

# Business & Tourism Work Group

3.00pm to 5.00pm, Friday 3 June

Meeting 1# Minutes

COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE

**Attendees:** Paul Greene, CRC (Chair); Rex Brown; Brydie Paton; Sharee Evans; Clare Malone (COS), Tony White (COS); Kerri Erler, (RDV).

## 1 Welcome and Introductions

Paul Greene welcomed Work Group members and invited them to introduce themselves. He explained that the Work Group has been established to engage with and represent the views of the whole community.

## 2 Briefing from Colac Otway Shire (COS) and Regional Development Victoria (RDV) Re Support for Work Group

Kerri Erler from RDV provided an overview of work undertaken to date following the Christmas Day bushfires in terms of economic and tourism development noting the allocation of \$1 million by the Government. She advised that in addition to administering the Great Ocean Road Economic and Community Recovery Fund, Regional Development Victoria (RDV) can provide a conduit between the Work Group and other areas of her department and across government to other potential funding opportunities.

Tony White explained that the Economic Development and Events area of COS will provide secretariat support for the Work Group and provide assistance with research and preparing project proposals and funding submissions.

## 3 Great Ocean Road Economic and Community Recovery Fund – Submissions

The Work Group agreed that all proposals for funding should be brought to the group for consideration.

The Work Group discussed two proposals for the Great Ocean Road Economic and Community Recovery Fund, \$60,000 for a Wye River 3 Peaks and Club to Pub Run and \$175,000 for an economic development grant for an integrated suite of initiatives aimed at stimulating tourism in the Wye River and nearby villages.

Paul explained that the Wye River 3 Peaks and Club to Pub Run would be two days of competition on an annual basis held on the weekend following Labour Day in March 2017 to raise funds for the Wye River Surf Life Saving Club and consist of:

- A THREE PEAKS RUN/ WALK on Saturday to promote exercise and family involvement rather than competition potentially with a Three Peaks Passport where completing each peak will entitle a competitor to have their passport stamped with the ultimate (but not essential) achievement being the completion of all three peaks. The participants will be encouraged to complete one, two or three peaks depending upon their desire and fitness levels, walking or running. This day is about participation not competition.
- Sunday: the Club to Pub run. A competitive day. The starting point will be on the grass adjacent the General Store. The route will follow Paddy's Path then go left into Harrington Street, up the Dollar Track to the Wye Road and then to Sabine Road. The route then follows Sabine Road to Wye Track (also known as Old Coach Road) which descends approximately 6 kms to Wye River. On return to Wye River, the route will run down through Harrington Park, finishing at the pub. This route covers approximately 22 kms and does not access the Great Ocean Road and as such there would be no need for its closure.

The event will be run by a committee organised by the Wye River SLSC which is an incorporated body. The purpose of the grant application is to underwrite the financial viability of the event with the objective being that it become self supporting.

Rex Brown advised that Otway Coast Tourism Inc is seeking funding for a suite of 4 initiatives incorporating marketing and infrastructure to facilitate tourism centred on Wye River. The package comprises:

- An Integrated Marketing Program (\$110,000) consisting of
  - development of inspirational local tourism content, based on 20 stories about 20 places in the area
  - integration of the content into the local Otwaycoast and regional Gort websites
  - direct promotional program using google Adwords and Facebook ads, using best practice
  - promotion through targeted journalist stories in high profile publications
  - best practice workshop for our members
- Village walking tracks (\$40,000). Several tracks have been shut since the fires. Existing tracks would be reopened



Colac Otway  
SHIRE



safely. A new track would extend to the Wye Falls in an extension of the Wye Riverside walk. Other walks are: Wye Track, Wye Road, Kennett River Walk, Birds track and Paddy's Path. This would also include a 'check of concept' for a walk from Wye to Kennett. Explanatory brochures, maps and interpretive signage on site would be part of this initiative.

- Koala interpretation material (\$15,000). High quality information boards informing tourist about the local Koalas. Responsible viewing opportunities would be provided at the Wye River Shop and near the Kennett car park, the latter in partnership with the Kennett community. Also at Grey River. This will also include arranging with DELWP for planned relocation of Koalas from overcrowded problems areas at Cape Otway into the forest around Wye as the eucalypt trees return to a suitable food supply – approximately 12 months.
- Destination Plan (\$10,000). This would be a facilitated destination plan similar to the well established planning process already done so well by GORRT in other areas.

The Work Group agreed to support both proposals. Paul Green advised that he would now seek the support of the CRC for the proposals.

#### **4 Discussion - Ideas and Opportunities for Projects**

Paul explained that it is important to hear what ideas the Work Group has. He advised that he has had some discussions with the state government which indicate that they are supportive of activities that have long term benefits.

Tony White advised of an opportunity for people to participate in a one day Stop Go training course to enable them to obtain employment with one of the traffic management companies working along the Great Ocean Road and surrounds or do this work in a volunteer capacity.

There was discussion in relation to research and data, particularly that relating to visitation. Sharee Evans advised that she has very useful data on visitation for the past 15 years which she has provided to COS and can make available to the Work Group. Tony White explained that Adrian Healey from the Apollo Bay Tourist Information Centre also collects data on water usage which is meaningful indicator of the number of people in the region.

The Work Group discussed the work of the Economic Pillar with Paul, Rex and Bridie advising that they had not been engaged and that little support had been provided directly to Wye River and Separation Creek.

There was also discussion around negative media and the detrimental effect this has had on tourism and how this could potentially be combatted. It was suggested that the Work Group utilise media contacts to generate positive media stories and that a schedule of contacts and subjects be prepared.

The Work Group also discussed the potential to extend the Great Ocean Walk from Lorne to Apollo Bay and opportunities in relation to improving access to the Wye River Falls.

There was also discussion around utilising technology to provide interactive tourism information. Tony White advised that this could be achieved through the Free WiFi project being rolled out. The status of the NBN roll-out was also raised with Tony White advising that a briefing on this is scheduled for the Shire on Tuesday.

The Work Group also discussed opportunities for information dissemination and the importance of working through one website to integrate marketing. Tony White advised that information could be directed through the new Destination website.

Paul advised that the CRC had agreed to place a suggestion box at the Pub and Bridie advised that they would be happy to have one at the General Store as well.

#### **Action/Outcome**

Work Group members to make data on usage available to the group.

Kerri Erler to seek advice from RDV Media staff to obtain advice on and how the negative media could potentially be combatted.

Work Group to prepare schedule of contacts and subjects to generate positive media.

Tony White to arrange for the next meeting presentations on the NBN status and the Destination website.

#### **5. Other Business**

Next meeting to be arranged based on the availability of the presentations on the NBN status and the Destination website.