The Great Ocean Road is one of Victoria’s principal tourist routes, extending from Torquay to Allansford, with a number of key towns and coastal villages along its 240 kilometre length.

The iconic road is a National and State Heritage listed stretch of road along the south-western coast of Victoria, built by more than 3000 returned soldiers between 1919 and 1932. It is the world’s largest war memorial, dedicated to casualties of World War 1.

About the upgrade
The Victorian and Australian governments have jointly committed $50 million to ensure the longevity of the Great Ocean Road for years to come.

The asset renewal programme will occur over five years to 2017/18 at targeted locations to ensure the road remains safe and reliable for the local community and the wide range of visitors to the region.

Some of the improvement activities will include:
- Upgrades to the road pavement, structures, drainage, retaining walls and safety barriers
- Repairs and ongoing treatment of major landslip sites to minimise rock falls
- Improved line-marking and sign replacement
- Removal of hazardous trees and weeds and vegetation management

The programme will aim to address the deterioration of the Great Ocean Road and reduce the impact of local hazards.

Existing / Current issues
The combined effects of age, the maritime environment, climate and coastal location have resulted in the increased deterioration of the road assets; and as a result the road requires substantial upgrade works to cope with increasing traffic volumes.

Sections of the road are rough, retaining structures and bridges are being affected by corrosion resulting in land slips, rock falls and reduced bridge load capacity.

Land slips, rock falls and drainage issues have occasionally resulted in temporary closures of sections of the road. These closures reduce access and connectivity to and throughout the region, and thus reliability of the road, with consequential impacts on the region’s economy as well as representing a potential risk to the safety of road users.

Benefits of the programme
VicRoads is working with local community and stakeholders to identify activities and communicate these essential improvement works.

Some of the key benefits road users will experience include:
- A safer, smoother road surface giving a more comfortable ride for road users
- Improved safety through the replacement of deteriorated safety barriers at some locations, improved line-marking and treatment of rock fall sites
- The stabilisation of land slip sites will minimise unplanned road closures
- Road pavement rehabilitation will provide an enhanced driving experience which will benefit the role of the Great Ocean Road in the tourism industry
- Improvements to shoulders along the route will greatly benefit cyclists
- Improved surfacing at some intersections, parking and viewing areas will reduce the frequency of loose gravel being carried onto the road surface, to improve motorcycle safety.
**Project descriptions**

**Vegetation Management**
Vegetation management includes the removal of trees and weeds, trimming of shrubs and branches hanging over the road and the reduction of fire loads along roadsides. These activities are required to achieve benefits in road safety, aesthetics, biodiversity and fire management.

An example of improving road safety through vegetation management is to improve the sight distance around a bend or an access point to a property or the beach. Trimming of trees and shrubs will ensure signs along the road are clearly visible and will enhance the amenity of parking areas and lookouts.

**Culvert**
The Great Ocean Road has a number of old culverts to drain water under the road which have been identified as either damaged or undersized. To reduce the potential for damage to the road, some culverts need to be replaced or upgraded. The replacement of a culvert requires the road to be dug up and the existing pipes removed. An impact to traffic during this work is unavoidable and the road may need to be closed for periods of time. A closure would be restricted to the shortest time possible, minimising impacts to the community and all road users and providing a safe environment for workers. These will always be communicated in advance.

**Bridges**
Many bridges on the Great Ocean Road were constructed in the 1950/60s and provide access across physical obstacles such as rivers. The salt air and climatic conditions has a big impact on any material used in the coastal area and this includes concrete bridges. Concrete can be impacted when the salt laden moisture penetrates the steel reinforcement within the concrete, causing the steel to rust and reducing the strength. With age, the bridge beams and deck (surface you drive on) require replacement to reduce the impact of the coastal environment. Whilst the impact to traffic during this work is unavoidable, generally access can be maintained and impacts to travellers minimised.

**Major Patching**
As a road ages and is impacted by traffic and climatic conditions, it can become rough and potholed due to loss of strength in the material below the road surface. Major patching involves digging out the localised area and replacing it with a material to improve the strength and provide a smoother ride. This work can generally be undertaken in a short time frame with minimal impact to traffic. When a road has a number of significant failures in close proximity, patching would need to be so wide spread that it is cheaper and more effective to conduct pavement reconstruction.

**Pavement Reconstruction**
Pavement reconstruction is required when large sections of a road are out of shape, rough and potholed due to loss of strength. Reconstruction involves digging up the entire road and replacing the pavement layers to increase its strength. The impact of this work on traffic is unavoidable but generally access can be maintained under roadwork conditions.

**Road Resurfacing**
Road resurfacing is undertaken when the road surface has deteriorated but the underlying layers and strength of the road are not affected. Resurfacing places a new waterproof layer over the top of the existing road and can be completed with asphalt or a mixture of stone and bitumen. Resurfacing will provide protection to the structural layers and add to the road's longevity.

**Landslips**
A landslip is a geological phenomenon which occurs on a sloped ground surface resulting in the movement or sliding of earth or rock. Given a large portion of the Great Ocean Road has been cut into the side of a hill, there is a high potential for landslips to occur above or below the road. Landslips can be caused by a number of factors including erosion, ground-water, storm events or poorly functioning drains. Preventative measures can be undertaken to limit the risk of a landslip occurring such as removing loose rock or installation of rock netting.

**Activity locations currently identified**

The work locations represented on this map are indicative of sites currently identified for improvements and are subject to change based on prioritisation of projects and ongoing investigations over the five year program. Further sites will be communicated as they are identified on a yearly basis.
Challenges
The Great Ocean Road is a key tourist attraction, which winds though varying terrain alongside the south-west Victorian coast, and provides access to several prominent landmarks. It is of historical, archaeological, aesthetic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

The maritime environment, the tight winding alignment and sensitive environmental issues create special challenges for maintaining and managing this road.

The road is considered one of the world’s great coastal drives, and serves to link numerous tourism villages and destinations along the coast as well as provide access to famous attractions and national parks. Maintaining vehicle access raises significant challenges around managing activities associated with maintenance and repairs.

Work will be programmed and carried out to minimise impact for all road users wherever possible. Commuters and the local community should be alert to traffic changes and potential delays throughout the upgrade programme and plan their journey in advance.

Community
A Stakeholder Liaison Group has been established involving representatives from State and Local government, Coastal Committees and Tourism who have a strong interest in the upgrade programme. The group will be able to identify issues and ensure consideration is given to regional and local community needs and expectations and is sensitive to social, environmental and cultural values.

They will share information about the program of works, priorities, rationale and provide assistance with spreading the word.

VicRoads will use extensive communications tools such as the VicRoads website, a dedicated email address, social media, and targeted communications to local residents, traders, and commuters to keep the community informed on the works and potential impacts.

Facts & Stats
A series of improvement works will be undertaken to enhance and renew the assets and improve safety along the entire length of the Great Ocean Road, from Torquay through to Allansford, east of Warrnambool.

As of July 2014:
- More than 40 kilometres of road has been identified for reconstruction or resurfacing
- 48 sites identified for stabilisation of cliff faces
- 3 bridges identified for reconstruction and strengthening
- 2 culverts identified for major upgrade
- Numerous sites will have new culverts, pits and drains
- Numerous sites will have new safety barriers
- Many over grown or weed-infested sites will benefit from vegetation management

Project information
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