Great Ocean Road

OUTSTANDING SCENERY

The Great Ocean Road, which meanders along the southwest coast of Victoria, is considered to be one of the world's great coastal drives. Officially it runs 243 kilometres from Torquay to Allansford, near Warrnambool, but many people choose to continue their journey further to discover the many natural and cultural attractions of Port Fairy, Portland and the surrounds. The road provides access to landmarks such as the Twelve Apostles, as well as some outstanding scenery, including beaches, cliffs, rock formations, temperate rainforest and waterfalls. It also passes through a number of historic seaside towns and villages.

VICTORIA'S SURF COAST

With some of the best surf breaks in the country, the stretch of coastline between Torquay and Apollo Bay is commonly referred to as Victoria's Surf Coast. The famous surf beach, Bells Beach, is located near Torquay, which is renowned as Australia's surfing capital. Each Easter, Bells, as it is affectionately known, hosts the Rip Curl Pro – the world's longest running professional surfing competition – which draws top surfers from all over the globe. Torquay is the home of the Surf World Museum, with an impressive collection of surfing artefacts and memorabilia.

GREAT OTWAY NATIONAL PARK

Near Apollo Bay, the road winds inland through Great Otway National Park. Covering much of the Otway Ranges, the park features lush forest, waterfalls and lakes in addition to heathland and rugged coastline and ocean beaches. At Cape Otway stands the Cape Otway Lightstation, the oldest lighthouse in mainland Australia.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND OTHER FORMATIONS

Off the shore of Port Campbell National Park are the striking limestone rock stacks of the Twelve Apostles – a widely recognised Australian landmark. The rock formations were
created by the erosion of limestone cliffs, which eventually became caves, then arches, then finally collapsed into the rock stacks that stand today. Previously, there were nine rock stacks but one of them slumped in 2005, leaving just eight standing today. The Twelve Apostles are particularly beautiful at sunrise and sunset.

The Twelve Apostles are not the only spectacular rock formations within Port Campbell National Park and the Bay of Islands Coastal Park. There are many other natural arches, islands, rock stacks and blowholes.

**HISTORIC SHIPWRECK TRAIL**

There are numerous opportunities for learning about the maritime history of the region, starting with the Historic Shipwreck Trail from Moonlight Bridge in Port Campbell National Park. The wreck of the *Loch Ard* in 1878 is one of the best known incidents. The ship ran aground near Mutton Bird Island. Of the 54 aboard the vessel, only two survivors managed the journey to shore, to the site now known as Loch Ard Gorge, an incredibly beautiful pocket in the coastline. The wreck remains at the base of Mutton Bird Island today.

**ABORIGINAL HERITAGE**

In addition to great natural beauty, the area has a rich Aboriginal heritage. A number of groups occupied the south-west of the state, including the Gulidjan, Wathaurong, Kirrae Whurrong and Gunditjmara peoples. They continue to have strong cultural and spiritual connections with the country.