

## ***Fear for "ecological disaster" on Great Ocean Road if toxic waste outfall goes ahead***

Clean Ocean Foundation has warned of dire economic and environmental consequences if a planned Warrnambool Sewage Treatment Plant expansion goes ahead in its current form.

On 29 July 2021, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) issued a Development Licence for the expansion project. A last-minute decision to extend the outfall has alarmed environmentalists who believe the move will see an increase in industrial facilities using the domestic system to dispose of their waste off the Great Ocean Road.

Clean Ocean Foundation CEO, John Gemmill, said: "Many of those familiar with the problems of the Wannon Water proposal were both shocked and disappointed by the approval. After taking some time to consider our option, we at Clean Ocean Foundation feel we have been left with no choice but to vigorously oppose this bad decision that sets such a troubling precedent."

Clean Ocean Foundation says the expansion would be an ecological disaster that puts at risk Southern right whales, Little Penguin colonies, marine life, the fishing, rock lobster and abalone diving industries, recreation, and Great Ocean Road tourism. They're calling for more responsible onshore treatment options to be considered.

After the EPA grant of a license to Wannon Water to authorise a deep-water ocean outfall off the coastline of Warrnambool, Clean Ocean Foundation has subsequently issued legal proceedings in the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to challenge and overturn the decision.

This will be one of the first challenges brought under the new state environmental legislation, that came into force 1st July 2021. It will seek to overturn the decision approving dumping poor quality waste via ocean outfall based on the risk to the marine environment and recreational users when other more responsible onshore treatment options exist.

Red tides are related to algae blooms and often indicate excessive pollution. The colour also symbolises the danger posed to humanity and our marine environment if we continue to dump waste in our oceans to make a profit.

A social media and fundraising campaign "Stop the Red Tide" is underway.

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More info: [stoptheredtide.com](http://stoptheredtide.com)

Facebook: [stoptheredtide](https://www.facebook.com/stoptheredtide)

Instagram: [stoptheredtide](https://www.instagram.com/stoptheredtide)

Fundraising: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tstr6s-stop-the-red-tide>

Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/epa-and-wannon-water-stop-the-red-tide>

Background material: <https://www.cleanocean.org/about-us.html>

