



**Wednesday 31 July 2019**

### **Strong community support for Eden Project concept in Anglesea**

The Eden Project, a UK-based educational and environmental charity and social enterprise, and Alcoa of Australia have today released a report outlining the community feedback for the Eden Project Anglesea concept, revealing strong support from community members and key stakeholder groups.

The report details initial feedback on the concept gathered during May and June when more than 800 people attended community consultation events in Anglesea and 3,000 people engaged online.

Community feedback highlighted the many benefits that Eden Project Anglesea would offer, including showcasing the environmental significance of the region, world-class sustainability and education opportunities and benefits to the local economy and jobs.

David Harland, Chief Executive of Eden Project International Limited, said the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: "Community lies at the centre of everything we do at Eden, so listening to the Anglesea community is our core focus in this first phase. Their response thus far has been simply outstanding, and we have been delighted to hear their collective and obvious enthusiasm and support.

"This has only renewed our confidence that this is a project that could genuinely be a global exemplar here in Anglesea.

"This is just the start of the journey to bring this project to fruition – as such, we will continue to work together with the community, as we focus on attaining the relevant approvals, particularly for the water body which is absolutely central to the concept."

A number of concerns were constructively raised by community members, including the impact that a potential increase in traffic could have on Anglesea, especially during the summer peak periods.

Warren Sharp, Anglesea Site Asset Manager of Alcoa, said: “We are excited by the community interest in the Eden Project Anglesea concept and the number of people who have engaged in the process so far – not only locals but members of the wider community too.

“We hear the concerns around traffic and understand that it needs to be a key consideration for the project to be viable. We are confident that we can find solutions by working with the community, and initial traffic assessments are underway.”

The Surf Coast Shire Council and local organisations including ANGAIR, Business and Tourism Anglesea and Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism have also expressed their support for the concept.

Councillor Rose Hodge, Mayor of Surf Coast Shire Council, said: “The Eden Project is a very exciting proposal and represents a rare opportunity for Anglesea and the Surf Coast Shire.

“I am pleased to have had the opportunity along with Anglesea Ward Councillor Margot Smith to personally participate in the consultation program, and we’ve seen first-hand the enthusiastic community reaction to the Eden Project.

“The Eden Project aligns with people’s desire for the site to be rehabilitated and for the future use to celebrate and enhance the environmental values of the area. At the same time the proposal provides the potential for a major regional economic boost, including the creation of many new local jobs.

“Council recognises the planning aspects need to be worked through, including an understanding of traffic impacts, and looks forward to the next steps for this landmark project.”

The critical next steps for Alcoa and Eden are the resolution of the water strategy to fill the mine void and determining the relevant planning authority for the next phase.

Community engagement will continue to guide the project. David Harland and Eden Project landscape architect Jane Knight are returning to Anglesea in August for further community discussions and research, and to present an update at the next Alcoa Community Consultation Network meeting.

David will also be calling on the support of key regional leaders when he presents the concept at the G21 Geelong Regional Alliance Stakeholder Forum on 30 August.

The full feedback report can be viewed at [www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au](http://www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au).

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**Further information:**

[www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au](http://www.edenprojectanglesea.com.au)

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**Background on Eden – [www.edenproject.com/](http://www.edenproject.com/)**

The Eden Project in Cornwall, UK, is a global garden featuring spectacular geodesic domes, known as Biomes, situated in a former china clay quarry. Eden is the home of the largest rainforest in captivity, known as the Rainforest Biome, as well as the beautiful Mediterranean Biome and extensive outdoor gardens.

Eden has contributed more than £2 billion to the regional economy and welcomed more than 21 million visitors since it opened in 2001.

Eden Project International Limited (EPIL) is the global wing of the Eden Project, whose ambition is to create projects inspired by the original Cornish vision in every habitable continent on earth. It is currently working on projects in China, Dubai, the USA and the UK.

**Background on Alcoa – [www.alcoa.com.au/anglesea](http://www.alcoa.com.au/anglesea)**

After 46 years of operations, Alcoa's Anglesea power station and mine was permanently closed in 2015. Decommissioning of the power station site and remediation activities in the former mine site are well underway.

With landholdings framed by the Great Otway National Park, Anglesea Heath, Anglesea River, the Great Ocean Road and the Anglesea township, the site presents a once in generation opportunity to create outcomes of significant value to Anglesea and the broader region.

Following extensive community engagement, Alcoa published a concept master plan for its freehold landholdings in 2018 with a vision to connect people to Anglesea valued landscapes; create a new tourism destination for Anglesea and the Great Ocean Road; and create economic opportunities for Anglesea and the wider region.