

# Cars hauled back to land after being swept out to sea by flash floods

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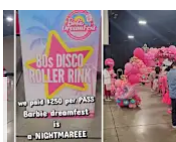


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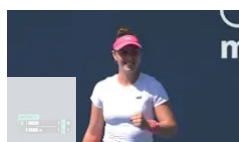
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A helicopter has retrieved more than a dozen cars that were swept out to sea during last week's severe flash flooding at campgrounds on the Great Ocean Road.

[The floods](#) on the Cumberland and Wye rivers last week also affected the Erskine River at Lorne and Separation Creek, forcing hundreds of holidaymakers to evacuate and prompting several flood rescues.



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The Great Ocean Road was closed in both directions between Lorne and Skenes Creek from 6.30am on Thursday as a helicopter moved in to retrieve the stranded cars.

The road reopened to traffic after the operation was complete.

VicSES operations manager Chris Longmore said an expert team, which included a Black Hawk helicopter and marine salvage crew, was called in to remove the cars that had come to rest on rocks, on the beach and out in the sea.

He said the helicopter was deployed to retrieve the cars in order to protect the coastal environment and cultural heritage of the beaches, rather than dragging them up along

the sand.

“Some vehicles came up really simply and were really being held down by water,” he said. “Others had some quite large boulders, sand and other debris that had built up over the last week of being in this environment.”

There were about a dozen vehicles at Cumberland River and two at Wye River. Longmore said the crew removed all the vehicles except for one caravan that remained stuck at Cumberland River.

Colac Otway Shire Mayor Jason Schram said it was a relief to finally have the cars out of the ocean.

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“It’s a great outcome to get the vehicles off the beach and the Great Ocean Road back open again and start welcoming tourists back,” he said.

Schram said the small towns whose economies relied on holidaymakers had been hit hard by the flash flooding.

“You can’t fight mother nature. It was a devastating flood with a huge amount of debris and earth and trees washed out to sea, as well as cars and personal belongings.”

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He said it was now safe to return and enjoy the beaches at those coastal locations that were impacted by the flash flooding.

The Environment Protection Authority has also lifted its water quality warning for beaches on the Great Ocean Road. Earlier this week, the authority had declared water quality poor at Lorne, Wye River and Kennett River following the floods.

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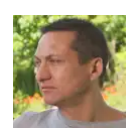
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