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Hon Peter Batchelor and Hon Terry Mulder  
 Co-chairs  
 Great Ocean Road Taskforce  
 Via email: [greatoceanroad.taskforce@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:greatoceanroad.taskforce@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Dear Co-chairs,

## **GOVERNANCE OF THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD ISSUES PAPER**

I write in response to the Governance of the Great Ocean Road Issues Paper (Issues Paper) released on 21 March 2018. The Western Coastal Board (WCB) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Issues Paper. We have formed our submission around three main elements, which are at the heart of the proposal to reform the governance of the Great Ocean Road Region:

- A new lead agency
- Development of a Strategic Framework Plan and
- Funding and resourcing.

### **A new lead agency**

The Taskforce has concluded that the best way to secure the future of the Great Ocean Road is to create a new lead agency function, which would develop and report on the implementation of an overarching Strategic Framework Plan. The WCB agrees that the creation of a single focused agency would overcome the issue of coordinating various public entities working on different tasks, and only within their own boundaries.

Using the model of Alpine Resorts and other geographic bodies, a board consisting of government-appointed members with appropriate expertise would oversee the agency. Its membership could include local government representatives.

The agency itself would need to attract highly skilled staff with a broad range of relevant qualifications and experience to deliver a carefully thought out and visionary plan. The same people would be responsible for the evaluation of major developments (public and private) within the subject area, having regard to a Strategic Framework Plan and an established set of design principles.

### **A Strategic Framework Plan**

If the fragmentation of approaches is to be overcome, a Strategic Framework Plan is a desirable approach. It would begin with overarching principles about landscape protection, nodes for development and economic activity, and other high-level principles. Details such as design guidelines and preferred land-use at different locations would follow.

To ensure the Strategic Framework Plan and its principles and design guidelines are followed by planning authorities, the new lead agency would have full referral agency status under the planning scheme. This could be achieved by coverage of the relevant area with an overlay which would control all buildings and works (that

is, development). The question of controls for 'land-use' as opposed to 'development' would require further thought. To avoid policies and objectives conflicting with each other (often found confusing within planning schemes), there could be a hierarchy of objectives making clear where the emphasis should be placed in decision making.

The other main issue requiring considerable thought and discussion is the actual area/extent of the lead agency's jurisdiction. While the length of the area may have some logical end points, the width will not be so easily determined.

### **Funding and resourcing**

Options for funding a new lead agency and its functions could include:

- a toll on the road (or part thereof), with exemptions for local residents
- parking and entrance fees levied at the main points of attraction and secured to fund the lead agency and Parks Victoria
- tour operators levied for conducting their business within the area (like the arrangement at the Great Barrier Reef)
- direct funding by the state government.

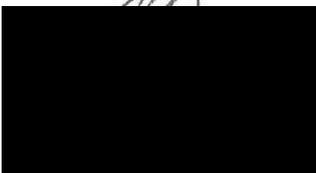
Parks Victoria has struggled to adequately manage their entire parks and reserves in the south-west region, with the reason often cited as a lack of funding and resources. Consequently, it is important that a robust and sustained funding package be implemented.

In addition to these three elements, the WCB would like to see the following improvements to the Great Ocean Road in general:

- preservation and enhancement of the varied indigenous vegetation found along the road
- greater management of environmental weeds in neglected areas (such as Lavers Hill)
- better protection of the road's significant Aboriginal cultural heritage, and other cultural heritage
- increased indigenous vegetation buffers between the road and commercial timber plantations
- reinforcement of villages along the road through avoiding ribbon development and allowing the natural landscape/vegetation to dominate beyond township edges
- continued improvement of the road surfaces to improve safety for drivers.

The Western Coastal Board thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the Great Ocean Road Issues Paper. I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss this submission further if required.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the Chair of the Western Coastal Board.

Chair, Western Coastal Board

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