

30 April 2018

Attention: Co Chairs Hon Peter Batchelor and Hon Terry Mulder
Great Ocean Road Taskforce

Lodged via: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/great-ocean-road>

Dear Mr Batchelor and Mr Mulder,

Amy Gillett Foundation Response to Great Ocean Road Taskforce Issues Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Great Ocean Road Taskforce Issues Paper.

The Amy Gillett Foundation (AGF) is a national organisation with a mission to reduce the incidence of serious injury and death of bicycle riders in Australia.

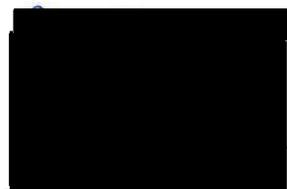
The Amy Gillett Foundation owns the Amy's Gran Fondo event held annually in the Great Ocean Road and Colac Otway region between Lorne and Apollo Bay and provides participants with a unique riding experience, in one of the most idyllic locations in Australia. The Amy Gillett Foundation has a direct interest in contributing to the conversation about the current and future governance of the Great Ocean Road as we look to our 8th event and plan for the future.

We identify two important and critical issues in the Great Ocean Road area. First, there is a crucial need to include and **prioritise road safety** in any future strategic planning and reorganisation of governance. Key opportunities including increased tourism and the visitor economy, growth of local communities and continued redevelopment of local land and infrastructure all necessitate a focus on road safety, particularly the safety of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

Secondly, there is a need for a more **holistic Great Ocean Road decision-making framework** with overarching, coordinating mechanisms for planning and action. As there is no single body with the necessary powers and responsibility to deliver the planning, financing and implementation arrangements for the Great Ocean Road, we find ourselves as event organisers facing challenges when opinions and priorities differ across the different councils and regions.

We offer a series of recommendations in our submission and would welcome the opportunity to discuss our submission in more detail in person. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,



**Chief Executive Officer
Amy Gillett Foundation**

Amy Gillett Foundation

The Amy Gillett Foundation (AGF) is a national organisation with a mission to reduce the incidence of serious injury and death of bicycle riders in Australia. We draw on evidence and international best practice, and collaborate with governments, business and the community to create a safer environment for cyclists, while maintaining an efficient road network for all road users.

Key Issues and Opportunities Discussion Questions

Prioritising Road Safety

We have addressed questions 6 and 7 jointly and recommend that road safety is included and prioritised in the strategic framework plan.

6. Do you have any suggested changes to the overarching policy, goals and principles (on pages 40 to 41)?

7. What elements would you like to see covered in a strategic framework plan for the Great Ocean Road Region?

Future Challenges - Increasing numbers of visitors

While great opportunities are created with increased visitation to the Great Ocean Road area, safety for cyclists must be a central concern and priority in any future planning. Future plans must consider the safety of local residents who cycle to commute and for leisure. As well, increased visitation by recreational cyclists must be anticipated with the rise of cycling tourism, so the provision of a safe road environment must be a key priority. It should be noted that facilitating safe cycling will have the flow on effect of decreasing stress and congestion along roads in the Great Ocean Road area.

Critically, future strategic planning and actions to develop and protect the inherent value of the Great Ocean region must focus on building amenity while maintaining safety. Safe movement and mobility is key to building sustainable regions which support both local communities and visitors.

In principle, we support the four proposed actions to support a new management model.

We recommend that road safety be prioritised in strategic planning as well as in principles for guiding governance changes. This aligns with the outlined guiding principles for the objective, *'Thriving local, state, national and international significant visitor economy'*. Specifically, road safety aligns with these principles:

- *Enhance the experience of the touring route and its destinations for all visitors, including international tourists*
- *Recognise the importance of liveable communities along the Great Ocean Road*

We strongly recommend the inclusion of a further guiding principle;

- *Ensure safety for all road users, particularly vulnerable road users, along the Great Ocean Road, supporting inland routes and other local roads*

Regarding proposal two, we recommend the following:

2. Develop an overarching Strategic Framework Plan that provides direction to portfolio and local government agencies for coordinated and coherent decisions along the touring route.

We recommend that within this Strategic Framework Plan, a road safety component be developed to assist with coordinated and coherent management of road safety, particularly of cycling and vulnerable road user safety. Road safety needs to be incorporated into the Strategic Framework Plan either as a standalone pillar in addition to the proposed four (town structure, landscape characteristics, Infrastructure and Economic Development). Alternatively, it may stand as a focus and priority underneath each of the existing pillars.

Recommendation:

1. Prioritise road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users in the Strategic Framework Plan

Building Sustainable Tourism & Events in Great Ocean Road Region

We have addressed questions 4, 8 and 9 jointly within the context of supporting events tourism in the Great Ocean Road region. We support the establishment of a new organisation to oversee development and coordination of the strategic framework.

4. 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? If so, what are the key issues for the organisation/business?

8. 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?

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

The Amy Gillett Foundation organises an annual cycling event along parts of the Great Ocean Road and surrounding roads with international status, attracting thousands of visitors to the region. Our event, Amy's Gran Fondo, provides an economic benefit to the State of Victoria, particularly the Great Ocean Road Region, in excess of \$30 million per annum.

Amy's Gran Fondo is a weekend-long event with activities that promote cycling for recreation, for competition and for community building. We facilitate a significant influx of tourism over the event weekend (mid-September), with an average of over 30% of participants from interstate or overseas, as well as in the lead up to the event with cyclists coming to the region to train along the Great Ocean Road.

Amy's Gran Fondo is a fully closed road event, making it the safest event of its kind in Australia for participants, and one of its key attractions. It is one of only two events that obtains a road closure permit for the Great Ocean Road under the Great Ocean Road Closure Policy Guidelines, with current approval granted to 2020.

We identify the lack of a cohesive and coordinated approach to event permits as a key issue with the potential to inhibit our capacity to hold a successful event. We imagine this is an issue that is faced by similar events who undertake the permit process and see this taskforce as an opportunity to improve and streamline the process.

The current process for permission to access one of two annual road closures on the Great Ocean Road involves applying under the Great Ocean Road Closure Policy Guidelines (the Guidelines) to the committee comprising VicRoads, Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire. Once permission is granted however, the event organiser has no guarantee of being able to hold the event approved under the Guidelines, as local councils can separately impose further conditions which were not part of the initial application process.

We are committed to complying with all necessary steps to apply for this permit and any permit conditions, however it becomes an uncertain undertaking when a successful application can later have additional conditions imposed. In some instances, the Amy Gillett Foundation has been notified less than 9 months in advance of holding an event. We would like to emphasise that the uncertainty around this process makes effective event planning, spending and execution vastly more difficult.

We would welcome a new process which provides more certainty around the permit process including:

- a single application process through which successful applications, after approval is granted, may not have additional conditions imposed by separate local authorities (unless under extenuating circumstances)
- lead times of two years in advance of an event to be notified of application outcomes

We suggest these changes with a view to working collaboratively and efficiently to ensure our event complies with necessary guidelines while also being able to plan and execute successful events.

Improving Visitor Experience

As referred to in section three, a key issue identified is *'Little or no holistic planning for the visitor experience'*. We would welcome the development of a single agency responsible for managing the visitor experience for the full length of the Great Ocean Road. Each year, the AGF engages with a wide range of local accommodation, food and beverage and general service providers in order to both provide a high quality experience for our event participants and simultaneously facilitate increased patronage of local businesses and services.

We enjoy working with these stakeholders and believe this networking and relationship building would be enhanced by a centralised group which would help recognise and articulate shared goals and barriers towards increasing sustainable tourism along the Great Ocean Road.

Recommendations:

1. Streamline the process for event permit application by precluding the additional conditions by separate authorities after an application is successful, and providing lead times of two years to notify of application outcomes.
2. Develop a single agency responsible for managing user experience for the full length of the Great Ocean Road