



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

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\$6.3 MILLION TOURISM BOOST TO ICONIC GREAT OCEAN WALK

Victoria's south-west will receive a major tourism boost after the Brumby Labor Government today announced the \$6.3 million final stage of an upgrade to the iconic Great Ocean Walk to make it more appealing to day-trippers and less experienced walkers.

Speaking today from Logans Beach in Warrnambool, Premier John Brumby said the enhancements would boost tourism, make the 104-kilometre Walk more accessible and provide economic benefits to surrounding towns and cities, including Warrnambool.

"The enhancement and extension of the Great Ocean Walk will provide a world-class nature-based tourist attraction for experienced and inexperienced hikers alike," Mr Brumby said.

"The new tracks, weatherproofing, and visitor facilities will boost tourism to the region by making the Walk more accessible.

"Furthermore, Parks Victoria will now work on attracting new private investment to the Walk and its surrounds to build accommodation and boost business for tourism operators and the towns and cities nearby."

Mr Brumby said the enhancements were needed after a Parks Victoria review of the Walk revealed limitations including on-road walking, lack of good trailheads and missing links with major tourism icons such as the Twelve Apostles.

The Great Ocean Walk Experience project includes:

- Upgrading walking tracks for all-seasons weather access;
- Re-aligning additional off road tracks to keep users away from vehicles;
- New trailheads at Apollo Bay and at other key locations;
- Extended campsites to be located between Johanna and Princetown; and
- An underpass to enhance safety of walkers crossing the Princes Highway between Gibsons Steps and Glenample Homestead.

Member for Western Victoria, Gayle Tierney said today's announcement followed the first stage of the *Great Ocean Walk* project, announced in January 2009.

"That upgrade included ten kilometres of new walking tracks from Moonlight Head to the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre, including bridges and boardwalks, signage, seats and a key viewing point at the end of the walk," she said.

Ms Tierney said the \$4.2 million in would come from the *Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)*, with Parks Victoria contributing \$2.1 million.

"The Brumby Labor Government's RIDF has committed more than \$591 million to more than 380 projects worth more than \$1.58 billion in new infrastructure investment in regional and rural Victoria."

Mr Brumby said the Government had topped-up the RIDF by \$260 million under its *Ready for Tomorrow: A Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria*, announced last week.

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“Over the last decade we’ve put the heart back into regional and rural Victoria,” he said.

“*Ready for Tomorrow* is about building on that work and driving a new era of opportunity and prosperity in regional Victoria.”

Ready for Tomorrow commits **\$631 million** across five key strategies:

- **\$110.1 million for *Investing in Skills and Young People*** with a new tertiary education package to deliver more opportunities in tertiary education for young people and to make it more attractive for them to stay in or return to the regions. It includes new targets to increase enrolments and graduates, new infrastructure support to encourage investment in student accommodation and for TAFE and university facilities, leadership and cadetship programs, a new youth strategy and support to develop new regional leaders;
- ***Backing Jobs and Industry* with \$99.4 million** towards a new action plan to create thousands of new jobs, boost regional industries and help small business. It outlines a commitment to grow government jobs in the state’s regions, drive up skills, training and exports, support farmers, the food and beverage industry and tourism growth;
- **\$203.9 million for *Building Infrastructure, Connecting Communities*** to provide regional Victorians with world-class infrastructure in water, cleaner energy, transport and industry development, improvements to broadband services, local roads, timber roads, bridges, bus service expansion as well as more affordable housing;
- **\$158.4 million for *Supporting the Regional and Rural Way of Life*** with funding for sports clubs, cultural activities and community. It includes infrastructure and amenities support for the well-being of older people in small communities, promoting regional Victoria as a great place to live and work, a boost to programs to help landholders manage vegetation with funding available for building performing arts centres, galleries and other civic amenities; and
- ***Planning Better Regions – A New Partnership* backed by \$58.9 million** to establish a new approach to regional planning and development including significant funding to support the planning and design of regional cities and towns, support for the development of new growth areas in regional cities, support for future planning in coastal areas and local government. It also includes grants to local councils for future planning work and expertise within local councils, fast-tracking projects to help local communities adapt to climate change and support for smaller councils.