

# GREAT OCEAN WALK

## *Walk Victoria's Icons*

### FACT SHEET

- The Great Ocean Walk (GOW) is located between the Great Ocean Road and the sea. It is three hours and 200km west of Melbourne Australia, via Geelong along the coast (B100) or Colac (A1)-over the range.
- The GOW is an approximately 100 kilometre track which stretches from Apollo Bay to Gibson Steps, adjacent to the Twelve Apostles, and passes through the Great Otway and Port Campbell National Parks.
- The GOW was launched in January 2006 and has become Victoria's iconic long-distance coastal walk attracting many national and international walkers.
- The establishment cost for the Great Ocean Walk was \$2.3 million which created an integrated, linked trail system from Marengo to Glenample Homestead.
- One of the unique aspects of the GOW is that walkers can 'step on and step off' the trail, completing short, day, overnight or multi-day hikes, ranging from easy walks to difficult treks.
- The complete linear walk (approx. 100 kms) can be completed between five to seven nights.
- Walkers will experience spectacular coast and forest scenery including rocky platforms, sheltered beaches, rivers, forests and coastal heathland.
- Wildlife includes Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Black Wallabies, evidence of echidnas on the ground and koalas in the trees around Cape Otway. At vantage points along the trail walkers have the opportunity to see dolphins and, from June to September, migrating whales.
- A variety of birds may be observed including King Parrots, Rufous Bristlebirds, Crimson Rosellas, Singing Honeyeaters, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos and Gang-gang Cockatoos. Wedge-tailed Eagles and White-bellied Sea-eagles are also seen. Along the beach flocks of Crested Terns, larger Pied or Sooty Oystercatchers and occasionally Little Penguins, can be seen.
- At night campers may hear the Boobook and Powerful Owls in the forests or the unusual screaming sound of the Yellow-bellied Glider or the puppy-like yaps of Sugar Gliders.
- Cape Otway is renowned for its shipwreck history and evidence of this can be seen at Wreck Beach where walkers can visit the anchors of the Marie Gabrielle and Fiji, embedded in the sand.
- The Gadabanud people's traditional Country transcends what is known today as the Otway coastline. This area, rich and diverse in plant and animal life, has been a gathering, ceremonial and feasting place for thousands of years. Many sites and spiritual links remain today. Local Gadabanud & Aboriginal people are closely involved with Parks Victoria in the protection, restoration and management of significant sites.
- Near The Gables lookout walkers can experience some of the highest sea cliffs in mainland Australia.
- The walk goes from 'mild' in the east to 'wild' in the west. As walkers hike west the walk becomes more remote and challenging.

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- The walk includes a mixture of tracks, gradients and surfaces including beach walking 5%, walking tracks 76%, management vehicle only tracks 10% and vehicle tracks 9%. There are a number of sections where further beach walking is an option.
- Visitors can choose to camp in the park or select from a variety of off-park accommodation including privately operated campgrounds, bed and breakfasts and self-contained cottages.
- GOW walk services provided by the tourism industry include guided walks, pick up and drop off of walkers, camping and walking equipment hire and food provision.
- There are seven purpose built GOW 'hike-in' campsites along the walk with a total capacity of up to 168 people. They are located at Elliot Ridge, Blanket Bay, Cape Otway, Aire River, Johanna Beach, Ryans Den and Devils Kitchen. Distances between campsites range from 10-15km. Bookings are required and fees apply.
- Parks Victoria has allocated five dedicated group camping areas on the GOW at Elliot Ridge, Blanket Bay, Cape Otway, Aire River and Johanna beach. These sites have a capacity of 45 and access to the same facilities as the GOW hike-in campsites. Bookings are required and fees apply.
- There are four 'drive-in' campsites at Blanket Bay, Parker Hill, Aire River and Johanna Beach. These sites are available for both car based campers and hikers. Registration is required.
- Walkers using campsites will be asked to register their intentions to help Parks Victoria manage the effects and risks to the health of the park and assist visitors in enjoying their experience.
- Walkers must book their campsites and register their intentions at least 2-4 weeks in advance.
- Drinking water is not available along the track. Tanks at campsites hold untreated rainwater. Walkers must be prepared to carry their drinking water requirements or to treat rainwater.
- If walkers are planning to camp they need to carry food, water and equipment for up to 15km a day or choose to link their walk to nearby accommodation and service providers.
- Track alignment was decided after comprehensive environmental, landscape, heritage and cultural values assessments. Geological and geo-technical investigations were also completed to assess coastal stability and erosion issues.
- The track surface is predominantly made of natural soils or sand, however boardwalks and crushed rock have been laid to protect areas from erosion.

For more information please contact:

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