FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Apollo Bay Harbour Redevelopment Project

Project Timeline and Funding

Site Design & Features

Facilities and Amenities

Cultural Heritage and Environment

Fishing Co-Op and Redevelopment

Project Timeline and Funding

Q: What's happening at the Apollo Bay Harbour?
The redevelopment of Apollo Bay Harbour will provide an improved visitor experience and broaden the commercial and recreational opportunities in the precinct.

In June 2023, we were provided $10.19 million to deliver:

- Upgrades and minor extension to the Apollo Bay Fishermen's Cooperative building to accommodate an improved commercial offering and visitor experience with an improved outdoor terrace which provides additional space and seating.
- Construction of enhanced public open spaces including a new public viewing deck extending over the port operations depot roof.
- Improvements to the existing Port Operations Depot including facilities which create a safer workplace and provide greater visual access to the working harbour and slipway.
- Maximise public carparking at the Mothers Beach carpark and provide improved pedestrian and transport connections around the Apollo Bay Harbour Precinct.

Q: When will construction start?
Following approval of the Precinct Plan, works will begin in mid-late 2025 and be completed in stages. Construction is scheduled for completion by June 2026.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why has there been a delay to the project?
When GORCAPA took over the project, a commitment was made to ensure appropriate governance processes were adhered to, and that the practice of robust stakeholder and community engagement be continued. Delays have resulted through this transition in project management since the commencement of the project from Colac Otway Shire Council to GORCAPA when it became the relevant land manager for the Apollo Bay Harbour.

Changes to legislation and planning requirements have required the project team to review and update the earlier plans to ensure compliance with current requirements.

Q: How much funding is allocated to the project?
The project is funded under the Geelong City Deal with a total allocation of $12.61 million.

Q: How much funding is still available?
There is $10.19 million remaining for this project. To date, a total of $2.4 million has been expended on early works, investigations and studies required to facilitate relevant planning and works approvals.

Q: Have the Development Plan and its technical reports from 2020 been incorporated into the project?
Yes. The Apollo Bay Harbour Development Plan developed by Colac Otway Shire Council and relevant technical materials used in its development have been integrated into the new Opportunities and Constraints Report.

Site Design and Features

Q: Is a waterfront promenade proposed in the new design?
No. A new viewing deck for public use is proposed as an extension of the existing terrace and viewing platform (in front of the Fishermen's Co-op) and will extend out over the depot roof. The previously proposed promenade is no longer feasible due to safety issues arising from pedestrians sharing space with the port depot and slipway operations. The new viewing deck will be connected to other elements of the precinct by improved pedestrian paths and wayfinding.

Q: Why is the port depot proposed to stay in its existing location?
Maintaining the location of the current port depot will keep views of the harbour and retains proximity to port operations, including slipway activities, for the Port Manager and staff. Mother's Beach car park was previously identified as a potential location for the depot. However, it was determined this would create a range of operational and safety issues for the working harbour and create significant landscape and view line impacts.

This decision is consistent with the requirements of the *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will there be better connections to Point Bunbury and town?
The project aims to improve connectivity by upgrading pedestrian and cycling paths linking to Harbour precinct and the town centre, in line with legislative requirements. The potential for a path to Point Bunbury is being investigated given the range of constraints which apply to the area between the Co-Op and Point Bunbury.

All users will have access throughout the precinct with ramps and rails for access from the Co-op and viewing deck to Mothers Beach carpark.

For many years, a pathway or boardwalk along the dunes has been discussed. This is no longer being considered as part of the project due the significant challenge of building any structures in a coastal erosion zone.

Q: Is there a plan for better beach access?
Yes, pedestrian links to Mothers Beach will be upgraded to improve safety and minimise vehicle and pedestrian conflict.

Q: Will public access to the port operations depot be restricted?
Due to public and worksite safety concerns, access is restricted to areas of port operations. Options are being considered to allow public viewing of port operations from various perspectives, including the upper deck.

Facilities and Amenities

Q: Will there be a new Harbour Manager's office/workshop?
Yes, as the workshop area in the port operations depot is needed for maintenance of port facilities and port vessels. Designs for the Depot building will be created following feedback on the draft Precinct Plan and the completion of geotechnical and cultural heritage investigations; this is expected to occur in the second half of 2025.

Q: Where will public toilets and change rooms be located?
Public toilets will be located at the western end of the depot building, and we are seeking feedback on what other amenities, such as showers and lockers could be included. These public toilets will be co-located with other services such as emergency rescue vessel storage and a community meeting room.

Changing huts will be located adjacent to the Mothers Beach carpark and we are seeking community feedback on the preferred locations.

Q: Will the new public facilities have showers?
This is being considered as part of the amenities block connected to the Port Operations Depot, and we are seeking community feedback on this. A beach shower at Mothers Beach will continue to provide rinse facilities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Cultural Heritage and Environment

Q: How is cultural heritage being protected?
Two Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and earlier archaeological studies have guided the proposed redevelopment. Engagement with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is ongoing, and a process to confirm further investigations is underway.

Q: Will the freshwater well be featured?
The location, rehabilitation, interpretation and protection of a freshwater well previously recorded at this site are being explored as part of the cultural heritage storytelling. We are working closely with EMAC to understand the cultural significance of this well to Traditional Owners and how we can best protect and recognise it.

Q: What about dune safety and weedy vegetation?
Although dune safety works are not specifically included in project activities, options for dune safety are being considered as part of the development of a Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan. Project works and landscaping on public land may include removal of weedy vegetation in line with relevant policies and guidelines.

Q: How are climate change impacts like sea level rise and coastal erosion being dealt with?
The Apollo Bay coastline has experienced significant change in recent years in response to coastal hazards. Recent investigations within the harbour have revealed the extent of inundation from sea level rise, storm surge, and the coastal erosion hazard. These issues have the potential to affect different assets in different ways. For example, part of the Mothers Beach carpark is expected to be subject to coastal erosion in the medium-to-long term, and the design will need to consider the best approach to infrastructure provision.

Fishing Co-Op and Redevelopment

Q: What's happening with the Co-Op building?
The Co-Op is being upgraded. The upgrades include a modest expansion for commercial use, consistent with current policy requirements and the objectives of the Geelong City Deal funding. Designs for the Co-Op building will be progressed following feedback on the draft Precinct Plan, and we expect this to occur in the second half of 2025.

Q: Is the Co-op building heritage listed?
The heritage values of the Co-Op are recognised in the Colac Otway Shire planning scheme under local heritage overlay HO300. While the Co-Op is not listed on the Victorian Heritage Register, the redevelopment will respect and respond to its maritime character.

Q: Who is funding the new Co-op building?
The funding for the upgrading of the Co-Op building will come from Geelong City Deal project funds and contributions made by the Apollo Bay Fishermen's Co-Op.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have further questions about the project, please visit the Have Your Say webpage.

For additional questions or to request accessible formats, contact the project team at: info@GreatOceanRoadAuthority.vic.gov.au.