



To: Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority
From: Friends of Lorne
Re: Weed Removal and Habitat Restoration, Lorne Foreshore
Date: 16 July 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further community input to the GORCAPA plans. We appreciate how, in response to community concern, GORCAPA has gone the extra mile to increase the amount of information flow to the community in Lorne. We particularly wish to thank Scott Hives.

We also note that GORCAPA has adjusted the strategy in relation to community concern, thank you. GORCAPA has now committed to replacement plantings, rather than natural regeneration. It may take 5 years for the top of the canopy of the new vegetation to reach a similar height to the existing coast tea tree. We assume that GORCAPA is saying that this replacement planting will occur for all coast tea tree in all the Lorne foreshore zones and not just for the Estuary area which has been the focus of the main discussion in the June consultation sessions. So please correct us if we have misunderstood.

In our November 2019 submission to GORCC on the Lorne Foreshore we argued for the retention of the coast tea trees because they played an important function and have high visual amenity. However, we suggested that as age requires replacement, we supported replanting with an indigenous species which can perform the same vital function (habitat, erosion control, shade, privacy, windbreak). We note that now indeed the *Coastal Vegetation Strategy (CVS) 2022* proposes that in the highly modified zones (main beach area and parts of the Estuary zone) coast tea trees are to be retained and will only be replaced as they die naturally. Friends of Lorne supports this. In the other zones, Friends of Lorne supports GORCAPA's policy of staged (all or partial) removal with replacement, provided that there is evidence that habitat is being enriched/improved as a consequence. We are sensitive to this not just because of the presence of Rufous Bristle Birds (which we consider below) but because there are now starlings on the Bert Alsop track, which is evidence of habitat degradation (note, the starlings are now elsewhere in Lorne also, so we are not saying that management of public land is the main contributor).

Some of our previous questions have not been fully answered.

Citizen science and monitoring of impact

GORCAPA has limited resources, which is a continuing concern for us. We note the organisation's need to rely on goodwill and partnerships for ongoing research and essential data gathering. We would like the type of evidence that you have to evaluate the impact of your strategy here to match what you have in Aireys Inlet; recognizing that the CVS not only has to be designed and implemented

niche-by-niche but that its impact will vary according to niche. Only on-the-spot data will reveal that. Can Friends of Lorne help facilitate monitoring in Lorne perhaps? There are other organisations (eg., BirdLife Australia) we can reach out to as well. External funds would be sought and would be necessary for accountability/quality control.

Erosion control

How can we explain that coast tea tree holds too much sand (eg., creates unwanted vertical cliffs on the beach in Lorne) but (presumably) does not do that in areas of Australia where it is indigenous? Can you tell us more please.

Rufous Bristle Birds

We understand that the right vegetation structure and height are crucial contributors to rufous bristle bird habitat. Does that mean that GORCAPA will choose some particular coast tea trees to remove in the conservation area (off-leash dog beach area) and not others? Right now, you simply say one-in-three and the criteria are not explained. Or is the one-in-three strategy based on a different rationale?

Thank you for your engagement with the Lorne community over this.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Hawe

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On behalf of the Committee, Friends of Lorne