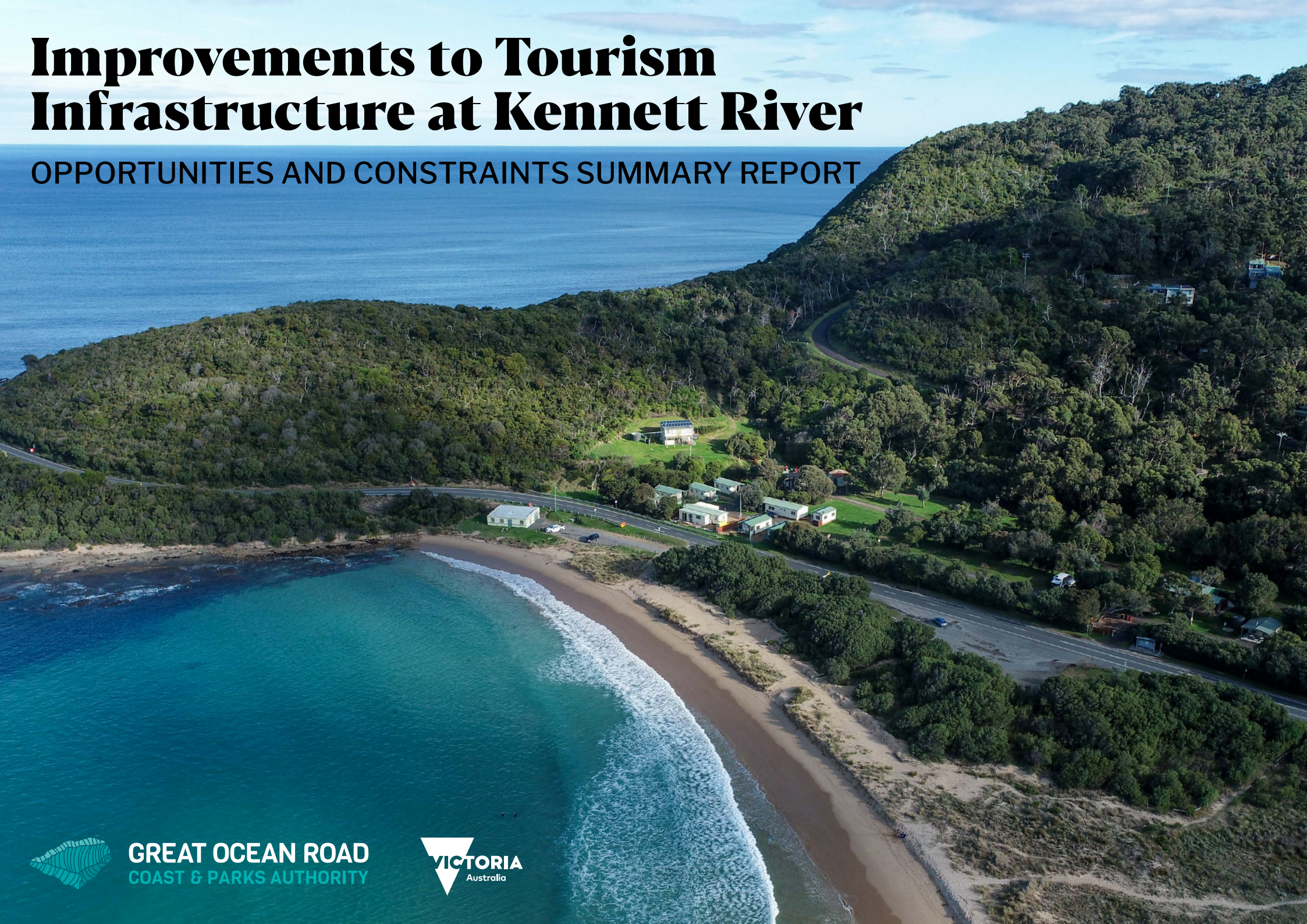


# Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS SUMMARY REPORT



**GREAT OCEAN ROAD**  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY



# Acknowledgement of Country

**We acknowledge and respect the separate and distinct Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the Great Ocean Road's land, waters, seas and skies and acknowledge their cultural knowledge that has led to sustainable practices and has cared for Country over tens of thousands of years.**

**We honour Elders past and present and express gratitude for their sharing of wisdom that has ensured the continuation of Culture and Traditional practices.**

**We are committed to genuinely partner and meaningfully build relationships that reflect self-determination and enable us to work together with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices, and together deliver on their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.**



# CONTENTS

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE DOCUMENT | 5  |
| OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS REPORT CONSIDERATIONS | 6  |
| SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS            |    |
| SITE SIGNIFICANCE                                   | 7  |
| INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS                         | 10 |
| TOURISM                                             | 12 |
| PUBLIC OPEN SPACE                                   | 16 |
| ACCESS AND MOVEMENT                                 | 20 |
| NATURAL ENVIRONMENT                                 | 23 |
| NEXT STEPS                                          | 25 |



# INTRODUCTION

## AND PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE DOCUMENT

### About the Project

Improvements to Tourism Infrastructure in Kennett River is an infrastructure initiative led by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority as part of the Geelong City Deal. Its goal is to enhance tourism and visitor infrastructure while respecting and celebrating the area's cultural and environmental values and providing facilities that are appropriate to Kennett River's size and unique character.

The improvements will provide new and improved facilities onsite, including:

- A new public amenity block
- An upgraded wastewater treatment facility in the Kennett River Family Caravan Park
- Car parking and road improvement works, traffic control (restriction of large coaches), and pedestrian safety.

### Purpose of the Report

The Kennett River Opportunities and Constraints Summary Report outlines the key insights gathered from community and stakeholder consultations, government policies, spatial analysis, and expert technical input.

Developed by head consultants SMEC, in collaboration with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, the report identifies the current opportunities and constraints for improvements to the Kennett River precinct.

This information will guide an appropriate proposal for the precinct that is responsive to the site's unique characteristics while ensuring compliance with the applicable statutory framework.

Significant contextual shifts have influenced this project, including the formal recognition of Eastern Maar Native Title (2023), the adoption of Victoria's Resilient Coast Strategy (2023), the Improving Equity of Access to Crown Land Caravan and Camping Parks Policy (2011) and other pieces of legislation, such as the *Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020*, the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*, *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the *Road Management Act 2004*, the *Water Act 1989*, *Environment Protection Act 2017*, *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Amendment Act 2019*, *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as well as the Marine and Coastal Policy (2020) and associated Guidelines.

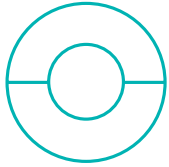
Other strategic planning documentation sourced includes the Kennett River Family Caravan Park Emergency Management Plan 2023-2024, Corangamite Regional Floodplain Management Strategy 2018-2028, Siting and Design Guidelines for Structures on the Victorian Coast 2020, the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020-2025, the Destination Action Plan (DAP 2017-2020), the Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy 2015-2025 and the early stages of the Great Ocean Road Coast and Park Authority's Sustainable Visitation Management Strategy.

# KENNETT RIVER

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS REPORT CONSIDERATIONS

### SITE SIGNIFICANCE

The site offers a chance to connect with and preserve Kennett River's coastal, small-town feel. The area's natural beauty, including its pristine beaches, dense vegetation, and abundant wildlife, attracts visitors and holidaymakers.



Aboriginal  
Cultural Heritage



European  
Heritage



Local  
Township



Natural  
Wildlife Habitat,  
Estuary and  
Foreshore



Kennett River  
Family Caravan  
Park

### INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

There's potential to enhance pedestrian safety and parking, and improve access to amenities, while considering the landscape, coastal hazards, and vehicle circulation.



Local Road  
Network



New Public  
Toilet Block



Upgraded  
Wastewater  
Treatment Plant

### TOURISM

Future strategies to shape balanced and sustainable tourism in Kennett River, manage visitor flow to prevent overcrowding, and protect the area's natural environs and character, are strongly desired.



Community and  
Visitor Education



Compliance and  
Enforcement



Great Ocean  
Road Coastal  
Trail



Tour Operator  
Licences



Sustainable  
Visitation  
Management  
Strategy

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

There's potential to re-imagine a 'shared zone' to facilitate the safe co-mingling of visitors and locals in a confined central area bound by the local road network and the river.



Coastal Edge  
and Use



Community /  
Event Space



Green  
Zones



Kennett River  
Trailhead

### ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

There's potential to improve pedestrian safety, traffic flow, parking efficiency, and emergency access. Precinct connectivity can be prioritised while managing limited space and vehicle access.



Buses



Access for  
Emergency  
Vehicles



Pedestrian  
Connections



Towing  
Vehicles



Formalised Road  
Infrastructure  
and Parking

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We must protect the natural environment, and there's also opportunity to improve it, encouraging native wildlife, native vegetation and the river estuary to thrive.



Bushfire Prone  
Area



Coastal  
Adaptation  
Planning



Kennett River  
Estuary and  
Beach



Flora and  
Fauna

# SUMMARY

## OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

### SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Kennett River is located on the lands of the Gadubanud People, part of Eastern Maar Country.

Kennett River is a small coastal hamlet, situated 174 km west of Melbourne, and halfway between Lorne and Apollo Bay. The hamlet is home to a vibrant local community located at the nexus of the ocean, river, and forested ranges.

Kennett River is also a popular holiday spot for campers and day trip travellers exploring the Great Ocean Road.

The township is within walking distance to the river and the beach and provides access to the Great Otway National Park via Grey River Road.

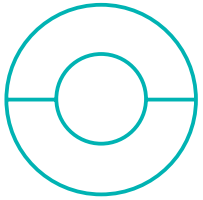
Following European settlement, it is one of 13 locations along the Great Ocean Road where construction camps were established and are protected by Victorian Heritage Listing.

The camps were known to resemble military establishments and usually comprised a communal dining marquee, kitchen, and recreational facilities. It then became a temporary settlement for the workers who had moved to work in logging operations in the Otway forests.

Today, Kennett River Caravan Park has approximately 120 campsites, 8 cabins, and accommodation for the caravan park staff. At peak periods, the park's population can exceed 700 people.

The area offers a chance to connect with and preserve Kennett River's coastal, small town feel. The area's natural beauty, including its pristine beaches, dense vegetation, and abundant wildlife attracts locals, visitors and holidaymakers alike.

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE



### Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Acknowledge and protect Aboriginal heritage places and values in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Protection of culturally significant sites and implementation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).
- Support achievement of Meerreengeeye ngakeepoorryeeyt Country Plan, as self-determined by Eastern Maar.
- Strengthen existing relationships with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) to establish opportunities for Caring for Country together.
- Provide opportunities for understanding Traditional Owners knowledge of Caring for Country.
- Explore opportunities for co-design with EMAC throughout the precinct.
- Provide interpretation and opportunities to learn about People and Country.
- Work towards opportunities for self-determination throughout the project.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- N/A



### European Heritage

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Acknowledge the European History associated with Kennett River as a base camp for building the Great Ocean Road and the Great Ocean Road war memorial.
- Opportunity to reinforce the Victorian Heritage Inventory Site Listing (H7620-0021.)

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Note the service road is listed under the *Heritage Act* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE



### Local Township OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to rehabilitate and enhance the landscape throughout the precinct.
- Opportunity to include water-sensitive urban design strategies wherever possible.
- Consolidate and improve wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Opportunity to improve the central community gathering space.
- Opportunity to increase useable open space.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Existing single entry/exit point off the Great Ocean Road reduces the options available to redesign the traffic network.
- Limited line marked public parking.
- Limited existing utility services.
- Limited existing pedestrian infrastructure such as pathways and crossings provide no separation between pedestrians and vehicle traffic in the local road network and on the Great Ocean Road.



### Natural Wildlife Habitat, Estuary, and Foreshore OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase water sensitive urban design to enhance water quality discharging into Kennett River.
- Infrastructure upgrades benefitting the riparian corridor of Kennett River and the estuary.
- The precinct is listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Requirement to maintain emergency service infrastructure within the riparian corridor of Kennett River.

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE



### **Kennett River Family Caravan Park**

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Upgrades to the wastewater treatment system and plant to reflect current EPA standards.
- Create clear visual separation and boundaries between public area and caravan park.
- Caravan park could provide facilities such as lockers and showers to support trail walkers.
- Sustainable water options to reduce reliance on Kennett River for water use.

#### **CONSTRAINTS**

- The existing wastewater system must be upgraded to accommodate current and future use. (combined use campers, beachgoers, locals and visitors).
- No mains water or sewer available.
- Upgrades to internal road network likely to impact existing camping sites.

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

There's potential to consolidate built assets, utilising sustainable water management strategies, and protecting areas of ecological significance. There's also potential to improve pedestrian movement between the public toilet block, caravan park, café, and beach while considering the landscape, coastal hazards, and vehicle circulation.

There's opportunity to work with the relevant authorities to restrict large tour coaches from entering or stopping within the Kennett River precinct.

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



### Local Road Network

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- There is an opportunity to work with authorities to restrict large tour coaches from entering or stopping in the Kennett River precinct.
- Reclaim and landscape part of Great Ocean Road service road that is within 30m of Kennett Riverbank.
- Trim vegetation to the north of the pedestrian beach accesses to approach sight distance following Austroads: Guide to Road Design Part 4A – Unsignalised and Signalised Intersections (AGRD4A).

#### CONSTRAINTS

- The road network is managed by external agencies, and GORCAPA are not yet authorised to introduce, change or enforce road rules.



### New Public Toilet Block

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide an all-abilities accessible public amenities block to service visitors of the beach, river and town.
- Consolidate amenities to create a passive security measure for public users, rather than being exposed in an open area.
- Provide a public toilet block in a location that provides safer connection to beach, car parks and cafe than the existing block.
- Utilise water efficiency measures and rooftop capture to reduce reliance on extraction or trucking water to site.
- Ensure the built environment does not impact visual amenity within Kennett River.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) will provide additional obligations on the design of the toilet block.
- No mains potable water and sewerage connection in Kennett River.
- The area is potentially subject to Coastal Acid Sulphate Soil and disturbance of these areas during construction should be limited.

## INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



### Upgraded Wastewater Treatment System

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Upgrade Wastewater Treatment system to accommodate Public Amenities Block and Caravan Park users.
- Water reuse for irrigation and efficiency opportunities.
- Upgrade to meet EPA requirements to ensure protection of soil and groundwater.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited space to construct the upgraded wastewater system.
- Site is not connected to sewer or mains water.

## TOURISM

Future strategies to shape balanced and sustainable tourism in Kennett River, manage visitor flow to prevent overcrowding, and protect the area's natural environs and character, are strongly desired by the local community and are identified as future priority actions by multiple agencies. This includes driver and visitor education, highlighting respect for local communities, wildlife, and the natural environment.

In the meantime, GORCAPA and Colac Otway Shire are exploring ways to strengthen parking restrictions, including time-limited parking, to improve traffic flow, public safety, and accessibility.

# TOURISM



## Community And Visitor Education

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Establish an education campaign for visitors and tour operators to promote sustainable and responsible visitation practices along the Great Ocean Road.
- Support proactive communications to raise awareness about behaviour that is detrimental to the environment and native flora and fauna.
- Any proposed approach to consider communication methods and formats in languages other than English.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Difficult to educate single-trip visitors.
- Limited controls available to verify sources of consumer-generated content (including social media.)
- Approach will need to consider communication in languages other than English.



## Compliance And Enforcement

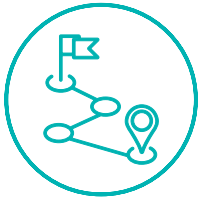
### OPPORTUNITIES

- Advocate for greater enforcement and compliance patrols for parking.
- Road Authority/s to enforce parking rules and limits.
- Provide clearly defined parking areas for all vehicles.
- Provide smart signage to let drivers know if parking is available.
- Explore the use of smart technology for enforcement and compliance activities.
- Monitor compliance with Tour Operator Licence conditions.
- Explore opportunities for coordination among all agencies on compliance and enforcement options and actions.

### CONSTRAINTS

- GORCAPA is not currently enabled as an enforcement agency and is reliant on other agencies with enforcement capabilities.
- Remoteness of Kennett River could impact resourcing and frequency of enforcement activities by responsible agencies.
- Additional resources are required for the relevant agencies to increase compliance and enforcement in Kennett River.

## TOURISM



### Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail Network

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to ensure the infrastructure aligns with the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail project.
- Opportunity to provide infrastructure for day and overnight hikers.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- N/A



### Tour Operator Licences

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore mechanisms in future tour operator licensing regulations reform for education, compliance and enforcement.
- Explore opportunities to develop tour operation licence holders' education.
- Require tour operators 'onboard' their clients with a standardised set of guidelines to visit the Great Ocean Road.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Tour Operator licensing regulations reform is a future priority. The outcomes of the reform are yet to be defined.

# TOURISM



## Sustainable Visitation Management Strategy

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop Great Ocean Road Sustainable Visitation Management Strategy (SVMS).
- Refer copies of Kennett River What We Heard Community Engagement Reports gathered as part of this project, as inputs to the development of the strategy.

### CONSTRAINTS

- The SVMS is a priority future initiative.

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

There's potential to reimagine a 'shared zone' to facilitate the safe co-mingling of visitors and locals in a confined central area bound by the local road network and the river.



### Coastal Edge And Use OPPORTUNITIES

- Create a better connection between the beach and the public toilet.

### CONSTRAINTS

- There is no existing pedestrian refuge on the Great Ocean Road between Kennett River and the beach.
- Future design and works to install pedestrian refuge is subject to future funding.

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



### Community / Event Space

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Build upon the sense of place that currently exists at Kennett River and heighten the sense of connection to this unique coastal environment.
- Enable increase in useable public space in Kennett River.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- N/A



### Green Zones

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Review landscape treatment around intersection crossings to minimise sightline obstruction.
- Opportunity to consider indigenous species plantings in the landscape.
- Design natural feature barriers and boundaries to keep pedestrians on the designated path network.
- Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) garden beds in strategic locations, such as around the existing wetlands or table drains, can reduce the rate of water flow across the site and provide natural buffers.
- Protect and enhance key views throughout the site to the river and foreshore.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited available space due to existing and proposed road network and other infrastructure within Kennett River including stormwater management.
- Planning and environmental considerations for activating public open spaces on coastal Crown land may include addressing climate hazards, flood risks, and bushfire-prone areas.
- Existing underground services and utilities.



## Kennett River Trailhead

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Highlight the Kennett River Nature Walk trailhead, which starts near the fishing platform near the Kennett River bridge.
- Opportunity to create signage and facilities for trailhead users in the precinct.
- Opportunity to accommodate overflow parking in the caravan park during off peak periods.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited parking for trail users.



## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

There's potential to improve pedestrian safety, traffic flow, parking efficiency, and emergency access. Precinct connectivity can be prioritised while managing limited space and vehicle access.

There's an opportunity to work with the relevant authorities to restrict large tour coaches from entering or stopping within the Kennett River precinct.



### Buses

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Designate appropriate parking bays to provide safer access for visitors and the local community.
- Limit and enforce the size and number of vehicles, parking durations and locations.
- Explore the potential of scheduling bus arrival times through future tour operator licensing reform.
- Buses transport multiple tourists at once, reducing traffic volumes and environmental impacts.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- There is limited space available for traffic infrastructure to minimise cultural and environmental impacts.
- There is a limited turning circle available for long vehicles entering the local road network.
- There is a limited turning circle for long vehicles available in the service road.

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT



### Access For Emergency Vehicles

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Delineate traffic lanes on Hawdon Avenue.
- Upgrade infrastructure for emergency vehicle to access the river in the event of an emergency.
- Co-ordinate infrastructure upgrades with emergency management plans and best practice.
- Ability to prioritise emergency access to emergency infrastructure.
- Ability to upgrade emergency infrastructure to also blend into the open space.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited space to alter access, to minimise cultural and environmental impacts.



### Safe Pedestrian Movement

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Formalise a pedestrian network that facilitates pedestrian movement to desired destinations in a safe manner that reduces environmental impacts and conflict with vehicles.
- Design a pedestrian path network that accommodates visitor drop-off, gathering spaces, and wildlife viewing areas.
- Formalise pedestrian crossings across Hawdon Avenue and Great Ocean Road.
- Opportunity to provide continuity along the Great Ocean Road Coastal Trail through the precinct.
- Provide a clearly defined and safe pedestrian crossing point on Hawdon Avenue between the caravan park and the Koala Cafe precinct.
- While not currently a part of the project, a pedestrian refuge is being considered by the Department of Transport and Planning as part of the separate Great Ocean Road upgrades project.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- No existing pedestrian refuge on Great Ocean Road.

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT



### Formalised Road Infrastructure & Parking

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Delineate parking spaces with line marking and consideration of parking controls / signage (e.g., time limited).
- Upgrade road infrastructure including resurfacing, realigning and/or to improve crossfalls and drainage.
- Upgrade drainage infrastructure in conjunction with road upgrades.
- Consider the rehabilitation of the road pavement on Hawdon Avenue and Great Ocean Road service road.
- Delineate traffic lanes and vehicle movement with line marking and signage.
- Potential to provide smart signage to flag number of parking bays available.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited space available for parking.
- Congestion created without formalise parking arrangements, line marking and limited enforcement.
- Existing fixed infrastructure.
- Proximity to Great Ocean Road T-intersection.



### Towing Vehicles

#### OPPORTUNITIES

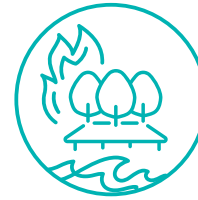
- Provide long-vehicle parking to accommodate long vehicles, such as cars towing caravans, horse floats, and marine craft.
- Improve and/or upgrade road intersections to improve vehicle manoeuvring, safety, and legibility.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- Limited parking space available for multiple long vehicles and vehicles towing.
- Limited turning circle available for long vehicles.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

There's potential to improve and protect the natural environment, encouraging native wildlife to thrive. Sustainable practices and purposeful landscaping can protect the natural environment while directing visitors toward suitable tourist offerings.



### Bushfire Prone Area

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore opportunities for robust and creative fire-resistant design that complies with the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).
- Integrate CFA infrastructure and bushfire preparedness education (in partnership with DEECA Forest Fire Management) as part of Kennett River's hamlet character.

#### CONSTRAINTS

- The site lies in a Bushfire Prone Area (BPA).
- Landscaping (including retention and planting of trees) must comply with the requirements of the BMO.
- Particular locations for building siting may necessitate the removal of existing vegetation under the BMO.

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

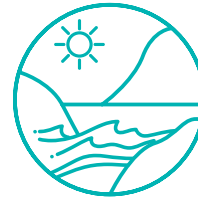


## Coastal Adaptation Planning OPPORTUNITIES

- Alignment with Victoria's Resilient Coast - Adapting for 2100+.
- Alignment with *Marine and Coastal Act 2018* and Siting and Design Guidelines for structures on Victorian Coast 2020.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Coastal hazards: sea level rise, erosion, inundation and storm tides.
- Design must meet Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) – flooding requirements, with input from the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.



## Kennett River Estuary And Beach OPPORTUNITIES

- Maintain and enhance ecological corridors and promote linkages in Kennett River.
- Maintain/enhance water quality entering Kennett River.
- Opportunity to align with our legislative and compliance obligations by ensuring that infrastructure within the Precinct is carefully balanced to minimise any adverse impacts on the Kennett River Estuary.
- Opportunity to utilise water harvesting, water reuse and water efficiency opportunities to decrease reliance on water extraction on Kennett River.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Limited space available for roadside parking.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



### Flora And Fauna OPPORTUNITIES

- Design to avoid impacts to indigenous and native vegetation.
- Maintain and enhance the overall extent and condition of indigenous and native vegetation and habitats throughout Kennett River Precinct.
- Landscaping to promote indigenous flora and fauna.
- Increase knowledge of local flora and fauna.
- Opportunity to remove noxious weeds.
- Opportunity to minimise visitation impacts on wildlife through education and signage.

### CONSTRAINTS

- Intersection site lines and emergency vehicle access must be maintained in the precinct which may impact existing vegetation and new planting selections.

# THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS...

The opportunities and constraints identified in this report help to inform the draft Precinct Plan, balancing community sentiment, protection of cultural heritage, best practice coastal planning, relevant legislation, and funding parameters.

## GET IN TOUCH

To stay up to date with the project, please visit the Have Your Say webpage - [Improvement to Tourism Infrastructure at Kennett River | Your Great Ocean Road](#)

The project team can be contacted at:  
[haveyoursay@GreatOceanRoadAuthority.vic.gov.au](mailto:haveyoursay@GreatOceanRoadAuthority.vic.gov.au)

