



**Gippsland Regional Plan
2020-2025
Full Report**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge all the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land that we now call Gippsland. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the inherent rights and continuing cultural responsibilities of Traditional Owners and Custodians to preserve and care for Country while continuing to connect to and practice the oldest living culture in the world.

Acknowledgements

Many have contributed to the formation of this Plan. The following organisations have participated in conversations about Gippsland and their stories, knowledge and expertise has helped to shape the priorities and actions in this Plan.

Bass Coast Shire Council

Baw Baw Shire Council

Committee for Gippsland and their members

Destination Gippsland

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

East Gippsland Shire Council

Federation University

Food & Fibre Gippsland

Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative (GEGAC)

Gippsland Primary Health Network

Gippsland Regional Partnerships

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

Latrobe City Council

Latrobe Health Advocate

Latrobe Valley Authority

Regional Development Australia, Gippsland

Regional Development Victoria

South Gippsland Shire Council

TAFE Gippsland

Sustainability Victoria

Wellington Shire Council

Foreword

Gippsland is remarkable with enormous potential

Our beautiful Gippsland region is renowned for its natural attributes: our unrivalled Gippsland Lakes and coastlines, national parks, snowfields and high country, rich resources, and fertile soils; and for our vibrant towns and communities.

Our region is built on the Country, culture and lore practices of our Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people, and we have much to learn and celebrate as we progress reconciliation and healing. Our more recent history and arrivals continue to add to our diversity and the rich cultural fabric that is Gippsland.

However, Gippsland is now undergoing a period of unprecedented change.

We are enduring a time of significant challenges: from the long-term drought, the devastating 2020 bushfire season, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rapid transition of our traditional energy and resource-based industries. At the same time, we are working hard to build new opportunities that leverage our beautiful environment, resources, and the collaborative capacity of our community to be a prosperous and inclusive region.

The Gippsland Regional Plan outlines our long-term strategic vision for Gippsland in 2040 and identifies the five-year priority actions to start us on the path.

The Plan is a blueprint for how we reach our full potential and ensure Gippsland is firmly on the map **as the place to live, work, invest and play.**

The Plan is unashamedly big and bold and is based on research and stakeholder consultation. Its implementation requires strong collaboration and action.

The Gippsland Regional Plan is a partnership involving the efforts of all levels of government, business, industry, health, education, and community. It identifies the priority and supporting actions that can drive the most significant economic, environmental, and social benefits for Gippsland over the next five years to 2025.

It doesn't attempt to cover every challenge Gippsland is facing, nor does it suggest we have all the solutions now. It is intended to ignite the conversation and action about Gippsland's future, and about what we can do individually and collectively.

Bringing our vision to life requires us to act now.

The Gippsland Regional Plan extends beyond budget and political cycles, providing a united and confident message to potential investors and funders about Gippsland's priority projects and initiatives.

The Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group has committed to support the Plan and embrace its goals toward securing the liveability and prosperity of Gippsland.

By working together with a strategic, collaborative, whole of Gippsland approach, we will achieve long-lasting benefits for each and every local Gippsland community.



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Introduction

The Gippsland Regional Plan is our long-term strategic plan for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for our Gippsland region and our community.

It will guide us as we strive to reach our full potential and ensure that Gippsland is recognised as *the place to live, work, invest and play*.

The development of the Gippsland Regional Plan was commissioned by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group using a collaborative approach. It brings together all levels of Government, business, and education, as well as a wide range of agencies and community organisations.

The Plan looks towards 2040 for its vision and goals, and specifically identifies the priority actions and initiatives required in the coming five years to 2025.

It identifies the significant challenges and opportunities that Gippsland faces in the areas of economic prosperity, environment protection, sustainability and care of Country, liveability, reconciliation with Aboriginal people, health, education, infrastructure, and land use planning. The priority actions and initiatives are validated by a data driven approach using local, regional, and state data sets and sources.

The most important projects, initiatives, and next steps for achieving Gippsland's 2040 vision are included in this Plan. These are selected according to their economic, social, environmental, and regional benefits, as well as their readiness for implementation.

This Plan builds on the achievements and efforts of previous Gippsland Regional Plans.

Its implementation continues to require significant investment, and the collective energy and creative thinking of the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group and its partners and members.

The Gippsland Regional Plan is a 'living' document that provides a framework through which priority projects and initiatives that will enhance our regional capability are identified, agreed, and advocated for. Each year the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group will review the plan to ensure its currency to achieve regional outcomes.

Hearing the voice of our community

The Gippsland Regional Plan 2020-2025 represents:

Linkages to more than 50 federal, state, regional and local strategies

Opinions from more than 300 Gippslanders

Consideration of more than 260 initiatives and projects identified by our community as important to Gippsland's future

Analysis of economic, social, and environmental trends

Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group Members

Committee for Gippsland

Gippsland Regional Partnerships

One (formerly Gippsland Local Government Network)

Regional Development Australia, Gippsland

Regional Development Victoria

Gippsland at a glance

Located in Victoria's south east, almost 287,000 people call Gippsland home. Our population is growing at the state average of 4 percent; except for our urban fringe shires of Bass Coast and Baw Baw, whose growth rates are 9 and 8 percent, respectively.

Gippsland is home to several Aboriginal communities including the peoples of the Gunaikurnai, Bidawal, Bunurong / Boonwurrung, Woiewurrung, Jaithmathang and Monero / Ngarigo Nations, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait people from other regions of Australia. Our Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people have a unique connection with Gippsland's land and waters, which adds to the rich culture and fabric of our beautiful region and will be further enhanced as we progress reconciliation and healing.

Many people from other cultures have settled in Gippsland. Our community includes people from the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. We work and live in a resource-rich landscape, one of the most diverse in regional Australia, which ranges from the industrial heartland of the Latrobe Valley, rich agricultural lands, our coastal and lakes regions, our highlands, and our forested north and east. Roughly the same size as Switzerland, Gippsland covers over 41,500 square kilometres and is the largest region in Victoria.

Each year, nearly 8 million tourists visit Gippsland, attracted to our renowned unspoilt lakes, beaches, snowfields, bushlands, and rainforests, as well as our beautiful towns and villages. Our region's vast range of stunning landscapes include the internationally recognised Wilson's Promontory National Park, the Gippsland Lakes and one of Victoria's largest visitor attractions, the Phillip Island Penguin Parade.

Gippsland's resource-rich landscape and plentiful water supply is a comparative advantage and a key building block of our economic prosperity. Coupled with our close proximity to Melbourne, our leverage of our remarkable range of resources has enabled Gippsland to establish a reputation of producing quality products and services across a range of industries such as food and fibre, energy, forestry, fisheries, manufacturing and tourism.

Gippsland at a glance

Fact
Approximately 41,500 km ² 11,600 km ² (28%) dedicated to Food & Fibre activities. More than 700 kilometres of Victorian coastline.
The largest area of public land in Victoria, with 1.6 million hectares encompassing forest, state and national parks, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Marine Coastal Parks and Reserves and Ramsar Wetlands.
Nearly 287,000 call Gippsland home (as of 2019)
40% of Gippsland lives in towns and settlements of less than 1000 people.
6 LGAs
Local government area (2019 population)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bass Coast (36,320)• Baw Baw (53,396)• East Gippsland (47,316)• Latrobe (75,561)• South Gippsland (28,934)• Wellington (43,007)

Our people

- 1.9% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- 79.4% born in Australia
- 18.7% born overseas

Average weekly household income of \$1058.

Year 12 Education attainment rates is 30% (below state average).

Certificate qualification attainment rates above the state average - recognition of a highly skilled trade workforce.

Rental and housing affordability are acceptable to very acceptable

Our visitors

8.94m tourists contribute \$1.68 billion annually to the Gippsland economy (March 2020)

Our economy

\$16 billion Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Top industries that contribute to our Gross Value Add (GVA)

- agriculture (14%)
- tourism (10.5%)
- manufacturing (10%)
- construction (10%)
- electricity and gas services (9%)
- health care (8%)
- mining (8%)

Number of registered business 25,204 (2019)

Number of jobs 106,000

Gippsland is Victoria's largest energy producer – producing 97% of Victoria's natural gas, 14% of Australia's oil and generating of the majority of the state's electricity supply.

Primary Production

- Horticulture - 28% of Victorian food and fibre land area
- Forestry - 25% of Victorian plantation timber
- Dairy -32% of Victoria's production, by volume
- Beef - 25% of Victoria's production by value.
- Sheep, Pork, Chickens, Aquaculture

Digital connectivity

Mid ranked in digital inclusion on the RMIT-Swinburne-Telstra Digital Inclusion Index (DII)
79% of all Gippsland households have internet connection (2016)

A full list of Gippsland facts and statistics including data sources is outlined in Appendix 1.

The Gippsland advantage

Endowed with natural advantages

The diversity of Gippsland's natural environment sets us apart. Our landscape and environmental values provide an enviable lifestyle and visitor destination, with pristine beaches, snowfields, lakes and rivers, bushland, rainforests, the Gippsland Lakes, and rich cultural and historical values.

Gippsland has an abundance of natural resources such as timber, coal, oil, and gas.

Fertile land and reliable high-quality water

Our favourable combination of stable climate, high and reliable rainfall, strong stream flows, water storage, irrigation infrastructure, and fertile soils and pastures provide a natural advantage in food and fibre. The Gippsland region has 28 percent of Victoria's land area for agricultural commodities, 27 percent of vegetable growing area and 25 percent of plantation timber estate¹.

A powerhouse energy producer – now and into the future

A leading traditional energy producer using coal, gas and oil reserves, Gippsland also has promising off-shore carbon capture storage sites, high quality on and off-shore wind conditions and good solar conditions, which provide exciting opportunities for ongoing sustainable renewable and clean energy production.

We also have an efficient high capacity high voltage transmission and switch yard network that transmits energy to Melbourne, the national electricity grid, and Tasmania. This capacity is a key energy advantage for Gippsland, enabling carriage of significant volumes from new energy sources to key markets.

Affordability and a quality lifestyle

Gippsland provides an affordable and quality lifestyle. Median house prices and rental affordability is better than the regional Victorian average². Our strong transport network, together with excellent community, arts, sporting, education, and health infrastructure, support the liveability of our growing communities.

Room to grow

Gippsland's population growth to 2036 is forecast to be above the state average³, driven by our western shires' proximity to Melbourne. Existing land use planning policies, community and transport infrastructure are supportive and encouraging of population growth and movements throughout Gippsland.

Open for business - strongly supported by Government

A new 'Economic Growth Zone' has been established in Gippsland as part of the \$266 million regional economic development program. This partnership brings together trade and investment specialists to help make Gippsland's economy more vibrant and diverse, attracting new business and facilitating export opportunities for our region.

A strong engineering and manufacturing base

Gippsland's traditional engine economy of power generation has underpinned our strong engineering and manufacturing capability, supported by an extensive service industry. We are diversifying our capabilities, with waste recovery, renewable and clean energy, and niche manufacturing key focusses.

Well connected to Melbourne and beyond

Gippsland's established freight and logistic road and rail systems facilitate the efficient movement and exporting of goods to major hubs in metropolitan Melbourne and New South Wales.

¹ KPMG, (2019), Accelerating growth for Gippsland food and fibre industry – Food & Fibre Gippsland.

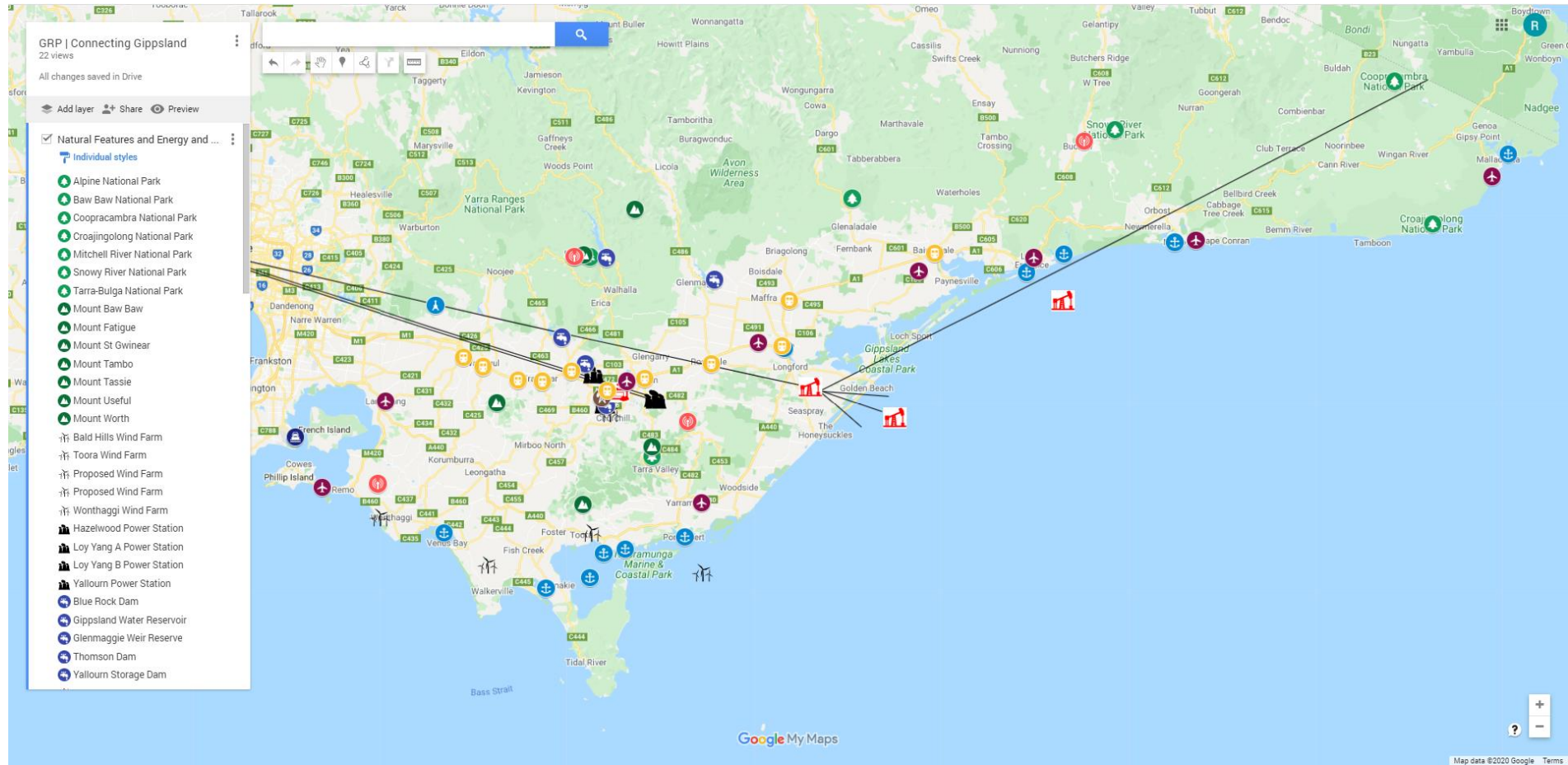
² Median house prices across Gippsland are \$301,000 and well below the regional Victorian median of \$420,000 <https://reiv.com.au/market-insights/victorian-insights>

³ DELWP, Victoria in Future (2019) https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/332996/Victoria_in_Future_2019.pdf

Strategic assets

Gippsland has a number of strategic assets that are of both regional and state significance. These assets are key contributors to our liveability, economic, social and environmental prosperity.

Gippsland's strategic assets



A detailed list of Gippsland's strategic assets is outlined in Appendix 2

Strengths

Beautiful landscapes

Abundant natural resources

Aboriginal culture and Traditional Owners' connection to Country

Beneficial climate, fertile land and water supply, infrastructure & quality for food and fibre production.

Affordable cost of living and housing

Reliable infrastructure and economic assets – electrical transmission and switch lines, waste management, east coast gas pipeline

Sporting and recreational facilities

Arts and cultural precincts

Education precincts including primary and secondary schools, Regional University and TAFE network

Strong engineering and manufacturing base including skilled workforce

Food and Fibre brand and reputation

Close proximity to Melbourne and access to key markets in Canberra and Sydney

High visitation (most of any region - 8.9m visits annually)

Challenges

Recovery following natural disaster

Increasing educational participation and attainment

Improving health and wellbeing outcomes

Social disadvantage and inter-generational unemployment

Ageing population

Appropriate housing stock

Community safety – family violence

Balancing land use for sustainability and investment attraction

Digital connectivity – accessibility (away from major town centres) affordability & literacy

Opportunities

Tourism and eco-tourism

Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism

Increasing localised procurement and supply chains

Renewable and clean energy sector

Creative industries

Health sector

Building Centres of Excellence in our fields of strength

Strengthening academic and industry research capabilities, education and training partnerships and pathways

Population attraction and growth

Business attraction and job growth – particularly in knowledge economy & remote working industries

Better connected intra-region transport hubs

Innovation frameworks

Our ageing population as mentors, story tellers

Threats

Unmitigated climate change

Natural disasters

Economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and potential impact to national and international trade

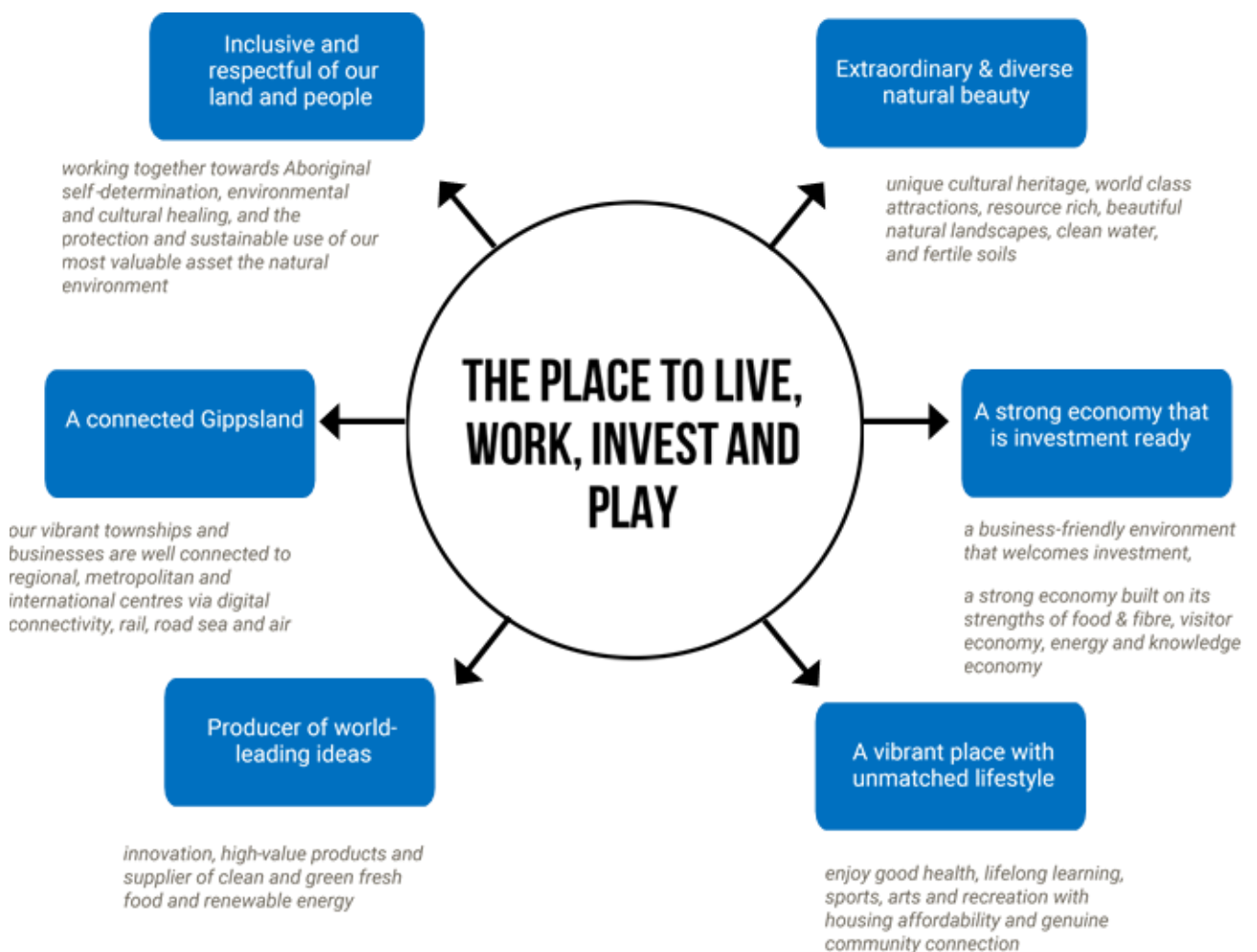
Inadequate planning for closure of traditional industry (brown coal power generation and timber)

A vision for Gippsland

By 2040 Gippsland aspires to be the most liveable region in Australia – a place to live, work, invest and play.

People in Gippsland have an enviable life - enjoying higher standards of living, greater cultural and community connections, and healthier and happier lifestyles than in 2020. Enjoying the best of life, Gippslanders connect with nature, with family and friends, with arts and culture, with business, with the world.

Gippsland in 2040

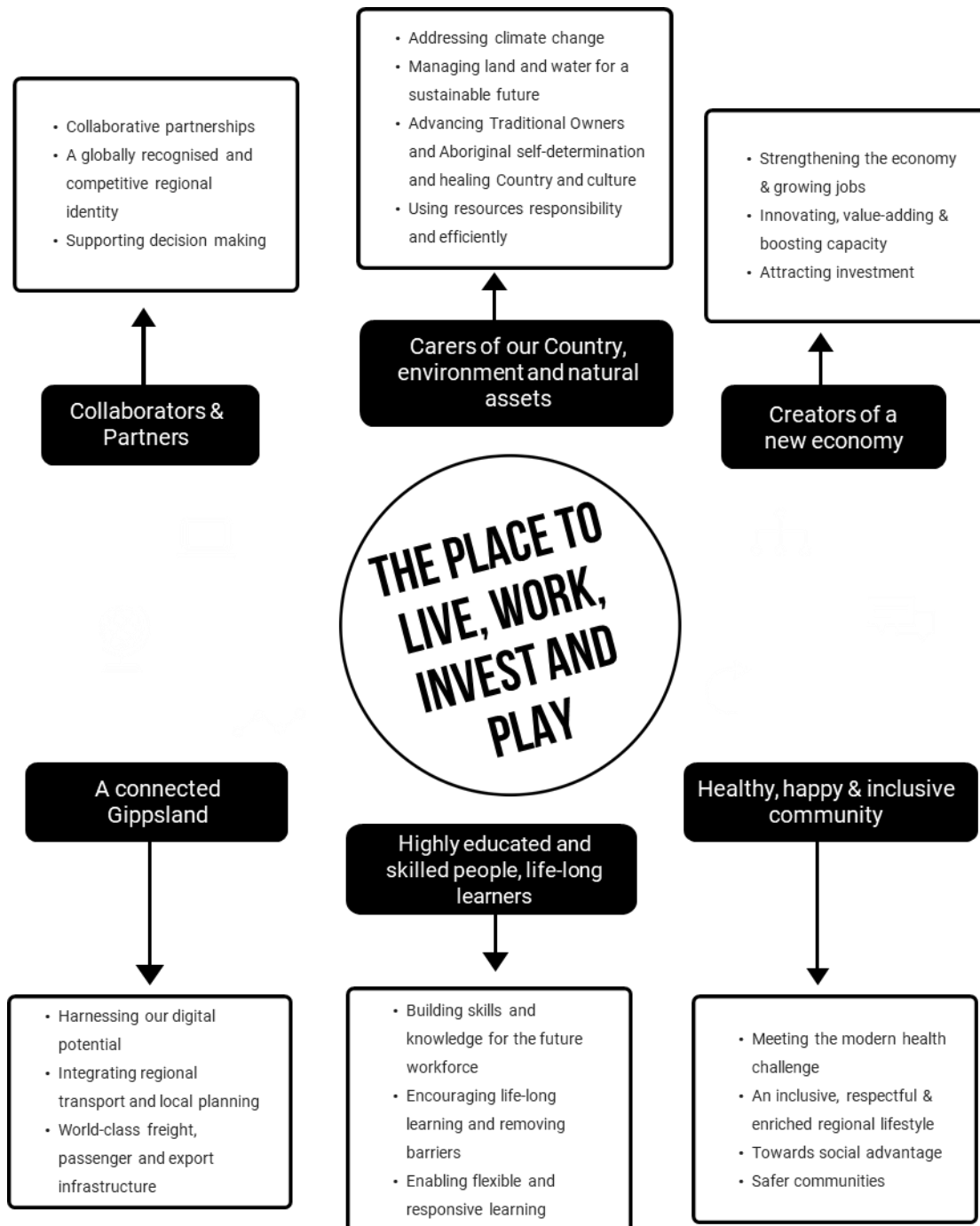


A detailed narrative of Gippsland life in 2040 is outlined in Appendix 3.

The pathway to Gippsland 2040

Strategic themes

To achieve our vision of being the most liveable region in Australia by 2040, six key enablers or themes will guide the actions Gippsland will take.



Measures of success

The following high-level measures will be used by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group to monitor the progress of the 2020-2025 Plan through its life. A full suite of success measures and data sources is provided in Appendix 4, which will be used to undertake a full assessment of the 2020-2025 Plan at the end of its life, and to inform the development of the next version of the Plan.

Legend:

Our current performance

▲ More favourable than the regional or state average – by 5.0% or more ■ Similar to regional Victoria average – difference is less than 5.0% ▼ Less favourable than regional or state average – by 5.0% or more

		NOW	2025	2040
Our environment and sustainability				
Greenhouse gas emissions	▼	2017: • LV brown coal power 43.2 MtCo _{2e} (excl Hazelwood PS) • Gippsland municipal area emissions 6.3 MtCo _{2e}	32% below 2005 emissions	75% below 2005 emissions
Energy use: % renewables and clean energy	▼	5.6%	20% ⁴	40%
Waste to landfill - % decrease	-	-	• 72% decrease	• > 80% decrease
Caring for Country	-	• One Whole of Country Plan • One Joint Management Plan covering 10 parks and reserves • One partnership agreement with Gippsland Environmental Agencies	• Two Whole of Country Plans • Further Joint Management Plans and / or Cooperative Management of Country agreements	• Whole of Country Plans covering all Gippsland Country • Pathway to full management of Gippsland's parks and reserves • Further partnership agreements between all Gippsland Aboriginal communities and environmental agencies
Our economy:				
Gross Regional Product	-	\$16.0 billion	\$16.0 billion	\$23.2 billion ⁵
Five-year average annual gross regional product growth rate (%)	▲	1.2%	At regional Victoria average	At state average
Number of jobs	-	106,000 (2019)	% growth in line with regional Victoria average	% growth in line with regional Victoria average
Five-year average annual job growth (%)	▼	1.7%	At regional Victoria average	Above regional Victoria average

⁴ Targets are reflective of Gippsland hosting a high proportion of Victoria's traditional base line energy production capability, and the projected timelines for transition away from these high emission energy production technologies

⁵ Forecast GRP in 2040 is based on 2.5% annual increase from 2025.

Number of registered business	-	25,204 (2019)	% growth in line with regional Victoria average	% growth in line with regional Victoria average
Our connections				
Digital connectivity:				
Digital Inclusion Index Score	▼	ADII Gippsland 57.3pts (2019)	ADII improve, and in parity with Melbourne	ADII > 95pts
Accessibility affordability and literacy				
Physical connectivity:				
Rail express travel time to Southern Cross, average	▼	- from Warragul: 1hr 41min - from Traralgon: 2hr 22min - from Bairnsdale: 4hr 00min	Completion of Regional Rail Revival with improvements to travel time	- from Warragul: 1hr 00min - from Traralgon: 1hr 30min - from Bairnsdale: 2hr 45min
Intra-regional public transport, representative example	▼	Leongatha to Fed University Churchill - travel time – 1hr 59min - earliest arrival time 9:04am	Leongatha to Fed University Churchill - travel time – 1hr 30min - earliest arrival time 8:45am	Intra-regional public transport is 30% better than in 2025
Our community				
Population	▲	287,000 (2019)	307,000 (2025)	360,000 (2040 ⁶)
Household income – % earning less than \$650 per week (2016 dollars)	▼	46.7%	Below regional Victoria average	Below regional Victoria average
Unemployment rate	■	3.8%	Below regional Victoria average	Below regional Victoria average
Our Education and skills				
Year 12 attainment and further education participation (people aged 19 years+)	■	77.4%	At regional Victoria average	At regional Victoria average
Qualification attainment – bachelor’s degree or higher	▼	9.9%	At regional Victoria average	At regional Victoria average
Not engaged in work or study (people 15 - 24 years)	▼	13.5%	At regional Victoria average	At regional Victoria average
Our Health and wellbeing				
Life expectancy at birth (Gippsland female)	■	84.2 years	At regional Victoria average	At regional Victoria average
Life expectancy at birth (Gippsland male)		79.3 years		
Life expectancy at birth (All Aboriginal female)	▼	75.6 years	At regional Victoria average	At regional Victoria average
Life expectancy at birth (all Aboriginal male)		71.6 years		
Protective factor – people who meet physical activity guidelines for exercise ⁷	▲	41.8%	Above state average	Above state average
Mental health treatment plans by general practitioner (per 1,000 people) ⁸	■	40 – 65 range for Gippsland LGA	At regional Victoria average	Above regional Victoria average
Community safety, family violence – recorded family incidents (per 100,000 people)	▼	2,570	At regional Victoria average	Below regional Victoria average
Homelessness population (%)	▲	0.25%	Below regional Victoria average	Below regional Victoria average
Volunteerism – people aged 15 years and above	■	26.1%	At regional Victoria average	Above regional Victoria average

⁶ DELWP, Gippsland population forecasts 2016-2056

⁷ Victorian Population Health Survey, DHHS 2014 & Gippsland PHN

⁸ Australian Atlas of Healthcare, 2013-14, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare

Our game changers

Realising the long-term vision of the Gippsland Regional Plan depends on the delivery of many future initiatives and projects, which are outlined in our 'steps to success' in each of our six themes.

The following game changers are a snapshot of the priorities that will be the most transformative for Gippsland, and we will advocate strongly for them as we deliver this Plan.

Further details for each of our game changer priorities are provided in Appendix 5, including example projects and initiatives, and flagship projects already underway that are starting us on our journey toward our goals.

Gippsland's game changer priorities

- Increasing digital inclusion throughout Gippsland
- Progressing major transport infrastructure and services to open Gippsland to new business, visitors, and residents:
 - a third Victorian international airport south east of Melbourne
 - expansion of the Port of Hastings
 - faster Gippsland rail services
- Renewable, clean and community energy initiatives
- Hero tourism destinations and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism
- Encouraging innovation and investment to sustainably grow our key industries:
 - food and fibre
 - new energy
 - health
 - advanced manufacturing
 - knowledge services
- Commercialising Carbon Capture and Storage
- Rehabilitating Latrobe Valley's mines and land
- Expanding programs that support and enable our most vulnerable communities and people

Theme 1 - Collaborators & partners

We champion the direction of the Gippsland Regional Plan and work collectively to advance our vision.

Our collaboration opportunity

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

Our guiding principles and values

Collaboration

Innovation

Thinking big, being bold and brave

SMART principles

Being accountable

One voice

Gippsland has a strong network of stakeholders working together to advance our region. They play a key role in building the reputation of our region, communicating our needs, and advocating for funding from both public and private investment.

A priority of the Gippsland Regional Plan is ensuring our existing cross government, industry and community leadership is expanded to reflect the diversity of the Gippsland community including cultural, linguistic and people with disabilities.

Two percent of Gippsland's population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and having stronger partnerships with our Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities is important to ensure Gippsland is inclusive, respectful, and celebratory of the oldest living culture in the world. We must continue to learn from our Traditional Owners and Custodians as we progress Joint Management partnerships and other opportunities for Aboriginal involvement, self-determination, and reconciliation across our region.

Stronger links with young people are also important as we empower our future generations to take the lead in advancing our efforts across Gippsland.

Listening to the voice of the Gippsland community

In recent years, Gippsland has invested significantly in listening to the voices of the Gippsland community. Each member of the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group brings the representative thinking of their extensive network, stakeholders, and members to all discussions.

The Gippsland Regional Partnerships initiative has taken the lead in facilitating extensive consultative programs that have yielded significant insights to the current, emerging, and future aspirations of our community, business, and industry. These efforts have been informed and supported by the Committee for Gippsland, One Gippsland and Regional Development Australia, Gippsland.

Continuation of this practice is essential. We must look to ways to continue to engage efficiently and without duplication.

An advocacy partnership

The Gippsland Regional Plan is developed in a partnership approach, and its implementation and advocacy will be the same.

Sending a clear message to funders of Gippsland's priority projects and initiatives is the key role of the Leadership Group.

Using data and a factual decision-making framework enables the clear prioritisation and positioning of projects and initiatives and ensures a high value and manageable pipeline of works.

A program of advocacy is used to present these projects to Federal and State Government for investment and partnership.

Priority actions in this Plan are led by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group and nominated partnership groups who have clear responsibilities and timelines for action.

A Gippsland identity that leverages our strengths

Gippsland has much to be proud of, and forming a recognised, competitive regional identity is important to putting Gippsland on the map as the place to live, work, invest and play. It assists in building trade and investment links with domestic and global markets.

Complementing and leveraging the strong identities regionally launched by Destination Gippsland's 'Gipps wonder land', Food & Fibre Gippsland and Invest Gippsland will be the basis of this work.

Strategic directions

1.1 Collaborative partnerships are representative of all Gippslanders

We work together to deliver region wide community benefits that support opportunities that improve education, health, employment, environmental and economic outcomes, while recognising and supporting Aboriginal healing and self-determination.

Our leaders across government, industry, education, and community groups are unified with a common purpose and resolve, working collaboratively to develop regional strategy, and advocating with a collective identity and voice.

1.2 A globally recognised, unified and competitive regional identity

Our leaders, champions and deal makers are out in Australia and the right parts of the world, promoting Gippsland and forging partnerships.

Gippsland's identity is aligned to our vision, complements existing industry-based identity, and clearly articulates our competitive strengths.

1.3 Supporting decision making

We use data and tools to inform our decision making as we plan and measure our progress.

Our priority actions are led by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group and partnership groups, who work with clear responsibilities, outcomes, and timelines for action.

We undertake an objective annual review where we commit to reporting our successes, our work in progress and any new initiatives to our community.

Steps to success

Strategic direction	Initiative	Type	Timeframe
1.1 Collaborative partnerships are representative of all Gippslanders	1.1.1 Refresh Gippsland's regional leadership group to guide the implementation of the GRP and advocacy of priority initiatives and projects	Governance	1-2 years
	1.1.2 Report annually to the community on the delivery of the actions in the GRP	Governance	1-2 years
	1.1.3 Increase diversity of voices in leadership and decision making	Governance	1-2 years
	1.1.4 Continued advocacy and support for the Gippsland led Community Leadership Program (GCLP administered by C4G).	Advocacy	Ongoing
1.2 A globally recognised, unified and competitive regional identity	1.2.1 Develop a regional identity, style guide and marketing plan	Project	1-2 years
	1.2.2 Develop a yearly advocacy program and marketing collateral for priority initiatives and projects	Project	1-2 years
	1.2.3 Utilise Gippsland ambassadors as promoters and influencers to sell Gippsland's strengths and comparative advantages to Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and the world	Project	3-5 years
1.3 Supporting decision making	1.3.1 Develop a regional investment assessment tool to aid region-wide decision making	Project	1-2 years
	1.3.2 Incorporate the principles and priorities in this strategy in regional growth plans and local planning schemes	Policy	1-2 years

Theme 2 – Carers of our Country, environment & natural assets

Gippsland's interdependence with our rich culture, our history, identity and health is celebrated and embedded in all our endeavours.

We care for Gippsland's unique natural beauty, with high quality environmental protection, restoration and disaster management practices that are increasingly informed by, and often led by Traditional Owners and Aboriginal groups.

Gippsland's care for, and responsible use of our natural assets, environmental and cultural values make us a renowned eco and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism, food and beverage destination. Our premium, clean, and green products, supported by strong water policy, and forest, land, lakes, and coastal management, are in demand throughout the world.

Gippsland is transitioning to become a leader in sustainable energy and forest products, and the development of efficient and high end uses for traditionally waste energy and materials.

Our environmental challenges, trends & opportunities

This theme is so important to Gippsland's liveability and prosperity; it's the key to our lifestyle, economic health, and attractiveness.

Embedding our responses to our changing climate

The disastrous fire and flood summer of 2019/20, hard on the heels of a severe drought, has brought into focus Gippsland's increasing vulnerability to the world's changing climate. Gippsland's coast and the Gippsland Lakes are some of the most beautiful, yet most vulnerable coastal areas to rising sea levels in Australia. Changes to rainfall patterns in south eastern Australia are resulting in longer dry periods and more intense rain events. Our higher temperatures and more days of heat, low humidity and high winds are increasing the frequency, size and intensity⁹.

Our key responses to climate change are combining partnerships with practical actions. We have a clear opportunity to enhance our effectiveness and attract more government investment to help us in this critically important endeavour, by formulating regional targets and strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Gippsland is a traditional energy powerhouse in Victoria and Australia, based on the abundance of brown coal, oil and gas under our land and sea. This traditional energy generation is extremely carbon intensive; in 2017 Gippsland's four major Latrobe Valley brown coal-fired power stations together contributed 49 percent of Victorian's net greenhouse gas emissions¹⁰. Progressive transitioning of our electricity sources to more renewable and clean technologies has commenced and will be one of our most powerful climate change mitigation measures.

Gippsland has a range of unique conditions with potential for capturing and storing carbon, including extensive agricultural and forested lands, and promising extensive offshore undersea storage sites. We have an opportunity to contribute to meaningful climate change mitigation via large scale emissions drawdowns, with the assistance of our high-level capabilities in agriculture, forestry, industry and technology.

As our responses to climate change are bedded down, it will be important to incorporate climate adaptation into all levels of regional and local decision making, land use and settlement planning, and emergency response. It is also crucial to address the links between climate change and health, particularly for society's vulnerable. Community education and programs need to be key components of our response.

The future of energy

Gippsland is emerging as an exciting renewable and clean electricity region. With three onshore windfarms in our south, Gippsland has prime locations and conditions for further onshore and offshore wind generation, as well as solar farms, battery storage and biomass facilities.

The successful completion of CarbonNet, a project investigating the commercialisation of carbon capture and storage technology in Gippsland, has the potential to partner with new technologies to further drive down Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions, whilst enabling participation in global new energy opportunities, particularly in hydrogen production.

Our renewable and clean energy opportunities are amplified by Gippsland's significant advantages of legacy high-capacity electricity transmission network, support businesses and power industry trained workforce, that also support the declaration of Gippsland as one of Australia's Renewable Energy Zones.

⁹ Gippsland Regional Adaptation Snapshot, Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2018

¹⁰ Adapted from Victorian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2019, DELWP

Waste to energy is a growing field in Australia and a potential opportunity for Gippsland. The relative environmental benefits and risks need to be carefully assessed, particularly for issues around emissions. The need for a stable quantity of input waste must not remove waste from higher order recycling or composting treatments.

Community power is another emerging trend in Gippsland. Our strong solar photovoltaic investment, trials in community energy, and individual investments such as on-farm biodigesters, are contributing to Gippsland's energy mix evolution and climate change mitigation efforts, while also improving users' power supply resilience, affordability and reliability. Increasing our proportion of electric vehicles is another pathway to energy sustainability, that needs to be encouraged and supported by expanding our network of charging stations throughout our widespread Gippsland region.

The Australian and Victorian Governments are working to support Latrobe Valley and Gippsland communities through these various transitions, and their ongoing work in this area is supported.

The possibilities of the circular economy

The circular economy and resource recovery are a set of principles aimed at closing industrial and resource loops, seeking to add value while vastly reducing energy and resource use and waste creation¹¹.

Gippsland is perfectly positioned to become a leader in the circular economy space. We are already working in the waste and resource recovery and water recycling areas, and in some cases expanding services into greater Victoria. Developing higher order products and markets from food and garden organics, crushed glass and plastics are particular opportunities that should be encouraged. There are also emerging opportunities for private companies to set up their own recovery and reuse systems or co-locate with complementary enterprises.

By embedding circular economy principles into our regional and land use planning, regulatory, education, business and community support settings, Gippsland will reap the many triple bottom line benefits of this emerging field.

The balancing act of land, water, sea, and resource management

In Gippsland we rely on an interdependence between our culture, our lifestyles, our industries, and a healthy environment to live in balance, and to grow our regional advantage and reputation as carers of our Country, natural assets, and resources. We aspire to be an area of rich cultural and historical heritage, relative water security, clean, green food and fibre products, unspoilt natural places, biodiversity, and great health and wellbeing.

Country, culture, and healing are inseparable for Aboriginal people. We must heed and increasingly be led by Traditional Owners' and Aboriginal people's knowledge and understanding of land and fire management, support self-determination for on-Country matters, work to better understand Aboriginal heritage values, and empower Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people to apply their knowledge to Country. We encourage opportunities to extend and build on existing joint land management agreements-with Traditional Owners. We must ensure that communication and management practices, including fire and emergency management, are culturally appropriate and respectful of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Gippsland's traditional economic strengths are all based to varying degrees on limited resources, including of water and arable land. We are reviewing and researching the way we manage these industries and working hard to transition to more sustainable models and develop new, smarter ways of doing more with less. We are preparing for transition disruptions at a business and community level, especially for industry sectors with long lead times such as timber harvesting. We must ensure that rehabilitation of legacy damage is carefully planned to progressively restore environmental health.

¹¹ The Circular Economy – An Explainer, Caley Otter, Department of Parliamentary Services, Victoria 2018

Our land development and settlement patterns and modern lifestyles, and even recreational choices, also apply pressure to our resources, natural environment, and biodiversity. We need to constantly assess and manage these threats through careful settlement and environmental planning, controlling pests and weeds, and the restoration and management of our natural assets, parks, and reserves.

Gippsland has many knowledgeable, committed and passionate individuals, community and industry groups that are doing great work in environmental, cultural, historical and biodiversity protection and restoration, climate change action, and local enterprises such as community food hubs and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism and bush tucker initiatives. All opportunities to harness local knowledge and to enable collaborations for these individuals and groups should be pursued, to help the hard work of these people and groups have even more reach and effectiveness.

Strategic directions

2.1 Addressing climate change and managing land and water for a sustainable future

We are readying Gippsland for the future by positioning and planning for climate change action, sustainable settlements and land use, and protection of distinctive and fragile environments.

We are ensuring our policy, planning and regulatory frameworks enable growth in new sustainable technologies.

We encourage investments in renewable, clean and community energy.

We are ensuring that our management of water and natural assets, parks and reserves, environmental protection and repair are informed and as appropriate, led by Traditional Owners and address ongoing and emerging challenges

2.2 Working together to benefit Country and culture

We seek to support Traditional Owner and Aboriginal care for Country and self-determination for on-Country matters.

We seek to harness community level knowledge and efforts in environmental stewardship and local environmental initiatives.

2.3 Using Gippsland's resources responsibly and efficiently

We are working to pivot traditional industries to more sustainable models.

We undertake research into new, smart, and sustainable ways to leverage our resources.

We encourage investments in the circular economy, resource recovery and value-adding.

Steps to success

Strategic Direction		Initiative		Type	Timeframe (within)
2.1	Addressing climate change and managing land and water for a sustainable future	2.1.1	Commit to a regional carbon emissions target	Policy / Strategy	1-2 years
		2.1.2	In coordination with the Victorian Government Regional Adaptation Strategy, determine regional short and long-term pipeline of climate mitigation, adaptation, and recovery projects	Advocacy / Program of works	1-10+ years
		2.1.3	Advocate for Gippsland to be declared a Renewable Energy Zone	Advocacy	1-5 years
		2.1.4	Progress sustainable renewable and clean energy investments through Gippsland	Policy / Strategy	6-10+ years
		2.1.5	Expand community and on-premises energy solutions through Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expanding our network of electric vehicle charging stations micro-grids community power hubs on-premise biodigesters, solar arrays and wind turbines 	Policy / Strategy	3-10 years
		2.1.6	Review and update policy, planning and regulatory settings to enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate change readiness, including updated riverine and coastal flood modelling sustainable agriculture, settlement and land use planning, and protection of distinctive and fragile environments protection of and Aboriginal cultural heritage and realisation of cultural rights environmentally sustainable design principles large and small-scale renewable and clean energy embedding circular economy and resource recovery principles and requirements 	Policy / Project	1-2 years
		2.1.7	Plan to address legacy environmental issues throughout Gippsland, including rehabilitation of Latrobe Valley coal mines	Strategy / Program of works	6-10+ years
		2.1.8	In coordination with Gippsland and East Gippsland Integrated Water Management Forums, balance societal and environmental water needs across Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrating water management and place-based planning Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural, management and economic use and ties waterway, wetland, and riparian management water and stormwater recycling and reuse water security for community, urban, industrial, and agricultural use 	Program of works	3-5 years

Strategic Direction		Initiative		Type	Timeframe (within)
2.2	Working together to benefit Country and culture	2.2.1	Extend joint Traditional Owner crown land management agreements including to water and sea, and a pathway to future full Traditional Owner management	Policy / Strategy	6-10 years
		2.2.2	Empower Traditional Owners' and Aboriginal's care for Country including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural heritage preservation • joint or sole land, forest, fire, water and sea planning, management, and recovery • joint management capital improvement initiatives • burning school at Forestec and cultural burning practices • employment in on Country initiatives • cultural tourism • Indigenous food production 	Strategy	
2.3	Using Gippsland's resources responsibly and efficiently	2.3.1	Progress geothermal opportunities in agriculture, tourism, and energy throughout Gippsland	Research / Strategy	3-5 years
		2.3.2	Progress sustainable and efficient land, water and resource use, reuse and recovery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macalister Irrigation District farming practices • intensive and regenerative agriculture • forestry and sustainable timber products • fishing and aquaculture • resource recovery 	Research / Strategy	3-10 years
		2.3.3	Build on The CarbonNet Project to commercialise carbon capture and storage	Research / Strategy	2-5 years
		2.3.4	Enable future use of coal and gas that are emissions neutral or emissions negative, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hydrogen production • carbon based products 	Research / Strategy	6-10+ years
		2.3.5	Progress regional waste and recycling recovery and processing facilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value-adding partnerships • servicing catchments beyond Gippsland 	Project	3-5 years

Theme 3 - Creators of a new economy

Gippsland's economy has been built on the back of world class natural resources, energy production, food and fibre and tourism.

The challenges brought on by drought, fire, industry disruption and COVID-19 have tested our resolve and inspired us to change and evolve.

We will continue to responsibly leverage our natural advantages as we embark on a path of innovation and investment in high-value industries to create a future economy with greater prosperity and sustainability.

Economic snapshot

Gippsland's \$16 billion economy has long leveraged our diverse and world-class natural resources to underpin our reputation in energy production, timber production, food and fibre, horticulture, and tourism. These key industries are supported by strong technical service and construction, health and social assistance and retail trade sectors – forming our three largest employment segments across Gippsland.

Gippsland has faced significant challenges in recent years including drought, bushfires, power station closures, native timber transition, population growth in Baw Baw and Bass Coast Shire and the COVID-19 pandemic. This in addition to adapting to the changing world of digitalisation, innovation, and automation.

The OECD has found that 10.6 percent of Australian jobs are at high risk of automation and a further 25 percent may change substantially in the way work is done, suggesting that 'job change' will be as important in managing the workforce impacts of automation as the 'job loss'¹².

Recent COVID-19 pandemic and bushfire recovery modelling suggests that parts of Gippsland will face some of the most significant declines in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Victoria, and immediate job losses between 8.4 and 10.5 percent¹³. East Gippsland and Bass Coast Shires are likely to be the most adversely affected.

Despite these challenges, Gippsland has favourable opportunities to diversify and build a new world-focussed economy. Food and fibre, tourism, health, education, energy supply and resource recovery will be key economic pillars for us into the future.

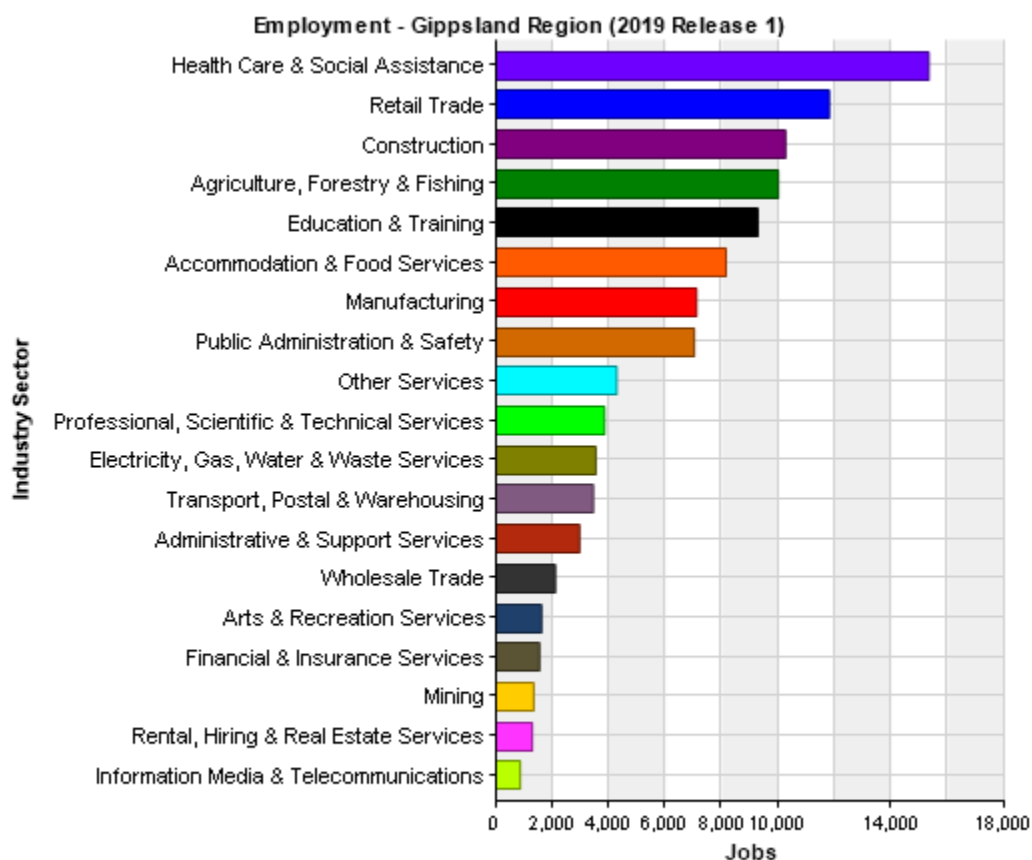
Leveraging world economic trends of a knowledge economy and lifestyle work-choices, innovation, and automation, we have untapped potential to grow our expertise and output in healthcare and social assistance, professional, scientific, and technical services and education and training.

We understand the economic challenges in front of us and are inspired to meet them. Gippsland is working hard to leverage our natural advantages and competitive points of difference to transition to a more diverse and agile future workforce and industry mix.

¹² <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/c8922d70-99e4-4dfa-ab92-86a775c9a697/Australias-Welfare-Chapter-5-summary-18Sept2019.pdf.aspx>

¹³ SGS Economics and Planning, COVID-19 and summer bushfires: The economic impact on your suburb and pathways to recovery, May 2020.

Employment

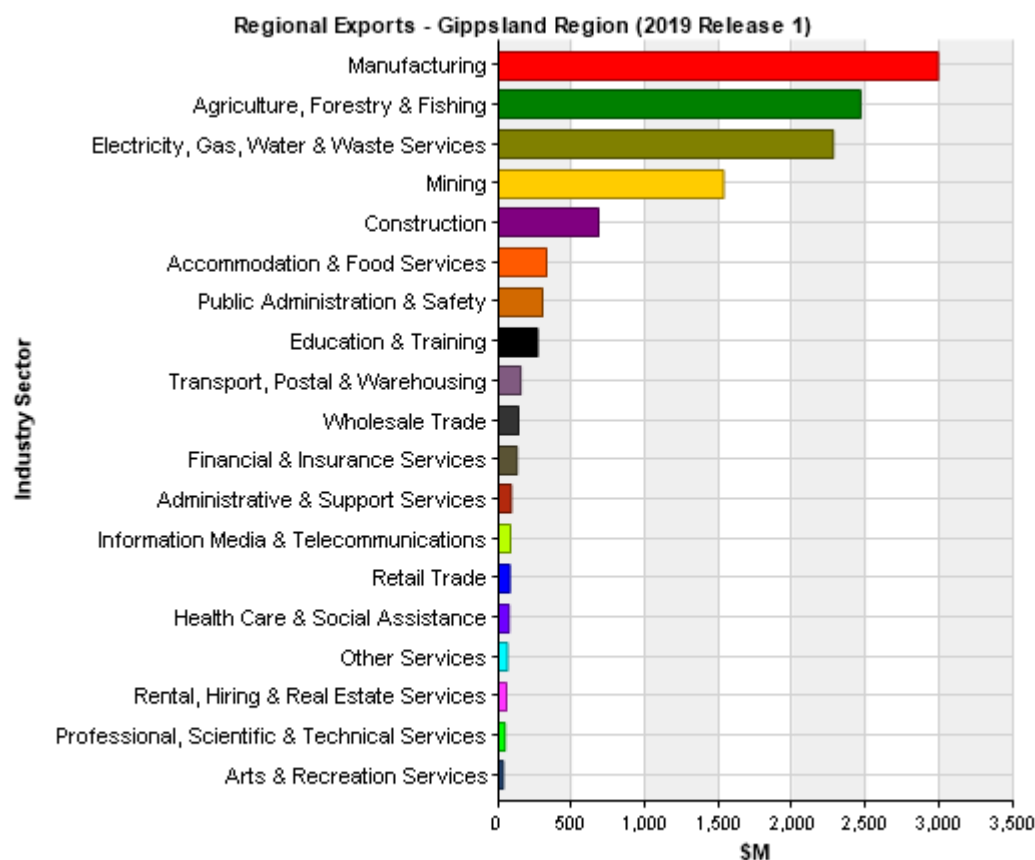


All industry sectors in Gippsland Region ranked by Employment

Industry Sector	Gippsland Region (2019 Release 1)	
	Jobs	%
Health Care Social Assistance	15,326	14.5%
Retail Trade	11,808	11.2%
Construction	10,257	9.7%
Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	9,995	9.5%
Education Training	9,273	8.8%
Accommodation Food Services	8,146	7.7%
Manufacturing	7,103	6.7%
Public Administration Safety	7,018	6.6%
Other Services	4,274	4.0%
Professional, Scientific Technical Services	3,839	3.6%
Electricity, Gas, Water Waste Services	3,528	3.3%
Transport, Postal Warehousing	3,438	3.3%
Administrative Support Services	2,955	2.8%
Wholesale Trade	2,098	2.0%
Arts Recreation Services	1,605	1.5%
Financial Insurance Services	1,536	1.5%
Mining	1,337	1.3%
Rental, Hiring Real Estate Services	1,284	1.2%
Information Media Telecommunications	857	0.8%
Total	105,677	

Regional exports

The total regional export estimate for Gippsland Region is \$11,743.977 million.



All industry sectors in Gippsland Region ranked by Regional Exports

Industry Sector	Gippsland Region (2019 Release 1)	
	\$M	%
Manufacturing	\$2,990.023	25.5%
Agriculture, Forestry Fishing	\$2,462.749	21.0%
Electricity, Gas, Water Waste Services	\$2,277.739	19.4%
Mining	\$1,530.884	13.0%
Construction	\$679.430	5.8%
Accommodation Food Services	\$325.701	2.8%
Public Administration Safety	\$299.084	2.5%
Education Training	\$264.838	2.3%
Transport, Postal Warehousing	\$151.330	1.3%
Wholesale Trade	\$135.491	1.2%
Financial Insurance Services	\$125.422	1.1%
Administrative Support Services	\$85.223	0.7%
Information Media Telecommunications	\$81.169	0.7%
Retail Trade	\$76.631	0.7%
Health Care Social Assistance	\$70.069	0.6%

Key economic sectors, challenges & opportunities

Food and fibre

Gippsland's food and fibre sector is the backbone of our economy, contributing an estimated \$7 billion of our \$16 billion gross regional product. The sector includes dairy (\$3 billion), forestry (\$1.2 billion), meat and horticulture (\$1 billion each), fishing, and wild catch and aquaculture (\$500 million)¹⁴.

Our Gippsland brand is unique, and we are renowned for the clean, green, and nutritious qualities of our food. The food and fibre sector is our most inter-connected industry grouping, with strong primary ties to the environment and visitor experience, and significant potential for farmgate tourism growth.

Our timber industry is transitioning as it prepares for the implementation of government policy relating to the ceasing of native timber harvesting by 2030. There is an opportunity for an ongoing sustainable plantation timber industry in Gippsland, and it is important that preparations are put in place with adequate lead time to ensure supply lines into the future.

The projected substantial increase in the global demand for food and fibre represents an exciting opportunity for Gippsland to supply high-value products to domestic and international markets. Key challenges include climate change, land use planning, big data acquisition and use, digital connectivity and access to ports and airports, and maintaining a healthy level of competition. The food and fibre, agriculture and associated transport industries have proved one of the most resilient industries to the challenging COVID-19 economic conditions.

Our region's industry peak body, Food & Fibre Gippsland, has an aspirational growth target of 5 percent per annum to 2025 with a focus on increasing the quantity of food production, value add through manufacturing and logistics, research and innovation, and export market growth.

Visitor economy

Gippsland's diverse and beautiful built and natural environments provide significant economic opportunity for our region. Tourism generates an estimated \$1.65 billion for our economy and supports more than 13,000 jobs, attracting more than 8.9 million visitors per year¹⁵.

Our tourism opportunities are based on a wide range of significant nature-based experiences including the Gippsland Lakes, Phillip Island Nature Park, Wilson's Promontory National Park and Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort, gourmet food experience, wineries, distilleries and craft breweries, all year-round arts, cultural and sporting events such as the MotoGP, and coastal tourism and recreation.

Gippsland's rich culture and history provides an opportunity for cultural, historical, and eco-tourism to be shared with visitors. Supporting Aboriginal groups to determine and appropriately yield economic benefit from their arts, culture and environment is important to creating cultural benefit and a valuable employment base.

Gippsland's relative proximity to Melbourne presents a favourable opportunity to increase domestic and international visitor numbers, night stays and visitor spending. Creating experiences that enable year-round visitation is a growing priority for our region, particularly in areas prone to seasonal visitation such as coastal, lakes and alpine areas. Ensuring appropriate transport links to support this visitor growth is essential. Collaborative partnerships between tourism and food and fibre are providing a strong opportunity to leverage our regional comparative advantages and identity.

The visitor economy is such an important contributor to employment and gross domestic product within Gippsland. Creating memorable and high yield tourism experiences and major events is crucial to building sustainability and resilience across this sector.

¹⁴ Gippsland Regional Partnership Food & Fibre Working Group – Progress Report November 2018.

¹⁵ Tourism Research Australia for year ending March 2020

Energy and resources

Gippsland is a traditional energy powerhouse, producing the majority of Victoria's electricity from our Latrobe Valley brown coal-fired generators, as well as 97 percent of Victoria's natural gas, and 14 percent of Australia's oil from Bass Strait's extensive gas and oil fields.

Our energy landscape is changing as traditional electricity generation methods are challenged by the need to lower greenhouse gas emissions. All of Latrobe Valley's coal-fired power stations are scheduled to close by 2048, which will see significant changes to the industrial and employment landscape in the Latrobe Valley and wider Gippsland. The Victorian Government commenced assistance to our region as the first of our power stations closed in 2017, which was highly welcomed, and will need to continue. We must also proactively prepare for the closure of the remaining power stations, including modelling of timeframes in advance of existing publicised closure dates to support transition decisions and action.

The rehabilitation of Latrobe Valley's coal mines is a very significant economic, social, and environmental challenge for Gippsland, with the demand for substantial volumes of water likely to be used for rehabilitation presenting a particular challenge in a drying south eastern Australian climate. The Victorian Government's Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy will be a guiding document for mine owners and regulators and must be regularly refreshed to ensure that critical rehabilitation and final land use decisions are made with consideration of all stakeholders and economic sector counterparts.

Gippsland is emerging as an important location for renewable and clean energy, with favourable locations and climatic conditions for a range of technologies. A key competitive advantage for Gippsland in attracting these new energy investments is our high capacity transmission infrastructure, an important legacy of our traditional power generation that connects Gippsland to the National Electricity Market, and to Tasmania. We must continue to develop Gippsland's position as a world-class innovative energy hub, with a declaration of Gippsland as a Renewable Energy Zone a key requirement.

While still abundant, Gippsland's oil and gas field reserves in Bass Strait have now peaked and it is estimated that only about 15 percent of known crude oil reserves and about 40 percent of known gas reserves remain available for extraction and production. Demand for the ongoing use of these reserves will be heavily dependent on environmental and social considerations in an increasingly climate-conscious society.

Less carbon-intensive gas is likely to remain in use for some time as an important 'shoulder' energy source. Gippsland's vast lignite resource remains a valuable asset, with investigations and trials underway into future environmentally acceptable uses, including for fertilisers, carbon fibre products and the potential of hydrogen production paired with carbon capture and storage, a future energy source that is predicted to be worth up to \$2.5 trillion globally by 2050.

The CarbonNet Project, supported by the Australian and Victorian Governments, is seeking to commercialise carbon capture and storage technology connecting Latrobe Valley to very promising extensive deep offshore storage sites in the Gippsland Basin under Bass Strait. The successful completion of this flagship project would allow the effective decarbonisation of our existing manufacturing and industrial base, encourage the attraction of high-growth, emission neutral or emission negative industries of the future, and support Gippsland's case for declaration as a Renewable Energy Zone.

Sand is the single most mined commodity on earth. Sands or its extracts are used in virtually every construction or manufacturing process to make products as diverse as concrete, windows, wind turbine components and mobile phones. Globally, it is being consumed much faster than it can be naturally replenished. Gippsland has a plentiful supply of sand, including in demand mineral sands, which provide substantial long-term economic opportunity.

Gippsland's high water security in a drying south eastern Australia is a tremendous environmental and economic asset, with our catchments providing a large percentage of Melbourne's water in addition to meeting our own needs. Water from our extensive array of catchments and irrigation as well as the Wonthaggi desalination plant provide a significant competitive advantage for our food and fibre production, tourism, heavy industry, settlement planning and lifestyle, and its use for these purposes must be carefully balanced with environmental needs.

Knowledge industries and professional services

Gippsland has a rapidly developing knowledge economy, and fostering this important economic sector is crucial to our future prosperity and growth. Knowledge based businesses including information technologies, finance and insurance, property, professional and technical services, education, administration and support services provide 22 percent of Gippsland's economic output¹⁶.

The knowledge economy is an essential input turning research into industrial development and both large and small-scale investment. The important characteristic is the ability not only to generate knowledge, but to commercialise it. Collaborations between our industries, research institutions and capital investment funds are critical to succeeding and should be encouraged.

Creativity is pivotal to a knowledge economy. Successful regions develop an advantage based on their ability to quickly mobilise diverse and creative people, resources and capabilities that can turn innovations into new business ideas and commercial products. Developing and promoting Gippsland's cultural, recreation and community assets, and unique lifestyle, is important to help retain and attract talented people to live, work and prosper in our region.

A growing number of business incubators and co-working spaces throughout Gippsland are proving to be a successful way of developing and growing traditional and new local industry.

Many knowledge-based businesses throughout Gippsland have been able to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions by utilising technology to pivot to online and virtual work. There are some real opportunities for growing this sector in Gippsland as a result of lessons learned by harnessing efficiencies from on-line services, widening employment pools by challenging traditional ideas on place-based work and business, and promoting the work-life balance opportunities of high level, 'city' style employment and business opportunities in our beautiful regional location. Ongoing improvements to Gippsland's digital inclusion levels will support this potential growth.

Small business

Small businesses are the unsung heroes of Gippsland's economy, comprising nearly 99 percent of all registered businesses¹⁷. Whilst many small businesses, particularly in our more remote and tourist-oriented areas, are micro or cottage businesses that are lifestyle based, we also have many that compete with or service larger players in all of our industry sectors. These businesses must continue to be agile and innovative to survive and thrive.

There is an opportunity for small businesses to benefit in knowledge sharing and developing symbiotic relationships, by a collaborative approach utilising a model of shared spaces, services, and technologies, and by encouraging targeted networking, professional and business development opportunities. It is important, too, to address barriers to entry and expansion that result from policy, planning, regulatory and tax arrangements.

Our smaller, micro and cottage industries are often seasonal and lack funding reserves. This can make them very vulnerable to demand variability caused by external shocks, as graphically demonstrated by the consequences felt by many East Gippsland businesses when impacted by the 2019/20 summer bushfire disaster. As well as immediate recovery support, it is important to encourage and support efforts for these kinds of businesses to grow their resilience and business health.

¹⁶ Calculated from REMPLAN economy profile 2020

¹⁷ Calculated from REMPLAN economy profile 2020, by revenue less than \$10M pa

Advanced manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing offers vast opportunities for Australian and international companies to leverage off Gippsland's skilled workforce and advancements in science and technology, to create new products and services, expand into new supply chains and markets, and attract and develop a new generation of skilled employees. We aim to encourage and help Gippsland manufacturers to invest in collaborative research to exploit innovative technologies and embrace the fourth industrial revolution, connecting the physical and digital world.

As our economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, Gippsland will be in a good position to capitalise on a renewed emphasis on Australian domestic self-reliance for manufactured and value-added products.

Health care and social assistance

The health sector is one of the largest job generators in Gippsland. As our region's population grows and ages, the need for health services will increase, therefore creating further demand for health-related employment and capability.

Gippsland has experienced a two-fold increase in the number of residential care and social assistance services jobs since 2001. More than 4,700 of all health jobs across Gippsland are in this sector, demonstrating a growing knowledge capability and demand for services.

A promising opportunity to build knowledge and economic strength in allied and community health services, including telehealth, exists. Early partnerships between education and the health industry are proving the benefits of a collaborative approach to developing regional based capability and expertise that includes developing post-graduate training opportunities.

As we meet the needs of a growing community, we will need to invest further in Gippsland's hospitals and major health facilities, including the Latrobe Regional Hospital and the West Gippsland Hospital. Meeting this increasing demand will see further increases in health-related employment as well as a number of jobs during construction.

Construction

Our western shires of Baw Baw and Bass Coast, which border metropolitan Melbourne, and are popular commuting and sea change locations, are among Victoria's fastest growing municipalities. We must ensure that government, infrastructure and local policy and planning supports these growth areas to ensure suitable, sustainable, and well serviced settlements.

As the economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic continue through the next several years, the construction sector in Gippsland will be heavily reliant on Government policy and funding – both directly from recovery stimulus funding decisions and land use planning reform, and in terms of effects on the confidence and capability of private construction, including housing.

Regional areas can be negatively affected by one-size-fits-all Government policy, for example when average minimum triggers for matching private investment favour higher income metropolitan areas. Smaller regional construction companies can at times miss out on capitalising on larger construction funding or stimulus programs, through lacking sufficient capacity in administration, technical or timing demands to be able to comply with Government conditions of tendering or pre-qualification requirements. It is important that the targeting of construction funding and stimulus for regional areas addresses these critical issues.

Defence

The defence sector is prominent in Gippsland, primarily through the RAAF Base at East Sale. The establishment of the Defence Force Flying Training School at the East Sale RAAF Base provides further opportunities to build on this presence and generate a demand for goods and services beyond that associated with the projected population growth. To enable this, it is important that the Federal Government further unlock regional procurement accreditation levels to be more inclusive of small to medium enterprises in the defence supply chain.

Strategic directions

3.1 Attracting investment

Gippsland will be open for business to the world and remain attractive to public and private investment in infrastructure, services, and high-value enterprises. We will continue to promote our competitive strengths and focus on the value we offer to individuals, families, and businesses as a place to live, work and play.

3.2 Strengthening the economy and growing jobs

We will build on our natural resources, strategic assets, and skilled workforce to create a strong and diversified economy with increased visitors, jobs and exports.

We will support Aboriginal economic development, business, and employment.

3.3 Innovating, value-adding and boosting capacity

We will create a culture of innovation, entrepreneurialism, collaboration and research with industry, government, research facilities, start-ups, and the community.

We will explore new high-value industries and supply chains and boost business productivity and profitability.

Steps to success

Strategic direction		Initiative		Type	Timeframe (within)
3.1	Attracting investment	3.1.1	Develop a Gippsland Innovation and Investment Strategy and Prospectus, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> industry specific data collection and sharing business expert/advisory input and capital access/raising mechanism for small to medium enterprises a region-wide innovation framework, methodology and implementation plan a more business-friendly regulation and funding framework 	Strategy	2 years
		3.1.2	Develop a targeted migration strategy to attract Melbourne-based professionals to live and work in Gippsland. Focus on high-value jobs in footloose industries (i.e. location independent) and recent arrivals.	Strategy	2 years
		3.1.3	Advocacy for Gippsland to be the decentralisation choice of business and government	Strategy	0-5 years
3.2	Strengthening the economy and growing jobs	3.2.1	Develop and implement the recommendations of the Gippsland Economic Development Strategy including the consequences and opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic	Strategy	5 years
		3.2.2	Support delivery of Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan by advocating for regionally significant tourism destinations and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism	Strategy	2 years
		3.2.3	Review and implement local procurement strategies that provide access to local and Aboriginal businesses	Program	Ongoing
		3.2.4	Develop a time-based economic, social, and environmental impact model of power station closures with scenarios including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> both published and early closure rehabilitation options potential end uses government policy/regulatory interventions replacement investment options 	Project	2 years
		3.2.5	Progress key new and alternative resource use projects, subject to environmental and government approval, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> earth resources lignite / gas to hydrogen and products sustainable timber products waste to energy initiatives 	Project	2 - 5 years
		3.2.6	Support Traditional Owners and Aboriginal groups in the development and implementation of Aboriginal economic development plans and employment strategies	Strategy	Ongoing

Strategic direction	Initiative		Type	Timeframe (within)
3.3 Innovating, value-adding and boosting capacity	3.3.1	Expand innovation collaborations involving industry, education institutions, government, and community, in sectors including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • food and fibre • advanced manufacturing • new energy • resource and environment management 	Advocacy, Projects (R&D)	
	3.3.2	Expand start-up and maker movement support and collaboration initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up Gippsland • Establishing inter-connecting 'GippsHub' innovation & co-working / learning centres under a shared-services model in key townships of each Gippsland municipality 	Program	Ongoing
	3.3.3	Support for on-farm innovation for irrigation projects.	Advocacy	2 years

Theme 4 – A connected Gippsland

Our digital infrastructure and transport network connect us to each other and the world, providing attractive choices for how and where we work and live, and unlimited reach for our experiences, products, and services.

We have an integrated regional and transport planning framework that is future ready, enabling and encouraging trade, environmental management, tourism and liveability.

Our connections provide the foundations for Gippsland to shine

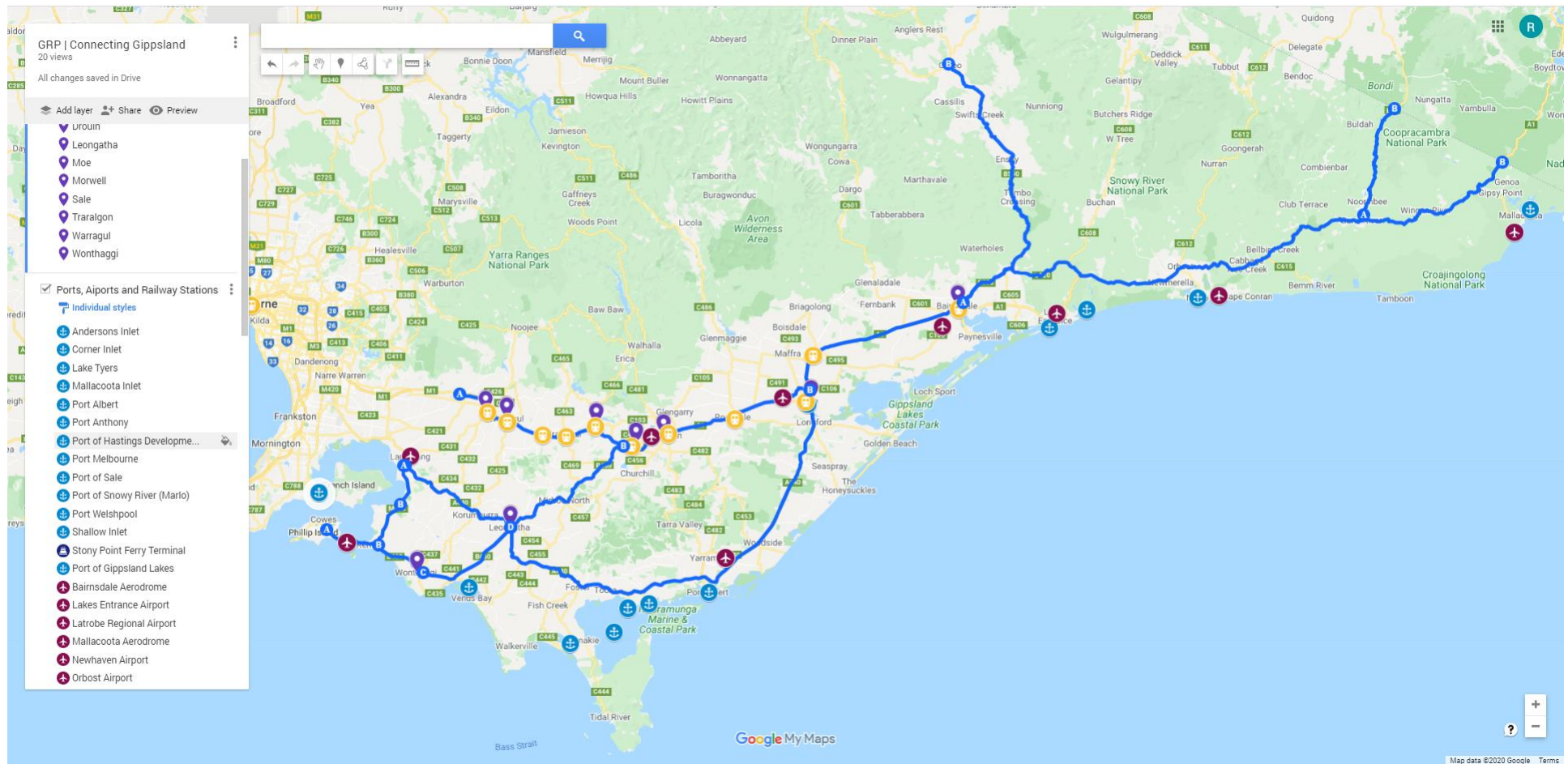
Gippsland's transport links and development patterns have been defined by our ancient Aboriginal trade routes and trails, historic trade and tourist routes, highlands, forests, extensive rivers, lakes and coastline, and lignite deposits.

We have strong central and southern east-west connections to Melbourne, Canberra, regional NSW, and Sydney. We have several substantial regional centres and a less dominant sized regional city than most regions. An integrated regional and transport planning focus will serve Gippsland well, enabling a collaborative approach that will encourage innovation and help us compete with larger centres.

Melbourne's airports and deep-water ports are located away from Gippsland. Our connection to Australia and the world is vital to add value to our traditional industries, to attract new industries, and cement our reputation as an exceptional place for tourists and holiday makers to visit. We need closer major intermodal facilities, efficient transport links and connections, and greater utilisation of our regional airports and ports.

Our geography results in variable digital coverage across our region and challenges the resilience of our transport and digital networks in times of wild weather, fire, and flood. Climate change will increase this challenge over time, and we must be prepared.

Gippsland's key connections



Our connectivity challenges, trends & opportunities

Our digital future

Investment in Gippsland's digital infrastructure, big data research, and skills have the potential to achieve significant returns on investment for our region, with transformative economic, social, and environmental benefits.

The COVID-19 crisis of 2020 has fundamentally changed our understanding of how digital technologies can be utilised to practically and efficiently deliver services such as education, health and public services to our dispersed population.

Digital connectivity is also intrinsically linked to the potential of growing Gippsland businesses involved in the knowledge economy and in global trade. Trials of newer digital technologies such as Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) are providing emerging opportunities for Gippsland's diffuse industries like agriculture, and small-scale cooperative enterprises, to build, transform and modernise.

Gippsland's Digital Inclusion Index of 57.3 is below both the Victorian regional average and Melbourne's score of 64.9, reflecting disparities in access, affordability, and ability¹⁸. While we have good central coverage, we have some surprising gaps within and just outside our bigger centres, while in our outlying areas gaps are often in smaller 'pockets' not recognized by low resolution mapping¹⁹. The critical infrastructure that underpins digital and telecommunications access needs to address the challenges of our geography, and to be resilient to natural disasters.

Integrating our transport and regional planning for a unique advantage

Gippsland is a large and highly decentralised region - spanning almost 42,000 square kilometres. Our regional city of Latrobe City includes the townships of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Churchill as well as several villages, and is less dominant in size than most regions, containing 23 percent of our population. In comparison Ballarat and Bendigo host around 40 percent of their respective region's populations, and Geelong almost 80 percent.

Gippsland's population is instead spread more evenly among several substantial regional centres, and around 40 percent of us live in small settlements. We have a high level of intra-regional mobility and collaboration, moving easily and often between regional centres. In particular, our major Gippsland east-west corridor extending from Warragul and Drouin, through our regional city of Latrobe Valley and east to Sale, Bairnsdale and beyond, connects many of our central, northern and eastern towns and villages to enable extensive sharing of services, employment pools and supply chains. Similarly, the neighbouring Bass Coast and South Gippsland townships of Wonthaggi, Inverloch, Leongatha, and Korumburra are conveniently clustered to connect to each other and to our southern towns and villages.

We have the challenge of competing against larger scale, more dense urban centres that traditionally perform better in the national and global economy by offering geographic concentration of people, capital and resources, knowledge institutions and service delivery.

We can meet this challenge, growing our relative influence and attraction capability by capitalising on our existing township interdependencies and mobility trends. We must carefully integrate regional and transport planning, taking account of industry and community needs, and encouraging shared services models that extend beyond municipal boundaries where it is logical to do so. Along with improvements to digital inclusion, these planning solutions will provide a significant and unique advantage to Gippsland, whilst offering the opportunity for people to live and work in our affordable regional areas and enjoy a highly amenable country lifestyle.

¹⁸ Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2019, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, Roy Morgan for Telstra

¹⁹ Gippsland Regional Digital Plan, Gippsland Regional Partnership 2019

Balancing movement and place in our towns

Many Gippsland towns are attractive with good services and beautiful locations. However, some still suffer from busy road corridors running through, affecting their look and feel as well as impacting safety and ease of movement, especially for the more vulnerable including children, the disabled and increasing proportions of older people.

For towns on major transport corridors such as Traralgon, Sale, Drouin and Korumburra, the dominant issue is heavy vehicles. For towns closer to or at holiday localities such as those around Phillip Island and the Gippsland Lakes, visitor peak traffic causes significant difficulties. There are several towns, such as Wonthaggi and Bairnsdale, where both issues come into play.

In concert with transport network improvements to manage the movement of heavy vehicles and holiday traffic around and out of our town centres, there is an opportunity for improving our towns with urban renewal projects with an emphasis on balancing movement and place values, and improving public transport, cycling and walking links.

Physically connecting Gippsland and the world

Excellent transport is a key to supporting, diversifying, and growing Gippsland's industries, and is essential to connecting our communities in our mobile and interdependent region.

We have an extensive road network, with central, southern, and eastern highways connecting west to Melbourne and east to Canberra, regional New South Wales and Sydney, and less prominent north-south links. Our public transport system is based around the Gippsland Rail Line between Melbourne and Bairnsdale, with buses providing the balance of services.

Our freight transport system is overwhelmingly road-based, due to few rail-based freight transport services including intermodal facilities, and a high proportion of our freight being time-critical fresh produce and products. The efficiency of our road freight network is under pressure as we seek to expand our reach to Melbourne, interstate and to the world. We require more efficient freight routes around or through many of our regional centres and townships. We must improve the freight efficiency of our main spine of the Princes Highway and improve the capacity of the Bass and South Gippsland Highways that are under pressure from a rapidly expanding extractive industry servicing Melbourne.

Creating international freight terminals on the east side of Melbourne is a priority for Gippsland. We need these facilities close to our region, to support our efforts to capitalise and grow our international reputation for clean and green premium fresh produce and enhance our ability to attract the value-adding investors and industries that will take our food and fibre sector to a new level. Similarly, our plans to attract investors to grow Gippsland's renewable and clean energy and high-end manufacturing sectors will be vastly improved by the faster and more efficient links to markets and source materials that these facilities would provide.

Our regional airports and ports are another potential pathway for time-critical freight transport, and increased utilisation of these is encouraged.

We intend to attract more residents and visitors to our region, and for those without their own transport we will need to offer high quality services to our regional assets, education and health services, and experiences in our beautiful natural places. An international airport east of Melbourne and improved public transport services to and around our region, are key initiatives to achieve these aims.

The summer of 2019/20 highlighted critical and increasing vulnerabilities in our transport network, as roads to and through our outlying areas were cut off during the fire disaster, with dramatic sea and aerial rescues and supply drops needed to ensure the safety and security of affected communities. These vulnerabilities must be addressed.

Strategic directions

4.1 Harnessing our digital potential

We must reduce the country-city divide and harness the possibilities of the digital age to improve planning and to showcase excellence and innovation in education, health, lifestyle, future industries, and international trade.

4.2 Integrating regional, transport and local planning

We are embedding a regionally focussed and integrated transport, land use and urban planning framework.

4.3 World-class freight, passenger, and export infrastructure

We are working to provide critical transport and logistical infrastructure to efficiently connect us to each other and to the world.

Steps to success

Strategic direction		Initiative		Type	Timeframe (within)
4.1	Harnessing our digital potential	4.1.1	In coordination with the Gippsland Regional Digital Plan, increase access to and usage of digital technologies throughout Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved digital broadband, LPWAN²⁰ and mobile access for smaller towns, rural, agricultural, and remote areas digital hubs and clusters, shared data and services, and free WiFi digital skills and literacy improved data collection and reporting 	Strategy / Project	6-10 years
4.2	Integrated regional, transport and local planning	4.2.1	Update Gippsland's Regional Growth Plan, ensuring integration of regional and transport planning, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> economic precincts shared services regional freight connectivity, precinct and intermodal planning land use and extent of overlays digital connectivity implementation into municipal planning schemes 	Policy / Project	3-5 years
		4.2.2	Improve resilience of critical connectivity and service supply following natural disasters, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> highway corridors township access roads digital and telecommunications infrastructure power supplies 	Advocacy / Program of works	6-10 years
4.3	World-class freight, passenger and export infrastructure	4.3.1	Progress major transport initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> third international airport south east of Melbourne Port of Hastings expansion to accommodate multiple user bulk, break bulk and container capacity Princes Highway improvements including the Traralgon Bypass freight network capability improvements township visitor traffic initiatives 	Advocacy / Strategy	3-10+ years
		4.3.2	Provide faster Gippsland rail services	Advocacy / Strategy	6-10 years

²⁰ Low Power Wide Area Network

Theme 5 – Highly educated & skilled people, life-long learners

Gippslanders aspire to participate and succeed in education and training at all levels and have access to the infrastructure and technology to achieve their goals.

Industry, business, government, and education partner to great effect to position Gippsland with the skills required for the jobs of the future and as a smart community with a focus on research and innovation.

Note: Within this theme, tertiary education is the term used to incorporate the broad range of education and training pathways which are open to school leavers, mature aged students and to the workforce.

Our education challenges, trends & opportunities

Education is the foundation upon which we build our future²¹

Lifelong learning and aspiration

Creating an environment that fosters lifelong learning and aspiration is crucial to Gippsland's future prosperity. The link between formal education and training, and learning attainment, future health, wellbeing, and economic outcomes cannot be overstated.

Establishing the foundations of lifelong learning behaviours and practices starts in the early years of children's lives. Research confirms that early intervention strategies are key to addressing generational and social disadvantage. Proactive intervention programs such as early and primary education support programs, VCE enhancement programs, and collaborative promotion of all tertiary education pathways must continue and be expanded. Together these will encourage equality of access, attendance and participation in education and training regardless of a family's history, employment status and place of residence.

Participation and completion rates in both secondary and tertiary education in Gippsland are below state averages²², although encouragingly there has been a positive increase in education and skills training attainment rates since 2011. Further interventions are required to continue this improvement, particularly in understanding and unlocking the barriers to education, developing skills training for employment and career pathway programs, implementing social supports as students transition to higher education, increasing educational and skills attainment, and nurturing a culture that raises education and career aspirations²³.

The OECD reports that higher levels of educational attainment tend to be associated with increased earning capacity, with tertiary-educated adults earning on average 54 percent more than their secondary-educated peers²⁴. All young people have aspiration and we must ensure that they are given the opportunity and avenues, including non-traditional and vocational pathways, to realise their potential. Encouraging higher levels of tertiary education attainment continues to be a high priority in Gippsland, including in more remote areas where barriers to participation may be greater.

Gippsland student participation in skills training and education is on the rise, with 26 percent of Gippslanders having Certificate or Advanced Diploma qualifications compared to the state average of 21 percent²⁵. This is reflective of our traditional "engine" economies which have relied on trade skills and expertise. It is also crucial that we continue to encourage Gippslanders' attainment of university qualifications as our region, and the world, moves to a more knowledge-based economy

Considerable efforts have been undertaken in the last five years to better understand the barriers to education, career, and life aspirations, and to identify viable and accessible education pathways for young people. This diagnostic work has included the Gippsland Regional Workforce Plan, Federation University and TAFE Gippsland research, early intervention behaviour and support programs in early school years, and the implementation of programs such as Broadening Horizons, STEM Sisters and "I Am Ready". This critical work must continue and expand to ensure we ready our youth for the jobs of the future.

²¹ Christine Gregoire, teacher, lawyer, former Governor of Washington State USA, and leader in reform of education, infrastructure, trade, innovation, foster care, and health care

²² Approximately 12 percent of Gippslanders above the age of 19 years have not completed year 12 or equivalent and 13 percent between the ages of 15 and 24 years are not engaged in either study or work. (Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard July 2020).

²³ 2.4% increase in education attainment since 2011.

²⁴ Education at a Glance 2018 – OECD Indicators

http://download.inep.gov.br/acoes_internacionais/eag/documentos/2018/EAG_Relatorio_na_integra.pdf

²⁵ REMPLAN Education Attainment, Gippsland 2016

Many of Gippsland's education providers support adult learning and professional development through subsidised courses, programs, and degrees, and support for these important initiatives is encouraged to enable access to life-long learning, innovation, and agility. A critical area for adult education in Gippsland is in support and re-skilling of workers affected by transitioning industries, particularly power and forestry. Gippsland's Learn Local Organisations, supported by Adult and Community Further Education funding and working in partnership with TAFE Gippsland and its Skills and Jobs Centres, are providing the pre-accredited employability skills necessary for adult learners to pathway into training and onto employment. These skills for new jobs will be a critical focus to enhance workforce participation and opportunity in Gippsland's changing economy.

New opportunities are emerging, too, in the area of professional development, short courses, and research initiatives aimed at Gippsland's fields of strength, and at economic, social, environmental recovery post drought, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome these opportunities and encourage collaborations between tertiary education providers, business, and all levels of government in these important areas.

The hub and spoke model of education and training facilities

A network of education and training facilities that extend from early years to higher education and workplace learning is imperative to meet the learning aspirations and needs of every Gippslander. As we grow our education network, it is important to recognise and account for learning that occurs in both formal and informal ways, on campus and off campus, through digital means and via our heritage and culture.

Gippsland has a range of high-quality education and training facilities, including public and private primary and secondary schools, Federation University's Gippsland campus in Churchill, TAFE Gippsland's multi-campus vocational education and training institute, regional university centres at Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi, private Registered Training Organisations, and a network of Learn Local Organisations providing Adult and Community Further Education programs.

We must leverage our recent investments in shared educational infrastructure in our regional centres to expand access to educational opportunities across Gippsland, including via digital and technological means.

New education and training facilities should be supportive places that encourage enhanced levels of participation and retention. They will increase diverse thinking, understanding and opportunity for all learners. It is also important to provide access for all abilities and to give culturally diverse people the option and opportunity for lifelong learning and connection by supporting cultural centres and gathering places.

Flexible learning

The ability to study in Gippsland encourages higher education students to go on to live and work in Gippsland. This is crucial for our region, helping to grow and retain our qualified and talented people.

The ability of higher education providers to deliver courses despite COVID-19 restrictions has highlighted the possibilities of engaging in digital and remote learning. The delivery of tertiary education is also changing as technology use expands and students' preferences for learning change. In regional areas, blended learning is emerging as an exciting opportunity to address issues of distance, student retention and thin markets, and is a key component of growing the attraction potential of country living, city opportunities, that is so important for Gippsland. Continuing improvement to Gippsland's digital inclusion and literacy, and ready access to quality WIFI within public and community spaces will be critical enablers for the expansion of flexible learning and blended delivery options. We must ensure that no-one is left behind as these technology-based learning delivery mode options expand for vocational training; industry required skill sets and tertiary education.

Bairnsdale's Regional University Study Hub, the planned Sale Study Hub extension and Bass Coast University Centre, are promising examples of regionally located, technology-enabled learning centres. The establishment of a network of flexible learning and skills centres across Gippsland that are well targeted, well utilised, and responsive to student needs, will give all of Gippsland's tertiary education students flexibility in their study modes. Students will be able to live locally for longer and will not need to travel to complete advanced level courses.

The education, business, and industry partnership

Fostering an innovation and entrepreneurial culture is key to encouraging more innovative businesses, product development and employment growth in Gippsland. Building this capability in workers and business requires the development of a regional innovation and skills eco-system involving a partnership of education, research, government, business and industry.

Gippsland's regionally based tertiary institutions, Federation University and TAFE Gippsland, are forming strategic partnerships with local industries, working together to build local capacity in applied research and learning pathway programs for students. A key example is the work they are undertaking with Opal Australian Paper developing Biomanufacturing qualifications and undertaking several specific research projects for this emerging industry in Gippsland's circular economy sector. These kinds of partnerships are an exciting opportunity to grow Gippsland's skill set at individual, business, and industry levels.

Industry, education, and skills providers are encouraged to continue to work together to provide skills, training programs and industry placements that provide the right education and skills for our workforce and meet the needs of current and emerging industries.

Monash University's School of Rural Medicine is an excellent example of education and industry partnering to build the capability and retention of a speciality medical workforce in regional areas. Current registrar and workplace training programs in rural health settings must be maintained to ensure an appropriately skill medical workforce that is supported by itinerant and visiting specialists.

Centres of excellence provide blended learning opportunities including formal qualifications and training, work placements, research and industry leadership and support. They are student and business attractors and help to address skills shortages in particular industries. Federation University Gippsland has a number of Centres of Excellence initiatives underway or planned in the diverse areas of new energy, carbon innovation, health, transformative and preventative health, allied health and community services and mine rehabilitation. We need to continue to support and develop new opportunities for research, business, and industry partnerships with a range of tertiary institutions, especially in Gippsland's fields of strength and potential.

The Latrobe Valley Authority has engaged the University of Melbourne and RMIT University to deliver its Smart Specialisation Strategy work, with TAFE Gippsland and Food & Fibre Gippsland contributors to exciting projects that demonstrate innovation and skilling of labour in horticulture supply chain activities. Industry and business knowledge of the practice and considerations toward other high value industries may be very beneficial.

The Gippsland Hi-Tech Precinct in Morwell is recognised as a cornerstone of our region's innovation eco-system, and it will be via this precinct that important partnerships between education, government, business and industry will be formed to support the expansion of new or emerging and growth industries including renewable and clean energy, food and fibre, health and advanced manufacturing.

Cultural education and understanding is a critical area with growing recognition and a multitude of educational, economic, and social benefits. Gippsland's Aboriginal community will be supported in the development of leading-edge facilities and education, and environmental, industry and business training programs.

Strategic directions

5.1 Building skills and knowledge for the future workforce

We are focussed on readying Gippslanders for the jobs of the future by connecting education, research, business, and industry. We will leverage and transition our existing skills and expertise into our new and emerging industries.

5.2 Encouraging life-long learning and removing barriers

We are building a life-long learning culture that provides the opportunity for all Gippslanders to aspire to and engage in education.

We are working to ensure our pathways from schools to further education, training and careers are clear, attractive, and relevant to Gippsland's people and industries.

We seek to support our vulnerable learners through early intervention arrangements that integrate flexible programs to support students and their families through their education.

5.3 Enabling flexible and responsive learning

Gippslanders can learn as and where they choose because the facilities and technologies that enable flexible and meaningful learning are accessible regardless of where we live.

Steps to success

Strategic direction		Initiative	Type	Timeframe
5.1 Building skills and knowledge for the future workforce	5.1.1	Refresh the Gippsland Regional Workforce Plan to understand our region-wide education and training needs now and into the future	Review	12 months
	5.1.2	Develop a Gippsland Tertiary Education Industry Advisory Board to inform expansion of TAFE Gippsland and Federation University education offerings, including pathway programs and partnerships with industry and other institutions	Project	2 -5 years
	5.1.3	Support the development of centres of excellence Gippsland's fields of strength and knowledge including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allied and community health new energy carbon innovation biomanufacturing emergency and land management and rehabilitation 	Project	2 years
	5.1.4	Expand partnership programs through the Gippsland Hi-Tech Precinct to promote career pathways and skill development, involving education providers, community, business, industry, and government	Project	1-2 years
5.2 Encouraging life-long learning and removing barriers	5.2.1	Support the continued implementation of local place-based initiatives that bring education and industry together to support continued participation in further education and learning	Program	12 months
	5.2.2	Build on existing future education projects, considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> barriers and access participation and retention ongoing learning pathways world of work experiences 	Strategy	12 months
	5.2.3	Support a program of regional adult and professional development initiatives aligned to upskilling, future jobs and reducing pay gaps, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> business women's networks youth networks adult informal and formal learning programs economic, social, environmental recovery post drought, bushfires, and COVID-19 assisting industry transition, particularly for power industry and forestry workers 	Program	2-5 years
	5.2.4	Support targeted programs developed by Aboriginal groups to encourage Closing the Gap on education and skills outcomes for Aboriginal people	Programs	1-5 years
	5.2.5	Coordinate and expand early intervention initiatives throughout Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Place Early and primary education support programs VCE retention and enhancement programs collaborative promotion of all tertiary education pathways 	Strategy / program	1-5 years

Strategic direction	Initiative		Type	Timeframe
	5.2.6	Develop a regional teacher retention and career advancement program	Strategy	2 years
5.3 Enabling flexible and responsive learning	5.3.1	Increase utilisation and partnerships within our network of collaborative regional education and skills centres	Strategy	1-10 years
	5.3.2	Capture benefits and lessons from COVID-19 pandemic school at home programs for primary and secondary including VCAL and VET DSS, to inform future blended learning opportunities.	Strategy	12 months

Theme 6 - A healthy, happy & inclusive community

Gippslanders are healthy and well and live in safe, stimulating, and supportive environments.

Our community challenges, trends & opportunities

The most liveable places in the world have five commonalities – they are safe, have access to quality healthcare and education, have a strong culture, healthy environment, and have high quality infrastructure such as roads, public transport, water and digital connectivity²⁶.

Inclusive communities

Gippsland aspires to be an inclusive community that welcomes and celebrates diversity. While our cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) is lower than the Victorian average, we continue to identify ways to encourage inclusiveness and to derive the benefits that diversity brings to improved community health and wellbeing.

Gippsland is home to several Aboriginal communities including the peoples of the Gunaikurnai, Bidawal, Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung, Jaithmathang and Monero/Ngarigo Nations as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait people from other regions of Australia. Nearly 4200 people in Gippsland identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. This represents 2 percent of our population which is more than double the Victorian state average²⁷. Many people from other cultures have also settled and made their home in Gippsland. Our community includes people from the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America.

We must support Aboriginal communities to lead initiatives that create safe places and programs to practice their culture, improve their health outcomes, education and employment participation²⁸. Initiatives arising from Closing the Gap, Whole of Country Plans, Reconciliation Action Plans, Culture and Healing Plans and Local Aboriginal Networks are positive early examples of social change and healing.

Empowering Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people in their self-determination activities will ensure that programs are devised and implemented by those that best understand – Aboriginal people and communities themselves.

As well as celebrating cultural diversity, Gippsland aims to address social exclusion due to age, health, disability, economics, education or because community members may live in an area that is not easily accessible to essential community facilities and employment opportunities²⁹. This requires a coordinated and multi-disciplinary approach that extends beyond the economic solutions of reducing unemployment rates, increasing incomes and providing community and health facilities.

Understanding and empowering our community to develop solutions that promote inclusion and participation in Gippsland is imperative. Expanding existing community connection initiatives such as Neighbourhood Houses, community kitchens, men's sheds, youth groups and multicultural/multifaith networks to enhance community inclusiveness and prevent isolation across the age, culture and diversity spectrum remains a priority focus.

²⁶ The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, The Global Liveability Index 2019

²⁷ https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/205?opendocument

²⁸ Aboriginal people generally have a lower life expectancy, lower participation in education and higher unemployment rate than non-Aboriginal people.

²⁹ East Gippsland, Latrobe and Bass Coast have a high degree of disadvantage in our region and when compared to other areas across Australia. The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage, Profile id, ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016

Pathway to community empowerment and resilience

Gippsland is a resilient and resourceful community. However, recent events including drought, summer bushfires, industry transitions, the Hazelwood Mine Fire and the COVID-19 pandemic are proving challenging for many Gippslanders.

Ongoing unemployment, under employment, social isolation, mental health and community safety are key issues impacting our communities' liveability and recovery³⁰. The hardest hit groups include our young people; part-time, temporary and self-employed workers who make up 40-50 percent of our retail and tourism workforce; and women and low paid workers. Continued targeted and accelerated support for those in need is an imperative to long term community resilience, liveability, and prosperity.

Across Gippsland there are excellent examples of innovative models of practice that leverage the power and energy of community to build resilience and liveability. The Latrobe Health Innovation Zone (LHIZ), which includes an independent Health Advocate and community led Latrobe Health Assembly gives voice to community aspirations in the planning and delivering of better health and wellbeing outcomes, and where a process of co-design with individuals and organisations is actively encouraged. Early work from the LHIZ is demonstrating the potential of the community in advocating government for system changes.

The coordination of community-led recovery initiatives supported by the three tiers of Government and industry following the 2019/20 East Gippsland bushfires is another excellent demonstration of community empowerment, decision making and resilience.

Both of these activities are providing tangible benefits for these hard-hit communities, helping people and communities feeling vulnerable to recover and to grow their resilience to future challenges. It validates the power of collaboration, a multi-disciplinary approach, local knowledge and focus in addressing complex social and economic problems. There is much to be learnt from this work and developing a blueprint for the future is important.

Lifestyle choices and a growing population

By 2040 Gippsland is expected to be home to more than 360,000 people, growing in line with or above state averages. This growth is dominated by our western shires of Baw Baw and Bass Coast, which border metropolitan Melbourne, and as popular commuting and sea change locations are among Victoria's fastest growing municipalities.

Gippsland has significant potential to be a population attractor, particularly for young professionals and families and multicultural communities. Regional Victoria is experiencing net population growth from Melbourne, reflecting interest by younger people seeking alternate country lifestyles, lower density living, more affordable housing and reduced commuting time³¹.

Gippsland's relatively low cost of living including good housing and rental affordability, when compared to other regional areas, allows us to promote our liveability strengths and be positioned as a preferred place to live, work, invest and play. Our lower cost of living also helps our lower income households to manage. But, with an average weekly income of \$1058, which is below the Victorian average, we need to prioritise support measures to increase household incomes³².

To maintain our liveability, careful planning is required to ensure appropriate housing stock, health, education, and community assets can accommodate any future populations.

Learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic has affirmed that remote and decentralised working is an effective and productive practice that enhances employment, education opportunities and access to health services. Investigating opportunities to grow decentralised employment, particularly in remote areas of Gippsland, will be important.

³⁰ Gippsland Regional Partnerships, Regional Development Australia, Gippsland & Regional Development Victoria - Gippsland Regional Roundtable Playback 15 May 2020

³¹ The Big Movers: Understanding Population Mobility in Regional Australia (Regional Australia Institute)

³² ABS 2016c

Healthy communities with a focus on early intervention

As Gippsland's population changes and grows so too must our regional health and community services systems.

Listening to and understanding the health care needs of our community will be important to ensure an effective, adaptive and responsive health system across Gippsland. A deliberate shift to focus care away from treatment to preventive and early intervention care is required to ensure the ongoing health and wellbeing of our community.

Gippsland is serviced by a strong hub and spoke network of primary, acute, allied, mental health and community health care services.

We can further enhance our regional health care with improvements including achieving better universal access to services, attracting and retaining specialists in rural and remote areas, growing hospital and community service capacity and infrastructure in growth corridors, and better utilisation of telehealth services.

Stronger partnerships between regional health and community service providers are providing a more responsive and collaborative approach to patient centred care. Recent investments to increase the capacity of Latrobe Regional Hospital and Wonthaggi Hospital have resulted in more locals being able to access core health care services without having to travel outside Gippsland. In West Gippsland, however, the current aged hospital will struggle to adequately service this fast-growing area, a gap which must be addressed.

A partnership approach across local government, health agencies, Aboriginal health organisations and community groups, and community will be critical to effect positive change to health outcomes in the future.

National health trends indicate rising levels of chronic, lifestyle, addiction, mental health and ageing - related illnesses. To address these trends, the development of a regional model that strengthens community-based delivery of preventive, early intervention and positive ageing initiatives is required.

Ensuring advocacy for and appropriate resourcing of key early intervention program providers such as community sector, municipal, and mental health services will be another critical component to the future health system. Education programs within the school curriculum will also embed life-long health practices.

Arts and recreation

For all of us, community is defined by the inextricable link between people and place. There is an increasing body of evidence on the positive contribution arts and culture plays in a region's liveability³³.

Gippsland has a network of major performing art centres, galleries, community-run spaces and streetscapes that are meaningful and aesthetically pleasing to visitors and the communities that use them. Implementing strategies to maximise utilisation, community participation and tourism potential of these facilities is important to position Gippsland as a lifestyle destination of choice.

With recent significant sports and recreation investment, Gippsland now has a network of state-of-the-art sports and recreational facilities in our larger centres that serve dual purposes of increasing the participation and wellbeing of the community and providing an income attraction opportunity by hosting leading sporting events and fixtures.

Continued efforts to ensure that access to sporting and recreation facilities are provided throughout Gippsland is important for the wellbeing of all our communities.

³³ Arts Victoria. (2008). The Role of Arts and Culture in Liveability and Competitiveness: A Submission to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability.

Safe communities

Ensuring the continued safety of the Gippsland community is a priority. Homelessness and crime levels in Gippsland are generally consistent with or below the state average, apart from Latrobe City and some smaller community areas in Bass Coast³⁴.

Proactive initiatives that build on the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence will contribute to reducing the incidence and impact of family violence for women, children, families and individuals in Gippsland. Early intervention strategies for youth and the homeless are also priorities.

³⁴ Aither, Gippsland Regional Profile, An analysis of regional strengths and challenges March 2019

Strategic directions

6.1 An inclusive, respectful, and enriched regional lifestyle

We strive to embrace all members of the community by providing facilities and programs that help all community members to connect and live their best lives.

We seek to provide a connection to Country, community, cultural and sporting facilities that increase community engagement, participation, and inclusion.

6.2 Towards social advantage and safer communities

Coordinating multi-disciplinary and practical prevention and response to help and support our most vulnerable, at risk and disadvantaged individuals and communities to succeed.

6.3 Meeting the modern health challenge

Meeting the ongoing healthcare needs of the community will be driven by a contemporary understanding of regional health needs. An integrated and collaborative approach to service delivery will focus on a network of primary, acute, allied and community health services.

Gippslanders readily connect physically or digitally to high quality services.

The health and wellbeing of our community is improved by a proactive preventative health focus.

Steps to success

Strategic direction		Initiative		Type	Timeframe
6.1	An inclusive, respectful, and enriched regional lifestyle	6.1.1	Support Aboriginal self-determination, recognition, and inclusion, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal leadership initiatives such as the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Strategy and Advisory Council supporting Traditional Owner Whole of Country plans, joint management plans and Reconciliation Action Plans supporting the development and implementation of other Aboriginal group and community plans and strategies health and social wellbeing increasing cultural awareness knowledge by non-aboriginal people and businesses. sharing of Aboriginal cultural stories 	Strategy	1-5 years
		6.1.2	Expand inclusiveness initiatives across Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streetgames (GippSport) Gippsland Youth Commitment Latrobe Youth Space & YES youth hub Neighbourhood Houses Community kitchens Multicultural and multi-faith spaces New and emerging community hubs for seniors, youth, education, and diverse cultures 	Program	1-2 years
		6.1.3	Improve community assets across Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parks sporting facilities public facilities connected paths and active transport links recognition of Aboriginal and historical cultural stories identification and wayfinding smaller townships 	Program of works	3-5 years
		6.1.4	Develop a creative strategy for Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on arts, culture, and heritage a regional arts and events calendar economic modelling and program 	Strategy, Program	2 years
		6.1.5	Develop a sporting events strategy for Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attracting sporting events to Gippsland's high-capacity venues and outdoor / natural assets economic modelling and program 	Strategy	2 years
6.2	Towards social advantage and safer communities	6.2.1	Improve regional response and targeting of intervention and assistance services through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved data collection and use sharing expertise and learnings between the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone and sub-regional groups a coordinated response to shared priorities in municipal health plans 	Project	1-10 years
		6.2.2	Enable Aboriginal and cultural support and knowledge/skill building programs and spaces including Country and business centre in the Latrobe Valley	Program	1-2 years
		6.2.3	Coordinate and expand domestic violence initiatives throughout Gippsland, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prevention and awareness programs emergency support services 	Strategy and program	1-5 years

Strategic direction	Initiative		Type	Timeframe
	6.2.4	Support initiatives to improve financial capability of vulnerable community members, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Home Energy Upgrade Program throughout Gippsland • Interchange program support • Job services for disabled people • Home care services for vulnerable seniors 	Advocacy / Strategy	3-10 years
	6.2.5	Implementation of the Eastern Victoria Fires 2019-20 recovery plans including the East Gippsland Fires 2019-20 Culture & Healing Sub-plan.	Program	3-5 years
	6.2.6	Improve intra-regional public transport, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • links to trunk public transport services • links to regional service providers' time of attendance requirements • accessibility 	Advocacy	3-5 years
6.3 Meeting the modern health challenge	6.3.1	Improve access to and responsiveness of regionally delivered health services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinating existing services and facilities • mobile / rotating services and telehealth • GP services • community health • preventative and complementary health • mental health • addiction • Aboriginal health 	Program	Concept 6-10 years
	6.3.2	Improve capacity of health services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional health services • West Gippsland Hospital 	Project	1-5 years
	6.3.3	Expand proactive mental health initiatives and services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementing recommendations of the 2020 Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health • Lifeline • Mental Health in the Workplace Project • Headspace 	Program	1-2 years

Delivering this Plan

The delivery of the Gippsland Regional Plan will be overseen and monitored by the Leadership Group

Members of the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group will individually and collectively engage with Lead Agencies and partners to assign accountability for the implementation of actions in the 'Steps to Success'.

The GRP Leadership Group will report annually on the achievements and progress over the life of the five-year plan.

Assessing new projects and initiatives

While the Gippsland Regional Plan's strategic vision and strategic goals will guide it through its five-year life, it is recognised that projects and initiatives will need to be more regularly reviewed as some are progressed and completed, and as new potential projects are conceived that may help to implement the Plan.

The initial 'Steps to Success' listed in this Plan were assessed under an independent, strategic Priority Initiative Assessment Framework (PIAF). The PIAF identified these as regionally significant projects and initiatives that are expected to deliver most effectively for Gippslanders in one or more of the areas of economic, social, or environmental benefits.

The PIAF was developed using an Investment Logic Mapping approach (Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance) and endorsed by the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group.

It is recommended that as part of the regular review of 'Steps to Success' within the life of this Plan, future proposed projects are also assessed under this PIAF. This approach will provide consistency and transparency in decision making, and confidence that endorsed projects and initiatives will continue to provide the benefits that Gippsland needs and deserves.

Further details are outlined in Appendix 6.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Gippsland at a glance – facts & figures

Fact	Data source
Approximately 41,500 km ² The largest geographic region in Victoria	https://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/area-of-australia-states-and-territories
11,600 km ² (28%) dedicated to Food & Fibre activities	KPMG Accelerating growth for the Gippsland food and fibre industry (2019)
The largest area of public land in Victoria, with 1.6 million hectares encompassing forest, state and national parks, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Marine Coastal Parks and Reserves and Ramsar Wetlands. More than 700 kilometres of Victoria's 2,500 km of coastline.	Towards 2030 Gippsland's Destination Management Plan - <i>A Blueprint for Growth</i>
Nearly 287,000 call Gippsland home (as of 2019)	https://forecast.id.com.au/bass-coast https://forecast.id.com.au/baw-baw https://forecast.id.com.au/east-gippsland
6 LGAs Local government area (2019 population) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bass Coast (36,320) • Baw Baw (53,396) • East Gippsland (47,316) • Latrobe (75,561) • South Gippsland (28,934) • Wellington (43,007) 	https://app.remplan.com.au/latrobe/community/summary?state=dNwVTBWVbcb8JGaCvDkLdqCNFnFdj2 https://forecast.id.com.au/south-gippsland https://app.remplan.com.au/wellington/community/suimary?state=MY0GhrjoKHZye8yUw5pj5oSw4tyZD
Population growth rate Gippsland's population has been growing in line with the state average of 4% from 2016-2019. Bass Coast Shire and Baw Baw Shire is growing at more than double the average at 9% and 8% respectively. Gippsland's projected population in 2036 is approximately 347,000 (26% growth). Bass Coast and Baw Baw will continue to be our fast growing LGAs with a population of approximately 46500 (39%) and 76,800 (56%). 40% of Gippsland lives in towns and settlements of less than 1000 people.	
Our people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.9% Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders • 79.4% born in Australia • 18.7% born overseas 	https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census-services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/CED215#:~:text=In%20the%202016%20Census%2C%20t here,up%201.9%25%20of%20the%20population.
The majority of Gippslanders live and work in the same LGA. Baw Baw LGA has the smallest proportion of residents living and working in the LGA (64 percent), while 20 percent work in Melbourne and 14 percent in the Latrobe regional hub. Average weekly household income of \$1058. Year 12 Education attainment rates is 30% (below state average). Certificate qualification attainment rates above the state average in recognition of trade workforce.	https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aither-Gippsland-Regional-Profile-March-2019.pdf https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census-services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/CED215 Remplan Economic & Community Profile, Gippsland Data https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index

Rental and housing affordability are acceptable to very acceptable	
Our visitors 8.94 million tourists contribute \$1.68 billion annually to the Gippsland economy (March 2020)	Towards 2030 Gippsland's Destination Management Plan - <i>A Blueprint for Growth</i>
Our economy \$16 billion Gross Regional Product (GRP) Top industries that contribute to our Gross Value Add (GVA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agriculture (14%) • manufacturing (10%) • construction (10%) • electricity and gas services (9%) • health care (8%) • mining (8%) • tourism (10.5%) Number of registered business 25,204 (2019)	https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aither-Gippsland-Regional-Profile-March-2019.pdf https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal/regional-snapshot
Jobs by industry (2019) Nearly 107,000 jobs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Social Assistance (15%) • Retail (11%) • Construction (10%) • Agriculture/forestry/fishing (9%) • Tourism (12%) • Manufacturing (7%) 	Remplan Economic & Community Profile, Gippsland Data
Primary Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture - 28% of Victorian food and fibre land area • Forestry - 25% of Victorian plantation timber • Dairy -32% of Victoria's production, by volume • Beef - 25% of Victoria's production by value. • Sheep, Pork, Chickens, Aquaculture 	KPMG Accelerating growth for the Gippsland food and fibre industry (2019)
Our connectedness Digital connectivity Mid ranked in Digital inclusion on the RMIT-Swinburne-Telstra Digital Inclusion Index (DII) 79% of all Gippsland households have internet connection (2016) Roads, Rail, Air & Ports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads: Princes Highway East, South Gippsland Highway, Bass Highway, Great Alpine Road, Monaro Highway • Freight and passenger rail: Melbourne to Bairnsdale • Bus Network: V/Line passenger service: Bass Coast, South Gippsland. East Gippsland • Airports: Latrobe, Sale, Bairnsdale, Dinner Plain, Orbost, Lakes Entrance, West Sale, Yarram, Newhaven, Mallacoota • Ports: Lakes, Albert, San Remo, Welshpool 	https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1872946/Gippsland-Digital-Plan-Final-25-September.pdf https://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/information-portal/regional-snapshot

Appendix 2: Gippsland's strategic assets

<p>Strategic asset</p> <p>Water supply – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major natural stream flows - Major water supply dams - Wonthaggi desalination plant - Macalister Irrigation District, the largest irrigation district in southern Victoria - Water assets including dams, treatment plants, Dutson Downs facility, distribution and sewerage network and dedicated supply and waste lines to major industrial sites including power stations and mines, and Opal Australian Paper Maryvale
<p>Energy – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latrobe Valley power generators and mines – Loy Yang A, Loy Yang B, Loy Yang Mine, Yallourn Power Station, Yallourn Mine, Hazelwood Mine (closed and under rehabilitation) - Significant brown coal deposits - Major wind farms - High voltage transmission lines - major transmission from Latrobe Valley power generation assets to Melbourne and beyond and potential for alternate energy sources. - Transmission assets - Basslink - Offshore oil and gas fields – Bass Strait - Longford and Orbost/Newmerella gas plants - Oil and gas pipelines - connecting to Victorian and interstate networks - Hydroelectric power station in Glenmaggie - Carbon capture and storage potential
<p>Agriculture – including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant areas of agricultural land that supports dairy, beef, horticultural and timber production - Significant areas of food manufacturing and processing hubs
<p>Manufacturing – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opal (formerly Australia Paper Maryvale) - Major dairy product manufacturers - Major food processors - Highly skilled engineering capability
<p>Transport – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Princes Highway – West – East spine link. - Major regional highways – South Gippsland and Bass Highways - Regional intermodal facilities at Morwell and Bairnsdale - Gippsland rail corridor - Regional public transport from Melbourne: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • V/Line Gippsland rail and coach service from Melbourne with stations at Garfield, Drouin, Warragul, Moe, Morwell, Traralgon (20 per day) • V/Line to Nar Goon, Tynong, Bunyip, Longwarry, Yarragon, Trafalgar (16 per day) • V/Line to Rosedale, Sale (6 per day), Stratford, Bairnsdale (5 per day) • Regional coach services V/Line & private: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bairnsdale to Cann River (connecting to Canberra), Marlo (3 per day), Genoa (0-1 per day) (connecting to Batemans Bay), Mallacoota (0-1 per day) • Bairnsdale to Paynesville (7 per day) • Dandenong to Koo Wee Rup (16 per day): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connecting to Anderson, connecting to Cowes (4 per day) and to Inverloch (4 per day) • connecting to Yarram (4 per day) • Traralgon to Sale via Cowwarr and Maffra (4-5 per day) • Nar Goon to Moe via Darnum (1 per day) • Town and intertown bus route networks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Airports at Latrobe, West Sale, Lakes Entrance, Yarram, Orbost, and Mount Hotham (adjacent), and Aerodromes at Bairnsdale and Mallacoota - Gippsland Ports commercial facilities at Corner Inlet and Port Albert (Port Welshpool, Port Albert, Port Anthony, Barry's Beach) and the Gippsland Lakes - Gippsland Ports recreational facilities at Corner Inlet and Port Albert, Gippsland Lakes, Anderson Inlet, Mallacoota Inlet, Snowy River, Lake Tyers, and Shallow Inlet
<p>Defence facilities – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAAF Base at East Sale - Australian Defence Force Flying Training School (to be established)
<p>Tourism – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major National and State Parks - including Wilsons Promontory, Mount Baw and the Alpine, Cape Conran, Morwell, Croajingolong and Tarra Bulga National Parks - Gippsland Lakes - Phillip Island - Snow fields - Heritage towns Omeo, Walhalla and Port Albert - Rail trails: East Gippsland (94km), Great Southern and Tarra (74 km) (with Nyora to Leongatha to be constructed), Gippsland Plains (63km), Bass Coast (23km), Gippsland Lakes Discovery (17km), Grand Ridge (13km), Tyers Junction (11km), Moe-Yallourn (8.5km), Walhalla Goldfields (7km), Rokeby to Crossover (5km), Noojee Trestle Bridge (3km) - A wide range of rural villages and heritage locations
<p>Arts and Culture assets – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Performing Arts Centre – Latrobe PAC, West Gippsland PAC, Wedge PAC Sale, Forge Theatre and Arts Bairnsdale, Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre - Galleries – Latrobe Regional Gallery, Port of Sale Gallery, Luminous Galleries Bass Coast, FLOAT Lake Tyers
<p>Education assets - including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federation University Churchill - Regional University Centres – Wonthaggi, Sale & Bairnsdale - TAFE Gippsland campuses at Sale, Fulham, Traralgon, Morwell, Yallourn, Warragul, Bairnsdale, Leongatha, Forestec (Kalimna West), Lakes Entrance, Warragul, (new consolidated Sale TAFE under construction), - Gippsland Tech School Morwell, - Chisholm TAFE Bass Coast - Community College Gippsland - Innovation assets – Gippsland Hi-Tech Precinct
<p>Sports and Recreational assets – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre Traralgon, Aqua Energy Leisure Centre Sale, Warragul Leisure Centre - Traralgon Tennis Complex, Sale Tennis Complex, - Traralgon Sports Stadium - Latrobe City Sports and Entertainment Complex, Morwell - Ted Summerton Reserve Moe (football and cricket) - Morwell Football Club and high-performance facilities - Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit
<p>Health assets – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latrobe Regional Hospital (Regional), sub-regional hospitals Bairnsdale, Sale, Leongatha, Warragul, Wonthaggi - Other hospitals/health services at Foster, Orbost, Omeo, Neerim South - Allied and community health care: Latrobe Community Health Services, Lakes Complete Health Service, GEGAC, Ramahyuck and Moogi

Appendix 3: A narrative of Gippsland life in 2040

People living in Gippsland have an enviable life. We enjoy higher standards of living, greater cultural and community connections, and healthier and happier lifestyles than we did in 2020. We enjoy the best of life – connecting with nature, connecting with family and friends, connecting with arts and culture, connecting with the world.

We achieved this by working together to put Gippsland's most valuable assets – our people and environment at the forefront of our decision making. We have reached balance in the way we use, protect, and honour our extraordinarily beautiful, resource-rich landscape, our temperate climate, our history and living culture.

We have successfully created better educational and health services, infrastructure, access to affordable housing, new-world job opportunities, higher income levels and support for all Gippslanders. And we are an inclusive community that proudly celebrates and embraces our heritage, rich Aboriginal culture, and diversity.

Education has proven to be Gippsland's 'game-changer'. All Gippslanders have access to high-quality education and new technologies that provide engaging learning experiences. People build skills through both face-to-face and virtual training, working with teachers and students without boundaries. Education and training pathways have created ambitious young and lifelong learners achieving qualifications from well-respected institutions, applying their skills as they learn and gain workplace experience.

Our education providers are forward looking - creating skills for the jobs of the future as they partner with industry and business, to position Gippsland as a smart community: a community that has research, innovation, value adding and a can-do attitude at our core.

People in Gippsland use fast, affordable, and reliable internet. We experience the joys of country living without compromising our physical or digital connectivity. We travel easily to regional centres for work, services, or amenities. There is a wider choice of where to live, knowing that quality education, health,

community facilities and services are available for all.

We have successfully grown the economic prosperity of our region by an average of 2.5% per annum since 2025 to \$23 billion. We have done this via advanced manufacturing, effective use of waste, by energy generation, sustainable use of our natural and mineral resources and in partnerships with the Aboriginal people demonstrating our smarts in innovating our approaches to food growing and production. Our region's competitive advantages mean businesses in key sectors now excel.

We have successfully enhanced our core industries of food and fibre and tourism and have successfully transitioned away from traditional brown coal energy generation. We continue to trade on our heritage of being the Victorian powerhouse, but with a leading focus on renewable and clean energy, innovation, and technical services.

We have also built an enviable reputation of being a knowledge-based economy that is connected locally and globally and provides a lifestyle of city jobs with a country lifestyle. Gippsland is also the proud home to the largest Aboriginal business economy in Victoria – thriving businesses that transect across many industries.

The Gippsland business community employs a local and remotely skilled workforce. We are the 'go-to' for start-up, small and growing businesses due to our business-friendly regulatory environments, collaborative enterprise ecosystems and our coordinated approach to investment attraction.

Gippsland has a growing customer base that actively enjoys our boutique regional products and services and visitor destinations – we have forged an internationally renowned brand for quality food and fibre produce and visitor attraction. Our region boasts year-round world-class attractions capitalising on our natural beauty, Aboriginal and cultural heritage, hospitality and outstanding events and experiences. All are backed by efficient

passenger, trade and freight options and online opportunities to connect to ever-expanding markets.

Gippsland has embraced 'disruption' – learning from the past and now working with a mindset that disruption creates opportunity. The disruption and transition from brown coal power generation, native timber harvesting, cycles of recovery from natural disasters and more recently from pandemics has taught us that we are a smart, resourceful and resilient community and we can and do innovate and transition to brighter futures.

Our improved standard of liveability and inclusiveness across Gippsland is a result of early recognition and investment in addressing social disadvantage and climate impacts. Gippsland has worked hard to close the gap in youth and generational unemployment, homelessness, and family violence. The average salary in Gippsland is now above the state average, while the cost of living is on par or below. Secondary and tertiary education attainment is at an all-time high and above the state average. Significant investment and community participation in climate change

adaption actions has also positioned Gippsland well for the future.

At the heart of Gippsland's progress is our innate ability to work collaboratively with strong leadership that connects the passion, energy and expertise of government, business/industry, education and most importantly our diverse community. Our community is empowered and engaged and contributes to key decision making about the prosperity of our region.

We continue to ensure the appropriate protection and adaptation of our most valuable asset – the natural environment – and ensure its sustainable use is preserved for future generations. We look to our Aboriginal communities to lead the continued learning of our cultural heritage – and we share this proudly with the world.

Above all we take pride in our region and the beauty that it holds – we believe that Gippsland is the best place to live, work, invest and visit: the most liveable region in Australia.

We celebrate our achievements and remain bold and brave in our thinking for the future.

Appendix 4: What success looks like: in 5 years & in 20 years

Theme 2: Carers of our Country, environment & natural assets				
Performance indicator	Information sources	Current measures	2025 success measures	2040 success measures
Greenhouse gas emissions	Snapshot community climate tool, Ironbark Sustainability & Beyond Zero Emissions Victorian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2019, DELWP	2017: • LV brown coal power 43.2 MtCO ₂ e (excl Hazelwood PS) • Gippsland municipal area emissions 6.3 MtCO ₂ e	32% below 2005 emissions (Interim Emissions Reduction Targets for Victoria (2021 -2030))	75% below 2005 emissions
Proportion of renewable and clean energy	NEM National Generation Information, AEMO, July 2020 Pacific Energy & Melbourne Water (Blue Rock Dam & Thomson Dam hydro), Australian PV Institute (APVI) Solar Map, funded by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, accessed from pv-map.apvi.org.au on 6 August 2020	5.6% <u>Renewables</u> Wind 139.6 MW Hydro 11.9 MW Solar ³⁵ 181.6 MW TOTAL 333.1 MW <u>Fossil fuels</u> Brown coal 4,775 MW Natural gas pipeline 881 MW TOTAL 5,655 MW	20% ³⁶ Renewable and clean energy Gippsland declared Renewable Energy Zone	40% renewable and clean energy
Waste to landfill - % decrease	Gippsland LGAs Recycling Victoria	TBA	72% decrease	>80% decrease
Caring for Country	Measures from Goal 18 of Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Whole of Country Plan (Gunaikurnai) • One Joint Management Plan (Gunaikurnai) covering 10 Gippsland parks and reserves • 2 Cultural Burns conducted in Knob Reserve, Stratford • One partnership agreement between Gunaikurnai Land and Water Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) and Gippsland Environmental Agencies (GEA) Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bunurong Whole of Country Plan • Gunaikurnai Joint Management expanded to include further Parks and Reserves. Cooperative Management of Country for far east Gippsland and Bunurong • Cultural Burning and knowledge transfer regularly practiced on several areas of Country, with resources to support agency partnerships • Actions of GLaWAC / GEA partnership agreement implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole of Country Plans covering all Gippsland Country • Pathway to full management of Gippsland's parks and reserves • Widespread Cultural Burning and knowledge transfer regularly practiced on Country across the Gippsland landscape, independent professional management, approval rights and agency support • Further partnership agreements between all Gippsland Aboriginal communities and environmental agencies

³⁵ Solar value calculated from Australian PV Institute Solar Map by Gippsland postcodes since 2007 (181.9 MW), less NEM National Generation Information Gippsland solar (0.3 MW)

³⁶ Targets are reflective of Gippsland hosting a high proportion of Victoria's traditional base line energy production capability, and the projected timelines for transition away from these high emission energy production technologies

Health of our water assets	Gippsland Strategic Directions Statement, Integrated Water Management Forums, DELWP, April 2019 East Gippsland Strategic Directions Statement, Sep 2018	Key opportunities identified in Gippsland Strategic Directions Statement Condition of waterways Central, West and South Gippsland Waterways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% in good or excellent condition • 53% in moderate condition East Gippsland Waterways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% in good or excellent condition 	IWM Projects delivered across Gippsland	20% increase in waterways in good or excellent condition
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Theme 3: Creators of a new economy				
Performance indicator	Information sources	Current success measure(s)	2025 success measure(s)	2040 success measure(s)
Gross Regional Product (all industries)	REMPPLAN, Jul 2020	\$16.0 billion	\$16.0 billion	\$23 billion
Five year average annual Gross Regional Product growth rate (%)	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	1.2%	At regional Victoria average	At state average
Gross Regional Product (Food & Fibre)	Accelerating growth for the Gippsland food & fibre industry, Mar 2019.	\$7 billion	\$9 billion ³⁷	TBD
Exports	REMPPLAN	\$11.7 billion	TBD	TBD
Total annual visitor expenditure (domestic & international) (\$m)	Destination Gippsland Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	1,650	1,800	2,100
Total annual visitor stays	Destination Gippsland	8.90 million visitors ³⁸	9.6 million visitors	10.5 million visitors
Number of jobs	ABS	106,000 (2019)	% growth in line with regional Victoria average	% growth in line with regional Victoria average

³⁷ Pre-COVID-19: 5% annual compound growth target set out in Accelerating growth for the Gippsland food & fibre industry, Mar 2019.

³⁸ Destination Gippsland, figures include Gippsland and Phillip Island as at March 2020.

Five-year average annual job growth (%)	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	1.7%	At regional Victoria average	Above regional Victoria average
Labour force participation rate (%)	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	57.7%	58%	65%
Unemployment rate (%)	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	3.8%	3.8%	3.5%
Innovation Index	Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (Australian Innovation System Monitor)	TBD	TBD	TBD

Theme 4: A connected Gippsland				
Performance indicator	Information sources	Current measures	2025 success measures	2040 success measures
Digital inclusion	RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology, Roy Morgan for Telstra Gippsland Regional Digital Plan (Regional Partnerships Gippsland)	Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2019 - Gippsland 57.3 vs Melbourne 64.9 pts 2019: unmet digital needs: 27 locations	ADII improve, in parity with Melbourne Halved number of places with unmet digital needs	ADII > 95 pts Eliminated places with unmet digital needs
Strategic, Transport and Statutory Planning	Regional Development Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Department of Transport Council Planning Schemes Stakeholder feedback	Latest Regional Growth Plan 2014 - Focussed on regional city, regional centres, LGAs - Not formally coordinated with transport planning - Rapid change in issues and opportunities not addressed in 2014 plan Significant perceived problems with planning barriers and clarity	Updated Regional Growth Plan Good implementation including incorporation into municipal Planning Schemes Stakeholder feedback indicates minor perceived problems with planning barriers and clarity	Regional Growth Plan updated every 5 years minimum Good implementation including incorporation into municipal Planning Schemes Stakeholder feedback indicates no perceived problems with planning barriers and clarity
Transport efficiency	Stakeholder feedback	Clear problems in freight efficiency, particularly around townships and in	Early projects funding announced and / or delivered	Port, airport, and freight initiatives have delivered highly efficient

	<p>Public Transport Victoria published timetable</p> <p>Regional Roads Victoria Impacts of the 2019–20 bushfires on the telecommunications network, Australian Communications and Media Authority, April 2020</p>	<p>access to Victorian, Australian and international trade routes</p> <p>Rail express travel time to Southern Cross, average - from Warragul: 1hr 41min - from Traralgon: 2hr 22min - from Bairnsdale: 4hr 00min</p> <p>Leongatha to Fed University Churchill - travel time – 1hr 59min - earliest arrival time 9:04am</p> <p>Princes Highway closed 36 continuous days 2019/20 due to fire activity and dangerous conditions beyond immediate fire threat. Several township access roads also closed.</p> <p>Average length of outage greater than 4 hours following 2020 bushfires – Victoria: 4.6 days Average time to start restoration 1.2 days Most outages due to power issues (including batteries, fuel for back-up systems). Delay to restoration time generally due to access restrictions</p>	<p>Completion of Regional Rail Revival with improvement to travel times</p> <p>Leongatha to Fed University Churchill - travel time – 1hr 30min - earliest arrival time 8:45am</p> <p>Princes Highway and township access road closures no more than 7 days beyond immediate fire threat</p> <p>20% improvement on average length of outage</p>	<p>regional, Victorian, Australian and international trade routes</p> <p>Rail express travel time to Southern Cross, average - from Warragul: 1hr 00min - from Traralgon: 1hr 30min - from Bairnsdale: 2hr 45min</p> <p>Intra-regional public transport is 30% better than in 2025</p> <p>No Princes Highway or township access road closures due to fire activity beyond immediate fire threat</p> <p>50% improvement on average length of outage</p>
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Theme 5: Highly educated & skilled people, life-long learners				
Performance indicator	Information sources	Current measures 2020	2025 success measures	2040 success measures
Education Attainment	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Year 12 attainment or equivalent – 77.4% (people aged 19 years)	Parity with Regional Victoria average	Parity with Regional Victoria average
	Remplan Education Attainment Qualifications	Qualification attainment - 9.90% (Bachelor's degree or higher)	Parity with Regional Victoria average	Parity with Regional Victoria average
Participation	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR. On Track (Department of Education)	Not engaged in work or study - 13.5% (People aged 15-24 years) Gippsland student enrolments in tertiary and vocational education Student withdrawal from tertiary and vocational education in first semester of commencement Enrolments at Federation University Enrolments at TAFE Gippsland	Parity with Regional Victoria average	Parity with Regional Victoria average

Theme 6: A happy, healthy & inclusive community				
Performance indicator	Information sources	Current measures	2025 success measures	2040 success measures
Health and wellbeing – life expectancy	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Life expectancy at birth (Gippsland female) – 84.2 years (Gippsland male) – 79.3 years	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Above regional Victoria average (difference more than 5%)
	Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2015-2017 ³⁹	Life expectancy at birth (All Aboriginal female) – 75.6 years (All Aboriginal male) – 71.6 years	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)

³⁹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/3302.0.55.003~2015-2017~Main%20Features~Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20of%20Aboriginal%20and%20Torres%20Strait%20Islander%20Australians~5>

	DHHS (DALY Report)	Hospital admissions per 100,000 population	TBD	TBD
Protective factor – people who meet physical activity guidelines for exercise	Gippsland Primary Health Network, Victorian Population Health Survey, DHHS	41.8%	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
Mental Health Treatment Plans	Gippsland Primary Health Network, Australian Atlas of Healthcare, Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Healthcare	40-65 per 1,000 people Range across Gippsland LGAs	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
Safer communities	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Recorded family incidents (per 100,000 people) - 2570	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
Towards social advantage	SGS Economics Annual Rental Affordability Index ⁴⁰ (RAI)	Cost of living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RAI – rated affordable to very affordable (based on average Australian rental household) 	RAI - rated affordable to very affordable	RAI - rated affordable to very affordable
	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Low income households spending more than 30% of income on mortgage repayments - 10.2% Low income households spending more than 30% of income on rent – 32.9% Households earning less than \$650 per week (2016 dollars) – 46.7%	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Homeless population – 0.25%	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Children in jobless households – 18.3%	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)
An inclusive, respectful, and enriched regional lifestyle	Regional Partnerships Measures Dashboard, Jul 2020. Prepared by Analytics & Strategic Projects, RRV Group, DJPR.	Volunteerism 26.1% (people aged 15+)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)	Parity with regional Victoria average (difference less than 5%)

⁴⁰ <https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index#:~:text=Its%20basis%20is%20customised%20data,focus%20on%20low%20income%20households.&text=Renting%20households%20on%20average%20have,renting%20households%20more%20than%20homeowners.>

Appendix 5: Our game changers, & flagship projects underway

Gippsland's game changer priorities	Example projects and initiatives	Flagship projects recent and underway
Increasing digital inclusion throughout Gippsland for social, education and economic benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital broadband, LPWAN and mobile access for smaller towns, rural, agricultural and remote areas Digital hubs and clusters, shared data and services, and free Wi-Fi Digital skills and literacy Improved data collection and reporting Response plan for emergency events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Regional Digital Plan Mobile coverage improvement program focussed on regional areas Gippsland rail mobile connectivity improvements between Melbourne and Traralgon Enhanced business grade broadband trial, Morwell On-Farm Internet of Things Trial, Maffra SummerTech LIVE trial business partnership with Federation University Binary Shift digital innovation festival Third party access to government digital infrastructure
Progressing major transport infrastructure and services to open Gippsland to new business, visitors and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy for a third international airport for Victoria, south east of Melbourne Advocacy for Port of Hastings expansion Freight and logistics precincts Faster Gippsland rail and intra-regional public transport Princes Highway upgrades from Melbourne to the NSW border including key township bypasses / alternate freight routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princes Highway upgrades including Traralgon to Sale Duplication Stage 3, Sale Alternative Truck Route early works and Traralgon Bypass planning study Bass Highway, South Gippsland Highway, Hyland Highway, Strzelecki Highway and Phillip Island Road capacity and safety upgrades Regional Rail Revival Gippsland Line Upgrade Gippsland Logistics Precinct, Morwell Bairnsdale Intermodal Freight Terminal Direct freight rail link between Dandenong South and Port of Melbourne
Renewable, clean and community energy initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onshore and offshore wind farms Solar farms Renewable energy parks Battery storage Biomass Micro-grids Community power hubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Star of the South Feasibility Study Latrobe Valley Community Power Hub Latrobe Valley Microgrid Feasibility Study Gippsland Aquatic Centre geothermal heating system
Hero tourism destinations and Traditional Owner and Aboriginal cultural tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Signature Trails including the Great Gippsland Trail, Mount Baw Baw Adventures Trail, Great Southern Rail Trail, Wilderness Coast Walk Croajingolong and George Bass Coastal Walk. Wilson's Promontory revitalisation National Park cultural and eco-tourism partnerships, in consultation with Traditional Owners and Aboriginals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croajingolong Part 1 Master Plan Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail Mountain Bike Parks
Encouraging innovation and investment to sustainably grow our key industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> food and fibre new energy health advanced manufacturing knowledge services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Investment Prospectus including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strategy to drive investment attraction comparative advantage/ sector strength analysis enablers to streamline planning and approval processes to improve investor confidence priority projects planning pathway to fast-track and provide certainty to the developers and investors Advocacy for Gippsland to be the decentralisation choice of business and government Geothermal opportunities in energy, agriculture and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gippsland Hi-Tech Precinct Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain pilot project Macalister Irrigation District 2030 upgrade Phase 1 and Phase 2 Gippsland Water's Soil and Organics Recycling Facility and Gippsland Water Factory Feasibility studies into Opal Australia Paper facilities for waste to energy and aquaculture Disaster recovery and resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Regional Economic Development Strategy East Gippsland bushfire recovery plans and investments Industry transition support packages including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Government transition fund Latrobe Valley economic development program

Gippsland's game changer priorities	Example projects and initiatives	Flagship projects recent and underway
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres of excellence in Gippsland's fields of strength, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – allied and community health – new energy – carbon innovation – food and fibre – advanced manufacturing – emergency and land management and rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Victorian Forestry Plan timber transition program • Latrobe Valley's GovHub Phase 1 • Regional / Country university centres at Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi • TAFE infrastructure projects including new Port of Sale TAFE and Morwell TAFE upgrade
Commercialising Carbon Capture and Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercialisation of The CarbonNet Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CarbonNet Project feasibility
Rehabilitating Latrobe Valley's mines and land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive and planned rehabilitation of Latrobe Valley mines and land pre- and post-closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazelwood Mine rehabilitation
Expanding programs that support and enable our most vulnerable communities and people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal self-determination, inclusion and wellbeing initiatives • Improve access to and responsiveness of regionally delivered health services • Expand proactive mental health initiatives and services • Improve regional response and targeting of intervention and assistance services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latrobe Regional Hospital expansion • Wonthaggi Hospital redevelopment • Cultural and sporting projects including Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre, Latrobe Creative precinct and regional sporting complexes • Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan

Appendix 6: Priority Initiative Assessment Framework

An outline of the PIAF is provided below. For the full framework, please contact the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group representative.

