

# COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

APRIL 2023

APOLLO BAY - SKENES CREEK - MARENGO

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# Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Gadubanud People of the Eastern Maar as the Traditional Owners of the land, waters, seas and skies within the study area 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 the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country and the maintenance of spiritual and Cultural practices.

# Report Authors

This report has been prepared by Tract Consultants Pty Ltd (Landscape Architects, Urban Designers, Town Planners, Consultation), under the management of Colac Otway Shire Council and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority.

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# PROJECT OVERVIEW



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The townships of Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo are nestled along the Great Ocean Road (Great Ocean Road) between a dramatic backdrop of hills and the coastline. Whilst the towns have relatively small permanent residential populations; the nature of the three towns is changing and this is having a major impact overall on the Great Ocean Road and Shipwreck Coast region. Climate change, coastal erosion, governance arrangements, population growth, tourism and visitor challenges and changing community needs are placing stress on existing infrastructure. There is a need to ensure high-quality outcomes for these changing communities and that infrastructure can meet existing and future needs.

Colac Otway Shire Council (COSC), in partnership with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority), have prepared a Community Infrastructure Plan (CIP) for Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo. The CIP provides overarching and strategic direction for the potential planning and delivery of key infrastructure within Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo over the next 20-30 years.

The Authority should pursue a 10 year review period for the foreshore masterplans to ensure future implementation reflects best practice coastal management and current climate change knowledge.

The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (the Authority), in partnership with the Traditional Owners, manage, protect and foster resilience of the natural, cultural and heritage values of coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road.

Our role is to simplify fragmented and conflicting management arrangements and deliver on a shared vision for the future of the entire Great Ocean Road region.

Our Vision, Objectives, and the Principles from the Great Ocean Road and Environs Protection Act 2020, form our framework and guide and drive everything we do.



Figure 1. Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority - Our Framework

Colac Otway Shire Council (Council) manage public land other than Coastal crown land and have a regulatory role with regard to private land. Council has adopted a long term Community Vision which guides the work of the organisation. This is outlined below:

*By 2050, Colac Otway Shire will be a destination where people come to appreciate our unique and diverse environment and friendly communities.*

*We value the wisdom of this land’s first caretakers, the Gulidjan and Gadabanud peoples, and recognise all those who have cared for the land since.*

*We work to preserve what makes our place special. We focus on environmental sustainability to protect our precious natural assets.*

*We are a proud and resilient community that values our welcoming spirit. We embrace new people, new business, new ideas. Our region is a great place to learn, live, work and play.*

### 1.1.1 What is the CIP?

The CIP presents a long term vision, principles, and preliminary concepts and ideas for Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo for the purposes of community and stakeholder consultation.

**The CIP will be used to discuss and test the level of community and stakeholder support for a variety of concepts and ideas and to understand local priorities.**

Key components of the CIP include:

- **District Plan** - outlines primary linkages between town activity nodes and destinations (recreational trails, walking and cycling connections).
- **Foreshore Masterplans** - for Skenes Creek, Apollo Bay Central Foreshore and Marengo foreshores.
- **Streetscape Plans** - for the Great Ocean Road and Pascoe Street in the commercial heart of Apollo Bay.
- **Design Guidelines** - for the Apollo Bay Streetscape with a materials and planting palette and including signage, street furniture and landscaping
- **Harbour Development Plan** - to implement a redevelopment consistent with the Special Use Zone.

The project has already delivered the Harbour Development Plan.

Following community and stakeholder consultation, supported concepts and ideas from the CIP will form the basis of further testing and detailed design work (through other projects) to develop estimate costs, establish feasibility and explore funding opportunities.



### 1.1.2 Why do we need a CIP?

The CIP aims to address the following key matters:

- **Facilitating active transport opportunities** - Well-planned, inviting and safe pedestrian and cycle connections provide a range of social, health, environmental and economic benefits for the community, and more broadly, allows people to develop an appreciation of place. Previous studies have identified the opportunity to expand and improve key linkages and streetscapes for walking and cycling within the three townships. Prioritising walking and cycling, as well as enhancing pedestrian amenity will help to reduce the dependency on car transport and parking, create vibrant streets, improve safety and surveillance and strengthen business activity.
- **Meeting Visitor Needs** - The three towns all experience extreme population fluctuation during peak periods, which places significant pressure on infrastructure and services. To ensure infrastructure can meet existing and anticipated visitor demand and expectations there is a need to provide a more strategic approach to the provision of infrastructure (including bus parking, toilet provision, traffic flows, streetscape amenity and pedestrian access). This also provides benefits for the local economy and for the provision of local infrastructure.
- **Foreshore Enhancements** - The foreshore reserves at Apollo Bay, Marengo and Skenes Creek provide a key leisure destination for both locals and visitors. While each foreshore reserve is unique, a coordinated design strategy is required to guide much needed upgrades to the public realm and infrastructure, as well as ensure the foreshore areas continue to provide an engaging, accessible and sustainable place for locals and visitors to enjoy into the future.

- **Apollo Bay Streetscape Improvements** - There is a need to develop comprehensive streetscape improvement plans for the key streets around Apollo Bay, in particular the Great Ocean Road and Pascoe Street. A key consideration of the CIP is to continue to investigate the recommendations of the Colac Otway Shire Tourism Traffic and Parking Strategy(2019) and to tie these to broader public realm improvements. In particular, the opportunity to improve the pedestrian amenity of the Great Ocean Road, to re-route oversize vehicles along Pascoe Street to reduce traffic along the Great Ocean Road at peak times, to provide additional bus parking and improve the utilisation of off street and on street parking, as well as improve pedestrian access.

The CIP will also bring together a range of concurrent studies and projects affecting Apollo Bay including, but not limited to, the current work at the Apollo Bay Harbour and the Colac Otway Shire Tourism Parking and Traffic Study.

### 1.1.3 What has informed this CIP?

The CIP has been informed by the following key inputs:

- Community and stakeholder suggestions and feedback;
- Background technical studies including consideration of coastal process and hazards, a community infrastructure audit and assessment, and a civil infrastructure audit;
- Review of other relevant State and Local legislation, strategies and policies which inform, govern or influence infrastructure provision; and
- Background research focusing on urban design and landscape.

These inputs are summarised in the Issues and Opportunities Paper which was released to the public in November 2019 and the Phase 2 Consultation Summary released in March 2020 (both available on COSC's website).

### 1.1.4 How will the CIP be used?

The CIP will inform infrastructure planning relevant to each partner agencies respective management estate. The CIP will also serve as an advocacy piece, providing a clear platform for agencies, both individually and in partnership, to seek funding opportunities to support implementation.

Although the CIP purposely works across management boundaries to ensure an integrated planning approach, each agency is responsible for endorsing and delivering items within their estate, including seeking approval against statutory triggers and stakeholder permission where applicable.

The CIP's delivery horizon varies, with some items likely to be delivered in the short term whilst most across a medium to long term timeframe. Community consultation, available budget, and planning complexity will guide work priorities and inform indicative staging.

### 1.1.5 What matters are outside the scope of the CIP?

The following matters are outside the scope of the CIP:

- **Mitigation of erosion on the foreshore and the Great Ocean Road is being considered as part of a separate project being undertaken by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority with the support of the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action.**
- Changes to land use zoning across the study area, including the Harbour Precinct.
- Changes to land use permitted or prohibited by existing zone provisions.
- Planning for private property.
- Building heights.
- Bypass of Apollo Bay.
- Relocation of the Golf Course.
- Infrastructure not provided by COSC or the Authority including water, sewer, gas and telecommunications.
- Operational and management arrangements for public toilets.
- Preparation of a Master Plan for the Apollo Bay Recreation Reserve.

While this document is intended as a plan to guide the future infrastructure needs of Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo, it is acknowledged that it doesn't capture all future community and social infrastructure needs.

Several community infrastructure items identified through earlier studies are being investigated through separate projects and have been excluded from this CIP (refer to Part A – District Plan at Section 2.3). It is also likely some new infrastructure needs will emerge over time after the CIP is adopted.

## 1.2 The Study Area

The overall study area for the CIP project is focused on the townships of Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo. The study focuses on the public realm and publicly owned land areas within the boundary; as shown on the figure opposite; including road reserves, council and crown land, the foreshore, creeks and recreational open spaces.

Detailed study areas apply to specific key deliverables for the project. Detailed study areas are outlined further in Parts A-C of the CIP.



Figure 2. Study Area

1.3 Report Structure

Figure 2 below, outlines the overall structure of the CIP.

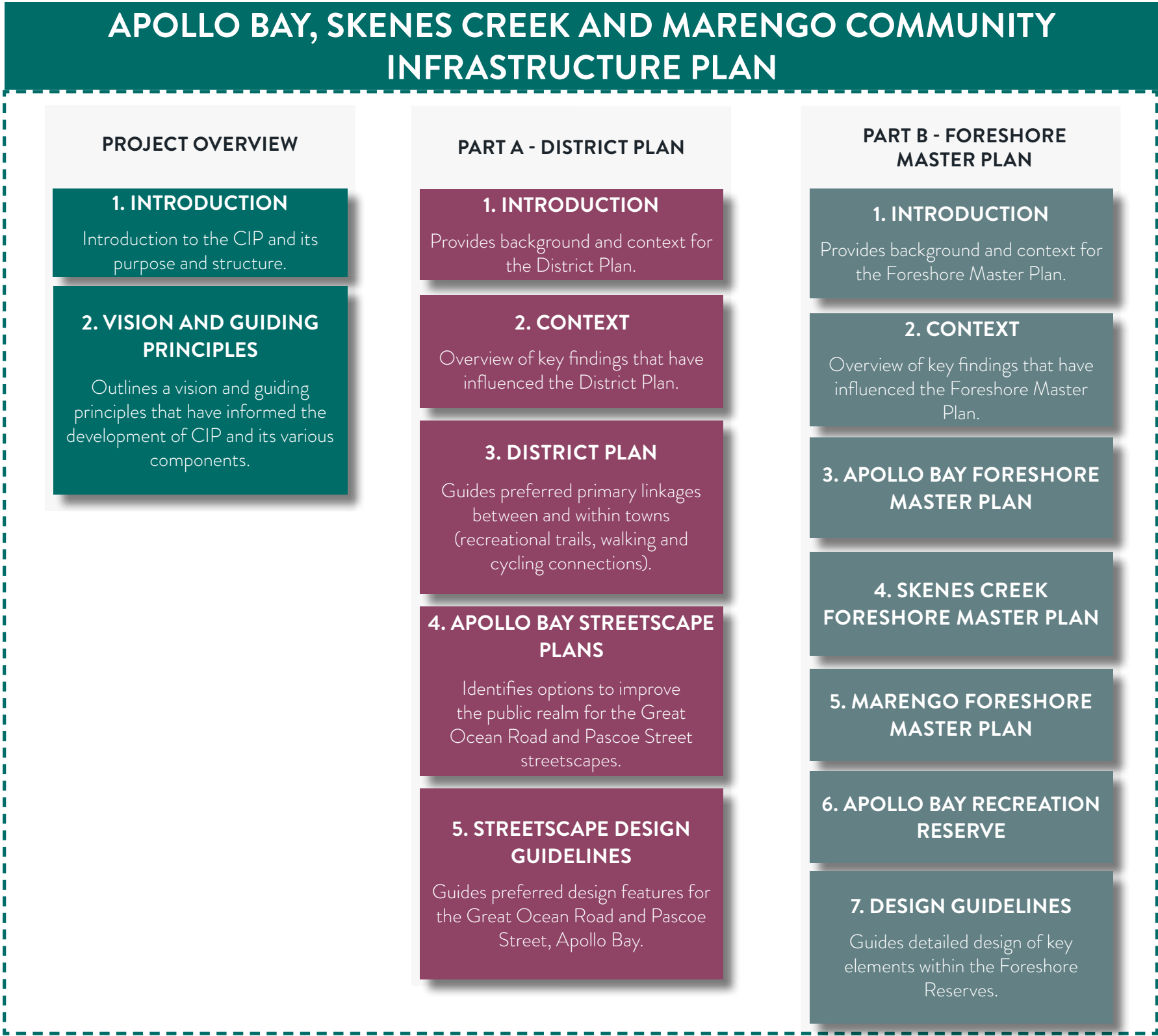


Figure 3. Report Structure



1.4 Project Process

The CIP has been developed across a number of stages as outlined below.

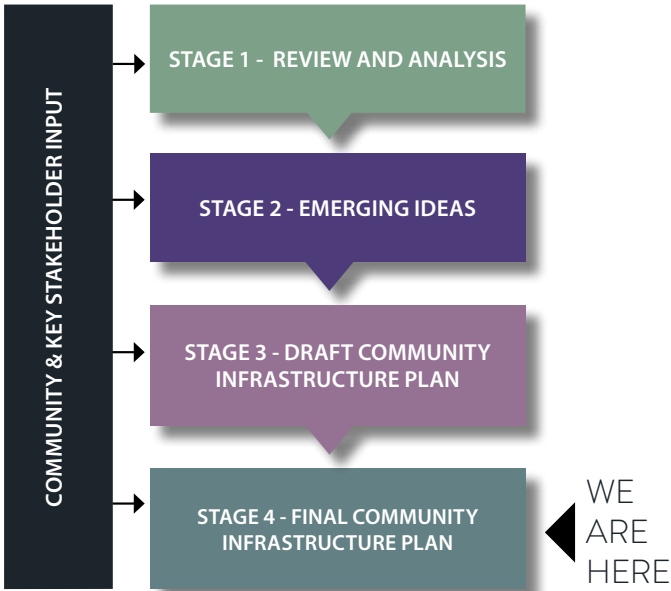


Figure 4. Project stages

1.4.1 Stage 1 - Review and Analysis

Issues and Opportunities Paper

An Issues and Opportunities Paper was prepared as part of Stage 1 to identify and understand the context, issues, processes, challenges and opportunities facing the townships of Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo.

The Issues and Opportunities Paper was informed by specialist technical studies, along with numerous other previous reports and Stage 1 Consultation feedback.

Stage 1 Consultation

The purpose of Stage 1 Consultation was to understand, discuss and confirm the existing opportunities and issues facing the project (including negotiables and non negotiables).

1.4.2 Stage 2 - Emerging Ideas

Stage 2 - Emerging Ideas, outlined a number of preliminary thoughts and ideas for the Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo Community Infrastructure Plan.

Stage 2 Consultation

The purpose of Stage 2 Consultation was to inform the community of preliminary and emerging ideas and seek feedback with regards to these ideas.

For further details on the Stage 1-2 Consultation, the Issues and Opportunities Paper Or the Emerging Ideas, please visit <https://www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/Planning-building/Strategic-planning/Current-Strategic-projects/Community-Infrastructure-Plan-Apollo-Bay-Skenes-Creek-Marengo>



Example of consultation material for Stage 2.

## 2 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 The Vision

The vision provides a preferred long term vision for Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo and a sense of how the three towns will look, function and feel into the future.

The vision has been influenced by community input and feedback to ensure it represents the local community aspirations for their collective townships.

This Vision has provided high level guidance throughout the development of the CIP.

***Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek and Marengo will become unique and enjoyable places for both local residents and visitors, across all seasons.***

*The three towns will be highly connected places, each with their own authentic form, identity and sense of place. Apollo Bay will continue to play its vital role as a key service centre for the surrounding community, offering a range of community facilities, while maintaining its small fishing village character. Marengo and Skenes Creek will provide a relaxed coastal lifestyle for all.*

*The three towns will form part of and enhance the Great Ocean Road and Shipwreck Coast experience, offering a range of enjoyable destinations and journeys for visitors and improving the benefits, both direct and indirect, associated with tourism for local residents.*

*The landscape and environment will continue to provide a framework for the three towns. It will inform the role and function of public spaces and contribute to their visual identity. The three towns will lead as an example for environmental sustainability, preserving and enhancing their natural environment for generations to come.*

*They will celebrate the region's culture and heritage, a source of food, resources and materials for the Eastern Maar, to the region's rich fishing and timber history.*

*The foreshores, streets and public spaces will be convenient, exciting and safe for people to use, and visually vibrant, both day and night all year-round.*



## 2.2 Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles have been developed from community and stakeholder consultation and analysis of the key issues and opportunities.

The Guiding Principles, along with the Vision, will be used to direct and assess all future planning and design outcomes within the precinct to ensure that future development is consistent with the vision and the community’s aspirations.

NOTE: All images are indicative only.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

#### Maar Living Culture

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- No harm to cultural heritage.
- Reintroduction of original names.
- Enhanced opportunities for story telling in built infrastructure.

Collaboration with the Eastern Maar will continue to shape the outcomes of the CIP to ensure they can continue to assert their rights and interests. Although these three principles will remain central to the implementation of the CIP throughout its lifespan, the CIP must remain responsive to additional elements and opportunities as our partnership with Traditional Owners continues to grow.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

#### Create a sustainable and robust environment that can adapt to environmental change over time

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Re-establish the quality and viability of coastal ecological reserves through the repositioning of road and trail infrastructure and formalising / rationalising beach access points.
- Ensure existing and future infrastructure considers the impacts of climate change, particularly erosion and sea level rise.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable initiatives to be incorporated into new buildings and development i.e. renewable energy, low carbon emissions etc. Water sensitive urban design to be incorporated in public spaces and car parking areas.
- Utilise the most current and best available coastal modelling around climate change when redesigning foreshore areas.

The CIP has considered the best available data to ensure the process is responsive to climate change pressures. However, given the lifespan of the CIP, prior to the implementation of individual actions further investigations will be undertaken to ensure the actions remain appropriate and continue to align with Principle 2.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

#### Maintain a ‘small town’ development scale while catering to seasonal peaks in visitor numbers

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Maintain the low scale of building development. The town, its built form and infrastructure should appear as an authentic part of the town and design form should always be shaped by the landscape.
- Maintain the separation of development areas and the visual relationship between the landscape and ocean that defines Apollo Bay and related coastal settlements. The landscape should always be a visually dominant part of the visual experience.
- Develop a framework of facilities and leisure settings to meet a mid-level of local and visitor needs but develop these in association with multi-use spaces that cater for larger numbers and future change.
- Public toilets should be provided at key activity nodes. They should be functional, accessible, well designed and integrated into the surrounding built form and landscape setting.
- Limit the spread of road and parking infrastructure and the visual impacts associated with these uses.
- Design for the individual as well as the group. Apollo Bay and its coastal settlements should always provide a personal experience.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4**

Strengthen the identity and authentic character qualities of each township

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Apollo Bay, Marengo and Skenes Creek should each retain their separate form, identity and sense of place. They should be seen as authentic and individual coastal settlements.
- Each place should be seen as a distinct leisure destination with facilities and services matching the needs of visitors, but the infrastructure capacity of each destination should be limited to what can be comfortably absorbed by the landscape and environment of each setting.
- Each place should serve as the starting point or destination for a local and regional trail system.
- Development within each town setting should not adversely impact the beach / coastal walk which should always retain its ‘wild coast’ scenic quality.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5**

Meet local community infrastructure needs through the development of shared use facilities

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Develop shared use infrastructure that serves the needs of locals and visitors.
- Consider the role of temporary facilities to meet seasonal and special needs.
- Use shared infrastructure settings to bring locals and visitors together.
- Where possible and appropriate, retain existing infrastructure to minimise environmental impact and cost.
- Build community infrastructure that enhances economic, environment and social outcomes for the community.



**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6**

Make it easier and safer to get around for all ages and all abilities

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Develop a formal pathway / bicycle network to serve Apollo Bay. Visually reinforce the neighbourhood and pathway structure through tree planting.
- Formalise parking and road access to increase parking efficiency and minimise landscape and environmental impacts.
- Limit the impacts of future parking. Where possible, people should be directed to park where there is existing capacity. Additional parking demand should be accommodated through the formalisation of existing parking areas and / or streetscape improvements.
- Create a range of key leisure destinations that act to draw casual parking away from retail centre parking areas and reduce competition for parking in the retail area.
- Reduce car dominance and encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement between key destinations.
- Make the pedestrian trail network a specific leisure feature.
- Create ‘loops of interest’ that accommodate various levels of available leisure time, such as one hour, two hour, four hour and all day trail experiences.
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and amenity. Provide shade and shelter to a level where it encourages pedestrian and cyclist movement.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE 7**

Design for integrated and sustainable design outcomes

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?**

- Design for integrated responses to coastal protection, environmental, infrastructure and leisure needs rather than individual system based design responses.
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities for maintaining community facilities and public spaces within the study area are clear.
- Provide adequate funding and maintenance budgets that allow for the delivery and upkeep of the community facilities and public spaces.





GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8

Improve visitor wayfinding and place legibility

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?

- Improve the visitor arrival experience within the foreshore and Great Ocean Road retail setting. Information should be available at multiple locations and, along with the trail system, provide visitors with multiple activity options.
- Each key destination should provide information about the local and regional destination network.
- The landscape of each key visitor destination and the connecting network should visually link visitors to the environment.
- Ensure a consistent design, message and branding across the townships.
- Ensure signage is legible, adopts universal design principles and assists in overcoming language barriers (i.e. English and Mandarin).



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 9

Develop an activity and connections framework for the three towns

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?

- Develop a more diverse series of key destinations (multi-use settings) and access networks to meet the needs of a wide range of visitors and locals. These should represent the best qualities of the study area and its region.
- Connect places by road and pedestrian / bike trail. There should always be a pedestrian access alternative.
- Design places and facilities that allow for shared visitor and local use.
- Develop integrated design responses that simultaneously consider environmental, leisure and infrastructure needs.
- Create a flexible design response that anticipates seasonal variations in the level of use and long-term environmental change.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 10

Redesign Apollo Bay foreshore reserve to provide better beach access and more attractive park settings

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?

- Create a central leisure space that serves the needs of locals and visitors. This space should serve as the start of the Great Ocean Walk and be the place where locals and visitors meet.
- The foreshore will be a major destination in Apollo Bay. It will be a visually distinctive place and well designed space that provides a welcoming, safe, exciting and quality public space for all kinds of people and all age groups.
- Provide a clear and connected trail between the foreshore and the Harbour, as well as the shops.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 11

Change the function and pedestrian capacity of the Great Ocean Road retail area

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CIP?

- Allow for widening of the Great Ocean Road footpath.
- Develop a more structured approach to footpath use that separates pedestrian movement and services functions from static uses such as eating and resting.
- Develop more informal road crossing points to allow for better pedestrian connections between the foreshore and the retail strip.
- Improve the landscape quality of the retail centre and foreshore reserve through tree planting and ground level landscape works.







