

'What We Heard' Eastern View Community Consultation

Community Feedback from a listening post that was held in
Aireys Inlet on 23 April 2022



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Participants were asked to comment on short and long-term adaptation options aimed to mitigate the impact coastal hazards at Eastern View. Four adaptation options were presented, and respondents commented on the effectiveness of each option. The open house was hosted by staff from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA).

This is what we heard:

There was understanding of the environmental pressures facing Eastern View and the risk to open coastlines in the area. Some of the issues identified by participants included sea level rise, climate change and erosion of the foreshore which has resulted in the narrowing of the beach. Participants indicated the site was highly valued for recreational activities by local residents who have developed a strong connection with the area over the last 30 years. Retreat of the Great Ocean Road and improved dune management received the strongest support while a rock revetment had the least support. Geo-rock bags as a temporary option was deemed an appropriate action while long-term planning was being developed.

Four options were presented on the day outlining different actions informed by the *Marine and Coastal Policy 2020*. The following is the feedback received for each option.

Sand Renourishment

It was noted by several local residents that erosion in the area has significantly increased over the past 30 years. There was acknowledgement that natural coastal processes would be respected if the sand nourishment was implemented however participants identified that this option was a short-term measure due to ongoing costs and the limited ability to reduce long-term erosion. Some respondents were concerned that the sand would be washed away and ineffective after a storm or large tide.

Overall, sand renourishment did not receive strong support.

"I have seen significant variation along Eastern View particularly over the last 10 years and some days the whole beach is covered while a few days later all the sand is completely gone."

Dune Management

This option received the most support. The natural appeal of this option was a main reason cited by supporters. It was noted that dune management had previously been successful in many areas around the world and provided co-benefits such as improved biodiversity values and stabilising the dune system. The greatest barriers identified to implement dune management was ineffective signage, fencing and education about keeping off the dunes.

"Some of the dune systems in the local area have even returned. If combined with adequate fencing, signage and education this could be a really effective option."

Managed Retreat

While not an option presented, managed retreat of the Great Ocean Road was mentioned as an additional option to be considered. Participants did not provide detail of where the road should be relocated to however identified that climate change would have increasingly harmful impacts to all aspects of the coastline. A common question asked was 'What was the most important thing we are protecting – the coastline or the Great Ocean Road?'

Other participants suggested that the Great Ocean Road could be raised in height to accommodate any future sea level rise.

"For me, this is about what we value. Are we trying to protect the Great Ocean Road or the natural environment on which the road exists?"

"Relocation of the road would be extremely costly, disruptive and would significantly impact the community during peak busy times."

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Temporary Geo-Rock Bags

The majority of respondents supported this option as an interim measure to protect critical infrastructure including power poles, car parks and beach access. Some participants noted that the geo-rock bags do not look natural and would appreciate further consultation prior to construction. The biggest concern expressed was the unknown length of time that they would exist to protect public infrastructure.

“Rock bags seem to be an appropriate measure, but how long will they be there for?”

“While designed to be temporary, the rock bags are unsightly and do not look natural.”

Engineered Revetment or Seawall

There was general consensus among participants that this option would be effective, provide long-term protection, however the natural environment is likely to be negatively impacted in the process through end scouring processes elsewhere. A revetment or seawall would also significantly impact amenity and the natural beauty of Eastern View and this was highlighted as a concern by participants.

An engineered revetment or seawall received limited support.

“This would significantly impact the beach appearance and amenities and safety view of life savers to the river outlet. It would be devastating to lose the beach.”

“Sea walls and physical armouring has been used in a number of locations recently and seem to be effective and aesthetically pleasing if it has a natural look.”

Other Comments

A majority of participants also provided additional comments which included the following:

- Respecting natural processes
- Alternative adaptation options as seen in other countries such as tunnels or bridges
- Improved education concerning protecting and maintaining the existing dune system
- Maintaining the existing environmental and recreational values of the area and avoiding hard infrastructure
- Further consultation with community particularly around long-term hard infrastructure or managed retreat.



Next Steps (TBC)

DELWP and Great Ocean Road and Coastal Parks Authority thanks the participants who provided valuable feedback which will be used into future planning decisions. The community will be informed about what short-term protection works will be undertaken.

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