



OCTOBER 2022

# Board Communiqué

## On behalf of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) Board, I'm pleased to share our October 2022 Board Communiqué.

Our October meeting presenting the Board and our Leadership team with a privileged opportunity to spend time on Country with Eastern Maar.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) CEO Marcus Clarke welcomed our group to Framlingham Mission on Kirrae Whurrong Country beside the Hopkins River to share knowledge around EMAC's vision and how we can continue to strengthen our partnership to ensure integration of Eastern Maar cultural values through our future projects and opportunities.

We were fortunate to have Uncle Rob Lowe guide us through a number of significant locations around Framlingham, sharing stories of his early life on the mission and what inspired his journey to become an educator and storyteller for the generations that follow.

We are committed to building genuine partnerships with Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung peoples that embody self-determination and are led by their expectations. This is incredibly important as the Authority takes on management responsibility for over 1,000 parcels of Crown land on both Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung Countries under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020*.

We thank Marcus and Uncle Rob for extending the invitation to come on Country and value the knowledge that was shared.

We commit to a journey of continued learning and building cultural competency in our staff to ensure cultural safety for all First Nations peoples engaging with the Authority.

Our October Board meeting followed in Warrnambool, where we discussed a range of important strategic items spanning several areas of our organisation as summarised below.

### COASTAL VEGETATION STRATEGY

Our latest Coastal Vegetation Strategy has expanded to incorporate the coastal land managed by the Authority from Point Impossible, near Torquay, to Marengo.

The third edition strategy is a five-year action plan fundamental to improving the health of Crown land reserves, covering around 1,090 hectares, and supports significant landscapes such as sandy beaches, dune systems, cliffs, heathlands, shore platforms and estuaries.

This strategy will shape our conservation work and provide technical guidance to improve conservation outcomes along the Great Ocean Road. This will help ensure our on-ground works complement those carried out by our hardworking community volunteers to achieve the best possible conservation outcomes.

The Board was briefed on the inclusion of new sections in the strategy, including environmental values, volunteering and fauna monitoring and was pleased to hear the plan had received positive feedback and strong support from the Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

In endorsing the Coastal Vegetation Strategy, the Board discussed further scoping required in the future noting planning work being done by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), what vegetation is within scope and the consideration of coastal and territorial vegetation.

Well done to our Conservation Team for producing an important piece of guiding work for our organisation.



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## COASTAL TRAIL DRAFT MASTERPLAN

The Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail will be a globally significant eco-tourism experience showcasing the region's natural and cultural values.

The 90 kilometre trail is set to attract and extend the length of stay for over 200,000 people in its first five years, delivering an extra \$38 million in visitor expenditure.

Once completed, the Trail will become the management responsibility of the Authority, creating an incredible opportunity for our people to work on a world-class asset that contributes to our vision of a thriving Great Ocean Road region as one integrated, living entity.

There was strong Board representation at the launch of the Final Draft Masterplan for the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail project at Fairhaven Surf Life Saving Club in August.

At the following Board meeting in October, the Final Draft Masterplan was adopted and it was noted that a Planning and Design Report will be finalised in October to inform statutory planning and infrastructure design requirements.

The Board also committed to the Authority and DELWP undertaking a co-designed project review prior to the commencement of the next project phase, being detailed design and statutory planning preparation and submission.

The Trail is a flagship process for the Authority and alongside all the wonderful opportunities and outcomes it will create, the Board also tabled potential risks, discussed funding sources for a project of this scale and highlighted the importance of capturing a cross-pollination of ideas throughout the various project phases.

## DRAFT BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The Authority's Draft Business Continuity Plan is an evolution of past plans with an additional focus on working from home in response to COVID-19.

The final draft of the Plan, required as part of the Financial Management Compliance Report, had been presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee and endorsed on 18 August 2022.

The Board adopted the Draft Business Continuity Plan, highlighting the importance of maintaining up-to-date contact information as the organisation continues to grow and agreed the plan should be reviewed on a regular basis.

## SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB LEASES

Issuing leases on the land we manage is an important pillar of our commercial operations to achieve financial sustainability and reinvest funds into Great Ocean Road coast and parks in line with the Minister's Statement of Expectations.

From July 2021 to June 2022, we issued 28 leases along the coast. Revenue driven by these agreements, alongside revenue generated from our other commercial ventures, funds important maintenance and capital works, and a range of vital services along our coastline.

During a discussion in our October meeting, the Board requested further information around the Authority's approach to leasing and committed to further exploring the long-term leasing strategy in the December Board meeting.

We appreciate the important role Surf Life Saving Clubs play in our coastal communities and want to implement an approach that enables them to continue to thrive while also allowing the Authority to reinvest in the region so it can be enjoyed by all, now and for generations to come.

## OTHER MATTERS

Finally, the Board adopted the Financial Summary Report for the period ending 31 August 2022 and endorsed the proposed updates and renewals of the following policies:

- Board travel
- Borrowing
- Managing bank accounts
- Managing liabilities, contingent liabilities, and contingent assets

The Board and I believe this is an integral time for our organisation as we grow both in size and capability, and take on management responsibility of more land as part of an extensive transfer program along the stretch of the coast. It's important for our organisation to build strong foundations through strategies, plans and policies such as those tabled in our October Board meeting in order to achieve our ambitious task of improving the management of the Great Ocean Road region.

Sincerely,



**Libby Mears**

Board Chair, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.