



FEBRUARY 2023

Board Communiqué

On behalf of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority) Board, I'm pleased to share our February 2023 Board Communiqué to inform stakeholders of the work of the Board.

Our first Board meeting for 2023 provided a valuable opportunity for Directors to participate in an intention setting exercise for the year ahead, sharing key items of interest to help collectively influence outcomes.

Items raised by Board Directors captured the depth and breadth of our strategic objectives. These included enabling fulfillment of First People's rights, preparation of our 5-year business strategy, the need for a well-considered commercial strategy, public land management plans, our tourism industry and environmental stewardship, and engaging with our new Minister and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

Board Directors noted these priorities continue to be on the Authority's operational workplans and as the organisation enters its third year, we continue to sequence activities to focus our transformation toward our ultimate role as a dedicated parks and public land manager.

PEAK SUMMER SEASON 2022-23

The Board Directors congratulated staff on a job well done over the busy peak summer season and highlighted the hard work on the ground to manage close to 8,200 reservations, an estimated 289,100 visitor nights and 94% occupancy rate across our eight associated campgrounds and caravan parks.

Our caravan park and on-ground staff are the face of the Authority and play such an important role in creating safe and memorable experiences for visitors to our region, and they do so with great professionalism and integrity.

ANNUAL REPORT AND CORPORATE PLANS

Board Directors noted that print copies of the Authority's Annual Report 2021-22 have arrived and the full report is also [available online](#).

Both Corporate Plans (for 2022-23 and 2021-22) will also be published online to demonstrate our key activities and performance against the current Statement of Expectations issued by the Minister.

LORNE SEA BATH PRECINCT LEASE

In considering the potential lease extension for the Lorne Sea Bath precinct, the Authority is following government leasing policy directions, particularly where it relates to a potential renewal of a lease to incumbent tenants.

LAND TRANSFER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Under the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020* (the Act), the Authority can accept committee of management appointments for Crown land. The Act sets out the areas where land management responsibility is to be transferred to the Authority by 1 November 2025.

A pilot transfer of two land parcels from Surf Coast Shire and four parcels from Colac Otway Shire successfully took place in 2022.

The remaining land areas set to be transferred are from nine separate land managers, including five councils (Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, Moyne Shire, and Warrnambool City), Parks Victoria, DEECA, and two volunteer Committees of Management (Princetown Recreation Reserve Committee and Port Campbell Recreation Reserve Committee of Management). Each of the land managers have different approaches to managing the land, varying levels of data about the parcels they manage, and their own influencing factors.



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A transfer methodology and decision-making framework has been developed by DEECA with the Authority and current land managers to provide a structured approach that aims to deliver seamless asset and land transfers where reputations are preserved, and our mandate is supported.

The approach is guided by six principles:

- Minimise disruption
- Transfer high-value, low-risk assets first
- Limit complexity
- Defensible decision making
- Apply legislation and policy
- Reduce financial impacts

Board Directors considered the planning and risk management activity for transferring the suite of Crown land parcels to the Authority by November 2025. A detailed schedule of transfer is being developed with DEECA to capture all parcels and to support effective community engagement during transfer.

GEELONG CITY DEAL

The Geelong City Deal is a ten-year plan to revitalise Geelong and unlock the potential of the Great Ocean Road visitor economy. It involves the three levels of government including the Australian and Victorian Governments together with the City of Greater Geelong to deliver \$500 million in investment for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region.

City Deal projects in the Great Ocean Road region include the redevelopment of the Twelve Apostles precinct, the Point Grey redevelopment at Lorne, the Apollo Bay Harbour redevelopment, and improvements to the tourism infrastructure at Kennett River.

Board Directors considered updates to these City Deal projects with a presentation by the Project Director, Geelong and Great Ocean Road Major Projects (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions) attending the meeting to assist.

Project realisation is subject to further detailed work involving obtaining the necessary legislative approvals, and the need for this to align with the Authority's statutory framework; grant agreements and detailed master plans.

STRENGTHENING OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

We were incredibly lucky to have Duane Fraser, Chair Indigenous Advisory Council to the Federal Minister, Board Director, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and non-Executive Director of Tourism and Events Queensland, join us to share his extensive experience advising Commonwealth and state governments on matters relating to Indigenous affairs and environmental policy.

Duane has also been appointed as a strategic adviser to the Authority alongside Chrissy Grant, member of the advisory council developing the Biodiversity Framework in Montreal, to help the organisation strengthen its strategic approach and to share key learnings as valued allies.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP NETWORKING EVENT

To continue to work effectively and collaboratively with our regional partners a formal networking event was held after the Board meeting with external guests including leaders from the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation; Great Ocean Road Tourism; Surf Coast Shire Council; and government representatives from DEECA and the Geelong and Great Ocean Road Major Projects team.

BOARD WORKSHOP

Further to the Board meeting, a full-day workshop was held the next day to enable key discussions on Indigenous leadership and the Uluru statement from the heart, which the Australian Government has committed to implement in full. An in-depth overview of the Uluru Convention was provided online by Thomas Mayor (a Torres Strait Islander man born on Larrakia country in Darwin), who has been entrusted to carry the sacred canvas of this statement, around the Country for truth-telling and agreement-making or treaties.

Other workshop agenda items included further refining the Authority's 5-year business strategy to outline key priorities and activities to achieve measurable outcomes. The strategy will undergo community consultation and require Minister's approval.

The workshop concluded with a detailed consideration of the importance of the Authority's caravan parks and associated campgrounds. Wide-ranging strategies were discussed including how to enable sustainable operations, support customer satisfaction, engaging local communities and prioritising environmental management with cultural respect and sensitivity.

Sincerely,



Libby Mears

Board Chair, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.