



GREAT OCEAN ROAD ACTION PLAN

Protecting our iconic
coast and parks

Dormant
Tower Hill Volcano

8.6m
visitors a year
within ten years

30 responsible
organisations

2/3
journeys are
day trips

Nearly **170,000**
hectares
of Crown land

Up to
12,000 visitors
a day to the 12 Apostles

Over
200
shipwrecks

5.8m
visitors spent

\$1.3b
generating

2cm/yr
the rate at which the cliffs
are being eroded

From 1846, the 12 Apostles
were once known as
"The Sow and Piglets"

7 limestone
stacks (out of
the original 9),
known as the
12 Apostles

Eastern Maar and
Wadawurrung
People have known
and cared for this
Country for at least

35,000
years

2
National
Parks

11,200
jobs

in the region in
the year ending
June 2017

In **2011**
Added to the
National Heritage List

1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires destroyed

42,000 and **729**
hectares houses

2015 Wye River bushfire destroyed

2,260 and **115**
hectares houses

Rare polar dinosaur
fossil sites

The Great
Ocean Road
is the world's
largest war
memorial

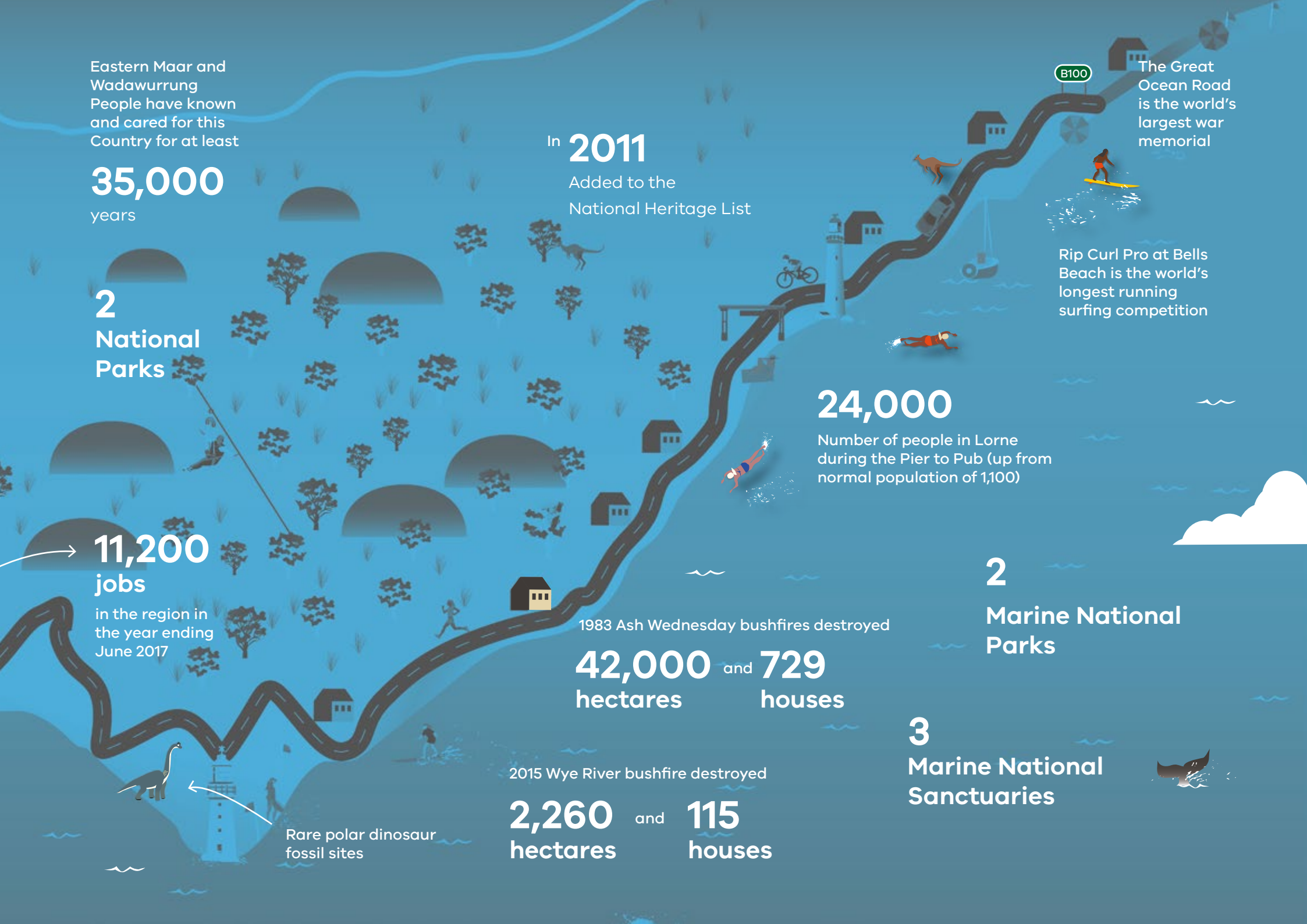
Rip Curl Pro at Bells
Beach is the world's
longest running
surfing competition

24,000

Number of people in Lorne
during the Pier to Pub (up from
normal population of 1,100)

2
Marine National
Parks

3
Marine National
Sanctuaries



Acknowledgement

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People as the traditional custodians of the Great Ocean Road region.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

We recognise and respect their unique cultural heritage, beliefs and intrinsic connection to their traditional lands, which continue to be important to them today.

We value the contribution their caring for Country makes to the land, coastlines, waterways and seascapes along the Great Ocean Road.

We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People to understand their culture and connections to Country in the way we plan for, and manage, the Great Ocean Road region. By integrating traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices with contemporary western ecological knowledge, we can deliver better environmental outcomes, make communities more liveable, and provide a great visitor experience.

We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards self-determination, equity of outcomes and an equal voice for Australia's First People.

Purpose

This Action Plan is the Victorian Government's response to the Great Ocean Road Taskforce Co-Chairs Report recommended reforms to management arrangements of the Great Ocean Road, its land and seascapes.



Minister's foreword

I love the story behind the creation of the Great Ocean Road.

It's special because, initially, it was funded by everyday Victorians. When the survey party started pegging out the route in August 1918, and when construction works commenced in 1919, the Road didn't have government support – it was bankrolled by public donations to provide employment for returned servicemen.

It was designed to open up access to the dramatic coastlines for day-trippers and tourists, and as a permanent memorial to the servicemen who served in World War One. Its construction – built largely by hand and as close as possible to the ocean – was a momentous engineering feat at the time.

Today – 100 years on – the road and its breathtaking coastal landscape is one of the world's great ocean drives, attracting more tourists than Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef combined.

But the Great Ocean Road is more than just a road.

It's the traditional lands of the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People.

It's a living memorial. A tourism drawcard. A national treasure.

And it's the home of 24,000 residents.

Right now, the road is at a critical juncture.

Like many international tourist destinations, the Great Ocean Road is challenged by increasing numbers of visitors, forces of nature – and the impacts of climate change.

Combined, these elements are having a very real impact on the beaches, cliffs, plants and animals – and in places both the day-to-day and long-term operation of the Road are also at risk.

Left unchecked, these threats could destroy this precious part of our state – and impact on the liveability of local communities.

These local communities have told us that major change to the management of the Great Ocean Road is required, and that we need to take action urgently.

This includes embracing Traditional Owner connections to Country, managing congestion during the popular summer period and better support for local communities.

It's why the Great Ocean Road Taskforce was established as a bipartisan effort with two independent Co-Chairs, Peter Batchelor and Terry Mulder – both former Transport Ministers in different governments and both residents of coastal communities along the Great Ocean Road.

Together with Traditional Owners and a panel of local experts from different fields, and the CEOs from the five Councils, they have worked diligently and consulted widely.

As part of their findings, the Co-Chairs have made 26 recommendations, with an unprecedented range of reforms to protect the coastal land and waters for years to come.

I want to thank the Taskforce members for their work, and the Co-Chairs for their landmark report.

With in-principle agreement for every single recommendation, we'll keep working to protect this most special part of our state.

Now – and for future generations.



A stylized blue ink signature of Hon Lily D'Ambrosio.

Hon Lily D'Ambrosio

Minister for Energy, Environment
and Climate Change

Eastern Maar foreword

The Eastern Maar are the Traditional Owners of south-western Victoria. Our land extends as far north as Ararat and encompasses Warrnambool, Port Fairy and the Great Ocean Road. It also stretches 100m out to sea from low tide and therefore includes the iconic Twelve Apostles.

Our identity is tied to our Country. We have looked after these places for tens of thousands of years, they are our responsibility and our sanctuary. They have sustained us physically and spiritually. It is well documented that our history since European colonisation has been difficult. The decline of our population during 1830-1880 has been described as catastrophic resulting from exposure to European diseases, massacres and dispossession, with our remaining numbers pushed onto missions. Despite that, we never ceased looking after our Country and passing our stories down.

We were invited to participate in the Great Ocean Road Taskforce review into the management arrangements for the Great Ocean Road. We welcome the invitation to be part of a process relating to the management of such a significant part of our lands.

It is our hope that the proposed governance reforms are implemented in full, with the Eastern Maar People built in to those processes, so that we may continue to guide the protection, restoration and culturally sensitive development of this important tract of our Country.

Twelve Apostles
Source: Visit Victoria



Wadawurrung foreword

The Wadawurrung People are the Traditional Owners of the land and waters that run from the Great Dividing Range in the north to the coast in the South, from Werribee River in the east to Painkalak Creek at Aireys inlet. Our Country includes hills, rivers and grassy plains, creeks and coasts, as well as encompassing the major regional cities of Geelong and Ballarat.

The Great Ocean Road – from Torquay to Painkalak Creek – is Wadawurrung Country.

For thousands of generations, we have cared for and protected the land and waters of our Country, including its heritage, cultural values and traditions.

Our history and connection to this part of Wadawurrung Country is rich in stories. We held ceremonies, we gathered, hunted, traded and cared for Country with traditional fire burning for revegetation.

When we see Bunjil, our Creator Spirit, we know our waters and land are healthy. Bunjil created our landscape, our stories of all things living. He protects our country and connects us with our stories and cultural beliefs.

We have a responsibility to continue to protect the stories, values and significant cultural sites along the Great Ocean Road. We hope that in partnership with others the cultural importance of the region is valued, and that this is clearly outlined in governance, law and policy.

That is why it was vital that we, as Traditional Owners, had a voice in all aspects of the Great Ocean Road Taskforce's conversations and recommendations. We believe that the Government is committed to see the best outcomes for the Great Ocean Road and we look forward to playing a primary, and active, role in implementing the Great Ocean Road Action Plan.

We know from the work we do that people want to know more about the First Peoples of the land.

Tourists and most locals have minimal knowledge of Wadawurrung history and culture along the Great Ocean Road, with no Wadawurrung acknowledgement signage, language, stories or history displayed along the route.

Implementing the cultural stories and values will inform people and enrich the experience of travelling along the Great Ocean Road.

Reconciliation is about bringing all together.

Let's walk together, alongside one another, so cultural heritage and values along the Great Ocean Road are known and shared with respect, understanding and accountability.

Point Roadknight







1.

Introduction



Introduction

The Taskforce was given a job of national significance – to identify the steps that need to be taken to safeguard the future of the coastal land and waters of the Great Ocean Road.

On 14 September 2017, the Victorian Government established the Great Ocean Road Taskforce. The Taskforce is independently co-chaired by the Hon Peter Batchelor and the Hon Terry Mulder. Its membership includes representatives of the Traditional Owners, tourism and coastal management and local government.

The Taskforce conducted the first independent assessment of the management and oversight of the entirety of the Great Ocean Road region.

It consulted with 38 organisations and found widespread agreement on the need for reform. The Taskforce also

found that – given the Great Ocean Road’s outstanding natural, cultural and heritage values – there was a need to treat the region as a *single, integrated and living entity*.

Lorne Pier
Source: Visit Victoria



With that in mind, the Taskforce released a landmark Issues Paper in March 2018 for community comment.

In that Issues Paper – *Governance of the Great Ocean Road Region* – the Taskforce:

- recommended a new management model and formal policy position to provide direction to the development of the land and Great Ocean Road region
 - explained that a lead agency is needed because – although more than 20 public agencies currently have responsibilities in the region – there is no overarching management, no clearly defined partnership with the Traditional Owners and no holistic planning for the touring experience
 - called for the development and funding of a 30-year strategic framework plan covering the entire region.
- its visitors spend \$1.3 billion a year and support 11, 200 jobs in the region¹
 - it is home to rare dinosaur fossils, more than 200 shipwrecks and some of Australia's most iconic coastline, from Bells Beach to the Twelve Apostles to the Tower Hill volcano
 - it boasts everything from national parks to marine sanctuaries
 - it is the traditional land of the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People, as well as a functioning memorial to the servicemen of World War One, it is hallowed ground for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In short, the work of the Taskforce has confirmed that the coastal land and waters of the Great Ocean Road are unique – and priceless.

There is no place in the world like the Great Ocean Road.

And, now, as Australia marks the centenary of the survey for the construction of the Road, this generation has an opportunity to secure the future of its land and waters for another century.

To fully appreciate the importance of the Taskforce's work, it's essential to fully understand the importance of the Great Ocean Road.

The Great Ocean Road is a national treasure:

- it attracts more visitors than Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef combined

1. Source: Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey for Year ending June 2017, with modelling and interpretation by Deloitte Access Economics.

Visitors stopping to photograph koolas.
Source: Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism



Objectives

This Action Plan is the Victorian Government's response to the Great Ocean Road Taskforce Co-Chairs Report proposing reforms to the management arrangements.

Like the Co-chairs Report, this Action Plan is a landmark document.

It is a landmark because it outlines an unprecedented range of reforms designed to protect the future of the coastal land and waters of the Great Ocean Road.

This generation of Victorians has an obligation to protect the iconic coastal land and seascapes along the Great Ocean Road for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

That obligation is owed to the returned servicemen who built the Road, the Traditional Owners upon whose land the Road is built, to its local communities, to all Victorians who enjoy day trips and holidays along the Road, and to the millions of people who will visit the Road in the decades to come.

After all, the Great Ocean Road belongs to all Australians.

One integrated and living entity

The iconic land and seascapes along the Great Ocean Road have outstanding natural, heritage and cultural values and are to be treated as the *one integrated and living natural entity* for the protection and appreciation of future generations.

The proposition asserts that the country through which the Great Ocean Road traverses is to be acknowledged, respected and cared for as the one integrated and living entity and not as separate elements. This holistic approach blends the wisdom of the Traditional Owners in caring for Country with a contemporary approach to protect natural, heritage and cultural values and distinctive landscapes.

Port Fairy
Source: Moyne Shire



The Great Ocean Road Action Plan is guided by five objectives².

Objective	Principle
Protect the ecological and landscape integrity of coastal and marine environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the marine and coastal environments along the Great Ocean Road, the unique habitats, ecosystems, biodiversity and landscapes. • Integrate Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary western ecological knowledge in environmental management. • Maintain the coastal assets and secure the coastal public land footprint for the enjoyment and appreciation of future generations. • Prepare for, and manage, the impacts of climate change on coastal public land and assets.
Increase Traditional Owner inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People as traditional custodians of the land, coastlines, waterways and seas along the Great Ocean Road. • Recognise, protect, and promote the values, rights, and interests of Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People. • Support, and equip Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People to play an active role in shaping the future of their traditional lands, waterways and seas. • Partner with, and equip Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung People in the development of policies, planning and management of the Great Ocean Road, its coastlines, landscapes and seas.
Protect distinctive areas and landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise, protect and promote the natural, heritage and cultural values, and distinctive characteristics of the Great Ocean Road, its landscapes and towns. • Conserve the unique features and special characteristics of the Great Ocean Road, its landscapes and seascapes. • Touch the land, coastlines, and waterways lightly and ensure there is a net gain for the environment³ out of any individual action, development or policy.
Grow the local, state and national visitation economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the importance of the Great Ocean Road, its land and seascapes to the economic prosperity, liveability and wellbeing of local communities, and of all Victorians. • Enhance the experience of the touring route and its destinations for all visitors, including international tourists. • Recognise the importance of liveable coastal communities along the Great Ocean Road. • Ensure responsibility for sustainable development of the Great Ocean Road visitor economy is shared by all levels of government, industries, businesses, local communities, and Victorians.
Modernise governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide visionary leadership and overarching direction to the management of the Great Ocean Road and its coastal landscapes and seascapes. • Adopt a holistic approach with integrated strategic planning, coordinated implementation, and aligned decision-making for the length of the Great Ocean Road. • Partner with Traditional Owners in the design of policies and planning for the future direction of Crown land and parks in the region. • Protect the rights and interests of the Traditional Owner groups. • Maintain ongoing dialogue with local communities and prioritise community engagement in designing policies and planning for the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes. • Develop a secure, long-term, commitment to fund the delivery of strategic goals.

2. These objectives were developed by the Taskforce, refined through community consultation, and endorsed by the Victorian Government.

3. The definition of environment here is the “whole of the environment”. This definition has been adopted from the *Environmental Protection Act 1970* “the physical factors of the surroundings including the land, waters, atmosphere, climate, sound, odours, tastes, the biological factors of animals and plants and the social factor of aesthetics”.





2.

Actions



Actions

The Government supports all 26 of the Co-Chair recommendations, subject to funding.

The Government proposes to implement the recommendations (outlined in Appendix 1) through five major reforms:

1. Legislation to protect the Great Ocean Road, its land and seascapes as the *one integrated and living entity*.
2. A new, dedicated, marine and coastal parks authority with the primary purpose of managing and protecting the land and seascapes of the Great Ocean Road, to manage visitation and to coordinate delivery of associated government investment projects.
3. A new overarching planning framework for the region that legislates community involvement in the development of shared objectives and a framework to provide future direction to the region.
4. A better planning approval process with an independent expert advisory committee that streamlines planning approvals for appropriate development projects and stops inappropriate proposals in their early stages.
5. A range of supporting initiatives.

These major reforms will be delivered through 18 specific actions with further work required to establish the finer details and funding for implementation.

LEGISLATION FOR PROTECTION

- 1 Legislate the policy
- 2 Legislate the planning framework
- 3 Legislate the environmental-economic accounts

A NEW DEDICATED PARKS AUTHORITY

- 4 A Great Ocean Road Coasts and Parks Authority
- 5 Work closely with local communities
- 6 Traditional Owner capacity
- 7 Sustainable funding

A NEW OVERARCHING PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- 8 Community involvement
- 9 A Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan
- 10 Monitor implementation

A BETTER PLANNING APPROVAL PROCESS

- 11 Standing advisory committee
- 12 Planning guidelines
- 13 Planning services support to councils

SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- 14 Sustainable tourism
- 15 Improved road access and safety
- 16 Crown land administrative arrangements
- 17 Shared delivery of municipal-like services
- 18 Commercial tour operator licences

Timing legend:

Short Term: By the end of 2020 (0-2 years)

Medium Term: By the end of 2023 (2-5 years)

Long Term: Beyond 2023 (more than 5 years)

Legislation for protection

The Victorian Government commits to create a standalone Act of Parliament that – for the first time – defines the coastal land and waters that encompass the Great Ocean Road; recognises that the region is a *single, integrated and living entity*; and makes the management of the region publicly accountable.

Actions

Action 1

Timing: Short term

LEGISLATE THE POLICY

Introduce a ground-breaking, standalone, Act of Parliament that:

- recognises the national significance and need to protect the Great Ocean Road, its land and seascapes as a *single integrated and living entity* for the benefit of future generations
- adopts the recommended five objectives for management of the region
- defines the coastal land and waters along the Great Ocean Road to be known as the ‘*Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*’
- introduces clear lines of accountability and transparency for all organisations involved in management of the region.

Action 2

Timing: Short term

LEGISLATE THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Enshrine the overarching planning framework in legislation including the strategic framework plan’s minimum contents, area of coverage, community involvement, preparation process requirements, approval processes, requirements for reporting and revision, and the responsible entities that must have regard to the approved strategic framework plan.

Action 3

Timing: Short term

LEGISLATE ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS

Establish a statutory requirement for:

- a set of Environmental-Economic Accounts to be developed and maintained for the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*
- the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to report periodically on the environmental condition of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*, as part of the regular Victorian *State of the Environment* reporting.

Wreck Beach, Great Ocean Walk
Source: Parks Victoria



A new, dedicated, parks authority

The Victorian Government commits to – for the first time – establish a dedicated, statutory parks management authority, the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority*, to protect and manage the coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road for the benefit of future generations.

This will not alter the underlying management tenure and conservation objectives of any national parks areas for which the new authority assumes responsibility.

The new authority will work closely with **Parks Victoria who retain responsibility for broad-acre parks management** - including for most of the Great Otway National Park - and who will provide parks management services to the new authority for its field operations to ensure environmental conservation objectives are met.

This is similar to the management model for the Great Barrier Reef where the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service provide

field management services to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority for the marine and island national parks.

This will simplify the governance of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes.

Currently there are 11 different managers of Crown land operating in different geographical locations with different responsibilities, stakeholders, priorities and timeframes. Not one agency has a remit along the full length of the Road.

Hiking along the Great Ocean Walk
Source: Visit Victoria



Actions

Action 4

Timing: Short term

A GREAT OCEAN ROAD COAST AND PARKS AUTHORITY

Establish an independent statutory authority, the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority*, with a skill-based board and independent chair, to manage the coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road.

Further work on the details of, and funding for, the new authority will start immediately so its legislation can be considered by Parliament in 2019.

Functions:

The Authority's primary purpose is to protect and manage visitation of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*:

- i. manage, protect, rehabilitate and foster resilience of the natural, cultural and heritage values of coastal Crown land and marine waters along the Great Ocean Road
- ii. environmentally sustainable visitation management for the National Heritage listed length of the Great Ocean Road to improve the visitor experience and manage visitation 'hot spots'
- iii. a 'coordinator-general' like function to coordinate the timely and efficient delivery of government investment (such as visitor facilities and infrastructure), to minimise the resultant disruption and inconvenience to travellers and local communities, and to deliver government construction projects.

The work of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority* will be underpinned by science and research.

Board Membership:

- independent chair
- a nominee of each Traditional Owner group⁴ for the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* area
- up to 8 independent skill-based members.

The authority's functions are broad requiring an independent board with a diverse range of skills including all of the following skills: land-use planning and landscape architecture; marine and coastal environmental science; travel, tourism, hospitality and leisure; finance management and investment facilitation; construction management; natural resource management; and cultural and heritage values management.

Action 5

Timing: Short term

WORK CLOSELY WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Establish structures for the ongoing involvement of local communities in the protection and visitation management of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*. The new Authority will also need to establish forums to liaise with and involve key stakeholders (such as an Environmental Advisory Committee and a Tourism Industry Advisory Committee).

Action 6

Timing: Medium term

TRADITIONAL OWNER CAPACITY

Support the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung to map their tangible and intangible cultural values in the land and seascapes along the Great Ocean Road and strengthen their capacity to actively manage their traditional lands.

Action 7

Timing: Short term

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Establish funding arrangements for the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority*.

4. Traditional Owner groups formally recognised through settlement agreements under either the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 2003* or *Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* or are the Registered Aboriginal Party under *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.



Apollo Bay
Source: Surf Coast Images

A new overarching planning framework

The Victorian Government will, for the first time, take a generational approach to the management of the coastal lands and waters of the Great Ocean Road.

The Great Ocean Road passes through an ancient and dynamic landscape – with strong cultural meaning for indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

The geological events that created and continue to change the landscape began millennia ago. The works that created the Road began a century ago. And the environment, social and economic needs of the area will keep changing in the face of climate change, increased tourism numbers and community demands.

The competing needs of the region cannot be balanced unless it is seen as a single, integrated and living entity. That is why a new overarching planning framework, enshrined in legislation, is needed.

Actions

Action 8

Timing: Short term

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Involve the community in developing long-term objectives and a shared vision for the future of the Great Ocean Road region that protects the distinctive landscapes and liveability of local communities, and provides a great visitor experience.

Action 9

Timing: Short term

A GREAT OCEAN ROAD STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN

Develop and maintain an overarching Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road region that:

- has a 50-year outlook and gives effect to the vision
- provides direction to municipal and agency activities and decision making
- provides future direction to land use and development in the region
- recognises, protects and promotes Traditional Owner values and heritage values
- prioritises preservation of the ecological and landscape integrity of coastal and marine environments
- includes planning for sustainable visitation and travel along the touring route
- is developed with community participation
- is reviewed every 10 years.

Action 10

Timing: Medium term

MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION

Require all public entities with delivery responsibilities in the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan to report regularly on their progress for an annual report to Parliament submitted by the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority*.

Viewing the Twelve Apostles



A better planning approval process

The Victorian Government will strengthen the planning system to properly protect the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes from inappropriate development.

By creating a standing advisory committee that will give expert advice on development proposals, this reform will streamline the process for appropriate development projects and stop inappropriate proposals in their early stages.

We need to encourage smart, environmentally sustainable developments that will secure the region’s future prosperity and liveability.

Actions

Action 11

Timing: Short term

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Establish a standing advisory committee for the Great Ocean Road region (under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*) to provide independent expert advice on sustainable land development and development proposals. This reform will stop inappropriate development proposals in their early stages and streamline the progress of appropriate development proposals.

Functions:

- i. act as a Review Panel for Planning Scheme Amendments and Planning Permits that are called-in by the Minister for Planning
- ii. act as a Land-use and Design Review Panel for councils, for visitor economy development proposals that are consistent with the Strategic Framework Plan and associated Planning Guidelines
- iii. act as a Review Panel for coastal and marine management plans, and coastal land consent permits within the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* area
- iv. provide policy and strategic advice to the Minister for Planning.

Skills:

Whilst the advisory committee can seek expert skills as required, its membership will have an understanding and appreciation of the region and include all of these skills: strategic and statutory land-use planning; architecture, urban design and landscape architecture; marine and coastal environmental science; transport planning; Traditional Owner values; heritage values; tourism and economic viability.

Action 12

Timing: Short term

PLANNING GUIDELINES

Identify options for planning guidelines to accompany the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan that provide clear direction on appropriate land-uses and development design standards across the area.

Action 13

Timing: Short term

PLANNING SERVICES SUPPORT TO COUNCILS

Identify options for planning services support to supplement the councils’ capacity to assess large and complex land development projects.

Supporting initiatives

No single action will secure the future of the coastal land and waters of the Great Ocean Road.

What is required is a generation of actions.

These supporting initiatives are no less important than the earlier major reforms.

Actions

Action 14

Timing: Short term

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Develop a sustainable visitation management strategy for the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* that focuses on a great visitor experience and increasing the economic benefit to local communities including:

- a capacity analysis for the Great Ocean Road (coast, parks and marine environments, the road, key destinations, and land-uses) to understand visitation management options and constraints
- better visitor facilities, amenities, products and services
- enhanced digital connectivity to boost both visitor experience and emergency services needs
- identifying other tourism infrastructure/facilities requirements along the Great Ocean Road.

Action 15

Timing: Short term

IMPROVED ROAD ACCESS AND SAFETY

Develop a transport strategy for the regional network (including the Princes Highway and north-south links to the Great Ocean Road) and prioritise the pipeline of investments required. Work with road safety agencies to review and identify priority projects for improving the safety and well-being of travellers along the Great Ocean Road.

Action 16

Timing: Medium term

CROWN LAND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Review and align Crown land reservations and parcel information within the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* with the directions of the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan.

Action 17

Timing: Short term

SHARED DELIVERY OF MUNICIPAL LIKE SERVICES

Establish a working group to identify opportunities for councils and government agencies to work together to deliver municipal-like services such as facilities maintenance and cleaning, gardening and waste collection.

Action 18

Timing: Short term

COMMERCIAL TOUR OPERATOR LICENCES

Review the public land commercial tour operator and commercial activity provider licences system.





3.

Implementation



Implementation

The Victorian Government is committed to implementing this Action Plan in collaboration with the local governments along the Great Ocean Road, and with the involvement of local communities.

The Great Ocean Road Taskforce has played a leading role in developing and advising on this plan. The Taskforce will continue to advise the coordinating Ministers and provide regional oversight of the Action Plan delivery.

A multiagency delivery team is being established in the Geelong office of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to manage the delivery of this Action Plan. The delivery team will brief local communities on the *Great Ocean Road Action*

Plan and regularly consult with local communities during its implementation. Quarterly status reports will be publicly released to provide transparency on the progress being made.

All projects and actions requiring funding will be carefully assessed against the criteria and budget capacity of potential funding sources. Funding decisions will be made in line with normal Government policy and budget processes.

Great Ocean Road Taskforce

From left to right: Bruce Anson, Peter Batchelor, Keith Baillie, Jamie Lowe, Wayne Kayler-Thomson, Diane James, Paul Davis, Elaine Carbines, Tony McGann, Jason Mifsud, Corrina Eccles, Terry Mulder. Absent: Andrew Mason, David Madden.



Budget to-date

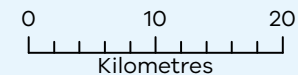
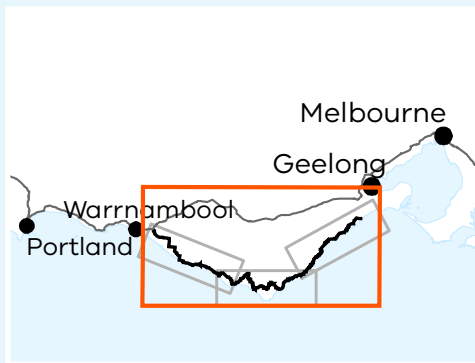
Delivery of this Action Plan will occur within the changing context of government initiatives and local strategies, plans and policies that are already underway, including the Geelong City Deal, the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan and the new *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

The Victorian Government's 2018-19 Budget allocated \$155 million for delivery of special projects along the Great Ocean Road. This investment builds on the \$165 million of funding already allocated for projects along the Great Ocean Road by the Victorian and Australian governments.

Great Ocean Road	<p>The Australian and Victorian governments have invested \$100 million in the Great Ocean Road Upgrade project to improve safety, and the experience of Australia's most visited destination. This extensive program involves resurfacing the Road, pedestrian and cycling improvements, replacement of several bridges and the installation of new drainage at over 100 locations.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has also committed an additional \$53 million to safeguard the geotechnical future of the Road following the 2016 floods and landslides at Separation Creek and Wye River.</p>	\$214.7 million
Access Roads	<p>The Victorian Budget 2018-19 provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$39.9 million for Princes Highway West upgrades – Colac to South Australian border • \$9.8 million for the Forrest-Apollo Bay Road upgrade • \$12 million for safety improvements on the Anglesea Road between Freshwater Creek and Bellbrae 	
Simplify the complex management arrangements for the Great Ocean Road	<p>The Victorian Government allocated \$1.3 million in the Victorian Budget 2017/2018 to establish the Great Ocean Road Taskforce (the Taskforce) to review the effectiveness of current governance arrangements and recommend governance reforms.</p> <p>The original budget has been supplemented by an additional \$625,000 from Regional Development Victoria who in partnership with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning are supporting the project delivery.</p>	\$1.9 million
Tourism industry	<p>To build on our success, the Victorian Budget 2018/19 invests in tourism and regional promotion, including \$153 million for Victoria's share of the Geelong City Deal with funding going to build the new Convention Centre and progress the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan including the Glenample Visitor Experience Centre at the Twelve Apostles.</p> <p>The Great Ocean Road will benefit from \$51.1 million allocated for international and interstate tourism campaigns, support for Business Events Victoria and regional tourism boards to attract more tourists and create more jobs.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has also committed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.5 million to improve visitor facilities at Maits Rest, Melba Gully and the Cape Otway Legislation • \$300,000 to investigate the merits of designing a walking trail for Torquay to Apollo Bay 	To be advised
Shipwreck Coast	<p>The Victorian Government has invested \$9.8 million to commence Stage One of the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan. These projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campbell's Creek Pedestrian Bridge, Port Campbell • 'The Saddle' Lookout, Twelve Apostles • 'The Blowhole' Lookout, Loch Ard Precinct • Digital upgrade, Twelve Apostles <p>An additional \$5 million has been allocated to implement early works on the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan with initiatives to improve and better manage the flow of traffic and safety for pedestrians.</p>	\$14.8 million
Investment and jobs growth	<p>The Victorian Government has allocated \$220,000 from the <i>Regional Skills Fund</i> to help Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Corangamite Shire develop workforce planning and development strategies to plan for investment and jobs growth.</p>	\$220,000







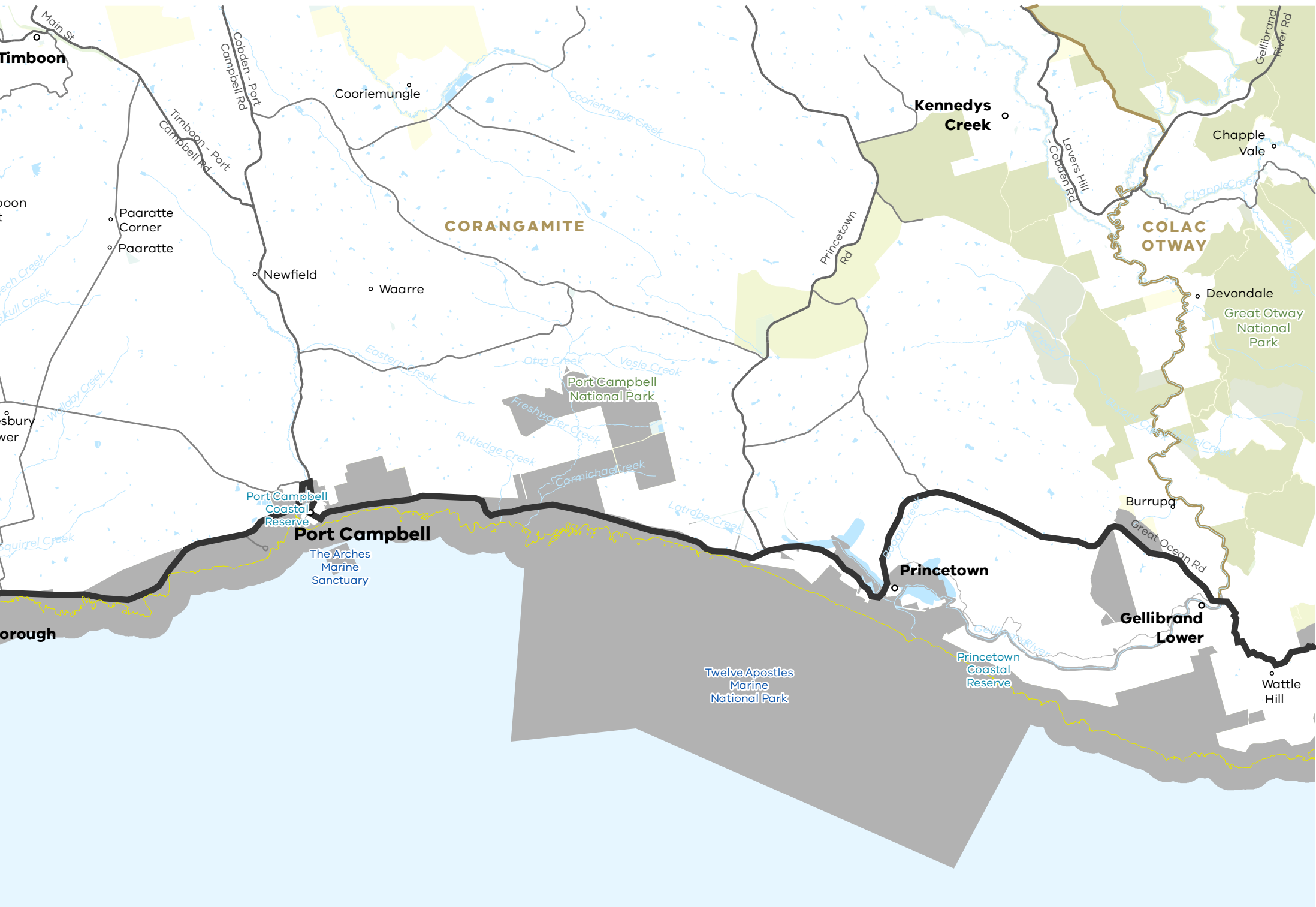
Legend



- City
- Regional Centre
- Town
- Local Government Area
- Urban Extent
- Great Ocean Road
- Freeway
- Highway
- Arterial
- Rail Line
- Watercourse
- Water body
- Coastline
- Proposed Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Area
- National Park
- State Forest
- Plantation
- Other Public Land
- Coastal Reserve / Coastal Waters Planning Scheme Zones
- Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) & Public Parks and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)



















Appendix 1

List of Co-Chair Recommendations

All 26 recommendations of the Co-Chairs Report are supported, and adopted in principle (subject to funding).

State policy position

Recommendation 1

Recognise the national significance of the Great Ocean Road and its iconic coastal landscapes in State policies and establish a commensurate decision-making framework with a focus on its preservation, sustainable economic development, and a great visitor experience.

Recommendation 2

Adopt this proposition and five objectives to provide direction to the governance arrangements and decision-making frameworks.

The iconic landscapes along the Great Ocean Road have outstanding natural, heritage and cultural values and are to be treated as the one integrated and living entity for protection and the appreciation of future generations.

- i. *Protect the ecological and landscape integrity of coastal and marine environments*
- ii. *Strengthen Traditional Owner involvement*
- iii. *Protect distinctive areas and landscapes*
- iv. *Grow the local, state and national visitation economies*
- v. *Modernise governance.*

Recommendation 3

Recognise and protect the marine waters and coastal land along the Great Ocean Road as the state significant 'Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks' for protection, care and investment.

A new overarching planning framework

Recommendation 4

Establish a statutory requirement to develop a shared vision for the Great Ocean Road region with a long-term outlook (50+ years).

Recommendation 5

Establish a statutory requirement to develop and maintain an overarching Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan that:

- gives effect to the vision
- provides direction to municipal and agency activities and decision making
- prioritises preservation of the ecological and landscape integrity of coastal and marine environments
- includes planning for sustainable visitation and travel along the touring route
- is developed with community participation
- is reviewed every 10 years
- identifies elements that organisations must have regard to, and those that are binding.

Recommendation 6

Establish planning guidelines to accompany the strategic framework plan that provide clear direction on appropriate land-uses and development design standards across the area.

Recommendation 7

Establish local community reference groups along the Great Ocean Road to provide input and guidance to the development of the strategic framework plan.

Recommendation 8

Establish a statutory requirement to audit and report annually to Parliament on the implementation of the strategic framework plan by the responsible public entities.

Recommendation 9

Establish a statutory requirement for the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability to periodically assess and report on the environmental condition of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* as part of the regular reporting on the State of the Environment in Victoria.

Recommendation 10

Support the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung to map their cultural values in the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*.

A new overarching planning framework

Recommendation 11

Establish a standing advisory committee to the Minister for Planning for the Great Ocean Road region (under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*) to streamline planning approvals and provide independent expert advice on sustainable land development.

FUNCTIONS:

- i. Act as a review panel for planning scheme amendments and planning permit applications that are “called-in” by the Minister
- ii. Act as a land-use and design review panel for the responsible authorities for visitor economy development proposals that are consistent with the strategic framework plan and associated planning guidelines
- iii. Act as a review panel for coastal and marine management plans, and consents to use or develop marine and coastal Crown land in the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*
- iv. Provide policy and strategic advice to the Minister on:
 - a. development and operation of the Great Ocean Road Regional Strategic Framework Plan
 - b. protection of coastal environments and Crown land
 - c. protection of the coastal public land footprint and public foreshore access
 - d. sustainable visitation management of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*
 - e. related matters referred by the Minister.

SKILLS:

Whilst the advisory committee can seek expert skills as required, its membership would need to include all of the following skills:

- strategic and statutory land-use planning
- architecture, urban design and landscape architecture
- marine and coastal environmental science
- transport planning
- Traditional Owner values
- heritage
- tourism and economic viability.

Recommendation 12

Streamline planning approvals by providing planning services to supplement the councils’ capacity to assess large and complex land development projects and ensuring that referral agencies are adequately resourced.

Recommendation 13

Establish a new statutory authority, the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority*, with an independent chair and skill-based board, to manage the coastal Crown land and marine parks along the Great Ocean Road.

FUNCTIONS:

The primary purpose is to protect and manage visitation of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*, to:

- protect and enhance the ecological and landscape integrity of the coastal parks and marine areas along the Great Ocean Road
- protect coastal assets (natural and built), the coastal public land footprint, and community access
- prepare for, and manage, the impacts of natural forces on, and climate change risks to, coastal public land and assets.

OTHER PURPOSES:

- sustainable visitation management including:
 - operation of visitor facilities and camping grounds
 - issuing of permits for events and commercial activities, leases and licenses
 - regulation of commercial operation in, on or around the Crown land and marine parks
- support the involvement of the Traditional Owners in the management of cultural values and natural resources (including Crown land)
- coordinate government construction projects and disruptions along the Great Ocean Road
- deliver construction projects
- facilitate appropriate economic development
- educate and foster community stewardship (and volunteerism) of coastal land.

POWERS REQUIRED TO:

- ensure funds raised (from caravan parks and leases etc) can be collected, held, remain with, and be allocated to initiatives within the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*
- purchase, consolidate, take on, transfer or otherwise acquire land for inclusion in the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*
- regulate commercial visitor operations in or on the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*.

INDEPENDENT SKILLS BASED BOARD OF EXPERTS COVERING:

- land-use planning and landscape architecture
- marine and coastal environmental science
- travel, tourism, hospitality and leisure
- finance and investment facilitation
- construction management
- natural resource management
- Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung values.

Recommendation 14

Establish local community advisory committees, an environmental advisory committee, and a tourism industry advisory committee as ongoing forums for involving local communities and key stakeholders in the management of the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*.

Recommendation 15

Enshrine the new governance arrangements for the Great Ocean Road, its landscapes and seascapes in stand-alone legislation that includes a preamble by the Traditional Owners.

Recommendation 16

Strengthen the capacity of the Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung to actively participate in the management of their traditional lands.

Sustainable funding model

Recommendation 17

Establish funding arrangements for the new authority.

Recommendation 18

Review the long-term risks from coastal erosion and inundation, severe weather events and climate change on coastal Crown land and assets.

Recommendation 19

Review the public land commercial tour operator and commercial activity provider licences system.



Supporting initiatives

Recommendation 20

Establish a working group to identify opportunities for shared municipal-like services delivery along the Great Ocean Road and develop an implementation plan.

Recommendation 21

Review and align anomalous Crown land reservations and parcel information within the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks* with the directions of the Strategic Framework Plan.

Recommendation 22

Conduct a capacity analysis for the Great Ocean Road (the road, coast and marine environments, parks and key destinations, accommodation, coastal towns) and identify visitation management options.

Recommendation 23

Develop a sustainable visitation management strategy for the *Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks*.

Recommendation 24

Review the risks to the ongoing operation and function of the Great Ocean Road and develop a longer-term transport network strategy.

Recommendation 25

Work with Road Safety Agencies to review and identify the priority projects to improve the safety and well-being of travellers along the Great Ocean Road.

Recommendation 26

Establish the visitor expectations and emergency services benefits of enhanced digital connectivity along the Great Ocean Road.



For further information on delivery of this Action Plan or to subscribe to project updates, refer to the project website at **www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/great-ocean-road-taskforce** or by contacting the project team at:

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