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Part 1: The vision and strategy

The vision

A vision for the future

The Great Ocean Road Region will be vibrant, prosperous and beautiful. Its diverse natural and built environment will be universally recognised, protected and enhanced. It will continue to be a prime visitor destination with world-class standing. A strong, sustainably based economy will be the foundation for its continued prosperity. The changing lifestyle needs of the community will be acknowledged and accommodated.



The Victorian Government's vision

The Victorian Government's *Growing Victoria Together* policy, released in 2002, outlines a broad vision for the future development of the state. *Growing Victoria Together* identifies the promotion of sustainable development and the protection of the environment for future generations as key strategic issues that require priority action. The *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* reflects this focus. It also builds on the principles of *Melbourne 2030*, the Victorian Government's land use and transport plan for greater Melbourne, by providing a complementary plan for promoting sustainable development and protecting the environment of the Great Ocean Road Region.

The *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* also links with the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*, the Victorian Government's long-term framework for the sustainable management of the Victorian coastline. The *Victorian Coastal Report 2004* shows that 81 per cent of the actions in the *Victorian Coastal Strategy* are underway, ongoing or completed. Key achievements of this Strategy include the finalisation of coastal and catchment management plans and the establishment of National Marine Parks and Sanctuaries. The implementation of the *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* will contribute significantly to the *Victorian Coastal Strategy's* objective to plan and manage the use of Victoria's coastal resources on a sustainable basis of recreation, conservation, tourism, commerce and similar uses in appropriate areas.

Introduction

The Victorian Government recognises that the Great Ocean Road Region needs a long-term strategy for managing and integrating development and providing an appropriate level of supporting infrastructure.

A failure to manage growth sustainably would result in:

- environmental damage
- reduced visitor satisfaction
- potential loss of natural assets
- unsustainable growth in some towns and communities
- loss of township character, with inappropriate development
- growing congestion on the Great Ocean Road and a further reduction in road safety
- reduced quality of life in many towns and communities
- increased fire risk and the need for emergency management.

Careful planning and management of the region's future growth and development, in the context of a shared vision and a dedicated, long-term strategy, will avoid many of these potential problems.



Document structure

The *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* outlines a shared vision for the future development of the Great Ocean Road Region. The Strategy is made up of three parts.

Part 1: Includes the Strategy’s four key directions, which address Environment, Settlement, Access and Prosperity. A series of strategies underpin these key directions. Part 1 sets out **what** the Strategy is intended to achieve over a 20-year time frame.

Part 2: Includes an Implementation Plan that identifies the initiatives and actions required to achieve the four key directions and their underlying strategies. The Implementation Plan includes a table for each key direction outlining the strategies with underlying initiatives, actions, timeframes and responsibilities. Part 2 of the Strategy sets out **how** it will be achieved.

Part 3: Outlines the **monitoring** and **review** process for the Strategy. Regular reporting is essential to ensure the Strategy meets its objectives and to allow appropriate refinements to be introduced over time.



Figure 2 Great Ocean Road Region Strategy and Implementation Plan – Document structure



The Strategy process

The *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* has been developed through a consultative process, initiated by the Victorian Government and supported by the five councils. All stakeholders have been given the opportunity to participate in the development of the Strategy and to influence its approved key directions and strategies.

A Steering Committee comprising representatives from relevant Victorian Government departments and agencies and the five councils has played an important part in developing the strategy.

Discussion Paper

The consultative process for developing the Strategy began with the release of a *Discussion Paper* in late 2001. The *Discussion Paper* provided a basis for exploration and community response about key issues. The 60 submissions received provided the overall direction of the Strategy as well as the impetus for further work, including regional transport and landscape studies. The key consultation messages were:

- put the environment first
- manage the development and planning of tourism to ensure it does not diminish the region's natural values and assets
- protect the scenic and landscape values of the region
- manage the future growth of the region's townships, particularly along the coast, to ensure the beauty, lifestyle and character of these towns are not lost or compromised
- improve access to the region, particularly the coast, while maintaining the tourist function of the Great Ocean Road
- recognise the diverse local character of different parts of the region
- provide a coordinated response from government agencies
- complement other local and regional strategies and initiatives.

Draft Great Ocean Road Region Strategy

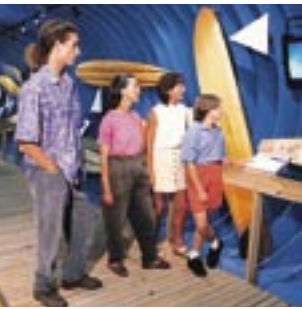
Following consideration of the responses to the *Discussion Paper*, the draft *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* was released in November 2003 for public consultation and public comment. A *Landscape Character Assessment Study* prepared by consultants was released with the draft Strategy. The purpose of the public consultation process was to seek feedback on the draft Strategy and the *Landscape Character Assessment Study*. In addition to inviting written public comments, a series of public information forums was held across the region and in Melbourne to provide information and the opportunity for public comment.

The 69 submissions received in response to the draft Strategy provided important input for the development of the Strategy. The submissions were analysed in detail, and further discussions undertaken with stakeholders. This information informed the development of the Strategy.

Response to the key issues identified in the consultation process

Feedback from the consultation process demonstrated strong support for the draft Strategy as the basis for direction and coordination of long-term growth and change in the region. Feedback resulted in several initiatives being rewritten for clarity or re-examined to avoid duplication in other parts of the Strategy. No initiatives in the draft Strategy have been left out in the final Strategy. Rather, some initiatives have been strengthened and further supported with appropriate actions.

The scope of the Strategy as a land use and transport plan and its links with other government initiatives is more clearly explained. In particular, the importance of the hinterland is explained and more detail about measures to enhance public land management in the region is provided. This includes specific reference to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC's) Angahook-Otway Investigation for creating an expanded national park, and other measures for protecting areas with high ecological/environmental value.



Fire and emergency management measures are addressed in more detail and an additional strategy and actions have been included for this important issue. More detail has been included on initiatives and tools that can be used to protect the character of small coastal settlements and limit the spread of ribbon development along the coast.

The Strategy includes more detail about how the *Landscape Character Assessment Study* will be translated into local planning scheme provisions as a consistent and robust methodology for identifying and describing landscape character and providing planning tools to manage development in significant landscapes. Specific measures to improve the management of the Great Ocean Road and improve regional access have been included.

The Strategy also includes more information about:

- the impacts of climate change on the region and details of regional greenhouse gas abatement initiatives
- heritage and Aboriginal cultural heritage issues and relevant strategies and measures for protecting these important elements of the region
- industry plans and measures to help disperse visitors across the region
- the implementation of the new rural zones as a land use planning measure to support primary industry and protect areas between towns.



What is the scope?

The *Great Ocean Road Region Strategy* is a land use and transport plan for managing growth and change across the Great Ocean Road Region over a 20-year time frame. The region is defined as extending from Torquay in the east to Warrnambool in the west, and northward to the Princes Highway. Its southern boundary is defined by the coast and the Great Ocean Road. It covers five council areas: Colac Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, Surf Coast Shires and the City of Warrnambool, with a population of around 100,000 people.

While the Strategy primarily responds to the challenge of managing growth and change along the coast, resolution of these issues must include consideration of the hinterland. The hinterland is intrinsically linked with the coast and its issues, particularly in relation to access and transport. The Strategy recognises that councils in the region govern and plan for both coastal and hinterland communities. Inclusion of the hinterland means a more strategic approach can be taken to address key regional issues, such as promoting alternative routes inland to alleviate seasonal congestion and improve safety on the Great Ocean Road, managing township growth and dispersing visitors and tourism development.

The Strategy looks beyond immediate growth demands and sets a vision for the region that is based on economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development, through balanced and managed growth of selected towns along the coast and inland. The principles of sustainability – development that meets present day needs and aspirations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – have directly guided the identification and development of the Strategy's key directions, strategies, initiatives and actions.

Planning for land use and transport in the Great Ocean Road Region must consider important issues such as the environment, the coast, heritage and regional development. This was a clear message from the consultation processes that significantly influenced the development of the Strategy.

Land use and transport planning is important for supporting the needs of communities. However, other areas of government activity are also important. Support from other government agencies is particularly important in the Great Ocean Road Region where recent development and demographic changes are impacting on local communities.

This Strategy recognises the important work that the Department of Human Services and the Department of Victorian Communities are undertaking in relation to community building, health, housing and community services.

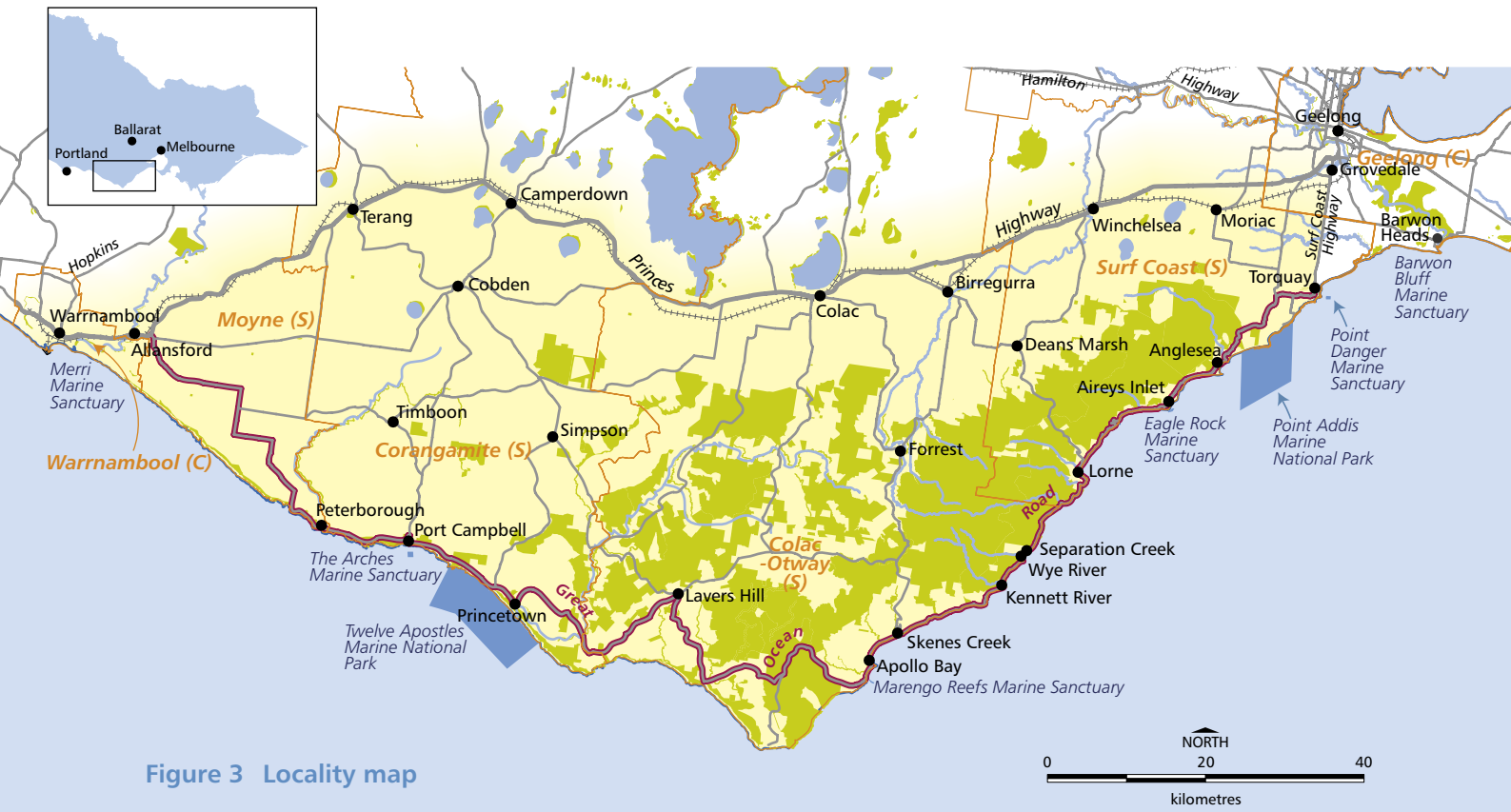


Figure 3 Locality map

- Great Ocean Road
- Roads
- Rail
- Public land*
- Local Government Area boundaries
- Study area
- Lakes and rivers
- Marine parks and sanctuaries

*Final boundaries to be determined by government on completion of VEAC Angahook-Otway Investigation.