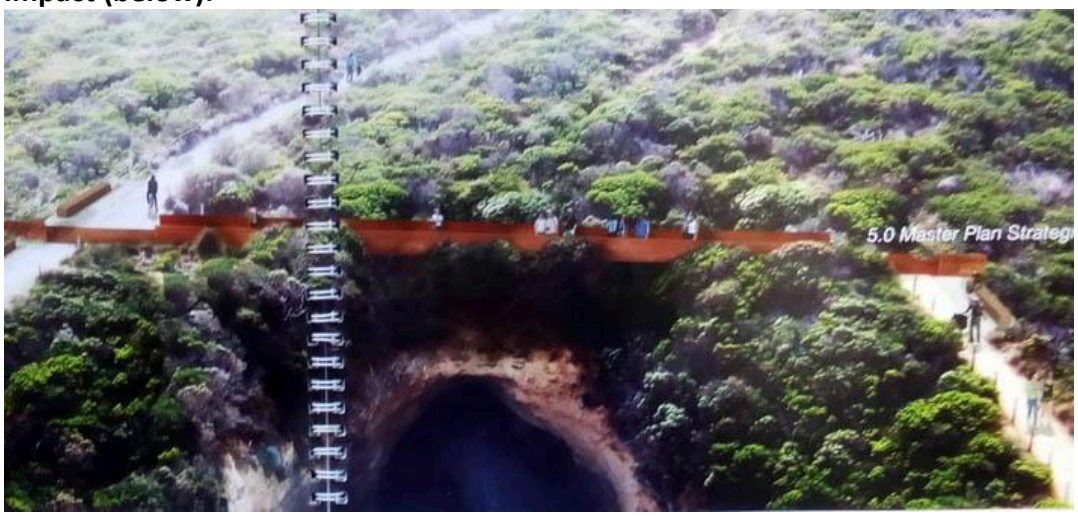
The Blowhole Viewing Platform, Port Campbell Coast

The Port Campbell Community Group Inc. is deeply concerned at the unsympathetic design and negative environmental impacts of the Blowhole viewing platform, again going ahead without community consultation.

The enormous polycarbonate design, a black tube, is a blight on the natural landscape and will become a wind tunnel in this extreme environment, and it could collapse the cavity beneath.
https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/western-victoria/loch-ard-blowhole-lookout

The design (above) is far different to that shown in the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan (SCMP) which was shown to the community and which had low visual and environmental impact (below).



A Parks Victoria information session 31-8-2017 at Port Campbell showed a geotechnical plan (below) which coincides with the SCMP design where the bridging design would go straight across the Blowhole and little or no requirement for masses of concrete over a cavern – the area of recognised "geological weakness".

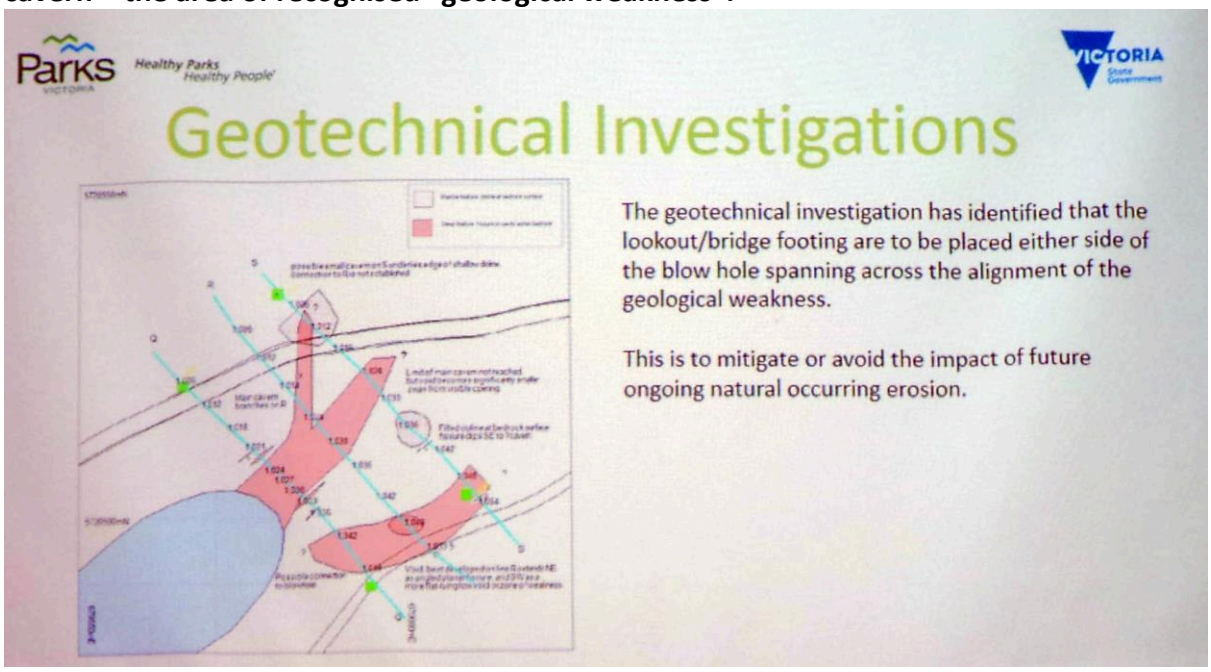


Photo PCCG Inc. Blowhole sign, c 2000

The Community has not been shown how the masses of concrete and new design considers geotechnical issues and the fragile limestone. Photos: 19-12-2024

The design – below - looks like a crashed airliner

Photos: Port Campbell Community Group Inc. 27-2-2025

Two pages following from a VicRoads FOI re the Blowhole explaining the geotechnical issues.

3.2 The Blowhole

The Blowhole is a large collapsed cavity approximately 20 m wide and 50 m long into which sea water is channelled through a narrow channel from the south. The Blowhole is located some 100 m inland from the coast. To the north of The Blowhole, a tunnel continues under the access road into a large subterranean cavern. The cavern has been delineated using the results of the drilling carried out at the site, and by applying geological concepts relating to the occurrence of lineations within the limestone formation.

This subterranean cavern has been found to be approximately 25 m wide and 35 m long and extending up to 8 m above sea level. It appears that the minimum cover over the roof of both the cavern and the tunnel is of the order of 12 m.

The locations of the cavity and the estimated tunnel location between the cavity and The Blowhole are shown on VIC ROADS Drawing No 395237 attached as Appendix B.

3.3 Formation of Cavities

The formation of both these subterranean cavities (and also The Blowhole itself) is considered to be due to dissolution and softening of the limestone by groundwater percolating through discontinuities within the limestone, followed by erosion and enlargement by vigorous wave action, followed in turn by collapse or slabbing off along an adjacent joint or discontinuity.

All of these factors are evident from the information obtained from the bores, and from observations made at the site.

All bores drilled at the site showed a marked increase in moisture content of the limestone with depth, even with bores located over the roof of the cavity. This indicates the cavities are in a general groundwater seepage regime.

Dippings into the cavity to the north of The Blowhole indicated that the floor of the cavity is submerged, with extremely turbulent water and strong currents being evident.

Dippings into the tunnel (20 m north of The Blowhole) indicated a water depth of approximately 10 m. At this location the tunnel would only be of the order of 2 m in width.

At Thunder Cave, seepage from the cave roof and from the back of the cave can be observed directly.

Nos B90-1024 were wash-bored to depths of 35.5, 23.0 and 20.0m respectively using the Roads Corporation Gemco H22 drill rig. These bores failed to intersect either the tunnel or the hidden cavern. No time was available to attempt further bores as the drill rig was required at another site.

3 DISCUSSION

The location of Thunder Cave has been adequately delineated by the EDM survey, the results of which are plotted on the locality plan in Appendix 1. While it is considered appropriate that the road be relocated away from the known cavity, no guarantee can be given that other cavities with the potential to collapse are not present to the land-ward side (to the north and north-east) of the outline of the main cavity.

At The Blowhole site however, further work is considered mandatory to locate the hidden and apparently large cavity. Further geophysical work could be carried out in an effort to expand our knowledge of the apparent resistivity 'high' shown on the model in Appendix 4 but backup drilling would still be required to prove the location and nature of the cavity.

One inherent difficulty associated with geophysical surveying and/or drilling is the need to cut further traverse lines or tracks through the thick heath/scrub in the area to the north of the tourist access road.

If the hidden cavity has a roof level as high as is alleged (15+ m), there is the possibility that the mass of the drilling rig may produce collapse of the structure similar to that which has occurred in the geologic past with The Blowhole. While this possibility is considered to be remote, it cannot be discounted.

Discussion with who entered the hidden cavity in January 1988 suggests that the siting of a drill rig over this area could indeed be hazardous because of the apparent size and the height of the cavity above water sea-level.

4 FURTHER INVESTIGATION PROPOSAL

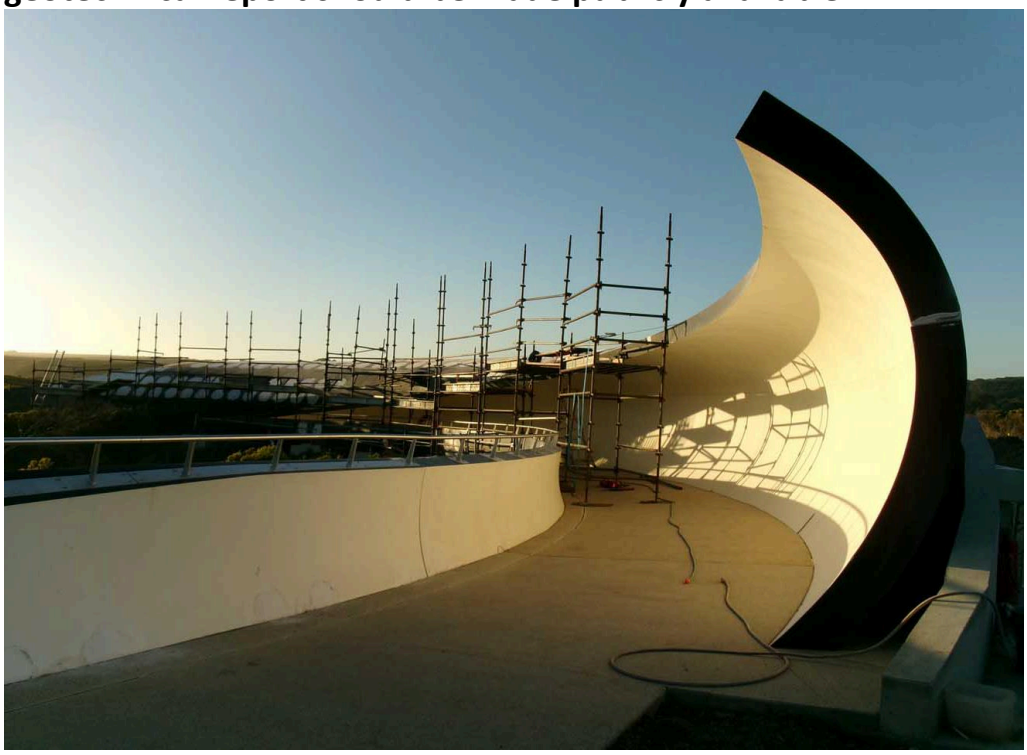
In a further effort to delineate the hidden cavity in The Blowhole area, the following is proposed:

- Drilling a further bore (or bores) on the north side of the road to locate the tunnel leading from The Blowhole and then to follow this line of drilling until the main cavity is reached.

- Attempt, by drilling, to delineate the perimeter of the cavity. This drilling investigation would need to be supplemented by further geophysical testing to expand the area previously covered. This may include geophysical techniques other than conductivity surveying.

Such investigations will only be carried out with your approval and at your direction. After receipt of this report a meeting will be arranged to further discuss these proposals and, if

Environmental Impact Statement
What work has been done to consider whether the extensive concrete foundations could collapse the cavern underneath?
A full and inclusive Environmental Impact Statement should have been undertaken (of this and any other infrastructure on this fragile coast), and a geotechnical report should be made publicly available.



During construction (above)

8/8/2025 – Painting out graffiti?

It seems the polycarbonate tube has flexed as the 'portholes' appear to have cracked and are painted in white. 8/8/2025

20/7/2025

Destroyed Landscape Values and Lack of Community Consultation

The coast's landscape values and the natural environment, and the Victorian and local community, are all losing in the long run – an expensive use of taxpayers money which could collapse this significant environmental feature.