



Media Release

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Great Ocean Road gains priority

G21-Geelong Region Alliance has listed Great Ocean Road maintenance and upgrading among its priority projects and called for consideration of streamlining its management.

Board members unanimously backed the call, emphasising the importance and urgency of securing the future of the heritage-listed, internationally renowned attraction which underpins the region's \$2.1 billion tourism industry.

"The Great Ocean Road is a beautiful, iconic magnet to the region and as such is an economic linchpin we must closely maintain and nurture into the future," G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said.

"More than seven million people visit the road each year, more international tourists than visit the Great Barrier Reef. While all of that traffic brings great benefit, it also comes with significant costs and challenges.

"We need federal and state government commitment to ongoing long-term funding. Private and public tourism amenities are needed to further enhance its economic potential and raising it to priority status will help ensure that governments are kept sharply aware of the need."

Federal and state governments have committed a total of \$153 million to the road since 2013 but maintenance issues were highlighted during 2016 as more than 120 land slips resulted in extended road closures.

At least 13 authorities play a part in managing the road, including municipalities, Great Ocean Road Coastal Committee, VicRoads, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Ms Carbines called on the State Government to consider streamlining its management.

“There is a need to simplify and better coordinate management arrangements, possibly through an over-sighting body covering the length of the road,” Ms Carbines said.

She said developing of infrastructure and attractions enticing visitors to stay and spend along the road and hinterland would also be required. Research has found average spend among visitors to the 12 Apostles is just 17 cents.

G21 supports existing projects including:

- Building Torquay’s profile as a Great Ocean Road Gateway, enhanced by its surf history and culture;
- Developing of a Fort Queenscliff tourism precinct in line with an existing Fort Queenscliff Precinct Tourism Master Plan;
- Developing of Apollo Bay Harbour, with upgraded tourism and community infrastructure to accompany its \$6.5 million annual fishing industry; and,
- Developing adventure trails across the region in accord with a Growing Adventure Tourism blueprint aiming to have G21 region recognised as Victoria’s premier trail destination.

The G21 board has also endorsed a Shipwreck Coast Master Plan calling for \$340 million in infrastructure improvements along 28km of the Great Ocean Road from Princetown to the Bay of Islands, including the Twelve Apostles and Port Campbell.

G21 is the central, combined voice in championing the needs of its five member municipalities and their communities to federal and state governments and authorities.

The alliance previously listed Apollo Bay harbour and adventure trails developments as priority projects but they are now under the Great Ocean Road project banner.

A previous campaign to secure Land 400 armoured vehicle manufacturing for Geelong is no longer a priority project but defence manufacturing procurement remains a strong G21 economic development objective as a member of Geelong Defence Alliance.

2017 G21 Priority Projects:

- Addressing disadvantage
- Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area
- Avalon Airport
- Central Geelong Revitalisation
- Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre
- Geelong Cultural Precinct
- Geelong Ring Road Connections
- Geelong Secondary Schools and Community Digital Hub
- Great Ocean Road
- Portarlington Safe Harbour
- Regional Motocross Facility
- Regional Rail Connections
- Waterfront Geelong – Safe Harbour Project

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