

Submission to Governance of the Great Ocean Road Region Issues Paper

April 2018

Confidentiality

I'm happy for my responses to be made public, however I do not wish for my name to be published.

Governance

- I support the notion of an overarching governing body to alleviate the existing fragmented approach to governance of the Great Ocean Road.
- It's imperative that any new governing body be independent and non-political, so that political interests cannot overpower or influence what should be the main priority, which is to preserve the Great Ocean Road.
- The new governing body should be situated within the Great Ocean Road region, not in Melbourne. It should not be removed from the communities and the land it is governing. It needs to maintain a working relationship not only with the various agencies, but also with the people.

Revenue & Funding

- It's essential that any new governing body be able to raise revenue and directly invest this revenue into the Great Ocean Road and its townships.
- Tourism operators (such as tour bus companies) who profit from the Great Ocean Road but contribute very little, should pay a tariff to visit the region. Tariffs could also be used to control time of travel and direction of travel, to alleviate congestions at landmarks along the GOR.
- Visitors to other national parks such as Kakadu pay to visit the park. Perhaps the Great Otway National Park should also be a paid experience, with revenue being directly reinvested into the GOR region.
- Ongoing funding must be secured, irrespective of the political environment.

Tourism & Capacity

- Sustainable tourism should be at the top of the agenda. Let's look at what is meaningful and sustainable, rather than trying to attract larger volumes of tourists.
- We should consider what capacity the road and the landmarks actually have, whilst still being an enjoyable place to visit. The 12 Apostles is a perfect example of tourism destroying not only the environment but also the visitor experience.

Planning & Development

- The new governing body should support the local councils who might currently struggle under the weight of large planning applications, but the new organisation should not overrule them and the communities that live there. Developers with deep pockets and politicians cannot be allowed to decide the fate of the Great Ocean Road region.
- The new organisation should not pave the way for large scale development on the Great Ocean Road, but should be working towards retaining the natural beauty of the area and supporting local tourism operators, not large developers and international investors.
- The pristine natural beauty of the Great Ocean Road is what makes it so unique. This must be paramount when considering new planning regulations for the region.

Community

- The local communities that live on the Great Ocean Road cannot be forgotten. It's these communities that care for the environment, pick up the litter, care for injured Wildlife, fight fires, greet visitors and go about their daily lives on the Great Ocean Road. Tourism should not be placed ahead of the needs and desires of local communities.
- Any new governing body should have close links to the local community, and should be physically situated in the Great Ocean Road region.

Consultation

- Communities and stakeholders should be given an opportunity to comment on the draft report before it's finalised. Therefore, a second round of consultation should occur later in 2018 before the report is provided to the Government.