



25 March 2015

To:

Via Email:

Draft Western Regional Coastal Plan: 2015-2020

Great Ocean Road Coast Committee Comments

The comments below are made following a review of the draft plan by our organisation and considering how the plan can complement and/or support our current 2013-2018 Coastal Management Plan.

Initially we would like to make the following points:

1. The concept of a Regional Coastal Plan(RCP) is fully supported by the committee as this will give GORCC a solid planning baseline for future CMP reviews and development through the RCP's links to the Victorian Coastal Strategy. When developing our CMP from 2011 we undertook extensive plan reviews of various Coastal Action Plans, such as the WCB Boating CAP. The new RCP will put better structure around our internal planning processes and improve linkages to the VCS.
2. Specifically, whilst the plan will be an important tool for our committee, the document structure, covering Chapters 1 to 3 – "Introduction, Coastal Values and Dynamics of the Coast", sets up the key components of the plan, including Action Items, to be readily understandable and useful to other coastal stakeholders beyond land managers such as GORCC. This structure should be supported.
3. The remaining four chapters address key concerns of GORCC:
 - a. **Visitation Pressures** – the plan refers to GORCC's current piece of work on vehicle demand strategy and the comments below on this reflect our view that there is not necessarily a solution that sees an expansion of facilities in our limited coastal space.

- b. **Foreshore Management** – We have commented below on the various management resources, and particularly volunteers and their work. However, whilst the Plan in *Section 5.2* sensibly discusses the benefits of working together across land boundaries, in GORCC’s experience this can be difficult to achieve when adjacent bodies have very different management and/or funding priorities. Consideration in the plan’s *Action 4* in Chapter 5 should refer to or include the ‘alignment of directions’ between bodies, rather than the broader statement of “...Develop a process...” which can be interpreted a number of ways.
- c. **Regional-Scale Planning** – Comments are noted below regarding the identification of lead agents for *Actions 4c* and *4d*.
- d. **Supporting Communities** – GORCC welcomes this component of the RCP. We have strong relationships with all 14 volunteer groups on our coastline and the committee’s Education Program which commenced in 2011 is now seen by us as ‘core business’ with significant annual internal financial and staff resources allocated to the work. We have referred to *Action 1a - Chapter 6* below and the benefits of this type of information sharing and would strongly support the development of this type of event.

Specific Comments are as follows:

Reference	Commentary
Page 2, Fig.2	<p>Whilst not now a working port, the Lorne township has a ‘local port’ in the Port of Lorne, for which GORCC is the designated Port Manager, working with the Dept. of Transport. Should this be recognised on the map?</p> <p>Should Cumberland River, west of St. George’s River be shown as part of Cttee. of Mgt. land (GORCC)? This land is on the landward side of the Great Ocean Road so may not be deemed relevant.</p>
Page 3, 1.5	<p>This refers to how the plan will be implemented, but Chapter 8 on pp28 and 29 lists the earlier actions noted but do not assist in how the implementation should be achieved, particularly with regard to resourcing and/or funding.</p> <p>For example, <i>Action 1a of Ch. 7</i> recommends a biennial regional coastal conference. We assume this may take the form of the successful one developed by the WCB and held at Deakin University, Warrnambool in 2010, but does not refer to or nominate</p>

	<p>funding sources to enable WCB to deliver this action.</p>
<p>Page 9</p>	<p>It may be adding unnecessary data however BDO Consulting completed a study in 2012 that showed the economic multiplier effect on coastal caravan park operations across the east coast of Australia was \$1.38 for each \$1 of park operating expenditure. This effect is from actual park/CoM operations and excludes the impacts of campers spending.</p> <p>Thus in our case, GORCC expends around \$3.0M in operations of parks, providing township economic benefits to Lorne and Torquay of over \$4.0m from those operations.</p>
<p>Page 10, 2.4, Fig.5</p>	<p>The plan discusses social access and visitation pressures and a key management tool for larger CoM's is the requirement to have a policy framework in place, for example a Major Events Approvals Policy, to protect open space in coastal towns from being constantly under visitation pressure to the detriment of local residents and casual coastal users. Reference to Policy/Governance Frameworks held by land managers may be useful here.</p>
<p>Page 12, 3.3</p>	<p>Demographic trends should make reference also to the phenomenon of some coastal townships having a large rate of unoccupied housing stock, such as Lorne, which shows 80% of residences are unoccupied during the shoulder and/or off peak months.</p> <p>This is important as some recent studies have engaged with the local residential population, but missed the important absentee stakeholder cohort during a consultation process.</p>
<p>Page 13, 4.1</p>	<p>A specific driver of high visitation and high intensity/short-term congestion is the increasing desirability of the Great Ocean Road to 'host' major events such as the growing number of requests GORCC receives for cycling events, often in and around Lorne as a staging post, and often with up to 5000 participants. All these activities require often unrestricted access to the urban foreshore.</p> <p>It should also be recognised that demand strategies cannot assume an expansion of facilities and that on any number of peak days each year the coastal facilities will not be able to cope, nor should they be expected to. GORCC's current <i>Coastal User Transport Study</i> does not foreshadow an expansion of car parking space for example.</p>

Page 17, 4.5	<p>Again, we think there should be a statement recognising that suitable coastal land is finite and expansion is not always an option as a solution to congestion.</p>
Page 19	<p>Market valuations are described as "...the most commonly used mechanism..." of assessing Crown land rents. At GORCC, this is the case under existing leases that have revaluation mechanisms in the lease agreement, however the more common approach to set rents for new leases is to take the lease opportunity to market which would then determine the rent. This has been the process for the past three leases for commercial operations/venues of GORCC-managed land for kiosks and cafes in Torquay and Lorne.</p> <p>Earlier comments about major events should also be noted here. In particular, coastal Crown land is becoming more popular for private, commercially –based markets or fairs, such as the current 'Nightjar Market' at Torquay which hosts some 30,000 visitors across four days in January, and which has a commercially based fee structure imposed on the organisers by GORCC. Likewise, it is expected the new 'Hook and Vine Festival' at Torquay will have a similar fee structure imposed under GORCC's Major Event Policy.</p>
Page 20, 5.2 & 5.3	<p>These sections should recognise the localised nature of volunteer resources and groups working with CoM's, and by definition the commitment local groups have to specific areas. GORCC works with 14 discrete volunteer groups all looking after and nurturing defined areas of interest. Their strength may be interpreted as coming from this discrete interest. GORCC's Community Reference Group which participated in the development of the CMP now meet bi-annually to review the plan's progress possibly because of the localised nature of the relationship.</p>
Page 25	<p>Under Ch. 6 Actions, local Councils are nominated lead agents for actions regarding identification of mitigation options and viable long-term options. Given LGA roles in planning and ratepayer representation, are Councils the most appropriate bodies to lead this work?</p>
Page 27	<p>In regard to the appointment of members to the RCB or Committees of Management, whilst the reference to diversity is very important, CoM's such as GORCC are medium-sized enterprises under the successful management model in place and thus membership attributes should emphasise also a strong commitment to good governance, strategy and policy development as a skill set to</p>

	complement other qualities needed to oversee the organisation.
Page 30	GORCC's Coastal Management Plan date is 2013, not 2010 as noted in Table 1. The plan's life is 2013 to 2018.
Page 31	In Table 3 – Other Coastal Plans, GORCC's Point Grey and Slaughterhouse Master Plan was replaced with the current <i>Point Grey Precinct Plan</i> – status is underway. The following major plans should also be noted: Lorne Foreshore Master Plan – under implementation Queens Park Master Plan – Underway Lorne Caravan Parks Master Plan - Underway

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important piece of work.

