

EAST GIPPSLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022-2032



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land, the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people and their enduring relationship with country. The people of the rivers and the hills have walked these lands for thousands of years as well as today, and we pay respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Council aspires to strengthen our partnerships and supports Aboriginal participation in management processes for land and natural resources. We recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision making now and in the future.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE



It is my pleasure to introduce the East Gippsland Economic Development Strategy 2022-2023 prepared by East Gippsland Shire Council in conjunction with SGS Economics and Planning.

East Gippslanders are no strangers to adversity however the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfire, compounding impacts of prolonged drought, COVID-19 and current industry transition have driven a need to re-shape our focus and approach to economic recovery, building business resilience, growing shire-wide prosperity for our communities and to reinforce the strong message that we are open for business.

Just as our Community Plan was developed through extensive consultation, our Economic Development Strategy has been formulated through detailed research and analysis of the region and incorporated a co-design process of engagement with both internal and external stakeholders. It has been built on deep consultation and, going forward, it will be about collaboration and shared ownership.

The East Gippsland Shire's Gross Regional Product (GRP) is estimated at \$2.66 billion, generated by around 4,400 local businesses and 16,539 workers.

This ten-year Economic Development Strategy builds on the vision shared by Council and our community for a region that enjoys a sustainable and prosperous economy, as outlined in the East Gippsland Community Vision 2040. It aims to enhance our focus on the priorities that support our regional business community while also ensuring we are properly prepared to welcome new contributors as part of our long-term pursuit of innovation, adaptation, and economic sustainability.

It points to the challenges to be faced by our region over the next decades, with an ageing population, pressures on as well as the need to create valuable local jobs for residents to build a more diverse, sustainable and dynamic economy.

In addition to the traditional agricultural and manufacturing industries which underpin our existing local economy, East Gippsland continues to benefit from a vibrant and growing tourism sector and major infrastructure projects such as the water augmentation of the South Bairnsdale Industrial Park and ever-expanding improvements to digital connectivity present a wealth of opportunities for the further growth and sustainable development of our region.

Strategy signals an exciting time for East Gippsland, providing clarity to our shared vision for a sustainable and prosperous economy as we look to future horizons as a collective.

The strategy will direct work already set out in existing policies, management plans, strategies and action plans related to ecological economics.

Our primary goals are to build on East Gippsland's primary industries to grow opportunity for current and future generations and see our region recognised as Victoria's premier destination to live, work and play.

But we can't do it alone. This strategy is about realising our collective aspirations so I hope you will join us as we work towards our 2032 goals for an ecological sustainable economy.

Your support and participation will be key to our success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Reeves'.

Councillor Mark Reeves, Mayor, East Gippsland Shire Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

East Gippsland has considerable opportunities for growth in economic prosperity based around both strong existing industries such as agriculture, tourism and hospitality and health care services, as well as growth and maturation of emerging industries such as arts, culture and heritage and education. In addition, leveraging niche outcomes from traditional strengths i.e. specialised food processing, niche tourism sectors and high-tech manufacturing will further strengthen the economy.

The Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032 builds on East Gippsland's Community Vision 2040, it is the key regional economic policy document aimed to achieve high levels of economic prosperity for our region. Inclusive economic prosperity is a critical enabler of the quality of life we desire in East Gippsland and a range of community outcomes.

The Strategy outlines East Gippsland Shire Council's role under nine (9) Focus Areas.

The objectives for each of the Focus Areas are designed to work toward the East Gippsland Community Vision 2040 and demonstrate the strategic direction and contribution of Council.

Implementation requires collaboration and shared ownership. Council sought assistance from SGS Economics to undertake the development of the Strategy using a co-design process engaging two focus groups, one group focused on community wealth and the second group focussed on traditional economic wealth drivers. The process also included 27 stakeholder interviews, and a co-design forum attended by 50 participants from various industries and interest areas.

The Strategy has been developed to address challenges and harness opportunities across the municipality. It also demonstrates alignment with the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).

Focus Areas are the areas that have been deemed to be of most influence in meeting the aims and targets of the Strategy. Either as strengths to build on, or as areas for improvement to enable or sustain economic prosperity.

These initial focus areas were then confirmed, expanded and then prioritised in a community co-design forum. The 9 focus areas are:

1. Fostering business
2. A high value and sustainable food and fibre sector
3. A unique and compelling tourist destination
4. An economy for young and future generations
5. Digital skills and connections
6. Arts, culture and heritage
7. Attractive place to live
8. Climate action leaders; and
9. A circular economy.

Each Focus Area is further defined by several strategies that will help us to move towards delivering on the vision.

Progress in delivering on the strategic outcomes will be reported to both Council and the community periodically.

A complementary Council Action Plan has also been developed to ensure guidance for Council planning.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

East Gippsland Shire Council led the development of the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032 for its community.

There are two primary outputs included in the Strategy.

Firstly, an overarching Economic Development Strategy for East Gippsland, and secondly a Four-Year Action Plan for the Shire.

The Strategy reflects the Shire's robust economic drivers, both current and prospective, and acts as a spontaneous co-ordinator of the economic development efforts of a range of stakeholders inside and outside of Council. This product takes a relatively long-term perspective, that is, 10 years.

The Four-Year Action Plan, (Addendum to the Strategy) has a sharper focus on Council's investment, planning, facilitation, and marketing activities.

Approach to the task

A nuanced understanding of local economic development was required beyond the so-called tried and true models of the past decade. Economic development in East Gippsland can, and should be about attracting globally oriented firms, but it also has to be inclusive and cross-sectoral. It must build and sustain grassroots business strength and develop strong local supply chains locking wealth into the Shire.

At the core of the project was a spine of stakeholder involvement. The aim was to genuinely engage stakeholders in East Gippsland's economic future. Groups not ordinarily involved in these conversations were engaged deliberately to ensure the diversity of insights and in recognition that economic development needs to benefit the whole community.

Co-design is an important policy development process that is used extensively by government and industry. To co-design means to design in a collaborative way with key stakeholders.

Co-design has two benefits:

- » Firstly, it leads to crucial stakeholders being involved in a deep and meaningful way to shape the East Gippsland Economic Strategy with Council while it is being drafted, not as reviewers of a finished document.
- » Secondly, co-design acknowledges that Council is an enabler but is not equipped to implement all the actions needed to transform East Gippsland's economy into the future. Council needs partners and the energy of relevant government and industry partners to develop and implement this strategy. The co-design process builds these essential partnerships.

The Strategy is built upon the information gleaned from a co-design forum held in the Shire in October 2021, with over 50 local groups, businesses and individuals who will have a role to play the future of the economy. Participants identified the policy priorities to best meet Council's aim to create *"A thriving and diverse economy that attracts investment and generates inclusive local employment"*, Council Plan.

Other inputs in drafting this strategy include a background economic analysis on the drivers, enablers and sustainers of economic development, including 25 direct stakeholder interviews. Two focus groups were also heavily involved in the drafting process.

The nominated targets and focus areas have been aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), ensuring that the strategy is multifaceted and recognises the inter-relationships in the drivers of sustainable development and consistent with best practice globally.

The strategy that emerged from this process has the hallmarks of rigorous economic analysis but also carries a clear licence from stakeholders. The aim was to generate a strategy and action plan that are both innovative and practical and deliver priorities for the short, medium and long-term that are targeted, realistic and achievable. Moreover, it will be a strategy that Council can drive with confidence, knowing that stakeholders have been in the room during its development.

Background and Purpose

Council's strategic planning framework shows how Our Community Vision 2040 will be delivered through the Council Plan, the Budget and other Council Plans and Strategies.

The Council Plan outlines the strategic agenda for Council during its term that have a dynamic relationship with mandated plans, (i.e. Municipal Strategic Statement / Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) and other major Strategies such as the Economic Development Strategy and Action plan.

How the strategic plans fit together

In developing this Strategy, we have drawn heavily from the community engagement undertaken to inform the Council Plan 2021-2025, the Community Vision 2040, Place Plans and Community Recovery Committee plans.

Strategic Objective 4 of the Council Plan is: *"A thriving and diverse economy that attracts investment and generates inclusive local employment"*.

To deliver the overall Council Plan, Council has three key strategies themed around the triple bottom line principles of sustainable development:

1. Environmental Sustainability Strategy – 10-year horizon;
2. Economic Development Strategy – 10-year horizon; and
3. Health and Wellbeing Strategy – 4-year horizon.

These Strategies are community-facing and set Council's strategic direction for a diverse range of services and support the work of external agencies and our community.

The interdependence between these three Strategies is recognised, they are important tools for delivering the Community Vision.



Whilst there may be some similarities between the goals of these three Strategies, the actions and measures will be tailored to the sustainable development theme addressed by each. These Strategies have been developed to ensure they complement each other.

Each goal has several strategies and targets that sit behind it. Recognising this is a high-level Strategy, four-year action plans will be developed to guide implementation.

THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Economic development typically refers to growing a local economy. This means growth in economic activity such as more exports of local produce or manufactured products, or more visitors spending money on tourist accommodation.

Growth, in turn, allows businesses to invest in new equipment, hire more people and pay higher wages. Greater economic activity also means higher government revenues and more money to spend on more and better-quality services for the community.

Economic development enables a higher standard of living for people in East Gippsland.

The East Gippsland Shire's Gross Regional Product (GRP) is estimated at \$2.66 billion, generated by around 4,400 local businesses and 16,539 workers.

While East Gippsland is well known for its agricultural production and natural resources, health care and education also make considerable GRP contributions. Manufacturing, construction and retail trade also make significant contributions to economic value-added.

Exports are a major player in economic performance and prosperity.

Exports refer to products or services traded to anyone outside of East Gippsland, to the rest of Victoria, Australia or internationally. This is 'new' money for the Shire. Income injected into the local economy creates a multiplier effect as exporting firms draw on local suppliers and workers to meet the demand from external customers.

East Gippsland's largest industries in terms of export value are agriculture, forestry and fishing, and manufacturing, followed by accommodation and food services (tourism).

A core aim for economic development is to increase the value of exports while reducing leakages of money back out of the Shire. Leakages occur when businesses and residents import goods and services from outside the Shire, and this dampens the multiplier effect.

East Gippsland currently sources \$1.4 billion worth of imports per annum from outside the LGA. Therefore, a small reduction in leakages would trap significant value in the local economy.

Economic growth has been an issue for East Gippsland over recent times.

East Gippsland has been hit by a series of shocks to the economy, including drought, the closure of the native timber industry, the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires and COVID-19, alongside broader trends of restructuring in the Australian economy impacting employment in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Understanding how well a local economy functions also goes beyond gross domestic product (GDP) growth measures and the number of jobs.

A well-functioning economy also needs to include a just distribution of wealth and opportunity across all communities, the provision of life's essentials (such as housing, education, healthcare, a political voice), and must be managed with environmental considerations to allow for a stable climate and healthy ecosystems.

There are areas of significant disadvantage across the Shire, with unemployment in disadvantaged groups and young people a concern. Inclusive economic development needs to respond to these challenges.

At the time of writing, the Gippsland region had the highest rate of youth disengagement of all Victorian regions. Young people in Gippsland are also more likely to be engaged in insecure work in the tourism, retail and hospitality industries.

Businesses are also struggling to find suitable candidates to employ. The workforce participation rate of 49 per cent in 2021 for East Gippsland is also concerning, as it is much lower than the participation rate across Victoria (63%).

The low participation rate shows that many thousands (2,392 since 2014) of people in East Gippsland have left the labour force, indicating a high number of discouraged workers and high number of retirees.

A lack of housing for both key workers and other residents is another economic challenge for the Shire.

The environment and landscapes of East Gippsland are major economic assets that have supported the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors for decades.

The natural assets of the Shire, including its alpine, coastal, and inland lake landscapes continue to be a draw for tourists. This can continue, but work is required to mitigate and adapt to climate change, variability and manage natural hazards. There is opportunity for greater focus on regenerating nature to support economic production and reduce impacts through initiatives to develop a more circular economy, with reduced carbon footprint.

As various industries evolve, change, adapt and grow, the economic make-up of the Shire and how businesses operate will continue to change. Digital disruption, technology adaptation, hybrid work combining time in the office with remote work, climate change, and many more macro trends will continue to provide challenges and opportunities to the local economy. The local economy needs to adapt and adjust to these future movements in a flexible and dynamic manner.

The changes in the economy necessitate planning for an economy for the 21st century and beyond. While the economy's structure is grounded in the dominant industries of the mid-twentieth century, notably primary production and tourism, it is important that planning for the next phase build on inherent strengths and build towards opportunities that breathe life into these industries and the economy.

This requires new thinking and consideration of digital technology, the arts and creativity, the impact of climate change and renewed economic models, including community wealth building and circular economy. Such a paradigm shift requires embedding social compacts and environmental stewardship at the core of economic value.

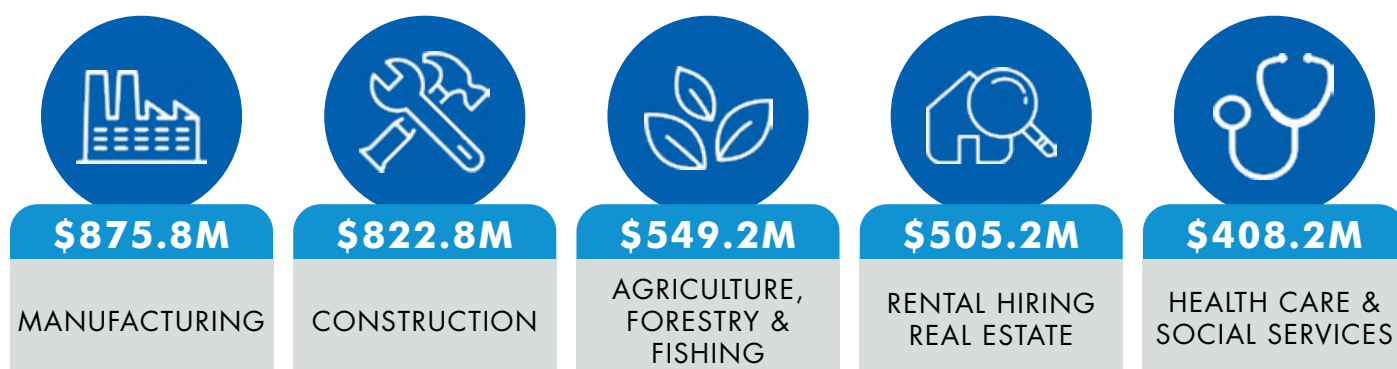
THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Local economy

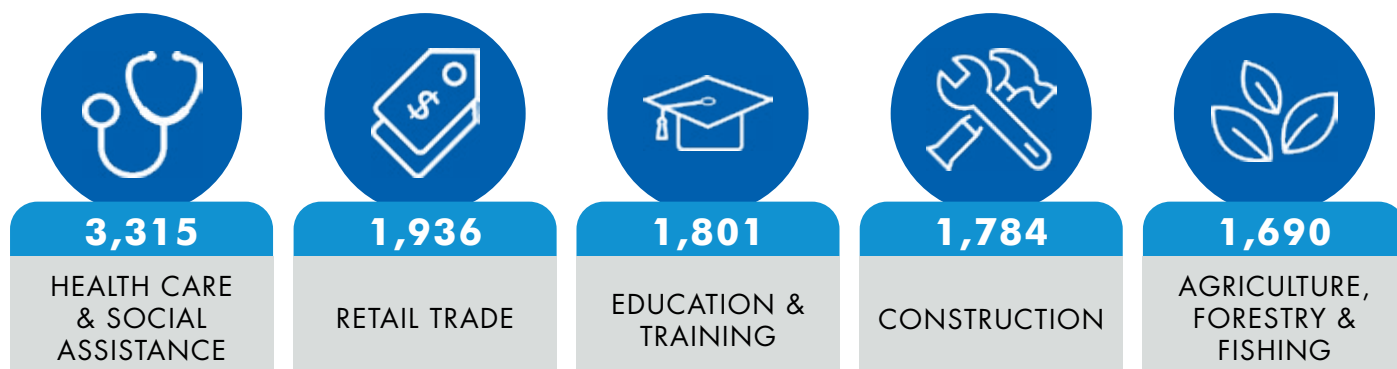


Top 5 sectors

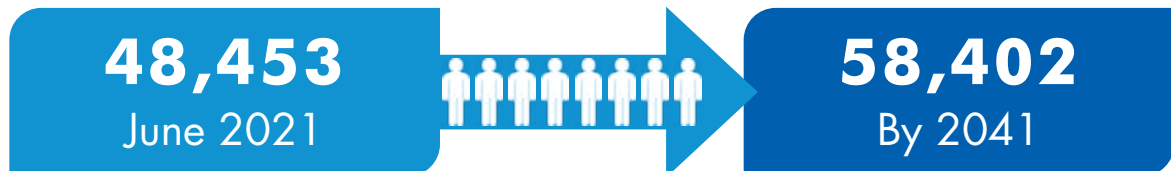
Economic Contribution



Employment (number of jobs)



East Gippsland population



Workforce

Unemployment rate is

5.3%

as at June 2022



A decrease of

1.6%

from 2021



Total workforce

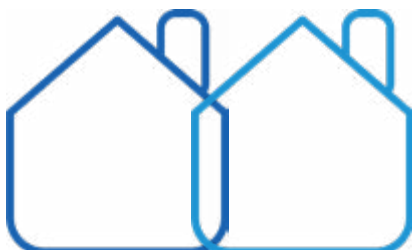


Live and work
in
East Gippsland



Live in
East Gippsland
work elsewhere

Housing affordability East Gippsland (June 2022)



Median House Price \$555,500

Median Unit Price \$379,000

Tourism

2021-2022

**\$211.8
million**

contribution
to GRP

**\$90.7M
(3.8%)**

total value added
by Tourism to the
economy



Domestic Overnight
Visitors

749,000

An increase of

14.1%

on the previous year

Domestic Daytrip
Visitors

488,000

An increase of

15.0%

on the previous year



Total domestic
visitors to the region

2.5M

An increase of

11.0%

on the previous year

The Tourism sector
contributes

1,256 jobs

Which is

6.7%

of total employment

STAKEHOLDER SENTIMENT

The local community and business (big and small) are the heart and soul of the local economy.

Community and businesses provided valuable input into developing this Strategy through approximately 30 face-to-face interviews, focus group workshops and a community co-design forum.

A broad approach to consider how an economy can be developed was discussed with stakeholders. Growing an economy requires identifying and supporting growth and emerging industries.

Still, a host of other factors are critical to enabling economic development and sustaining it for ongoing prosperity and an inclusive economy that meets the needs of local residents.

To develop economic policy, it is paramount to understand what drives the economy, how the development of driver industries is enabled, and how economic development will be sustained for the long term.

Economic drivers are the regionally or world competitive sectors that draw export income into East Gippsland. Stakeholders identified food growing and production as the Shire's biggest industrial asset, with many opportunities available to the Shire for development.

Tourism was also regarded as a strength. Manufacturing, health care, education, retail, and hospitality were also regarded as providing economic value.

Forestry is a traditional strength but is contracting. How forest resources are used can provide another economic driver.

East Gippsland's natural environment and liveability were seen as the leading assets in terms of what enables economic development.

There is work to be done to improve transport infrastructure, digital technology, the supply of housing and industrial land and protect land for agricultural production.

The education system and pathways for young people were also regarded as needing support and improvement, as does the support offered to businesses to invest and innovate.

Stakeholders involved in the consultation process identified that the most evident weakness in the East Gippsland economy as undersupply of a skilled, engaged workforce for businesses to tap into.

Looking at what will sustain economic development, the community was regarded as a critical asset. But there is a definite need to improve the outcomes from economic development.

These outcomes include higher quality jobs with good wages, improved outcomes for East Gippsland's Aboriginal communities, and the economy's localisation to trap more wealth in East Gippsland.

Climate change, variability and environmental degradation pose significant risks to ongoing economic prosperity. Still, many stakeholders also reported the opportunities they saw from the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

The table below outlines the most promising opportunities for economic development and the blockers as identified by stakeholders in the local economy.

Table 1: Opportunities for Improvement as identified by stakeholders (ranked by most common response)

Strengths for economic development	Opportunities for improvement
<p>Leveraging the sustainable use of natural assets;</p> <p>Attract new residents with skills, high discretionary spending habits and a desire for regional living;</p> <p>Strengthen the visitor and events offering;</p> <p>Market and promote the region and create a unique identity differentiated from other regions;</p> <p>Opportunity to expand and improve planning processes and strategy, regulation, and land management to support economic development;</p> <p>Developing the local food and fibre sector;</p> <p>Increasing local skills and training opportunities;</p> <p>A leader in climate change adaptation and mitigation and environmental stewardship;</p> <p>Developing business relationships and a culture of mentoring and innovation;</p> <p>East Gippsland as region of locally and regionally connected, vibrant and unique small towns;</p> <p>Developing local arts, cultural and heritage assets;</p> <p>Digital skills and processes and productivity improvements in manufacturing and agriculture;</p> <p>Health and aged care;</p> <p>Develop new opportunities in emerging and non-traditional industries;</p> <p>Develop local renewable energy and power grids;</p> <p>Transport and logistics infrastructure upgrades to improve connectivity to the rest of Victoria and NSW;</p> <p>Leveraging local industry strengths for growth and diversification;</p> <p>Shortening supply chains and value-adding to more local produce;</p> <p>Make East Gippsland more open and welcoming to new opportunities and investment;</p> <p>Work with Traditional Owners to develop their own economic development efforts; and</p> <p>Develop circular economy processes within East Gippsland's industries.</p>	<p>There are worker shortages of all skill levels making it hard for businesses to fill positions;</p> <p>The availability of housing for all workers (skilled, unskilled, seasonal);</p> <p>There can be some avoidance of change and innovation and a shortage of business capacity to grasp opportunities;</p> <p>Digital connectivity blackspots;</p> <p>Trialling digital skills in some segments of the business community;</p> <p>Fragmented industry and business development efforts and lack of a unified vision;</p> <p>Transport and logistics infrastructure gaps;</p> <p>Alternative models of higher education and vocational education;</p> <p>The distance from Melbourne and between towns;</p> <p>Limited industrial land in some towns;</p> <p>A lack of Council and community resources to drive change;</p> <p>There are increasing costs of doing business, notably the cost of rental, insurance and materials. Energy costs also a worry for some businesses;</p> <p>The seasonality of key industries;</p> <p>Natural hazards and climate change;</p> <p>Population, farmer and business owner aging; and</p> <p>Lack of accommodation and visitor facilities.</p>

VISION AND AIMS

The community's vision for East Gippsland is:

"In 2040 our people, place, environment, and economy will be connected, in balance and resilient. Our unique and diverse communities will be accessible, inclusive, well connected and safe. We will value and care for each other and our natural environment. Our economy will support existing and emerging industries by being agile, innovative, and sustainable".

East Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2021-2025

The community vision clearly calls for an economy that is resilient and provides benefits for local people. Local business strength, innovation and sustainability are other aims.

Therefore, growing the East Gippsland economy will go beyond simply trying to achieve better numbers in measures such as gross domestic product growth and the number of jobs.

A commitment to inclusive economic outcomes means attention not only to the quantity of economic growth and its impact on average living standards, but also to the distribution of that growth among residents. Inclusive economic growth underpins the community outcomes we value.

Economic development efforts will emphasise fostering the existing business community, focusing on the importance of place and growth from within, building on regional strengths. Economic development will extend to job quality, training and career pathways, innovation, economic inclusivity and local wealth building. This will ensure long-term, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Based on the community vision, the Council Plan and community contributions in co-design, the ten-year aims for economic development in East Gippsland are:

- » Be **B**old
- » Be **O**pen and welcoming
- » Deliver **U**niversal economic outcomes
- » Generate **N**ew income-earning opportunities
- » Be **C**ollaborative to deliver; and
- » Think **E**cologically to protect and enhance the environment.

The East Gippsland economy has had a challenging decade, but the above aims strive to **B.O.U.N.C.E** the East Gippsland economy out of recovery into a productive and exciting new decade.

The next phase of East Gippsland's economy must be built on its inherent strengths.

It must be bold and open to developing opportunities to breathe new life into the economy and generate new income and opportunities.

This also requires a move towards a far more holistic conceptualisation of a universal, collaborative, and ecological economy.

Table 2. East Gippsland B.O.U.N.C.E Aims and Key Targets

Bold

The East Gippsland community will strive for economic transformation developing an innovative, creative, prosperous and sustainable regional economy.

2031 Target:

East Gippsland will move into the top half of Victoria LGAs on GRP per capita by 2031 (currently in the bottom third)

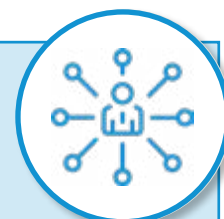


Open

The Council and the community will be welcoming and supportive of new ideas, businesses, and residents. We will be well connected to regional, national, and international markets physically and digitally.

2031 Target:

The number of locally owned SMEs with a turnover over \$200k will increase from 1,781 to 2,390 (at 3% p.a.), and annual inward investment aligning with the objectives of the strategy will increase year-on-year



Universal

The economy of East Gippsland will support a diverse range of local businesses and good employment opportunities for all, underpinning community wellbeing.

2031 Target:

The share of jobs that are full-time and provide above-average incomes against national benchmarks will increase year-on-year, and the number of towns/districts in the 20% most socio-economic disadvantaged in Victoria (as measured by ABS's SEIFA index) will fall from 50 out 123 areas in East Gippsland at present to only 10





New income opportunities

East Gippsland will foster entrepreneurship and innovation in new and existing industries creating new export products and services to inject new income into the local economy

2031 Target:

Exports increases from \$1.7 billion per annum to \$2.2 billion (at 3% p.a.)



Collaborative

Economic transformation will be achieved by community, government and business stakeholders working together to drive economic development. The Economic Strategy will tie in with other strategies, including those focusing on health and well-being, the environment, industry and the arts, in a reinforcing way.

2031 Target:

Increasing local business to business engagement measured by increasing Local Expenditure from 50.26% to 55% as a percentage of combined Regional Imports and Local Expenditure.



Ecological

East Gippsland will focus on developing a more contemporary world with sustainability at the heart of the economy. Economic growth will be climate-resilient, recognise limits on resource consumption, leverage and regenerate natural assets, and the transition to a low-carbon and circular economy will create local business and employment opportunities

2031 Target:

East Gippsland will grow the number of businesses participating in the circular economy. The volume of organic waste to landfill will reduce by 90%, textile waste to landfill by 50% and other recyclable materials going to landfill by 90%. Annual decline in municipal emissions per dollar of GRP

TARGET ALIGNMENT TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (UNSDGs)

This Strategy recognises that the pursuit of a sustainable economic future requires a holistic understanding of the social, environmental and economic landscapes that underpin regional well-being and prosperity.

To achieve this, the strategy has utilised the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to develop a monitoring program, which will assist in supporting the ongoing assessment of the progress of the region in achieving the priorities and actions outlined in the strategy.

Council's inclusion of the SDGs in planning and reporting is aligned to the Australian Governments formal partnership of the United Nations Global Compact to deliver and measure national performance against the 17 goals.

Future outcome targets have been set, using a range of inter-related indicators of sustainability identified in the UNSDG framework, allowing the Shire to transparently monitor regional development over time.

Although several of the UNSDGs can be aligned to those of economic development, the focus of this strategy is on achieving economic development outcomes, therefore the targets and indicators (see following page) have been drawn from the following two UNSDGs, namely:

» **Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth:**

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

» **Goal 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure:**







Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan include indicators and targets aligned to a range of other SDGs and these should be considered together.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Figure 1: B.O.U.N.C.E goals aligned to the UNSDGs

<p>Bold</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG target 8.2): Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors. » Indicator: The number of locally owned SMEs with a turnover over \$50k will increase from 3,200 to 4,400 (at 3% p.a.), and annual inward investment aligning with the objectives of the strategy will increase year-on-year. 	<p>Open</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG target 9.1): Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all. » Indicator: The number of locally owned SMEs with a turnover over \$50k will increase from 3,200 to 4,400 (at 3% p.a.), and annual inward investment aligning with the objectives of the strategy will increase year-on-year.
<p>Universal</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG target 8.5): By 2031, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value. » Indicator: The share of jobs that are full-time and provide above-average incomes against national benchmarks will increase year-on-year, and the number of towns/districts in the 20% most socio-economic disadvantaged in Victoria (as measured by ABS's SEIFA index) will fall from 50 out 123 areas in East Gippsland at present to only 10. 	<p>New income</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG 9.2): Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product. » Indicator: Exports increases from \$1.6 billion per annum to \$2.2 billion (at 3% p.a.).
<p>Collaborative</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG 17.16): Enhance multi-stakeholder partnership for SD, that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SD goals. » Indicator: Increasing local business to business engagement measured be increasing Local Expenditure from 50.26% to 55% as a percentage of combined Regional Imports and Local Expenditure. 	<p>Ecological</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Target (UNSDG target 8.4): Improve progressively, through 2031, resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and CO2 emissions. » Indicator: East Gippsland will grow the number of businesses participating in the circular economy. The volume of organic waste to landfill will reduce by 90%, textile waste to landfill by 50% and other recyclable materials going to landfill by 90%. Annual decline in municipal emissions per dollar of GRP.

Sustainable and inclusive economic development is core to the Strategy. Between the focus areas, the broad remit for economic development as outlined by the UNSDGs has been captured.










The strategy naturally aligns strongly with goals 8 and 9 on economic growth and industry, innovation and infrastructure.









The strategy also has a focus on environmental performance and outcomes, including SDG's 6,7 & 10-15 which are concerned with environmental sustainability.

The focus areas also touch on social outcomes including health and wellbeing, education, gender equity and addressing inequality (SDGs 1-5).



Table 3: Focus areas and their alignment with the UNSDG framework

UN Sustainable Development Goals	1. Fostering business	2. Food and fibre	3. Tourism	4. An economy for young people	5. Digitally connected	6. Arts, culture, heritage	7. Attractive place to live	8. Climate leaders	9. Circular economy
1 NO POVERTY 									
2 ZERO HUNGER 									
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 									
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 									
5 GENDER EQUALITY 									
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 									
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 									
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 									
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 									

UN Sustainable Development Goals	1. Fostering business	2. Food and fibre	3. Tourism	4. An economy for young people	5. Digitally connected	6. Arts, culture, heritage	7. Attractive place to live	8. Climate leaders	9. Circular economy
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 									
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 									
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 									
13 CLIMATE ACTION 									
14 LIFE BELOW WATER 									
15 LIFE ON LAND 									
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 									
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 									

FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIC INDICATORS

Summary of Focus Areas

Areas of focus are the areas that have been deemed to be of most influence in meeting the aims and targets of the Strategy. Either as strengths to build on, or as areas for improvement to enable or sustain economic prosperity.

A mixed approach was used to identify priority areas of focus for the Strategy to pursue. One workstream provided an evidence-driven list of action areas based on statistical research, policy review, stakeholder interviews and best-practice economic thought.

These initial focus areas were then confirmed, expanded upon and then prioritised in a community co-design forum. The prioritised areas of focus are:

1. Fostering business;
2. A high value and sustainable food and fibre sector;
3. A unique and compelling tourist destination;
4. An economy for young and future generations;
5. Digital skills and connections;
6. Arts, culture and heritage;
7. Attractive place to live;
8. Climate action leaders; and
9. A circular economy.

A 'Three Horizons' approach to economic transformation

Realising the transformative ambitions of the East Gippsland community requires a framework to simultaneously inform both short-term planning and the realisation of long-term aspirations.

The Three Horizons framework provides this structure. Initially developed by McKinsey to structure organisational change, the Three Horizons framework is used here to guide economic development action planning.

The three horizons model identifies three key stages (horizons) of economic maturation.

Horizon One: Consolidate	Where stakeholders in the economy protect and build existing core business and functions.
Horizon Two: Enhance	Where an economy leverages existing core functions to diversify into related functions, supply chains or aligned businesses. These improvements can be thought of as 'organic innovations', building on existing strengths.
Horizon Three: Transform	Where stakeholders contemplate new opportunities that are not currently present but draw on the place's advantages that underpin current functions. The third horizon is where a place seeks to 'reinvent itself'.

It is essential to be active across all three horizons simultaneously while recognising that the scale and timing of benefits will vary.

An exclusive focus on consolidation projects will quickly disappoint many stakeholders as not being visionary enough.

Equally, a strategy with its 'head in the clouds' can also be expected to rapidly lose support and momentum. Applying the Three Horizons framework to the East Gippsland economy provides structure to the continual process of evolution towards transformative change.

The timeline is not necessarily a starting date but instead an outlook of when success can be achieved.

Under each, the 10-year success factors are laid out, as is the economic logic as to why the area of focus is economically advantageous to pursue. A list of community-wide strategies is then listed.

These strategies for the East Gippsland economy are to be pursued by all stakeholders in the East Gippsland economy and work towards achieving the overarching aims and targets listed on the previous page.

The strategies are not intended to provide a complete and detailed future program of works. Instead, they are intended to signpost what should be prioritised if East Gippsland is to move towards the ambitious transformation of the economy.

The strategy should be considered a repositioning of the Shire's future growth and a reference point for what additional work needs to be done to progress the vision and aims. How the Shire Council will directly contribute is captured in a separate four-year action plan.

Strategic Indicators

It is essential that we have short medium- and long-term goals. The BOUNCE targets are an accurate measure of our long-term performance as a region, however there is a need to have more specific measures that can be referenced on shorter or various timeframes and against specific focus areas.

Aligned to the nine Areas of Focus the following are the short- or medium-term indicators that will provide a measure of our progress in moving towards a transformative economy:

- » Council also has a responsibility as the author of this plan to report on its progress. It is important that Council measure the impact and effectiveness of the Strategy.
- » The strategic indicators in this Plan will allow us to measure outcomes, both internal and external.
- » For example, the number of visitors to our region, Council has some influence, but not sole responsibility or control.
- » Council will also review the Action Plan for each financial year to identify our annual activities that support the Plan strategies.

Overall employment	Increase year on year.
Value added by the Agriculture industry	Increase 5% year on year.
Value added by the Tourism industry	Increase 5% year on year.
Population change	Increase year on year.

Source: REMPLAN

Role of Council in Coordinating delivery of this Plan, and Reporting on progress

East Gippsland Shire Council is in a unique position as a driver of Economic Development in East Gippsland.

However, Council does not hold all the cards and in some of the identified Focus Areas, Council is a relatively minor player with other agencies have control of their resources, and Council having a minor role that is largely "Advocacy" based.

Council can undertake coordination actions that will influence the actions of other agencies and bodies in our region.

Council key coordinating role also extends to industry, facilitating and coordinating resources that bring industry together to identify and opportunities and resolve issues.

Council can also harness the collective resources of other partners in the region to deliver outcomes for the Strategy.

Identified in the accompanying Action Plan are several Coordinating Actions that clarify Councils role as the central agency to assist in the delivering of this Economic Development plan.

They are:

1. Establish and maintain an Economic Development Advisory Committee for the life of this Action Plan.
2. Maintain both strong operational and leadership relationships with other agencies impacting economic development in the region. This includes leadership and staff in agencies such as One Gippsland, Regional Development Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, Latrobe Valley Authority, Destination Gippsland, GLaWAC, AusIndustry, Rural Financial Counselling Service, Food and Fibre Gippsland, Agriculture Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (and its agencies), and others as appropriate.
3. Establish partnerships and/or strong working relationships with Business and Tourism Associations and Chambers of Commerce to support their role and their members.
4. Undertake an annual review of the Action Plan, in alignment with the review of the Council Annual Plan, to ensure actions are aligned to other plans and are appropriate to the current environment. Where appropriate, amend or add actions.

FOCUS 1: FOSTERING BUSINESS

Transformational ambition

A business environment that fosters diversity, growth and innovation and East Gippsland is an attractive region for investment



FOCUS 1: FOSTERING BUSINESS

Economic logic

East Gippsland has 3,150 locally registered businesses with a turnover of over \$50,000 per annum (ABS, 2021). The vast majority of these (94%) are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with a turnover between \$50,000 and \$2 million. There are also 27 businesses registered in East Gippsland with a turnover of over \$10 million, who act as vital economic anchors with local supply chains.

Economic development depends upon the skills of these thousands of local business owners and entrepreneurs across the Shire. Therefore, the health of businesses and their ability to grow, employ people, and develop products is of critical importance to the Shire's economic development aspirations.

Much of the desired economic growth can come from positive change in current firms already in the Shire. These businesses can become larger, more innovative, productive or export into new markets.

The emergence of new local firms is also critical. New firms include businesses moving into East Gippsland (aided by business attraction and facilitation), start-ups and new entries borne locally through entrepreneurship, plus social enterprises and community projects. It is also valuable to assist and reduce the loss of existing firms that may not be financially sustainable in their current state.

A focus on local business development is warranted to build an inclusive economy, support local employment, develop local supply chains, and trap wealth into the Shire. Investment attraction activities can complement this but need to target businesses that meet the Strategy's targets.

A broad array of businesses should be supported on their growth journey, from the largest agricultural producer to the high street retailer or local bakery, and the solo entrepreneurs building a business from home, community organisations and artistic endeavours.

There is a role for all stakeholders in East Gippsland's economic future to support local businesses with the skills, knowledge and networks to grow and expand their local operations.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 4.1: Leadership enables economic prosperity, investment, recovery, resilience and growth;
- » 4.3: Council's work with stakeholders fosters entrepreneurship and new business opportunities, particularly with communities facing change;
- » 4.4: Targeted information and streamlined approvals and processes make it easier for business to invest.

Fostering business complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

Businesses must be first supported through the challenging economic times experienced whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the business environment in East Gippsland.

In the third horizon, a business environment is in place that fosters diversity, growth and innovation. East Gippsland is also an attractive region for investment.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
» Expand targeted and innovative initiatives that strengthen and promote business growth and sustainability and recover from COVID-19	» Enhance business networks and foster a culture of collaboration, mentoring and support in the business community and with government » Foster the capacity of local entrepreneurs to innovate and challenge the norm	» Create the conditions where investing in East Gippsland is straightforward and supported by government

Who are the major partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

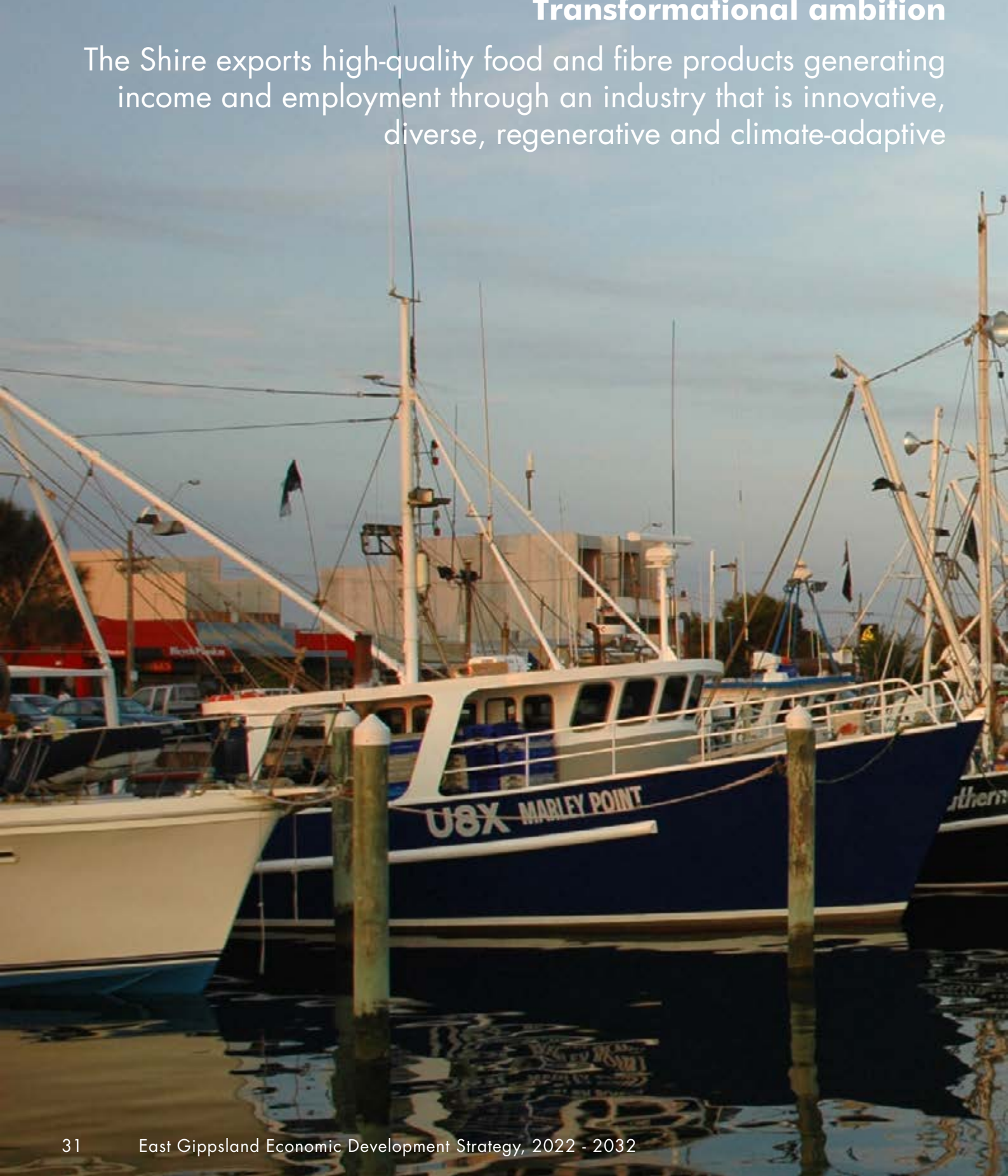
- » State and Commonwealth Government: DJPR, LVA, RDV, Small Business Victoria, AusIndustry, AusTrade

- » Regional organisations: Gippsland Regional Partnership, C4G, LVA;
- » Industry bodies and associations;
- » Chambers of Commerce;
- » Local business leaders;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Innovation leaders: Start-up Gippsland.

Focus 2: A High Value AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR

Transformational ambition

The Shire exports high-quality food and fibre products generating income and employment through an industry that is innovative, diverse, regenerative and climate-adaptive



FOCUS 2: A HIGH VALUE AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FIBRE SECTOR

Economic logic

The Shire has well-established agriculture, forestry, fishing and food processing industries. Almost half of the value of exports sold from the Shire to the rest of Victoria, Australia and internationally are generated by food and fibre products. Though the dairy crisis, drought, the closure of the timber industry and the bushfire have all taken their toll on the industry in recent years.

Exports are a significant player in economic prosperity as they inject 'new' money into the local economy, creating a multiplier effect as exporting firms draw on local suppliers and workers to meet the demand from external customers.

Growth in export earning industries needs to occur to bring new money into the region. The ongoing success of the sector is therefore of critical importance.

The food and fibre sector is built on the region's natural assets. There are opportunities to increase productivity and generate even more value from the same natural resources using technology, improved farming practices like regenerative farming, and improved bio-security measures.

New food and fibre industries need to be nurtured to develop new products, whilst mature industries can continue innovating and developing ideas or markets.

There is also a recognition that an ongoing understanding and support of opportunities for the native timber industry as it undergoes a transition is required.

A critical issue for food and fibre is that these industries rely on the earth's natural systems at direct risk from climate change and climate variability. But the transition to a low-carbon economy also presents opportunities.

The agriculture sector has driven the East Gippsland economy for decades. Innovation, growth, and new industry opportunities can be grasped to drive the economy for decades to come.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 4.6: East Gippsland's natural strengths in agriculture and natural resource-based industries are enhanced to increase value, employment, sustainability and resilience.

A High Value Food and Fibre Sector complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

The assets that support the sector must be consolidated, including the region's land and water supply, whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the sector. In the third horizon, the Shire exports high-quality food and fibre products generating income and employment through an innovative, diverse, regenerative, and climate-adaptive industry.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
» Increase and protect the productivity of agriculture and fishing to generate sources of income from local assets into the future (land, soil, water, energy etc).	» Develop local processing to add value to a greater share of agriculture and fishing products before they leave the Shire to create greater local value; » Explore, research, and develop new food and fibre sub-sectors; » Support a sustainable forestry and timber processing sector; » Implement a unified food brand to support food and fibre exporters and farm-gate tourism. (linking to focus area three).	» The Shire exports high-quality food and fibre products generating income and employment through an industry that is innovative, diverse, regenerative and climate-adaptive.

Who are the major partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » Council Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee;
- » State and Commonwealth Government i.e Agriculture Victoria, Global Victoria, RDV;
- » Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment;
- » Land Managers i.e. DELWP, FFM;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Industry bodies i.e. Food and Fibre Gippsland, Gippsland Agriculture Group;
- » Local business leaders;
- » Water management authorities i.e East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, East Gippsland Water, Southern Rural Water;
- » Education providers i.e. Federation University, TAFE Gippsland; and
- » Landcare.

A photograph of a wooden deck with a railing, situated under a large, light-colored umbrella. The deck is made of wooden planks and has a railing made of wooden posts and horizontal wires. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

FOCUS 3: A UNIQUE AND COMPELLING TOURISM DESTINATION

Transformational ambition

A world-class food, nature and experiential tourism offering that attracts a sustainable supply of visitors.

FOCUS 3: A UNIQUE AND COMPELLING TOURISM DESTINATION

Economic need and benefit

Tourism plays an essential role in the East Gippsland economy.

In 2019, before the pandemic, 6.2 million domestic visits were held in the Gippsland region for a total of 6.36 million visitor nights (Business Victoria, 2021).

In addition, 83,000 international visitors came to Gippsland in 2019. The tourism economy accounts for around 7 per cent of Gippsland's GRP (compared to 4.7 per cent of Australia's GDP). Domestic tourism is the foundation of the tourism sector representing 96 per cent of visitor expenditure in Gippsland before the pandemic.

The attraction of tourists generates income for businesses across many sectors, including accommodation, hospitality, retail, the arts, tours and transport, but also agricultural producers (who may offer on-farm accommodation or cellar door experiences).

East Gippsland has considerable natural tourism assets, including waterways and coastline, bushland reserves, tracks and trails, national parks and alpine areas. The Shire is already attracting good levels of tourism infrastructure investment, including the development of Metung Hot Springs, and local businesses developing new tourism products, events and tours.

The region also has heritage assets that can be utilised to celebrate local heritage and culture. Cultural tourism, food and hospitality are seen as opportunities in the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy.

Recently the tourism sector, including the entertainment and hospitality industries, has seen devastating impacts because of COVID-19. This includes lost visitors, cancelled events for businesses, and loss of employment for individuals. Before expanding the sector for the future, there is a need to support tourism businesses to stabilise and ensure their immediate recovery.

There are also changing consumer demands and trends that need to be incorporated into tourism businesses. One example is East Gippsland tourism operators need to see their offering as a suite of high quality, re-enforcing experiences and relationships. Consumers increasingly expect a unique set of experiences, where price and quality no longer differentiate products apart.

The "visiting friends and relatives" visitor market also needs ongoing monitoring with opportunities identified to further embed this as a reliable source.

The region needs to use partnership to leverage opportunities that will arise from the 2026 Commonwealth Games held in Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Technology has played a hand in this, as consumers have become more readily educated and can search, validate and communicate their preferences online. There is a need to enhance the tourism product and increase brand awareness to grow visitation leveraging this increased use of digital technology.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 4.5: Tourism sector investment is sought in business capability, product development and experience to meet the changing needs of domestic and international markets

A Unique and Compelling Tourism Destination complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

Tourism businesses must be supported in recovery from COVID-19 and bushfires. Existing strengths need to be consolidated (like incorporating arts and heritage into the tourism offer) whilst simultaneously looking at ways to enhance the sector, including developing the product, developing the supporting infrastructure, and implementing the East Gippsland brand.

In the third horizon a world-class food, natural and experiential tourism offer is in place that attracts a sustainable supply of domestic and targeted international visitors who experience all that East Gippsland has to offer.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
» Bring together the unique environmental, cultural, and historical selling points of East Gippsland and support and promote cohesive brand and promote.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enhance tourism industry opportunities on public and private land; » Support development to enable a high-quality visitor experience leveraging East Gippsland's asset; » Support existing operators and new tourism entrepreneurs; » Enhance and develop East Gippsland's unique selling points by fostering tourism industry entrepreneurs; » Develop public tourist infrastructure (both physical and digital) to enable a high-quality visitor experience; » Accelerate the development of visitor itineraries in an authentic visitor package. 	» A world-class food, natural and experiential tourism offer that attracts a sustainable supply of domestic and international visitors

Who are the major partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. Parks Vic, Creative Victoria, TEPP;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;

- » Industry bodies i.e. EGMI & DG;
- » Local tourism associations;
- » Local business and leaders.



FOCUS 4: AN ECONOMY FOR YOUNG AND FUTURE GENERATIONS



FOCUS 4: AN ECONOMY FOR YOUNG AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Economic need and benefit

Youth unemployment and disengagement are higher in East Gippsland than state and national rates. This means that many young people are neither working nor studying.

Young people in East Gippsland are also likely to be engaged in insecure work in the tourism, retail and hospitality industries, which have been impacted heavily by the summer bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Young people are navigating a period of testing social and economic change due to the interconnected challenges posed by globalisation, technology, climate change, cost of living pressures, declining home ownership rates and demographic change.

At the same time, businesses report difficulties in finding staff. If not resolved, worker shortages will stymie economic and businesses development. Extending workforce and training opportunities to young and disadvantaged groups increases the size of the labour market and creates new entrepreneurial talent. There are lots of possible opportunities in East Gippsland. The challenge is linking up the ambitions and aims of young residents with the available opportunities.

Many organisations are doing this work. But there is an opportunity for a concerted effort by Council, businesses and community members to partner with young people and develop an economy for the future.

An economy that aligns with young people's values and aspirations will pay economic dividends over time if disengagement and youth unemployment can be reduced. This will also provide a pipeline of enthusiastic and skilled workers for East Gippsland's growing industries.

Business leaders are critical in providing employment, mentoring, and training opportunities.

There are also opportunities to grow and improve the quality of East Gippsland's educational assets and tailor education programs to emerging industries and develop employment pathways for students.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 4.2 Collaboration amongst key partners is facilitated to improve pathways for education and skills training

An Economy for Young and Future Generations complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

It is important that the issues and barriers leading to high youth unemployment and workforce shortages are understood, as well as what the industries of the future will be. Simultaneously, efforts to enhance the experience for young people in the economy need to be pursued. In the transform horizon young people are inspired to come or stay in East Gippsland through an array of exciting educational and work opportunities in an economy that is future focussed.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Engage with young people, youth organisations, businesses and social enterprises to understand and address barriers to training and employment; » Identify the industries of the future aligned with the ambitions of young people, and begin the work of developing those areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Support the development of education and employment pathways in community, industry, Council and partner agencies (as per the EG Framework for Well Placed for Well-being); » Support tertiary and vocational education opportunities (that reach all parts of the Shire) to prepare individuals with requisite education and training to find/retain good and promising jobs in the industries of the future; » Develop locally relevant and exciting tertiary and vocational education opportunities (that reach all parts of the Shire) to prepare individuals with requisite education and training to find/retain good and promising jobs in the industries of the future or be an entrepreneur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Young people are inspired to come or stay in East Gippsland through an array of exciting educational and work opportunities in an economy that is future focussed.

Who are the major partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. Department of Education and Training, LaunchVic;
- » Commonwealth Government i.e Department of Education, Skills and Employment;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Secondary Schools;
- » TAFE Gippsland and registered training organisations, Universities (Federation University);
- » Industry bodies;
- » Local business leaders;
- » GELLEN;
- » Community groups; and
- » Health and community services.

FOCUS 5: DIGITAL SKILLS AND CONNECTIONS

Transformational ambition

East Gippsland's businesses, industries and residents utilise digital technology, processes, and skills to fully participate in national and global markets



FOCUS 5: DIGITAL SKILLS AND CONNECTIONS

Economic need and benefit

The digital infrastructure in East Gippsland was consistently identified by the community and businesses as an impediment to business and economic development. Issues include slow internet speeds, telecommunication black spots and gaps in digital skills. The Shire is very large geographically and the population small, so many people and businesses are digitally isolated.

East Gippsland's businesses need to be supported and empowered to access the technology and digital skills required to enable growth. Good digital connectivity should be baseline infrastructure in all towns and areas of the Shire to support businesses.

This is critical to tourism and food and fibre businesses who often operate in remote areas. Good connectivity also provides safe communication channels in emergencies and supports online education to boost skills.

At a more advanced level, Australian businesses (including manufacturing and agriculture) are transitioning towards 'Industry 4.0'. This is characterised by advancing digital technology in production and a shift towards virtual business, e-commerce and other online innovations. Local businesses will need to transition to more advanced methods and use technology to boost productivity to remain or become globally competitive.

There is also an opportunity to grow the economy in East Gippsland by attracting new residents who work primarily remotely in knowledge industries. Historically, it has been assumed that people locate based on where jobs are. This is changing.

The improvements to communications technology mean that many jobs are no longer anchored to a location. This trend has been further accelerated by COVID-19 and people looking for greater liveability and affordability when choosing where to live.

This results in changing migration patterns, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics reporting that migration to Australia's regions in response to the pandemic has been the largest net inflow ever recorded.

Due to the nature of the work that can be done remotely, those moving to regional areas are likely highly educated professionals. Even if new residents don't work for a local business, there will be an increased demand for services such as healthcare and education, supporting government investment in these services.

Population serving businesses in hospitality, personal services, recreation, and retailers will also benefit from this spending injection into the local economy.

Importantly, good digital connectivity is also critical to support East Gippsland's young people's ambitions and assists in finding work and staying in the Shire.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 2.2: Infrastructure provision and maintenance supports a diverse range of current and future user needs and activities and is both environmentally and financially sustainable

Digital Skills and Connections complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

It is important that business-owner skills are developed to match the existing technology, and obvious internet infrastructure issues are addressed. Simultaneously, the enhance horizon sees industry in the Shire adopt more advanced methods in automation and artificial intelligence and develop digital hubs to digitalise parts of the economy.

In the third horizon, East Gippsland's businesses, industries and residents utilise digital technology, processes, and skills to fully participate in national and global markets.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Develop business-owner digital skills» Improve digital infrastructure access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Implement next-generation technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» East Gippsland's businesses, industries and residents utilise digital technology, processes, and skills to fully participate in national and global markets.

Who are the partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. Telecommunications and Digital Economy Agency;
- » Commonwealth Government, Digital Transformation Agency;
- » Business leaders;
- » Telecommunications providers, (Telstra, NBN Co etc);
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Education providers, TAFE Gippsland, Federation Uni).

FOCUS 6: ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



FOCUS 6: ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Economic need and benefit

The public value of art and culture is clear, from improved social cohesion to the vital role that arts institutions and programming play in the reconciliation process, arts participation delivers a range of benefits for individuals and communities.

Direct economic benefits of creative and cultural infrastructure include employment and economic output, creative and cultural tourism visitation, creative and cultural export earnings.

There are also flow-on benefits, including place-making, liveability, community vibrancy and branding benefits.

The creative and entertainment sector is diverse, consisting of a mix of artistic and non-artistic sectors, commercially driven businesses, start-ups and microenterprises, individual practitioners, not-for-profit and community organisations, and cultural institutions.

The creative scene in East Gippsland is strong, but there is a lack of arts infrastructure and an under celebration of the region's heritage and culture.

Creative industries are also seen as opportunities in the Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 1.2: Collaboration with key stakeholders fosters the cultural, arts and creative communities for all activities Council has facilitated or financially contributed to

Arts Culture and Heritage complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

It is important that the existing arts community is first embedded in economic development and existing artistic ideas, ventures and venues are fostered.

In the second horizon, new infrastructure and arts programs can be developed in consultation and partnership with the arts community to enhance the Shire's arts, culture, and heritage assets. After ten years, the transformational ambition is that arts, heritage and culture are central contributors to the economy and community development.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Grow the connections between arts, culture and heritage networks and individuals, and the business community; » Imbed arts networks into the business community and intertwine them into local projects and marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Foster artistic ventures and venues that have strong economic outcomes; » Support the development of a strategy for the arts and culture sector that enhance participation and increase the sector's economic impacts and entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Arts, heritage and culture are central contributors to the economy and community development.

Who are the partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » Arts, Artists, Culture, Creatives and heritage community;
- » State Government i.e. Creative Victoria;
- » Commonwealth Government i.e. Office for the Arts;

- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Business leaders; and
- » Education providers (TAFE Gippsland, Federation Uni).

FOCUS 7: ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE

Transformational ambition

East Gippsland is a great place to live for existing residents and attractive for new residents and businesses on the back of community, liveability, good mobility, access to Melbourne and housing choice



FOCUS 7: ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE

Economic benefit and need

To attract and keep skilled workers and high-quality businesses, a range of economic enablers are needed to support local liveability. These include transport connections, vibrant local townships, good health and education services and housing.

Foundational transport, social infrastructure and health services could be improved, but the most significant challenge identified in community engagement and co-design was the lack of housing for key workers.

A lack of housing is a barrier to economic development because finding the right employees is critical to business growth.

Being a place where people want to live and can move to makes it easier for employers to find the right fit. The attraction and retention of skilled labour is a challenge for East Gippsland as it competes not just locally, but globally for talent.

Investment in new homes can also grow the local construction industry and local employment. Though short-term issues need to be overcome, including labour and material shortages.

In terms of transport infrastructure, any improvement that can improve travel times and connections, particularly to Melbourne, will be an economic benefit for the Shire.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 1.3: Community groups and volunteers are acknowledged, promoted and supported;
- » 1.4: Through targeted services, partnerships and advocacy, communities enjoy strong mental and physical health, well-being and resilience;
- » 2.1 Statutory and strategic planning for land use delivers sustainable outcomes that balance the need for growth with the enhancement of our lifestyle, character, the built and natural environment;
- » 2.2 Infrastructure provision and maintenance supports a diverse range of current and future user needs and activities and is both environmentally and financially sustainable; and
- » 3.2: Sustainable land use practices are used to manage council land to protect biodiversity and to provide education and incentives to support the management of private land.

Attractive Place to Live complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

It is important that the existing strengths of the region (its liveability, natural assets and small towns) are celebrated and improved.

In the second horizon, improvements are sought that reduce barriers to easy lifestyles, including the lack of housing. After ten years, the transformational ambition is that East Gippsland is an even greater place to live for existing residents and attractive for new residents and businesses, on the back of community, liveability, good mobility, access to Melbourne and housing choice.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop and promote our lifestyle strengths to attract and retain skilled workers; » Support economic, social and cultural activity in East Gippsland's townships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase the supply of housing for the attraction and retention of critical workers for a deep pool of skilled and unskilled workers; » Attract investment in health care to improve services and create local employment; » Strengthen the network of services, including public transport, to effectively connect people to jobs and opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East Gippsland is a great place to live for existing residents and attractive for new residents and businesses on the back of community, liveability, good mobility, access to Melbourne and housing choice; » East Gippsland is a region of natural landscapes, small towns and villages.

Who are the partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. Homes Victoria, Department of Health, DJPR;
- » Real Estate Agents;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;

- » Commonwealth Government ie: Department of Social Services etc;
- » Social housing providers;
- » Building industry associations;
- » Local property developers and
- » Construction companies; and
- » Major landholders.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in East Gippsland, Australia. The town is nestled between a large body of water (a lake or bay) in the foreground and a range of mountains in the background. The town itself is a mix of residential houses, commercial buildings, and green spaces. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The overall tone is serene and scenic.

FOCUS 8: CLIMATE ACTION LEADERS

Transformational ambition

East Gippsland is a climate change adaptation leader, particularly in the agriculture sector, and mitigates climate hazard risk to protect the economy which is heavily intertwined with natural ecosystems.

The Shire takes advantage of the mega-trend of decarbonisation to grow the economy with new climate-friendly jobs, new technologies and enterprises.

FOCUS 8: CLIMATE ACTION LEADERS

Economic benefit and need

Climate change is a concern for major sectors in East Gippsland, with a certain level of climate change already locked in due to past emissions. This will present challenges to economic performance and liveability. Climate change, climate variability and increased natural hazard risk is a significant barrier to the ongoing economic prosperity of East Gippsland.

The move towards net zero will impact businesses, particularly those with high emissions or energy use such as agriculture and manufacturing. The announcement of Australia's commitment to a net-zero target by 2050 will drive investment and innovation.

EGSC has developed a Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2022-2032). The resilience of communities to manage and respond to increasing climate risk and natural disasters, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable economic growth are all critical success factors for the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Many leading economists, like Ross Garnaut, see the transition to a net-zero economy as a massive opportunity for regional Australia, creating an array of economic opportunities for new products, processes and industries.

Agriculture, as but one example, will have opportunities to transition to more resilient food production systems that are innovative, diverse, risk-managed and climate-ready. Places and businesses that act first can take advantage of being an early mover.

Economic opportunities include:

- » Investment and research in alternative crops, livestock and production technologies;
- » Extended growing seasons and growing conditions for some crops;
- » The deployment of drought-resilient crops and livestock to improve resilience;
- » Increased food production for global food security to counteract lost production elsewhere;
- » Advance vegetation, waterway and land management practices to improve productivity;
- » Aboriginal land management practice and use of indigenous species;
- » Carbon farming and land restoration to provide an income stream through carbon credits;
- » The attraction of new businesses aligned with the goals of being a climate leader;
- » The development and deployment of renewable energy technology;
- » Manufacturing processes that are carbon neutral by using local clean energy supply;
- » The manufacture of climate-resilient products, including buildings and machinery;
- » Retrofitting buildings and infrastructure to be climate-resilient; and
- » The education sector delivers the skills to deliver new technologies implementation.

Regional Australia, and Gippsland are seeing a significant growth in "new energy" opportunities and projects such as medium-large scale solar and large scale off shore wind - Star of the South. For each of these East Gippsland will have specific opportunities to capitalise and need to prepare our workforce and industry to these opportunities.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 2.3: Planning with local communities for natural disasters and emergencies strengthens capacity, infrastructure, resilience, preparedness, and recovery
- » 3.1 Council works to reduce its own and the communities carbon emissions while supporting the community to mitigate the impact of a changing climate on the environment, safety, health and lifestyles.

Climate Action Leaders complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

To consolidate, the region's existing businesses and industry strengths must be made resilient to climate change and variability hazards. To enhance East Gippsland's standing as a climate leader and develop a comparative advantage, the Shire will look for ways to foster and expedite innovation and the transition to a low-carbon economy and use the transition to create local employment opportunities and attract investment.

After ten years the transformational ambition is that East Gippsland is a climate change adaptation leader, particularly in the agriculture sector, and mitigates climate hazard risk to protect the economy. The Shire takes advantage of the mega-trend of decarbonisation to grow the economy with new climate-friendly jobs and enterprises.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Build business resilience to natural hazards including drought, fire, flood, sea level rise; » Build workforce and business capability to capitalise on new energy opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Foster, encourage, lead and mentor excellence in industry and business leaders to transition to a low carbon economy; » Use mitigation and adaptation to create local employment opportunities (like retrofitting buildings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » East Gippsland is a climate change adaptation leader, particularly in the agriculture sector, and mitigates climate hazard risk to protect the economy. The Shire takes advantage of the mega-trend of decarbonisation to grow the economy with new climate-friendly jobs and enterprises.

Who are the partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. DELWP, SES, BRV;
- » Commonwealth Government i.e Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources;
- » Industry Bodies, particularly agriculture and tourism

- » Chambers of commerce;
- » Education providers;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Local business leaders; and
- » Community groups.

FOCUS 9: A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Transformational ambition

Innovative and financially beneficial circular production and waste streams are developed in East Gippsland, generating environmental and economic benefit.



Economic benefit and need

Climate change is a concern for major sectors in East Gippsland, with a certain level of climate change already locked in due to past emissions. This will present challenges to economic performance and liveability. Climate change, climate variability and increased natural hazard risk is a significant barrier to the ongoing economic prosperity of East Gippsland.

The move towards net zero will impact businesses, particularly those with high emissions or energy use such as agriculture and manufacturing. The announcement of Australia's commitment to a net-zero target by 2050 will drive investment and innovation.

EGSC has developed a Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2022-2032). The resilience of communities to manage and respond to increasing climate risk and natural disasters, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable economic growth are all critical success factors for the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Many leading economists, like Ross Garnaut, see the transition to a net-zero economy as a massive opportunity for regional Australia, creating an array of economic opportunities for new products, processes and industries.

Agriculture, as but one example, will have opportunities to transition to more resilient food production systems that are innovative, diverse, risk-managed and climate-ready. Places and businesses that act first can take advantage of being an early mover.

Economic opportunities include:

- » Investment and research in alternative crops, livestock and production technologies;
- » Extended growing seasons and growing conditions for some crops;
- » The deployment of drought-resilient crops and livestock to improve resilience;
- » Increased food production for global food security to counteract lost production elsewhere;
- » Advance vegetation, waterway and land management practices to improve productivity;
- » Aboriginal land management practice and use of indigenous species;
- » Carbon farming and land restoration to provide an income stream through carbon credits;
- » The attraction of new businesses aligned with the goals of being a climate leader;
- » The development and deployment of renewable energy technology;
- » Manufacturing processes that are carbon neutral by using local clean energy supply;
- » The manufacture of climate-resilient products, including buildings and machinery;
- » Retrofitting buildings and infrastructure to be climate-resilient; and
- » The education sector delivers the skills to deliver new technologies implementation.

Regional Australia, and Gippsland are seeing a significant growth in "new energy" opportunities and projects such as medium-large scale solar and large scale off shore wind - Star of the South. For each of these East Gippsland will have specific opportunities to capitalise and need to prepare our workforce and industry to these opportunities.

How does this support the Council Plan and align to the UNSDGs?

This Focus area aligns to the following action in the Council Plan:

- » 3.4 Environmentally and financially sustainable practices reduce waste going to landfill;
- » A Circular Economy complements several of the other goal areas within other Council plans and should not be viewed as an action that can only be undertaken in isolation.

This focus area is aligned with the following United Nations SDG's:



What are the Strategies to achieve the three horizon outcomes for the East Gippsland economy?

The community-wide strategies to pursue the transformational ambition are captured below.

Work must be done to understand local waste flows and designate a circular economy as an economy-wide priority. To develop East Gippsland's circular economy, there is then a need to support and foster initiatives to reduce waste, redesign products and production methods and increase the use of recycled products. Collaboration and data sharing will enhance the effort further.

After ten years, the transformational ambition is where Innovative and financially beneficial circular production and waste streams are developed in East Gippsland, generating environmental and economic benefit.

Action Horizon 1: Consolidate	Actions Horizon 2: Enhance	Actions Horizon 3: Transform
» Understand and build awareness of the implications and opportunities in circular economy processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Support circular economy initiative and investment » (Re)Design products and business production methods so waste is minimised; » Improve resource recovery by enhancing material collection systems and recycling processes; » Increase use of recycled materials by building demand and creating local markets for recycled products and waste; » Improve information collection and analysis to support innovation, guide investment and enable informed consumer decisions. 	» East Gippsland is a climate change adaptation leader, particularly in the agriculture sector, and mitigates climate hazard risk to protect the economy. The Shire takes advantage of the mega-trend of decarbonisation to grow the economy with new climate-friendly jobs and enterprises.

Who are the partners for delivery?

As well as Council there are several other government agency and industry bodies involved in delivering these strategies, including:

- » State Government i.e. DELWP, Circular Economy Victoria, Sustainability Vic, Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group;
- » Traditional Owners and First Nations organisations;
- » Commonwealth Government i.e. Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources;
- » Industry bodies (particularly agriculture);
- » Chambers of commerce;
- » Waste sites and recyclers;
- » Local business leaders; and
- » Community groups.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR DELIVERY

For inclusive and transformative economic development to occur, key stakeholders that influence the region's ability to deliver strategies need to have commitment and understanding of the strategy and their organisation's role in driving it. Maintaining and expanding cross-sector relationships for investment, business development, and jobs growth is central to this.

The Strategy aims to provide a document to focus and align effort by being a communications tool and providing strategic guidance on regional priorities to stakeholders in East Gippsland's economic future.

Economic development is a long-term process, not a one-time project. It is critically essential for core organisations to continuously communicate and progress efforts. Embedding economic development efforts into the region's DNA is an exercise in civic muscle-building over time.

In the Focus Areas, stakeholders can lead deeper strategic work to pursue additional actions with the additional knowledge gained over time. A list of partners for delivery has been identified. This list will need to evolve over time as new opportunities for partnership arise.

There are some partners that have a stronger and more aligned role to this Strategy, these are explored in the following section.

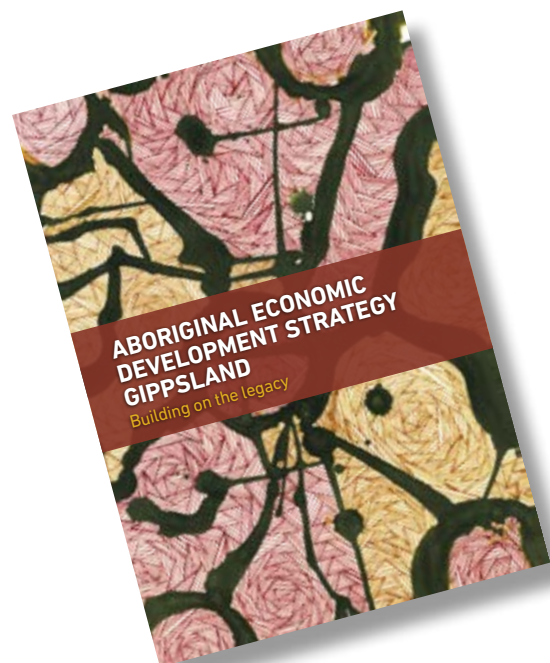
Key Partners and Strategic Alignment

The **Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy** for Gippsland steered by Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) on behalf of the whole of Community is the starting point towards ensuring a self-managed and self-determined future of local communities.

Whilst GLaWAC is the host organisation for this strategy, it has been developed with contribution from the whole community, it is a 'living strategy' that will grow and allow ongoing engagement with those wishing to contribute to the economic future of Aboriginal Gippsland.

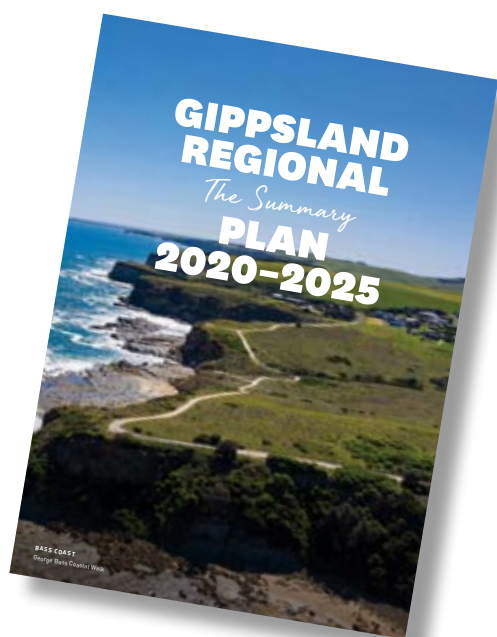
The Strategy was designed to explore partnerships, joint ventures and collaboration with and between Aboriginal businesses and the broader Community.

The Strategy aims to support Aboriginal organisations to pursue Community enterprise aspirations when they become ready.



The Strategy also focuses on the significance of working together to develop enterprise that can employ greater numbers of Aboriginal people across the region in addressing the historical and economic marginalisation.

The Strategy recognises the ever-changing dynamic of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) into the future with Traditional Owner Corporations (TOC's) and future Treaty opportunities now significant contributors to this journey.



The **Gippsland Regional Plan 2020- 2025**

is the region's strategic plan for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for the Gippsland region and our community. It looks towards 2040 for its vision and goals and identifies our priorities for the coming five years to 2025.

The Regional Plan is auspiced by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group (Committee for Gippsland, Gippsland Regional Partnership, One Gippsland (formerly Gippsland Local Government Network), and Regional Development Australia Gippsland).

During a time of significant challenge, including the rapid transition of our traditional energy and resource-based industries, drought, the 2019/20 bushfire season, and the COVID-19 pandemic, working together with a whole Gippsland approach is critical to achieving lasting benefits for every Gippslander.

Strong collaboration and partnerships are the cornerstones of the Regional Plan and are essential for our region to secure a prosperous future.

In developing the Regional Plan, we welcomed participation from a wide range of stakeholders.

- » The Regional Plan represents:
- » Linkages to more than 50 federal, state, regional, and local strategies;
- » Opinions and ideas from more than 300 Gippslanders;
- » Consideration of more than 260 initiatives and projects identified by our community as important to Gippsland's future; and
- » Analysis of economic, social, and environmental trends.

The Gippsland Destination Management Plan (DMP) update 2021-2030 seeks to build on the significant work that has been achieved since the release of the 2019 DMP.

This DMP develops a path forward for rebuilding the visitor economy following the disruptions of the intervening period. The plan will be a catalyst for continuing the drive towards a revitalised and resilient visitor economy and communities in Gippsland.

Tourism recovery and maximising the growth potential of the visitor economy will require a collaborative approach between Government, industry, the education sector, First Nations Australians, and the community.



Partnerships and sustainability are a strong theme that underpin all strategic priorities. In the context of this plan, the region's vision, Gippsland's natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit will be delivered through a series of projects that will fill gaps in the supply of visitor experiences and be attractive to investment to underpin growth.

The projects provide strategic direction for leadership, demand marketing, events, product, infrastructure investment and crisis recovery to ensure the region is well placed to deliver on its brand and the vision.

To achieve Gippsland's vision and strategic priorities, this DMP is guided by a set of principles, those being:

- » inclusive;
- » sustainable;
- » resilient;
- » compelling;
- » committed to excellence; and
- » engaging.

Food & Fibre Gippsland (F&FG) was formed in March 2019, via the amalgamation of Agribusiness Gippsland and the East Gippsland Food Cluster, creating a united, collaborative powerhouse.

The mission of F&FG is to lead capacity building, innovation, and knowledge sharing for the greater good of the sector across the whole of Gippsland.

F&FG are industry-led and strive to understand and respond to the challenges and ideas across the region.

F&FG deliver a number of programs that relate to the deliver of the Strategy, including:

- » **Smart Specialisation:** F&FG has partnered with the Latrobe Valley Authority to deliver the food and fibre stream of the Gippsland Smart Specialisation Strategy (GS3).
- » **Connect 2 Employment:** This is a region wide Employment Program, supported by Jobs Victoria where they actively connecting job seekers with food & fibre businesses to secure sustainable, long term employment.
- » **Gippsland Trusted Provenance:** Stakeholders from a broad array of Gippsland businesses called for a unified brand that ties Gippsland produce to the region's successfully implemented visitor economy branding as developed by Destination Gippsland.
- » **VegNET:** The National Vegetable Extension Network aims to effectively extend important research based information to the horticulture industry and its growers to help them build their businesses.
- » **ME Export Hub:** With the support of the Australian Government's SME Export Hub Grant, and Regional Partnerships-Gippsland, F&FG is implementing the Gippsland Connect program, supporting Gippsland businesses to explore export opportunities.

- » Gippsland PASE: The Gippsland PASE Program is aimed at small to medium exporters. SME exporters of dairy, fish, eggs, grain, plant, horticulture, meat and animal products will benefit from the project, which will assist producers to overcome market access barriers.
- » Drought Programs: F&FG is the Gippsland Node leader in the Drought Resilience Innovation and Adoption Hub program where the focus is on collaboration. The hub will aim to ensure agricultural research is useful and accessible.
- » Workforce Training & Innovation: This program will deliver workforce capabilities and build stronger partnerships across industry, training providers and TAFEs.
- » What's Your Food or Fibre Challenge, Gippsland? is a program that aims to turn challenges in businesses of all sizes into greater opportunities. The program aims spark innovation that benefits our communities and businesses and leads the way for the food and fibre industry nationally and globally.
- » FIAL National Cluster Program: F&FG is part of FIAL's National Cluster Program, aimed at sustainably growing Gippsland's agrifood sector, fostering a collaborative industry culture that promotes working together to advance research and development, strengthen value chains, whilst minimising export costs.
- » The Gippsland Excellence in Food and Fibre Awards: The Gippsland Excellence in Food and Fibre Awards are a region-based Awards program to recognise, celebrate and reward excellence in collaboration and innovation.



The **Gippsland Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)** was developed by The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

The REDS contribute to DJPR's vision for regional Victoria to be a resilient and thriving place to live, work and do business. The REDS provide a consistent socioeconomic evidence base, and strategic framing of medium- to long-term directions to activate economic development opportunities.

The REDS seek to:

1. Identify a socioeconomic evidence base for the region, including demographics, business and industry dynamics, and local endowments that can be used by all stakeholders, and will provide a baseline for monitoring future performance.
2. Acknowledge and reveal the depth of work, analysis, and planning already in place in regions and create a mechanism to support and progress established regional directions, where supported by the current evidence base.
3. Harness and enhance the region's comparative strengths as drivers of growth in the medium- to long-term.

4. Identify opportunities for public and private investment.
5. Influence and inform rural and regional economic policy and program design across government.
6. Support the prosperity and well-being of rural and regional Victoria through increased rural competitiveness and productivity

The REDS can be used by all levels of Government, regional communities and business to coordinate investment and collaborate for shared outcomes.

DJPR will use the REDS to drive strategic whole-of-government activity in the regions, informed by a contemporary understanding of economic performance and comparative advantage.

- » Regional communities and businesses can use the REDS to: communicate innovative capacity in their region, now and in the future
- » collaborate with government to better understand regional strengths, challenges and opportunities
- » attract investment to the region based on clearly identified strategic priorities.



Other Strategic Document and Linkages

The aforementioned Strategies and organisations are largely Gippsland wide and/or focussed on Economic Development opportunities that aligned broadly with this Strategy.

The alignment of Strategies is not limited to these as there are a number of others that are industry, or location specific or have other alignments, these include:

- » Gippsland Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy;
- » The Gippsland Regional Digital plan;
- » East Gippsland Marketing and their Annual Marketing Plan,
- » Tourism Opportunities Reports: Buchan, Cann Valley and Erinunderra to Snowy and Districts;
- » Gippsland Agricultural Group; and
- » the Future of the Orbost and District Project planning.



GLOSSARY

Ag Vic	Agriculture Victoria
BRHS	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
BRV	Bushfire Recovery Victoria
DESE	Department of Employment, Skills and Education
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DG	Destination Gippsland
EGMI	East Gippsland Marketing Inc.
EGW	East Gippsland Water
F&FG	Food and Fibre Gippsland
FFM	Forest Fire Management
GAG	Gippsland Agricultural Group
GELLEN	Gippsland East Local Learning Network
GLAWAC	Gunnai-Kurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
GP	Gippsland Ports
LEFCo	Lakes Entrance Fisherman's Cooperative
LVA	Latrobe Valley Authority
PTV	Public Transport Victoria
RDA	Regional Development Australia - Gippsland
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
RRV	Regional Roads Victoria
SBV	Small Business Victoria
SRW	Southern Rural Water
TEPP	Tourism Events and Priority Projects
TV	Tourism Victoria

CONTACT US

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Lakes Entrance: 18 Mechanics Street

Mallacoota: 70 Maurice Avenue

Omeo: 179 Day Avenue

Orbost: 1 Ruskin Street

Paynesville: 55 The Esplanade

Outreach Centres

Bendoc Outreach Centre -
18 Dowling Street

Buchan Resource Centre -
6 Centre Road

Cann River Community Centre -
Princes Highway

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