

Respondent No: 44

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Member Username: [REDACTED]

Member Postcode: 3127

Member Email: [REDACTED]

1. What is your interest in the Great Ocean Road Region?

Secondary residence

Recreation

Attend/participate in an event

2. Are you completing this survey on behalf of an organisation?

no

3. How many times did you travel along the Great Ocean Road (any section between Torquay and Allansford) in the last 6 months?

Most weeks

4. What do you love most about the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes?

Section from Torquay to Port Campbell. The sense of being in a natural environment, one that exists independently of the activities of mankind. A sense of awe at the power, not always benign, of nature. A sense of privilege at the opportunity to observe indigenous plants and animals. These are thing I like. They are unfortunately accompanied by the knowledge that this natural environment, including the ocean, is in fact at threat from the activities of mankind

Warrnambool to Port Fairy: A sense of the history of settlement of Victoria

5. What aspect of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes would you most like to see protected?

The natural environment, including the ocean.

6. What aspect of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes would you most like to see changed?

The almost complete dependence on private transport and the flow on effects of that situation

More engagement with marine biology - eg under-water viewing facilities at Lorne and/or Apollo Bay piers

7. Do you work for, own or operate a business, or are you a member of a community organisation, that benefits from visitors to the Great Ocean Road Region?

Yes but only in a trivial way. No issues

8. Is there any critical issue or opportunity that we have missed (in chapter 3 of the Issues Paper)?

Whatever its overarching claims (see next para), this report is actually directed to expanding tourism. It recognises climate change as a reality but sees the problems posed by climate change only in terms of, for example, temporary road closures. Expanding commercial activity, as envisaged by the taskforce, is in fact pouring petrol on the fire of climate change. Climate change is a disaster for all natural systems, marine, fresh water and land based. There is no recognition, as far as I can see, of a need for substantial changes in the way we do things. What we need is help to see the need for change and thus to be willing to accommodate that change. The report is mostly about maintaining the status quo using means that are already destroying the status quo.

The reports overarching claims include politically correct statements such as touch the land, coastlines and waterways lightly and ensure there is a net gain for the environment (p43). There is however no evidence in this report that environmental matters have been seriously considered. The taskforce contains specialists in business and people with experience in managing the social environment. It does not identify any member as having specialist credentials in the natural environment. As far as I can see none of the members have such credentials. Yet to a substantial degree, it is the natural environment that draws people to the Great Ocean Road.

9. Do you have any suggested changes to the overarching policy, goals and principles (pages 40 - 41) in the Issues Paper?

I have read the whole report and it remains unclear to me exactly what is being proposed. No matter what overarching policy/goals/principles might be held, it is hard to see that any new authority will be able to over-ride State or Commonwealth policies on matters of interest. There is a real risk that any new body will be just another governance hurdle that councils and individuals will have to deal with. I note the suggestion that the new body will give locals a new avenue for complaining about the impact of visitors. I can only wish such complainants luck.

10. What elements would you like to see covered in a Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region?

Reductions in environmental footprint. What might this mean? Let's consider public transport (not mentioned in the report). Are taskforce members aware that the public cannot carry a surfboard to the Surfcoast by public transport? Are they aware that bicycles cannot be carried? That the public transport system has multiple stops in some localities but does not stop at all at The Cumberland? That pets (even very small ones in enclosures) cannot be carried? Would not a greater use of public transport help to retain people in the area (by comparison with tour groups passing through)? Would not people arriving by public transport, both visitors and part-time residents, have a greater need than car drivers for local supplies and services and thus stimulate the local economy?

11. What are your thoughts about establishing a new organisation to oversee the development, and coordinate implementation, of a Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region?

I can see a role for a new organisation that is genuinely farsighted and has the capacity to prepare us for future change. It could have a role in developing strategies and in education of the public and of authorities.

There is a substantial risk that any new authority will just add another layer of complexity to an already complex system

12. What current constraints need to be addressed in the future governance arrangements?

It is hard for me to see any new authority achieving much. There are, as noted in the report, a multiplicity of authorities, but many of these are not going to be (and should not be) over-ridden by a new construct.

I accept that there are some areas in which gains could and should be made. For example weed control along the road. I may have my numbers slightly wrong here, but the basic story is correct. Vic Roads is responsible for the 2 metres on either side of the road, GORCC for the ocean side of the road outside that 2 metres, and private landholders or State authorities for the non-ocean side. If ever there was a plan for ineffective weed control, this is it but what could a new authority actually do about it?

13. Are there any other management models /options we should consider?

14. What key criteria should the Taskforce use to evaluate the management model options?

The nexus between increasing visitation and environmental destruction should be explicitly recognised, and hence the need for inventive and forward thinking.

The model must therefore contain mechanisms for identifying and acting upon threats to the natural environment.

There should be clear guidance that, in all matters, the direct (eg vegetation clearing) and indirect (eg emissions) effects on the natural environment must be taken into account, and indeed play the dominant role in decision making.

Information about the natural environment must be evidence based

What is your age range?

██████████

Please provide your country of residence if you are not an Australian resident

I agree to the privacy statement

yes