



Great Ocean Road Event Closure Guidelines

(August 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 businesses located within the coastal towns and villages that it passes through and connects.

Given its iconic nature, events held on the Great Ocean Road attract large numbers of participants, offering significant economic benefit to the region.

Unregulated closures of the Great Ocean Road for the purpose of conducting events would impact on the access and mobility of residents, as well as the region's ability to service visitors, resulting in adverse flow-on effects to communities and business.

The objective of these guidelines is to provide a framework for considering requests for the closure of the Great Ocean Road for the purpose of conducting events, which balances the economic and tourism benefits to the region with the importance of maintaining access and mobility for its communities..

The guidelines have been developed in collaboration with Regional Roads Victoria, Victoria Police, Colac Otway Shire and Surf Coast Shire Council, being the four agencies that have legislative governance of sections or the length of the Great Ocean Road incorporated in this document. The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) is also represented on the Steering Committee.

2. Definitions

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| <u>Great Ocean Road</u> | For the purpose of the guidelines, the Great Ocean Road is defined as the section of road between the two townships of Anglesea and Apollo Bay (from O'Donohue Road, Anglesea to Cawood Street, Apollo Bay). |
| <u>Event</u> | The types of events covered by the guidelines include triathlons, fun runs, marathons, community sporting events, cycling, motoring and other on-road events. Roadworks are not classified as events for the purpose of this document. |
| <u>Closure</u> | 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 eight hours |
| <u>Inland Route</u> | Roads providing a connection between the Princes Highway and the Great Ocean Road. |
| <u>Steering Committee</u> | The steering committee comprises Regional Roads Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), Colac Otway Shire, Surf Coast Shire Council and Victoria Police. Regional Roads Victoria is the secretariat of the Steering Committee. |
| <u>Low Season</u> | For the purposes of this document, the Low Season is defined as the period from 1 May to 31 October. |
| <u>Yearly</u> | Calendar year not financial year. |
| <u>Document Name</u> | The 'Great Ocean Road Event Closure Guidelines' are referred to as 'the guidelines' for the remainder of this document. |

3. Governance

3.1 Approval Authority

Under the Road Management Act 2004, Department of Transport 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 must provide evidence

based on the criteria in the guidelines as to why they disagree with the decision.

3.3 Cancellation of an Event

An event may be cancelled if:

- the event organiser has not demonstrated the capability to deliver on the criteria as outlined in the guidelines; or
- the event organiser has not met the agreed timelines and conditions to comply with essential permits; and
- there is evidence of the above.

3.4 Municipal Event Policies

The 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 respective event policies.

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

3.5 Confidentiality

Until such time as in-principle approval is formally provided, all information regarding event applications will remain confidential.

3.6 Review

These guidelines will be reviewed every five years by the Steering Committee, with the next review due in 2024.

3.7 Contractual Arrangements

All applicants must disclose any pre-existing contractual agreements with any external parties which may impact on the staging or timing of an event, as well as the extent of any financial payments made to third parties which could cause a conflict or perception of a conflict of interest with the Steering Committee members.

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. All events must be conducted in the low season (as defined). Events will be subject to each host municipality's event authorisation process, and reflect an equitable spread of benefit between the two municipalities.

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 will be issued to accommodate the Great Victorian Bike Ride outside of the low season.

The Steering Committee reserves the right to not fully award the two events if it deems the applicants do not satisfactorily meet the criteria.

4.2 Timing of events

Closures are to be restricted to the low season, defined as the period from 1 May to 31 October.

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

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 wherever possible, or co-ordinated in such a way as to minimise any adverse impacts. This applies in particular to inland routes servicing the landlocked five 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 in the assessment process.

4.4 Duration of events

The duration of a closure of the Great Ocean Road for an event shall be limited to no longer than eight hours in one day, with rolling opening times strongly encouraged to minimise community disruption. Road closure timings 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 the widest possible audience. Such events must be able to demonstrate significant benefit to the local communities.

The events must demonstrate a capacity to support, enhance and reflect community values including health and wellbeing, and consistency with state and local government priorities.

Events that allow the general public to access and participate in the event will be considered more favourably than a closed or restricted event.

4.6 Approval Lead Time

The Steering Committee will 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 must allow sufficient lead time to provide appropriate consultation and secure all relevant approvals to conduct the events.

4.7 Risk Management and Agency/Community Capacity

A risk assessment must be undertaken for each event in accordance with ISO 31000:2009, and provided as part of the EOI and event application. All risk management plans must be developed by a suitably qualified professional to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee and/or Emergency Services agencies.

Event organisers must develop an Emergency Management Response Plan to the satisfaction of Emergency Service agencies.

An evaluation must be undertaken to ascertain the level of support required from the agencies for the event. It must also identify impacts on local communities should the event require 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 applicant as part of the authorisation process.

5. Application Process and Evaluation Criteria

5.1 Great Ocean Road Event Closure Application Process

Event organisers wishing to apply for one of the two permissible road closures for Great Ocean Road events will be required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) application during the EOI period. The EOI period will be conducted at least 18 months before the 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 it takes to develop sustainable events. Due to this, events will be considered more favourably 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.

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

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria outline how each event is assessed during the EOI process and will be used for dispute resolution. They will also be used as rationale for any cancellation of in-principle agreements.

5.2.1 Event Management

To conduct an event on the Great Ocean Road, event organisers must meet the following criteria:

- 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
- Adequate coverage levels of public liability (\$20 million) and professional indemnity insurance
- Demonstrated financial stability over the past three financial years, and
- Capacity to undertake risk management assessments in accordance with ISO 31000:2009.

5.2.2 Economic Development Opportunities

Closing the Great Ocean Road for events can create disruptions within townships. Event organisers must demonstrate the capability of their proposed event to generate a minimum economic benefit of \$2 million in the host region (Surf Coast Shire / Colac Otway Shire). This may be demonstrated by past event impact analysis or comparable events that display an economic benefit.

Event organisers must address the following as part of their demonstrated economic impact:

- Boosting off-peak visitation, overnight stays and expenditure
- The amount of visitation/tourism from outside the host region 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 region in the lead up to the event
- Marketing/PR value of the event to a state/national/global audience and how this could be leveraged to promote the host region
- 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 host townships can be promoted, including 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 (local business integration)
- The ability of the event to trigger repeat visitation to the host region
- The ability for the region to be promoted to participant databases, and
- 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 must identify the short and long-term community benefits provided by the event including:

- How the event creates social gathering opportunities
- The level to which people of diverse groups, abilities and ages are brought together
- How the event will positively impact the host community
- How the host community will be acknowledged or supported if the event is to cause inconvenience (eg access removed for residents)
- If the social opportunities are short-term (event specific) or long-term (ongoing benefits) 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), and
- How the event will engage with the host community to develop local "ownership"

5.2.4 Environmental Leadership

The natural environment is a major asset in 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 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 environmentally sustainable event delivery, including:

- Minimising the carbon footprint of the event, for example minimising energy use, using renewable energy sources, using sustainable transport options, offsetting emissions through certified programs, prioritising low emission intensive products and activities, and avoiding waste
- Fully comply with Surf Coast Shire Council's Plastic Wise Policy, including elimination of all single use plastic bottles, plastic bags, plastic straws, plastic packaging and balloons
- Demonstrate a commitment to minimising waste being sent to landfill, including waste avoidance measures, recycling and annual targets for the percentage reduction of waste associated with the event
- Develop a communications plan specific to environmental sustainability measures, including how the event organiser will influence and manage participants' behaviour in relation to waste – for example, minimising transport or disqualifying participants who are seen to drop food wrappers or water bottles on the road
- Provide evidence of positive environmental outcomes in the post-event report
- Where the applicant has not previously run an event on the Great Ocean Road, the applicant must provide credible modelling or research that describes the potential environmental impact/s of the proposed event and how these will be managed.

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 Communications Plan

Following in-principle approval, a draft communications plan for notification of traffic disruption on the Great Ocean Road must be developed and submitted to the Steering Committee with all event documentation.

The draft communications plan will outline the process that will be undertaken to consult with all affected communities, including Anglesea and Aireys Inlet. Consideration must be given to the landlocked communities and special requirements they may have for movement within the road closures.

Event organisers must co-ordinate pre- and post-event community information sessions as required. The host municipalities will assist in facilitating invitations, eg through provision of key contacts and distribution lists. Event organisers will cover all facility hire and other associated costs. Event organisers must liaise with the Steering Committee to structure the format of all community meetings.

Typical expectations for additional community consultation include information mail outs, paid advertising in local media outlets, direct community and business liaison, community signage and other promotional information such as media articles, letters, posters, and associated websites.

5.4 Post-Event Report

Where an event is approved and completed, the event organiser must provide the Steering Committee with an independent economic impact assessment report within two months of completion of the event. The economic impact assessment report must use an impact assessment methodology from a suitably-qualified professional that is pre-approved by the Steering Committee.

The report must include an analysis of how the event outcomes reflected the criteria.

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 future events will be revoked.