

Fact Sheet – History

- The idea for a coastal walk along the west coast of Victoria was first mooted in 1974.
- A feasibility study for the South Coast Track between Portland and Anglesea incorporating the sections between Apollo Bay and Port Campbell was conducted by the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands, in 1989.
- In 1990 reference to a long distance walk between Peterborough and Princetown was included in the Port Campbell National Park Management Plan as a medium priority.
- Members of the local business community developed the concept for a walk in 1994 over bottles of port in a shed near Cape Otway. Initially known as the Great Ocean Road Walk Track, it was refined to be known as the 'Great Ocean Walk'.
- A Great Ocean Walk Management Committee was formed in 1994/5 including community, representatives from the Shires, National Parks Service and Shipwreck Coast Tourism. A bid to the federal department of tourism for the first stage of works was submitted with support from the then Victorian Minister Hon. Mark Birrell.
- In 1996 Parks Victoria commenced a Values and Risk assessment project to look at potential impacts associated with the walk.
- The Regional Tourism Development Program funding bid was approved for Stage 1 in 1996, valued at \$229,000 including in-kind contributions. Parks Victoria commenced construction shortly after using people employed through the Department of Employment Education and Training New Work Opportunity Program.
- 1996 – The Otway National Park Management Plan includes the Great Ocean Walk as a significant increase to walking opportunities.
- 1997/8 - A Greencorps program was engaged by Parks Victoria to carry out further on ground works to link earlier construction.
- 1998 – The Port Campbell National Park and Bay of Islands Coastal Park Management Plan includes Great Ocean Walk as an increase in walking opportunities in the park.
- 1998/99 - Parks Victoria engaged Ballarat University's Centre for Environmental Management to undertake detailed values and development risk assessment for entire walk.

Great Ocean Walk™

- 2000 – Luebbers and Associates commenced the heritage study of indigenous culture of the walk study area for Parks Victoria with support from Framlingham Aboriginal Trust. How Woodhouse Graesser commence geotechnical investigations.
- In June 2002 Parks Victoria approved the project with the second major phase of construction work commencing on 26 August by specialist track builders from Victoria and Tasmania, who worked on tracks such as the Overland Track and Western Arthurs in Tasmania and the new Wilsons Promontory SE track. This phase of work was completed in 2003.
- Parks Victoria continued to create a basic track link with the next phase of work, which was completed in 2004, again with specialist track builders.
- The last phase of construction commenced in late 2004 through to December 2005 to provide a safer and improved track which has resulted in a much greater experience accessing some spectacular scenery along the Otway Coast.
- The Great Ocean Walk was launched by The Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for the Environment, on January 9th 2006 and has since seen visitors from across Australia and the world travel to Victoria to enjoy this unique coastal experience.