

GREAT OCEAN ROAD
COAST COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



VISION

TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE
THE BREATHTAKING AND
ICONIC COASTLINE WITH
ITS DIVERSE COMMUNITY,
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND
RICH CULTURAL HISTORY AS
CUSTODIANS FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS.





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WHO WE ARE



The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee is a Committee of Management formed by the Victorian Government in 2004.

We are a not-for-profit, community-based organisation responsible for managing Crown land reserves along the heritage listed Great Ocean Road in Victoria. We manage critical coastal and visitor infrastructure from Lorne Pier, through to the Fishermen's Beach Precinct in Torquay. All dollars raised through Great Ocean Road Coast's operations are reinvested back into the coastal environment, caravan parks, and the community.



37KM

CROWN LAND RESERVES
MANAGED

\$8M

GENERATED IN DIRECT
REVENUE ANNUALLY



FUNDING

The committee currently generates over \$8 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.

The committee is required to reinvest all revenue it raises back into the management of its Crown land reserves. The committee receives no recurrent funding from any level of government. Revenue is supplemented by grants, which are used for special projects and environmental work.

VISION

To protect and enhance the breathtaking and iconic coastline with its diverse community, natural environment and rich cultural history as custodians for future generations.

OUR MISSION

To ensure the effective management of the Great Ocean Road foreshore on behalf of the Victorian Government, the community and users.

AREAS OF MANAGEMENT

We manage 37 kilometres of Crown land reserves along the coast in the Surf Coast Shire, from Point Impossible east of Torquay to the Cumberland River southwest of Lorne.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our 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, we hold a variety of powers through Section 15 of the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

STRUCTURE

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

Our staff team comprises around 30 full time employees, covering areas ranging from caravan park management, conservation, education and strategic and environmental planning through to outdoor works and financial operations.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



It is our great pleasure to present the 2015-16 Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Annual Report.

This past year Great Ocean Road Coast continued to work closely with the community, volunteers, local business and tourism operators to deliver significant improvements to the environment across the 37km of coastline from Torquay to Lorne under our management.

Following ongoing consultation and review with the community, we implemented another year of our coastal management plan, which provides strategic direction for our efforts across the coastline.

Our caravan parks at Torquay and Lorne continue to provide improved visitor experiences and flow-on effects for the local economy. They also provide 80% of our income, which enables us to reinvest back into the coastline, community and conduct important coastal maintenance. Just as important is that they continued to create holiday memories and instilling life-long associations with the coast.

In 2015-16, we saw sustainable growth with more than \$2.6 million was invested in capital works projects in Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Fairhaven, Lorne and Torquay, with significant upgrades to coastal amenities and access points. These improvements directly contribute to building a visitor economy that enhances the liveability and prosperity of coastal townships.

Over nine-hundred thousand dollars was reinvested in both our Lorne and Torquay Caravan Parks for cabin and amenity upgrades.

Our conservation team continued their vital work, clearing invasive weeds from 18 sites along the coast and revegetating with indigenous plants. The team has also been monitoring the biodiversity at various locations along the coast to help guide future conservation strategies.



Our expanded education program delivered a variety of services to empower schools and students with environmental leadership, and ensuring that successive generations value, protect and advocate for the precious Great Ocean Road environment.

Our reserves team worked across the coastline maintaining and improving the assets, beach access and visitor amenities, and responding to the sometimes unpredictable winter to repair assets in a timely manner to allow beach users full access once again.

Great Ocean Road Coast's work would not be possible without the support from the community, partner organisations and the dedicated environmental volunteers who contribute thousands of hours of conservation each year. In building partnerships to better care for the coast, we also seek to build capacity and develop skills within communities.

We would like to once again thank our dedicated committee members, staff, partner organisations, school students, teachers and our hard working volunteers for the ongoing commitment for caring for our coast over the past 12 months.

We are looking forward to 2017 and beyond and increasing our contribution to the community and regional economy, and continuing to protect the natural wonder of the Great Ocean Road coastline.

John Carlile
Chairman

Richard Davies
Chief Executive Officer

\$2.6M

INVESTED IN CAPITAL
WORKS PROJECTS

18

SITES CLEARED OF
INVASIVE WEEDS



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION PROGRAMS OFFER
PEOPLE OF ALL AGES THE
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE
AND LEARN ABOUT COASTAL
ENVIRONMENTS, FOSTERING A
SENSE OF APPRECIATION AND
OWNERSHIP AND TEACHING
OTHERS HOW TO TAKE SMALL
ACTIONS THAT MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



From kindergarten to tertiary age, more than 1,400 individuals participated in one or more of our education programs or activities in 2015-16.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Schools and groups participated in a wide range of both hands-on activities covering a wide array of topics. The program links closely with the work of the Great Ocean Road Coast Conservation Team and the priority actions of our 2015-20 Native Vegetation and Weed Action Plan. The effort from schools participating in the program equates to over 800 volunteer hours working on Great Ocean Road Coast-managed land.

1,400

PARTICIPANTS IN
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

COAST GUARDIANS PROGRAM

One-hundred and fifty Year 9 students from four local schools took part in our 2015-16 Coast Guardians Program which sees each school take ownership over the rehabilitation and protection of a coastal site. Through the program students learn about the coast and also connect with our community partners such as Coast Action groups, Birdlife Australia and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority Water Watch Program.

EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION AT EVENTS

Every year, Great Ocean Road Coast provides free environmental education activities at local events such as the ANGAIR Wildflower and Art Show as well as various other school and community events and markets.

SUMMER BY THE SEA

In January 2016, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee participated in the Summer by the Sea Program, funding and hosting 15 activities across two weeks.

The event is an opportunity for everyone to discover Victoria's marine and coastal environments. Over 200 individuals enjoyed Great Ocean Road Coast -led activities, participating in everything from canoeing and snorkelling to stand up paddle boarding and craft activities.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION



Protection and enhancement of the natural environment is the highest priority area of the business for the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee.

In 2015-16, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's intensive conservation efforts continued, led by our conservation team. Great Ocean Road Coast makes a significant annual financial investment to conservation on the coast with support from community and corporate volunteers, schools and other partners.

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee partnered with Conservation Volunteers Australia to participate in the Federal Government's Green Army Program – an initiative designed to provide opportunities for young Australians aged 17-24 years and generating real benefits for the environment. In May 2016, Great Ocean Road Coast engaged its third Green Army team, which has greatly contributed to the improved environmental health along the Great Ocean Road.

Works included weed control, planting, fauna monitoring and fencing among many other areas the teams supported Great Ocean Road Coast's core responsibilities.

NATIVE VEGETATION AND WEED ACTION PLAN

As our key strategic direction, the *Native Vegetation and Weed Action Plan 2015-20* guides on-ground conservation work with a continued focus on the eradication of weeds which are identified as the key threat to coastal biodiversity.

MONITORING PROGRAM

The coastal environment contains significant biodiversity and environmental values. Using its monitoring framework, Great Ocean Road Coast worked with volunteer groups to establish a new monitoring system, gathering data using a range of techniques including infrared cameras, mammal surveys, transect lines and photo points.

The program provides an in-depth analysis of the different species living along the coast to assist with decision-making and conservation strategies.

Dune monitoring continues to provide us with key information on the impact of storm surges and dune recession.

INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Control of pests such as rabbits and foxes is an important component of Great Ocean Road Coast's conservation work and essential to the protection of fauna such as the threatened Hooded Plover. Over the last year, Great Ocean Road Coast has partnered with adjoining land managers such as Parks Victoria and the Surf Coast Shire in a coordinated effort to target pest species.

2015-16 saw:

- 72 hectares fumigated for rabbits
- 120 hectares fumigated for foxes

Pre and post control monitoring will be undertaken to determine population numbers and evaluate success.



COASTAL TENDER

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority Coastal Tender Program continues to assist conservation work across the coast. Since 2011 Great Ocean Road Coast:

- received \$571,540 in funding
- implemented projects across 13 sites
- undertaken works across 177 hectares of coastal reserves.
- completed a wide variety of conservation activities ranging from fox and rabbit control and weed eradication through to revegetation and erosion control.

In April 2016, Great Ocean Road Coast was successful in securing an additional \$53,623 in Coastal Tender funding for work on the Point Roadknight dunes, focussing on the management of Coastal Tea Tree.

HOODED PLOVER PROTECTION

Hooded Plovers are listed as vulnerable under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and were recently identified as one of 20 species targeted under the Federal Government's Threatened Species Strategy.

Great Ocean Road Coast works with partners Birdlife Australia and the Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast volunteers to protect these beach-nesting shorebirds. Onground work includes fencing, fox control and volunteer support, complementing community awareness activities such as Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's 'Save the Hoodie' campaign. The Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast and Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Conservation Team contributed a combined 1,800 hours to the on-ground protection of Hooded Plovers over the breeding season.

Last year was a record breeding season on the Great Ocean Road Coast, with six chicks fledging [compared to a previous average of 1.5 chicks per year since 2010].

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee adopted Surf Coast Shire's Plastic Wise Events and Markets Policy in 2016, which encourages event operators on Great Ocean Road Coast-managed land to reuse event materials, provide comprehensive waste management plans and promote reusable bags and water bottles.

SIX

**PLOVER CHICKS FLEDGING
(COMPARED TO A PREVIOUS
AVERAGE OF 1.5 CHICKS PER
YEAR SINCE 2010)**

COASTAL INVESTMENT



Split Point Lighthouse Lookouts

Coastal infrastructure is under increasing demand as population and visitation numbers increase. The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee invested almost \$1.2 million into coastal projects over the last 12 months to help manage increasing demand and expectation from coastal infrastructure and amenities.

AIREYS INLET, SPLIT POINT VIEWING PLATFORM

Work was completed on the last of the lookout upgrades at Split Point, Aireys Inlet. The new viewing platform was constructed to sensitively complement previous upgrades in the area, including the new all abilities accessible lookout next to the Split Point Lighthouse. The new path and viewing platform was designed to ensure the safety of all users, allow for environmental rehabilitation, and to reduce the impact of erosion and cliff instability.

FAIRHAVEN, MOGGS CREEK BOARDWALK

A new boardwalk was constructed to improve access to the beach for recreational fishers and other beach visitors at Moggs Creek.

NEW STEPS AT FAIRHAVEN

A new construction material “modwood” made from 90% recycled materials was trialled with a new set of stairs constructed at Fairhaven. The product has several advantages including a high degree of UV stability, being highly resistant to extreme weather, moisture and termites and low maintenance.

ANGLESEA, SURF COAST WALK RE-ROUTE

The Surf Coast Walk was successfully re-routed at Anglesea due to safety concerns. The works were commissioned after engineer’s reports revealed tension cracks at the cliff-face.

TORQUAY, FITNESS STATIONS

The Rotary Club of Torquay and the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee installed four pieces of exercise equipment along the Torquay Foreshore as part of a new Torquay Fitness Trail to support general community health initiatives. The project was funded by Rotary with the assistance of community donations and support.

WINTER STORM DAMAGE

A significant amount of storm damage occurred along the coastline over winter with Great Ocean Road Coast staff responding to multiple access issues and repairs across the 84 access coastal access points.

\$1.2M
INVESTMENT IN COASTAL
PROJECTS OVER THE
LAST 12 MONTHS

CARAVAN PARK MANAGEMENT

\$900,000

SPENT ON UPGRADES TO TORQUAY
AND LORNE CARAVAN PARKS



Situated adjacent to the beach, our directly managed caravan parks in Torquay and Lorne offer a range of accommodation options for families, tourists and visitors, and contribute around 80 per cent of the money we spend each year on caring for the coast.

Lorne Caravan Parks were evacuated on the afternoon of Christmas Day following the Emergency Services evacuation advice. Working in conjunction with local emergency service personnel our Emergency Management Plan was activated. Staff with were on site ensuring the safe evacuation of guests.

After a public expression of interest process failed to yield an acceptable bid for the value of the site, we announced that the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee will take on the operation of the Anglesea Family Caravan Park in December 2017, at the end of the current fixed-term lease.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

More than \$900,000 was spent on upgrades to the Torquay and Lorne Caravan Parks over 2015-16 with major projects for Torquay including:

- Amenities block redevelopment \$317,000
- Road upgrades \$38,000
- Cabin upgrades \$153,000
- Washing machines \$17,000

Improvements for the Lorne Foreshore Caravan Park included:

- Cabin upgrades - \$86,000
- Toilet block upgrades - \$51,000
- Barbecues - \$24,000
- Erskine River cabin upgrades \$59,000

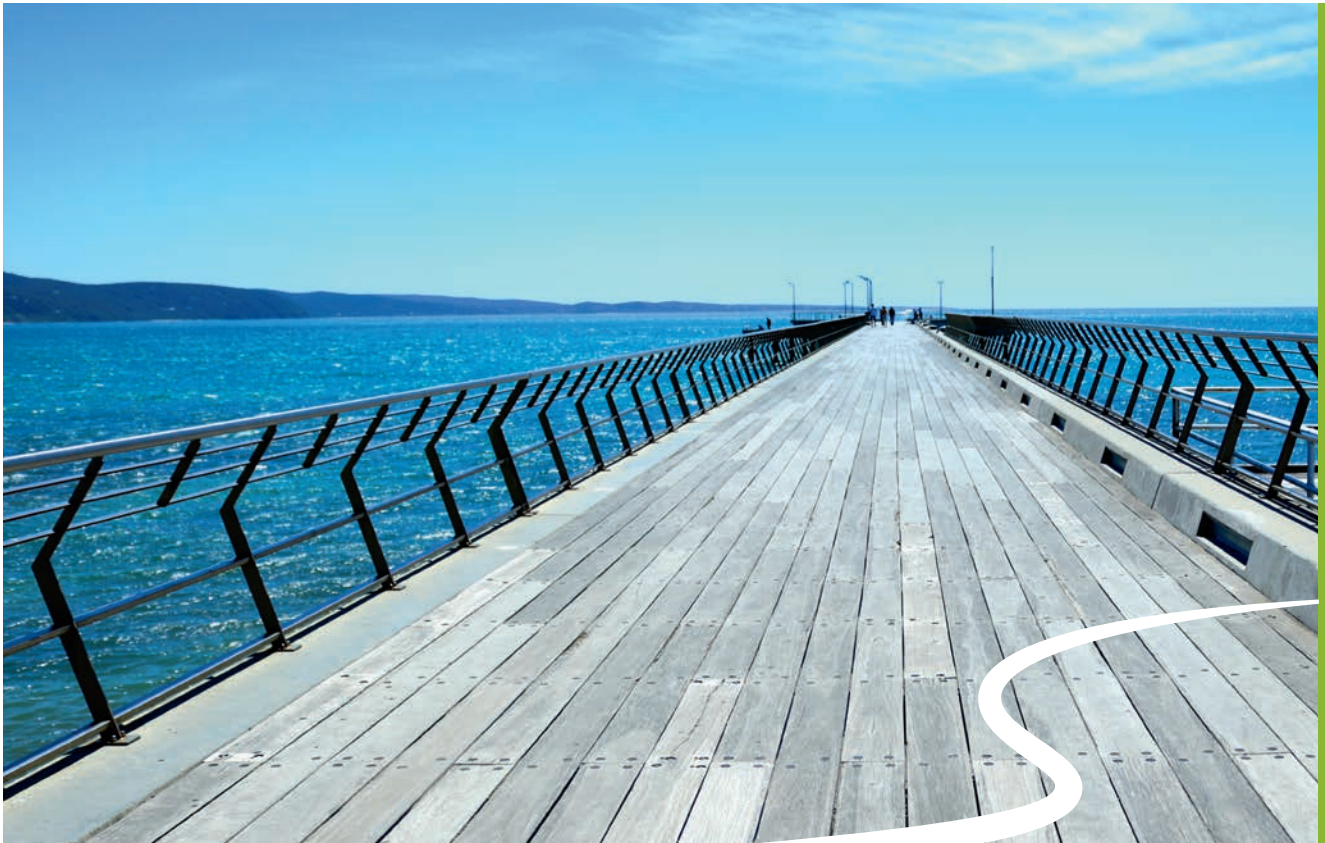
LEASES AND LICENCES

Great Ocean Road Coast manages 21 leases, including restaurants, sailing clubs and kiosks, and 20 licences, including surf schools, food vans and markets. Revenue from these operations is reinvested back into the coast and community.

CONSIDERED AND INFORMED
PLANNING IS CRITICAL TO
ENSURE WE ARE USING OUR
LIMITED RESOURCES IN THE
MOST EFFECTIVE WAY.



STRATEGIC PLANNING



These processes are also an opportunity for stakeholders, including the wider community, to provide input into major projects and decisions. 2015-16 saw the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee complete and continue several major planning processes across the coast.

PLANNING PROCESSES COMPLETED

In the last 12 months several significant plans and strategies were released, including:

- **Queens Park Reserve Master Plan:** A long term vision and master plan to guide the future use and development of Queens Parks Reserve. The plan identifies the environmental, cultural and social assets of Queens Park, and strategic actions for their effective management.
- **The Queens Park Caravan Park Master Plan:** A plan to identify priorities and provide direction for the future management of the Queens Park Caravan Park in Lorne.

PLANNING PROCESSES CONTINUED

Great Ocean Road Coast Committee continued to progress the development of several plans over 2015-16, releasing several draft plans for consultation including the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch Master Plan. For this project, an issues and opportunities paper was released for community comment, followed by a thorough engagement process involving a multi-agency working group and community reference group.

POINT GREY BUSINESS CASE

The \$90,000 project, which includes \$50,000 from Great Ocean Road Coast, will deliver a business case for redeveloping the precinct, including a cost benefit analysis and an outline of the potential economic and social benefits.

Great Ocean Road Coast has worked closely with the Lorne and Surf Coast community to develop plans for the precinct upgrade to-date, and proposes a \$6 million redevelopment including:

- Redeveloping two existing buildings, including a stand-alone aquatic and angling clubroom, featuring an opportunity for private sector investment
- Improving to public open spaces
- Building new picnic and BBQ areas.

This project will be further supported by the Great Ocean Road's proposed development of the adjacent Queens Park caravan park.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Over the next financial year, several new planning processes will commence, including a master plan for the Lorne Central Foreshore. Thorough planning with the community is integral to the ongoing management of the coast.

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS



Connecting with the wider community is an essential part of successful coastal management. Great Ocean Road Coast strives to communicate, engage and partner with a wide range of coastal users and stakeholders in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for the coast.

10,000

HOURS SPENT BY
VOLUNTEERS EACH YEAR

COMMUNITY

Great Ocean Road Coast Committee offers a wide range of opportunities for others to have input into major projects and decisions and to provide feedback on Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's work. In 2015-16, more than 200 groups or individuals made a submission or completed a survey on one of Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's major projects, including the Great Ocean Road Memorial Arch, Queens Park Reserve Master Plan, Erskine Paddock, Anglesea boatramp, Point Roadknight and Torquay Fitness Trail.

VOLUNTEERS

The backbone of our conservation efforts continues to be environmental volunteers, with 11 groups working directly on land under our management. These groups are estimated to contribute 10,000 hours to the coast each year – the equivalent of around six full time staff.

In 2015-16 this partnership continued, with Great Ocean Road Coast Committee dedicating extensive on and off-ground support to environmental volunteer groups. From attending working bees and providing equipment through to promotional assistance and grant writing support, Great Ocean Road Coast works closely with these dedicated groups each year.

COASTAL GRANTS

Each year Great Ocean Road Coast Committee provides \$10,000 in grant funds towards approved environmental or community activities in coastal areas under our management. Grant funding of up to \$2500 is available per project. Among the grants awarded in 2015 was \$2500 for Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast to purchase a telescope for educational purposes and \$1500 for the Love Lorne annual community Model Boat Regatta event.



SAVE THE HOODIE CAMPAIGN

In 2015-16, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee launched the 'Save the Hoodie' campaign in an effort to increase Hooded Plover chick survival rates on the Surf Coast.

The branded campaign, which is targeted at changing beachgoer behaviour (with a particular focus on dog owners), supports intensive, on-ground efforts conducted Great Ocean Road Coast Committee's Conservation Team and dedicated Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast volunteers.

Over the 2015-16 breeding season the campaign's excellent reach and overwhelmingly positive response exceeded expectations, with extensive media coverage, noted changes to dog-owner behaviour, and widespread evidence of strong community and stakeholder support. The 2015-16 campaign was supported by Birdlife Australia, Friends of the Hooded Plover Surf Coast, the Surf Coast Shire, Go Ride a Wave and Ghanda.

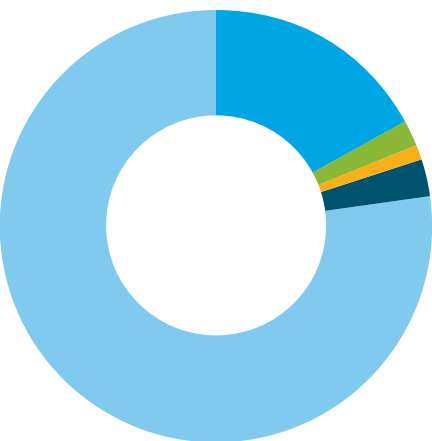


FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Significant financial resources are required in order for us to fulfil our role and responsibilities across the land we manage.

With no recurrent funding from other sources, around 80% of Great Ocean Road Coast's revenue is generated through the direct management of the Torquay and Lorne Foreshore Caravan Parks.

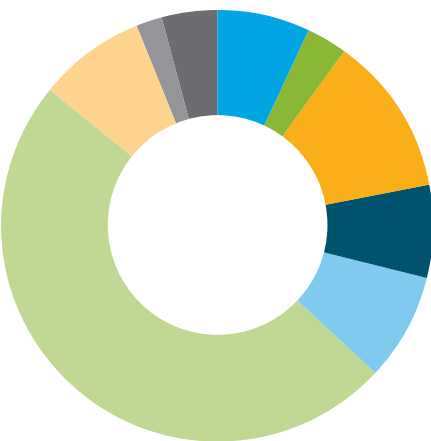
CONSOLIDATED INCOME
INCLUDING GRANTS
Year 2015/2016



Leases/Licences	17%
Coastal Reserves	2%
Admin/Other	1%
Government Grants for Projects	3%
Income Caravan Parks	77%

TOTAL / \$8.7 MILLION

CONSOLIDATED TRADING EXPENSES
EXCLUDING DEPRECIATION
Year 2015/2016



Cleaning	7%
Insurance	3%
Repairs & Maintenance	12%
Supplies & Equipment	7%
Utilities	8%
Wages	49%
General & Administrative	8%
Marketing & PR	2%
Other	4%

TOTAL / \$6 MILLION

TOTAL CAPITAL /
PROJECT EXPENDITURE
Year 2015/2016

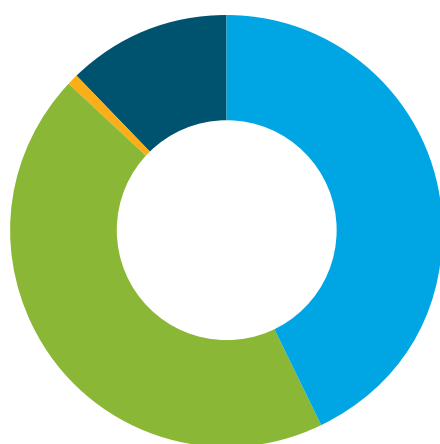


Elephant Walk Car Park Torquay	8%
Caravan Park Upgrade	31%
Various Coastal Reserves	48%
CCMA Grant	6%
Other	7%

TOTAL / \$2.6 MILLION

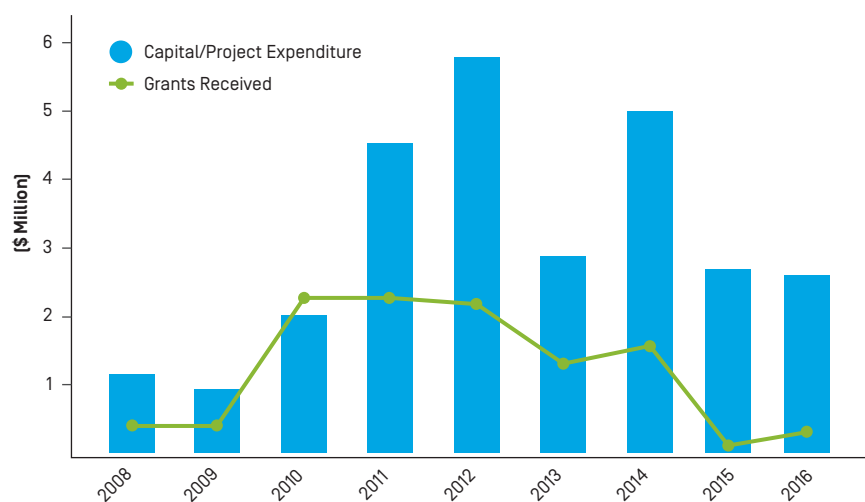
TOTAL EXPENDITURE

Year 2015/2016



Coastal Reserves	43%
Caravan Parks	44%
Lease/Licence Management	1%
Administration	12%

CAPITAL / PROJECT ACTIVITIES



TOTAL / \$8.5 MILLION

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee respectfully acknowledges the original custodians of the coast, their rich culture, deep affinity with the land and spiritual connection with it.

Cover photo (and many of the photographs featured in this report) courtesy of Ferne Millen.

Disclaimer: This Annual Report was prepared by the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee. This publication may be of assistance to you but the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

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