

# Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MASSIVE BOOST TO COASTAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) and local Federal MP Darren Cheeseman today announced a massive boost to efforts to conserve the coast along the Great Ocean Road, thanks to funding support from the Australian Government.

\$600,000 will be invested over the next two years to remove weeds and protect native vegetation along the coast.

\$175,000 will be spent to protect and promote cultural heritage values, with a further \$95,000 to be used for the first detailed assessment the vulnerability of the coast between Torquay and Lorne to climate change.

\$550,000 will also be invested to upgrade community and tourism facilities at Torquay Surf Beach, including new and upgraded public toilets, a new visitor shelter overlooking the beach and a new kiosk.

GORCC Chief Executive Officer David Clarke said "We are very thankful to the Australian Government for providing \$1m in new funding to support these conservation efforts".

Federal Member for Corangamite Darren Cheeseman MP said the Great Ocean Road is an international tourism icon and highly valued by local communities.

"This will fund be the biggest assault on weeds in this coastal region ever. It will really benefit biodiversity and some high value coastal habitats."

"The kiosk, landscaping, shelter and sitting area at Torquay Surf Beach will be terrific for tourists and local alike", said Darren Cheeseman.

According to David Clarke the new funding will deliver massive improvements to the health of the coast over the next two years.

"GORCC's conservation efforts over the last five years have progressively increased but we know there is still much more to be done".

These new projects will address four of the biggest coastal issues identified in GORCC's 2007 Environment and Land Management Plan: environmental weeds, conservation and celebration of Aboriginal cultural heritage, climate change impacts and increasing demand for coastal recreation facilities.

An experienced conservation team will be established to blitz weeds and boost native plant species in accordance with our 2009 Native Vegetation and Weed Action Plan. Support will be provided to Coast Action/Coast Care and Friends groups to play a role.

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*Caring for the coast and community*

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“We know that a healthy coast will be more resilient to the future impacts of climate change. These new projects will enable us to pull out thousands of weeds, protect important native vegetation and preserve cultural heritage values – all of which will make for a more healthy coast”.

“In addition, for the first time, we will assess the vulnerability of the local coast to climate change in terms of potential impacts on coastal assets and values. This information will provide a basis to commence work on adaptation strategies to ensure a healthy future for our coast. The project will build on work completed and underway at national and state levels, including the Department of Sustainability and Environment’s Future Coasts initiative”, said David Clarke.

“We look forward to these projects achieving fantastic outcomes for the coast”.

“There will be plenty of opportunities for the community to be involved and informed about our work over the next two years, and encourage everyone to do their bit to help look after the coast”, said David Clarke.



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