

Great Ocean Road (GOR) Event Closure Guidelines (Version 4 – January 2020)

1. 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 has an equally important role in providing access for residents and business within the coastal towns and villages that abut 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.

Regional Roads Victoria, Victoria Police, SurfCoast Shire, Colac Otway Shire 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. Such events 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 Regional Roads Victoria, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Victoria Police as the four agencies that have legislative governance of sections or the length of the Great Ocean Road incorporated in these Guidelines. Extensive consultation has also been undertaken with the affected communities and other stakeholders along the Great Ocean Road.

2. Definitions

Great Ocean Road For the purpose of these Guidelines the Great Ocean Road is considered to be 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 for a maximum of 8 hours.

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>	The steering committee consists of Regional Roads Victoria, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire and Victoria Police. Regional Roads Victoria is the secretariat of the Steering Committee. These agencies will be the only agencies represented on the Steering Committee as they represent the agencies that provide permits for events along the Great Ocean Road.
<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 ' Great Ocean Road (GOR) Event Closure Guidelines' are referred to as 'Guidelines' for the remainder of this document.

3. Governance

3.1 Approval Authority

Under the *Road Management Act 2004*, VicRoads is the Responsible Road Authority for the Great Ocean Road and in accordance with Section 99B of the *Road Safety Act 1986*, 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.

3.2 Decision Making and Dispute Resolution

All governance decisions made by the Steering Committee will be a majority rule decision. In the event of a dispute, the Steering Committee agency that disagrees with the majority will need to provide evidence based on the criteria in the Guidelines as to why they disagree with the decision making.

Regional Roads Victoria will have the final decision in case of a split vote.

3.3 Cancellation of an Event

An event may be cancelled if:

- the event organisers have not demonstrated the capability to deliver on the criteria as outlined in these Guidelines;
- the event organisers have not met the minimum requirements of event delivery in terms of paperwork required;
- there is evidence of the above.

3.4 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 03 5232 9400 to determine the co-ordinating municipality.

3.5 Confidentiality

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

3.6 Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed every 5 years by the Steering Committee with the next review due in 2024.

4. Conditions

4.1 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 (as defined). 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.

4.2 Low Season Event Timing 1 May – 31 October

Closures are to be restricted to the Low Season. Support for events in the low season is a key priority 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.

4.3 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 applies in particular to the inland routes serving 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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. Such events 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 consistency with 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, the prioritisation of events able to generate a wider community participation and ancillary participation outside of the direct event shall not preclude any event from being considered.

4.6 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 EOI application process.

Event proposals are required to allow enough lead time to provide consultation and approvals for events.

4.7 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 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.

5. Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

5.1 GOR Event Closure Application Process

Event organisers wishing to apply for one of the two permissible road closures for the Great Ocean Road for events will be required to submit an EOI application during the EOI period. This EOI period will be conducted at least 18 months before the current in-principle support for current events expires.

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 will only be considered if they are proposed to run on an annual basis.

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 yearly 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 will be provided for a three-year period, event organisers will be required to submit event applications yearly as per each agency's event guidelines.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

These criteria outline how each event is assessed during the Expression of Interest process and will be used for dispute resolution. They will also be used for criteria for cancellation of an event.

5.2.1 Event Management

To conduct an event on the Great Ocean Road all event organisers must demonstrate the following:

- Demonstrated capacity in staging and managing events of state, national or international significance
- Adequate governance systems in place including an event refund policy.
- Demonstrated capacity to provide required emergency management and traffic management plans and documentation in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated capacity to provide an environmental management plan demonstrating best practice in minimising use of non-renewables and single-use plastic items.
- Adequate coverage levels of public liability and professional indemnity insurance.
- Demonstrated financial stability over the past three financial years.
- Capacity to undertake risk management assessments in accordance with ISO 31000:2009.

5.2.2 Economic Development Opportunities

Event organisers need to address the following and provide an economic impact assessment post-event:

- Impact on off-peak visitation, overnight stays and expenditure.
- The amount of visitation/tourism from outside Host Shires and the length of stay during the event.
- Demonstrate high levels of expenditure ('yield') per visitor/participant.
- The level of pre-training or visitation that the event will generate in the Host Shires in the lead-up to the event.

- The level of expenditure these visitors will generate (or have generated historically) and its distribution in the region.
- The opportunities where the Host Shires and/or the host townships can be promoted, the nature of this promotion and the marketing reach.
- The level of involvement of local businesses in the event both pre-event (supply chain expenditure in event set up) or during the event (stall holders).
- The ability of the event to trigger repeat visitation to the host region.
- The ability for the region to be promoted to participant databases.
- The ability of the event to reinforce and/or strengthen the desired 'brand' of the host township or Host Shires in a positive way.

5.2.3 Social Opportunities

Event organisers need to identify in a post event report the short term and long term community benefits provided by the event including:

- How the event will create social gathering opportunities.
- The level to which people of diverse groups, abilities and ages are brought together.
- Evidence of how the event will positively impact the host community.
- Detail of how the host community will be acknowledged or supported if the event is to cause an inconvenience (e.g. road closures).
- Identify if the social opportunities are short term (event specific) or long term (ongoing spin offs) in nature.
- Level of involvement by local volunteers (number of people and hours).
- Tangible legacy outcomes for the host community as a result of the event.
- How the event caters for needs of all abilities (including people with a disability).
- How the event will engage with host community to develop local ownership.

5.2.4 Environmental Sustainability

The natural environment is a key driver for attracting people to visit the Great Ocean Road. It is a privilege for event organisers and participants to have access to the road to conduct their activities and in return, it is expected that these stakeholders will contribute to the ongoing protection of the environment and sustainable visitation through their actions and approach.

To be considered for an in-principle licence for one of two possible road closures to conduct an event, applicants must:

- Demonstrate best practice in sustainable event delivery including waste minimisation, recycling and strategies to minimise the carbon footprint of the event
- Commit to Surf Coast Shire Council's Plastic Wise Policy
- Eliminate all single use plastic
- Develop environmental sustainable targets for the duration of the agreement
- Develop a communications plan specific to sustainable matters, including how the event organiser will influence and manage participants' behaviour in relation to waste – for example, disqualifying participants who are seen to drop food wrappers or water bottles on the road
- Provide evidence of environment outcomes in the post-event report. This includes quantifying waste mitigation outcomes, such as the percentage reduction of waste diverted to landfill.

The co-ordinating Road Authority or Municipality may impose a bond as part of the conditions of any permit under Section 99B(1) 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.

5.3 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 submitted to the Steering Committee with all event paperwork.

The draft communication plan will outline the process that will be undertaken to consult with all affected communities. Consideration must be given to the land locked communities and special requirements they may have for movement within the road closures.

Event organisers are to coordinate a pre event community meeting and a debrief post event if required. 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, community signage and other promotional information such as media articles, letters, posters, and associated websites.

5.4 Post Event Debrief

Where an event is approved and completed, an independent assessment will be carried out every year, post event, of the impacts/benefits to the broader community. This will include an analysis of how the event outcomes reflected the criteria above. The report will be provided to the Steering Committee within three months of completion of the event. The assessment is to be coordinated and paid for by the event organisers.

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 for the Event shall be revoked.

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