

Otway Coast Committee
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Paddys Path Update

Throughout this year the Otway Coast Committee (OCC) has continued to work with other stakeholder agencies, VicRoads, Department of Environment & Primary Industries (DEPI), and Colac Otway Shire toward finding a solution for the repair of the damaged section of Paddys Path.

With input from VicRoads, the OCC made a funding application to DEPI's 'Public Safety on Public Land' for funds to repair the path using a system that has been successfully used by VicRoads to repair sections of the Great Ocean Road. At the time of writing, the outcome of that application is not known.

Both the OCC & VicRoads have previously completed Geo Technical reports and both reports indicated a more detailed understanding was required of the slip site; while the VicRoads report looked primarily from the Great Ocean Road perspective; it did offer some initial options for repair of the path.

Recently DEPI, understanding the importance of the path to the local community, has engaged a Geo Technical engineer with extensive local knowledge to undertake further investigations and develop engineered response options to repair the path.

The OCC, DEPI & the Geo Tech Engineer met on site on the 18th of September 2014 to be informed by the engineer of his findings and proposed responses. One important part of the advice, that is a real priority for the community to understand, is that work done by local people to make the path 'usable' has only exacerbated the situation. In the expert's opinion, that work is accelerating the slip and, more importantly, will now mean that another retaining wall structure on the upper side of the path is required adding to the cost of repair.

After the major slip in early December 2013 the OCC closed the path because of the real risk to the safety of any person attempting to use the path. The OCC takes seriously its management responsibility to at all times minimise risk. Since the closing of the path, parts of the barricade that limit access and signage alerting people to the danger have been removed. Now works by unknown individual/s over the last 2-3 weeks have accelerated the slope failure and added to the cost of repair. We ask that the community take seriously the barricades and signs.

The OCC will continue to work with the other stakeholder agencies toward the repair of the path. We ask that the local community understand that the site is highly volatile, that any response must be engineered to the highest possible standard so that funds are not wasted on lesser measures that could fail and at all times public safety must be the highest priority.

Gary McPike
Executive Officer