

What's News?

Work to implement landmark reforms to how the Great Ocean Road is managed are continuing, even during COVID-19 (coronavirus), and big changes will be coming into effect later this year.

Legislation that recognises the state significance of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes and establishes a new dedicated coast and parks management authority passed the Victorian Parliament in June 2020.

A second Bill that will give the authority its full powers is expected to be debated in Parliament in the first half of 2021, with the full functions of the authority to be stood up progressively over several years

Starting on 1 December 2020, the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) will initially be an amalgamation of the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee (GORCC) and the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) - two existing Committees of Management that are responsible for large amounts of Crown land and several caravan parks from Torquay to Marengo.

Staff from GORCC and OCC are already working positively together to get ready for the changes and are well prepared to officially merge on 1 December 2020.

"It's great to see progress on establishing the new authority, with staff and directors from GORCC and OCC already working really well together." – Ken Northwood, GORCC

"The new authority is going to be a real win for the entire region and it's encouraging to see how positively GORCC and OCC are already teaming up to help deliver these important reforms." – Jennifer Johnson, OCC

A Transition Action Plan has been developed by DELWP in consultation with GORCC and OCC. Both Boards are actively supporting the Action Plan.

With bookings flying in for this Summer, everyone is looking forward to welcoming visitors once again as Victoria moves to a 'COVID-normal' setting.



New Digital Presence Coming Soon

To ensure the public can easily make bookings for all caravan parks run by GORCAPA, a new website and online reservation system will be available from 1 December – a first for the Marengo and Apollo Bay caravan parks.

All reservations locked in with GORCC and OCC prior to 1 December will be secure and automatically transferred to the new system. There will be no additional cost or action required for those bookings.

Development of a 'logo and brand strategy' for the new authority is also underway, with stakeholder consultation a key focus.

GORCAPA Board Appointments

In another step forward, an expression of interest process for GORCAPA board positions was held in July-August, with 168 applications currently being assessed.

The applications demonstrated a broad range of skills and experience from individuals living across Victoria, including a large number from the Great Ocean Road region.

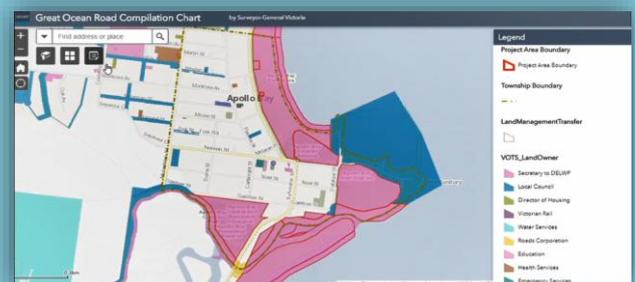
Once established, the Board will have up to twelve members and include a nominee of each recognised Traditional Owner group.

It is anticipated Board appointments will be announced in November 2020.

Mapping the Great Ocean Road

In some technical, but very important work, the Surveyor General of Victoria (SGV) is undertaking a huge data project that will have lasting benefits for the new authority and other agencies in the region ongoing.

Using a combination of road and airborne based mobile laser scanning, aerial photography survey along and old-fashioned foot work, SGV has painstakingly surveyed the entire 243-kilometre length



Great Ocean Road Action Plan

Quarterly Community Update

October 2020

of the Great Ocean Road to create a three dimensional database (point cloud) that defines the Great Ocean Road and features 500 m each side of the road.

It will provide the authority with up to date and detailed information about Crown land, foreshore boundaries, land use types and the location of assets.

This ensures planning and management decisions reflect accurately what's happening on the ground and is a first for the region, including the potential for 3D road view (streetscape) models to show the impacts of proposed road projects and buildings for more accurate planning and to inform community engagement.

More info on the project here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4e13OaMEmc>



Planning Matters

The Great Ocean Road Region Standing Advisory Committee (GORSAC) has received its first referral.

GORSAC was appointed by the Minister for Planning to provide independent advice on planning, policy and strategic matters in the Great Ocean Road Region, as well as on the development or review of coastal and marine management plans and consents to use marine and coastal Crown land.

On 5 August 2020, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change referred the Bells Beach elevated walkway and viewing platform components of the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2015-25 to GORSAC for advice.

GORSAC will provide an independent assessment of the proposed structures, including considering all submissions previously made as part of the Shire's consultation on their broader plan for the Reserve. GORSAC is expected to deliver its report to the Minister by the end of October 2020.

Committee Members Nick Wimbush (Co-Chair), Ian Hamm and Andrew Hutson considered the referral by way of videoconference meetings between 18 September and 2 October 2020. Mr Wimbush has significant expertise in environmental assessment, coastal planning and strategic planning.

Bells Beach Reserve is an iconic part of Victoria. It's of national significance, is heritage listed and is important to the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners.

More information about GORRSAC, including hearing schedules can be found at:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/>

Working with Volunteer Committees of Management

DELWP is working with volunteer committees of management and local councils to develop a transition plan for the transfer of public land that will ensure that community facilities continue to be maintained ongoing.

The reform team understands the value these assets and reserves provide to local communities and thanks the dedicated locals who continue to champion them.

GORCAPA will commence operations on 1 December 2020, with coastal Crown land parcels being progressively transferred to the Authority over several years.

Great Ocean Road Action Plan

Quarterly Community Update

October 2020

The reforms will increase local community input and the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Act 2020* enshrines in legislation an obligation for the authority to engage with locals as they develop management plans and policies that are of particular relevance to those local communities, and to report publicly on the outcomes of that engagement.

Changes at Skenes Creek, Kennett River and Marengo Caravan Parks

Following a thorough review in 2019, the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) decided to resume direct management of the Skenes Creek, Kennett River and Marengo caravan parks at the expiry of the current leases in November 2020.

This change is great news for Victorians. It represents the best value for money for Victorian taxpayers, will mean more investment directly back into maintenance and improvements to the parks themselves with flow on benefits to local communities and visitors alike.

There will be no changes for existing site holders or holidaymakers, and staff are working to ensure the parks are ready for guests.

OCC is working closely with the existing lease holders through these changes.

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Want to Know More?

For more information on these Great Ocean Road reforms, check out: <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/great-ocean-road-action-plan>

