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28th March 2018

Hon Richard Wynne
Minister for Planning
Level 16
8 Nicholson Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Minister,

RE: G21 SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNANCE OF THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD ISSUES PAPER

As CEO of G21 - Geelong Region Alliance, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the issues paper you released re "The Governance of the Great Ocean Road."

As you are aware, the G21 - Geelong Region Alliance was established in 2002 by five municipalities (Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast, Golden Plains and Colac Otway) with support of the Victorian Government and a wide range of local organisations. Membership now spans all three levels of government, non-government organisations, businesses and community groups.

Under the G21 - Geelong Region Alliance, we have brought together our region's leaders to develop a regional plan, determine regional priority projects and advocate for their implementation. We represent the voice of the G21 region and have a formal role as the Regional Strategic Planning Committee, in advising the State and Federal Governments on regional issues and priorities.

The key directions under the *Geelong Region Plan: a sustainable growth strategy* are to:

- Protect and enhance our environment
- Create sustainable settlements
- Strengthen our communities
- Revitalise our economy
- Make it happen

The future of the Great Ocean Road aligns with each of these key directions and accordingly the G21 Board has identified it as priority project for state and federal investment.

G21 congratulates the state government for establishing the "Great Ocean Road Taskforce" and welcomes the opportunity to respond to the issues paper you have released.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



*G21 is the formal alliance of government, business and community organisations,
working together to improve people's lives in the Geelong region.*

G21 SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNANCE OF THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD ISSUES PAPER

The National Heritage listed Great Ocean Road is the critical underpinning infrastructure that supports the Great Ocean Road region's \$2.1 billion tourism industry.

Stretching for 243 kilometres, the Great Ocean Road is regarded as one of the world's greatest coastal drives and provides an iconic driving experience, while also linking the numerous tourism villages and destinations along the coast.

The Great Ocean Road is a significant economic driver, not just to the G21 region but also to Victoria. It attracts more than six million tourists each year - more than the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru combined.

Indeed thirty per cent of Victoria's international visitors visit the Great Ocean Road primarily to see the Twelve Apostles.

Visitors access the Great Ocean Road from many locations including Melbourne, Avalon, the Princes and Hamilton Highways and Queenscliff via road, ferry and rail.

From October this year, Air Asia X will be flying into Avalon twice a day bringing 500 passengers to our region.

By 2025, it is expected that visitor growth along the Great Ocean Road will climb to eight million tourists per annum.

ISSUES

Maintaining the Great Ocean Road

Given the Great Ocean Road's iconic status and economic importance, it is essential that it is appropriately maintained and developed to meet current and forecast usage.

The state and federal governments have allocated \$50m each towards the maintenance of the Great Ocean Road in recent years.

A further \$53m has also been allocated by the state for infrastructure along the Great Ocean Road including a barrier to prevent landslips from affecting the road at Wye River.

G21 strongly supports the ongoing provision of both state and federal recurrent funding to maintain and upgrade the Great Ocean Road.

Visitation Yield

Whilst over six million people visit the Great Ocean Road each year, the yield from this high level visitation is extremely low with the average visitor spend at the 12 Apostles being just 17 cents.

The majority of visitors are day trippers from Melbourne and therefore the current economic benefit from the Great Ocean Road goes to accommodation, tour operators, as well as hospitality and retail providers in Melbourne.

It is essential that we address this critical issue to ensure that our region's economy and people benefit from our internationally renowned tourism icon.

In order to do this, it is imperative to increase accommodation in the Great Ocean Road region and to provide a breadth of tourism offers, beyond the Twelve Apostles that visitors can access.

G21 strongly supports the provision of state and federal funding to implement the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan which aims to both improve the visitor experience in the vicinity of the Twelve Apostles and to leverage private sector investment in quality tourism accommodation and product.

Management

The Great Ocean Road and surrounds is managed by various agencies including:

- Surf Coast Shire
- Colac Otway Shire
- Corangamite Shire
- Moyne Shire
- Warrnambool City
- Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee
- Otway Coastal Committee
- Great Otway Tourism
- Barwon Water
- Wannon Water
- Corangamite CMA
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA
- Vic Roads
- Parks Victoria
- DELWP
- Western Coastal Board
- Victorian Coastal Council

The fragmented nature of the management of the Great Ocean Road is a major hindrance to the realisation of its economic potential both to our region and Victoria.

G21 strongly supports the management of the Great Ocean Road as a wholly integrated system for the purposes of protection of our precious asset and to stimulate much needed public and private sector investment.

G21 is encouraged by the recommendation outlined in the issues paper that a lead agency should be identified to manage the Great Ocean Road.

We propose that in order to achieve this objective, a new authority be established to oversight the management of the Great Ocean Road.

The Authority should have the powers to develop an overarching Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road.

Before commencing the development of the Strategic Framework Plan, it is important that an audit of existing plans and strategies re the Great Ocean Road be completed to identify:

- What has been implemented.
- What has not been completed.
- Changes in settlement and visitation patterns.
- Current and future opportunities.

The Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan should build on existing local government planning and include:

- Definition of the Great Ocean Region.
- Overarching vision for the Great Ocean Road region.
- Identification of and protection plan for the region's natural assets.
- Identification and risk management of future climate change impacts.
- Identification/confirmation of coastal township boundaries.
- Traffic management plans for the Great Ocean Road and hinterland roads.
- Emergency management plan for the region.
- Management of the increasing visitor experience including identification of necessary public and private sector infrastructure.
- Organisational chart of responsible agencies for service delivery.
- An implementation plan for the Framework identifying responsible agencies.

The process undertaken by the Authority to develop the Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan must be inclusive of all relevant communities including the Traditional Owners.

It is essential that once the Strategic Framework Plan is completed, the Authority has the power to:

- Coordinate responsible agencies for service delivery.
- Advocate for public and private sector investment including the need for a dedicated and recurrent funding source.
- Develop budget bids.
- Engage with local communities including the Traditional Owners.
- Advise on the potential to streamline existing management agencies.
- Advise on streamlining planning processes to facilitate private sector investment.
- Advise on potential for revenue raising opportunities to increase visitor yield.

This Authority should be required to develop and report on the implementation of the Strategic Framework Plan.

It is essential that regular and independent auditing of the implementation of the Strategic Framework Plan be held and the outcomes be made publicly available.


4th April 2018