



# Gippsland Regional Plan

2015-2020



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## Purpose of the Gippsland Regional Plan

The Gippsland Regional Plan (GRP) is a long-term strategic plan for improving economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Gippsland region and its community. It is a long-term strategic plan that aims to respond to the most significant challenges and opportunities that the Gippsland region is expected to face over the next ten to twenty years.

The development and implementation of the GRP brings together all levels of Government and business, as well as a wide range of agencies and community organisations. The GRP provides a framework from which priority projects and initiatives that will drive improved regional capability are identified, agreed, and advocated for.

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# Strategic Partnership

The Gippsland Regional Plan is a partnership initiative between the following parties:

## **Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN)**

The GLGN is an alliance of the six Gippsland Councils being Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire, and Latrobe City.

## **Regional Development Australia (RDA) Gippsland**

RDA Gippsland, a Commonwealth government appointed body, has a role in strengthening the region and ensuring its long-term sustainability. In relation to regional planning, RDA Gippsland is expected to provide advice to state and federal government, identify any gaps in the regional plan, and assist in the coordination and implementation of the regional plan and other regional development activities.

## **Committee for Gippsland (C4G)**

C4G is a self-funded organisation that provides peak body representation of business, industry, and community organisations across the Gippsland region. Member organisations include small to medium businesses, large companies, community organisations and education providers in the Gippsland region.

## **Regional Management Forum (RMF)**

The Gippsland RMF comprises representatives of local and state government departments and authorities, Federation University, Destination Gippsland and Gippsland Ports. This group contributes to the leadership and strategic planning within the Gippsland region for the benefit of the community through communication, both formal and informal, relationship development, information sharing, networking and assisting with cutting through red tape.

## **GRP Leadership Group**

The GRP Leadership Group consists of members of GLGN, C4G, RDA Gippsland and the RMF. The key task of this group is to undertake all the necessary actions in the oversight and operation of the GRP and its advocacy framework.

## **Strategy Groups**

The development, and implementation, of the GRP is also supported by GRP Strategy Groups. The Strategy Groups reflect the key strategic themes of the GRP and provide particular knowledge and insight with respect to strategic issues, policy direction, key programs and projects relevant to the theme. The GRP Strategy Groups also consider potential regional projects and provide advice to the GRP Leadership Group with respect to potential priority regional projects.

The GRP Strategy Groups have an identified chair/lead agency and project partners. Membership of strategy groups is at an appropriate senior level within participating organisations. The expectation is that the people represented on each group will have strong organisational knowledge and the authority to make decisions on behalf of their respective organisations.

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# Executive Summary

The GRP articulates a strategic vision for Gippsland with a narrative that describes the desired future key outcomes for the region. The achievement of the vision and the desired future key outcomes is supported by four Strategic Themes that are based upon an analysis of the region's economic, social and environmental characteristics, trends, opportunities and challenges - the Strategic Themes are:

1. Economic Prosperity
2. Education and Community Wellbeing
3. Natural Environment Stewardship
4. Connectivity

Each Strategic Theme includes Objectives that identify desired outcomes relevant to the theme. Strategic Priorities then identify the areas of activity needed to achieve those Objectives. This framework of Objectives and Strategic Priorities provides a platform from which relevant projects and initiatives can be identified, agreed, prioritized and implemented. Each Strategic Theme also has high-level Key Indicators that will be used to:

- Provide an indicative baseline of current regional performance with respect to the Strategic Theme; and
- Evaluate the impact of projects and initiatives on the region's capability.

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## Economic Prosperity

Economic Prosperity recognises the importance of Gippsland's natural resources and builds upon these to increase employment and exports through:

- Identifying and prioritising the key regional level infrastructure that will be required to support economic development, job creation and growth over the next twenty years. This includes understanding the impacts of forecast population, demographic and economic change;
- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of existing key economic assets including the Macalister Irrigation District (MID);
- Increasing the quantity of food production and value adding in the region and the value of its food related exports;
- Supporting the development of Gippsland's brown coal resources through the development new technologies that secure a future for the resource beyond power generation and the development of government policy that provides a clear signal to potential investors;
- Increasing the level of visitation and number of visitor overnight stays, from both domestic and international visitors, through development of new experiences that leverage the region's key assets, improving existing experiences and investment in related infrastructure;
- Improving processes to facilitate investment attraction, promote the region's competitive strengths and capabilities and increase the export readiness of industries and businesses;
- Developing the capability of the region's workforce to support growth opportunities in the regional economy and improving the vocational opportunities for a wider range of people;
- Fostering greater levels of innovation through improved partnerships between education, research and industry;
- Gaining policy support for Gippsland's key manufacturing sectors including coal derivatives, paper, and the aeronautical sectors; and
- Supporting place based approaches to transition and diversification of the economy with a focus on long term sustained jobs growth.

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## Education and Community Wellbeing

Education and Community Wellbeing recognises the crucial relationship between educational attainment, prosperity and wellbeing. The theme has a focus on raising the level of educational attainment by identifying and addressing barriers, and pursuing opportunities, for increased tertiary education participation. This includes the development and/or redevelopment of education and training facilities. The pursuit of improved community wellbeing also recognises the importance of:

- Seeking support to develop business cases for the expansion and/or redevelopment of a range of the region's hospital facilities including the Latrobe Regional Hospital and the West Gippsland Hospital;
- Undertaking joint health workforce planning, including in the realm of shared and coordinated specialist medical workforce between hospitals in the regions
- Building on current work underway, led by health services in partnership with Department of Health and Human Services and the new Gippsland Primary Health Network, to ensure integrated service delivery across the region, agreeing on respective health service capabilities and enhancing client pathways and outcomes;
- Building on existing population health planning in the region with a view to having one integrated health and well-being plan per local government area, with all local stakeholders contributing to its achievement;
- Supporting relevant outcomes from the Royal Commission into Domestic Violence;
- Supporting improved access to a range of opportunities for Indigenous people in the region;
- Seeking to improve the capacity and functionality of key arts facilities and improving access to arts programs and experiences for a wider population.



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## Natural Environment Stewardship

Natural Environment Stewardship supports: Protecting Gippsland's unique natural environments; sustainable development of Gippsland's natural and built environments; sustainable use of Gippsland's natural resources; and sustainable and best practice management of Gippsland's waste. These outcomes are to be pursued through:

- Researching the implications of the forecast growth and change in the population and employment of Gippsland in the next 20 years with respect to the level of demand for a range of housing products and designs, social service impacts, commercial centre implications, employment demands and transport needs;
- Fostering a shared understanding across agencies, councils and community groups and supporting implementation of regional catchment management strategies in order to develop shared policy settings and resource land management approaches for the region's most significant biodiversity assets and natural risks, including high priority waterway and biodiversity programs;
- Attracting increased investment, in particular, public investment, in Gippsland's public parks, such as Wilsons Promontory, in order to support an increase in the community's use of these assets, and their appreciation of the related ecological values. The increased usage will support improved community well-being (both physical and mental) and increased volunteer involvement in land management;
- Undertaking a collaborative approach between local, state and commonwealth government agencies to prepare climate change mitigation and adaption plans;
- Continuing the collaborative management of the Gippsland Lakes environment through support of the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee processes involving implementation of key priorities in the East and West Gippsland Waterway Strategies and the Gippsland Lakes RAMSAR Site Management Plan;
- Identifying new opportunities to consider possible regional or statewide waste and resource recovery facilities and explore economic development opportunities arising from the development of new technology at existing waste and resource recovery operations.

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## Connectivity

Connectivity focuses on improving access to vocational opportunities and services and the efficiency of access to key markets for Gippsland's goods and exports. This will be achieved through working with the state government to find solutions to the congestion issues on both road and rail through south east Melbourne to improve access to ports and markets and passenger connectivity to Melbourne, and back to the region – these solutions will include improving:

- The capacity of the region's rail connectivity to Melbourne
- Access to ports – this may include the further development of the Port of Hastings as Victoria's second major port should it be determined through independent studies that such development will not have a negative impact on the coastal environment of Bass Coast, and in particular, Phillip Island.

The Connectivity theme also seeks to improve regional transport infrastructure including the capacity, functionality, and safety of the Princes Highway and regional highways.

Finally, the Connectivity theme seeks to improve the availability of high-speed broadband growing the level of engagement of regional businesses and service providers with the digital economy.





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# A Vision For Gippsland

Gippsland - Australia's  
smart region with  
world-class environments,  
maximising opportunities  
for investment and  
employment.



# Gippsland in 2025 – A Narrative

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## Gippsland in 2025 – A Narrative

The Gippsland region enjoys a strong and collegiate leadership culture that understands regional needs and is committed to achieving agreed regional priorities.

This leadership has fostered valuable partnerships across government, community, and industry, which are central to Gippsland's reputation for compelling advocacy, investment attraction and the successful implementation of projects that have had a significant impact on improving regional capability.

The region has experienced significant population growth, which has attracted both demand and investment in services. This population growth has led to even greater population diversity and Gippsland has strengthened its reputation as a welcoming region that highly values tolerance and inclusiveness.

Gippsland is also recognised as a region that has successfully diversified and strengthened its economy through its focus on food production, innovation in clean energy, health services, education and the visitor economy. Despite this transformation, the region recognizes and respects the long-term sustainability of its world-class natural environments and resources.

Gippsland is also proud of the achievements made by its Indigenous community, who have embraced the opportunities presented by a greater level of economic diversity, and have grown the levels of participation and leadership.

Gippsland has an international reputation as a producer and processor of high quality food products and has significantly expanded its food production to meet the growing demands of domestic and export markets. The direction provided through the Gippsland Food Plan has underpinned significant industry expansion and greater levels of value adding, in a range of agribusiness areas including production and

processing in dairy, meat and horticulture, and other key food processing. Timber production, including plantation forests, has continued to be an important industry particularly for the region's paper manufacturing sector.

The region's health sector remains a major employer through its response to significant growth in the region's population, which has also resulted in a number of the region's hospitals undergoing expansion and development. Community wellbeing has also benefited from a growth in health services, including mental health and an integrated approach to health promotion.

Gippsland's extensive energy sector continues to generate significant economic benefits. The region has adopted a long-term strategic approach to its unique and vast brown coal resource. The leveraging of significant support from the state and commonwealth governments facilitated the interest and attention of major investors in low emission and renewable energy technology, as well as the production of coal derivatives. The investors have developed major processing facilities and significant and emerging export markets. The subsequent industry development has generated jobs in a range of highly skilled and value adding areas including construction, technology development and process operations.

Gippsland's manufacturing sector continues to diversify. Along with the development of coal derivative processing, there has been significant growth in downstream food processing and continued investment in paper manufacturing. The aviation manufacturing sector is acknowledged internationally, generating significant exports and employing a highly skilled and expanded workforce. This industry provides effective support to the aviation needs of the refurbished RAAF Base at East Sale and the operation of the Defence Force Pilot Training School that has been established in the region.



The visitor economy continues to grow and plays a key role in the regional economy. Increased public and private investment in the sustainable development of tourism assets and their iconic locations, including the Gippsland Lakes, Phillip Island, Mt Baw Baw and Wilsons Promontory National Park has created quality visitor experiences.

High-speed broadband and improved connectivity remain a key regional focus. Many local organisations and firms have leveraged opportunities in the digital economy to establish new business models and markets, grow the professional services sector, foster opportunities for teleworking to grow employment and improve the access to services, particularly for those living in the region's many smaller communities. The use of high-speed broadband to foster networking, collaboration and the sharing of information of knowledge and information has become a hallmark of the region's economic success.

Significant population and economic growth has also seen a boom in commercial, industrial and residential construction activity. The region's major population centres have experienced a significant expansion in retail business and commercial activity. The presence of more service providers and facilities has in turn led to improved public transport connections.

The strong growth in regional exports has been enabled by the enhancement of routes to market with new port developments; the effective establishment and operation of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct and major government investment in road and rail infrastructure both in the region and in its corridor to market in greater Melbourne. These improvements have also supported greater connectivity for the regional community.

The continued economic success of Gippsland is underpinned by excellent post-secondary educational facilities. Federation University is highly regarded for its close relationship with, and leadership role in, the Gippsland community, and for having worked in close collaboration with other post-secondary institutions and industry. This collaboration services the ever expanding and changing skills needs of our diverse workforce and has achieved a significant increase in the number of the region's young people who have completed post-secondary qualifications. The Gippsland Workforce Plan has provided an effective basis for assessing long-term skills requirements.

Each local government area has implemented key elements of the Gippsland Regional Growth Plan that balances the need for sustained economic growth with the needs of the environment against the pressures of an expanding and more diverse housing market. This land use planning has also mitigated risks associated with bushfire and flooding and supported high levels of community safety.





# 1. An overview of the Gippsland Region

# 1

## An Overview of the Gippsland Region

### 1.1. Gippsland's Location and Size

The Gippsland region is located in the southeastern corner of the Australian mainland and covers a major part of eastern Victoria with an area of 41,600 square kilometers. The region is comprised of six local government areas (LGAs) being Latrobe City, Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, South Gippsland Shire and the Wellington Shire.

The region extends from its western end, which adjoins metropolitan Melbourne's southeastern boundary, to Cape Howe the most easterly point of Victoria. In the north, the region borders New South Wales and much of the region's northern boundary is defined by Victoria's high country – which incorporates Victoria's snow-fields. The region's southern boundary is defined by 700 kilometers of Victorian coastline. The region contains the largest area of public land in Victoria.



## 1.2. Key Towns

Gippsland's settlement patterns are well established with the Latrobe Valley corridor forming the major economic and population centre of the region. Latrobe City, as Gippsland's regional city, consisting of Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill, is seen as a collective urban system or networked city.

The regional centres of Bairnsdale, Sale, and Warragul/Drouin are located along the Princes Highway. The regional centres of Leongatha and Wonthaggi, and the townships of Korumburra and Inverloch lie along the Bass and South Gippsland highways. Cowes (Phillip Island), Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Maffra and San Remo are also significant settlement locations.

## 1.3. Population and Projected Population Growth

The projected changes in the Gippsland region's population over the 20-year period 2011 to 2031 are tabled below.

LGA	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change in LGA population 2011 to 2031	% increase in LGA population 2011 to 2031	% of Regional Population Growth
Baw Baw Shire	43,387	48,378	55,660	63,128	71,245	27,858	64%	38%
Bass Coast Shire	30,232	33,581	37,898	42,638	46,872	16,640	55%	23%
East Gippsland Shire	42,830	44,611	47,016	49,613	52,242	9,412	22%	13%
Latrobe City	73,788	73,903	76,319	79,162	82,455	8,667	12%	12%
Wellington Shire	42,064	42,467	44,057	45,849	47,632	5,568	13%	8%
South Gippsland Shire	27,515	28,112	29,677	31,265	32,764	5,249	19%	7%
Gippsland	259,952	271,182	290,751	311,774	333,327	73,375	28%	100%

The projected increase in the regional population – i.e. more than 73,000 people — represents adding a population almost equivalent to that of Latrobe City to the region. This has significant implications for the demand for services, the capacity of infrastructure and for the regional economy as a whole.

Population growth will not occur evenly across the region with Baw Baw and Bass Coast Shires projected to experience the largest increases in population. This is due to their relative proximity to Melbourne, including the Cardinia Employment Corridor with new residents settling within commuting distance to metropolitan workplaces. This has significant implications for the region's connectivity to Melbourne.

#### 1.4. Population in Small Towns

Around 40% of the region's population lives in towns and settlements of less than 1,000 people. These towns are dispersed throughout the region including in the high plains, historic gold mining areas and in agricultural areas giving the region a strong series of towns with local amenity, community character and tourist destinations. The dispersal of these small towns also presents a range of challenges with respect to the delivery of, and/or access to services including health, education and telecommunications.

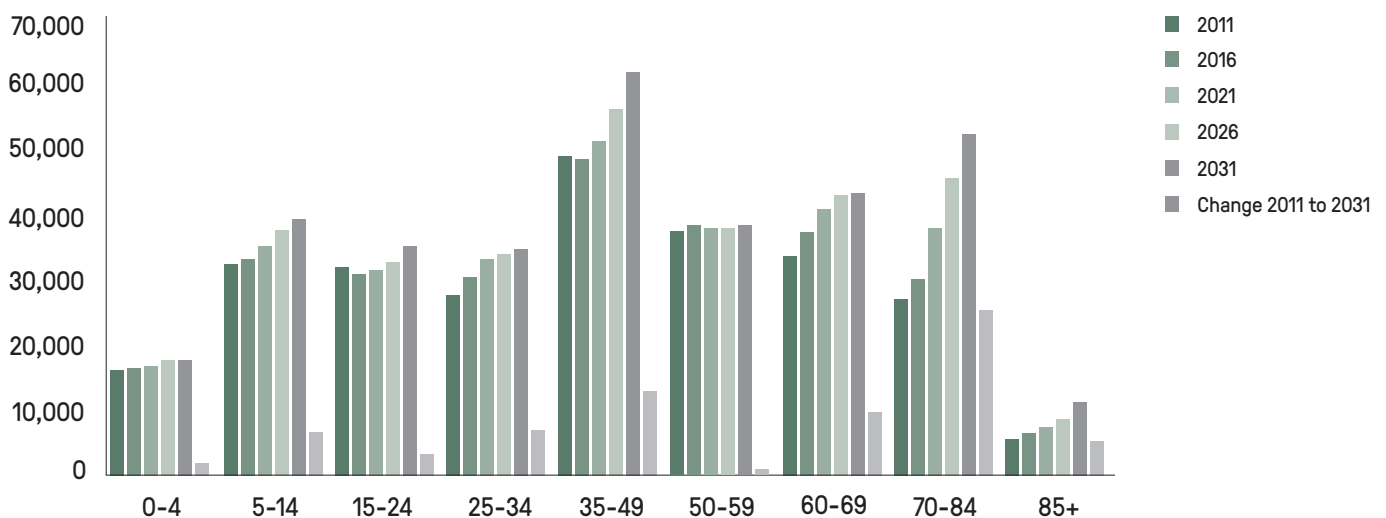
#### 1.5. Changing Population Age Profiles

As the regional population increases there will be notable changes in the population's age profiles:

- 70 to 84 age group will increase by more than 25,000 people – this has implications for improving the region's age friendliness and the access to services relevant to the needs of older people;
- 35 to 49 age group will increase by more than 12,000 people – this has implications for goods and services relevant to the needs of household formation;
- 25 to 34 age group will increase by almost 7,000 people – this has implications for access to entry-level housing;
- 15 to 24 age group will increase by more than 3,600 – this has implications for access to tertiary education and vocational training;
- 0 to 14 age groups will increase by almost 7,000 people – this has implications for access to schools and the need for educators.

The overall growth in population also has implications for increase access to health and social services as well as leisure and cultural services.

#### Projected Changes in Gippsland Regional Population by Age Groups



## 1.6. Income levels

The levels of median weekly personal, family and household incomes in the Gippsland region are below that of median weekly incomes levels for Victoria and Australia

	East Gippsland	Bass Coast	Wellington	South Gippsland	Latrobe	Baw Baw	Victoria	Australia
Personal	\$436	\$472	\$479	\$481	\$468	\$511	\$561	\$577
Family	\$990	\$1,071	\$1,168	\$1,148	\$1,236	\$1,273	\$1,460	\$1,481
Household	\$798	\$855	\$905	\$920	\$942	\$1,025	\$1,216	\$1,234

\*Note - for people aged 15 years and over Source – ABS 2011 Census

These income levels have implications for the regional community's access to education, health, leisure and cultural services as well as for the demand on social services.

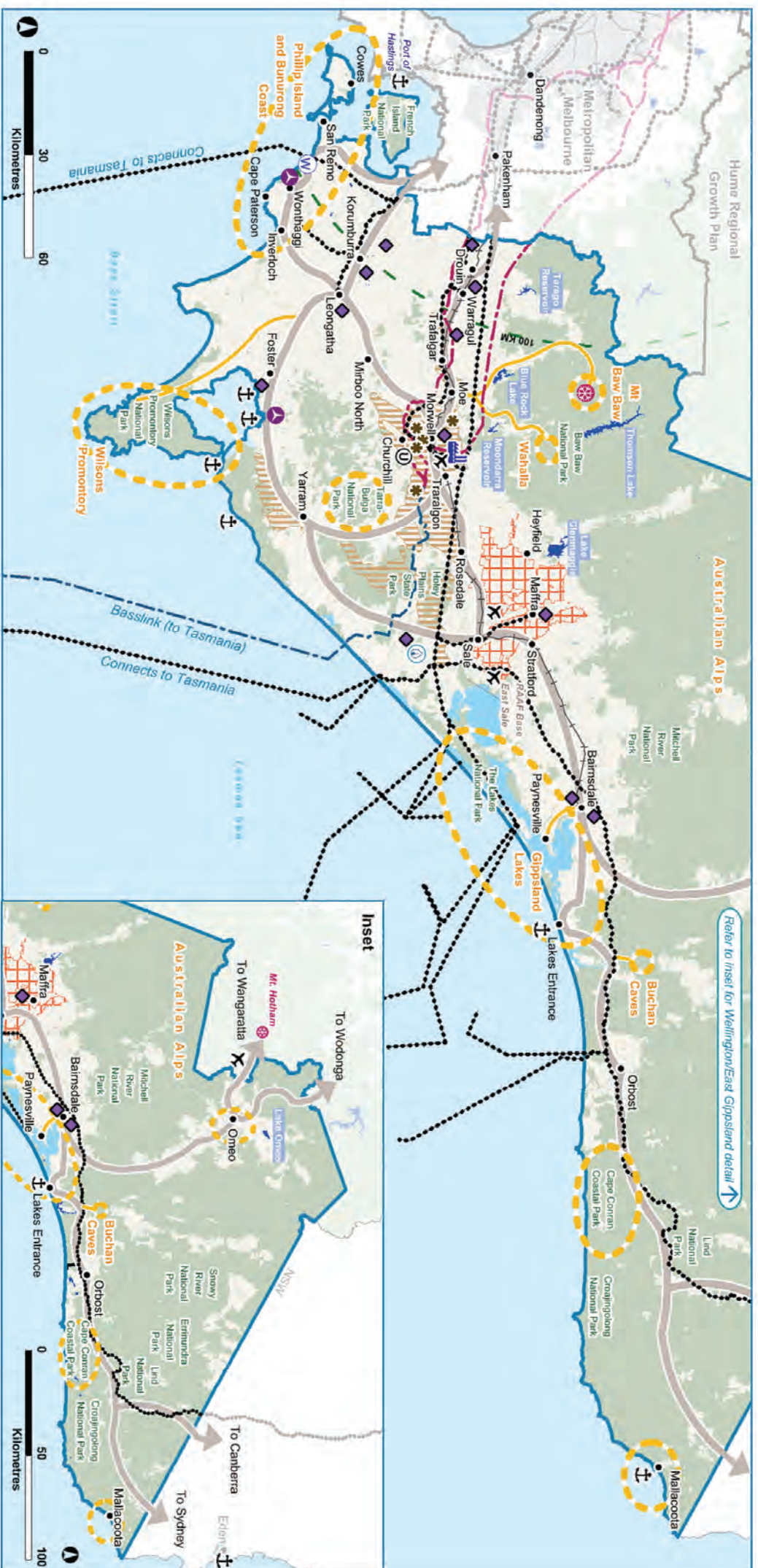
## 1.7. Strategic Assets

The Gippsland region has a wide range of strategic assets that are important to both the region and Victoria – these assets include:

- Water supply – including:
  - Major water supply dams
  - Wonthaggi desalination plant
  - Macalister Irrigation District
- Energy – including:
  - Power stations
  - Significant brown coal deposits
  - Major wind farms
  - High voltage transmission lines
  - Offshore oil and gas fields
  - Longford gas plant
  - Oil and gas pipelines
- Agriculture – including significant areas of agricultural land that supports dairy, beef, horticultural and timber production
- Manufacturing – including:
  - Australia Paper Maryvale
  - Major dairy product manufacturers
  - Major food processors
  - Transport – including:
    - Princes Highway
    - Major regional highways
    - Gippsland rail corridor
    - Latrobe Regional Airport
    - Local ports
- Defence facilities – including:
  - RAAF Base at East Sale
  - Australian Defence Force Flying Training School (to be established)
- Tourism – including:
  - Major National and State Parks - including Wilsons Promontory, Mount Baw Baw and the Alpine, Cape Conran, Morwell, Croajingalong and Tarra Bulga National Parks
  - Gippsland Lakes
  - Phillip Island
  - A wide range of rural villages and heritage locations including Walhalla



# Gippsland - Future Directions for Gippsland Strategic Assets







## 2. Strategic Theme Economic Prosperity



## 2

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# Strategic Theme – Economic Prosperity

### 2.1. Key Objectives

The key objectives of this strategic theme are to:

- Grow the number of jobs in the regional economy
- Develop greater economic prosperity and diversity
- Attract greater levels of investment

### 2.2. Overview of the Regional Economy

Gippsland's economy, and its competitive advantages reflect the region's diverse and world-class natural resources that include:

- Extensive areas of agricultural land that support dairy, beef, horticultural and timber production;
- Vast reserves of brown coal, and offshore oil and gas fields that are relied upon by Victoria's, and to some extent Australia's energy sectors;
- Many iconic locations throughout the region that underpin Gippsland's reputation as a major international and domestic tourism destination.

The region's exports are dominated by energy related resources, including oil and gas production and electricity generation, as well as dairy product manufacturing. Beef, paper products and civil construction are also major exports. Gippsland's economy is growing - between 2006 and 2011 the total number of jobs in the regional economy grew by more than 3,400.

### 2.3. Characteristics and Trends in the Regional Economy

The following sections highlight the key characteristics and trends in Gippsland's regional economy with particular respect to employment, exports and expenditure of goods and services from regional suppliers.

#### 2.3.1. Regional Employment

The total employment estimate for the Gippsland region is 89,386 jobs with the largest number of jobs in the sectors noted in the following table

Industry Sector		No of Jobs	% of total jobs
Health Care & Social Assistance	More than 7,000 of these jobs are in "health care services"	11,852	13.3%
Retail Trade		9,872	11%
Construction	Construction services – i.e. "tradies" account for more than 4,000 of these jobs	8,136	9.1%
Education & Training	Pre-School, Primary, Secondary & Special Education sector contributes more than 6,000 of these jobs	7,821	8.7%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	The Sheep, Grains, Beef & Dairy Cattle sector contributes more than 6,000 of these jobs	7,777	8.7%
Manufacturing	Dairy Product Manufacturing contributes 1,284 jobs; Bakery Product Manufacturing contributes 934 jobs; Pulp, Paper & Paperboard Manufacturing contributes 850 jobs	7,679	8.6%
Tourism	These jobs are in a range of sectors with more than 3,400 jobs in the Accommodation & Food Services sector	6,104	6.8%

Source - REMPLAN

Over the period 2006 to 2011, the sectors that experienced the largest employment growth were Health and Construction where the number of jobs grew by more than 1,600 in each sector. Employment grew by more than 800 jobs in the Accommodation and Food Services sector and there was substantial jobs growth in Professional Services, Public Administration, and the Education and Training sectors.

During this same period, the number of jobs in the agriculture sector contracted by more than 1,100 and by almost 800 in the retail sector. The Electricity and the Saw Mill, Wood and Paper Product Manufacturing sectors also experienced a sizeable contraction in employment.

### 2.3.2. Exports and Expenditure on Local Goods and Services

Exports and the expenditure on goods and services from regional businesses generate revenue for the region. These revenues are used to pay wages and salaries, and may be invested in increasing the capability and competitiveness of businesses and support employment growth. Growth in the sectors that are major exporters and/or that have the largest major expenditure on local goods and services will have the widest positive impact on the regional economy.

The regional economy generates exports to the value of more than \$9.4 billion - the major exporting sectors are noted in the following table:

#### Exports

Industry Sector		\$B	% of total exports
Manufacturing	Dairy Product Manufacturing contributes more than \$694.3 million regional exports; Pulp, Paper & Paperboard Manufacturing contributes more than \$680 million	\$2.77	29.3%
Mining	Oil & Gas Extraction contributes more than \$1,368 million of regional exports	\$1.83	19.3%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	Electricity Generation contributes more than \$1,034.8 million of regional exports	\$1.38	14.6%
Construction	Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction contributes more than \$945.5 million of regional exports	\$1.28	13.5%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	Sheep, Grains, Beef & Dairy Cattle contributes more than \$769.8 million of regional exports	\$1.02	10.7%

Source - REMPLAN

The total local expenditure estimate for Gippsland Region is more than \$7,8 billion - more than 40% of this expenditure is generated by the construction and manufacturing sectors.

#### Expenditure on Local Goods and Services

Industry Sector		\$B	% of total expenditure
Construction	Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction contributes more than \$639.2 million of local expenditure.	\$1.77	22.7%
Manufacturing	Dairy Product Manufacturing contributes more than \$447.9 million of local expenditure; Pulp, Paper & Paperboard Manufacturing contributes more than \$153.4 million	\$1.58	20.2%

Source - REMPLAN

## 2.4. Key Economic Sectors

The following sectors represent key opportunities for investment attraction and employment growth based on the combination of their impact on the regional economy, the capability of associated assets and resources and the future demand for related goods and/or services.

### 2.4.1. Food Production and Processing

Food production and processing is a key strength of the regional economy. The projected substantial increase in the global demand for food represents a considerable opportunity for Gippsland's food products, and in particular, dairy.

Achieving a significant increase in the volume of food production in the region is a key strategic challenge. The Gippsland Food Plan aims to expand the food industry's worth and contribution to the regional economy by promoting growth and attracting investment, pursuing the provision of enabling infrastructure and logistics, supporting innovation and change adaptability through effective advocacy and appropriate policy development. This will require collaboration across industry, research and development providers and government. This strategic focus aims to increase the quantity of food production in the region and grow the value of its related export markets. The expansion of food production will also need to address potential conflict between community attitudes and industry investment in intensive agriculture and ensure that valuable agricultural land remains a key principle in strategic land use plans.

Investment in relevant infrastructure is key to improving the efficiency and competitiveness of regional food production. This includes the modernisation of the MID, which already contributes \$500 million per year to the region's economy. An increase in Gippsland's food production will provide opportunities for increased food related processing, manufacturing, and related value adding. Support for increased food manufacturing will require:

- Investment attraction with respect to expanding and/or developing processing facilities;
- Extending the capability of local supply chains;
- Furthering the export readiness of industry;
- Improving the connectivity to ports and other key domestic markets

### 2.4.2. Energy

Energy production is one of Gippsland's major industries with the region producing around 85 per cent of Victoria's electricity, 97 per cent of Victoria's natural gas, and 14 per cent of Australia's oil. Gippsland's vast brown coal resource, along with oil and gas fields in Bass Strait, allied to existing infrastructure, such as the transmission network, expertise and skills in relation to energy production provides an important competitive advantage and economic development opportunity.

In order to protect and further strengthen Gippsland's competitive position as an energy producing region, there is a need to work with industry, and the community, and position Gippsland as a future leader in new, low emissions energy technologies including renewables.

Over the medium to long term Gippsland has an opportunity to diversify its energy generation mix, and capitalise on the existing infrastructure assets. Such opportunities are likely to emerge as ageing fossil fuel generation assets approach their end-of-life, but are dependent on supportive state and national policy settings, and market demand. An opportunity exists for regional development groups to work collaboratively with industry, researchers and education providers to develop Gippsland's position as a world-class and innovative energy hub.

#### 2.4.2.1. Brown Coal

The region's vast brown coal resource will continue to provide a significant amount of the State's baseload electricity demand for some time to come. Technologies including coal drying, gasification and liquefaction can transform coal into high quality hydrocarbon products such as fuels and fertilisers, creating a future for brown coal beyond power generation. In addition, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology provides a future possibility to significantly reduce the emissions associated with brown coal combustion and utilization.

Future opportunities for brown coal in a carbon-constrained economy will be largely dependent on projects that are technically sound, commercially viable and socially acceptable. The Victorian and Commonwealth Governments have allocated funding to the Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program (ALDP) to facilitate new, large-scale demonstration coal development projects in the Latrobe Valley.

Further to the above, there is a need for well-defined government policy regarding the future utilisation of the region's brown coal resources. This policy needs to provide a clear signal for potential investors and enable the confident determination of regional priorities with respect leveraging energy as a driver for future economic growth.

#### 2.4.2.2. Gas

The Australian Energy Market Operator projects that east coast gas demand (including for LNG to export) will almost triple by 2020, from around 700 PJ in 2014 to around 1960 PJ in 2020. The increase in demand will be entirely driven by demand for LNG exports; with domestic gas consumption in eastern Australia expected to fall slowly over this period. Victoria's gas demand is also forecast to fall slowly over this period.

Production of both oil and gas has now peaked and it is estimated that only about 15 per cent of known crude oil reserves and about 40 per cent of known gas reserves remain for production. The main challenge for the industry is to extend production from existing and new fields and to take into account environmental and social considerations.

#### 2.4.2.3. Large Scale Renewable Energy

Increasing community concern with the issue of climate change, plus the acknowledgment of the need for a transition to a cleaner economy sooner rather than later, will focus the interest of government and industry for investment in this area.

Bioenergy, solar and wind all offer economic, social and environmental opportunities in the region. Large Scale wind projects are suited along the Gippsland Coast, whilst large-scale bioenergy and solar are suited to the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Plains.

Renewables would include developments such as the Bald Hills Wind Farm in South Gippsland, a 52 wind turbine facility that was commissioned in 2015, was a \$300M investment, creating construction jobs and enough electricity to power 60,000 homes every year. One of the key challenges to growing investment in renewables will be gaining community support for further large-scale developments.

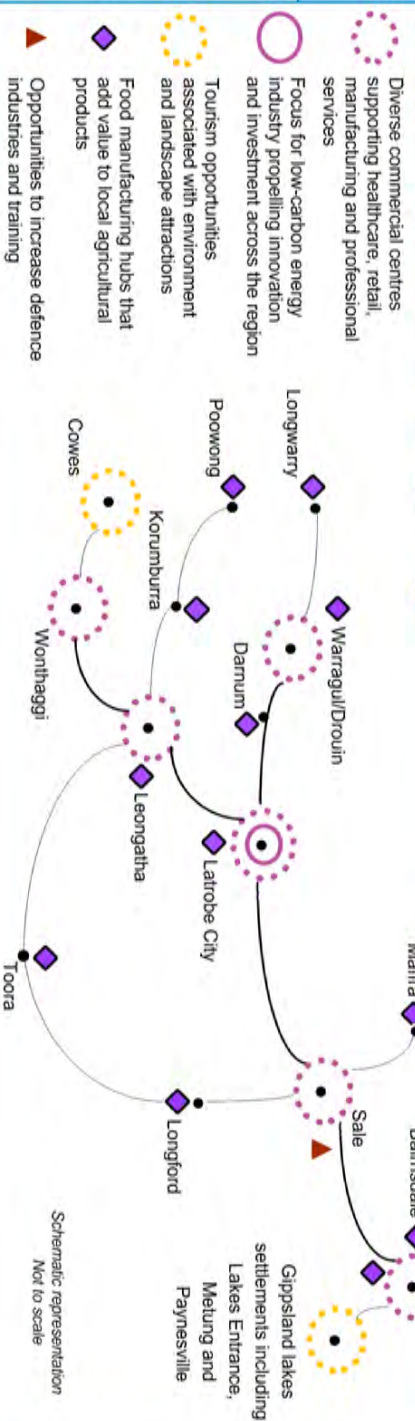


# Gippsland - Future Directions for the Economy

- Protect key agriculture and forestry land and support food production for domestic and export markets
- Protect the Macalister Irrigation District as a key asset for horticulture and dairy production
- Support tourism opportunities associated with environment and landscape attractions
- Support growth of commercial fishing
- Organic recycling facility
- Maintain access to sand resources for the construction industry
- Retain brown coal reserves for derivatives and future use in low-emissions power generation
- Energy generation and potential for carbon capture and storage
- Future export opportunity from the Port of Hastings
- Protect the transport network to retain and enhance access to employment and export markets
- Electricity transmission line (500 kV)
- Australian Paper Maryvale
- Victorian Desalination Plant
- Longford gas plant
- Gas reserve
- Oil reserve
- Public land
- Lakes
- Rivers



## Urban economic opportunities within the Gippsland region



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#### 2.4.3. Manufacturing

Outside of food processing, Gippsland's other major manufacturing activity is paper manufacturing, which is facing considerable competitive challenges. Allied to this industry is a significant level of plantation forestry in the region and related transport services. Australian Paper has invested \$90 million in de-inking technology and plant that will remove 80,000 tonnes of wastepaper from Australia's landfill, saving up to 200,000 tonnes of carbon emissions every year - the equivalent to taking more than 70,000 cars off Australia's roads.

Future opportunities for the region also include the development of coal-to-products industries, such as processing brown coal as a potential source of gas, diesel and fertilizer for both domestic and export markets. The Advanced Lignite Demonstration Program involves three companies developing high value energy products from Gippsland's vast coal reserves, including oil, fertiliser and upgraded coal for local and export markets, as well as a number of other very active developments in planning and design are pointing to the future of major process operations in the Latrobe Valley. Should these ventures move to full commercialization there would be a sizeable expansion of the region's manufacturing sector as well as major opportunities for the construction sector associated with the building of the required processing facilities.

Aerospace manufacturing is the next highest manufacturing export after food and paper processing. The multinational company Mahindra Aerospace, trading as GippsAero, is based in the Latrobe Valley at Latrobe Regional Airport and manufactures the only aircraft of its kind in Australia.

#### 2.4.4. Health

The health sector already generates the largest number of jobs in Gippsland and, as the region's population grows, the demand for health services will increase, as too will health related employment. The 'Residential Care & Social Assistance Services' sector - which includes aged care services - contributes more than 4,700 of the health sector jobs and has grown from 2,600 jobs since 2001 or by 180%.

There is a need to further develop a range of Gippsland's hospitals and major health facilities, including the Latrobe Regional Hospital and the West Gippsland Hospital, to meet an increasing demand which would see further increases in health related employment as well as a number of jobs during construction.

#### 2.4.5. The Visitor Economy

Gippsland's substantial visitor economy has significant opportunities for growth. Destination Gippsland estimates that more than 10.8 million domestic and international visitors per annum are attracted to the region's significant nature-based experiences including the Gippsland Lakes, Ninety Mile Beach, Wilson's Promontory, Phillip Island Nature Parks and the Mt Baw Baw, Croajingalong, and Tarra Bulga National Parks.

Gippsland's natural tourism product is augmented by food related experiences, which leverage the region's agricultural producers, and are central to a wide range of arts and cultural events held across Gippsland all year round. Boating, coastal tourism and recreation are major drawcards to visitors across the many waterways of Gippsland. There are opportunities to create Indigenous cultural experiences including performance, storytelling, art, guiding and other activities that will grow people's understanding of Aboriginal culture and grow employment and business opportunities for the region's Aboriginal community.

The current level of visitation to the region supports 3,000 businesses and generates more than 15,000 direct and indirect jobs. Destination Gippsland estimates that a 9% increase in the current 5.45 million overnight stays would generate a total of \$2.85 billion in economic expenditure and more than 20,000 direct and indirect jobs. Growing the level of visitation by domestic and international visitors to Gippsland, particularly from growing markets such as China and India, requires:

- Development of new experiences that leverage Gippsland's unique natural environments and assets and the ongoing improvement of existing experiences;
- Investment in infrastructure that supports improved local amenity, recreational facilities, accommodation, transport services, recreational boating and fishing, and the upgrade of roads, such as the South Face Road, to provide improved access to the region's high value natural assets and tourism experiences;
- Ongoing development of industry and operators' capability including greater engagement with digital platforms that promote Gippsland exceptional offerings

There is also a need to provide tourism operators and investors with an information and regulatory advantage as an incentive for investment and job growth in the nature based tourism sector, benefiting from Gippsland's environmental values.



#### 2.4.6. Defence

The defence sector is prominent in the region through the RAAF Base at East Sale. The establishment of the Defence Force Flying Training School at the RAAF Base at East Sale will provide further opportunities to build on this presence and generate a demand for goods and services beyond that associated with the projected population growth.

### **2.5. Building Improved Economic Capability in the Region**

The following are areas of development required in order for the Gippsland region to best leverage the opportunities inherent in key industry sectors and address key challenges to growing the regional economy

#### 2.5.1. Innovation

There is need for increased innovation in Gippsland's key areas of competitive strengths including, the food manufacturing and energy sectors, to ensure that they continue to drive employment and exports. To this end, the region will work with State Government, Federation University and industry to encourage more investment in research and development and the uptake of new knowledge to firms by supporting regional city innovation clusters that drive innovation, skills and export growth. There is a need to also support businesses to engage researchers to address business problems and challenges.

Key to this will be the establishment of hi-tech education precinct in the Latrobe Valley, focusing on industry innovation, research and development, and enterprise stimulation.

#### 2.5.2. Low Carbon Transition

The impacts of climate change, both direct climatic effects and indirect impacts, such as implementation of policy responses necessary to curb greenhouse gas emissions, will present both challenges and opportunities for the Gippsland region.

The projected impact of adapting to this changing physical environment and new policy settings will require Gippsland to rebalance its economy so that it can effectively transition to a future where the region continues to prosper and where resources are used in a sustainable way. Such a transition requires a co-ordinated and focused effort involving all levels of government, private industry, business leaders, unions, non-profit organisations and the community.

Contraction in emissions intensive industries would have widespread negative consequences for the regional economy, employment and communities of Gippsland. However, a low carbon emissions will also provide new opportunities to diversify Gippsland's economy through growth in sectors including clean coal technologies, renewable energy, energy efficiency, forestry and agriculture.

There is a need for low carbon transition plan to be developed to guide transition activities and to optimise the social, economic and environmental outcomes. The low carbon transition plan will require resources and a clear implementation plan.

#### 2.5.3. The Regional Workforce and Workforce Planning

The number of employed people who reside in the Gippsland region is estimated to be more than 107,000. More than 22,000 of employed people residing in Gippsland work outside of the region with more than 4,600 of these people working in the construction sector.

The workforce is ageing - more than 47% of the workforce is over 45 years old – in sectors such as agriculture, utilities, health and education more than 55% of workers aged over 45 years old. As the regional population ages the workforce participation rate is falling. This is a challenge to supporting employment growth in the Gippsland region.

The regional economy is changing. Much of the employment growth has been in service sectors including health. This growth, along with the opportunities in energy, coal derivatives, food and the digital economy all have implications for the capabilities of the regional workforce going forward. The Gippsland Workforce Plan will identify the future workforce and capabilities required across critical industries within the Gippsland region and position Gippsland for long-term, sustainable future growth.

#### 2.5.4. Employment for People with a Disability

Australia ranks 21 out of 29 OECD countries in employment participation rates for those with a disability. The Gippsland region will seek to improve access to employment and vocational opportunities for people with a disability.

#### 2.5.5. Investment Attraction

A number of economic development related processes, including the Gippsland Food Plan, have identified the need to improve the region's investment attraction capability. Improving Gippsland's connection to its national and global markets by increasing targeted trade and investment attraction will be a key driver of productivity and job creation in the region.

Rapid economic growth in Asia and the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan and Korea will create significant opportunities for Gippsland to capitalise on, particularly within agribusiness - is a source of competitive advantage for the region.

Rapid economic growth in Asia and the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with China, Japan and Korea will create significant opportunities for Gippsland to capitalise upon. Invest Gippsland will be a structured approach to investment attraction for Gippsland and, will include:

- Identifying and supporting priority industry sectors to compete in the global marketplace that have potential for economic growth including Agrifood
- A targeted approach to promoting the region's reputation, competitive advantages and investment opportunities
- Driving more globally competitive behaviour at a business level to increase overall productivity and grow export capability

This will require effective collaboration between Gippsland's state and local governments, business and industry.

#### 2.5.6. Alignment with State Government's Priority Economic Sectors

The Victorian Government has identified seven key priority sectors for economic development:

- Food and fibre
- New energy technology
- Medical and pharmaceutical technology
- Transport, defence and construction technology
- International education
- Professional services
- The visitor economy

Gippsland has particular strengths in a number of these sectors including food, energy and the visitor economy. There is a need to promote this alignment, including the region's impact on the Victorian economy, in future investment attraction efforts.

## 2.6. Strategic Priorities

The GRP will identify priority projects and initiatives that address the strategic opportunities and needs associated with improving the region's economic prosperity including:

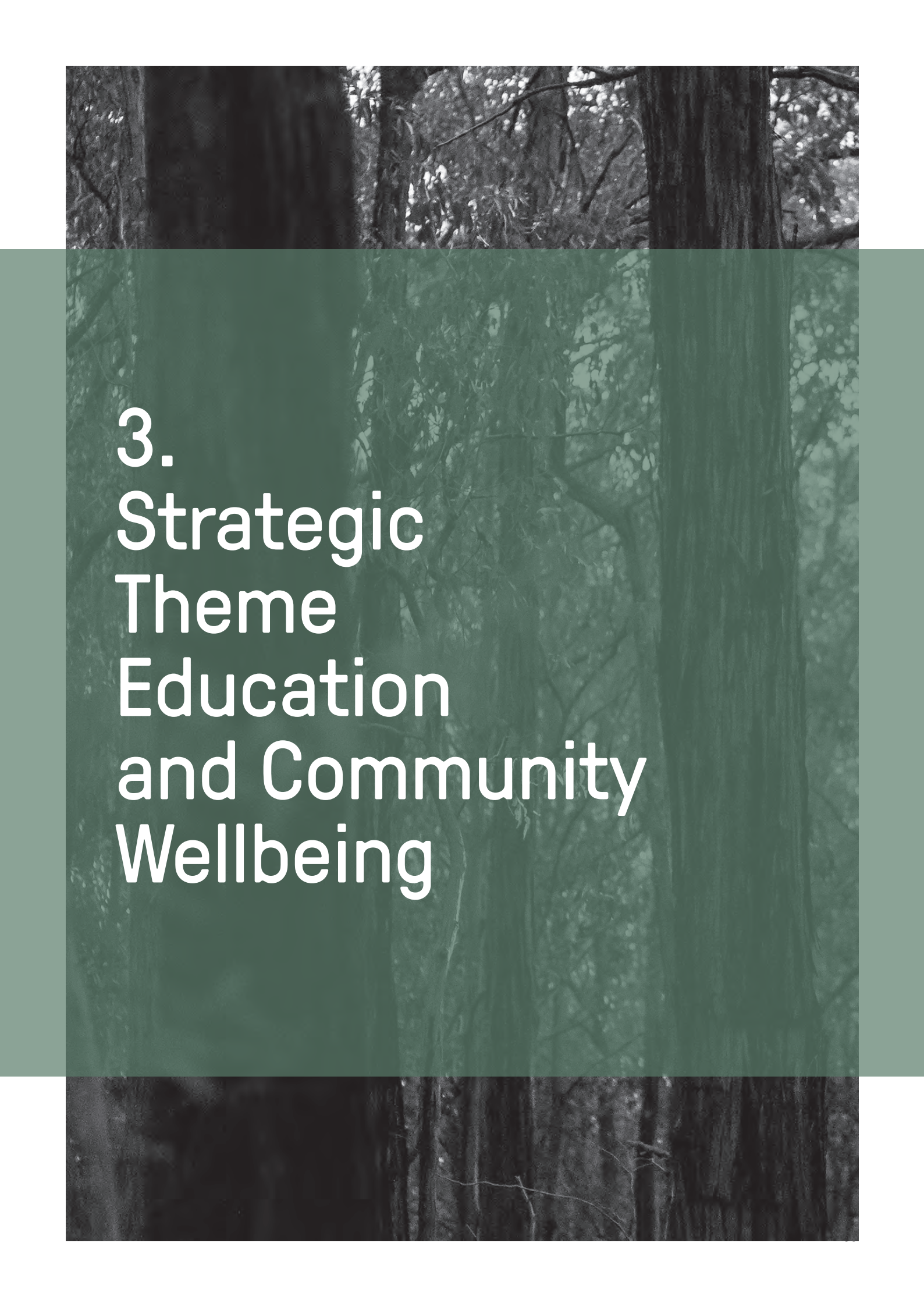
- Identifying and prioritising the key regional level infrastructure that will be required to support economic development, job creation and growth over the next twenty years. This includes understanding the impacts of forecast population, demographic and economic change.
- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of existing key economic assets including the MID
- Increasing the quantity of food production and value adding in the region and the value of its food related exports. This includes the identification of the areas that comprise the region's most versatile and productive agricultural land for food production and working with the community and agricultural sector to identify actions to increase production and profitability in those areas.
- Supporting the development of Gippsland's brown coal resources through the:
  - Development and facilitation of new coal technologies that secure a future for the resource beyond power generation and are viable in a carbon constrained economy; and
  - Advocacy for government policy with respect to coal that provides a clear signal to potential investors and the identification of regional priorities
- Increasing the number of domestic and international visitors, and visitor overnight stays through:
  - Attracting investment in infrastructure that facilitates the improvement of existing high value assets and product development including new experiences in the region's world class wilderness areas;
  - Supporting the Phillip Island Strategic Tourism Plan;
  - Providing tourism operators and investors with an information and regulatory advantage as an incentive for investment and job growth in the nature based tourism sector;
- Improving processes to facilitate investment attraction, promote the region's competitive strengths and capabilities and increase the export readiness of industries and businesses
- Developing the capability of the region's workforce to support growth opportunities in the regional economy and improving the vocational opportunities for a wider range of people
- Fostering greater levels of innovation through improved partnerships between education, research and industry
- Gaining policy support for Gippsland's key manufacturing sectors including coal derivatives, paper, and the aeronautical sectors.

## 2.7. Key Indicators

The following indicators will provide insight into the impact of the implementation of the GRP on regional capability with respect to the Economic Prosperity theme:

- Employment – number of jobs and jobs growth;
- Exports – value of exports and export growth;
- Wages and salaries - value of wages and salaries and growth in the value of wages and salaries.



The background of the slide is a photograph of a forest with tall, thin tree trunks and dense foliage. A semi-transparent green rectangular overlay covers the central portion of the image, providing a background for the text.

# 3. Strategic Theme Education and Community Wellbeing

## 3

## Strategic Theme – Education and Community Wellbeing

### 3.1. Objectives

The objectives of the Education and Community Wellbeing Strategic Theme are:

- Improved levels of educational attainment against those for the rest of Victoria;
- Improved health outcomes against those for the rest of Victoria;
- Improved access to health services against those for the rest of Victoria;
- Improved levels of community safety against those for the rest of Victoria;
- Improved access for Indigenous people to education and employment opportunities.

### 3.2. Educational Attainment in Gippsland

It is widely accepted that a skilled and educated community increases wellbeing and leads to a more productive economy. Regional Development Victoria report - Research into Education Aspiration for Regional Victoria noted that a single additional year of education increases life expectancy by 0.18 years and raises earnings by approximately ten per cent.

Long-term data shows that secondary school students in Gippsland are less likely to complete school, to understand the range of post-secondary educational opportunities available to them and to attend tertiary education and are also more likely to “refuse, defer or abandon university places than their metropolitan counterparts.” The 2014 On Track Survey (the survey) noted that 67% of the 3,560 students who commenced Year 7 in 2008 completed Year 12 in 2013.

The survey notes that 38.3% of Gippsland students were opting for higher education compared with 54.3% of students from across Victoria – see table below:

**Post School destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers  
- 2014 On Track survey**

	Bachelor degree	Certificate IV+	Certificate I-III	All VET Cert-Dip	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	All App/Train	Deferred	Employed full-time	Employed part-time	All Employed	Looking for work	NILFET	Unknown	
Gippsland	526	133	58	191	101	61	162	210	64	144	208	64	11	0	1,372
	38.3%	9.7%	4.2%	13.9%	7.4%	4.4%	11.8%	15.3%	4.7%	10.5%	15.2%	4.7%	0.8%		
Victoria	17477	4005	1161		1523	732		3039	850	2073		1178	144	1	32,183
	54.3%	12.4%	3.6%	16.1%	4.7%	2.3%	7.0%	9.4%	2.6%	6.4%	9.1%	3.7%	0.4%	0.0%	

The survey also identifies that 11.8% of Gippsland students were opting for apprenticeships and traineeships compared with 7.0% of students from across Victoria.

It is generally recognised that one of the most significant impediments to educational attainment in regional Victoria—including Gippsland—is participation - more specifically, aspiration and access.

The formation of the Federation University campus at Churchill provides a significant opportunity for Gippsland to improve access to tertiary education. The University is reporting a 20% increase in student enrolments from 634 in 2014 to 760 in 2015. The largest percentage – some 21% - of enrolments are in nursing; this augurs well for the projected increase for the demand for health related services and related employment.

The establishment of a Gippsland Education and Industry Skills Council will seek to foster improved educational attainment. This group will focus on the identification of barriers to and opportunities for increased tertiary education participation, attainment and retention, informed by local tertiary education providers, employers, industry and the community.

### 3.3. Education and Training Facilities

It is recognised that learning and education occurs in formal and informal ways and settings; across a spectrum from small local organisations to vocational education and training (VET) providers, to workplaces to a large globally oriented university.

Federation Training is also of significant importance to the region in improving access to vocational related training. The development of the Port of Sale Education precinct is critical to sustainable operation of Federation Training. This development will have a significant impact on Federation Training's financial efficiency and its ability to effectively deliver training programs and services.

### 3.4. Regional Health Outcomes

Life expectancy for males and females in Gippsland is less than the Victorian average with the life expectancy for males being significantly lower than the Victorian average.

#### Life Expectancy Gippsland and Victoria - 2007

			95% CI		Sig	
		LE	LL	UL		
Female	Gippsland	84.0	83.3	84.7		0.72%
	Victoria	84.4	84.2	84.6		0.12%
Male	Gippsland	78.1	77.3	78.9	L	-0.51%
	Victoria	80.3	80.1	80.5		0.37%

Notes -  
Sig indicates a life expectancy at birth significantly higher (H) or lower (L) than the Victorian average. LE is the estimated number of years of expected life. UL/LL is the Upper/Lower 95% confidence interval (CI).



The rate of disease burden per 1,000 persons can be used to compare the health status of LGAs with the region or Victorian rate. The Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) is a measure of the disease burden in a population combining the loss of years of life due to premature mortality and the loss of healthy years of life due to disease or injury. A high DALY rate indicates poor health status of the population.

A low DALY rate reflects better health status. The DALY rates for males, and females, in Gippsland are higher than the DALY rates for all of Victoria. This indicates that Gippsland has a health status below that for all of Victoria.

#### DALY rates Gippsland and Victoria

	Males	Females
Gippsland	159.0	140.0
Victoria	143.0	129.1

#### 3.4.1. Healthy Communities

- A number of programs have been developed and delivered in the region during recent years to encourage healthy lifestyles and to improve health literacy. However, increased support and additional funding is needed, particularly for evidence based activities and programs that promote healthier lifestyles where people 'work, live and play', and to address some of the underlying social determinants including social inclusion, self-esteem, connectedness and resilience. This means health services, local government, and a range of other stakeholders are required to support further investment and outcomes in these areas.

#### 3.5. Health Facilities and Services

Improved access to health facilities and services is a key element in achieving greater levels of community wellbeing.

#### 3.5.1. Hospitals

Gippsland is serviced by the Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) at Traralgon, the major regional hospital, four sub-regional facilities located in Warragul (West Gippsland), Bairnsdale, Sale/Maffra and Wonthaggi, and local health services located in Leongatha/Korumburra, Foster, Omeo, Yarram and Orbost. With Baw Baw and Bass Coast shires among the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, existing hospitals including, Warragul, Wonthaggi and Latrobe are under increasing pressure to accommodate rising demand. There is a need to build capacity in acute hospital services to meet future needs. Some of this capacity can be created by service model changes and process re-design, and some will require new and expanded infrastructure, particularly in areas of high population and demand growth. LRH, as the Regional Referral Hospital, needs to expand its capacity and capability in several areas to reduce the need for Gippsland patients to visit Melbourne hospitals for specialist tertiary services. Stage 2A of a capital expansion is currently being initiated at LRH, with further stages required over time. Likewise, the West Gippsland Hospital services a sub-region experiencing the fastest population growth in Gippsland, and among the fastest in Victoria. A new hospital will be critical to underpinning and accommodating this exciting period of growth.

#### 3.5.2. Health Services

A range of community health services, mental health services, health planning and coordination organisations and networks including Aboriginal health organisations also support the region. The regional health and aged care service system also includes at its core local government, specialist consulting practitioners, private allied health practitioners, private hospitals, aged care services, pharmacists, dentists, ambulance and a range of other health-related services. There is a need to address demand pressures at a number of levels, and to deliver more person centred services to people in the right place and at the right time.

The number of health professionals per 1,000 population in the region is lower than that for Victoria with the exception being nurses/midwives according to the 2012 Gippsland Regional Health Status Profile issued by the Department of Health.



	General Practitioners	Specialist medical practitioners	Nurses/midwives	Pharmacists	Physiotherapists
	per 1,000 population				
Gippsland	1.09	0.23	16.57	0.79	0.58
Victoria	1.33	0.69	15.47	0.86	0.93

Gippsland health services increasingly need to work as a 'health system' to ensure integrated pathways for clients navigating a complex service system. Health services in high growth areas, including West Gippsland Healthcare Group and Bass Coast Regional Health, need to expand and renew infrastructure in line with their respective capabilities, consistent with the capabilities of neighbouring health services.

Many of the future strategies will need to build on and expand community and home based services, which have already seen significant growth, particularly in aged care. Major reforms in aged care, disability and mental health services – underpinned by the commencement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme – will support this shift, and be driven by more client directed care principles – including more personal control of funding packages for a range of supports. Better integrating care in this environment will be critical – between GPs, health services, aged care providers and many others – Primary Health Networks working closely with state funded services and networks will be critical to this. Workforce availability, and workforce re-design is critical in supporting expanded bed, community and home based services into the future.

Population health and primary and secondary prevention initiatives will also become increasingly critical to prevent the onset of chronic disease and to intervene and manage chronic illness earlier and more effectively where it is identified. Primary prevention is the domain of traditional health services – but also local government, education, business and a range of leaders who can influence behaviour change and help address improvements in the underlying social determinants of health.

### 3.5.3. Mental Health Services

There are a range of state and commonwealth funded mental health services in the clinical and non-clinical domains across Gippsland. Many of these services have been expanded or recommissioned in recent years to be more person centred and recovery oriented. There is a need to better integrate and expand these services over time, and to ensure appropriate prevention and early intervention services are in place and built upon – many of which are the domain of the universal health system and not specialist mental health providers. Medicare Local Gippsland's Priority Health Needs in Gippsland report, published in June 2014 highlights a deficiency in the availability of mental health support services in Gippsland and there is high demand for primary mental health services and counselling in the region that is not being adequately met.

### 3.5.4. Positive Ageing

Given the projected significant increase in the size of the region's population of older people, there is a need to improve the awareness of, and responses to, the needs of an ageing community. This includes integrating the needs of older people into broader community planning and development programs, and recognising the expertise and contribution offered by older people.

The demand for services relevant to the needs of older people is already above that for all of Victoria and the availability of aged care places is below that for all of Victoria as noted in the following table.

	HACC clients aged 70 plus per 1,000 target population	Aged care places (high care) per 1,000 target population	Aged care places (low care) per 1,000 target population
Gippsland	410.9	46.2	34.5
Victoria	339.6	45.8	41.7

Source - Gippsland Health Online

### 3.6. Community Safety and Crime Prevention

Community safety and crime prevention is a joint responsibility across all levels of government and in the community service sector in Gippsland.

#### 3.6.1. Crime Prevention

Strategic guidance to crime prevention initiatives is provided by Justice Reference Groups in South West Central Gippsland and Gippsland East. A committee has formed in each area, co-chaired by the Department of Justice and Regulation and the Victoria Police that involves support from local government, state government and community service agencies. The groups promote a whole-of-government integrated approach to service delivery that enhances crime prevention and community safety in the region. Both groups work in partnership and collaboration to focus on information sharing, discussion of emerging issues, and sharing best practice.

#### 3.6.2. Family Violence

The impact of family violence is experienced by thousands of women, children, families and individuals in every community across Victoria. The statistics reported by the Victoria Police relating to the number of family incidents where charges have been laid in Gippsland are tabled below. They indicate that there has been a patent increase in these events across all the LGAs in the region, which is indicative of an increased trend in the incidence of domestic violence.

#### Number of Family Incidents where charges have been laid in Gippsland

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	% change from 2009/10 to 2013/14
Bass Coast	242	249	309	431	488	202%
South Gippsland	160	193	246	267	318	199%
Baw Baw	253	316	434	437	552	218%
Latrobe City	1,018	1,329	1,810	1,990	2,044	201%
East Gippsland	387	553	639	835	1,000	258%
Wellington	267	360	544	576	640	240%
Gippsland	2,327	2,910	3,982	4,536	5,042	217%

The complexity of this issue requires a cross sector, multi-tiered response incorporating prevention, early intervention, crisis and procedural justice initiative targetting whole of community and specific cohorts encompassing specific cultures, gender, age groupings and other identified needs.

The GRP seeks to support a whole of community effort to put a stop to Family Violence through healthier, respectful and safe relationships and increased personal choice control and protection. This will also include seeking access to the \$81.3 million that the Victorian Government has committed to the trauma and dislocation associated with family violence, and the benefits achieved through increased awareness, education and shared responsibility.

### 3.6.3. Crystal Methamphetamine

The use of crystal methamphetamine, known as 'ice', is a widespread issue across Victoria, in particular, regional Victoria. The increase in ice use in Gippsland is contributing to the increase in family violence and crime rates for the region.

Gippsland health services and community groups have been recipients of funding as part of the Victorian Government's \$45.5 million Ice Action Plan which aims to reduce the harm from ice use across Victoria.

### 3.6.4. Emergency Management

Emergency Management is a joint responsibility managed by multiple response, relief and recovery agencies across Gippsland. The Gippsland region formed a Regional Strategic Fire Management Committee in 2008 and brought together regional response and relief & recovery committees to form a Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) in 2012.

The REMPC has the responsibility for providing the highest level of strategic direction for and leading the approaches taken to all elements of Emergency Management throughout the region. The following sub-committees report to the REMPC:

- Gippsland Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee
- Gippsland Regional Risk Working Group
- Gippsland Region Relief and Recovery Working Group.

### **3.7. Arts**

Gippsland is home to several major performing arts centres and galleries, some of which are in need of redevelopment, refurbishment and in some cases replacement. There are significant 'gaps' in the geographic placement of these large facilities. Across the region there are also many community run spaces – galleries, theatres, artist run initiatives (ARIs), and workshop spaces.

Considerable deficiencies exist in terms of the breadth and access Gippsland residents have to arts experiences when compared with other regions across the state. These deficiencies may be geographic, economic, physical or social and can impact significantly on the liveability of the region. It is essential that the broadest aspects of accessibility and cultural diversity be considered when looking at the complete arts environment.

As Gippsland's population grows and diversifies, the level and type of support required for artists, arts organisations and creative communities will increase, as will community accessibility expectations. Work is needed to identify both strategies for supporting and developing Gippsland's creative communities, and to plan for arts programs, initiatives and environments that can cater to community need with a view to enhancing Gippsland's position as a lifestyle destination of choice.

### **3.8. Inclusiveness**

The GRP supports a commitment to ensuring that all communities in Gippsland are inclusive, diverse and equitable for everyone. This is to ensure that everyone in our communities, including those with higher levels of vulnerability, have a sense of belonging and the opportunities to reach their full potential in life.

The GRP seeks to ensure that, where needed, there is joint collaborative effort between local community organisations, local and state governments, police and schools to work together on shared community issues (e.g.: young people's transition from school to employment) and to improve social and economic outcomes (e.g.: health, well-being, educational and employment outcomes). In this way, Gippsland can be an inclusive place where people are safe, healthy and can participate fully in social and economic life of their communities.

### 3.9. Aboriginal Communities

Gippsland is home to several significant aboriginal communities. This includes peoples of the Gunaikurnai, Bidawal, Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung, Jaithmathang and Monero /Ngarigo Nations as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait people from other regions of Australia. The GRP acknowledges and will actively seek to complement the specific statewide and regional strategies and plans already underway or being implemented which are specifically directed at Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people have an unacceptably lower life expectancy than non-Aboriginal people.

A continued and escalated focus on closing the gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal people living in Gippsland will therefore be critical, and include:

- Reducing the differences in infant mortality rates, morbidity and low birth weights between the general population and Aboriginal people, and
- Improve access to services and outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Gippsland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are subject to a higher level and unacceptable rate of unemployment. Local governments are encouraged to provide training and employment as a direct employer and encouraging employment within business and industry through procurement practices. The employment aligns to and works collaboratively with both State and Federal Government priorities identified through:

- Indigenous Advancement Strategy
- Indigenous Procurement Policy
- Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy
- Closing the Gap through place based employment in local government
- Council's Recognition and Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### 3.10. Cultural Diversity

The region has had many people settle from other cultures – historically these arrivals were from the United Kingdom and Europe and, more recently, arrivals have included people from Asia, Africa and South America.

While Gippsland's cultural diversity of the region is much lower than the Victorian average, the region welcomes a range of cultures, identifying ways that inclusiveness can be encouraged and leveraging the benefits of diversity to promote improved community wellbeing.

### 3.11. Strategic Priorities

The GRP will identify priority projects and initiatives that address the strategic opportunities and needs associated with improving the region's educational attainment and community wellbeing including:

- Identifying barriers to, and opportunities for, increased tertiary education participation, attainment and retention through a process that is informed by local tertiary education providers, employers, industry and community
- Supporting Federation University in growing enrolments – particularly by people from the Gippsland community
- Supporting the development of an innovation and education precinct in the Latrobe Valley through collaboration with key regional stakeholders through partnerships and curriculum which supports industry needs
- Developing improved vocational training facilities in Sale and other locations in the region;
- Seeking support to develop business cases for the expansion and/or redevelopment of a range of the region's hospital facilities
- Undertaking joint workforce planning, including in the realm of shared and coordinated specialist medical workforce between hospitals in the regions
- Building on current work underway, led by health services in partnership with Department of Health and Human Services and the new Gippsland Primary Health Network, to ensure integrated service delivery across the region, agreeing on respective health service capabilities and enhancing client pathways and outcomes
- Building on existing population health planning in the region with a view to having one integrated health and well-being plan per local government area, with all local stakeholders contributing to its achievement
- Supporting relevant outcomes from the Royal Commission into Domestic Violence
- Supporting improved access to a range of opportunities for indigenous people in the region
- Seeking to improve the capacity and functionality of key arts facilities and improving access to arts programs and experiences for a wider population.

### 3.12. Key Indicators

The following indicators will provide insight into the impact of the implementation of the GRP on regional capability with respect to the Education and Community Wellbeing theme:

Number of:

- Gippsland residents completing Year 12
- Gippsland residents enrolling in tertiary education studies
- Gippsland residents completing tertiary education studies
- Hospital beds per Gippsland residents
- Health professionals per Gippsland residents.

The Gippsland Regional Resilience Monitor will also be used to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the Education and Community Wellbeing Strategic Theme.



# 4. Strategic Theme Natural Environment Stewardship



# 4

## Strategic Theme – Natural Environment Stewardship

### 4.1. Objectives

- Protecting Gippsland's unique natural environments
- Sustainable development of Gippsland's natural and built environments
- Sustainable use of Gippsland's natural resources
- Sustainable management of Gippsland's waste

### 4.2. Overview

Gippsland has a greater diversity of natural resources than any other region in Victoria. The region has large areas of valuable habitat including alpine areas, rivers and wetlands, large areas of public space – including iconic national and state parks, more than 700 kilometres of coastline, a wide range of agricultural spaces with high levels of annual rainfall, and significant reserves of brown coal, oil and gas. These natural assets are fundamental to the wellbeing of the region's community, and economy, and are significant assets for Victoria with respect to energy and water supplies as well as recreation and tourism. The effective stewardship of these assets is of critical importance to the future of the Gippsland region.

#### 4.2.1. Gippsland Regional Growth Plan

The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan (GRGP) is key to the effective stewardship of the region's built and natural environments. The GRGP:

- Provides a strategic framework for future development of the region and has as one of its key principles to "Promote a healthy environment by valuing Gippsland's environmental and heritage assets, and by minimising the region's exposure to natural hazards and risks"
- Provides a framework for strategic land use and settlement planning that can sustainably accommodate growth
- Identifies important economic, environmental, social and cultural resources to be protected, maintained or developed
- Provides direction for accommodating growth and change including residential, employment, industrial, commercial, agriculture and other rural activities
- Shows which areas of land can accommodate growth and which are to be preserved
- Identifies opportunities for supporting regional level infrastructure, providing an essential contribution to the long-term sustainability of the region

The regional growth plan seeks to accommodate an additional 116,000 persons by 2041 and maximise urban growth in six defined places: Latrobe City as the regional city and regional centres at Bairnsdale, Leongatha, Sale, Warragul/Drouin and Wonthaggi. This approach will enable urban growth to reduce impacts on areas with high environmental and cultural heritage values and to avoid or better manage natural risks. The GRGP recognises the need to respond to a population that is significantly more diverse in age, household type and employment needs.

#### 4.2.2. Gippsland Environment Agencies

The Gippsland Environment Agencies (GEA) group is comprised of the region's environmental agency leaders and was established to facilitate members working together on common goals. The group is embarking upon a process to identify regional priority projects.

There are four catchment management authorities that cover the Gippsland region: East Gippsland, West Gippsland, Port Phillip and Western Port, and North East. These authorities have prepared Regional Catchment Strategies to prioritise and guide strategies for achieving improved environmental outcomes in the region. The plans are supported by the:

- Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy
- Work of the Gippsland and Central Coastal Boards to manage strategic coastal and marine issues through the preparation of coastal action plans
- RAMSAR Site Management Plans
- Regional Waterway Strategies; and
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Plans.

#### **4.3. Natural Resources**

##### 4.3.1. Forest, Parks and Reserves

The Gippsland region is unique in Victoria with approximately three-quarters of the region being forested public lands and national parks – including Wilsons Promontory, Mount Baw Baw and the Alpine, Cape Conran, Morwell, Croajingalong and Tarra Bulga National Parks - natural watercourses and floodplains. Many of the region's natural attractions - including the Gippsland Lakes - are world-class tourism destinations and have a major impact on Gippsland experiencing more than ten million visitors per annum. The region's wilderness and public lands have inherent value as places where people can connect to the natural world, appreciate the landscape, and observe and interact with native wildlife. Protection of these places and their environmental and cultural heritage assets acknowledges their value and ensures they remain intact for the flora and fauna they include, and for the benefit of future generations. Gippsland's timber resource is comprised of native forest and plantation estates, providing building materials, pulp and paper production and employment for local communities. Nearly one-quarter of Victoria's plantation estate is located within Gippsland.

The stewardship of these assets needs to support a range of outcomes including:

- Improving the quality and extent of remnant vegetation, especially significant areas as identified in regional catchment strategies
- Economic opportunities for landholders in the region involving the management of ecosystem services and on-farm carbon sequestration
- Any changes in landscape, fire and flood risks that may result from increasing treed vegetation cover, especially where occurring in close proximity to settlements
- Tourism and recreation attractors for the region that benefit from its environmental values;
- Connectivity between public lands that can provide biodiversity and climate adaptation benefits as well as enabling people to walk and cycle through and between public lands
- Opportunities for diversification into a broader range of wood products and to more fully utilise timber residues in new processes such as renewable biomass energy.

#### 4.3.2.Coastal Assets

Gippsland has 700 kilometres of coastline, which includes Westernport and Phillip Island, Wilsons Promontory, Corner Inlet, the Ninety Mile Beach, and the waterways of the Gippsland Lakes.

The region's coastline includes a range of waterways, coastal, estuary and marine assets that are critical for supporting commercial and recreational fisheries and tourism. Many of these coastal assets are under significant pressure for development given the opportunities they present for the region's economic and population growth. Important built assets, infrastructure and environmental and cultural heritage assets along the region's coast may be at increased risk due to coastal storms, sea level rise, catchment flooding, coastal erosion and inundation as a result of climate change. There are also wide ranges of coastal communities of which many attract significant peak populations and demands on coastal infrastructure during holiday periods. Continued prioritisation and investment in coastal infrastructure development and maintenance will be critical for meeting these demands.

The Gippsland and Central Region Coastal Action Plans seek to address these issues and the Local Coastal Hazard Assessments for Western Port and the Gippsland Lakes and 90 Mile Beach will provide additional data to inform planning.

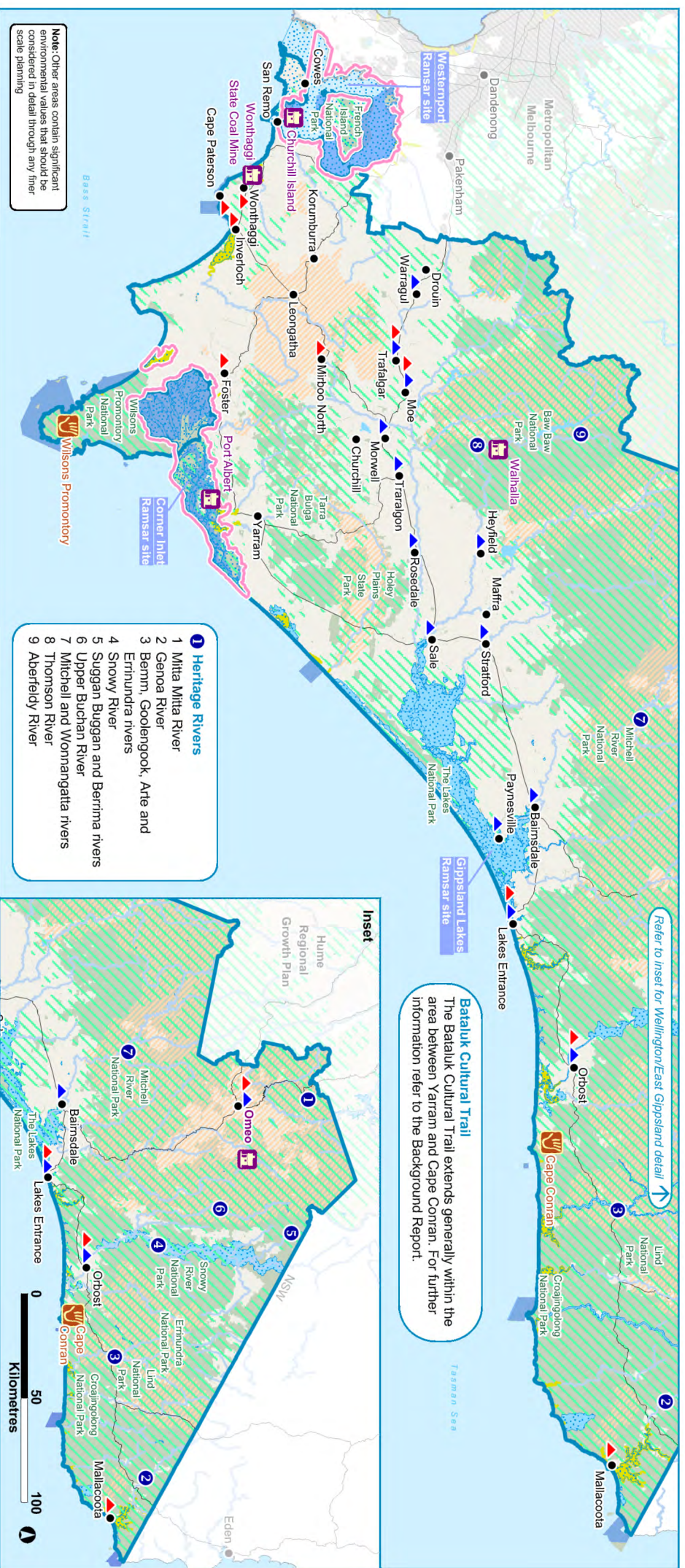
#### 4.3.3. Gippsland Lakes

The Gippsland Lakes has particular importance for its environmental, recreational and economic value. The Gippsland Lakes and adjoining wetlands occupy approximately 600 square kilometres in a catchment that comprises almost 10% of the land area of Victoria. The Gippsland Lakes RAMSAR Site Management Plan, and the East and West Gippsland Waterway Strategies aim to improve the environmental health of the Gippsland Lakes and protect the value of this important asset. The strategies articulate priorities for additional government funding of \$2.5 million annually for projects that enhance the Lakes environmental, social, cultural and economic values. The Gippsland Lakes Environmental Strategy highlights the connections between the environmental values of the Lakes and the significant boating, tourism, fishing and recreational activities that they support. The provision of sustainable coastal infrastructure and facilities around the Gippsland Lakes is a key element of the environmental management of the Lakes, to protect sensitive areas and manage demand for economic and social use of the natural resource.

#### 4.3.4.Water

The Gippsland region contains all or part of 13 significant river catchments - being the Genoa, Thurra, Cann, Snowy, Tambo, Nicholson, Mitchell, Avon, Thomson, Latrobe, Tarwin, Bass and Bunyip rivers - incorporating nine heritage rivers and numerous nationally and internationally significant wetlands. It also contains Victoria's largest free-flowing river, the Mitchell, with upper reaches of high environmental significance.





Avoid or minimise the impact of development on high value environmental and cultural heritage assets, including significant landscapes.

Support initiatives to enable the establishment, protection and reconnection of ecosystems through large-scale native vegetation corridor projects.

Reduce the impact of development on the quality and security of water resources.

Reduce the impact of development on high value coastal, estuarine and marine assets such as the Gippsland Lakes and Corner Inlet.

Manage risks to settlements by directing development away from areas of unacceptable risk from natural hazards.

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0 30 60 Kilometres



The region's coastal wetlands and inlets include the Gippsland Lakes, Anderson Inlet and Corner Inlet, which attract tourists to the region. Waterways are also valued for the recreational opportunities they provide, their cultural values and their role in the landscape supporting a range of ecological processes. Environmental water allocations are particularly important for the health of the region's waterways.

Water catchments and storage reservoirs provide supply for Gippsland's urban, rural, recreational and industrial users and make a significant contribution to Melbourne's water supply. Pressure for increased settlement and tourism development exists in some declared water supply catchments and needs to be carefully managed to protect both water quality and water supply.

The GRGP notes, "planning for future urban and economic development should incorporate measures to reduce demand for water where possible, including through water sensitive urban design and opportunities for urban water harvesting" - and that - "new urban areas should include provision of recycled water to reduce demand for potable water."

The GRGP also notes that "reduced rainfall, increased evaporation, reduced snowfall and more severe droughts and altered forest structures may reduce runoff to critical water catchments as a result of climate change. This could affect the health of Gippsland's waterways and the region's ability to supply Melbourne with water, as well as affecting Gippsland's resident and industry users, including electricity generators in the Latrobe Valley. More frequent bushfire and increased temperatures also have implications for water quality and may impact on human health and regional tourism."

The Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy sets out a long-term plan to secure the region's water future. The strategy identifies threats to water availability and identifies policies and actions to help water users, water corporations and catchment management authorities manage and respond to those threats over the next 50 years.

#### **4.4. Earth Resources**

Earth resources are a substantial contributor to Gippsland and Victoria's economy and employment. The region's assets are in energy production, potable and irrigation water for agriculture, forestry, and landscape features that support tourism and recreation. Our clean and productive natural environment underpins our agricultural future, and this plan acknowledges our vital custodial role in this regard.

##### **4.4.1. Brown Coal**

Gippsland has one of the world's largest deposits of brown coal, estimated at 33 billion tonnes of potential economic resource including 13 billion tonnes that is yet to be allocated. The coal resource is predominantly currently used for electricity generation at power plants located close to the coal source in the Latrobe Valley.

The state has relied on Gippsland's brown coal resource as a cost-effective means of securing base load power for many years. However, with electricity demand falling due to rising prices, reduced industrial demand and an increase in the uptake of household solar photovoltaic power generation, the demand for the region's brown coal for power generation is also expected to fall (particularly as more renewable energy sources come online). Investment in new technologies that utilise the brown coal resource for purposes other than power generation with an appropriate emissions profile in a carbon constrained economy can ensure ongoing use of the resource and subsequent regional economic benefits.

Gippsland's reliance on the economic value of brown coal is likely to be impacted by state, national and/or global initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The region will need to invest in innovation and technology to realise opportunities for alternative use of its brown coal resource based on clean coal technology, CCS, and other products derived from brown coal such as liquid fuels, fertilisers and solid fuels. The region will also need to investigate opportunities to develop renewable energy resources in the region including, geothermal, wind, hydro-electric, wave and tidal generation.

#### 4.4.2. Oil and Gas

Gippsland produces 97 per cent of Victoria's natural gas and about 14 per cent of Australia's crude oil via the Gippsland Basin in Bass Strait. Oil and gas are two of the region's most important natural resources and important drivers of economic growth for both Gippsland and Victoria.

The international demand for these resources is growing. The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) projects that east coast gas demand (including for LNG to export) will almost triple by 2020, from around 700 PJ in 2014 to around 1960 PJ in 2020. The increase in demand will be entirely driven by demand for LNG exports; with domestic gas consumption in eastern Australia expected to fall slowly over this period. Victoria's gas demand is also forecast to fall slowly over this period.

However, production of both oil and gas has now peaked and it is estimated that only 15 per cent of known crude oil reserves and 40 per cent of known gas reserves remain for production. The main challenge for the industry is to extend production from existing and new fields and to take into account environmental and social considerations.

#### 4.4.3. Sand, Stone and Mineral Extraction

Gippsland is a major provider of sand to the construction industry, with important resources in the Grantville-Nyora area and near Trafalgar. Hard rock resources are distributed across the region. There are also other economic opportunities associated with gold, copper, tin, lead, iron, rutile and zircon.

#### 4.4.4. Agricultural Land

Gippsland has extensive areas of agricultural land that underpin the region's strengths in dairy, beef and horticultural production and exports. The productive land resource and infrastructure such as the Macalister Irrigation District are important assets that position the region to further develop its food production and processing opportunities.

The effective stewardship of the region's significant areas of agricultural land needs to:

- Resolve competing demand from other land uses and in particular, population growth;
- Retain the agricultural landscapes throughout Gippsland that underpin the region's "clean and green" reputation for its produce and that support the region's attraction of visitors
- Manage community concerns and industry interests with respect to intensive agriculture;
- Reduce the extent of soil erosion and salinity;
- Address the impacts of climate change – this will include leverage of the outcomes of the Agriculture Industry Transformation Project – which is a partnership between Gippsland's local governments and Melbourne University, with support from RDA Gippsland. The project has delivered a powerful evidence based tool which uses data and patterns of weather changes to assist agribusinesses understand the potential impacts of climate change and support farmers in their decision making around innovation and adaptation.

#### 4.4.5. Timber Production

Gippsland's timber resource is comprised of native forest and plantation estates. The combined output supports a significant timber and pulp and paper sector that employs around 3,400 people. Future development of the timber industry needs to consider potential impacts on water supply, natural risk impacts and the impact of climate change.

#### 4.4.6. Fisheries

Commercial and recreational fisheries generate substantial economic benefit from the region's natural resources. The Lakes Entrance fishing fleet is the largest in Victoria, supplying fresh seafood to Melbourne, and the recreational fishery across all waterways provides economic and social benefits for the community. Sustainable management of the fisheries, boating and recreational fishing facilities, and the waterways which support fish populations, is critical for maintaining and enhancing the value of the region's fisheries.

#### 4.4.7. Air Quality

Air quality in Gippsland is at a high standard and the Latrobe Valley air is amongst the world's most researched and continues to be closely monitored by the EPA and users. There has been significant capital investment by major plant owners to reduce both particulate and gaseous emissions so that Gippsland continues to maintain world class environmental performance.

The levels of smoke and gases associated with fire events at the Hazelwood Mine in 2014 highlighted how poor air quality has a negative impact on both local communities and inhibiting the level of visitation to the region.

### **4.5. Risks and Natural Hazards**

#### 4.5.1. Flood

Significant areas of the Gippsland region are subject to flood risks. Land use planning decisions should be based on the best quality information on flood hazard to minimise risk to life, property, community infrastructure and environmental assets.

#### 4.5.2. Bushfire

The Gippsland region has a number of high bushfire hazard areas that intersect with settlements as well as areas experiencing rural residential and tourism expansion. Regional and localised planning considers bushfire risk in detail, with the assistance of planning tools such as the Bushfire Management Overlay, Regional Bushfire Planning Assessments and Bushfire Prone Areas. The regional settlement framework included in the Gippsland Regional Growth Plan has been developed to reduce risk from bushfire.

#### 4.5.3. Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation

The GRP and regional catchment management strategies recognise the potential risks to Gippsland's natural environments, settlements and economy from climate change, and the comparative advantages of Gippsland compared with other areas in the state along with potential economic diversification opportunities associated with climate change and a low carbon economy.

More information is needed on the likely impacts of climate change on specific industries and landscape types across the region and the opportunities that may arise from these changes such as new industries and diversified use of existing commodities. This information will assist with strategic land use planning, including consideration of any potential increase in exposure to natural hazards.

### **4.6. Waste and Resource Recovery**

The Victorian State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan indicates that Victoria's waste and resource recovery sector employs about 8,000 people, turns over about \$2 billion and manages over 12.3 tonnes of solid waste per year. The Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group has responsibility for the development of the Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan that will involve:

- Infrastructure planning;
- Joint procurement facilitation;
- Providing regional knowledge into state-wide market development strategies; and
- Educating business and communities.

Gippsland has seen the closure of over 30 landfills in the past 15 years and the development of a significant network of transfer stations and infrastructure to promote resource recovery. A higher value placed on recovered materials presents an opportunity to consider any new waste facilities in a regional and/or statewide context, and to explore economic development opportunities arising from the development of new technology. Available and appropriately zoned land in close proximity to Melbourne strengthens its ability to explore economic development opportunities arising from the development of new technology at existing waste and resource recovery operations.

#### 4.7. Strategic Priorities

The GRP will identify priority projects and initiatives that address the strategic opportunities and needs associated with improving the stewardship of the region's natural environment including:

- Researching the implications of the forecast growth and change in the population and employment of Gippsland in the next 20 years with respect to the level of demand for a range of housing products and designs, social service impacts, commercial centre implications, employment demands and transport needs;
- Fostering a shared understanding across agencies, councils and community groups and support implementation of regional catchment management strategies in order to develop shared policy settings and resource land management approaches for the region's most significant biodiversity assets and natural risks, including high priority waterway and biodiversity programs;
- Attracting increased investment, in particular, public investment, in Gippsland's public parks, such as Wilsons Promontory, in order to support an increase in the community's use of these assets, and their appreciation of the related ecological values. The increased usage will support improved community well-being (both physical and mental) and increased volunteer involvement in land management;
- Undertaking a collaborative approach between local government and government agencies to prepare climate change mitigation and adaption plans;
- Continuing the collaborative management of the Gippsland Lakes environment through support of the Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee processes involving implementation of key priorities in the East and West Gippsland Waterway Strategies and the Gippsland Lakes RAMSAR Site Management Plan;
- Promoting sustainable growth and management of coastal infrastructure and facilities to support optimum access to the natural environment for tourism, boating and fishing and opportunities for growth and value-adding for these sectors;
- Identifying new opportunities to consider possible regional or statewide waste and resource recovery or bioenergy facilities and explore economic development opportunities arising from the development of new technology at existing waste and resource recovery operations.

#### 4.8. Key Indicators

The following indicators will provide insight into the impact of the implementation of the GRP on regional capability with respect to the Natural Environment Stewardship Strategic Theme:

- Increased planning for, and awareness of, the need to provide services and diversity in housing and employment that respond to predicted changes in the demographics of Gippsland's population;
- Increased planning and investment in the provision of infrastructure to manage demand for access to waterways and natural areas, improve tourism opportunities and minimise environmental impacts.
- Improved consistency across planning schemes and regional catchment strategies in respect of natural environment stewardship;
- Coordinated resource land management approaches for the region's most high priority waterway and biodiversity programs;
- Renewable and low carbon energy projects being planned and developed;
- Preparation of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans for Westernport and the Gippsland Lakes;
- Investment in regional waste and resource recovery facilities and reduced volume of waste to landfill;
- Annual reporting on the stewardship and condition of Gippsland's environment;
- Increased community participation in the management of public land.





# 5. Strategic Theme Connectivity

# 5

## Strategic Theme – Connectivity

### 5.1. Objectives

- Improved access to other domestic, and international markets for Gippsland's producers and exporters
- Improve the community's ability to access services and vocational opportunities
- Improve the community's access to mobile broadband services

### 5.2. Introduction

The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan notes "efficient transport connections are needed to provide access to services and employment across Gippsland as well as inter-regional destinations. As the region's population continues to grow and change, it is important to plan transport infrastructure projects to promote enhanced connectivity, capitalise on economic opportunities and monitor the demand and the viability of providing additional public transport services."

Gippsland's location, size, topography, and settlement patterns pose challenges for businesses attempting to access customers in the region and markets outside of the region and for community members wanting to access services and vocational opportunities.

The access to markets for industry in the Gippsland region is largely dependent on its linkages to Melbourne and transport hubs such as the Port of Melbourne and Melbourne Airport. Tourism is also highly dependent on having efficient connectivity to Melbourne as well as ready access to a wide range of locations and tourism experiences throughout the region.

Improved access to high-speed broadband is central to improving the region's businesses access to markets and customers, and community access to services and information.

### 5.3. Key Transport Infrastructure

The Princes Highway and the Gippsland rail line serve as the region's key transport corridor to Melbourne and connecting the regional centres of Warragul, Latrobe City, Sale and Bairnsdale. Average traffic volumes on the Princes Highway, between Pakenham and Traralgon vary between 15,000 and 25,000 vehicles per day with traffic volumes between Traralgon and Bairnsdale varying between 5,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day.

The Princes Highway provides freeway and/or dual lane access from Melbourne through to Traralgon and single lane on to the NSW border. The highway is being duplicated for some of the distance between Traralgon towards Sale and further funding is required to complete the final 14 kilometres of this task.

Secondary major transport routes are the Bass and South Gippsland highways, which connect Wonthaggi and Leongatha to Melbourne as well as providing important linkages within the region and further east. North-south routes, including the Strzelecki Highway, connect southern Gippsland to the Princes Highway and Latrobe City. The Grand Ridge Road, the Hyland Highway and the Great Alpine Road are important scenic routes for tourists. The Gippsland rail line has regular Vline passenger services to Traralgon – up to 18 on a weekday - with some of these services going through to Bairnsdale. Key centres that are not along the Gippsland rail line are serviced by Vline bus services.

There are no scheduled aviation passenger services to Gippsland, however the region has a number of airports and aerodromes that are able to receive chartered aviation passenger services. The Latrobe Regional Airport and West Sale Aerodrome can receive multi-engine jet aircraft as can the RAAF facility at East Sale.

Local ports provide an important function for the servicing of the Bass Strait oil and gas fields, commercial fishing and in providing access for the growing recreational boating sector. The Port of Corner Inlet Inlet (including Barry Beach Marine Terminal, Port Anthony Marine Terminal, Port Welshpool Roll-On Roll-Off facility, Port Welshpool Marginal Wharf) accommodates approximately 500 vessel movements per annum, servicing the oil and gas industry and maritime transport (livestock and general cargo) to and from the Bass Strait Islands. The Port of Gippsland Lakes accommodates significant commercial and recreational vessel movements into Bass Strait via Lakes Entrance.



### Amenity and useability

**Freight and logistics precincts** would enable consolidation of freight activities and opportunities to increase the use of rail. Road and rail between the Port of Hastings, Lairdke Valley and other intrastate and interstate freight and logistics precincts will support future industrial and natural resource-based export opportunities.

A horizontal scale bar with a black segment from 0 to 40 and a white segment from 40 to 80. The word "Kilometres" is written below the bar. A north arrow is located at the right end of the scale.

Growth will not be experienced in all areas. Maintaining access for smaller communities to education, employment and other facilities will be critical as the demography changes. Future expansion of community transport and taking resources to the people may be required.

#### 5.4. Freight and Logistics

Gippsland's economy is highly dependent on the ability of regional businesses to be able to move freight efficiently and effectively to markets within and outside of the region. The region generates a significant volume of exports in agriculture and manufacturing and has a freight task that the Gippsland Freight Strategy estimates to be more than 24 million tonnes per annum. More than 50% of the task is being moved to a destination within the region and more than 30% being transported to and from Melbourne. There are also significant volumes of timber being freighted across the Victorian-New South Wales border.

Projected growth in food exports to Asia and the potential for export of high value added brown coal derivatives will see a significant increase in the region's freight task. The Gippsland Freight Strategy notes that, in the future, export of value-added coal products could eventually become Victoria's largest single transport task.

Road and rail improvements that facilitate increased freight access to Melbourne's distribution and export hubs will enhance the competitiveness of these sectors. Enhanced maintenance and improved capability of infrastructure will make transport corridors more capable of withstanding disruption caused by natural events, and improve the safety and efficiency of the movement of people, services and freight within Gippsland and to connecting regions.

The possibility of the further development of the Port of Hastings as Victoria's second major port, supporting expansion in containers, bulk and oil and gas industries represents a significant opportunity for the Gippsland region with respect to its ability to move goods to export markets. However, any further development of the Port of Hastings needs to be informed by an independent:

- Economic, environmental and social impact study of the Port of Hastings Container Expansion Project on the Bass Coast municipality – in particular Phillip Island;
- Peer review of documentation being prepared by the Port of Hastings Development Authority to inform an Environmental Effects Statement.

Improving the capability of regional transport infrastructure is also key. The Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Master Plan, released in 2014 supports the directions contained within the freight strategy and outlines a series of ranked priorities including the:

- South Gippsland Highway upgrade - this includes a number of projects that would benefit freight along the route including a high priority for the realignment of the road at Black Spur, Koonwarra
- Strzelecki Highway Bridge and Road upgrade – including further overtaking lanes and bridge widening.

#### 5.5. Public Transport

Reliable public transport is critical to Gippsland's ability to function as a region, connect to other parts of Victoria and in maintaining community connectedness.

The Vline train services are key element of the public transport mix for Gippsland. Vline data for Gippsland notes that there were 2,003,752 trips for the 2013/14 financial year, which was up from 1,893,156 in the previous year. There are already serious congestion and capacity issues on peak hour Vline trains, and there is an urgent need for extra carriages and services. Many of the people moving into region are commuting to city for work each day and this will exacerbate this need. Vline has also noted that with additional patronage comes the need for either additional feeder local bus services or station car parking, which is already at capacity. Any significant increase in rail services beyond Traralgon will require the development of a passing opportunity between Traralgon and Sale or Sale and Bairnsdale.

There is also a need for improved access for people not living aligned to train line – particularly in the South Gippsland and Bass Coast Shires as well as additional bus services. The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan notes the need to:

- Ensure that planning for new residential developments, industry and employment areas should be conducive to public transport provision;
- Improve and modify public transport services to better meet market needs;
- Support the provision of public transport services for those without access to private vehicles and to improve access to services and employment
- The region will work with the state Government in the development of the Regional Network Development Plan, to ensure that public transport services reflect Gippsland needs and can respond to a growth in demand associated with an increasing population.



## 5.6. High-Speed Broadband

The issue of improved access high-speed broadband remains a key priority in terms of developing and improving economic, social, education and health outcomes across Gippsland. Data from Telstra's Gippsland's regional management notes that the people access high-speed broadband through either fixed and/or mobile services and that:

- 83% of the population aged 14 plus have a mobile phone service (55% post - paid & 28% pre-paid)
- 34% of the population aged 14 plus have a dedicated mobile broadband plan
- 42% of households have fixed broadband (ADSL)

The Telstra data also notes that Gippsland's regional coverage of fixed broadband is about 5% lower than the rest of regional Victoria however, Gippsland has a higher adoption of mobile broadband. These differences can be attributed to limitations of Gippsland's current fixed broadband infrastructure and the region's geographically dispersed population.

Opportunities to improve coverage and/or access to high-speed broadband will benefit the region. Given the projected development of the high-speed broadband network in Gippsland – see <http://www.nbnco.com.au/> - opportunities to improve coverage for commuters on Gippsland rail services and the tourism industry in Lakes Entrance would have high impact on increased access and productivity.

It is key that businesses, communities and individuals understand how they can effectively leverage existing levels of broadband and engage more widely with the digital economy and the opportunities at hand.

There is a need to continue to leverage the experiences of the, now implemented, Gippsland Broadband Engagement Strategy in order to continue to build improvements in community capacity around high-speed broadband. The development of a high-speed broadband opportunities study would identify leading practices, both in the region and beyond, in the use of high-speed broadband to deliver services and/or access markets and promote these to the regional community, service providers and industry. Recent studies by Price Waterhouse Coopers on digital growth indicate that small businesses can generate additional output from better use of internet and mobile technology. The study estimates that over the next 10 years small businesses in the federal electorates of:

- McMillan can unlock an additional \$181 million of outputs; or approximately \$36,500 per small business;
- Gippsland can unlock an additional \$185 million of output; or approximately \$41,300 per small business.

## 5.7. Strategic Priorities

The GRP will identify priority projects and initiatives that address the strategic opportunities and needs associated with improving the region's connectivity.

There is a need for the Gippsland region and the state government to work together to find solutions to the congestion issues through Southeast Melbourne on both road and rail to improve access to markets and passenger connectivity to Melbourne, and back to the region – these solutions may include:

- Improving the capacity of the region's rail connectivity to Melbourne
- Improved access and capacity of the Dandenong rail corridor
- Enhancing rail capacity via passing loops in conjunction with the Dandenong Rail Capacity Program
- Providing additional train paths to retain direct linkages to Melbourne's central business district through the Melbourne Metro project
- Improved capacity of passenger rail service to Melbourne
- Improving the capacity of regional rail infrastructure
- Duplicate single-track sections of the rail line between Longwarry and Bunyip.
- Replace Avon River Rail Bridge near Stratford
- Further development of the Port of Hastings as Victoria's second major port, supporting expansion in containers, bulk and oil and gas industries should it be determined through independent studies that such development will not have a negative impact on the Bass Coast, and in particular, Phillip Island

Continue to improve regional transport infrastructure including:

- Improving the capacity and functionality of the Princes Highway including:
- Completion of the Traralgon to Sale duplication (14km not yet funded);
- Additional overtaking lanes east of Orbost.

Improving the capacity and functionality of regional highways including:

- South Gippsland Highway upgrade - a number of projects would benefit freight along the route. High priority is the realignment at Black Spur, Koonwarra.
- Strzelecki Highway Bridge and Road upgrade further overtaking lanes and bridge widening.
- Access and safety improvements along Phillip Island Road.

Improving the capacity, functionality and growth opportunities provided by local ports (particularly Corner Inlet and the Gippsland Lakes) to service the growing coastal cruising market, oil and gas industry, agriculture, fisheries and recreational water-based transport needs, including:

- Maintaining navigable access to ports and infrastructure to cater for shipping movements;
- Provision and maintenance of shore-based infrastructure to meet growing maritime industry and recreational boating needs.
- Continue to improve the availability of, and engagement with high-speed broadband including:
- Improving availability of high-speed broadband along Gippsland's transport corridor;
- Reducing mobile blackspots in areas of the region that experience high levels of visitation.
- Further identification of how regional businesses can engage with the digital economy to grow their revenue.

## 5.8. Key Indicators

The following indicators will provide insight into the impact of the implementation of the GRP on regional capability with respect to the Connectivity theme:

- Number of Vline Services/Passenger Capacity;
- Travel times to Port of Melbourne/Melbourne Airport from key locations in the region;
- Freight costs;
- Commercial and recreational use of local ports;
- Percentage of population with access to mobile broadband.



# 6. Implementation of the Gippsland Regional Plan

## 6

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# Implementation of the Gippsland Regional Plan

The implementation of the GRP has three key elements:

### 1. Project Development:

Building on the strategic themes and priorities of the GRP, projects are put forward by relevant organisations and entities including Councillors, community groups, businesses and any other parties with an interest or suggestion of how to improve and add value to the communities in the Gippsland region. These projects are further investigated and developed, as appropriate, by the Strategy Groups.

The suggested projects are reviewed by the Strategy Groups and ultimately evaluated by the GRP Leadership Group. The evaluation process is a rigorous evaluation matrix, which ensures only the highest priority and actionable projects are selected for the One Gippsland advocacy program. Projects that may require further review with respect to how they may add value to the region will be retained for further investigation and/or development.

### 2. Advocacy:

One Gippsland is the united voice of Gippsland, advocating for the highest agreed regional priorities arising from the GRP. One Gippsland is a consortium of Gippsland's three peak representative bodies, including the C4G, GLGN, and RDA Gippsland. It advocates for a carefully selected package of transformational projects for the Gippsland region to both state and federal governments for funding.

### 3. Delivery:

Once a successful advocacy program has been achieved and funding secured, the project is then undertaken by the relevant authority. This may be a local government authority, private sector or state government agency as appropriate.



# Gippsland Regional Plan Strategy, Project Development, Advocacy and Delivery Framework

## STRATEGY

### Inputs

- Council Plans and Strategies
- Community Priorities (Surveys)
- RDAG Business Plan
- C4G Strategic Direction
- National, State, Regional Strategies & Priorities

### Examples

- Gippsland Regional Plan
- Regional Growth Plan
- Gippsland Freight Infrastructure Master Plan
- Waste Resources Recovery Infrastructure Plan
- Victorian Coastal Strategy

**GIPPSLAND REGIONAL PLAN**  
Long term strategic direction and themes  
focusing on addressing regional significant  
challenges and opportunities

4 – 5 year cycle with extensive consultation and analysis

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

### PROJECT SUGGESTIONS BY RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS & ENTITIES

- Councils
- C4G
- RDAG
- Community
- Government Agencies
- NFP Organisations
- Business & Industry
- Other Organisations & Entities

Relevant  
Organisations

Economic Prosperity  
Strategy Group

Relevant  
Organisations

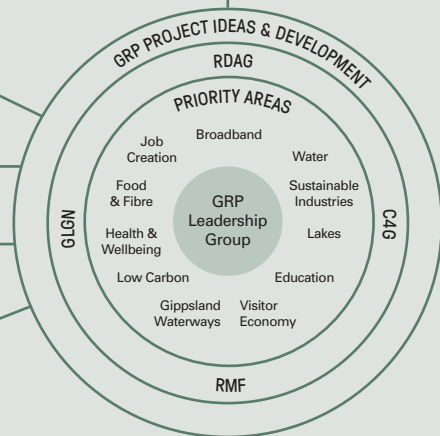
Education & Community  
Wellbeing  
Strategy Group

Relevant  
Organisations

Natural Environment  
Stewardship  
Strategy Group

Relevant  
Organisations

Connectivity  
Strategy Group



PROJECTS SCORED AND RANKED

### SIGN OFF BY:

- GLGN
- C4G
- RDAG

### PRIORITY PROJECTS

(One Gippsland Campaign)  
Projects that deliver on the strategic directions of the Gippsland  
Regional Plan  
ANNUAL REVIEW CYCLE

PROJECT BRIEF

## ADVOCACY



FUNDING CONFIRMED

## DELIVERY

COMPLETED  
PROJECTS

