

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am delighted to present this Report Card on the progress of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy.

Launched by Premier Bracks in 2004, this Strategy was put in place to help protect south west Victoria's precious coastal and hinterland environments, manage urban growth, improve access and support sustainable development.

Under the Strategy, State and Local Governments, communities and industry are working together to manage growth and change within the Great Ocean Road Region, while still encouraging sustainable tourism and resource use.

A multi-agency Strategy Implementation Coordination Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of this important Strategy, which addresses key land use and transport issues across the region.

As an indication of the success of this collaborative approach, I am pleased to say that 95 per cent of the 154 actions outlined in the Strategy have commenced or are on target for delivery.

While this is good news for local communities in the region and its many visitors, we need to continue to build on the work we have completed so far and keep true to the vision for this region to be vibrant, prosperous and beautiful.

A continuing challenge is a more equitable sharing of economic benefits with hinterland communities to help relieve some of the growing pressures along the coast.

This Report Card provides a summary of the significant achievements in the region to date and coincides with the 75th birthday of the iconic Great Ocean Road.

The Bracks Government is proud to commit to ensuring that the things we love about the Great Ocean Road and its impressive hinterland are protected and preserved for future generations.

JUSTIN MADDEN MLC

Minister for Planning



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2004 - 2006

A SHARED VISION FOR THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD REGION'S FUTURE
'Its diverse natural built environment will be universally recognized, protected and enhanced. It will continue to be a prime visitor destination with world-class standing. A strong, sustainably based economy will be the foundation for its continued prosperity. The changing lifestyle needs of the community will be acknowledged and accommodated.' (Source: Great Ocean Road Region Strategy 2004, page 3)

Since the launch of the Strategy in 2004 the stand-out achievements include:

Environment: Protecting the landscape and caring for the environment

■ **Creation of the Great Otway National Park.** The Great Otway National Park was created in December 2005. Encompassing the former Otway National Park, Lorne Angahook State Park and other Crown Land, the new park is about 103,000 hectares and stretches from Anglesea to Princetown. The State Government has allocated \$13 million over four years to establish and manage the new Otways Parks and Reserves system. After 2009, an additional \$3.37 million per year has been committed to the ongoing operational management of the park system. Substantial progress has also been made in the appointment of 17 new employees for the park.

■ **Otway Forest Park.** A new 40,000 hectare Forest Park was also created in 2005. It adjoins the Great Otway National Park, primarily on the northern slopes of the Otway Ranges, and provides for a wider range of uses and activities.

■ **Integrated land stewardship in the Otways.** The Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks Victoria have jointly developed the Otway Stewardship Agreement. This agreement specifies the roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved to successfully implement projects and deliver services. In addition, the Otways Landscape Community Council was appointed in September 2006 to develop an Otways Community Engagement Plan to inform the park planning and operations of these agencies.

■ **Landscape assessment and protection.** A comprehensive landscape assessment of the Great Ocean Road Region coastline has been completed. The study is being progressively implemented by coastal Councils through their planning schemes to strengthen protection of the visual values of the coastal environments.

■ **Marine National Parks and Marine Sanctuaries.** Parks Victoria have finalised management plans for Eagle Rock Marine Sanctuary, Point Addis Marine National Park and Point Danger Marine Sanctuary. Draft Management Plans have been released for public comment for Twelve Apostles Marine National Park, The Arches Marine Sanctuary, Marengo Reef Marine Sanctuary and the Merri Marine Sanctuary. More than \$1 million has been allocated to manage the new Marine National Parks and Sanctuaries system. A further \$1.5 million has enabled extensive marine habitat mapping to be completed for the Twelve Apostles and Point Addis Marine National Parks.

■ **Coast and Marine Information Portal.** The Western Coastal Board and partners established the West Victorian Coast and Marine Information Reference web-based portal www.westerncoastalboard.vic.gov.au to provide a single point of entry to on-line information and data relating to the Western Victorian coast. This provides a valuable information, management and decision-making resource for all stakeholders.

Settlement: Managing the growth of towns

■ **Coastal Spaces Recommendations Report.** Released in April 2006, the report reinforces the Victorian Coastal Strategy policy directions such as providing protection against inappropriate development between coastal townships and also clarifies processes for defining the settlement boundaries for existing coastal towns.

■ The **Warrnambool Land Use Strategy** and the **Torquay / Jan Juc Structure Plan** have been finalised. These two key towns have the capacity for substantial urban growth and these plans will help manage future development.

■ **Other coastal township structure plans** have been initiated. The **Port Campbell** plan has been completed. Urban design guidelines have also been completed for **Peterborough**. Structure plans are progressing for **Wye River**, **Separation Creek** and **Kennett River**. The **Apollo Bay Structure Plan**, which will identify the capacity and location for additional urban development in Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo is nearing completion.

■ **Hinterland township studies** have been completed for the **Winchelsea Structure Plan 2021** and **Colac Urban Design Framework**. **Timboon** is being formalised, and work is progressing for **Camperdown**, **Terang** and **Cobden** (Corangamite Central Towns Review) and the **Colac Structure Plan**.

Access: Improving the management of access and transport

■ **Road Works and Safety improvements.** Total road funding and commitments associated with the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy is in excess of \$31.8 million for the period 2004 - 2007. To date, VicRoads has allocated a total of \$19.3 million for road works and safety improvements within the Great Ocean Road Region, including along the Great Ocean Road and the major north-south routes connecting the Princes Highway to the coast. Of this funding, over \$10 million has been spent on safety improvements along the Great Ocean Road between Torquay and Apollo Bay, including shoulder-sealing, guard rail, signing and line marking. A further \$3 million is being spent on similar improvements between Apollo Bay and Allansford. This complements the introduction of an **80 km/h speed limit** along the stretch of road from Anglesea to Apollo Bay in December 2004. Work has commenced on a \$1.25 million new roundabout on the intersection of the Great Ocean Road and Deans Marsh Road at Lorne.

■ **Relieving traffic pressures.** North-south routes between the Princes Highway and coastal localities are being improved to relieve traffic pressures on the Great Ocean Road and disperse visitors and economic benefits. Over \$8.1 million has been allocated or committed to works to improve safety and assist motorists on hinterland roads leading to Lorne, Apollo Bay, Lavers Hill and Port Campbell.

■ **Motor cycle safety improvements.** \$804,000 has been allocated to enhance motor cycle safety in the Great Ocean Road Region.

■ **Traveller information improvements.** Variable message signs totalling \$845,000 will be installed at a number of locations at the eastern end of the Great Ocean Road Region to advise travellers of route options and travel times, which will help to relieve traffic congestion.

■ **Pedestrian safety, bus stop and amenity upgrades.** Major improvements are underway to pedestrian crossing points at towns including Lorne, Apollo Bay, Anglesea and Aireys Inlet, along with new bus shelters and landscape works around activity hubs. A new pedestrian bridge will be constructed over Spring Creek at Torquay.