

17 October 2019

Andrew McNee  
Assistant Secretary  
Assessments and Governance Branch  
Department of the Environment and Energy  
GPO Box 787  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr McNee

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA) would like to provide a summary overview of their support of the design proposition for a contemporary lookout located at the 12 Apostles, on Victoria's Great Ocean Road.

We acknowledge the site is considered one of the most valuable landscape experiences on Victoria's coastline and appropriately included on the National Heritage List. However, evidence has shown us the quality of the place is undermined by the experience of the place. Ongoing site challenges, including environmental damage, ecological impact, visitor safety and low-quality design and aesthetics of the existing amenity need an appropriate solution.

It is our position that the critical relocation of this near-cliff asset needs to be of a design quality that elevates the experience of the place through an intervention that not only addresses the challenges of this site but can be judged as an exemplar of international design excellence. International examples, such as Norway's Atlantic Coast projects (Nasjonale Turistveger) suggest a global benchmark. In our view, the nominated design architects, Denton Corker Marshall (DCM), one of Australia's leading design practices, have the capacity, capability and credibility to achieve this ambition.

We propose DCM's striking contemporary lookout design offers a clever solution to practical, technical and aesthetic issues. Their dark stick / light stick sculptural composition:

- rationalises visitor footfall into a controlled but extended journey, physically separated from the natural ground and sensitive vegetation;
- pulls visitors back from the current edge of the lookout, even while the design has been manipulated so the visitor is likely to feel closer to the edge than the current condition;
- tells a narrative, established through significant input from local indigenous groups, that can be understood as part of the experience of the place;
- promises earthy colours, selectively highlighted to reflect the narrative - although we suggest final colours and details should be subject to prototypes to ensure their 'fit' with the place.

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The OVGA has offered independent design review of the lookout design at several key points through its design development. We have been impressed with the stakeholder consultation process, which has contributed to refinement of the narrative and suggests community understanding and support for the concept.

The OVGA believes the ambition embedded in the project brief for the lookout is important to follow through to ensure this world-class asset offers a world-class experience. Victoria has an opportunity to provide a quality architectural encounter in an extraordinary natural place and we believe DCM's sculptural landscape overlay will both protect and enhance this site.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Garner', written in a cursive style.

Jill Garner  
Victorian Government Architect