



Accessible Events Guide

Disclaimer

This publication is intended as a guide only for event organisers to assist with planning an event. It is not a substitute for professional advice on legislative requirements.

East Gippsland Shire Council accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions in this document. Information in this document is subject to change.

For further information, or if you have feedback regarding this document, contact Council's Events Team on 03 5153 9500 or email events@egipps.vic.gov.au.

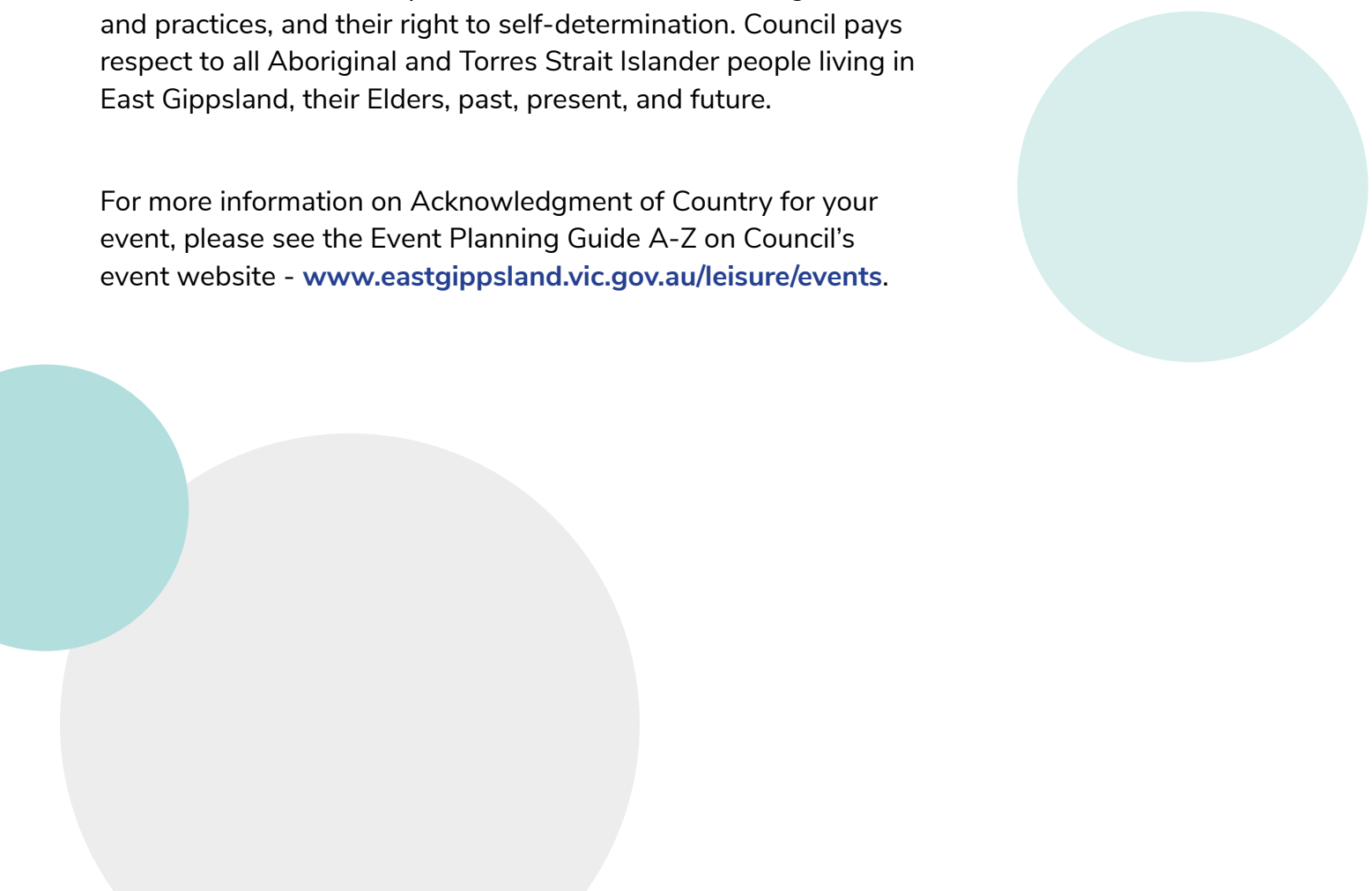
Information correct at time of publishing March 2023.

Acknowledgment of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with Country.

The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years. Council values their living culture and practices, and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

For more information on Acknowledgment of Country for your event, please see the Event Planning Guide A-Z on Council's event website - www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/leisure/events.





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Introduction

An inclusive and caring community that respects diversity is a goal of East Gippsland Shire Council and is a strategic objective of the Council Plan. A component of this is to influence and create accessible opportunities for all people to have greater participation in public events across the shire.

People with disability make up almost 20% of the population in East Gippsland and make up a considerable proportion of an event's potential audience or customers.

- On average, people with disability will attend events with three other people.
- People with disability and carers can also influence the choices of their families and friends based on what they experience at an event.

- Everyone benefits when access is better, including other attendees, people making deliveries, people with heavy baggage, families with young children, families with prams, older Australians who have access requirements, and people with an injury.

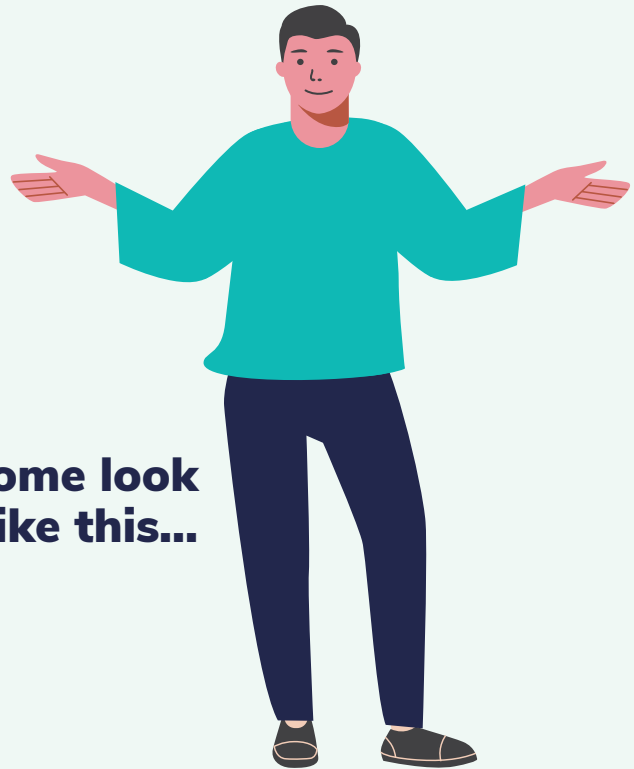
Events in East Gippsland are integral to community participation, which leads to connected and healthy communities. Following the Black Summer bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, we know how important connecting to our community is for good mental health. It is also important that everyone in our communities can participate.

This guide is a practical tool that assists the wider community to consider, plan and help make your event accessible.

**Not all
disabilities
look like this.**



**Some look
like this...**



What is an accessible event?

An accessible event removes as many barriers to attendance and participation as possible, so that it can be attended by as many people as possible. Accessible event practices and principles promote inclusion and participation, removing aspects that would otherwise make it difficult or impossible for some to attend.

Accessible events benefit the whole community, including families, people with prams, injured people, and set-up and pack-down teams.

Who should use this guide?

This event guide was designed for event organisers and community groups across East Gippsland to assist in improving disability inclusion and access at events.

It can also be used as a guide for private event hosts, business owners, schools, and organisations. It is a practical tool that helps with the planning and reviewing of an event to make it more inclusive for people with living with disability.

Customer demographics

In East Gippsland, 20% of the population identifies as having a disability. Of that 20%, less than 4% are wheelchair users. Therefore, accessible events provide more than just suitable toilets and ramp access for wheelchairs.

Event attendees that may need access and inclusion at an event include people:

- With low vision or hearing
- With a psychosocial disability
- With a sensory disability
- Who is a wheelchair user
- With an intellectual or cognitive disability
- Pushing a stroller
- Requiring assistance for mobility

See page 12 for tips and actions to help make an event accessible and inclusive.

What does the law say?

Community members have a legal responsibility to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities, including at events.

Learn more about the Federal Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992 and disability rights (and what happens if there is an official discrimination complaint) on the Australian Human Rights Commission - About Disability Rights webpage.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
www.legislation.gov.au

About Disability Rights |
Australian Human Rights Commission
www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/about-disability-rights

Universal design

Universal design is a design philosophy that ensures that products, buildings, environments, programs, services, and experiences are accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age, ability, cultural background, or any other differentiating factors.

Read more on universal design here:

www.providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/universal-design-policy-summary



Medical model vs social model of disability

The medical model of disability views a person living with disability as having a problem that requires treatment.

People with disability are advocating a shift in thinking to the social model of disability, a way of viewing the world which enables us to recognise barriers in our environments, attitudes, and perceptions, as well as organisational limitations. The social model shifts the focus away from the person with disability to a focus on society, to create a more inclusive and accessible world around them.

Creating accessible events for a community contribute cultural change for disability inclusion across the world.

For more on the medical vs social model, visit:

www.neurodivercitysg.com/medical-model-vs-social-model.html



The
environment
is the
problem

Limited Auslan interpreters
Ramps and lifts
Lack of education
Special schools
Fear
Badly designed buildings and transport
Stigma
Discrimination



Getting started on your accessible event

Plan early

The most effective way of ensuring your event is accessible is to think about access at the earliest stages of planning. The guide checklist (page 13) is a simple tool for you to use during the initial stages of the event to help you through your event planning.

To ensure accessibility is well-considered throughout the event process, include it as a regular agenda item during committee meetings. It is also recommended to task access and inclusion responsibilities to a committee member. This ensures access and inclusion remain part of the event-planning process.

Council has a number of resources to assist events with management and planning at www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/leisure/events, such as:

- Event Planning Guide A-Z
- Site Plan Checklist
- Risk Management and Emergency Plan
- Maximising Benefits from Events – Toolkit for Event Owners
- Event Management Toolkit – a series of 22 templates and guides including a budget template

During event planning, involving people with disability is always the best way you can achieve a more inclusive and accessible outcome for your event. Alternatively, include a dedicated event access and inclusion officer for your event. This can be part of your volunteer committee or a paid role, depending on the type and size of the event.

Knowing the right language

To avoid using terms that could be discriminatory or demeaning at your event either by personnel or in your event marketing, we strongly recommend building awareness of the correct words that are used when talking to, referring to, or working with people a disability.

For the correct words, below are examples of contemporary language you can use.

For more information about language to use for people with disability you can visit PWDA Language Guide: a guide to language about disability, Commonly Used Phrases at www.pwd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PWDA-Language-Guide-v2-2021.pdf

It is important that your event committee, volunteers, and contractors are familiar with current language to use.



Language to use	Do not say
Person or people with disability	Someone who has a disability
Blind or low vision	Seeing or vision impaired
Deaf or hard of hearing	Hearing impaired
Wheelchair user	Wheelchair bound
Accessible toilet or parking	Disabled toilet or disabled parking
Person or people with additional needs	This may be used in a space when referring to people who are neurotypical, however, can also be used to refer to a wider range of people with disability



Accessible event marketing

Event promotion provides a good opportunity to inform a community that an event will be accessible and how. Media releases, social media posts, a website, handouts and posters for an event can list an inclusion statement and a map showing such things as an accessible parking area.

An example of an inclusion statement is:
“We are an inclusive event and encourage the participation of everyone in our community, including First Nations Australians, people with disability, LGBTIQ+ people and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people. We strive to ensure an inclusive experience for all.”

Accessible event marketing: digital typography and accessible colour

Colours, contrasts, and font types and sizes impact legibility for those with low vision. To ensure your digital typography and colour create accessible printed material, you may need to change background or font colour, font style, font scale, headings, paragraphs and list styles, and text link styles.

For guidance visit Victorian Government Typography and Accessible Colour - digital guides:

www.vic.gov.au/typography-and-accessible-colour-digital-guide

For advice on how to create a website that is accessible, visit Web Content Accessibility Guidelines:

www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/

Accessible event marketing: alternative text

Alternative text (alt text) is the written text that describes an image, graphic, icon or graph to those who cannot see it. The text is invisible to the eye but is read aloud to people with low vision or are blind using screen-reading technology.

Almost half a million people in Australia live with low vision or are blind. Adding a simple inclusion, such as alt text, to your website, social media and event communications increases access to your event.

For more information on alt text, visit www.vic.gov.au/alternative-text-digital-guide

For instructions on how to insert alt text on your social media images, visit the alt text instruction page for:

Facebook

www.facebook.com/help/214124458607871

Instagram

www.help.instagram.com/503708446705527

Twitter

www.help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/alternative-text-to-images-for-accessibility



Wayfinding accessibility symbols



Auslan



Guide dog



Hearing
loop



Wheelchair

Top 10 accessible event considerations

Access requirement	
1. Signage	<p>Create a wayfinding plan.</p> <p>Provide clear signage that shows where the toilet facilities, first aid, quiet spaces, food, and entertainment are located.</p> <p><i>*You can find printable signage templates at the end of this plan.</i></p>
2. Marketing and website	<p>Meet WCAG guidelines for marketing and website creation. For more, visit the Centre for Accessibility webpage, What is the WCAG Standard www.accessibility.org.au/guides/what-is-the-wcag-standard</p>
3. Volunteer training	<p>Ensure volunteers have been briefed about assisting people with disability during the event.</p>
4. Parking or drop off	<p>Allocate a drop-off point and/or parking to allow people with disability to more easily access the event.</p>
5. Toilets	<p>Ensure there are sufficient accessible unisex toilets per expected capita.</p>
6. Quiet spaces	<p>Allocate a quiet space for those who may have sensory overload.</p>
7. Venue consideration	<p>Host an indoor event in an accessible venue and ensure there are accessible toilets, an accessible entrance, and enough space across the venue to manoeuvre a wheelchair.</p>
8. Facilities for companion and assistance animals	<p>Ensure there are bathroom and water facilities available for an assistance or companion animal.</p>
9. Environment	<p>For an outdoor event, ensure that the area can be accessed by all. Consider terrain and lighting and consider setting aside an area for people with disability and their families that helps ensure they can view or participate in the event.</p>
10. Seating and mobility	<p>If seating is required, consider allocating a clear viewing place or platform for people with disability and wheelchair users.</p> <p>Also consider providing wheelchair hire at the event.</p>

Accessible events checklist

Budget and funding

- ☐ Have you allocated a budget line item for access and inclusion requirements? This should be considered when applying for funding.

Location or venue

- ☐ Do you have the option to choose a fully accessible venue or location?
- ☐ If not, are you prepared to implement accessibility provisions where required?
- ☐ Are there clearly identified accessible car parking spaces available near the entrance?
- ☐ Are there drop-off points for vehicles close to the entrance of the venue?
- ☐ Are entry points clear and well lit?
- ☐ Are there accessible unisex toilets?
- ☐ Is the information/registration desk at a height that is accessible for a wheelchair user?
- ☐ Is there a hearing loop? If not, can you install a temporary one?
- ☐ If the venue has fixed seating, are there removable seats for wheelchair users?
- ☐ Is there provision for a breakout space or quiet room?
- ☐ Are all doors wide enough for a wheelchair user to get through? Most standard doorways are 850mm, wheelchair users have a preference for 1000mm.

- ☐ Is there a clear, continuous accessible path of travel (CAPT) from any parking or drop off points to the venue entrance? A CAPT is defined as a delineated pathway (minimum 1 metre wide) with no steps or barriers.

- ☐ Do emergency management procedures include the needs and evacuation processes for people with disability?

- ☐ Are there facilities for assistance animals?

Event infrastructure

- ☐ Have you planned for alternative arrangements where infrastructure has been identified as inaccessible?
- ☐ Are stages and risers accessible for performers and speakers if required?
- ☐ Do all stairs and ramps have rails?
- ☐ Are there easily accessible power points available to charge motorised scooters and wheelchairs?
- ☐ Have you designated an accessible seating area at the front of audience areas with an unimpeded view of the stage, show, speaker and/or Auslan interpreter? For a medium-sized event, aim to provide seating for 20 people as a minimum (roughly 1.5m² per person). This includes outside events.

Transport and parking

- ☐ Are there accessible drop-off points in suitable locations with kerb access?
- ☐ Is drop-off point information provided on all marketing materials?
- ☐ Is accessible parking available and are there enough allocated spaces to support expected event participation?
- ☐ If required to allocate accessible parking, have you considered the technical standards?

Event signage

- ☐ Do you have clear signage to direct people to all event areas as well as amenities such as information booths, toilets and first aid?
- ☐ Are accessible pathways clearly identified?
- ☐ Is there an accessibility map?

Outdoor events

- ☐ Are there any structures obstructing kerb ramps?
- ☐ Are accessible portaloos and water stations provided?
- ☐ Do any street closures or fencing maintain the accessibility of kerb ramps or accessible paths of travel?
- ☐ Are there accessible pathways to all amenities?

- ☐ Are there breakout or quiet spaces and seating provided in shaded areas?
- ☐ Do any grassy areas need to be covered with flooring materials to make mobility easier?

For more information, visit the Victorian Government's webpage *Tracks Pathways Ramps and Stairs*:
www.sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/design-everyone-guide/index-elements/tracks-pathways-ramps-and-stairs

Assistance animals

- ☐ Are there facilities for assistance animals (e.g., bathroom, water, shade)?
- ☐ Have staff been briefed on the rules and regulations pertaining to assistance animals?

See *Public access rights for Assistance Dogs*
www.assistedogs.org.au/about-us/public-access-rights/

Event registration and ticketing

- ☐ Do you have a registration form for accessibility guests? If not, can they note their specific requirements at the time of booking?
- ☐ Are registration forms and booking systems in an accessible format with different submission options such as web, telephone, and email?
- ☐ Have you included the Companion Card option in your registration and ticketing?

Visit www.companioncard.vic.gov.au

Content and information

- ☐ Is written information, such as programs, available in an accessible format such as Easy Read for people who are blind or with low vision?

Visit www.stylemanual.gov.au/content-types/easy-read

- ☐ Is there an opportunity to provide audio description or other accessible formats for any visual information such as a presentation or video?

- ☐ Do you need captions or an Auslan interpreter for any speakers or video?

Marketing and communication

- ☐ Does your website follow web accessibility standards?

See Vision Australia Web Content Accessibility Guidelines www.visionaustralia.org/resources/digital-access/resources/tip-sheets-whitepapers/web-content-accessibility-guidelines

- ☐ Are there multiple methods of contact available such as a phone number, email address or telephone typewriter (TTY) number and the National Relay Service?

Visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service

- ☐ Does your written material use a large and clear typeface style, with good contrast between text and background?

- ☐ Are your communications using appropriate inclusive language (e.g., 'accessible toilets' rather than 'disabled toilets') and plain English? Refer to *How to write in plain English* on page 8.

- ☐ Does your website have specific accessibility page?

- ☐ Does your website include wayfinding strategy or access maps?

Volunteers and staff

- ☐ Have your staff (including venue-supplied staff) and volunteers had disability awareness training and been briefed on any accessibility measures or requirements?

Sound and lighting

- ☐ Have audiences been informed if there will be any flash lighting, strobes, smoke, loud noises, or other special effects?

- ☐ Is there signage warning of lighting or sound effects for patrons who may have photosensitivity or phono sensitivity?

- ☐ If lights are dimmed for presentations, are sign language interpreters still adequately lit?

- ☐ Are portable microphones available for members of the audience who are invited to ask questions from the floor?

-
- ☐ Is a hearing loop being used for the event?

See Telecoil and Hearing Loop info at www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/abouthearing/telecoils_hearing_loops

- ☐ In the Emergency Plan, how will an emergency announcement be made so that those who are audio or visual impaired receive the message?

Catering

- ☐ Are there catering options for people with specific food requirements e.g., allergies, vegetarians, gluten free, religious requirements?
-

- ☐ Are menus available in accessible formats such as large print or audio?
-

- ☐ Are the catering tables or food vendors (including food trucks) at a suitable height for wheelchair users?
-

- ☐ Are accessible seating and tables available?



Resources and further information

Funding and support

Access and inclusion for events should not be thought of as an added cost; they should be factored into the running costs of the event. Being inclusive and accessible to the whole community is a good selling point for all grant and funding applications.

Event hosts can search for funding opportunities using the East Gippsland Shire Council's Grant Guru grant finder - www.eastgippsland.grantguru.com.au

In addition, funding information can be found at the following websites:

Creative Victoria - www.creative.vic.gov.au/grants-and-support

Australia Council - www.australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-development

Festivals Australia (Office of the Arts) - www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support

Vic Health - www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding

Visit Victoria - www.corporate.visitvictoria.com/events/regional-events-fund

Gipps Sport - www.gippsport.com.au/grants

Vic Sport - www.vicsport.com.au/grants

On-line resources:

PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability - https://bit.ly/PWD_Language

Accessibility Guidelines for Government Communications and Events - www.vic.gov.au/accessibility-guidelines-government-communications

A Way With Words - https://bit.ly/A_Way_With_Words

Victorian State Government Victorian Disability Access and Inclusion Plan - www.vic.gov.au/disability-access-and-inclusion-plan-2021-2025

Useful websites:

Sport 4 All - www.sport4all.com.au

Bairnsdale Mobility and Hire - www.bairnsdalemobilityandhire.com

Arts Access Victoria - www.artsaccess.com.au

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763

Australian Human Rights Commission - www.humanrights.gov.au

Push Adventures (Accessible and Inclusive Tourism) - www.pushadventures.com.au

Medical vs Social Model diagram - www.neurodivercitysg.com/medical-model-vs-social-model.html

Universal Accessibility Symbols for Your Communications -

www.inclusive.sa.gov.au/resources/state-authority-resources/accessible-and-inclusive-community-events/universal-accessibility-symbols-for-your-communications

Signage and Wayfinding -

www.sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/design-everyone-guide/index-elements/signage-and-wayfinding





This report was supported by the East Gippsland community.

Thank you to the individual community members who shared their stories and experiences, East Gippsland Children with Additional Needs working group; East Gippsland Shire Council Disability Advisory Committee; and event organisers across East Gippsland. It was their willingness to share stories of adversity and success that informs this guide and makes events across East Gippsland for all to access and enjoy.



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