

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS BY BRETT INCE, CEO GEELONG AND BELLARINE TOURISM BOARD (FORMALLY DIRECTOR TOURISM AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE, PARKS VIC.)

1. *If you were to support a coastal walking trail between Queenscliff and Torquay, where would it be located?*

This would depend on the coastline landscape assessment, however where appropriate, it would be best suited to provide view points across the coast. There would be a need for the trail to traverse inland in some areas, however this adds to the adventure and would be dependant on land holdings etc.

2. *Why do we need more growth? Our parks systems are already under extensive pressures failing in biodiversity protection? How will tourism plan assist with biodiversity protection?*

The consideration here is to manage tourism growth within the Parks systems. Too often if tourism growth is not managed, parks systems suffer as community and visitors create unplanned tracks that disturb biodiversity and cultural heritage. If tracks are planned for and defined, this allows for other parts of a parks system to revegetate and be cared for. The other point here is to consider how we educate out visitors and community through interpretation and also create programs to visitors to give back through conservation whether it be through volunteering or financially contributing to a program. Most visitors thrive for education of a place.

3. *How do you balance the push for greater tourism against the many environmental concerns that have been raised today?*

It is important to realise that if tourism is planned for and visitors are engaged in education, interpretation and conservation programs, they can contribute to conservation. There is growth in worldwide conservation volunteering which could positively contribute to a landscape, whilst managing visitation on approved pathways etc. The many conservation programs which were discussed could link to this type of tourism and provide a great volunteer force to care for our landscapes. If visitors are educated about a place, they are more inclined to care for that place.

4. *Nature is worth more than money? How can we increase this value and save what little we have left from the profit motive?*

It is agreed that nature is worth more than money, however nature also needs people to care for it. Many of the people in the room would travel and like the opportunity to give back to nature at their travel location. Voluntourism is a way this can occur which goes beyond profit.

5. *How do you feel we can best engage the community, and public in general, with a relatively 'remote' or 'wild' place like Buckley Park?*

Buckley Park is a place that could be used to educate groups on the ecological landscape of this part of the region. It could be a potential opportunity to link visitor education programs with conservation programs.

6. *Eco-tourism can be all about making money from the environment. How can you make sure a place isn't over-exploited or should some places be left alone?*

Eco-tourism, if managed appropriately can be a way of educating visitors about the ecological system and providing an opportunity for visitors to give back. Echidna Walkabout Tours at Serendip and the You Yangs Regional Parks is a clear example of this where they create experiences for visitors to give back through bone seed weeding and contributing to the 'Koala Clancy Foundation' to create better habitats for the koala population in the You Yangs. Tour operators can be licensed in an area with conditions to ensure that Eco tourism is not exploited. There are definitely areas that should be left alone and this should always be considered in both a cultural heritage and ecological assessment process.

7. *Where is protection of the environment in this presentation. Not everything is an "opportunity"!!!*

The presentation was provided in order to give a snapshot of the overall region from a tourism perspective. Protecting the environment is important to the future of our region.

8. *Are there any plans for marine environmental or ship wreck tourism?*

It is certainly a consideration for the region with Queenscliff Harbour providing the opportunity to launch from. It is a broader consideration in Port Phillip Bay and how the HMAS Canberra provides this potential.

9. *Would the connection of Ocean Grove & Point Lonsdale thru a multi-use trail help increase visitations?*

It would provide a connection between the two towns that would be safe and alleviate the use of vehicles. It certainly provides the opportunity for visitors to explore and be educated on this part of the region.

10. *How can we protect nature from over use by these huge numbers of tourists?*

The best approach here is to consider how conservation based programs where visitors can be educated and give back through volunteer experiences.

11. *Education is vital to preserve biodiversity values however if it is not supported with real compliance efforts, your education efforts are diminished. How will compliance be integrated and who will finance it?*

Completely agree with this statement. This would be up to the land management to consider and important for the community to ensure land managers are doing this.

12. *Is tourism development taking account of climate impacts of over-tourism? Buckley park is too small for too much impact.*

Yes there is consideration of climate impacts of over-tourism. The opportunity is to link to ecologically responsible visitors that want to care for the landscape through participating in education and conservation programs. Buckley Park should not be seen as a mass tourism area, however a trail could help to keep visitors off ecological and cultural significant areas.

13. *How is water managed? Especially during Xmas holidays. What is planned going forward?*

14. *Do you think a fenced walkway along or just behind the crest of the dunes for a few hundred metres would be a tourist attraction?*

It would allow for visitors to access the area through an approved track. This type of offer should not be developed as a 'tourist attraction' but rather an access way and view point to allow for community and visitors to connect from Point Lonsdale to Ocean Grove.

15. *Period of statistics shown?*

The calendar year of 2018