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Sent: Monday, 2 September 2019 2:14 PM
To: 'Lisa Neville' <lisa.neville@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Great Ocean Road Action Plan

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To Great Ocean Road Management Reform Project Director

Proposed Great Ocean Road Action Plan

The Geelong Environment Council appreciates the opportunity to comment and wishes to make the following points

The Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act process is underway. GEC has submitted a point of importance that the township boundaries in the shire (and along the GOR) are retained in their current location.

GEC concurs that the significant area around the coast and the management of the coastal road is managed by an appropriate authority.

It is also important that the very significant area of significant natural values are managed and protected by the authority with the greatest expertise in environmental values.

Gec opposes the transfer of management from Parks Victoria to any other authority of any part of land or marine area now managed under the National Parks Act.

The management by Parks Vic with the philosophy of Healthy Parks, Healthy People is identified and clear, as is the NP Act. The management of lands and sea areas so listed must have the prime objective of protecting significant biologically important areas. The GEC had worked in the Otway region for over 30 years to obtain protection for the rich biodiversity and scenic qualities of the Otway Forests and heaths. Management by an Authority with its prime objective being promotion and management of a prime tourist attraction is

inappropriate and potentially damaging to the environmental values which are so highly valued; the potential for a conflict between tourist facilities and protection of finite and valuable assets if management is totally provided by the tourism provider.

The number of parks and reserves which may be managed with less expertise for their ecological values and for the many threatened species they contain.

GEC urges that a number of issues related to transport on the road are addressed. These include,

A lack of knowledge of road rules by foreign drivers resulting in some serious accidents.

Massive congestion and queues of cars in the areas of the popular sight seeing destinations. We urge that a car parking focus point is established where cars are parked and passengers take a shuttle bus to sites such as Twelve Apostles. GEC members have experienced this form of tourist management in overseas countries.

A control system of the number of buses could be introduced. We believe that further planning and control is required to manage the huge traffic burden on the road and the intense visitor pressure on some sites which will not be sustainable in the long term.

GEC strongly urges the Government to ensure that the new GORA does not include the important listed parks and reserves currently included in the NP Act. Current management is widely supported in the wide Victorian community.

Areas that must not be transferred from NP Act management to the new Authority include-

Port Campbell NP

Point Addis Marine Park

Twelve Apostles Marine NP

Bay of Islands Coastal park

The Arches Marine Sanctuary

Any areas of the Great Otway National Park

Joan Lindros Geelong Environment Council

cc

Minister Lisa Neville

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