

Legislation introduced into Parliament

The *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Bill 2019* was introduced into the Victorian Parliament in November 2019. This is the first of two bills required to give effect to the Great Ocean Road Action Plan. It will:

- include a bilingual preamble by the Eastern Maar and by the Wadawurrung (one of the first Victorian Acts to include First Nation language in its body);
- recognise the state significance of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes;
- establishes a new parks management authority, the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, that is dedicated to the protection and management of the coast and parks along the Great Ocean Road;
- provides for the development of an overarching planning framework for the region;
- require dedicated environmental reporting on the condition of this special part of our state.

The Bill was debated and passed in the Victorian Legislative Assembly (lower house) in February 2019. The next stage is for the Bill to be debated in the Victorian Legislative Council (upper house).

This legislation, once passed, will not diminish the planning authority of councils and will not impact on their autonomy. Councils continue to be the responsible authority for development proposals under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority Office locations

On 21 February, The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP announced the headquarters of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority will be in Torquay, with district offices planned in Apollo Bay and Port Campbell. There will also be operational bases in other coastal towns along the Road.

All staff working for existing committees of management will be eventually transitioned into the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority and will retain their jobs, conditions and working locations.

Impacts of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic is being felt right across the globe, impacting us all. It is a difficult time for everyone, and our thoughts go out to you, especially those experiencing health concerns or financial hardships.

The Government is committed to establishing the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority as soon as the enabling legislation has been passed by Parliament. The management reform team is fully operational and can be contacted on greatoceanroad.actionplan@delwp.vic.gov.au.

For up to date information about COVID-19 see: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>.



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Great Ocean Road Action Plan

The following table provides a brief update on the 18 actions outlined in the Victorian Government's Great Ocean Road Action Plan (released in October 2018). To see the Action Plan in full, please visit: www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/great-ocean-road-action-plan



Legislation for Protection	Action 1	Legislate the policy	<i>Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Environs Bill 2019</i> introduced into Parliament in Nov 2019. This is the first of two Bills to give enduring effect to the management reforms.
	Action 2	Legislate the planning framework	The Bill (see Action 1) includes provisions for development of an overarching statutory planning framework.
	Action 3	Legislate the environmental economic accounts	The Bill (see Action 1) amends the <i>Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Act 2003</i> to require reporting on the condition and benefits of the environment for the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks.
A New Dedicated Parks Authority	Action 4	A Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority	The Bill (see Action 1) establishes the new Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority. Should the Bill pass Parliament, the new Authority will commence operations on or before 1 December 2020.
	Action 5	Work closely with local communities (establishing structures for involvement)	The views expressed in the local community consultation undertaken in Nov 2019 is informing the design of Authority community involvement structures. A summary of the feedback will be released in the coming months.
	Action 6	Traditional Owner capacity	Key deliverable once the Authority is established. The Authority will have a nominee of each recognised Traditional Owner group on the Board.
	Action 7	Sustainable funding	Sustainable funding options are being developed for Government consideration based on the feedback from local communities in November last year.
A New Overarching Planning Framework	Action 8	Community Involvement (shared vision and long-term objectives)	Community involvement commenced in 2019 with consultation on aspirations for the region as inputs to the development of a vision and long-term objectives. Draft vision and objectives are being developed with the involvement of responsible entities.
	Action 9	A Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan	Work has commenced on some background studies and inputs for the development of an overarching regional strategic framework plan. Further progression is subject to funding.
	Action 10	Monitor Implementation (of the SFP)	Key deliverable for the new Authority once established.
A Better Planning Approval Process	Action 11	Standing Advisory Committee	The Standing Advisory Committee has been established (for terms of reference and list of members refer www.planning.vic.gov.au/panels-and-committees/browse-panels-and-committees/projects/great-ocean-road-region-sac#documents)
	Action 12	Planning Guidelines	Guidelines are to be developed as the strategic framework planning and is subject to funding.
	Action 13	Planning services support to Councils	Planning services support is funding dependent.
Supporting Initiatives	Action 14	Sustainable Tourism	Progression of this work is funding dependent.
	Action 15	Improved road access and safety	Progression of this work is funding dependent.
	Action 16	Crown land administrative arrangements	Progression of this work is funding dependent.
	Action 17	Shared delivery of municipal like services	Will form part of the transition planning for the Authority.
	Action 18	Commercial tour operator licences	Surveys for tour operators and land managers complete. Results and further engagement will set the direction for policy reform.