

30 April 2018

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Great Ocean Road Taskforce

Re: Governance of the Great Ocean Road Region Issues Paper

The Victorian Coastal Council (VCC) is a statutory body appointed by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change under the *Coastal Management Act 1995* to undertake statewide strategic coastal planning, prepare the Victorian Coastal Strategy and provide advice to the Minister about strategic coastal issues.

The VCC applauds the objective of the Issues Paper to improve coordination and integration of planning and resourcing of the GOR region with a longer-term perspective, and recognition of the risks and impacts from climate change, and in partnership with Traditional Owners.

Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014 – Hierarchy of Principles

Much of the approach outlined in the Issues Paper aligns with the Hierarchy of Principles from the Victorian Coastal Strategy 2014, with a focus on protecting and conserving “the unique features” of the region while gain regional benefits from those features in the long term.

In whatever direction governance of the GOR region moves, it will be useful to explicitly consider the Hierarchy of Principles as the basis for using and managing the coast, given the state-wide nature of the Victorian Coastal Strategy.

Proposed structural governance arrangements

One outcome learnt from the process to develop the proposed Marine and Coastal Act (MACA) now before Parliament is that there are many options for improving coordination of coastal planning and management. Structural options may not be the most cost-effective approach, and it is unclear whether a new authority would be the most effective and efficient approach to improve coordination.

Appropriate agencies exist to deliver specific outcomes, and the complexities of coastal issues can hamper communication and coordination of their activities. There are ways to use the existing system better. Key steps to achieve this are to establish a clear and agreed strategy and develop more transparent responsibilities for those existing agencies. This could be done with emerging tools to improve the delivery of outcomes by

different agencies, and these tools are worth trying before establishing a new agency. For example, the Regional and Strategic Partnerships proposed under the MACA would allow a structured approach to bring key agencies together, consult with the community and other regional stakeholders, and negotiate transparent and coordinated responsibilities for each agency.

Relevant VCC projects

The VCC and the three Regional Coastal Boards are continuing with several projects that may be of interest to the GOR Taskforce. These projects have been recognised in the Transition Plan for the MACA, and they are being delivered in partnership with DELWP.

Project	Objectives
Visitation Framework	Better coordination of visitation to maintain or improve visitor experience and coastal landscape values. Clearer information for coastal managers to understand visitation demands, plan and manage assets and inform complex visitation decisions.
Financing the Coast	Analysis of income and expenditure for coastal managers. Development of a framework to establish sustainable resourcing for the coast.
Knowledge Hub	Establish a hub to support and improve the technical capacity of coastal managers. Provide a centralised coordinated source of information for planning and management.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission about improving the planning and management of a region that is so important to the Victoria.

Sincerely



Chair, Victorian Coastal Council