



**Guidelines for considering the closure of the
Great Ocean Road to conduct events
(November 25, 2013)**

Background

The Great Ocean Road is one of Victoria’s principal tourist routes and one of the world’s most famous coastal drives. While principally a tourist road, it provides an equally important role in providing access for residents and business within the coastal towns and villages that about it.

Given the roads iconic nature, events on the Great Ocean Road attract large numbers of participants, bringing with it an economic benefit to the region, particularly during the off peak tourist season.

Unregulated closures of the Great Ocean Road, for the purposes of conducting events, will impact on the access and mobility of residents and the region’s ability to attract tourists, resulting in adverse flow on effects to communities and business.

VicRoads, Victoria Police, Municipalities and the community recognise that whilst major events provide economic and tourism benefits to the region, a balance must be struck to maintain access and mobility for these communities.

The objective of these guidelines is to provide a framework and a consistency in the approach for considering requests for the closure of the Great Ocean Road for the purpose of conducting events that impact upon both municipalities of Surf Coast and Colac Otway Shires through the closure of the Great Ocean Road.

These guidelines have been developed in collaboration with VicRoads, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Victoria Police, incorporating extensive consultation with the affected communities along the Great Ocean Road.

Definitions

Great Ocean Road For the purpose of these Guidelines the Great Ocean Road shall be considered as the section of road between the two townships of Anglesea and Apollo Bay (from O’Donohue Road, Anglesea to Cawood St, Apollo Bay).

Event The types of events covered by this Guideline include; triathlons, fun runs, marathons, community sporting events, cycling, motoring and other events.

Road works are not classified as events for the purpose of this document.
An event is one that is classified to operate during day time hours, (maximum of 8 hours) during the low season, May 1 - 31 October.

Closure Where public traffic is restricted from travelling in one or both directions of the Great Ocean Road for a duration of greater than 20 minutes.

Note:

- Closure does not include hold and release type management.
- Closures in townships where a reasonable detour is available will not be classified as closures for the purpose of this document.
- One day is defined as no greater than 8 hours.

Inland Route Roads providing a connection between the Princes Highway and the Great Ocean Road.

<u>Steering Committee</u>	Organisations represented on the steering committee; VicRoads, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Victoria Police. VicRoads is the secretariat of the Steering Committee.
<u>Low Season</u>	For the purposes of this document, the low season is defined between the dates of 1 May and 31 October.
<u>Yearly</u>	Calendar year not financial year.
<u>Document Name</u>	The name 'Guidelines for considering the closure of the Great Ocean Road to conduct events' to be referred to as 'Guidelines' for the remainder of this document.

Approval Authority

Within the meaning of the Road Management Act 2004, VicRoads is the Responsible Road Authority for the Great Ocean Road and in accordance with the Road Safety Act 1986 Section 99B, has authorising powers to issue a permit for the closure of the Great Ocean Road for a non-road activity.

Victoria Police provide permission for an event to be held on a road in accordance with the Road Safety (Traffic Management) Regulations 2009. (Part 3 – Activities on Roads)

Closures will only be approved with the agreement of the Steering Committee.

Municipal Event Policies

These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with existing municipal event policies. Suitability of events should be considered by both municipalities in accordance with their own existing Event Policies/Strategic Plans.

In assessing events, impacts on neighbouring municipalities should be considered and appropriate community and stakeholder engagement undertaken.

Contact either Surf Coast Shire 03 5261 0600 or Colac Otway Shire 5232 9400 to determine the co-ordinating municipality.

Number of events permitted yearly

The number of events permitted to conduct a closure of the Great Ocean Road shall be no greater than two per year and must be in the low season. Events must be subject to each municipalities Event Approval process.

In the context of these Guidelines any request to conduct an additional event would be considered as an exception.

Every six years an additional permit may be issued to accommodate the Great Victorian Bike Ride outside of the low season.

Event GOR Road Closure Application Process

The Steering Committee will consider interest from suitable event organisers to conduct events on the Great Ocean Road. The method for selecting events will be via a formal competitive application process.

The Steering Committee appreciates the significant workload involved in preparing and running an event for the first time, and the length of time to develop sustainable events. Due to this, events proposed to run on an annual basis will be considered more favourably.

The Steering Committee will consider providing in-principle support to events for up to a three year period. Event organisers will be required to submit applications based on a set of criteria including but not limited to:

- Regional and local benefits (as per Benefits section)
- Proven event organisation experience.
- Financial capacity and event sustainability.

Whilst in-principle support may be provided for a three year period, event support will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure events adhere to the application process and benefits detailed in their submission.

Low Season Event Timing May 1 – October 31

Closures are to be restricted to the low season between 1 May and 31 October. Support for events in the low season is a key element of the relevant State Government Departments.

Events will not be considered that involve closures of the Great Ocean Road during school holidays, public holidays or long weekends.

The duration of closures should be kept to a minimum and conducted at times that minimise their impact on traffic.

Road Closures

Each event is to be considered on an individual basis in relation to the location of closures on the Great Ocean Road and any other closures on the wider network related to the event (eg: inland routes). The closure of inland routes should be avoided where ever possible or co-ordinated in such a way to minimise any adverse impacts. This also applies in particular to the land locked 5 hamlets located on the Great Ocean Road - Wongarra, Kennett River, Wye River, Sugarloaf and Separation Creek. Events that minimise closures, particularly in regard to inland routes, will be considered more favourably.

Duration of events

The duration of a closure of the Great Ocean Road for an event shall be limited to no greater than 8 hours in one day with rolling opening times strongly encouraged to minimise community disruptions. Times will be staged and sections clearly advertised.

Events with a closure duration of greater than one day will not be considered.

Type of Event

The types of events to be considered as warranting closure of the Great Ocean Road shall be limited to events of International, National or State significance where coverage of the event and participation is available to a wider audience, and must be able to demonstrate significant benefits to the local communities.

The event must demonstrate a capacity to support, enhance and reflect community values including health and well-being and State and Local Government policies.

Events that allow the general public to access and participate in the event will be considered more favourably than closed or restricted events that do not allow this participation.

However, events able to generate a wider community participation and ancillary participation outside of the direct event shall not preclude the event from being considered.

Approval Lead Time

The Steering Committee shall establish a calendar of approved events for an 18 month rolling period on the Great Ocean Road – based on the competitive application process.

Event proposals are required to take into consideration enough lead time to provide consultation and approvals for events.

Event Benefits

It is acknowledged that some events may impose inconvenience in local access to the community. Documentation shall be provided to the Steering Committee from the applicant via the coordinating municipality to enable an

assessment of the benefits and the impacts flowing from the Event. The Steering Committee will review the balance of the impacts/benefits in relation to State and Local Government policies regarding:

Social: Community identity and pride can be generated through tourism. A positive sense of community identity can be reinforced and tourism can encourage local communities to maintain their traditions and identity. Events can bring communities together, provide opportunities to fundraise and facilitate community strengthening activities. Events promote a region's liveability. Events can in some instances contribute financially to local infrastructure improvements. However, events that impact on access can have detrimental social impacts. Event organisers will need to consider and provide evidence of how their event provides social returns that outweigh social impacts.

Economic: Major events stimulate business and create jobs. Increased spending in the community generated from visitors or tourism businesses can directly and indirectly promote the viability of local businesses.

Tourism operators can play a role in highlighting the broad prosperity that tourism can bring to a community and will contribute to a greater understanding and respect for the value of tourism.

Events bring many visitors to our region, which is particularly important in the low season. An important aspect of major events utilising the Great Ocean Road is that they create awareness of the region and encourage repeat visitation.

The closure of the Great Ocean Road can impact on local business trade. Event organisers will need to identify how local businesses can receive benefits from the event and provide evidence that the benefits to the area outweigh the impacts.

Environmental: benefits may include providing financial or in-kind support for the conservation of the local environment and natural resources will enhance the reputation of any tourism business. Tourism, particularly ecotourism, can place a greater focus on the conservation of natural resources through the recognition of their importance to visitor experiences and their economic value to the local community.

The overall benefits to the affected communities must be demonstrated via an independent assessment. The event organiser will need to provide the independent assessment prior to approval. Each Council will provide a list of preferred suppliers. For the event to be considered, the benefits of both municipalities must be demonstrated in the event proposal.

Risk Management and Agency/Community Capacity

A risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with ISO 31000:2009, and provided as part of the Event Application. This risk assessment must include a risk matrix covering all likely issues.

Each municipality's Event Policies/Strategic Plan requirements need to be considered.

An evaluation must be undertaken to ascertain the ability and level of support available from the agencies for the event. It must also identify the impacts on the local community should the event require the use of local essential services.

The event should aim to be self-sufficient and demonstrate no impact on existing local services that cannot be managed (eg: medical, logistical, infrastructure, crowd management, traffic management, emergency management, access etc.). This must also be considered by the event applicant as a part of the Event Application.

Environmental Impact

An assessment of the environmental impact the event will have on the local environment must be considered and included with the submission of the Event Application.

The co-ordinating Road Authority or Municipality may impose a bond in accordance with Section 99B of the Road Safety Act (1986) or through municipal event plans to recover costs involved in cleaning up after an event where this hasn't been carried out appropriately by the organiser.

Each municipality may introduce an event bond to ensure the environmental impacts are minimised by each event. (Refer to the Shire Event Policy and Event Management Plan for further details).

Communication Plan

Following in-principle approval, a draft communication plan for notification of traffic disruption on the Great Ocean Road will need to be developed and approved by the Steering Committee 6 months prior to the proposed Event date.

The draft communication plan will outline the process that will be undertaken to consult with all affected communities.

Event organisers are to coordinate a pre event community meeting and a debrief post event in the township most affected by the road closure as agreed by the Steering Committee. Municipalities are able to assist with database information. Event organisers will cover the costs of facility hire and other associated costs. Event organisers must liaise with the Steering Committee to structure the format of both meetings.

Typical expectations for additional community consultation include information mail outs and community signage and other promotional information such as media articles, letters, posters, and associated websites.

Event Debrief

Where an event is approved and completed, an independent assessment will be carried out every year of the impacts/benefits to the broader community of the event and its outcomes shall be undertaken with a summary provided to the Steering Committee within 3 months following the event at a Debrief Meeting.

If an event organiser wishes to run an event on an annual basis, any matters raised in the Event Debrief must be included in the Risk Management Plan and mitigated appropriately. If this is not completed to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee, the in-principle agreement to the Event shall be revoked.

Confidentiality

Until such time as in-principle approval is formally provided, the Event Application or the Event shall remain confidential.

Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed by the Steering Committee in 2018.