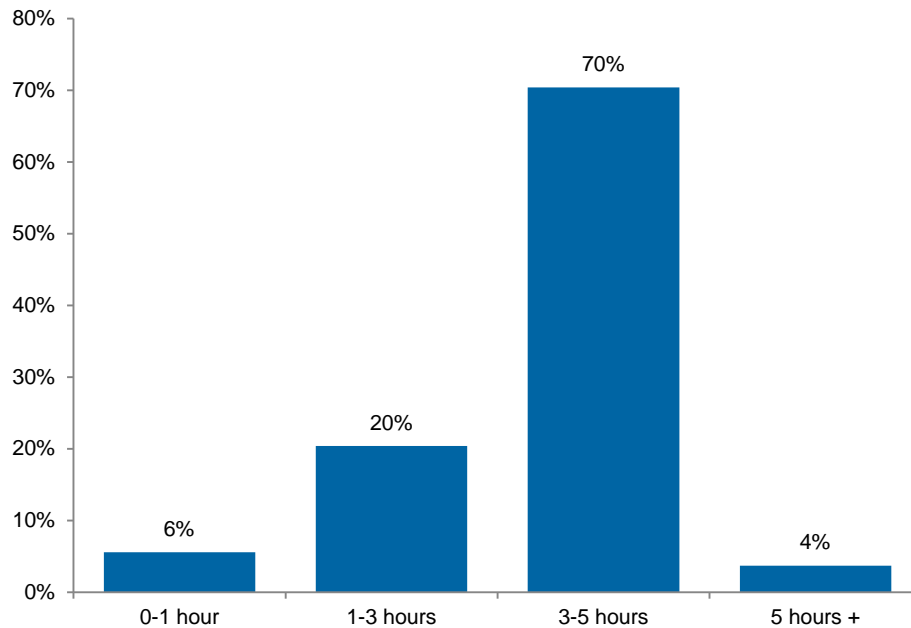
Figure 2.3 Origin of survey respondents



Length of stay at beach

Visitors were asked how long they had stayed or expected to stay at the beach. As shown in Figure 2.4, 70% indicated that they stayed or planned to stay for between three and five hours. The majority of the remaining respondents stayed or planned to stay for less than three hours.

Figure 2.4 Length of stay at the beach



Purpose of visit

70% of respondents indicated that the beach was their only destination on that trip.

Willingness to consider public transport

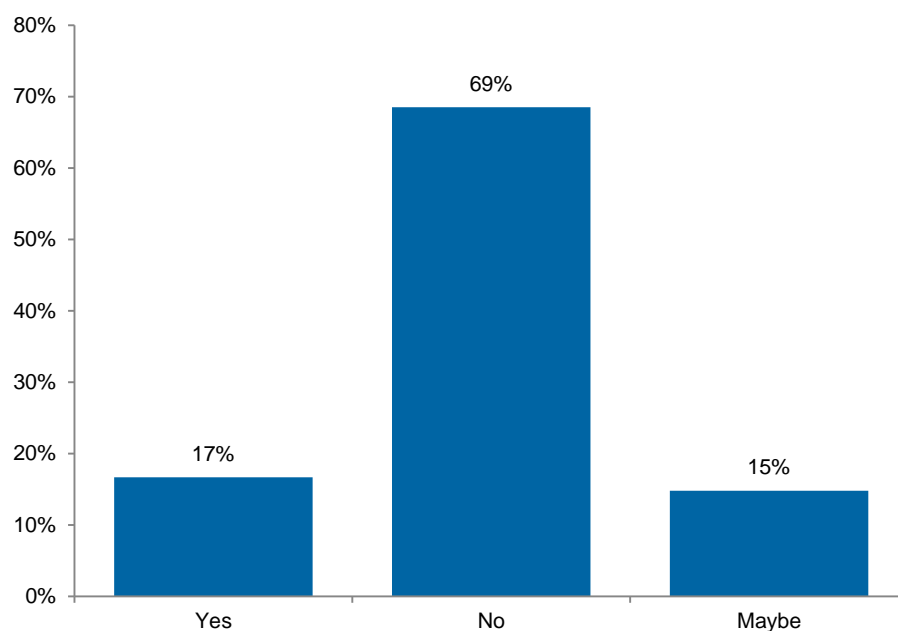
Every respondent to the surveys indicated that they would not consider using public transport to access the beach. Reasons given typically included the amount of equipment that had to be carried and the lack of or inconvenience of public transport.

No one was asked if they would consider cycling to the beach instead of driving, but neither was anyone observed cycling to the beach.

Willingness to consider using a park-and-ride system

Visitors were asked whether they would be willing to consider using park-and-ride to access the beach. As shown in Figure 2.5, 17% of respondents would consider it, 15% would possibly consider it and 69% would not consider using a park-and-ride facility. As with general public transport, the amount of equipment to carry and perceived inconvenience were given as reasons not to use park-and-ride.

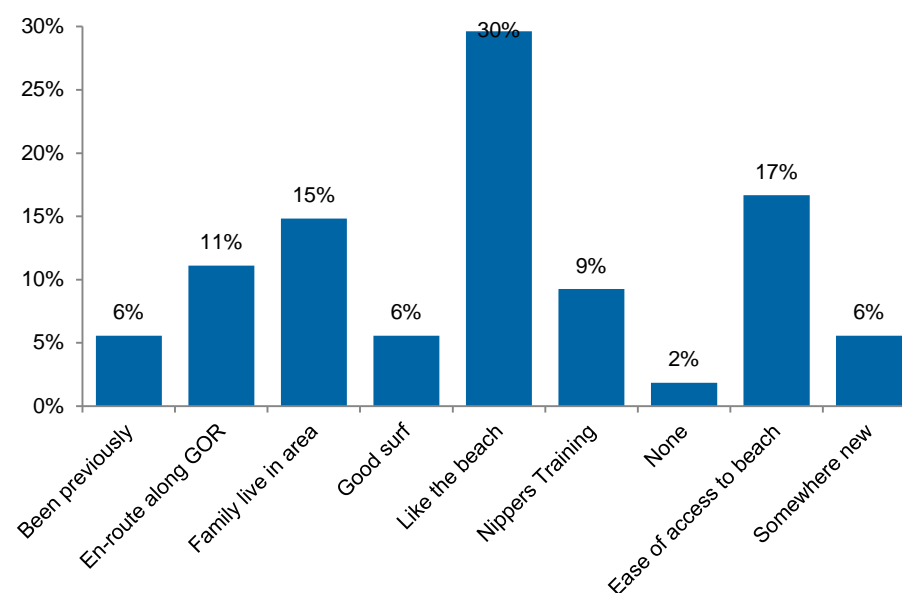
Figure 2.5 Willingness to consider using park-and-ride to access the beach



Reason for visiting the beach

Visitors gave a variety of reasons for visiting a particular beach. Figure 2.6 indicates that most people (30%) stated simply that they 'liked the beach', 17% said that ease of access to the beach was the main consideration and 15% said that it was because their family live in the area².

Figure 2.6 Reason for visiting the beach



² Note that these visitors may have originated from areas that are not necessarily regarded as 'local'.

Key findings of surveys

The key findings of the user interview surveys are summarised below.

- More than 90% of visitors to the beaches are not locals. The majority of visitors (54%) are from Melbourne;
- Only 4% of visitors stay at the beach for more than five hours. The majority (70%) stay for between three and five hours;
- For 70% of visitors the beach was their only destination on that trip;
- No visitors said they would be willing to consider using public transport to access the beach;
- 70% of visitors said they would not be willing to consider using a park-and-ride system; and
- The most common reasons for visiting a particular beach were: they like the beach; easy access to the beach; and their family live in the area.

2.4.3 Discussion paper

Overview

In February 2014 GORCC and GHD published a discussion paper (available at www.gorcc.com.au) which outlined the transport issues currently being faced by coastal users and presented options for dealing with them. Feedback on the discussion paper was sought from the public in the form of an online survey and drop-in session which was held in Lorne. This feedback supplements the data presented in Section 2.3 of this strategy. The results of this community feedback can be found on the GORCC website (www.gorcc.com.au).

The paper presented the following information:

- Issues currently being faced by visitors to the coast;
- Preliminary survey data;
- How transport is managed elsewhere;
- The study objectives;
- The options available for managing the transport issues. These were presented as possible options, rather than actual recommendations, which is how they are presented in this document); and
- How the public can get involved in the study. This introduced the online survey and drop-in sessions.

Community feedback process

For four weeks in January and February 2014 a survey was conducted to obtain community feedback on the information presented in the discussion paper. The survey was made available both online and in hard copy format. The survey was promoted through a number of channels including newspaper advertisements, notices on the GORCC website and e-newsletter, signage on the Lorne foreshore and on social media platforms.

In addition, a drop-in session, or open house, was run on the Lorne foreshore. Around 300 community members attended the open house to have their say about transport to the coast.

Outcomes of community feedback

The following were the key results from the community feedback:

- 55 responses were received in total, 52 from individuals and 3 from organisations.
- Typical influences for the choice of beach to visit were closeness to accommodation and perceived safety of the particular beach.
- Most people came from a local town on the Surf Coast.
- Most respondents (43%) said that they stayed at the beach for one to three hours. 20% said they stayed for three to five hours.
- The majority of respondents arrived at the beach by car (67%) with 29% of respondents walking. Of those who drove, most parked in a car park closest to their beach of choice.
- Most respondents agreed strongly with the aims of the project and that the aims of the project had been adequately captured.
- A number of management options received support from respondents including sustainable transport initiatives, disabled parking, drop-off bays and overflow areas. A small proportion (14%) identified 'do nothing' as a sensible option, which would tend to suggest that most respondents did not see this as a desirable option.

2.4.4 Draft strategy

Following the release of the discussion paper and the responses received, a draft strategy was prepared and released for wider community review. The actions in the draft strategy were shaped by the community and stakeholder consultation received earlier, including the feedback received on the discussion paper.

The draft strategy was released along with an online survey to obtain feedback from the community. Only two complete submissions were received on the draft strategy. These are detailed in the consultation report available on the GORCC website (www.gorcc.com.au). The feedback received on the draft strategy has been considered and used in developing this final version of the strategy.

PART 3

THE STRATEGY



3.1 Objectives

This section sets out the objectives of the Coastal User Transport Strategy which are not listed in any particular order. The purpose of these objectives is to guide the selection of actions, which are outlined in Section 3.3.

O1 Manage visitor demand

The overarching need along the coast is to manage the demand for parking such that the beaches are accessible to all. Currently there is the perception that there is insufficient car parking during bust periods, which means that people struggle to find a parking space and often resort to parking indiscriminately, such as on grass verges, or in locations that have economic or amenity impacts (such as on the main road, or on residential streets). Survey data partly supports this perception, particularly with respect to indiscriminate parking at peak times.

However, it is also noted that some car parks are relatively under-utilised and thus managing visitor demand also considers measures to spread demand more evenly across facilities along the coast.

Furthermore there will always be occasions when demand for car parking will be greater than the supply, and the purpose of this objective should not be seen to cater for these occasional scenarios or to consider ways to increase the supply of car parking.

The objective therefore is to manage the demand for parking to improve the ability of visitors to find a parking space without the need to circulate or park indiscriminately.

O2 Enable appropriate access to the beach for all

Some beaches can only reasonably be accessed by motor vehicle and therefore require adequate parking facilities. Generally these are the beaches that are outside regional towns, with little or no existing public transport provision.

The aim therefore should be to enable appropriate access to these beaches by providing adequate car parking facilities close to the beach and ensuring that they provide the necessary facilities appropriate to their location. These facilities should include treatments to enable family groups and those with vision and mobility impairments to enjoy the beach.

It is however recognised that not all beaches will have the same level of access. This is because some beaches will be relatively remote or be more suited to different beach users (e.g. surfers) and to provide the same level of access to these beaches would not be feasible or appropriate.

O3 Enable emergency access

Emergency access must be provided at all locations. This means that emergency vehicles should be able to enter and exit each car park without being blocked by indiscriminately parked cars. Where vehicular access to the beach itself is possible, this also should not be obstructed by parked cars.

O4 Improve the natural environment

The coast and beach environment is generally sensitive and the expansion of car parking capacity should be discouraged for environmental and amenity reasons. The actions should therefore seek to assist with achieving this by improving the impacts of user transport on the natural environment. This could include improving management of stormwater and run-off from car parking areas and restricting access into environmentally sensitive areas.

O5 Provide a positive user experience

The provision of facilities and the level of active management at each beach should be commensurate with the demand; that is, at popular beaches where the demand for parking is

high, there should be good quality facilities and a fair and equitable distribution of parking spaces. At more remote beaches where demand is not so high, there is less need for active management and lots of facilities.

O6 Be safe

Car parks should generally be safe to enter and leave and desirably should provide good passive surveillance to minimise security risks. Passive surveillance is a theory that good design maximises the perception that people can be seen, and thus reduces the opportunity of a crime taking place as potential offenders perceive an increased scrutiny of their actions. While security is certainly desirable, it is acknowledged that some beaches are remote and do not have high visitor numbers to produce natural passive surveillance.

O7 Minimise inconvenience to local residents and traders

It is possible that some measures will impact on the residential amenity and/or the commercial viability of the area.

The strategy should seek solutions that do not unreasonably impact on local residents' or traders' amenity, but must also acknowledge that beaches are for the enjoyment of all and that the needs of locals must be balanced with those of visitors.

O8 Working in partnership with stakeholders

It is important that this strategy is implemented in a co-ordinated and integrated manner with other stakeholders (particularly the Surf Coast Shire Council). This recognises that changes to beach access can impact on the wider community and thus an integrated approach is required to maximise outcomes.

3.2 GORCC car parking hierarchy

3.2.1 Overview

GORCC manages 51 car parks between Torquay and Lorne, with a wide range of facilities at each. Some of these are large car parks in large towns with many spaces and facilities, while others are small areas in remote locations with capacity for only a few cars and no facilities.

Some of the GORCC managed car parks experience high demand because of their location, ease of access and popularity of the beach, and others experience relatively little demand. As discussed previously demand is also highly seasonal with the peak periods.

Developing a car parking hierarchy will help support the objectives of this strategy as well as guiding the recommended actions set out in Section 3.3.

3.2.2 Development of hierarchy

Clearly, it is not appropriate, necessary or economically prudent to provide many spaces and lots of facilities at car parks that are remote or under-utilised. In some instances it would not be appropriate to enhance the provision for environmental or amenity reasons.

Therefore, a car park hierarchy has been developed to establish a standard of facilities that should be provided at each car park operated by GORCC. This recognises that a distinction of priorities needs to be made between each tier.

It is recommended that the hierarchy have four tiers, as presented in Table 3.1. The typical facilities and standards that would be expected at a car park designated within a particular tier are also shown based on the following indicators.

Location of the car park

Car parks located in regional towns, particularly those immediately adjacent to a patrolled beach or other services such as shops and restaurants, will have a higher ranking in the hierarchy than car parks that are located in smaller townships or in remote and less accessible locations.

Demand for parking

Car parking demand is an indication of the popularity of the beach and potentially how safe and accessible it is. Demand has been defined as high, medium or low. Car parks with higher demand should sit further up the hierarchy, as the money spent on providing new facilities would have the greatest impact there.

Level of beach patrol

Car parks which serve beaches that are regularly patrolled by surf lifesaving clubs or other associated organisations will be given a higher ranking than other beaches which may only have patrols in holiday periods or no patrols at all.

Quality of surface and delineation of spaces

Car parks in tier 1 should have a sealed pavement and delineated spaces where site specific characteristics allow this. This enables a more efficient and ordered management of parking within the car park especially during peak periods. It also provides a safer surface for pedestrians of all abilities. Car parks in lower tiers need not be sealed. Indeed, as shown in Appendix A, some remote car parks (designated as tier 4) currently have a sealed surface but some tier 2 car parks have gravel surfaces. As such the sealing of car parking pavements should be undertaken on a case by case basis recognising that some locations will not be suitable for this type of treatment.

Facilities

The level of other facilities also helps to establish a car park's position within the hierarchy. Generally it would be expected that a tier 1 car park would have toilets, showers, and possibly a refreshment kiosk or café. It is also likely to provide access to SLSC facilities and may have other features such as playgrounds adjacent to it. At least two of these facilities should be provided at a tier 2 car park. Toilets would be expected to be provided as an optional facility at tier 3 car parks and no additional facilities would be expected at a tier 4 car park.

Table 3.1 GORCC car park hierarchy

Tier	Location	Car parking demand	Patrolled beach during peak periods	Car park features	Facilities
1	Regional town	High	Yes	Sealed pavement Delineated spaces Disabled parking Rubbish bins Bicycle parking	All of the following: Toilets Showers Café or kiosk ⁵
2	Regional town	High to medium	Yes/No	Sealed/unsealed Rubbish bins	Toilets; and at least one of the following: Showers Café or kiosk
3	Small town	Low	No	Sealed/unsealed	Toilets (optional)
4	Remote	Low	No	Sealed/unsealed	None

The existing provision of facilities at each of the 51 car parks has been assessed against the above criteria and assigned a tier, as listed in Appendix A. Each of the car parks has also been assigned an aspirational tier based on its location and perceived popularity as well as likely future demand. This allows for the identification of car parks which ideally should be upgraded to meet visitor expectations in the medium to long term.

A car parking hierarchy will allow GORCC to prioritise and target capital spending to upgrade certain car parks, which in tandem with other measures may help to spread the demand for car parking from locations where parking demand exceeds supply on busy days. The observed car parking demands and aspirational tiers for each car park are shown in Appendix A.

⁵ Note that these facilities may have a separate car parking requirement under the planning scheme. A number of spaces should be preserved for these uses. These facilities should also be viewed as optional since other factors will determine the viability of these facilities at individual locations.

A summary of the existing and aspirational provision is shown in Table 3.2. Generally, this strategy recommends an increase in the number of tier 1 car parks. In Torquay this increase comes from upgrading existing tier 2 car parks, while in Anglesea and Lorne it comes from upgrading existing tier 3 car parks. There are no proposed changes in Aireys Inlet.

Table 3.2 Number of existing and aspirational car parking tiers

Tier	Torquay/Jan Juc		Anglesea		Aireys Inlet		Lorne	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
1	4	7	0	1	0	0	1	2
2	10	7	4	4	0	0	4	4
3	6	6	1	0	1	1	6	5
4	0	0	1	1	9	9	3	3

In addition to the existing and aspirational tiers which have been assigned, there may be the need in the future for lower tier car parks to be elevated to tier 1 or 2 to increase their usage. This would be useful for relieving the demand at some of the existing tier 1 car parks. The need for future tier upgrades should be considered by GORCC in response to actual changes in population and demand.

3.3 Actions

The consultation process sought feedback from the community and stakeholders on the most pressing problems affecting the coast and on the most acceptable ways of dealing with them. The nature of transport to the coast means that the discussion necessarily focused on car parking and how to either reduce the demand or better accommodate the existing – and growing – demand.

Respondents to the online survey were asked to state the degree to which they supported various possible measures to improve transport to the coast. In rank order of the most supported and least supported options, the results of the consultation are shown in Table 3.3.

The discussions held in the stakeholder workshops (discussed in Section 2.4.1) identified a broad consensus with the results shown in Table 3.3. It was acknowledged in the workshops that some of the management options would require a joint approach between relevant organisations. For example, any changes to internal GORCC car parking operations could impact on Surf Coast Shire parking management and thus a joint approach would need to be implemented.

Table 3.3 Level of support for possible management options

Rank	Positive support		Negative support	
1	Sustainable transport	83%	Do nothing	58%
2	Disabled parking	81%	Time restrictions at car parks	46%
3	Drop-off bays	78%	Formalise parking spaces	31%
4	Formalise overflow areas	74%	Improve facilities at car parks	23%
5	Spread the demand	63%	Park and ride system	19%
6	Park and ride system	52%	Sustainable transport	17%
7	Improve facilities at car parks	48%	Spread the demand	10%
8	Time restrictions at car parks	47%	Drop-off bays	8%
9	Formalise parking spaces	43%	Disabled parking	7%
10	Do nothing	14%	Formalise overflow areas	5%

3.3.1 Desired outcome

The desired outcome from this transport strategy is a system that provides fair and equitable access to the beach, while not impacting unreasonably on the amenity of local residents and traders or the environmental qualities of the area.

The actions seek to achieve the objectives set out in Section 3.1, and the hierarchy in Section 3.2 provides guidance on where the actions should be implemented.

3.3.2 Time frames

The actions vary from low impact and localised to ones which are broad and represent significant changes to current practice. Actions have been assigned a time frame in which they should be implemented. The time frames are based on the importance or urgency of the problem they address, the amount of community support they received, and on the cost of implementing the action, which may be high. The time frames are:

Short term: implemented within 12 months

Medium term: implemented within 1 to 5 years

Long term: implemented after 5 years

3.3.3 Limitations of data used for this study

The actions in this strategy are guided by the results of the community consultation, the professional judgement and experience of the engineers engaged to produce this strategy, as well as other information obtained, such as parking survey results, research into parking best practice and case studies of similar issues elsewhere.

It should be noted that the results of the community consultation are from a small sample of people who registered interest in the project and not from a random sample of beach goers. In particular, the initial survey seemed by chance to be biased towards visitors from Melbourne, who represented over half (54%) of all respondents, whereas the majority (60%) of respondents to the online survey, which was advertised locally, came from a local town on the surf coast.

The results should be seen in this context as it is likely that the views of other beach users would not be fully accounted for in this survey. Nonetheless it is a valuable source of information about current issues raised by the local population.

Due to time constraints the parking occupancy surveys were conducted on two days during the summer school holidays at a selection of beaches. One of these days was very hot and experienced high parking demand and the other was relatively cool for the time of the year and saw a commensurate drop in parking demand. Despite these limitations, the surveys were carried out in accordance with industry standard practice. Every effort was made to ensure the surveys were representative of typical conditions at car parks during the summer period. The results should therefore be taken in this context.

3.3.4 Recommended actions

The following actions are recommended as solutions to mitigate the problems currently being experienced when accessing the coast. The actions are listed in order of their level of support in the community, as support by users is critical to their success. It should be noted that a 'Do-Nothing' option has been excluded from this list since it was generally shown in both the stakeholder workshops and the online survey results that doing nothing would not be a suitable outcome.

A1 Improve sustainable and public transport opportunities to/from and along the coast

Time frame: long term

Priority: Low

Cost: High

The option with most support favoured improving sustainable transport options to the coast. The discussion paper proposed that providing high quality bicycle facilities, such as good access to the Surf Coast Walk, may reduce demand for car parking by encouraging people to cycle rather than drive to the beach. Further comments received also supported providing public transport to the coast.

The practicalities of cycling to the beach would probably limit its use to local residents or shorter trips without any equipment to carry, but it would also improve the recreational cycling facilities in the area which would have other benefits. Providing a bus service would be feasible, but would need to be negotiated with Public Transport Victoria.

The cost of providing good inland access to the Surf Coast Walk is likely to be high and is not likely to be achievable in the short term. Given that the parking demand it would replace is likely to come only from local residents due to the distances involved, it is considered that it would have minor benefits in terms of reducing car parking demand. Therefore, this option has been given a low priority.

Figure 3.1 Providing good inland access to the Surf Coast Walk is likely to be expensive



Recommendations

While it is recognised that demand for walking and cycling appears to be quite low currently, some beach visitors may be willing to walk or cycle to the beach if there were facilities which made it safe and pleasant to do so, thus relieving car parking demand.

- Work with other stakeholders to encourage walking and cycling by providing paths and routes to the coast;
- Encourage walking and cycling by seeking to provide easy and convenient access to the Surf Coast Walk;
- Provide visible bicycle parking facilities at tier 1 and tier 2 car parks; and
- Seek to provide a public bus service which stops at several beach car parks.

Figure 3.2 Seek to provide a bus service which stops at beach car parks



A2 Provide disabled parking spaces

Time frame: short term

Priority: High

Cost: Low

The notion of providing fair access to people of all abilities is well supported. It would satisfy the objective of enabling appropriate access to the beach for all and would be relatively inexpensive and simple to achieve. Therefore, this option has been given a high priority.

Recommendations

In response to the objective to make access convenient for all, provision should be made for disabled visitors to the beach.

- Set aside 1-2% of parking spaces in tier 1 car parks for disabled users.
- In conjunction consider ways to improve access to the beaches themselves such as providing all terrain wheelchairs

A3 Provide drop-off bays at popular beaches

Time frame: short term

Priority: High

Cost: Medium

The intention of providing drop-off bays is to reduce the need to park as close to the beach as possible and to reduce the amount of unnecessary circulation that occurs in car parks as people look for a parking space. For a typical family with young children, one parent and the kids could be dropped off in the most convenient location while the other parent parks in a more remote location. While there is nothing stopping that person from circulating nearby, on especially busy days it may be easier to find a parking space further from the beach.

Providing drop-off bays would be relatively simple to achieve and is likely to be popular and well used. It is recommended that this be given a high priority. It is noted that to be effective it would need to be well enforced to prevent people parking there for long periods. This would need the cooperation of Surf Coast Shire.

Recommendations

To reduce the need to park at the beach, facilities should be provided to allow visitors to be dropped off before the driver can then go and park elsewhere.

- Provide No Parking⁶ zones in prime locations close to the beach in tier 1 car parks;
- Drop-off zones could be integrated with emergency access areas, as these do not require constant and uninterrupted access and are less likely to be abused than regular No Parking zones; and
- Regular enforcement will be needed to ensure the drop-off zones are not abused and do not simply become convenient parking spaces.

A4 Manage overflow areas

Time frame: short term

Priority: High

Cost: Low-medium

Currently there are a number of car park overflow areas to help cope with the high demand experienced during summer at certain beaches.

These overflow areas play an important role on the coast. For most of the year they provide large areas of open space for the use and enjoyment of the public, and then on certain days during the peak visitor period they can be used to help alleviate some of the pressure on the formal car parking areas. This flexible approach is very important and effective and these areas must be retained so that they can continue to serve their role.

However, these car parks are not formalised or managed in any way and are inefficient, with cars often parking in an indiscriminate manner.

It would be possible to formalise these car parks by demarcating the parking spaces using logs or spike-down kerbs. This may increase capacity by formalising the parking rows and aisles.

Again, this would be a relatively cheap and easy change to make and is also well supported. Therefore it is given a high priority.

Recommendations

The provision and efficient use of overflow areas is essential to car parking along the coast. Improvements to these areas have the potential to add capacity without increasing the overall footprint of car parking facilities.

- Provide car parking attendants during especially busy periods to manage the overflow areas;
- Consider formalisation of these areas through infrastructure such as logs or other more informal measures to improve demarcation of car parking spaces; and
- Ensure that overflow areas are kept free of other uses during peak times so that they are always available for use as additional car parking.

⁶ No Parking zones prohibit drivers from stopping unless they are picking up or dropping off passengers. If a time limit is not shown on the sign, a limit of two minutes is permitted. For additional clarity, it would be beneficial to provide signs indicating that the area is a drop-off zone.

A5 Improve way finding to spread the demand; improve the dissemination of information to visitors

Time frame: medium term

Priority: Medium

Cost: Low-medium

A key finding of the initial stakeholder consultation was that visitors are often unaware of their options when it comes to visiting a beach. Those staying in a town may be unwilling to explore further along the coast, or may be unaware of the facilities elsewhere. Many may wish to use a particular beach because it is suitable for young children, but are not aware of other suitable beaches. This often results in overcrowding at some beaches and an under-utilisation at others because there is uneven distribution of demand.

By advertising the options available for those with specific needs, or simply for those who are unsure of where the quieter beaches are, people may be encouraged to travel further afield, reducing demand at the popular beaches. This may involve the installation of dynamic signage and the development of smart phone apps which display real-time information, but it could also involve the distribution of leaflets at tourist accommodation. As such, some measures may be expensive to implement. This option has therefore been given a medium priority.

Further in the future, it may be appropriate to encourage greater use of quieter beaches so that demand at the busier beaches is reduced. This could be achieved by assigning a higher tier in the car parking hierarchy, but would need to be balanced with Objective 4 – limit impact on the beach environment.

Recommendations

To improve the spread of demand, the following measures are recommended:

- Provide signs at car park entrances and exits to provide information of other car parks in the area;
- Develop a smart phone app which displays real-time occupancy information and other car park details such as the type of facilities available;
- Disseminate leaflets at popular tourist locations and accommodation which show where the car parks are and the facilities at each;
- Consider the use of dynamic signs at key locations to display real-time car park occupancy information; and
- In the long term, review the car parking hierarchy with a view to moving under-utilised car parks further up the hierarchy so as to transfer demand from busier car parks.

A6 Improve the standard of facilities at car parks

Time frame: medium to long term

Priority: Low-medium

Cost: Medium-high

The purpose of the car parking hierarchy is to identify those car parks which due to their popularity, location and level of use, require certain facilities such as disabled parking and sealed pavements.

This option was not well supported in the consultation on the discussion paper, but the feeling from the responses is a general fear of the beach environment becoming too developed with cafes, etc. A clear preference from the survey responses was to keep the beach environment undeveloped to maintain its charm.

One aim of the hierarchy is to provide facilities where they are needed. Remote beaches with low visitation have little need for more than a small gravel car park, but a higher standard is generally expected at the more popular beaches.

Despite its relative lack of community support, the main aim of the car parking hierarchy is to develop a policy to guide their management and development. Given the natural long-term nature of this option, it is recommended that it be given a medium-to-low priority and be rolled out over a number of years. It may be necessary in the future, as the remote beaches become more popular, to increase the standard of facilities across the board, but still in line with the relative levels of use.

It is recognised that some locations, such as Whites Beach, have lots of car parking, but no facilities at all. Popular beaches should have a level of provision commensurate with the demand they experience. Visitors should not have to leave the beach area to go to the toilet, for example, and risk losing their parking space.

Recommendations

The following actions are recommended:

- Provide a level of facilities in line with the aspirational car parking hierarchy; and
- Seek to improve the provision of facilities over time at all car parks.

A7 Delineate spaces in all car parks

Time frame: medium term

Priority: Low

Cost: Low-medium

Currently, only car parks with sealed pavements have marked parking spaces. This encourages people not to park indiscriminately. While it is not possible to line mark unsealed car parks, other methods of delineating spaces are available (both formal and informal). Delineating spaces in car parks generally increases capacity.

As an extension of delineating spaces in only the overflow car parks, this could also be applied to the main car parks which are currently unmarked. This would have a similar effect as in the overflow areas: increasing capacity by reducing indiscriminate parking.

The lack of support for this option is likely to stem from the fear of overdeveloping remote beaches and the loss of rural character. While this is understandable, the most this would involve is marking out individual parking spaces with logs or similar. Sealing the pavements of

remote car parks is unlikely to be economically viable and is unlikely to provide additional benefits over marking them with logs.

Given the lack of support and the limited effectiveness of this option compared to other options, it is recommended that this be given a low priority. It is also recommended that less formal means of delineating spaces be used where possible in overflow areas.

Recommendations

The following actions are recommended:

- Delineate parking spaces in unsealed car parks by marking space limits with logs or similar; and
- Consider using car park attendants during especially busy times.

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

A framework for monitoring and evaluating the strategy is important as it allows the effectiveness of the strategy to be assessed. Desired outcomes are based on the objectives of the strategy and set out what the aims of the strategy are. The degree to which these outcomes have been achieved should be measured against targets. These allow us to assess which areas of the strategy are working best and which need to be refined to ensure that the strategy is ultimately successful.

3.4.1 Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes resulting from the delivery of the strategy and are derived from the objectives. They are:

Demand is well managed. Finding a parking space is much easier and use of the spaces is more equitable. Circulation and indiscriminate parking are reduced.

Access to beaches is convenient. Adequate car parking is provided where there are no alternatives but to drive. Car parks have facilities appropriate to their location and level of use.

Emergency access is provided. Emergency vehicles are able to access car parks (and beaches where possible) without obstruction.

Impact on the beach environment is minimal. Other outcomes have been achieved without the provision of additional car parking capacity. Implemented measures are low impact.

The user experience is positive. Visitors do not leave frustrated at not being able to find a parking space, or feeling that their enjoyment was diminished by parking restrictions or a lack of adequate facilities.

Parking at the beach is safe. Road safety is not compromised within or at the entry and exit points to car parks. People feel safe parking their cars.

Local residents are not unreasonably inconvenienced. The actions do not restrict residents' ability to enjoy the beach environment or their town. Residents are not unreasonably out of pocket.

Approach is co-ordinated. The actions are conducted in a co-ordinated and integrated manner, taking into account the views and opinions of stakeholders.

3.4.2 Targets

Targets are used to measure the performance of the plan and to assess whether the outcomes have been achieved. They are:

Target 1: Average occupancy in tier 3 and tier 4 car parks increases by 25%. This would be established by conducting parking occupancy surveys in these car parks.

Target 2: The number of crashes involving pedestrians or vehicles entering and leaving car parks does not increase over time. This would involve an examination of the casualty crash records in the vicinity of the car park access points.

Target 3: The total footprint of GORCC car parks does not increase. The existing area would need to be established by survey (or it may be shown on land titles) and re-surveyed at intervals to determine if the footprint has increased. This would only need to occur if civil works have been carried out in the intervening period.

3.4.3 Strategy review

While the actions described in Section 3.3 have been designed to improve the overall experience of transport to the coast, and in particular finding a car park at a beach, it is acknowledged that the problem is getting worse due to increasing population and improved access. Therefore, it is possible that the effectiveness of the proposed management measures may reduce over time.

In the long term (after five years) it will be necessary to re-evaluate the performance of the strategy. At this time, the issues affecting the coast, the stakeholder views, the aims of the strategy and its actions will be revisited to determine whether additional actions are required. These actions could include time restrictions and park and ride services, as well as others.

3.5 Cost estimates

As an indication of the level of capital costs involved in implementing the recommended actions, each action has been assigned a cost level of high, medium or low as shown in Table 3.4. Additionally, typical unit rates for certain items have been provided and are shown overleaf.

Table 3.4 Qualitative cost estimates

Summary of action (Section 3.3.4)		Cost	Comments
A1	Improve sustainable and public transport options	High	Public bus services would require State funding
A2	Provide disabled parking	Low	
A3	Provide drop-off bays	Medium	
A4	Manage overflow areas	Low-med	Depends whether car parking attendants are employed
A5	Improve way finding and information	Low-med	Depends whether a smart phone app is developed
A6	Improve standard of facilities	Med-high	
A7	Formalise parking	Low-med	Depends whether car parking attendants are employed

Unit rates

The rates shown in Table 3.5 have been taken from Rawlinsons Australian Construction Handbook 2013 using the rates for Melbourne. Where a range is given in the handbook, the higher rate has been used.

Table 3.5 Sample unit cost rates

Item	Unit	Cost per unit
Sign on single post, 450 mm x 600 mm	no	\$400
Drop-off bay, 1 car	car	\$3,205
Bitumen car park, includes drainage, lighting and landscaping	m ²	\$89
Line marking, 75 mm wide	m	\$1.45
Public toilets with disabled facilities	m ²	\$2,480

3.6 Summary of actions

A summary of the actions is shown in Table 3.6. It is recommended that these actions be implemented according to the time frames given.

Table 3.6 Summary of recommended actions

Summary of action (refer Section 3.3.4)		Objectives met	Time frame	Priority	Cost
A1	Improve sustainable and public transport options	O1, O2, O3, O5, O7, O8	Long term	Low	High
A2	Provide disabled parking	O2	Short term	High	Low
A3	Provide drop-off bays	O1, O2, O4, O5, O7, O8	Short term	High	Medium
A4	Manage overflow areas	O1, O2, O4, O6, O7, O8	Short term	High	Medium
A5	Improve way finding and information	O1, O2, O4, O7	Medium term	Medium	Low to medium
A6	Improve standard of facilities	O5, O6	Medium to long term	Low	Medium to high
A7	Delineate spaces	O2, O4, O7	Medium term	Low	Low to medium