

## A Grand plan

Council will reallocate funds from the North Poowong Road project to construct and seal the remaining four kilometres of the Grand Ridge Road, with the crucial works expected to commence this week.

Voted as urgent at its last meeting, the decision to seal Grand Ridge Road at Trida and part of Carmody's Road at Leongatha follows Baw Baw Shire Council's commitment to repair sections of the road in Ferndale and Seaview.

The North Poowong Road project will be delayed due to permit requirements associated with Giant Gippsland Earthworms, which have been found at the site, and possible offsets required for the removal of significant indigenous vegetation.

Known as one of the great tourist drives in Victoria, Grand Ridge Road can be reached either via Warragul, Morwell or Traralgon on the Princes Freeway, or via Yarram, Foster, Korumburra or Leongatha from the South Gippsland Highway.

Council's Manager Economic Development, Tourism and Customer Services, Danny McDonald, highlighted the regional significance of having the road restored.

"Grand Ridge Road is an important tourism asset for the Gippsland region," Mr McDonald said.

"These works will help to prevent further deterioration, improving the experience for travellers – tourists and residents alike. In particular we anticipate that this will become a significant route for motorbikes and bicycles."

In its total distance of just over 135 kilometres, Cr Nigel Hutchinson-Brooks said the project was more than just about road works.

"The Strzelecki area was first explored in 1840 by the Polish-born adventurer of the same name, but was not settled until 30 years later when its earliest pioneers acquired land on the understanding that they would clear vast reaches of some of the then tallest timber in the world," he explained.

"The terrain that the road traverses and the views that it overlooks gives travellers a glimpse into how difficult their lives must have been. The Grand Ridge Road has a rich history and we want to ensure it's around for generations to come."

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