

Future of Orbost & District Project (FoOD)

**Call for
Expressions of Interest (EOI)**

Product prototype development as part of early-stage feasibility study for guided and fully supported walk/s

Marlo to Mallacoota Coastal Wilderness Walk

June 2024



Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background.....	3
3. The Opportunity.....	4
4. EOI Information and Assessment Criteria.....	5
5. Sponsoring Organisation.....	7
6. Disclaimer.....	7

1. Introduction

The Future of Orbost and District Project is offering the opportunity to join us in creating a unique experience by developing a fully guided and provisioned walk along the coast between Marlo and Mallacoota.

As part of a staged process we are offering to sponsor an interested tour operator to develop a product prototype/s as part of a feasibility assessment for a premium guided coastal wilderness walk/s between Marlo and Mallacoota'.

2. Background

2.1. Future of Orbost & District Project

The Future of Orbost & District Project is a response to Forestry Transition, and a place-based development initiative, which is financially supported by the Victorian Government

The project is receiving financial support through the Victorian Government's Forestry Transition Program, and it operates within a funding agreement between the Victorian Government and the Orbost and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Strengthening our visitor economy ecosystem to support social, economic, and environmental outcomes is a strategic priority.

Whilst our rich and diverse natural assets are core pillars of our region's visitor economy, we also recognize that there are key gaps. These include accessibility and other experiences. As such, we are looking to activate some unique experiences through our 'hero' tracks and trails.

We work on the principles of collaboration and innovation and are seeking partnerships to specifically activate the Marlo-Mallacoota Wilderness Walk/s.

2.2. Marlo to Mallacoota Coastal Wilderness Walk

The Coastal Wilderness Walk extends along the wild coast of far-east Gippsland in the very far southeast corner of Australia. It includes isolated stretches of coastline, including the Sandpatch Wilderness Area, past the historic Point Hicks Lighthouse, secluded coves and through pristine landscapes teeming with native wildlife.



Stretching for around 140 km, it provides opportunities to experience isolated beaches, spectacular sand dunes, vast estuaries, coastal heathlands and forests, and connections to culture.

Currently the walk is very demanding, requiring walkers to be fully self-contained and with all the necessary skills and preparation to navigate this remote part of the country and its changing conditions.

Whilst there are some vehicular access points, public camping grounds and small settlements along the way, there is currently limited built infrastructure.

Parks Victoria has undertaken a number of feasibility studies to explore potential future investment in infrastructure, however this remains uncertain at this stage.

More information is also available here-:

- <https://www.mapsbookstravelguides.com.au/walking-the-wilderness-coast/>
- <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/croajingolong-national-park/things-to-do/walk-the-wilderness-coast>
- <https://www.visitgippsland.com.au/do-and-see/outdoor-activities/walking-and-hiking/wilderness-coast-walk>
- <https://www.visiteastgippsland.com.au/things-to-see-a-do/activities/walk-hike/walk-croajingolong-national-park>
- [https://assets.visitgippsland.com.au/documents/Gippsland Track and Trails Feasibility Study 2019.pdf](https://assets.visitgippsland.com.au/documents/Gippsland_Track_and_Trails_Feasibility_Study_2019.pdf)

3. The opportunity

We're calling on experienced and/or aspiring operators – who love our place as much as we do! The Future of Orbost and District Project is offering the opportunity to create a unique experience by developing a fully guided and provisioned walk along the coast between Marlo and Mallacoota. We aim to create an exceptional all visitor experience exploring some of Australia's most remote and breathtaking rugged coastlines. We're inviting you to work with us to activate this iconic trail.

3.1. Developing a prototype for supporting early-stage feasibility

We are offering to sponsor an interested tour operator (or partnership) in developing a product prototype/s as part of a feasibility assessment for a premium guided coastal wilderness walk/s between Marlo and Mallacoota'. The product prototype and feasibility assessment would need to include, but not be limited to-:

1. specifications on all elements of the walk/s, including but not limited to-:
 1. Start and end points
 2. Number of people participating in walk/s
 3. Number of days/nights
 4. Number of hours walking each day
 5. Special features/experiences for each day of the walk/s
 6. Accommodation types (must be dismantlable such as glamping tents)
 7. Meals
 8. Any vehicle transfers;
 9. Logistics for bringing in temporary accommodation, food, water, etc
 10. Logistics for navigating any river/estuary crossings, etc

11. Ideal time/s of year to operate walk/s
12. Other;
2. risk management;
3. target customer/market;
4. any partnerships required to deliver the walk/s;
5. estimated cost of delivering the walk/s;
6. recommended price points for the walk/s in the market.

Please note, 'walk/s' - that is singular plural and - is used here as the successful party/ies need to consider whether covering the entire Marlo to Mallacoota distance is feasible and/or whether it might need to be broken down into a series of walks and/or sections of the entire walk with vehicle transfers.

3.2. Working collaboratively to support shared benefit

Given our collaborative ethos and objective to support shared benefit, ideally the work will be undertaken through a partnership (i.e., a local business which might be interested in the on-ground delivery of the walk/s and a business with a strong footprint in the premium guided walking tour sector). We therefore encourage a partnership approach, and depending on who expresses interest, we may reserve the right to do some 'matchmaking'!

We are offering a sponsorship of up to \$5,000 to support this work. This is on the assumption that we are supporting what will become a viable commercial opportunity. Further sponsorship is expected to be available to support an actual pilot, should a commercial opportunity emerge as viable, but need further 'testing'.

No further financial support will be provided to cover any expenses associated with the development of the product prototype.

A sponsorship payment will be dependent on the final delivery and acceptance of the product prototype in accordance with the requirements of 3.1.

We expect that product prototype development can be undertaken through a combination of desktop research, site visits and advice/input from locals. Members of our Visitor Economy Working Group will be on hand to also provide input, and membership of this group includes:-

- community members
- local businesses
- representatives of Parks Victoria, East Gippsland Shire Council and other arms of government/agencies, East Gippsland Marketing, and Destination Gippsland.

As most of this walk is in national park, Parks Victoria is a key stakeholder and working with us on this.

4. EOI Information and Evaluation Criteria

4.1. EOI Information

4.1.1. EOI process

This is a simple single stage Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

Respondents will submit and be assessed based on their-:

1. genuine interest in delivering the work/s into the future (40%);
2. the experience and credentials they bring (40%);
3. an expected timeline and schedule of activities to complete the work (10%);
4. how the sponsorship offering would be used and support product prototype development (10%).

The assessment weighting is included for each element of the EOI process in the above.

We are expecting succinct responses to the above.

4.1.2. EOI submission

All respondents must-:

- address the four points described in section 4.1.1;
- provide their business details-:
 - registered business name,
 - ABN
 - registered business address
 - Contact details – including name and role of key contact person, eMail, phone number, website (if relevant)

Respondents may also submit additional attachments (e.g., PDF document) to support their proposal.

All responses are to be submitted via project@orbostregion.com.au before **4.00pm on 12th July 2024**.

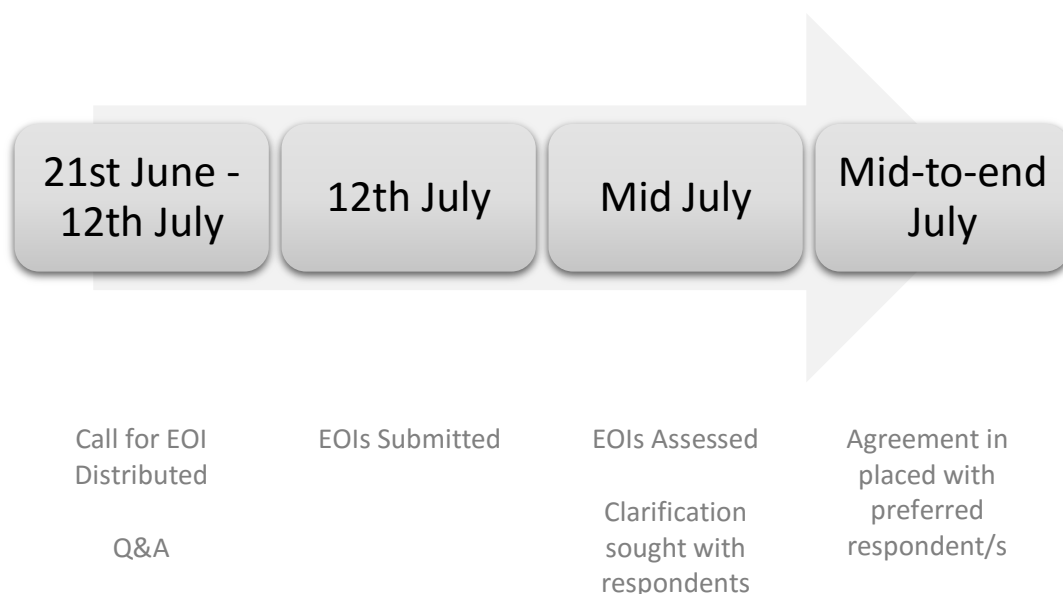
4.1.3. EOI enquiries

EOI enquiries can be directed to the Future of Orbost & District Project Management Lead, Dr Nicola Watts at project@orbostregion.com.au or 0408 351 475.

Any questions received in relation to the EOI will be compiled into a Questions & Answers (Q&A) addendum and circulated to interested parties.

Any interested parties are therefore encouraged to register their interest early via project@orbostregion.com.au, so they can receive any additional Q&A addendums in a timely manner prior to submitting a response.

4.1.4. EOI timeline



Note this process and associated timelines are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Future of Orbest & District Project.

5. Sponsoring organisation

The Future of Orbest and District Project is not a legally incorporated entity and is auspiced by the Orbest and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A sponsorship agreement between the successful respondent will be with:-

Orbest and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ABN: 43 670 301 856
PO Box 558, Orbest 3888

6. Disclaimer

Respondents must make their own independent enquiries in relation to their expression of interest (EOI), and what might be required to deliver the prototype product.

This EOI is intended to provide background information.

All information given to respondents and ultimately the proponent/s by the Future of Orbest & District project (FoOD) and its auspice body – the Orbest Chamber of Commerce and Industry or its respective officers or agents will be given on an ‘all care and no responsibility’ basis.

The successful respondent will also need to accept full responsibility for any legal or regulatory obligations undertaken as part of the product prototype development – particularly workplace health and safety considerations associated with field trips.

Respondents acknowledge and agree that the submission of an EOI does not create a contract.

By submitting an EOI, the Respondent agrees, without qualifications, to have acknowledged and accepted this.