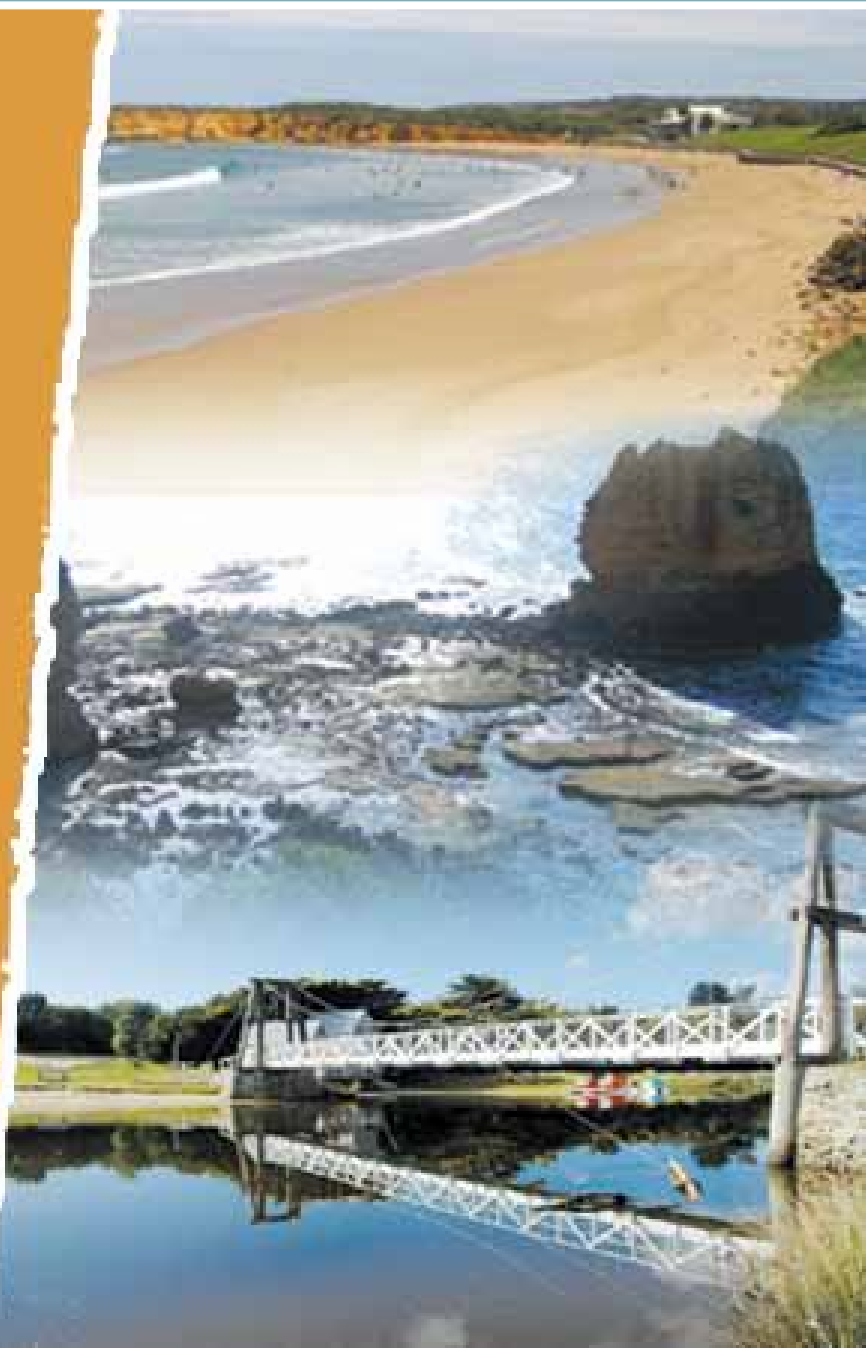




Great Ocean Road Coast Committee

Annual Report 2009 - 2010



Great Ocean Road
Coast Committee Inc

About us

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee is a Crown land Committee of Management established under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*.

Established by the Victorian Government in August 2004 and formally incorporated in March 2005, we are responsible for 37 kilometres of coastal Crown Land reserves along Victoria's Great Ocean Road, from Point Impossible east of Torquay to Cumberland River west of Lorne.

Comprising 12 voluntary committee members (appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change) and some 27 permanent employees, we are a small community-based, not-for-profit organisation with big aspirations – we want everyone to love, protect and enjoy our beautiful coast as much as we do!

Our responsibilities extend to the Port of Lorne, Taylor Park in central Torquay and Queens Park in Lorne, and include:

- building and maintaining a veritable A to Z of coastal facilities, assets and infrastructure – from artwork to zebra (pedestrian) crossings
- operating caravan parks in Torquay and Lorne, and managing the leases for two others (privately operated)

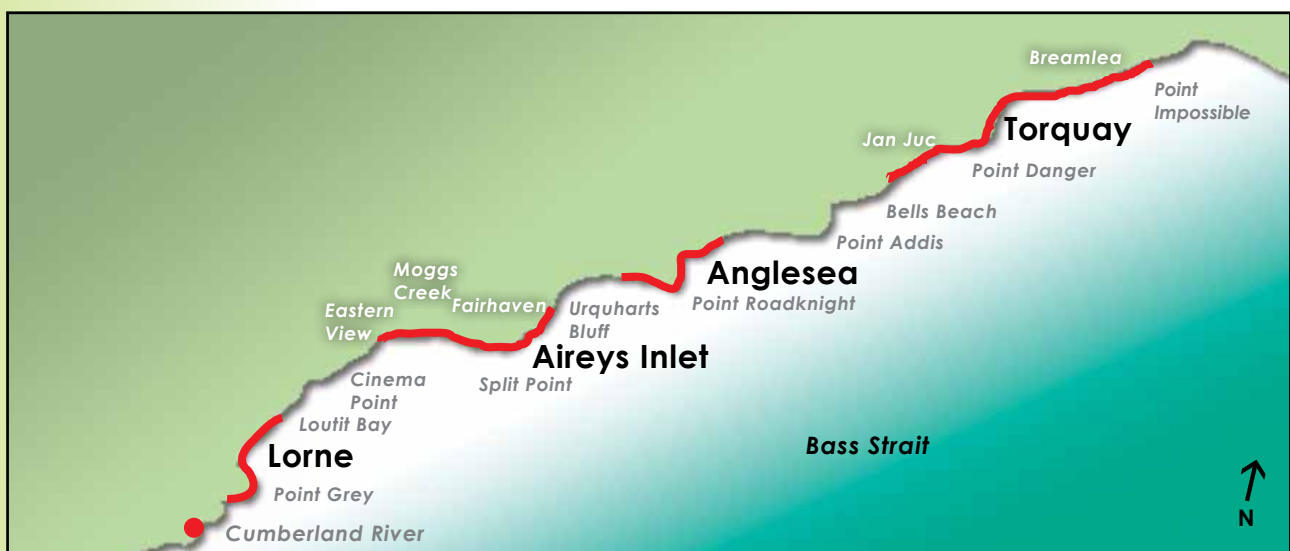
- issuing leases, licences and permits for various commercial and one-off activities and events on the coast
- undertaking weed eradication and other programs to protect the sensitive coastal environment, and
- contributing to the area's overall amenity in any number of ways, including removing rubbish from beaches and coastal reserves.

We design and deliver a range of projects that aim to:

- protect and enhance the coast's natural and cultural values
- sensitively manage the impacts of recreation and tourism, and/or
- provide opportunities for recreation and tourism.

Much of our work is undertaken in partnership with the State Government, Surf Coast Shire, other agencies, volunteers and the local community. We undertake a range of communication activities focused on building and maintaining effective partnerships, and on educating and engaging people in caring for the coast.

Our Management Areas



From the Chairman

On behalf of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our 2009-2010 annual report.

During the year, the 12-member voluntary committee has dealt with a number of challenges relating to our responsibilities involved in managing 37 kilometres of Crown land reserves along the Great Ocean Road coast between Torquay and Lorne.

Just to maintain these coastal areas to an adequate standard requires significant recurrent investment. Add in the costs involved in working to protect the coast from the impacts of climate change, burgeoning population growth, increased tourism and recreation use – as just some of the emerging issues confronting our coast – and you start to get some idea of the scope of work we are to deliver.

Funding therefore remains an ongoing priority to ensure we can continue to perform our day-to-day coastal management duties while delivering major projects and infrastructure upgrades that benefit the coast and the community.

The past year has seen progress made on several important coastal projects. Thanks to major funding support from Regional Development Victoria, we were able to start work on the \$1.3 million two-year redevelopment of the Surf Coast Walk while a Federal Government grant is supporting the delivery of our three-year \$1.35 million Great Ocean Road Renewal Program.

We also commenced stage one improvement works in our Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park, with the beachfront section substantially redeveloped and opened up to casual peak season camping along with the construction and commissioning of a new main amenity block. Work has since started (in May 2010) on a major power and water upgrade in the park's southern half and will be completed by November 2010.

In addition, our plans to redevelop Torquay's popular Fishermans Beach precinct, to build a new boat ramp in the same precinct and to redevelop and heat Lorne's iconic foreshore precinct also started to gain momentum with the State Government contributing funding towards each of these vital projects. Our ability to keep people informed was also given a boost with the launch of our dynamic new interactive website on 1 April 2010.

The past 12 months also saw some changes to the committee's membership with Peter Bauerle, Simon Coverdale, Clive Fitts and Ken Northwood appointed in November 2009 to fill mid-term vacancies created by the resignations of Bill Fox and Sally Sneddon. Peter Anderson left in April 2010 after six years as a

committee member, including the past three years as Chairman, while our inaugural Chief Executive Officer David Clarke departed in June 2010 after five years. We thank Peter, David, Bill and Sally for their respective contributions to our work and wish them well in their future endeavours.

The year ahead promises to bring fresh challenges and opportunities with the new committee starting its three-year term from 1 July 2010. In addition to the various projects already in progress, the committee intends to oversee a program of increased community engagement and enhanced communications, including recognition of the many volunteers who contribute so generously along the coast.

I look forward to leading the new committee and to working alongside the organisation's administration to deliver long-term environmental, social and economic outcomes for our coast and you.

John Carlile

Chairman

October 2010



At the helm from June 2010 (right) Chairman John Carlile and Chief Executive Officer Richard Davies.

(Photo courtesy of Geelong Independent)

Caring for the coast

The committee's role entails looking after the coast in any number of ways so that people can love, protect and enjoy it as much as we do.

Our day-to-day work includes cleaning beaches, undertaking weed control and revegetation works, issuing event permits and commercial licences and leases, building and maintaining coastal facilities, and many other activities.

We maintain close working relationships with the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Surf Coast Shire and other land management agencies to engender an integrated approach to managing the coast. We're also grateful for the support, hard work and effort of many dedicated and passionate coastal volunteers in helping to care for the coast.

During 2009-2010, we started work on delivering the **Great Ocean Road Renewal Program**, a three-year \$1.35 million program supported by funding from the Australian Government. Comprising four discrete projects, progress included:

- Establishing a three-person Conservation Team in March 2010 to deliver the **Natural Values Project**, which focuses on weed control, native vegetation management and native fauna conservation. As part of its work with local coastal volunteer groups and partner agencies, the team was involved in rehabilitating the Moggs Creek estuary from the damaging impacts of weeds and erosion.
- Commencing work on preparing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan as part of the **Cultural Values Project**.

The plan is being developed in partnership with local Aboriginal representative groups. When complete, it will identify important cultural sites along the coast and provide guidelines for their conservation.

- Engaging a suitably qualified and experienced organisation to undertake the **Surf Coast Coastal Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Project** with work underway on assessing the potential impacts of climate change on our coast's values and assets.
- Developing a design brief and engaging a designer for the **Community and Tourism Facilities Project** with design options being developed.

Work also commenced on redeveloping and extending the Surf Coast Walk to establish a spectacular 44-kilometre continuous walking track between **Point Impossible (east of Torquay) and Fairhaven**. The \$1.3 million redevelopment is being jointly funded over two years by the committee, Regional Development Victoria and Surf Coast Shire.

The work kicked off in December 2009 with a section of the existing track in Point Roadknight extensively upgraded. Other works since completed include building new sections in Anglesea to provide access around the perimeter of the beachfront caravan park and connect some existing tracks, and upgrading the track between Yellow Bluff and Gilbert Street in Torquay. The project is scheduled for completion in 2012.



Moggs Creek estuary benefited from a partnership between our new Conservation Team and local coastal volunteer groups.

Other 2009-2010 achievements include:

- continuing our partnership with Birds Australia to protect the endangered hooded plover bird species by undertaking a range of monitoring and educational activities related to nesting sites at Point Roadknight
- working more closely with local coastal volunteer groups through our new Conservation Team with activities including weed removal and replanting on the dunes at Anglesea Surf Beach, and conducting our first controlled ecological burn in a small section of native grassland in Jan Juc, which was a joint effort involving Jan Juc Coast Action and Parks Victoria
- completing weed control activities on the Painkalac Creek, Cumberland, St George and Erskine Rivers' estuaries with funding support from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
- educating more than 500 local primary school students about dune conservation through the Marine Discovery Centre's Dune EduAction program, and involving student delegates to the Junior Landcare Victorian Youth Environment Conference, held in Lorne in August 2009, in rehabilitation works along the North Lorne foreshore
- completing several capital works projects including improving beach access and drainage at Fairhaven, replacing rotting deck timbers on the remaining historical section of the old Lorne Pier, resealing the Jan Juc car park and replacing fencing wire at Voss's Car Park (Torquay), and
- replacing beach access stairways at Sandy Gully and Jan Juc Surf Beach with funding provided by the Department of Sustainability and Environment.



The Surf Coast Walk track between Yellow Bluff and Gilbert Street in Torquay was upgraded as part of the redevelopment project.



It was all hands on deck to help the coast for students attending the Junior Landcare Victorian Youth Environment Conference in Lorne.

Improving our caravan parks

Our 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.

During 2009-2010, we put a significant amount of work into developing design documentation and funding proposals relating to implementing various components of our caravan park improvement masterplan.

In addition, we prepared an extensive risk analysis and risk management plan for each park, which addresses the key risks associated with their respective business operations, customer management, health and safety, and environmental matters.

Work started on stage one improvement works at Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park, which included:

- constructing a new main amenities building
- redeveloping and upgrading services in the beachfront section to accommodate casual campers for the first time in more than 20 years
- redeveloping part of the eastern section – including installing new power, water and road services – to accommodate the 12-month permit holders relocating from the beachfront section, and
- extensive weed removal and native revegetation works in both redeveloped areas.



A major power upgrade in the southern half of Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park started in May 2010 with trenches dug (below) and conduit laid (above).



Costing around \$600,000, these works were completed within budget and on time for the 2009-2010 peak summer season.

As part of the changes at Torquay, we also introduced a new casual camping ballot to provide a more equitable opportunity for new campers to stay in the park during the peak summer season. Previously, many people were unable to book a peak summer casual camp site due to the high number of people re-booking a year in advance from the previous summer.

With the committee approving a 10-year upgrade investment plan in August 2009, work started in May 2010 on the next step in our Torquay improvement works: the construction of new electrical supply and water reticulation to around 300 camp sites in the park's southern section. This project received a much appreciated \$750,000 funding boost from the State Government announced in December 2009.

The upgrade works unfortunately required some 100 12-month permit holders to temporarily relocate their vans and annexes for the construction period due to access and safety reasons.

In addition, an area in the park's south-east corner is being reconfigured to allow the installation of new two and three-bedroom cabins. As at the end of the reporting period, all these current improvement works were on track for completion by November 2010.

Both Lorne and Torquay also underwent major staffing changes with the appointment of new management teams to each park in May 2010. These changes bring both parks into line with standard structures employed in most commercial caravan parks around Australia.

The redevelopment of the park's beachfront section provided a boon for casual campers.



To ensure campers were kept informed of park developments, we continued to liaise with the Torquay Concerned Campers Committee and the Lorne Reference Group throughout the year, and to communicate via direct mail, our website, e-newsletter and newspaper articles.



Torquay's ageing main amenity block was demolished in July 2009 to make way for a spacious new facility for campers.

Activating and managing coastal projects

In addition to our day-to-day work looking after the coast, we also undertake various improvement projects.

These aim to protect and enhance the coast's natural values while providing opportunities for recreation and tourism in a manner that sensitively manages the impacts of these activities on our precious coastal environment.

The past year has seen progress made on several key coastal projects and initiatives, including the Great Ocean Road Renewal Program and the redevelopment of the Surf Coast Walk. Both projects are being managed by our Coastal Reserves team and are covered in the *Caring for our coast* section of this report.

In addition, a number of projects we've had sitting on our drawing board for some time started to take some positive steps forward.

In December 2009, the State Government announced a \$750,000 funding injection into the Fishermans Beach redevelopment, which will deliver a brand new purpose-built community, tourism and recreation facility on the Torquay foreshore. The construction contract was re-tendered in April 2010 and we are presently working towards finalising the project arrangements.

Another \$1.2 million State Government funding announcement, in April 2010, also enabled work to proceed on constructing a new boat ramp at Fishermans Beach to replace the existing ramp, which is more than 50 years

The Fishermans Beach redevelopment will deliver a purpose-built community, tourism and recreation beachfront facility in Torquay.

old. The construction contract was tendered shortly after the funding announcement and awarded in June 2010. Construction is due to commence in September 2010.

The redevelopment of the Lorne swimming pool and surrounding foreshore precinct also started to gather steam. In November 2010, Landcorp Foreshore Precinct Pty Ltd took control of the site under a 21-year leasing arrangement, which entails extensive redevelopment of the precinct's facilities. These include the swimming pool, trampolines, cafe and kiosk. The same month saw the State Government announce a \$200,000 grant to upgrade the swimming pool facilities and infrastructure.



It was smiles all round following the State Government's announcement that it would provide funding towards the Lorne Foreshore Precinct Georexchange Heating Project.



The State Government also announced in June 2010 that it would provide \$758,000 to fund the Lorne Foreshore Precinct Geoexchange Heating Project. This will supply environmentally friendly and cost-effective heating for the precinct's facilities, including the swimming pool, hydrotherapy pools, spas and showers.

Following a community and stakeholder consultation process undertaken during the first half of 2009 in relation to the redevelopment of Lorne's iconic Point Grey and Slaughterhouse sites, the committee released the *Place Essence Report*, which described the quintessential features of each site. This marked another positive step forward in this project's history.

As outlined in the *Improving our caravan parks* section of this report, 2009-2010 also saw significant progress on stage one improvement works at Torquay Foreshore Caravan Parks.



Extensive weed control works are a key focus of the Natural Values Project, which is one of four projects being delivered through our Great Ocean Road Renewal Program.

Volunteers are helping to revegetate sections of the new Surf Coast Walk track.



Connecting with communities

We are committed to communicating and engaging with people in meaningful and productive ways that benefit the coast and the community.

During 2009-2010, we completed two significant communication and engagement projects, introduced new communication tools and improved existing ones.

A detailed report analysing the key findings emerging from a major research project into attitudes and perceptions of our organisation and the coast was finalised in July 2009. This formed the basis for developing a range of recommendations and actions to improve the way we communicate and engage with people. We are progressively implementing these via an annual action plan that sets out our communication and engagement priorities for each financial year.

Based on the research findings, work commenced in July 2009 towards improving our online presence. Following a request to quote process, we engaged a firm in October 2009 to help redevelop our organisational website and to establish standalone websites for our two caravan parks as part of a new marketing strategy.

The next six months saw a substantial amount of time devoted to design and content development work with the new Great Ocean Road Coast Committee website [www.gorcc.com.au] and two independent caravan park sites [www.torquaycaravanpark.com.au and www.lornecaravanpark.com.au] finally going live on 1 April 2010.

As part of the website redevelopment project, we also established a social media strategy, which set the foundation for introducing a suite of social media tools to coincide with the new website's launch.

These are intended to support our efforts to communicate and engage with people more effectively in the online environment. In the first three months, our blog, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages have all shown slow but steady growth in usage patterns, indicating a promising start for these new tools.



Staff worked in partnership with the Queenscliff Marine Discovery Centre to educate and engage local primary school students in dune conservation.



Member for South Barwon Michael Crutchfield and Surf Coast Mayor Libby Coker announced work starting on the Surf Coast Walk to the media.

To support our efforts to inform and educate people about major issues confronting our coast, we also engaged a local film maker to assist us in producing a series of educational film clips. To date, three clips have been completed and uploaded onto our new website and social media pages with another three in the pipeline.

All these initiatives have been funded by a Federal Government Caring for our Country Community Coastcare Grant.

We made improvements to the way we produce and distribute our fortnightly e-newsletter, *GORCC Talk*, through the use of an online email campaign application. This has proved very efficient since its introduction in January 2010 and provides us with the ability to easily monitor the publication's value. In June 2010, we implemented some further changes by renaming the newsletter *Great Ocean Road Coast News* and moving to monthly production.

Other initiatives focused on opportunities to engage with people via events such as the ANGAIR Wildflower Weekend and Art Show in September 2009 and sponsorship of the Lorne Sculpture Exhibition in November 2009. Progress was also made towards introducing communication planning into our planning processes for major projects while our media relations program sought to keep the community informed via regular distribution of information to key media representatives.



An ongoing partnership with Birds Australia, Surf Coast Shire and local volunteers is focused on protecting the endangered hooded plover bird species (below) through a range of educational activities, including beach signs (above).



People matters

We are grateful to the following organisations and community groups who supported our efforts to look after the coast during 2009-2010:

- Aireys Inlet District Association
- ANGAIR
- Anglesea Coast Action
- Conservation Volunteers Australia
- CPA Australia
- CPG Australia Pty Ltd
- Eco-Logic Education and Environment Services
- Free Beaches Australia/Nudist Association Victoria
- Friends of Aireys Inlet Coastal Reserve
- Friends of Jan Juc Creek
- Friends of Moggs Creek
- Friends of Lorne
- Friends of Queens Park
- Jan Juc Coast Action
- Lorne-Aireys Inlet P-12 College
- Lornecare
- Lorne Conference on Protein Structure and Function
- Queenscliff Marine Discovery Centre
- Quiksilver
- Rip Curl
- Surf Coast and Inland Plains Landcare Network
- Surfrider Foundation
- Torquay Coast Action
- Torquay Landcare Group
- Torquay College

The many people involved in these organisations contribute much valuable time and effort, and we will continue to foster and support them in their endeavours.



Volunteers continued to put in a mammoth effort to remove environmental weeds, such as *Polygala*, from coastal areas.

Businesses also contributed time to looking after the coast through events such as the Rip Curl Planet Days and CPG Australia's employee planting day.



Supporting others to look after the coast

Our annual Coastal Grants Program aims to support local groups and individuals in helping to care for the coast. Coastal Grants awarded during 2009-2010 were as follows:

OCTOBER 2009

- Anglesea Coast Action (\$1,000) for weed control and mulching works related to the group's heathland restoration project.
- Jan Juc Coast Action (\$1,000) to purchase plants for Rip Curl's 2010 Planet Days.
- Jan Juc Surf Life Saving Club (\$1,000) for modifications to the beach access ramp in front of the club.
- Lorne-Aireys Inlet P-12 College (\$1,000) to fund students' participation in the 2010 Great Victorian Fish Count.
- Torquay Coast Action (\$1,000) to purchase a portable water cart.

MARCH 2010

- Friends of Moggs Creek (\$1,000) to rehabilitate the estuary mouth as part of the Moggs Creek Community Enhancement Program.
- Torquay Landcare Group (\$1,000) to support the Anglesea Dunes Rehabilitation Project.
- Torquay Sailing Club (\$1,000) to fund the installation of a rubber matting access way to facilitate beach launches.
- Surfcoast Longboarders (\$340) to purchase equipment for use at surfing events, working bees and other community events.
- Torquay Marine Rescue Service (\$750) to purchase a new portable marine radio.
- Torquay Surf Life Saving Club (\$913) to purchase seven rescue tubes.

Our Coastal Grants program enabled groups such as Torquay Landcare Group to undertake important weed control and revegetation works throughout the year.



Financial snapshot 2009 - 2010

In 2009-2010, the committee's operating and capital spending from internal funds was \$5 million. We maintain a prudential reserves limit and, once achieved, all remaining funds are planned for allocation to coastal management, caravan park operations and capital projects.

Sources of funds

Nearly half our income (Graph 1) is derived from the Lorne and Torquay Foreshore Caravan Parks with another 30 per cent of funding comprising State and Federal Government grants, and the remainder from leases, licences and permits. Our 2009-2010 grants income has been higher than in previous years when the average grant funding has been closer to 20 per cent of total income.

The following grants were received during the reporting period:

- Great Ocean Road Renewal Program – \$1 million (Federal Government)
- Surf Coast Walk Redevelopment Project – \$800,000 (State Government) and \$270,000 (Surf Coast Shire)
- Torquay Boat Ramp – \$1.2 million (State Government)
- Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park Power Upgrade – \$750,000 (State Government)
- Fishermans Beach Redevelopment – \$750,000 (Department of Sustainability and Environment), \$750,000 (Regional Development Victoria) and \$200,000 (Surf Coast Shire)
- Lorne Foreshore Precinct Geoexchange Heating Project – \$758,000 (State Government)
- Lorne Swimming Pool Improvement Project – \$200,000 (State Government)
- Department of Sustainability and Environment Risk Mitigation Grant – \$112,000 (State Government)
- Lorne Conference on Protein Structure and Function – \$5,000

Spending

The major increase in capital spending over the past 12 months (Graph 2) is a result of grant allocations for the Torquay Foreshore Caravan Park, Great Ocean Road Renewal Program and Surf Coast Walk redevelopment.

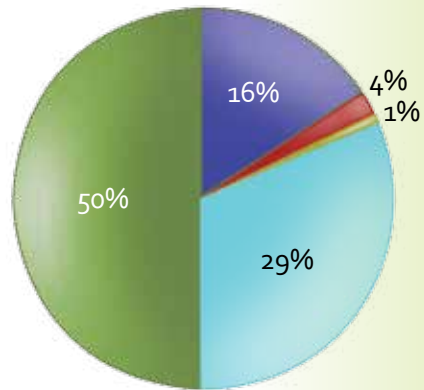
In summary, spending is split between the major activities shown in Graph 3. In 2009-2010, administration and lease/licence management collectively represented nine per cent of total expenditure with the remaining 91 per cent allocated across coast and park operations.

Spending for our coastal reserves (Graph 4) was mainly taken up by wages, repairs and maintenance, cleaning provisions and other operational expenses. The remainder (34 per cent) was allocated to capital works.

Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Inc Consolidated Income 2009-2010

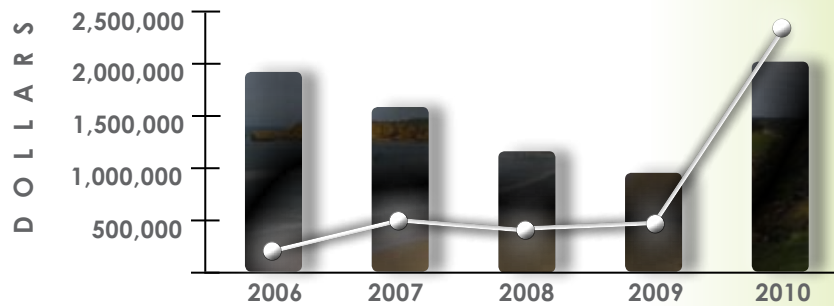
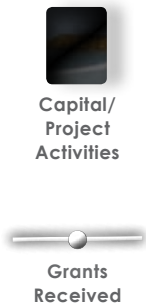
INCLUDING GRANTS

Caravan Parks
Government Grants
Leases and Licences
Coastal Reserves
Admin / Other



GRAPH 1

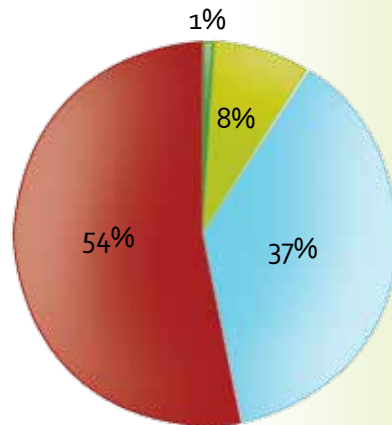
Capital/Project Activities 2006-2010



GRAPH 2

Total Expenditure 2009-2010

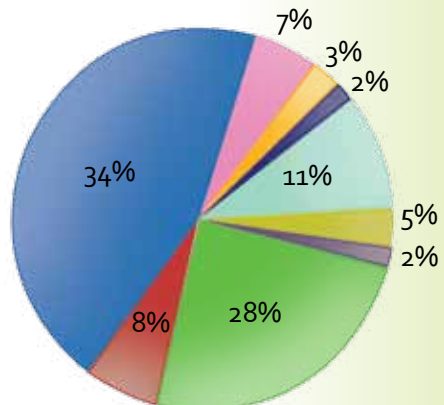
Caravan Parks
Coastal Reserves
Administration
Lease/Licence Management



GRAPH 3

Coastal Reserves Expenditure 2009-2010

Capital Works/Special Projects
Wage Expenses
Repairs and Maintenance
Other Expenses
Cleaning
Waste Disposal
Electricity
Plant & Materials
Water Rates



GRAPH 4

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.

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