

TORQUAY



Destination Action Plan 2015–2017

December 2014



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



Image: Mark Chew



Acknowledgments

The development of the Torquay Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd.

The process brought together representatives from all stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy; local government, state government agencies, industry and the community to develop a plan. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing Torquay and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase Torquay's competitiveness.

Specifically we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

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Introduction

Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd is undertaking the preparation of a Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region which extends from Torquay in the east to the South Australian border in the west.

A core strategy is to recognise that visitors to the region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences. Therefore the development, marketing and management of the regions destinations is pivotal to the success of the whole region.

This Destination Action Plan for Torquay identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance the competitiveness of Torquay as a primary visitor destination of the region. These strategies will also be reflected in the Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the region to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Plan has been prepared by a facilitated workshop process involving business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities and challenges. The group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Torquay visitor economy and experience.

The visitor economy

Visitors to Torquay are major contributors to the strength of the local economy. The visitors may be leisure travellers (domestic and international), visitors to friends and relatives, holiday residents, business visitors, students or day-trippers.

Their expenditure is 'new money' contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value and the provision of services, facilities and activities in the community.

The total tourism contribution to the Great Ocean Road region is \$1,832 million 20,000 jobs, 11.1% of Gross Regional Product and 11.6% employment share.

SOURCE: Victorian Regional Satellite Accounts 2011-12 produced by Deloitte Access Economics.



Image: Robert Blackburn



In 2013 the Surf Coast Shire attracted a total of 1,677,833 visitors spending \$410,631,653. This comprised of:

- 902,000 domestic day visitors spending \$92,906,000
- 750,000 domestic overnight visitors spending \$303,750,000
- 25,833 international visitors spending \$13,975,653.

SOURCE: National Visitor Survey YE December 2013 Tourism Research Australia and REMPLAN analysis.

Direct gross regional product (GRP)

- \$26 million domestic day trip visitors
- \$19 million domestic overnight visitors
- \$11 million international overnight visitors
- Total of \$178 million visitor direct segment spending of the Western region (37% of the total Western region GRP).

Direct and indirect gross regional product (GRP)

- Total of \$417 million estimated total of the direct and indirect GRP for the Shire
- 2,687 jobs in the Shire due to direct impact of tourist spending (21.5% of the Great Ocean Road region).

SOURCE: Decisive Consulting October 2014 report on FY 2011-12 to Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd Board.

Torquay attracted

- An annual average of 367,000 domestic day visitors (67% for holiday/leisure purposes)
- 240,000 domestic overnight visitors (35% stayed between January-March with an average length of stay of 2.6 nights)
- 11,558 international visitors, 84,000 nights spending \$6.2 million. Average stay 7.3 nights & 85% holiday/leisure purpose.

SOURCE: National Visitor Survey YE December 2013 Tourism Research Australia and REMPLAN analysis.



Image: Mark Chew

Success factors

Industry research has established that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving the above objectives. The workshop participants considered these factors relative to Torquay in reaching consensus on the priority strategies and actions. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the competitive growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of Torquay.

1. Strong local tourism organisations focussed on their core role of visitor servicing
2. Strong regional tourism organisations focussed on their core role of regional marketing and development
3. Local government support
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals and/or organisations
5. Strategic planning for the economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans
6. Consistent visitor service excellence
7. Research driven cooperative marketing
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, products and events matched to market demand
9. Risk management plans
10. Supportive communities which understand and value tourism.



Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction.

All of these objectives are important for Torquay with particular challenges in maximising visitor expenditure, seasonal dispersal and satisfaction. The impact of population growth west of Melbourne and Geelong presents significant visitor management challenges, particularly from day visitors in peak periods.



Image: Mark Chew



Challenges

1. Improve master town planning (visionary, sense of place & brand aligned)
2. Way finding and road signing
3. Product development
 - Events (non sport)
 - Torquay culture aligned
 - Quality delivery & consistency
 - Seasonality (Winter gap)
4. Customer service excellence
5. Destination promotion.

Opportunities

1. Brand and positioning identification
 - Torquay experience
 - Home of Australian surfing
 - Start of the Great Ocean Road
2. Unique Torquay signing
3. Premier conference and events destination (strategy to include small business participation/benefit).



The leadership group considered the 'Success Factors for Regional Tourism' and reached consensus on a current situation rating score out of 10.

Diagnostic rating

Characteristics		Rating	Comments
1.	Strong local tourism organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	4.6	
2.	Strong regional tourism organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5.1	In progress
3.	Local government support	5.5	
4.	Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals and/or organisations	5.9	
5.	Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	5	In progress
6.	Consistent visitor service excellence	3.3	
7.	Research driven cooperative marketing	5	Not commenced regionally
8.	A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	6.2	
9.	Risk management plans in place	5	Not progressed regionally
10.	Supportive communities that understand the value of tourism.	4.8	

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Image: Robert Blackburn



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Torquay Commerce & Tourism and the Surf Coast Shire to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Implementation Leadership Group will consider and review this progressively. One key consideration will be the availability and securing of resources to progress the implementation of the Plan in a timely manner. It may also be appropriate and necessary to involve other organisations and to seek funding for specific projects.

The Plan does not commit any organisation to the actions proposed but is a guide to pursuing priorities and actions which will make a positive difference to the achievement of the tourism objectives noted above.

The priority actions have been assigned a KPI priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

HIGH within the first year

MEDIUM within one to two years

LOW within three years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd in consultation with the Implementation Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in three years.

The Destination Action Plan will provide input to the preparation of a Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region.

PRIORITY 1

Destination marketing

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and consistently promote a unique market positioning and brand identity for Torquay 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with key stakeholders undertake a destination positioning identification process based primarily on Torquay as the Start of the Great Ocean Road, the Home of Australian Surfing and possibly as a soft adventure hub 	GORRT, Surf Coast Shire	High
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate Destination Torquay in the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd marketing strategy Appoint a representative/s to participate in a Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd marketing committee advisory group, to facilitate integration of Torquay brand and tactical marketing and coordination 	Surf Coast Shire	High
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope a distinctive signing plan consistent with the agreed positioning; include as a priority, a highly visible entrance statement and a #1 Great Ocean Road wayside stopping/photo opportunity point 	GORRT, Surf Coast Shire	High
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, develop and progressively implement a contemporary best practice way finding, visitor precinct and location interpretive signing system throughout the town 	Surf Coast Shire	Medium
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Torquay website as part of the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd digital strategy 	GORRT	High
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote local attractions and services via the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd WIFI hotspot 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism	Medium
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and encourage use of a Torquay brand style guide by business and community organisations 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	Medium
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage business participation in Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd cooperative marketing and business/industry development programs. 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High, Medium & Low

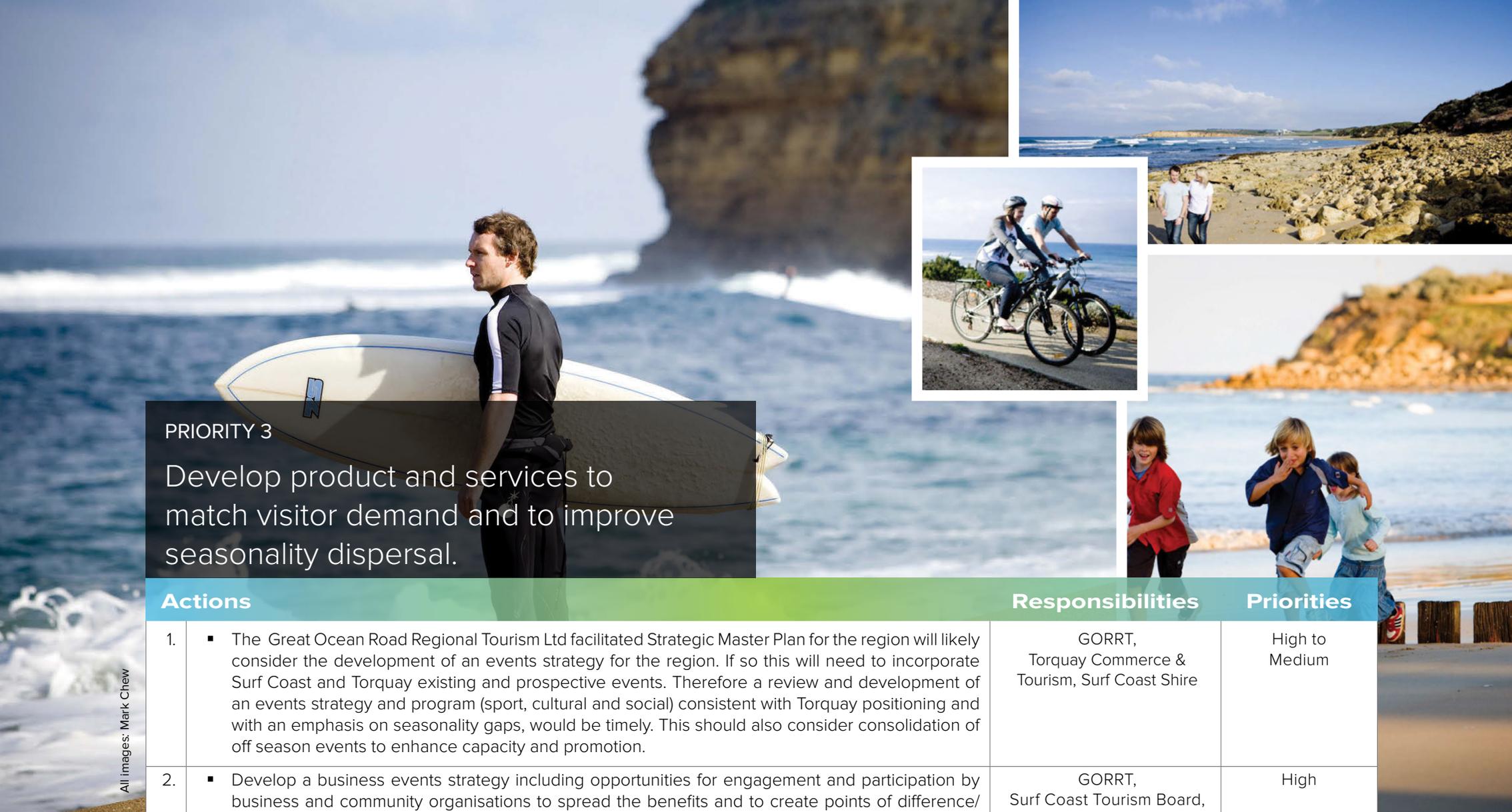


PRIORITY 2

Enhance the visitor experience of the town.

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Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the ‘Torquay–A Town for Tomorrow’ report recommendations 	Torquay Commerce and Tourism	High, Medium & Low
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the creation of temporary ‘pop up’ piazza/village square experiences featuring existing businesses, entertainment, seating etc. 	Torquay Commerce and Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for or facilitate an independent review of the scale, standard, maintenance and cleanliness of visitor amenities at key visitor nodes and precincts consistent with visitor demand growth. e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Toilets and showers Interpretive signing Walking trails including way-finding to and from Visitor information 	GORRT, Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the establishment of ‘pop up’ Visitor Information Booth on the esplanade or alternative locations during peak periods and at events 	Surf Coast Shire	Medium
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the Australian Surf Capital Enterprise and Cultural Precinct Redevelopment Project as part of the Strategic Master Plan for the region Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd and Surf Coast Shire to consult on the recommendations of the Plan and to consider opportunities to develop business cases which could attract public and private funding to deliver increased visitor expenditure and encourage regional dispersal and added value 	GORRT, Surf Coast Shire	High
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an adjunct to 2.5 above and/or separately, investigate the regional role an integrated Visitor Centre and Surf World Museum could play in promoting Torquay as the start of the Great Ocean Road, Home of Australian Surfing and bookending of the Great Ocean Road experience as a Regional Visitor Experience Centre. 	GORRT, Surf Coast Shire	High to Medium



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PRIORITY 3
 Develop product and services to match visitor demand and to improve seasonality dispersal.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd facilitated Strategic Master Plan for the region will likely consider the development of an events strategy for the region. If so this will need to incorporate Surf Coast and Torquay existing and prospective events. Therefore a review and development of an events strategy and program (sport, cultural and social) consistent with Torquay positioning and with an emphasis on seasonality gaps, would be timely. This should also consider consolidation of off season events to enhance capacity and promotion. 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High to Medium
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a business events strategy including opportunities for engagement and participation by business and community organisations to spread the benefits and to create points of difference/ unique experiences 	GORRT, Surf Coast Tourism Board, Surf Coast Shire	High
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a cooperative joint venture (public/private) product development plan and promote Torquay as the accessible 'soft adventure/active lifestyle hub' of the Surf Coast and Great Ocean Road region featuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking trails (Surf Coast Walk) Cycling Fitness and exercise including events Healthy lifestyle Multiple beach activities Fishing and water sports Surfing. 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium



PRIORITY 3 cont.

Actions

Responsibilities

Priorities

4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd facilitated Strategic Master Plan will most likely propose the development of a ‘tourism excellence’ strategy and industry development program for the region. ▪ The Torquay business community will be encouraged to participate. Therefore it will be advantageous to encourage Torquay business participation to deliver hospitality and retail services consistent with the Torquay positioning. (e.g. casual, health and wellbeing) and to cooperatively support and promote local providers. ▪ Destinations which act positively to optimise participation will gain competitive advantage and contribute to seamless regional visitor experience ▪ Local business leadership will be required 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism	Medium
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lobby Surfing Australia to bring the Hall of Fame annual awards back to Torquay from Queensland by 2017 ▪ Celebrate the legends of Australian Surfing by a display at the Museum and via statues in an avenue of honour at an appropriate public location as a new attraction 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	Medium
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperate with Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd and Government agencies to attract and encourage investment in new products (accommodation, attractions and services) consistent with the Torquay positioning and visitor demand trends. 	GORRT in cooperation with Surf Coast Shire, Regional Development Victoria, Regional Development Australia, Tourism Victoria	High, Medium & Low

Image: Mark Chew



PRIORITY 4

Develop a seamless visitor service excellence culture, capacity and capability.

Image: Mark Chew

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a ‘visitor service excellence’ training program for business and events 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism	Medium
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey and benchmark regional visitor satisfaction, possibly including a voluntary mystery shopper program – Torquay to be included 	GORRT	Medium
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the value of ‘whole of community visitor welcoming’ into the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd strategy to communicate of the value of tourism to the community–will require local organisation support 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	Medium
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a ‘Best 5 Things to do and see in Torquay’ program for business and the community with seasonal variation. 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High



Image: Mark Chew



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PRIORITY 5
 Promote the value of the visitor economy to the community.

Actions Responsibilities Priorities

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and regularly communicate, via multiple mediums, the economic, social/community, cultural and environmental benefits of the visitor economy Feature good news stories, people and visitor business excellence Consider and negotiate a regular page in the Surf Coast Times 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High
2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a program to recognize and promote business excellence e.g. Tourism business and personality of the month Award Promote via multiple mediums including a regular feature in the Surf Coast Times 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism	High
3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educational material to schools on the Torquay tourism industry 	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	Medium
4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, promote and sell 'Torquay–The home of Australian Surfing' and #1 Great Ocean Road merchandise Encourage local global brands to promote 'designed in Torquay, Australia' 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism,	Low
5. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local business and organisations to use and display the Torquay branding and merchandise 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism,	Low
6. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and communicate a seasonal report card on the performance of the visitor economy 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High
7. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a research project to establish and benchmark the retail spend of visitors. 	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High

Image: Robert Blackburn



PRIORITY 6

Minimise the impact of mass visitor growth.

Actions

Responsibilities

Priorities

1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and implement efficient parking solutions to provide adequate parking and visitor amenities at key visitor nodes and precincts consistent with current need and future demand projections (e.g. beaches, the esplanade and retail precincts) Implement the Great Ocean Road Coordinating Committee Coastal User Transport Strategy 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider park and ride solutions for peak periods linked to retail nodes to encourage increased spend by day visitors (GORCC Strategy) 	Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and shuttle services at peak times to the developing Armstrong Creek residential growth areas (GORCC Strategy) 	Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Low
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby to improve and increase public transport services and options, to from and around Torquay (GORCC Strategy) 	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide excellent way finding signing to manage vehicle traffic access to key visitor nodes via alternative routes (GORCC Strategy) 	Surf Coast Shire, Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	Medium
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for key road access to beaches and retail precincts from and to the Surf Coast Highway to be developed and maintained in advance of demand growth as per the Surf Coast Shire Road Management Framework. 	Surf Coast Shire	Low

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PRIORITY 7

Strengthen local tourism leadership and collaboration.

Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Establish a partnership agreement between Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd and Surf Coast Shire and a separate agreement between Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd and Torquay Commerce and Tourism which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly defines roles ▪ Maximises business participation in Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd business services and cooperative marketing programs for mutual benefit ▪ Incorporates actions from this Plan ▪ Considers future resourcing options ▪ Supports the objectives articulated in this Plan and the Tourism Master Plan for the region ▪ Promotes the value of the visitor industry to the community ▪ Implements and monitors progress of this Plan 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire	High
2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Torquay Commerce and Tourism to continue to support and develop an annual program of cooperative visitor servicing projects that contributes to increasing visitor expenditure and satisfaction. (e.g. promotion of local events and activities, retail promotion, entertainment) 	Torquay Commerce & Tourism	High
3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a collaborative Implementation Group with representatives from Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Surf Coast Shire, Torquay Commerce and Tourism, Surf Coast Tourism Board to lead and facilitate implementation of this Plan 	GORRT, Torquay Commerce & Tourism, Surf Coast Shire, Surf Coast Tourism Board	High
4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review this Action Plan annually and update every three years. 	GORRT	High

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