

Respondent No: 32

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1. What is your interest in the Great Ocean Road Region?

Conservation agency working in the area

2. Are you completing this survey on behalf of an organisation?

Trust for Nature (Vic) is Victoria's dedicated private land conservation agency. Using our statutory powers we can place conservation covenants on private land to protect and restore places across the state forever, including the GOR region.

3. How many times did you travel along the Great Ocean Road (any section between Torquay and Allansford) in the last 6 months?

Most weeks

4. What do you love most about the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes?

5. What aspect of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes would you most like to see protected?

Trust for Nature would most like to see more private land with high conservation values permanently protected in the Great Ocean Road region. This would improve the overall amenity of the landscape for both locals and visitors, as well as making a significant contribution to the long term health and resilience of biodiversity in the region.

Using its statutory powers, and with the consent of the landholder, Trust for Nature can preserve high quality native vegetation on private land using conservation covenants. These covenants place protections over land forever. We can also permanently protect areas of natural interest or beauty, or of historical interest on private land (see section 3 of the Victorian Conservation Trust Act). We then work with the landholder to manage and take care of that land into the future.

Trust for Nature already has 13 covenants either along the Great Ocean Road or within close proximity. It also owns Henriksens Sanctuary, a reserve off the GOR near Apollo Bay. This reserve protects remnant vegetation of Wet Forest close to the coastline in an area where much of the near-coastal land has been cleared for agriculture or housing.

The Trust could work with private landholders and other stakeholders to covenant strategic areas of the landscape which, for example, protect remnant native vegetation; place limitations on stocking rates on agricultural land; or protect special landscapes from being subdivided. This approach would be in line with the Guiding Principles for the Strategic Framework Plan: that distinctive areas and landscapes are protected and conserved for future generations.

6. What aspect of the Great Ocean Road and its landscapes would you most like to see changed?

7. 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?

8. Is there any critical issue or opportunity that we have missed (in chapter 3 of the Issues Paper)?

The discussion paper rightly identifies a lack of shared vision for future land uses to support the Great Ocean Road as a tourism asset (page 33, point 1). However, it does not specifically address the threats facing biodiversity in the region. Trust for Nature believes this challenge should be explicitly identified under the heading Future challenges on page 34. It might state something like There are a range of threats to biodiversity in the region which could be more effectively addressed via an integrated approach across both public and private land. A number of mechanisms including permanent protection of native vegetation on private land could link bioregions and provide vital habitat to indigenous flora and fauna, and so help ensure the long term survival of the natural environment in the region.

As stated above, Trust for Nature is able to protect private land with high biodiversity values, as well as land that is of natural interest or beauty, or of historical interest using in-perpetuity covenants. Using this mechanism in combination with public land conservation mechanisms would not only improve the overall health of the landscape but also the experience for locals and visitors to the region.

We also note that the list of relevant legislation on page 37 should include the Victorian Conservation Trust Act 1972.

9. Do you have any suggested changes to the overarching policy, goals and principles (pages 40 - 41) in the Issues Paper?

10. What elements would you like to see covered in a Strategic Framework Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region?

We support the goals/objectives of the Strategic Framework Plan, together with their guiding principles. However, for the reasons already stated, Trust for Nature believes that private land conservation should be more clearly embedded in the Strategic Framework Plan, together with other conservation mechanisms. For example, we suggest that the spatial land-use management plan should include landscapes of high conservation value on both private and public land.

Trust for Nature could assist the Taskforce in identifying appropriate sites in the region. It has already identified areas where the greatest benefits can be achieved through utilising conservation covenants. This has been achieved through an analysis of the state government's Natureprint, which identifies area of high quality, high biodiversity, and connectivity. Our Statewide Conservation Plan similarly identifies focal landscape and zones that most warrant biodiversity protection for the future survival and health of threatened ecosystems and species.

In order to preserve an outstanding scenic environment, free of weeds, pest animals, and obtrusive man-made infrastructure, appropriate planning is required in addition to increased legal protection over the existing natural values. The latter can be

effectively achieved through the use of conservation covenants on private land and subsequent land stewardship and support from Trust for Nature.

11. **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?**
12. **What current constraints need to be addressed in the future governance arrangements?**
13. **Are there any other management models /options we should consider?**
14. **What key criteria should the Taskforce use to evaluate the management model options?**

What is your age range?

██████████

Please provide your country of residence if you are not an Australian resident

I agree to the privacy statement

yes