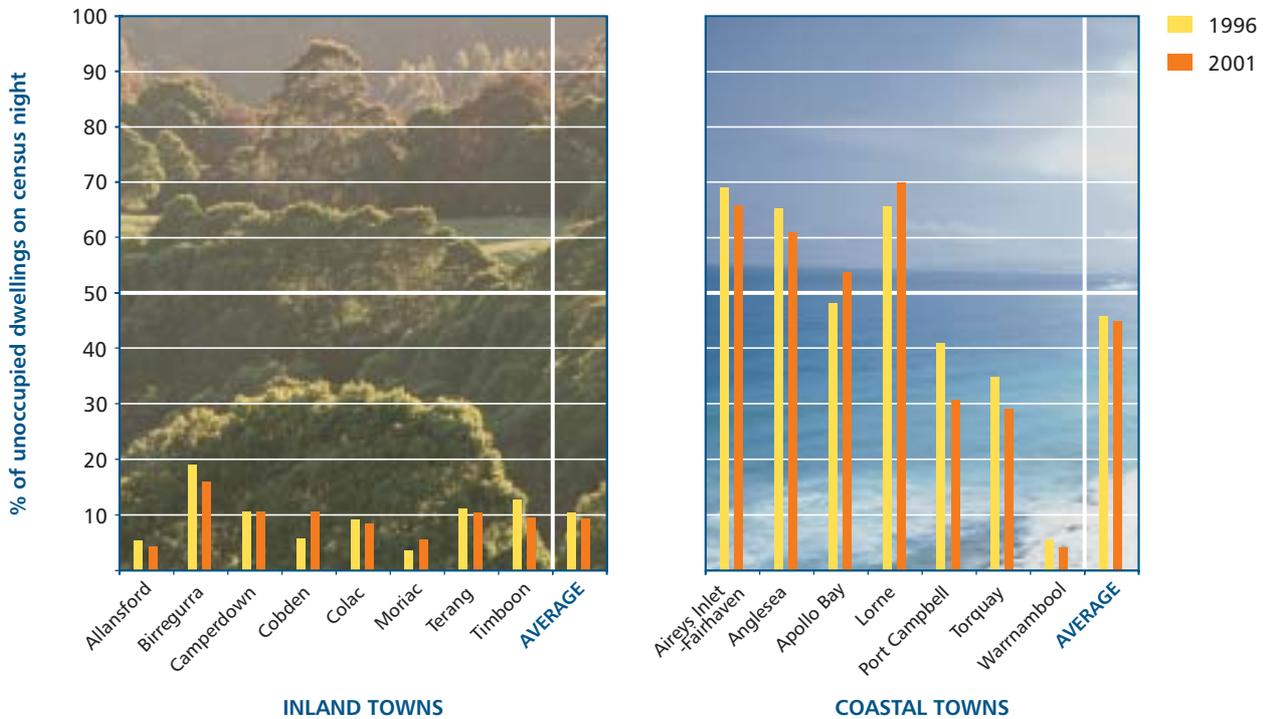
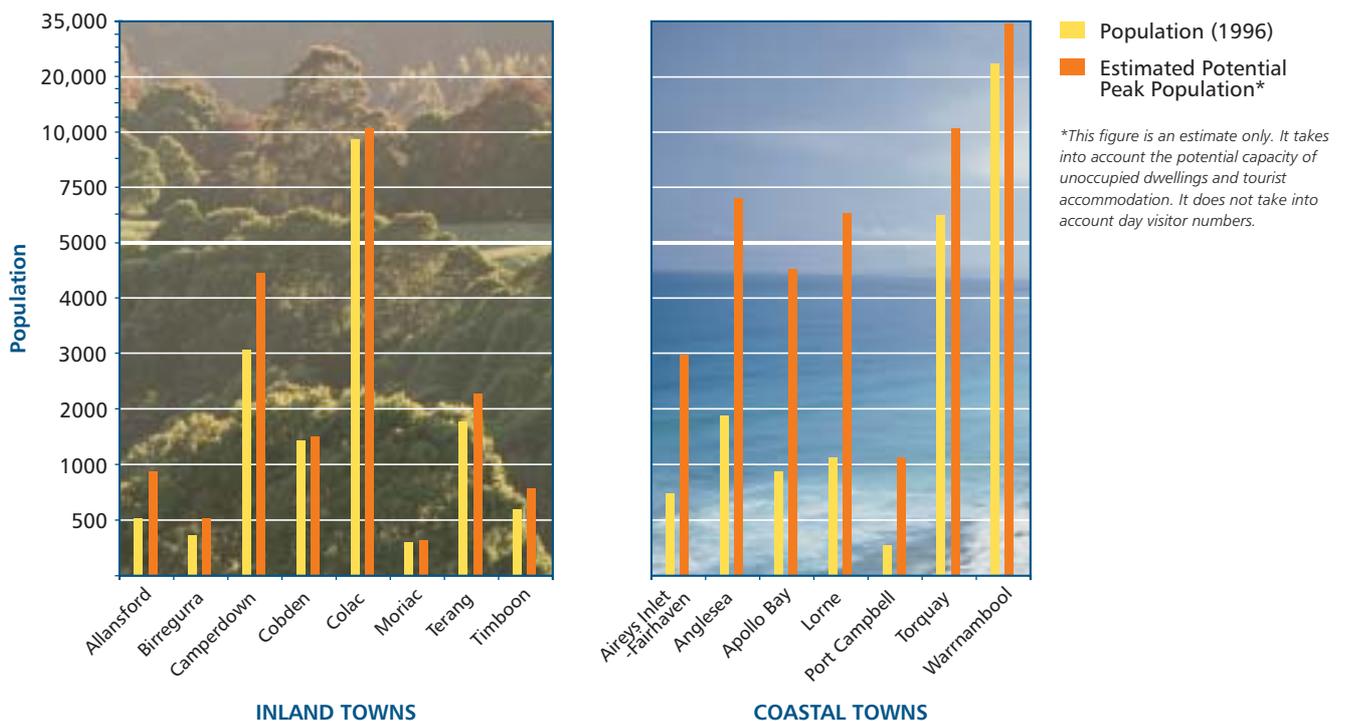


Figure 3 Unoccupied dwellings



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Figure 4 Peak/non-peak population



Source: Department of Infrastructure Towns in Time unpublished data and RACV 2001



Economically, the region continues to change and develop. Rural enterprise underpins the regional economy. Dairying, long the backbone of the region, has achieved significant productivity gains, and increases in the volume of dairy production are likely to continue. Forestry, both public and private, is a major source of economic activity, with a change of focus from native forests to timber plantations that is underlined by the government's commitment in 2002 to reduce timber harvesting in native forests by 33 per cent and to phase it out by 2008. Employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining represents almost 40 per cent of the region's workforce. There will be more utilisation of energy sources, based on offshore gas and wind power. Support for the region's industries, through the improvement of road infrastructure and sustainability initiatives for resource use, is needed.

The Great Ocean Road itself is under pressure. Day trips are a significant component of the growth in visitation, and traffic can be intense at peak times. Other roads in the region provide efficient ways of reaching the coast, but these are not fully utilised. Many require improvements and, despite being scenic in their own right, they may not have the immediate visual appeal of the Great Ocean Road. Pressure on the road network has led to high accident rates on parts of the Great Ocean Road, with some sections having accident rates above the state average; motor cycle accidents are a particular concern. Primary industry is a heavy user of roads in the hinterland with increasing use of B-Double vehicles and higher mass vehicles. This presents a challenge for providing adequate infrastructure such as bridges.

Attention to access and transport management for the Great Ocean Road will help improve emergency management – fire being a constant seasonal threat in this heavily forested region. It will also assist in directing settlement to defined townships.

How has the strategy developed?

The Department of Sustainability and Environment is leading the development of the strategy, in consultation with local government and other government departments and agencies. The strategy steering committee comprises representatives from the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD), the Department of Primary Industries, VicRoads, Tourism Victoria, the Victorian Coastal Council, Parks Victoria, the shires of Surf Coast, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, and Warrnambool City.

Further studies were then undertaken in areas such as the region's land and infrastructure capacity, access needs and traffic movements, significant landscapes, the adequacy of local planning provisions for protecting landscape and township character, tourism trends, and the development of sustainability principles (see 'What are the underlying principles?' and Appendix 1, which lists these further studies).

Workshops and discussions took place with key stakeholders in the region including coastal boards, and with authorities responsible for energy, telecommunications, water, catchment management and local tourism.



The Premier and the Ministers for Planning and Transport launched the project in October 2001. A discussion paper, Great Ocean Road Region – towards a vision for the future, was released at the same time.

Public consultations were held in October and November 2001, with forums and workshops across the region and in Geelong and Melbourne. These generated widespread interest, bringing forward common values (see 'Consultation messages' on page 14) as well as a range of views.

Steps in the strategy process

To date

- release of a discussion paper, consultation program on the discussion paper
- further work, analysis of issues raised in consultation
- consideration of options
- development of the draft strategy.

From now on

- release of the draft strategy
- public comment sought on the draft strategy
- further refinement of the strategy, taking into account consultation
- completion and release of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy
- implementation, monitoring and review of initiatives.

Consultation messages

The key messages from the public consultations were:

- put environmental values first
- manage the development and planning of tourism so that 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
- involve a coordinated response from governments
- complement other local and regional strategies and initiatives.

What are the underlying principles?

The achievement of a successful, sustainable future for the Great Ocean Road Region means development that meets present-day needs and aspirations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Principles of sustainability are:

Intra- and inter-generational equity – ensuring that each generation passes on its inherited social, economic and natural capital to the next.

Sustainable use of natural resources – conservation of non-renewable resources and use of renewable resources according to their rate of replenishment.

Maintenance of biological diversity – maintenance of the variety of all life forms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

Enhancement of economic and social wellbeing – improved quality of life, and economic prosperity that does not compromise the other sustainability principles.

More community involvement and participation – achievement of important societal goals by encouraging community involvement in decision-making.

The precautionary principle – taking a precautionary approach to decisions that affect the environment, which means dealing with risk and irreversibility.

These principles have been applied to the regional issues identified through the community consultation process and the assessment of possible options for the Great Ocean Road Region. They have directly guided the identification and development of the strategy's key themes, directions and initiatives. Appendix 2 further explains what these principles mean and describes the options that were considered for the Great Ocean Road Region.



The scope of the strategy



The draft Great Ocean Road Region Strategy is based on *Option 4: Balanced coastal and inland growth* outlined in Appendix 2. This preferred option focuses on sustainable development of the region through balanced and managed growth of selected towns along the coast, and inland.

The key features are:

- coastal residential and tourist accommodation growth, to be directed to Torquay, Warrnambool and to a lesser extent, Apollo Bay
- strong protection of township character
- encouragement of growth inland at Colac, Camperdown and Timboon
- strong protection of significant landscapes between coastal towns and hinterland landscapes
- provision of opportunities for tourism development in key coastal nodes and strategic locations, with an emphasis on nature-based tourism at suitable locations, including the hinterland
- protection of the Great Ocean Road's access and tourist function, through travel management measures and improvements to alternative regional access routes.



The strategy recognises that the region as a whole can accommodate growth, but that physical and environmental issues, such as land availability and water supply, constrain the way land can be used and where development can occur. It also recognises the community's wish to maintain the character of small coastal towns.

While the coast and the journey along the Great Ocean Road is acknowledged as the major attraction for visitors and residents in the region, inland areas offer opportunities to attract more visitors and to accommodate some demand for residential development.

The government's commitment to create a single national park that extends from Anglesea to Cape Otway supports the strategy by protecting environmentally significant areas, as well as providing new nature-based tourism opportunities in the Otways.

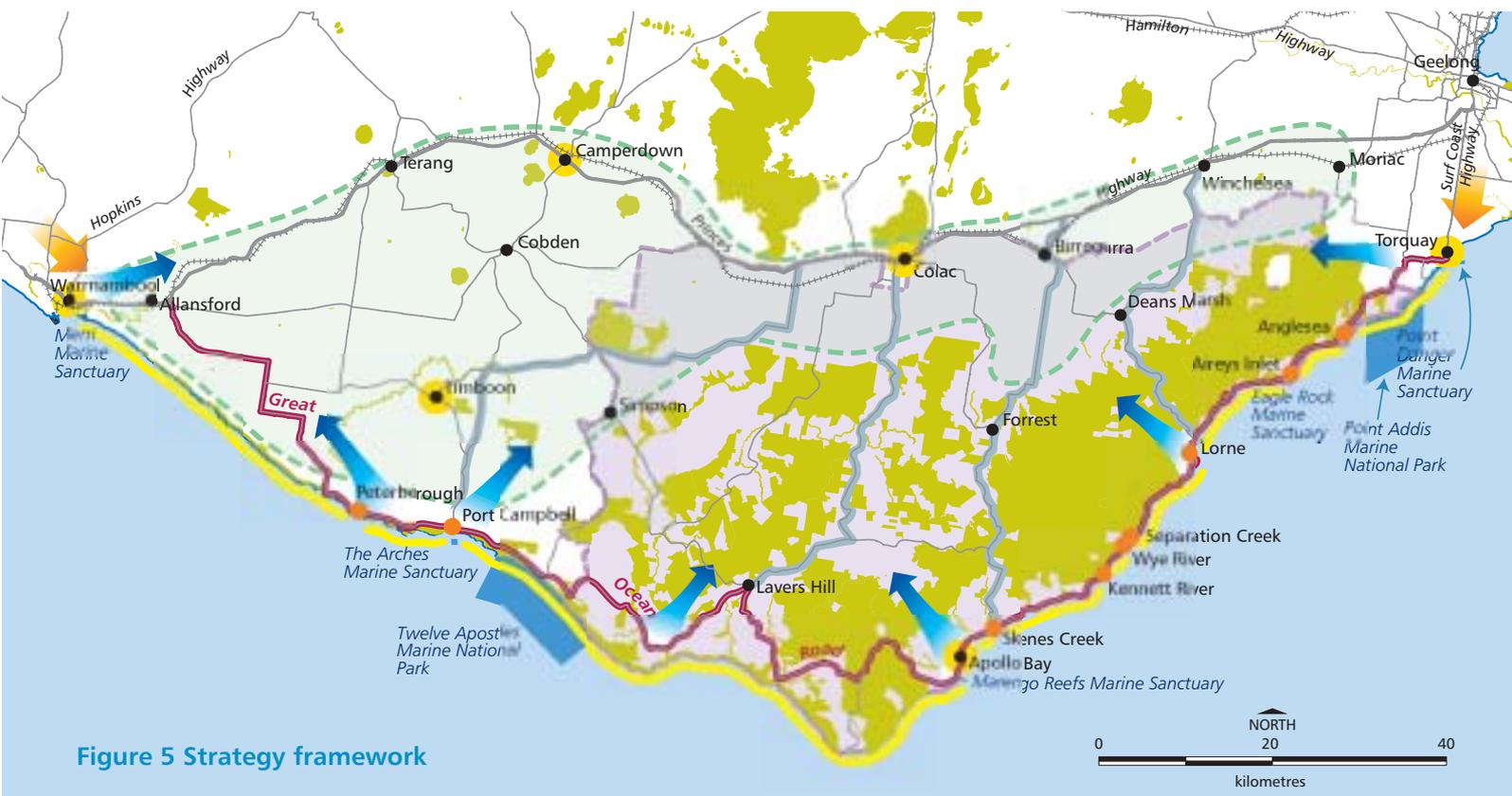


Figure 5 Strategy framework

- Great Ocean Road
- Roads
- +++ Rail
- Public land
- Gateway to the region
- Growth nodes
- Spread tourism growth in appropriate coastal and hinterland areas
- Improve access by hinterland road upgrades
- Protect areas between coastal settlements
- Protect character of coastal towns
- Sustainability and productivity improvement for dairy and agricultural industries
- VEAC study area
- Marine parks and sanctuaries



Who will benefit from the strategy?

The strategy will provide long-term direction within which government, councils, industry and the community can plan and take action to achieve common goals for the sustainable development of the region.

It will provide certainty for governments and agencies in setting priorities and developing ongoing programs. It will guide decision-making in relation to infrastructure investment, land-use planning and location of facilities. It will also help to manage expectations about future urban development in the region and future investments in improvements to the Great Ocean Road.

How does the strategy relate to existing regional plans and strategies?

The strategy is a high-level policy that provides directions needed to achieve the vision for the region, and it builds on and complements existing work and strategies by government bodies including the Victorian Coastal Council, Catchment Management Authorities, water authorities, Parks Victoria, Tourism Victoria, VicRoads, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), and the Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD).

The strategy is integrated with existing government strategies such as the *Victorian Coastal Strategy*, the *Regional Catchment Management Strategies* and the *Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Development Plan*. A list of key strategies is provided in Appendix 3.



The strategic framework

The **vision** sets out the aim for the future of the Great Ocean Road Region.

The **directions** take into account environmental, economic and social concerns and have been developed within a local, regional, state, national and international context.

The **policies** are statements of intent to guide future actions and decision making and the **initiatives** are the actions that show how the government intends to commence implementation of the Great Ocean Road Region Strategy.