The key north-south route back to Melbourne from the Twelve Apostles threatens the international reputation of touring the Great Ocean Road and the safety of all road travellers due to the poor condition of the arterial road network.

The Twelve Apostles region absorbs 2.6 million visits annually. A great proportion (68%) of these visits are domestic daytrips, arriving via the Great Ocean Road by private vehicle or tour bus, spending time at the Apostles, and then departing back to Melbourne (Princes Highway) via Cobden-Port Campbell Road and Timboon-Colac Road the same day. (See above map)

THE ISSUES

MORE VISITORS

More than 740 vehicles per day are using our local arterial roads to return to Melbourne via the Princes Highway. The number of vehicles using Cobden-Port Campbell Road, Princetown Road and Timboon-Colac Road is dramatically increasing.

A 45 per cent increase in visitation to the Shipwreck Coast is expected within the next 20 years. With Australia Day and Chinese New Year coinciding on 30 and 31 January 2017, the Twelve Apostles Visitor Centre recorded an average 11,500 visitors per day.

Additionally, there is a growing cluster of local produce experiences (Food Artisans Trail) in the Timboon / Simpson area, drawing visitors from the Twelve Apostles into the hinterland via these three arterial roads. Visitors to Timboon Distillery, Timboon Ice Creamery, Schulz Organic Dairy and Newton’s Ridge Vineyard use the Cobden-Port Campbell Road, Princetown Road and Timboon-Colac Road to access these attractions.

WHAT IS NEEDED

$150 million has been allocated by State and Federal Governments for improvements to the entire Great Ocean Road within the past three years.

Consideration of the ‘visitor’s journey...’ it is more than the Great Ocean Road. Cars and tour buses are using north south routes to the Princes Highway to return to Melbourne.

A funding solution that considers the Great Ocean Road loop including the hinterland roads as the visitor journey, is required. Road pavement upgrades are a short term option only and likely to require $4 million.

We need urgent funding to assess and deliver:

• High standard pavement and strengthening
• Improved signage
• Opportunities for slow vehicle turnout where required
• Key intersection safety improvements
• Localised geotechnical and drainage improvements

Further assistance could be provided through the State and Federal Governments to acknowledge the complete visitor journey and ensure road related infrastructure is a suitable and safe standard. Without these upgrades, millions of visitor experiences will be tarnished by the poor condition of this key tourist route.
THE ISSUES

ROAD SAFETY

Our major concern is the condition of these roads and the safety risks for those travelling them.

VicRoads 2013-2014 data shows that more than 21 per cent of the Cobden-Port Campbell Road, Princetown Road and Timboon-Colac Road is in a distressed state.

Tourist driver behaviour is a particular concern, with many international drivers not remembering to drive on the left-hand side of the road when driving along the Great Ocean Road and other main roads.

More than 60 vehicle crashes have involved over 180 people during the past six years on the Great Ocean Road and hinterland roads forming the ‘Great Ocean Road Visitors Touring’ route. Eight of these crashes involved buses, i.e. with 7 or more people involved.

Whilst a number of initiatives have been introduced including multilingual messaging on websites, directional arrows and Drive on Left in Australia signage on roads, and distributing stickers in hire cars and local businesses, it doesn’t stop vehicles crossing centre lines to avoid edge breaks and push outs, rutting and potholes, slowing down in the middle of the road to manage passing over a pot hole, or swerving to avoid pavement cracking and rutting.

ALTERNATE ROUTES ALSO REQUIRING ATTENTION ARE:

COBDEN-PORT CAMPBELL ROAD $10 MILLION REQUIRED

PRINCETOWN ROAD $11 MILLION REQUIRED

The Great Ocean Road North - South Loop. Its a matter of safety and international reputation.