

Tatungalung Circuit -

Proposed Cunninghame Arm Boardwalk, Cunninghame Arm Lakes Entrance

Initial Proposal – March 2019

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1. Introduction

This report has been prepared with the intention to seek support from Council, our Traditional Landowners and the Community for the proposed development and construction of a boardwalk circuit linking Cunninghame Arm bridge and Eastern Beach Park (“the Proposal”).

The proposal is inline and consistent with recommendations made in previous Council owned reports.

2. Background

In 2012, the Department of Sustainability & Environment, along with East Gippsland Shire Council engaged Ethos NRM Pty Ltd to develop the Lakes Entrance Foreshore Management Plan (“the FMP”).

The primary objective of the FMP was to ‘improve future use, management and development of the foreshore, as well as to protect natural, cultural and historical foreshore values’, the FMP also set out clear and agreed directions for the management of the Lakes Entrance Foreshore and adjoining waterways.

The FMP identified a number of clear recommendations for the improvement and management of the foreshore. Whilst some of these recommendations have been adopted and actioned there is still a significant number to be addressed, in particular;

- *improving existing pathway networks to provides connected access within and around the study area for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *pathway upgrades – widening of existing pathways to meet shared pathway standard, construction of a new pathway at Club Spit and along North Arm past the recreation reserve to Eastern Creek, and along Cunninghame Arm to Eastern Beach Tourist Park.*

In 2016, the East Gippsland Shire Council engaged MRCagney in association with John Mongard Landscape Architects to develop the Lakes Entrance CBD Improvement Master Plan (“CBD IMP”).

The CBD IMP, was prepared to guide future capital works predominantly for the streetscaping within the Lakes Entrance CBD, however it does take into consideration the potential for development and enhancement of the Foreshore area.

In response to the then, ‘draft’ CBD IMP, in 2017 Council further engaged Urban Enterprise to develop the Lakes Entrance Investment Projects – Economic Impact Assessment. This assessment investigated a number of proposals, one being the ‘Cunninghame loop walking trail’.

The ‘Cunninghame loop walking trail’ identified in the Economic Impact Assessment, refers directly to the proposal outlined in this report.

A clear and consistent link between these reports is the undeniable requirement and need for shared pathway development and upgrades, along the foreshore. Both reports identify the foreshore as an incredible asset and one of the main tourist attractions for Lakes Entrance. The CBD IMP does identify that future development

in Lakes Entrance should be conducted to ensure design consistency throughout the township.

3. Site Location and Context

The proposal is located between Cunninghame Arm Bridge and Eastern Beach Park, as outlined by the red line in Figure 1. It is located on a Crown Land reserved under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, for which the East Gippsland Shire Council is the Manager on behalf of the “Crown”.

The proposal footprint is zoned, PPRZ (Public Park and Recreation Zone), PCRZ (Public Conservation and Resource Zone) and PUZ7 (Public Use Zone other Public). The footprint is also subject to a ‘Bush Fire Management’, ‘Vegetation Protection’ and a ‘Land Subject to Inundation’ Overlay.

The broader area is characterised by coastal wetlands and natural flora and fauna, limited recreation infrastructure, residential dwellings and local businesses and cafes.

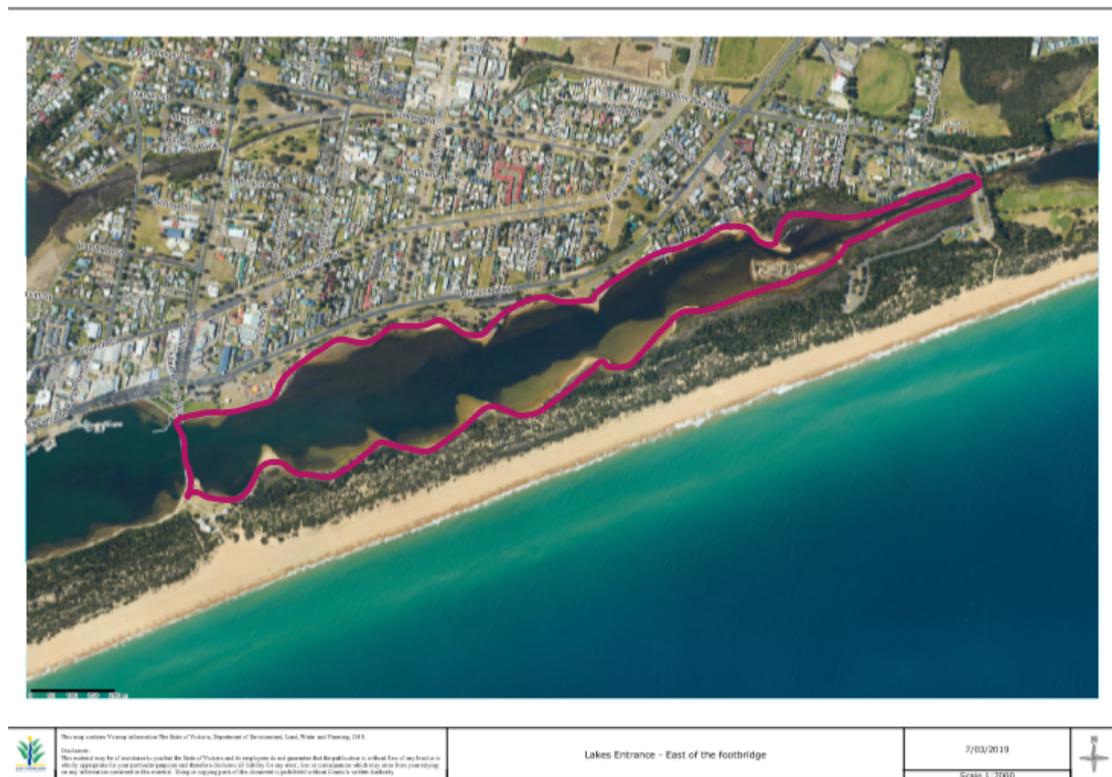


Figure 1. Site Location

4. Strategic need for the Proposal

In October 2012, the Department of Sustainability and Environment, with the East Gippsland Shire Council engaged EthosNRM Pty Ltd to investigate and develop the Lakes Entrance Foreshore Management Plan (FMP). The FMP reviewed and considered all existing planning documents and proposals relevant to the Lakes Entrance Foreshore, the FMP then identified a number of management strategies to

protect and improve the foreshore values and provided a detailed implementation program.

The FMP recognised that *“Walking and cycle access tracks within the natural precinct are important for enabling people to experience and enjoy the natural values of these areas”*. The FMP clearly outlined an action to:

- Extend the shared pathway along the foreshore (possibly with a boardwalk) between Middle Street and Eastern Beach Tourist Park.

This action was given a high priority with the East Gippsland Shire Council named as the Responsible Manager.

The FMP identified that there is a requirement to construct a walking track along the frontage (of the North Arm Foreshore), and act on foreshore privatisation. Foreshore privatisation is also an issue relevant to the proposal site.

In May 2016, the East Gippsland Shire Council appointed MRCagney, in association with John Mongard Landscape Architects to engage with community members and identify key projects and guidance for future capital works in Lakes Entrance, this consultation process resulted in the development and Council Approved Adoption of the Lakes Entrance CBD Improvement Master Plan (the CBD IMP).

The CBD IMP considered all facets of the town including the Commercial, Tourism, Recreational and Residential needs and desires. The very predominant consistent outcome from both Plans was the need for improved shared pathways which complement and showcase the natural beauty of Lakes Entrance, enabling local residents and visitors to enjoy what Lakes Entrance has to offer.

Lakes Entrance has a number of ‘disjointed’ walking tracks, many of which require the users to cross, at times busy unsafe roads. Of the walking tracks around Lakes Entrance the Jemmy’s Point Hill circuit is the only ‘complete’ circuit in Lakes Entrance. This proposal will ensure that Lakes Entrance has an all accessible boardwalk circuit for locals and tourist to enjoy and take in the natural beauty of Lakes Entrance.

The foreshore between middle street and the existing Cunninghame walking path, is severely eroded and is in desperate need of attention. The proposed boardwalk will naturally reduce the risk of erosion and will aide in the rehabilitation of the foreshore along this area. Future management of the area would consist of a more constructed and deliberate rehabilitation program.

In December 2017, EGSC adopted the Age – Friendly Communities Strategy 2017-2030, and subsequently became a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO), a Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. The strategy aims to ensure that Council:

- *Public spaces and buildings are designed and maintained to promote safe, engaged and connect communities with more footpaths and seating at regular intervals*
- *The design of public space, facilities and furniture ensures accessibility for older people and encourages effective interaction and inclusion for all age and cultural groups*

- *Outdoor space design acknowledges and engages with the heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*
- *Increased provision of information to building designers, planners and developers on age-friendly friendly building design principles.*

This proposal directly supports and aims to deliver Councils objectives as it will provide a safe easy accessible walking track with timber seating and viewing areas.

5. Proposal Description

The proposal is intended to support the outcomes and actions identified in the abovementioned plans, by improving recreational amenities for locals and visitors in creating an 'all accessible' boardwalk circuit that enhances the visitor experience through complementing the natural environment and increasing our understanding of the rich indigenous heritage of Lakes Entrance.

The proposal will engage with the traditional landowners, the Gunaikurnai people, to ensure the cultural heritage and history of Lakes Entrance is preserved and honoured. The proposed circuit would be a practical demonstration of reconciliation.

The proposal's objectives are:

- Provide a complete pedestrian circuit around the Cunninghame Arm Foreshore
- Remove the need to cross roads
- Be safe, secure and accessible for all users
- Avoid and minimise adverse environmental impacts
- Promote cultural significance of Lakes Entrance.

5.1. Options

The Proposal has several design options to consider, the final concept design would be dependent upon the amount of funding available and the level of support obtained by both the traditional land owners, local community and local Council.

5.2 Option 1 – Boardwalk with Additional Facilities

This option would see the development of a shared accessible boardwalk from the southern side (Ocean side) of Cunninghame Bridge, following the waters edge through to Hammocks Bridge at Eastern Beach, approximately 2.4km. The boardwalk would then cross Cunninghame Arm and continue west along the Cunninghame Arm Foreshore (approximately 890mt) to meet with the existing shared pathway, as outlined in Figure 2. The total circuit is approximately 4.65km.

The inclusion of timber seating, viewing areas, cultural and local information boards, would further enhance this proposal and add to the overall visitors experience of Lakes Entrance.

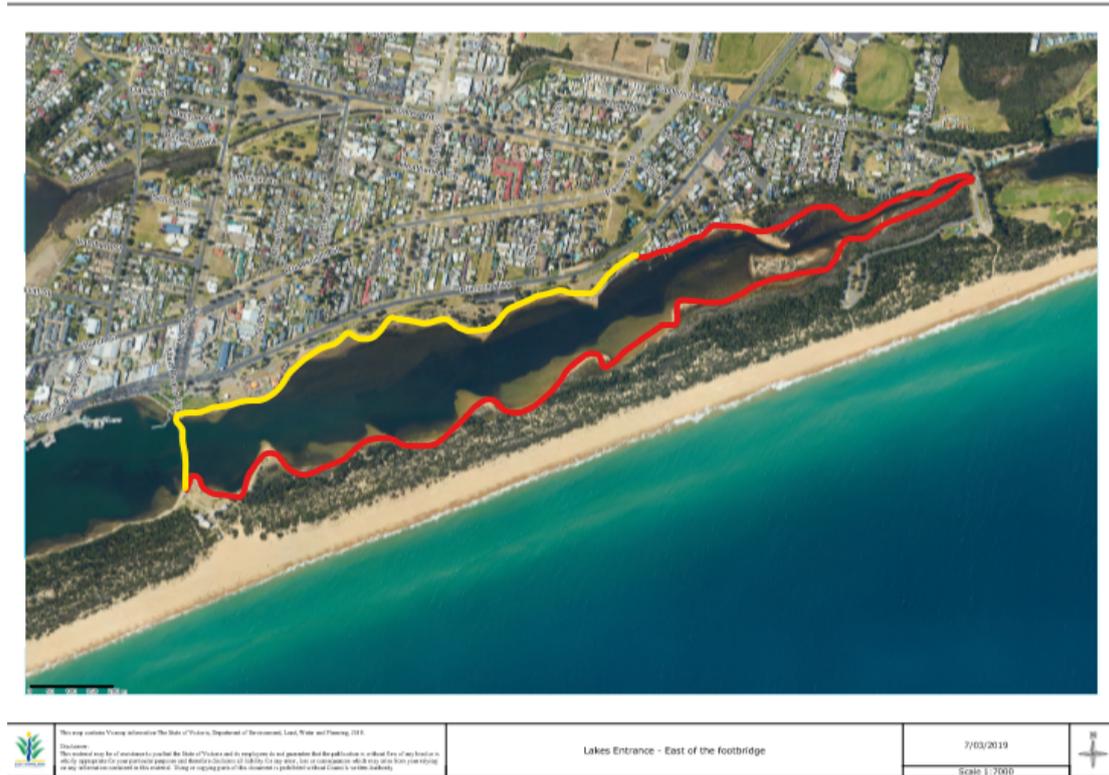


Figure 2 – Proposal Option 1

5.3 Option 2 – Combination Boardwalk

This option would see the development of a 'shared' boardwalk from the southern side (Ocean side) of Cunninghame Bridge, following the waters edge through to the second carpark at Eastern Beach, approximately 2.4km. The walking track would then utilise the existing road surface through to Hammocks bridge, where it would cross Cunninghame Arm and head west along the foreshore, this would be a 'shared' gravel pathway linking to the existing shared pathway along Cunninghame Foreshore, as outline in Figure 3.

In order for this option to meet our key objectives for this to be safe, secure and accessible for all users a small section of the existing Hammocks Road will need to be slightly realigned.

To further enhance the visitor's experience of this boardwalk this option should consider the inclusion of timber seating, cultural and local information boards along the boardwalk.

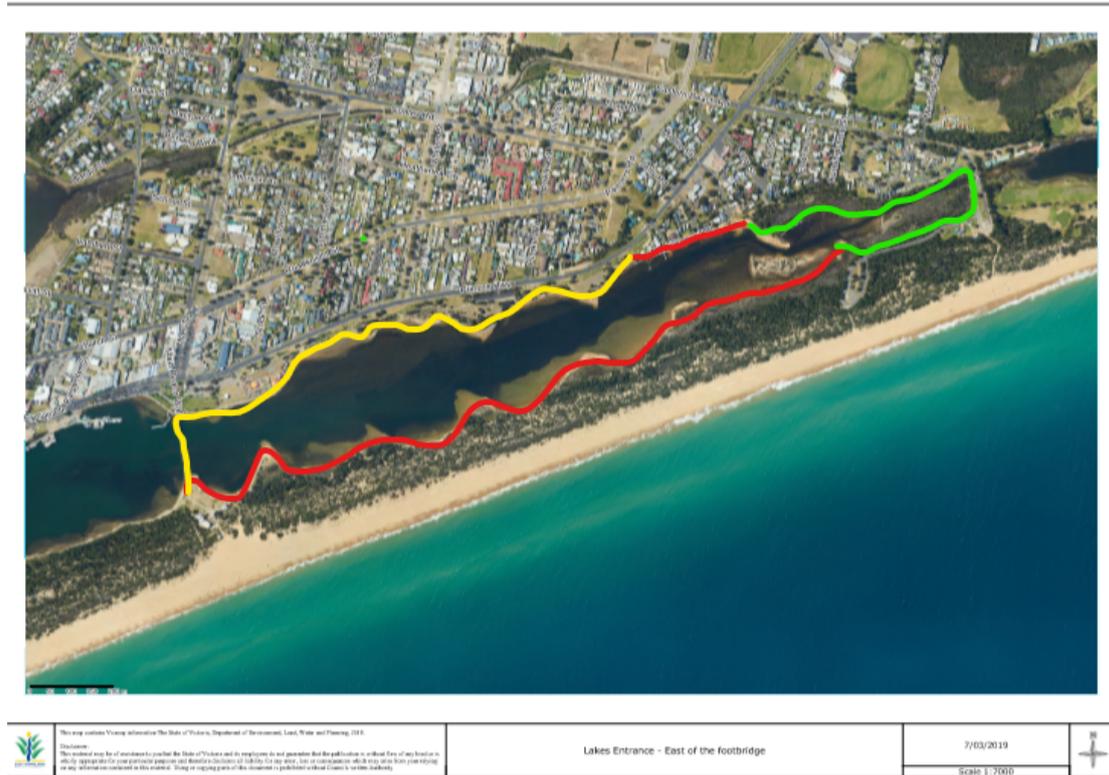


Figure 3 – Proposal Option 2

5.4 Option 3 – Nature Track

This option would see the development of a Nature walking track, using gravel as the main base. The track would follow the same circuit as option 1 and 2. This option would not consider seating or local information boards.

7. Preferred Option

Option 1 is the preferred option and would compliment the objectives identified in both the FMP and CBD IMP, as well as help to improve the overall appeal of Lakes Entrance, with minimal impact to the Environment.

This option would enable safe, secure access for all users regardless of their abilities.

Option 2 would potentially be a viable option, however additional care and design must be taken to ensure the pathways will be accessible, safe and secure for all users, in a manner that will not compromise the impact on the Environment.

Option 3 is the least preferred, as it is unlikely that it would provide safe and secure access for all users, with minimal impact to the environment.

8. Key Stakeholders

Some of the key stakeholders and beneficiaries of this proposal are identified below:

- Victorian Government - DELWP
- Local Government - East Gippsland Shire Council
- Lakes Entrance Action and Development Association
- Indigenous Groups – GLaWAC and LEAHA
- Local Community
- Local Community Groups - Lakes Entrance Park Run
 - Lakes Entrance Men’s Shed
 - Lakes Entrance Bike Riding Group
- Local Schools
- Regional Community – tourists
- Visitors

The interests, issues and positive impacts of the stakeholders are identified in the following table.

STAKEHOLDER / BENEFICIARIES	INTEREST	Requirement	POSITIVE IMPACTS
Victorian Government - DELWP	Regional Economic Development, community well-being and environmental protection	Support of local initiatives to stimulate economic development and build community resilience. Protection of Coastal assets	Upgrade and improve coastal infrastructure and Protect Gippsland Lakes and environmental values.
Local Government - East Gippsland Shire Council	Local Economy and employment, community well-being, community cohesion and satisfaction	Greater certainty for the community to support investment and community growth. Improvement of public assets. Increased community well-being. Support tourism growth.	Improve and expand on existing public assets. Economic and employment growth. Improve Community confidence, cohesion and satisfaction. Increase visitation and local expenditure.
Lakes Entrance Action and Development Association	Community well-being, confidence, cohesion and satisfaction.	Greater certainty for the community to support investment and community growth. Improvement of public assets	Improve and expand existing public assets. Provide greater liveability and visitor experience.
Indigenous Groups – GLaWAC and LEAHA	Protection of natural and cultural heritage assets	Reduce Impact on the local environmental and cultural heritage values	Protection of environmental and cultural heritage values.
Local Community / Groups and Schools	Community sustainability and well-being.	Decline in employment and growth opportunities.	Improve and expand existing public assets. Provide greater liveability and visitor experience.

Regional Community Tourists	Protection of tourism and economic assets important to the region.	Loss of tourism opportunities, investment and growth. Impact on the image of the area as a visitor destination.	Increase in visitation and expenditure. Economic contribution of Lakes Entrance. Improved regional image.
Visitors	Amenity and visitors facilities and services	Availability of foreshore amenities and facilities. Quality of the visitor experience, products and services.	Protection of foreshore assets for visitor enjoyment. Additional commercial services and recreational facilities.

8. Planning and Legislative Requirements implications

This proposal would be subject too and defined by a vast number of environmental, planning and legislative requirements.

Extensive research and reporting will be required to ensure all requirements are sufficiently addressed. These requirements will be identified during the Environmental Review and the Geotechnical Interpretive Report process.

The proposal will require consent from the DWLEP as the land owners, as well as permission and approval from the Marine and Coastal Act.

Zoning

The location is zoned, PPRZ (Public Park and Recreation Zone), PCRZ (Public Conservation and Resource Zone) and PUZ7 (Public Use Zone other Public), under the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and is subject to the following overlays:

- Bush Fire Management
- Land Subject to Inundation
- Vegetation Protection Overlay

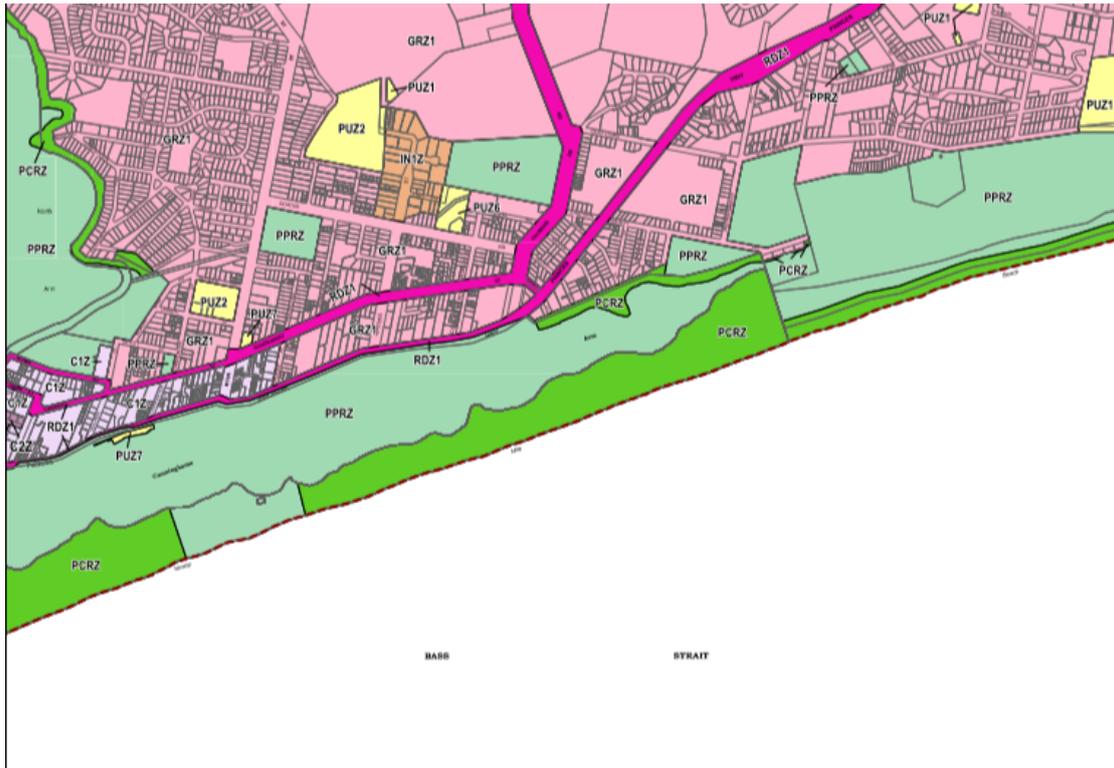


Figure 4 Zoning

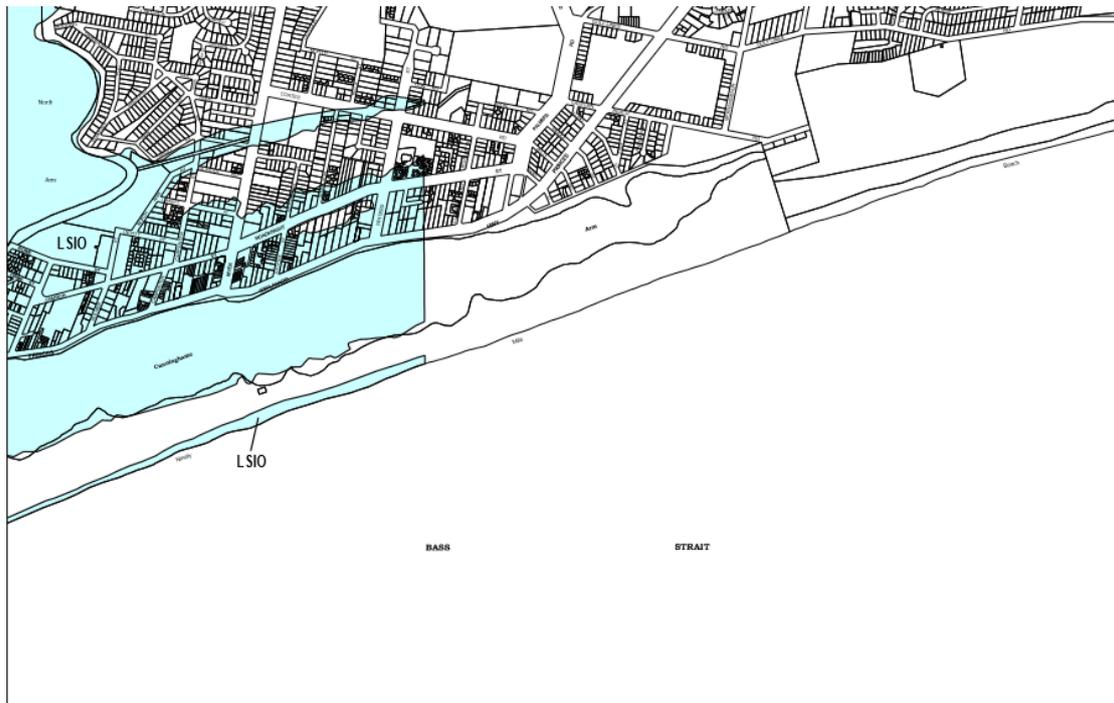


Figure 5 Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

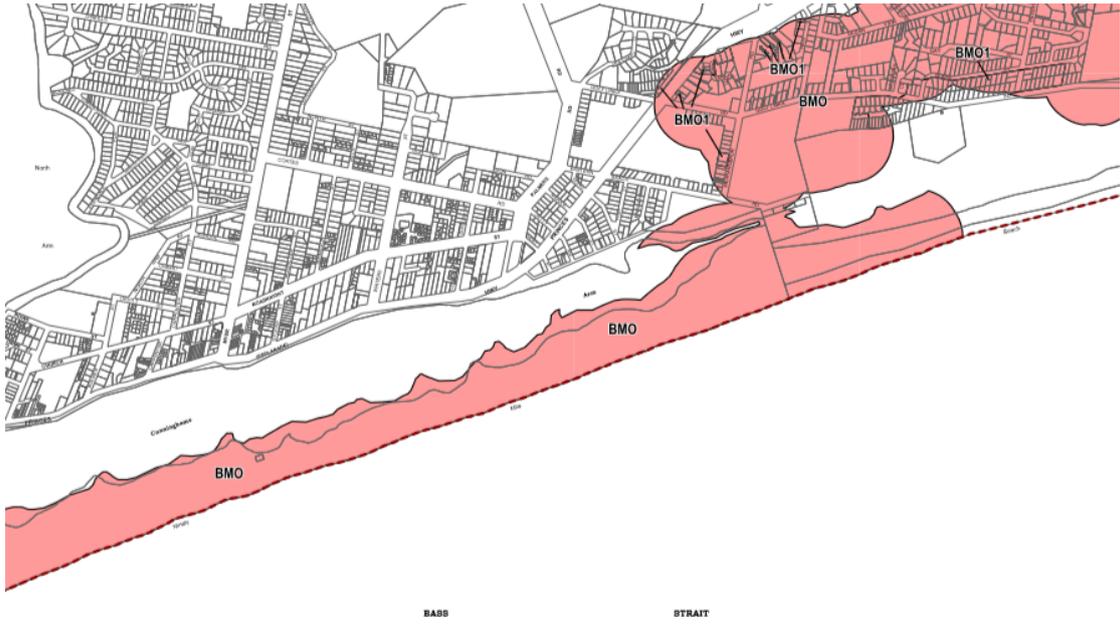


Figure 6 Bush Fire Management Overlay

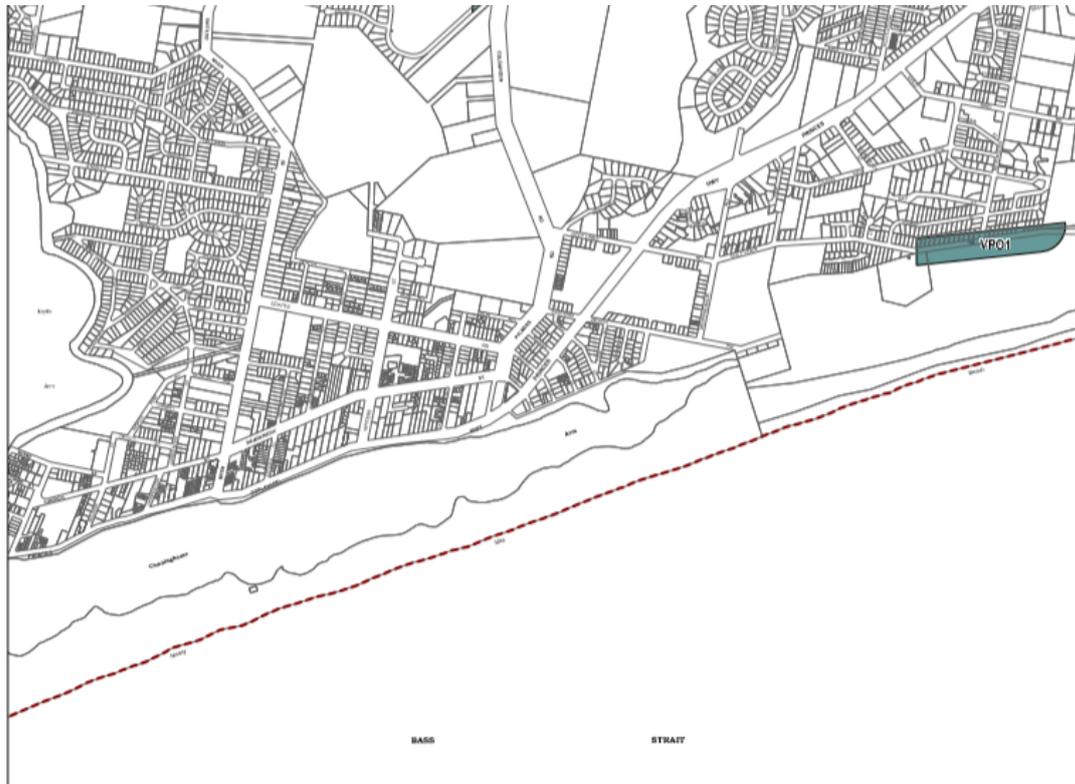


Figure 7 Vegetation Protection Overlay

9. Consultation

Formal consultation with the traditional land owners is essential before the project can be developed further.

Community consultation will be required following the conceptual planning phase, the Environmental Review and the Geotechnical Interpretive Report.

10. Finance and Funding Opportunities

This proposal has the potential to attract significant State and Federal Government funding, one avenue may be via the Building Better Regions Fund. The nature of the proposal may also attract some Coastal Conservation Funding.

The initial concept design and planning process will need to be met by East Gippsland Shire Council.

The East Gippsland Shire Council engaged Urban Enterprise to investigate Lakes Entrance Investment Projects, included in this report is the proposed 'Cunningham Loop Walking Trail', at the time of the report the indicative cost of the walking trail was \$5.73 Million.

11. Community Benefit / Economic benefit

The proposed boardwalk will offer locals and visitors a recreational asset that will honour and showcase the cultural heritage and the natural beauty of the coastal environment.

The development of the boardwalk is expected to provide short term construction as well as providing ongoing economic impacts of the East Gippsland Economy, through increased tourism.

11. Conclusion

The proposed 'Tatungalung Circuit' is intended to provide residents and visitors to Lakes Entrance with a safe, secure and accessible circuit of the Cunninghame Arm Foreshore. The Boardwalk will enhance the experience and liveability of Lakes Entrance and will embrace the natural beauty of the foreshore.

12. Recommendation and Proposed Time line

It is recommended that East Gippsland Shire Council develop a brief for the purpose of tendering a Contract for the Concept Design, Environmental Review and Geotechnical Interpretive Reporting and Planning Requirements for the proposed Cunninghame Arm Boardwalk.

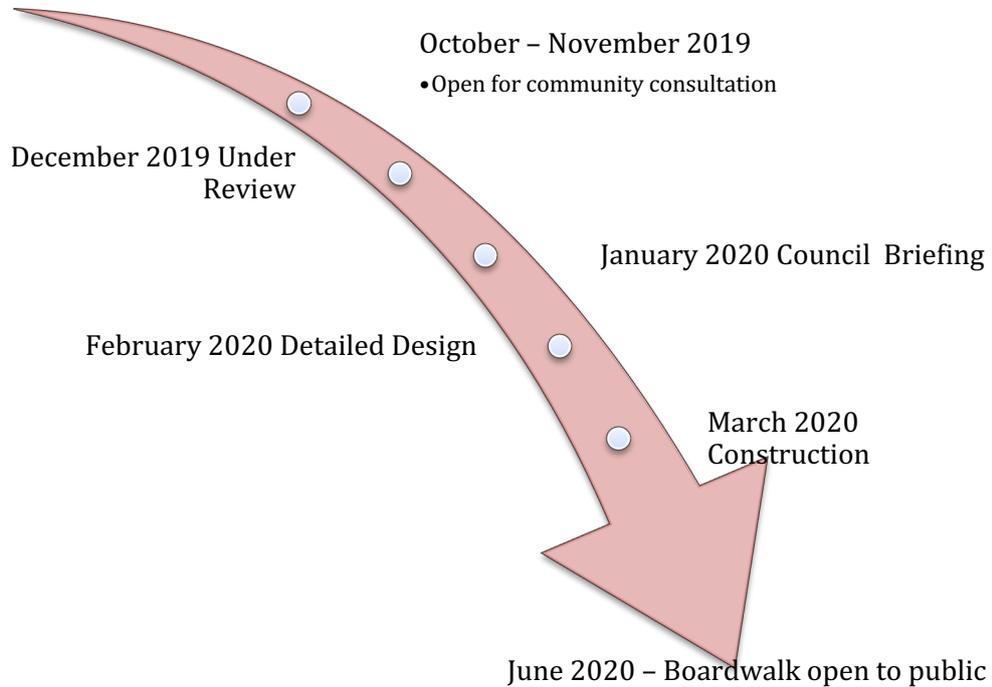
It is further recommended that East Gippsland Shire Council write to Mr Darren Chester, Local Federal Member of Parliament, seeking his support for the development of the proposed boardwalk and request financial assistance for the acquisition of the abovementioned reports.

Proposed Time Line:

I appreciate the following proposed time line is extremely ambitious and is dependent on relevant funding opportunities, however I believe it is essential to commence the process and aim to complete the Concept design, Environmental Review and carry out the Geotechnical Investigation Report by September 2019.

April – September

- Investigation and Concept design
- Carry out Geotechnical Investigations, environmental review and develop concept design.



References

Lakes Entrance Foreshore Management Plan 2012. Prepared for East Gippsland Shire Council and the Department of Sustainability and Environment by Kerry Spencer and Eric Sjerp, Ethos NRM Pty Ltd.

Lakes Entrance CBD Improvement Master Plan 2016. Prepared for East Gippsland Shire Council by MRCagney, in association with John Mongard Landscape Architects.

Lakes Entrance Investment Projects – Economic Impact Assessment May 2017. Prepared for East Gippsland Shire Council by Kurt Ainsaar and Mike Ruzzene, Urban Enterprise Urban Planning, Land Economics, Tourism Planning & Industry Software.

Ageing Well In East Gippsland – Age-Friendly Communities Strategy 2017-2030, December 2017. Prepared by East Gippsland Shire Council for the East Gippsland Shire Council.