

Media Release



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New manual to guide coastal heritage conservation

An Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Manual for Crown land reserves between Torquay and Lorne launched today will provide a foundation for the protection and conservation of cultural values on the coast.

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC), together with Darren Cheeseman MP, Federal Member for Corangamite, announced the completion of the Manual today at a significant indigenous cultural heritage site near Pt Impossible.

The project is one of four projects that are part of the Great Ocean Road Renewal Program, a three-year, \$1.35 million program, supported by \$1 million in funding from the Australian Government and \$350K in funding from GORCC.

GORCC CEO Richard Davies said the manual would provide guidance on on-ground Aboriginal heritage conservation needs and issues together with ongoing conservation of heritage sites and materials.

"The Great Ocean Road coast contains remnants from a rich and long indigenous history, and still holds great significance for Aboriginal people today," he said.

"This manual will help us to fulfil our coastal management obligations without jeopardising cultural materials or sites and to work with traditional owners to bring cultural heritage to life through interpretation and cultural activities," said Mr. Davies.

MP Darren Cheeseman, Federal Member for Corangamite, said the process of developing the manual included a detailed audit of indigenous sites conducted by a team of indigenous and other experts.

"This audit uncovered a range of previously important unacknowledged sites that were used by the local indigenous population," he said.

The manual was prepared for GORCC by heritage consultants Terra Culture Heritage Consultants with support from local indigenous groups.

"This manual will not only give us a better understanding of the coast's Aboriginal heritage and sites, but also help us to foster ongoing partnerships with local Aboriginal groups.

"We would like to thank the the *Wathaurung* Aboriginal Corporation (RAP), the *Kuuyang Maar* Aboriginal Corporation and the *Wathaurong* Aboriginal Co-operative for their support and assistance with this project," said Mr. Davies.

The project was initiated to identify, assess and protect cultural sites through fencing and other works, interpret the cultural values of the coast and build partnerships with indigenous communities and also includes important background material for use in education and interpretation.

"The work undertaken has added greatly to our knowledge of the usage of the coast by the indigenous population, and I would love to see the next step taken where we have greatly improved interpretation work along the coast that will help locals and tourists understand and appreciate indigenous connections to this land," said Mr. Cheeseman.

Preparation for the project included ground surveys, mapping, interviews and fieldwork with representatives of Aboriginal groups, radiocarbon dating of selected highly significant sites, cataloguing of found material and the compilation of cultural heritage information for use in interpretation and education.

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