



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

Economic Development Strategy

Annual
Implementation
Update July 2023

Economic Development Strategy

Actions 2022/23

1. Attracting and retaining investment

Objective: Growing our economy, employment and attracting investment. Ensuring South Gippsland is investment ready and recognised as a positive location to do business

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
1.1 Attract and grow investment to the Shire through the implementation of a targeted Investment Attraction Program.	1.1.1	Deliver a targeted investment attraction program to support, encourage and facilitate and investment attraction to the region.	Completed 2022/23 - Ongoing – Participation in Invest Gippsland program. Targeted program to be delivered in 2022/23 in line with branding implementation program.	
	1.1.2	Develop an innovative and accessible Investment Prospectus for potential investors.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project. New investment materials developed including digital and video.	
	1.1.3	Investigate attending and conducting trade missions annually to encourage future investment in the Shire	Commenced – Hosted Invest Victoria trade mission related to Offshore wind development. Hosted a range of other delegations	
1.2 Understand the opportunities and implications from development of the new energy sector.	1.2.1	Engage with the energy sector, businesses and community to achieve positive outcomes from new energy developments.	Completed for 2022/23 – Ongoing Project – Wide engagement with energy sector including briefings to Council, direct discussions and Submission made to the Federal Government Offshore Renewable Energy Zone. Participated in the Gippsland New Energy Conference for Aug 2022.	
	1.2.2	Support the development of the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone.	Completed 2022/23– Discussions with Vic Grid and promotion of their community information sessions. Zone not planned to be located in South Gippsland	
1.3 Improve opportunities for investors to	1.3.1	Develop a solutions focused Industrial Land Supply Strategy (LLSS) to support new development.	Commenced – Review of Industrial Land Supply conducted in 2022/23	

develop land in the Shire: Be investment ready.	1.3.2	Work with operators to enhance retention and expansion of existing businesses.	Completed 2022/23 Ongoing – Worked with Businesses, RDV, AusIndustry and LVA to assist with grant applications. Referrals to Business Concierge service.	
	1.3.3	Undertake an Advocacy Plan to all levels of government to support investment enablers in the region.	Completed 2022/23 Ongoing project – Advocacy Plan adopted by Council. Implemented Advocacy program including visit to Canberra and Spring Street. Participated in advocacy projects of other regional agencies such as One Gippsland.	
1.4 Streamline Council's regulatory processes, and facilitate external processes making it easier for businesses to invest in the Shire.	1.4.1	Continue and enhance the Better Approvals Program.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project – 227 business enquiries received through the Better Approvals Program to the end of April 2023.	
	1.4.2	Continue to provide the 'Business Concierge' service within Council.	Completed 2022/23 Ongoing– Additional funding received from LVA to assist program. Ongoing positive feedback from businesses that have received assistance through the program. Business Concierge role established permanently.	
1.5 Seek innovation in Circular Economy Development that assists us to respond to climate change.	1.5.1	Undertake an initiative to develop the Circular economy with partners, consistent with Council's Sustainability Strategy.	Commenced – Member of the working group for the development of a Gippsland Circular Economy Hub.	

2. Supporting enabling infrastructure

Objective: Building our digital connectivity, freight and supporting infrastructure and business and community linkages.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
2.1 Advocate for the continuous development of infrastructure improvements to support business growth in the Shire.	2.1.1	Work with key partners to develop an integrated Infrastructure Strategy for the Shire.	Yet to commence – Planned for future years. In 2023, Council has contributed to the Gippsland Freight Master Plan and Infrastructure Victoria’s 30-year Strategy	
	2.1.2	Develop and implement an Annual program of Priority Projects for Advocacy to State and Federal Governments.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing. Priority projects developed and adopted by Council Advocacy program undertaken State and Federal Governments.	
	2.1.3	Conduct a digital connectivity audit to determine telecommunications needs/wants across the Shire.	Conducted Connectivity Planning with Telstra and NBN.	
	2.1.4	Advocate for better digital connectivity across the Shire.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project – Participated in Connecting Victoria engagement process. Announcements of upgrades of NBN to Leongatha and Mirboo North and new mobile tower for Walkerville	
	2.1.5	In partnership with key stakeholders, investigate developing a business and community telecommunications education program.	Commenced – NBN sponsored Small Business Event – June 2023	
	2.1.6	Advocate for improved public transport across the Shire	Commenced – Ongoing discussions with DOT.	
	2.1.7	Undertake an investigation into potential solutions for sewerage issues in Fish Creek.	Completed – RMIT study completed. Briefing to Council on report.	

3. Developing key industry sectors

Objective: Strengthening and growing key industry sectors will equip our economy for the future. Building innovation, value adding and economic capacity

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
3.1 Provide industry with sector specific and specialised information to maintain viability and an edge in a competitive environment.	3.1.1	Connecting industry to sector experts and relevant support in fields to support future growth.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project – Connected their businesses with industry specialists at RDV and AusIndustry, Industry Capability Network, Mentoring Services and Small Business Victoria and Industry Capability Network.	
	3.1.2	Support industry to leverage off research institutes and published statistical data/information to apply for grants and other funding opportunities.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project – Provided statistical information, reports and economic impact statements for a range of grant applicants.	
	3.1.3	Investigate conducting an industry cluster development/Smart specialisation program in identified sectors.	Commenced Ongoing– Participated in Gippsland Smart Specialisation Program Council in conjunction with Latrobe Valley Authority.	
	3.1.4	Support Industry Trade events that support industry development such as the South Gippsland Dairy Expo.	Completed 2022/23 – Supported South Gippsland Dairy Expo – September 2022 which was able to resume after break due to COVID.	
3.2 Provide our businesses with the capability, capacity and information required to successfully do their jobs.	3.2.1	Continue to offer targeted training and skills programs to local businesses.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project – 3 workshops delivered.	
	3.2.2	Continue to deliver business communication tools and resources such as the Business e-newsletter and associated business web pages.	Completed 2022-23 Ongoing project – 12 business newsletters circulated. Council Business Website Pages revised and updated.	
	3.2.3	In conjunction with the Victorian Government, continue to roll out business support services such as the Small Business Bus and Small Business Mentoring Service (SBMS).	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing service. Provided monthly free SBMS sessions and hosted visits of the Small Business Bus.	
3.3 Support the expansion of the speciality food sector.	3.3.1	Implement program to support the Specialty Food Sector, particularly for enhancing local Food hubs.	Completed 2022/23 program– Ongoing project – Provided funding to local food hubs: Grow Lightly and Prom Coast Food Collective	
3.4 Continue to invest in and further develop the visitor economy.	3.4.1	Implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy.	Completed 2022/23 – Information reported separately.	

3.5 Ensure Film Friendly Support	3.5.1	Grow and promote Council's readiness for Film Friendly Approvals.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project. Updated Film Guidelines and application process. 6 filming permits issued.	
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4. Building partnerships

Objective: Collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to support business development. Developing our unique economic identity in the broader Gippsland and Victorian framework.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
4.1 Strengthen strategic partnerships to support economic growth.	4.1.1	Maintain and nurture partnerships with key agencies at Shire, regional and state level.	Completed – Maintained partnerships with agencies including quarterly meetings of South East Australian Transport Strategy and Cr Rae elected to Executive, Invest Gippsland, GippsDairy, LVA, RDV and One Gippsland.	
	4.1.2	Actively participate in industry specific groups, forums and expos as appropriate.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing – Participated in Gippsland Dairy Industry Leadership Group, LVA Business Support Network, Mainstreet Australia and with Food and Fibre Gippsland	
4.2 Enhance our business visitation and 'business intelligence' programs.	4.2.1	Undertake and increase the number of site visits (face to face) to businesses within the Shire.	Completed 2022/23 – Nearly 200 site visits undertaken. Additional Environmental Health Officer employed using Vic Government funding to assist in distribution of COVID information to businesses.	
	4.2.2	Maintain and expand the Customer Relationship Management System.	Completed 2022 23 – CRMS system in place and has improved the capacity to target information to appropriate businesses.	
	4.2.3	Expand and formalise data analysis systems to support making more informed and evidence-based decisions.	Completed 2022 23 – REMPLAN, Spendmapp, Localis data systems in place and used to assist grant applications and analysis of major events for businesses and Council.	
4.3 Provide opportunities for business networking across the Shire.	4.3.1	Facilitate, support and participate in business networking programs. Act as conduit for businesses to connect in both formal and informal settings.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing Project – Conducted three business workshop and heavily promoted other organisations workshops. Conducted Small Business Dinner Networking event June 2023	

4.4 Support regional award programs to recognise and reward exceptional businesses.	4.4.1	Participate in regional awards programs: Gippsland Business Awards Gippsland Food and Fibre Awards Wine Gippsland Awards	Completed – South Gippsland’s most successful year at Regional Business Awards; Gurneys Cider awarded Agribusiness of the Year. Sponsored both Gippsland Business Awards and Wine Awards. Food and Fibre Awards not held in 2022.	
	4.4.2	Encourage and support local businesses to enter regional and state-wide award programs.	Completed 2022/23– Gurneys Cider winners of Food Producers and Business of the Year at the Gippsland Business Awards 2022.	

5. Building capacity

Objective: Building the skills, training and knowledge of our current and future workforce, embracing lifelong learning and removing barriers to education. Strengthening resilience to economic and natural emergencies.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
5.1 Enabling/Supporting industry to access a skilled and job ready workforce.	5.1.1	Work with educational and training institutions to increase opportunities for locals to be job ready and assist retention of young people.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project. Conducted Jobs Expo in Leongatha March 2023. 36 businesses participated and about 200 attendees. Considered the most successful such event held in Gippsland. Supported Careers Expo in Korumburra in June 2023	
	5.1.2	Work with businesses to understand skills requirements and plan appropriately.	Completed – Discussions held with businesses during visits and through Business Associations.	
	5.1.3	Continue to support access to vocational education and training through a range of targeted initiatives including student transport.	Completed – Submission made to Infrastructure Victoria. Funding for transport program provided by Vic Government.	
	5.1.4	Support the continuation of the Cows Create Careers Program.	Completed 2022/23 – Supported the program financially.	
5.2 Facilitate Entrepreneurship initiatives.	5.2.1	Continue Startup Gippsland Program and initiatives to foster youth entrepreneurship.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing Supported the program with 4 South Gippsland participants in the 2022/23 program and 3 in the 2023/24 program. Workshop conducted in Leongatha in April 2023.	

<p>5.3 Develop Business Resilience and Recovery.</p>	5.3.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	Completed for 2022/23 Ongoing. Coordinator Economic Development and Coordinator Community Strengthening completed Municipal Recovery Manager training– Staff member funded by Bushfire Recovery Victoria with the Economic Development Team to support resilience and recovery completed her role during the year. Participated in the development of new Drought Resilience Plan for Gippsland which was completed during the year.	
<p>5.4 Develop local capacity to build and retain Community Wealth.</p>	5.4.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project Completed and ongoing – Delivered “Get Techy” Program to assist with emergency response. Distribution of emergency preparation information via business resource packs during	
	5.4.2	Establish a working group to support and develop the implementation of community wealth building initiatives.	Commenced planning with participation in workshops on conducting Community Wealth Building initiatives for future years implementation as program developed.	
	5.4.2	Undertake initiatives to support and build local community enterprises.	Not commenced – Planned for future years implementation.	
	5.4.3	Support local procurement initiatives to build capacity.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing Conducted workshop with GROW Gippsland and Industry Capability Network (ICN) on winning tenders, to boost local procurement. Promoted ICN portal for local business to register for offshore wind projects	
<p>5.5 Create systems to support accessing grant funding opportunities for local businesses and community enterprises.</p>	5.5.1	Maintain a website of relevant grant funding opportunities.	Completed – Continued Grant Finder website which is available from Council website and promoted in newsletter.	
	5.5.2	Develop a clear and usable process for businesses to seek and obtain support from Council for grant funding from other levels of Government.	Not commenced – Planned for future years implementation. 2023/24	

6. Enhancing towns and main streets

Objective: Building our capacity through infrastructure development and enhancing our unique towns and villages. Making South Gippsland a great place to live and move to, where population change is well managed and communities are prosperous.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES	
6.1 Support our towns, villages and main streets to grow and thrive well into the future.	6.1.1	Support infrastructure developments to enhance our main streets.	Completed – Conducted liaison on Little Commercial Street Korumburra Street furniture provision and footpath cleaning through Outdoor Activation Program. Reduction of fees for health permits and waiver of fees for business related outdoor signs, goods displays on footpaths and outdoor dining facilities to support business responding to COVID.	
	6.1.2	Work with local business associations to market main streets and town/shopping hubs e.g. Shop Local Projects.	Completed 2022/23 Ongoing – Hosted Business Presidents Lunch March 2023 to hear activities being conducted locally. Undertook Shop Local Program including TV campaign, social media and branded shopping bags. Continued Visit South Gippsland Website with free listing and promotion of businesses.	
	6.1.3	Work in partnership with business associations to develop coordinated marketing and management programs.	Completed 2022/23 Ongoing Business Development Officer working with Business Associations. Toora formally established new Association. Working with Loch on new association and Tarwin Lower/Venus Bay on their rebranded group. Assisted with events such as seating and umbrellas.	
	6.1.4	Investigate options to provide grass roots training and innovative initiatives for businesses and towns.	Commenced – Discussions with Business Associations on potential workshops and networking.	
	6.1.5	Facilitate grant funding opportunities for trader and main street improvements.	Completed 2022/23 – Provided information grant funding for Main streets. Supported grant for Toora for Mental Health program.	

	6.1.6	Promote new business opportunities from the expansion of the Great Southern Rail Trail and increased visitation.	Completed 2022/23 – Ongoing project - Official opening of Leongatha to Nyora section of GSRT Marketing Plan developed with input from local businesses.	
6.2 Target new residents and sustainable increased population to support our future economic viability.	6.2.1	Seek a partnership with Regional Australia Institute (RAI) to enhance liveability and attract future residents.	Completed for 2022/23 Participated in RAI – Regional Activators Program.	
	6.2.2	Participate in a targeted and collaborative marketing campaign to attract new residents to the Shire.	Commenced – New branding developed and included in investment attraction material	
	6.2.3	Support development and implementation of the Social Housing Project.	Social Housing Strategy Adopted by Council.	
6.3 Leverage off the arts, cultural and heritage sectors for economic benefits	6.3.1	Continue to collaborate with the arts, culture and heritage sectors to enhance liveability and marketability of the Shire	Completed – Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy adopted July 2022. Reported separately	