



# Economic Development Strategy

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL  
2021 - 2031





**Kerry Ellis**  
 Chief Executive Officer  
 – South Gippsland  
 Shire Council

## Foreword

South Gippsland is one of the best places to live, work, and visit! Our strength lies in our community, locality and climate, but we recognise our challenges.

The Strategy contains key themes that will guide Council's approach to enabling this prosperity for the next ten years and into the future in South Gippsland.

This Strategy is action-based and designed to focus on priorities where we can have the greatest impact. It also acknowledges the need to balance environmental and community priorities. It is an opportunity to re-imagine what role local leadership plays in the development of community identity and locally-owned industries resulting in market growth.

Although this strategy is future-focussed, COVID-19 has taught us of the need to be flexible and agile in our implementation as we progress to achieve the best outcomes for South Gippsland. This Strategy provides opportunity through social, technological, economic and environmental change, and allows for ongoing review and response.

It takes a people-centric approach and recognises the input of the community, business and industry, visitors, government agencies and other stakeholders to form actions that leverage the Shire's strengths and opportunities.

The Strategy was formed under the guidance of seven highly skilled experts who formed the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG). EDSAG was established to bring together experts from across different industry sectors to advise and oversee the development of the Strategy. We value the input from these members who were appointed based on their knowledge of a broad cross section of industries, unique backgrounds and experiences and this Strategy is testament to their work.

Council was also fortunate to benefit from extensive input from our community in developing this strategy, through business and industry groups, place-based community groups, and individual community members. We appreciate and value this community contribution to the strategy.

I wish to acknowledge the initiative to develop this Strategy of the Council Administrators, Julie Eisenbise, Rick Brown and Christian Zahra and their strong commitment to the process and for the benefit of the community and local economy.

We recognise that South Gippsland's best chance for success will come from working together, and we look forward to the next stage of prosperity in South Gippsland as we work with the community and business to implement this Strategy.

## Acknowledgement to Country

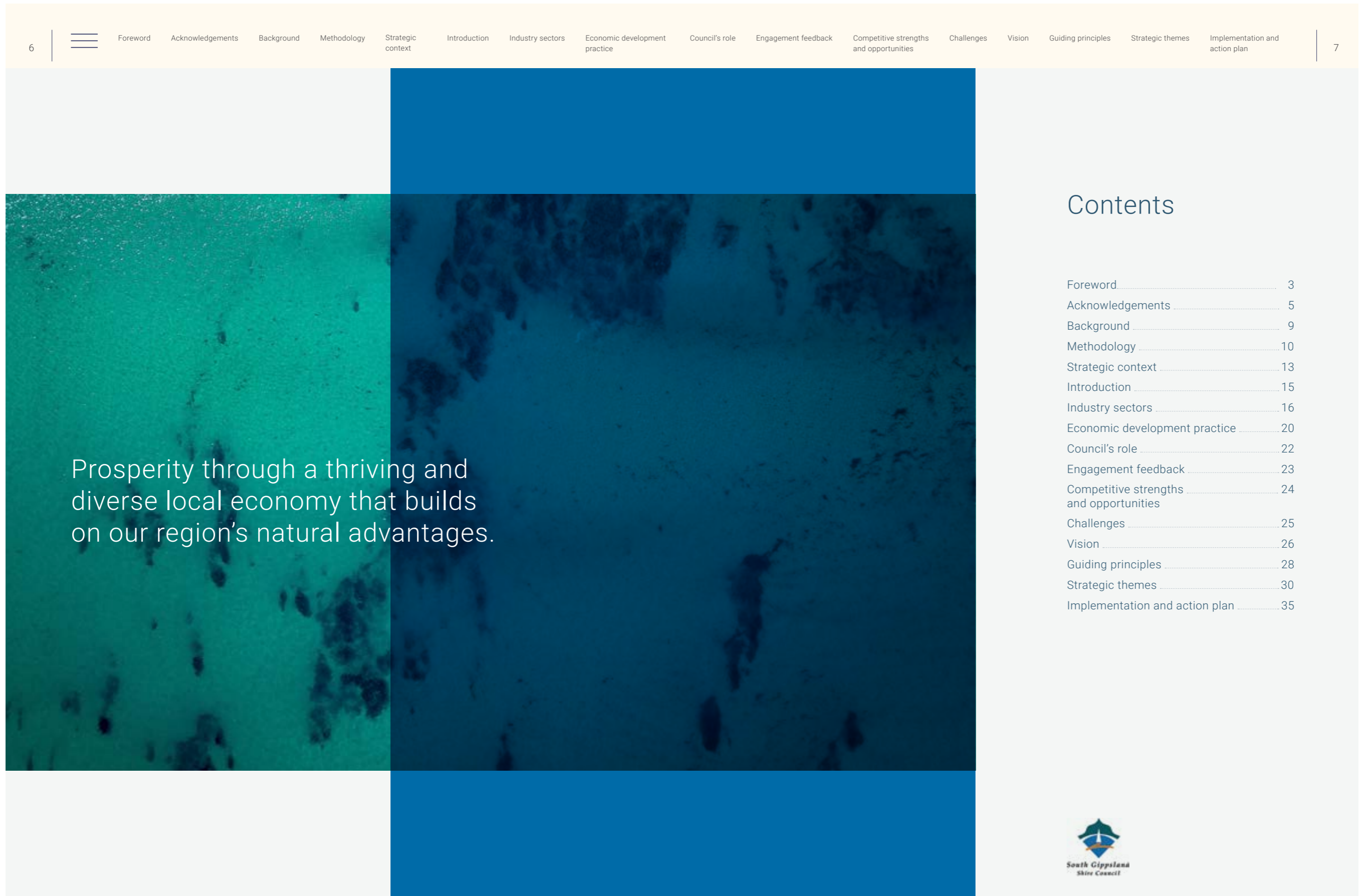
Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land and their enduring relationship with country. Council aspires to strengthen our partnerships and supports Aboriginal participation in management processes for land and natural resources. We recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision making now and in the future.

## Acknowledgements

Council would like to acknowledge and thank its businesses, residents and agency representatives, who generously gave of their time, to inform this document by meeting with the project team, attending consultation sessions and by providing input and feedback into the Economic Development Strategy.

## Economic development strategy advisory group members

**Ian Munro (Chair)** Jenny O'Sullivan Nicola Pero  
Stephen Sully Leigh Kennedy Scott McArdle  
Stewart Carson

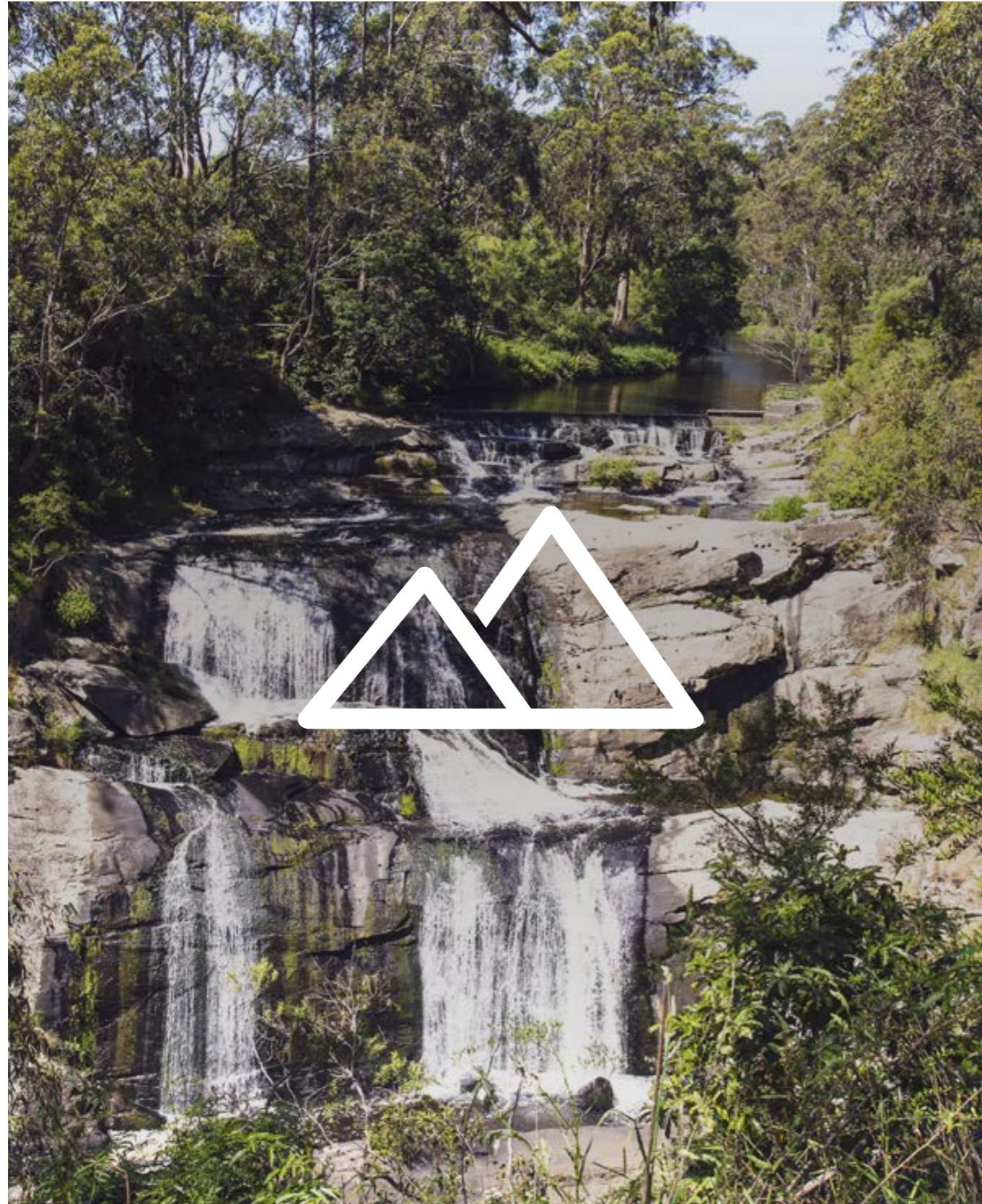


Prosperity through a thriving and diverse local economy that builds on our region's natural advantages.

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## Background

The Local Government Act outlines that one of the overarching governance principles for Councils is “the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district”.

Council's previous Economic Development and Tourism Strategy was expiring and mindful of the importance of a strong economy, it was timely to create a new Strategy. The Council Plan 2020-2024 included initiatives for the development of an Economic Development Strategy and a separate Visitor Economy Strategy. The separate Visitor Economy Strategy reflects Council's investment in the sector and desire to see it expand.

The South Gippsland Shire Economic Development Strategy is designed to guide Council's decision making and build our economic capacity. The Strategy is a long-term plan to encourage and support sustainable economic growth for the Shire. It aims to respond to the most significant challenges and opportunities that South Gippsland is expected to face over the next 10 years but has the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances as required.

The Strategy is a long-term plan to encourage and support sustainable economic growth for the Shire.

## Methodology

A comprehensive methodology was developed to oversee completion of the project. It involved a number of components with a clear consultative approach at the forefront of the development of the plan.



### Economic development strategy advisory group

An Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) was established to bring together experts from across different industry sectors to advise and oversee the development of the Strategy. Members were appointed based on their knowledge of a broad cross section of industries, unique backgrounds and experiences.

**The members of the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) are:**

**Ian Munro (Chair)** – Ian is one of Victoria’s most experienced Economic Development professionals having headed the Victorian Government’s Investment Facilitation function for almost 20 years.

**Jenny O’Sullivan** – Jenny is experienced in agricultural and grazing industries, and natural resource management. Her memberships include the Cattle Council of Australia and the Australian Beef Sustainability Steering Group.

**Nicola Pero** – Nicola is the CEO of Food and Fibre Gippsland and has a strong background in events management, local government and education.

**Stephen Sully** – Stephen is one of the leading practitioners in main street development in Victoria and has skills in urban planning and advocacy, and economic development.

**Leigh Kennedy** – Leigh is the Head of Campus at Federation University in Churchill, is a board member of the Committee for Gippsland, and has nearly 20 years international leadership experience spanning five continents.

**Scott McArdle** – Scott has extensive experience in Agriculture, Waste, Energy, and Emergency Management and Recovery in state government and the private sector.

**Stewart Carson** – Stewart has over 20 years of management experience in the dairy industry and is the CEO of Burra Foods, one of South Gippsland’s largest businesses.

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### Engagement and consultation

The Strategy has been developed following an extensive consultation process. Gippsland-based consultancy firm Aerium was engaged to conduct community consultation for the Economic Development Strategy. Business operators, visitors, local groups and community members were encouraged to provide feedback to the Strategy via multiple engagement methods. These included online and hard copy surveys, one-on-one meetings, focus groups and Social Pinpoint, an online engagement platform.

The consultation period ran between March and May 2021 and considered a wide range of views, recorded from nearly 400 pieces of feedback. The responses from the consultations were collated and were used to inform the strategy. In addition, industry sector experts were utilised and EDSAG were key contributors, helping to inform and guide development of the consultation process and strategy development.

### Research

Research was undertaken by Council which included the examination of the latest trends in economic development in Australia and from around the world, economic and social data analysis and reviewing strategies from other Local Governments.

This research included: information provided through the professional association Economic Development Australia regarding contemporary strategy development, new practices and initiatives. Discussion with economic development professionals from around Australia. Statistical analysis of economic, population and social data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, REMPLAN, ID Consulting and Spendmapp. A review of relevant articles was also undertaken.

### Development

From this process, key themes with objectives were developed and then an Action Plan was formulated to address economic development issues. The Action Plan delivers practical solutions that Council, in-conjunction with strategic partners, can work to deliver over the next 10 years. The Action Plan is intended to be a live document that responds to challenges, opportunities and changes in policy direction as they arise.

## Strategic context

The Strategy is designed to work in alignment with other Local, Regional, State and National plans that impact on South Gippsland including:

- *South Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2021-2024*  
Council's main strategic document. Objective 2 of the Plan is Economic Prosperity - cornerstone for local employment and business growth. This includes the vision: To establish the Shire as a thriving and diverse local economy that builds on our region's natural advantages.
- South Gippsland Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- South Gippsland Sustainability Strategy.
- Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan
- Victorian Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan.
- Victorian Government 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy  
The Government's final 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy will be released in the second half of 2021. Council contributed to the development of the Strategy through participation in consultation sessions on the draft documents and by a making a formal submission. South Gippsland Shire is specifically mentioned in the document, in particular regarding the Shire's comparative advantage in food production.
- Victorian Government Social Enterprise Strategy
- *Gippsland Regional Plan 2020 – 2025*  
The Gippsland Regional Plan is the long-term strategic plan for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for the Gippsland region.
- *One Gippsland*

### National and International Context

The Strategy also recognises that the South Gippsland economy operates in a broader national and international context and there are significant external factors that impact on it. Some of these factors have been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the responses to it. They include: a gradual shift to the Asia Pacific as the centre of world economic output, international trade agreements, treaties and initiatives on climate change, evolving foreign policy developments, the ever increasing role of technology, which is also impacting on the nature of markets and major changes to the workforce, including a shift to working from home for many people.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021 – SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021 – SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE



## Introduction

South Gippsland Shire is located 90 minutes south east of Melbourne on the edge of Melbourne's eastern growth corridor, one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria. Its best known for its rolling green hills, spectacular coastline, traditional country towns and villages and the world famous Wilsons Promontory National Park.

The Shire is home to 30,000 people with steady population growth of 1%. Its major towns are Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster. Other towns include Nyora, Poowong, Loch, Bena, Kongwak, Tarwin Lower, Venus Bay, Koonwarra, Meeniyah, Dumbalk, Fish Creek, Yanakie, Sandy Point, Port Franklin, Toora, Welshpool and Port Welshpool.

The Shire has a strong economy, closely linked to food production with both major agricultural and food manufacturing sectors. It is one of the most important dairy production areas in Australia with 10% of Victoria's dairy farms.

It supports over 11,000 jobs, in 3,700 businesses, the vast majority small businesses employing less than 20 staff The Shire has an annual economic output of \$3.8 billion and Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$1.85 billion. It has low unemployment and high productivity with a GRP per worker of over \$166,000.

South Gippsland is an important visitor destination with some of Victoria's best scenery that attracts 1.2 million visitors per year. New tourism assets include, the expanded Great Southern Rail Trail, reopened Port Welshpool Long Jetty and major projects at Wilsons Promontory National Park.



South Gippsland has 10% of Victoria's Dairy farms



## Industry Sectors

The following sectors are functional industry descriptions rather than the normal Australian Bureau of Statistics definitions.



### Food and Fibre

Food and Fibre production is the backbone of the South Gippsland economy and the largest employer. This sector includes Agriculture, timber and fishing and also the associated value added processing. There are over 1,400 South Gippsland businesses in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry sector, the second highest of any LGA in Victoria. South Gippsland can lay claim to being one of the key centres of dairy farming in Australia but is also known for its high quality beef. It includes major manufacturing plants with three dairy processing facilities and an export abattoir. The Shire has seen significant growth in the horticulture sector with products like snow peas, celery and potatoes. A fishing fleet is located at Port Welshpool and Port Franklin. There has been strong growth in the speciality food sector, with a wide range of agricultural products and beverages, such as cheese, fruit, eggs, micro-breweries and distilleries. Farmers Markets play an important part in local food distribution and now new systems are being developed to support this.



### Visitor Economy

Council's significant investment in assets such as the Great Southern Rail Trail and Port Welshpool Long Jetty has been part of encouraging greater visitation to South Gippsland. The sector offers many opportunities for investment particularly in accommodation and new tourism attractions. Visitor spending represents a significant part of the economy and for many of our smaller towns, it is the dominant source of revenue.

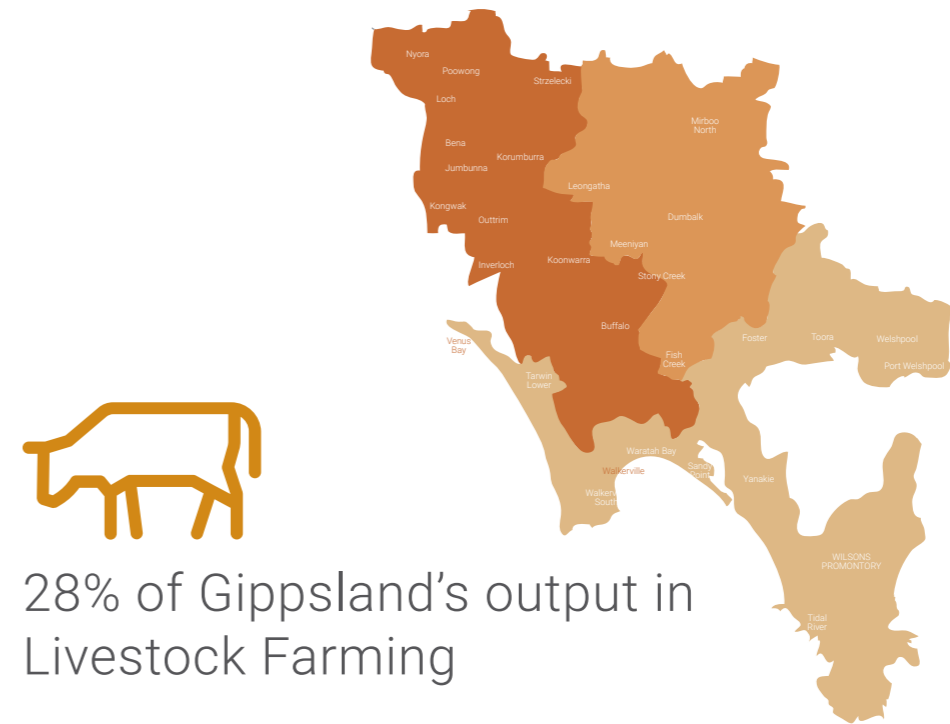


### Construction

The Construction sector has grown to have the third highest output in the Shire and has become a major employer. This is being driven by both house construction and major infrastructure projects. This sector has potential for further growth as the population expands. The Shire also has an important role of in training of the next generation of workers for this sector.



One of the highest proportions of female owner-managers in Victoria



### Energy

South Gippsland plays an important role in servicing the Bass Strait oil and gas industry. With a move to more sustainable energy production, there are opportunities in South Gippsland for new energy technologies. These opportunities include hydrogen production, solar, wind (including off-shore), battery storage and bio-energy. Planning is progressing on South Gippsland becoming the landfall of a second electricity interconnector from Tasmania. These opportunities must be balanced with community expectations and concerns.



### Knowledge Based Industries

This includes sectors relying intensively on technology and human capital. These are critical for supporting and enabling other sectors of the economy. This includes a wide range of sectors such as information technology, consulting, scientific, research, finance, insurance, education, communications and media.



### Advanced Manufacturing

South Gippsland has an important and innovative non-food manufacturing sector, notably in engineering and metal fabrication, that are acknowledged for their capability. COVID 19 has seen a greater recognition of the importance of this sector and greater funding support from State and Federal agencies. New technologies and a greater desire to re-shore operations could create new opportunities for this sector.



**Retail**

Council is investing significant funds to upgrade commercial centres of some of its largest towns to enhance liveability, accessibility and opportunities for business. The sector has seen significant change over the last decade but remains the Shire's third largest employer and core part of the economy and the social functioning of towns.



**Health and Medical**

Growing healthcare needs have resulted in major upgrades to local hospitals and new aged care facilities in South Gippsland. This sector is now the highest employer across Victoria and the second highest in South Gippsland. The Shire's ageing population provides opportunity for further expansion of the sector.



**Transport**

South Gippsland has a strong road based freight sector that supports the rest of the economy and notably food processing. The Corner Inlet ports of Port Welshpool, Barry Beach Marine Terminal, Port Anthony and Port Franklin support the fishing and energy sectors and access to Bass Strait islands. Leongatha aerodrome has growth potential for flight operations and industrial uses.



**Extractive Industries**

The Victorian Government has recognised the region as the most significant source of sand, rock and gravel for the next generation of major construction programs in Melbourne.



**Cultural and Creative Industries**

South Gippsland's cultural and creative sector is a small but important industry that has strong links to the visitor economy and enhancing our towns and villages. It is an important factor for attracting new residents and the Shire is an ideal location for film and television projects.



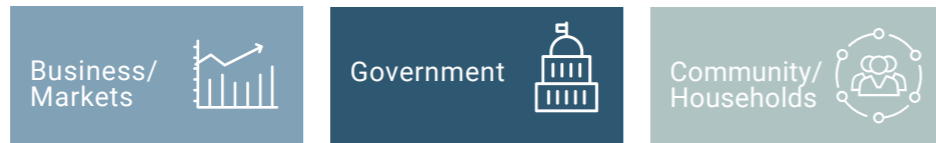
No.2 LGA in Victoria for businesses in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector.

## Economic Development Practice

A strong local economy impacts at every level of the community, through the provision of local enterprises, jobs, support services, down to funding of community and sporting facilities and groups.

Economic Development is ultimately about activities that enable and build up the capacity of a local area to improve its economic future, prosperity and quality of life for all.

The enablers operate through three key pillars:



A healthy economy works when these three pillars work cooperatively, in a balanced way.

Potential enablers within these pillars include governance and leadership, provision of infrastructure and land, policy and regulation, natural resource and environmental management, clustering and networks, business planning, access to markets and funding, innovation, knowledge and skills, liveability, cultural activities, employment and community services.

### Rural Economic Development

Rural Economic Development is a subset of economic development practice. It recognises the greater connection in rural areas between these three pillars due to a higher level of economic and social interdependence. A localised natural disaster, business or service the closure may have much greater consequences for a rural town than a metropolitan area. On the reverse side, the resilience and strong connections of rural communities make it possible to implement economic development solutions not be possible elsewhere.

Rural economic development relies on understanding the structure, complexities and uniqueness of the local area. It needs a flexible approach, strong local knowledge and expertise, leveraging community connections, and harnessing local capabilities.

One approach to rural economic development that is gaining significant traction around the world is Community Wealth Building (CWB).

CWB is a people-centred approach to local economic development that aims to build a fairer and more sustainable economy. It seeks to minimise the leakage of local expenditure and savings to other areas, and recirculate this funding to maximise local wellbeing and benefits.

CWB takes a more 'bottom-up' approach to business development but includes a critical role for anchor



institutions such as local Public authorities, Education and Health facilities as economic entities in their own right. It seeks to deepen local supply chains, encourage local procurement and support community enterprises. CWB can be used in conjunction with other traditional economic development practices to enhance their ability to deliver positive outcomes.



South Gippsland Shire Council seeks to be recognised as a leading organisation in rural economic development

## Council's role

Council is one of the key partners in developing the economy in cooperation with other levels of Government, business and community.

Council provides local leadership, regulatory services, a wide range of business development programs and assistance.

One of Council's key roles is advocacy to other levels of Government in a pro-active and coordinated way to secure funding for projects identified as priorities by the community and industry. As the closest level of government to the community, Council is committed to ensuring it actively engages, understands and responds to local needs.

### Council links with a wide range of other groups and agencies that include:

- Business Associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Regional Development Victoria
- Small Business Victoria
- Invest Gippsland
- Agriculture Victoria
- Ausindustry
- Destination Gippsland
- Latrobe Valley Authority
- Food and Fibre Gippsland
- GROW Gippsland
- One Gippsland
- Economic Development Australia
- Industry Bodies such as GippsDairy
- Education bodies, include SGBC LLEN, TAFE Gippsland and, Federation University
- Regional Roads Victoria
- Gippsland Ports
- South East Australian Transport Strategy (SEATS)
- Utility Providers

### Engagement Feedback

#### From the Consultation and Engagement Process:



## Issues raised

A number of subjects were raised throughout the consultation process. Although there was a considerable amount of feedback, the key issues are summarised below.

### Improve digital connectivity

Currently there is a concern of the lack of digital connectivity or required standard in some locales throughout the region. This affects the ability of businesses to operate efficiently and effectively into the future.

### Completion of Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT)

The GSRT is currently being extended and more is planned. This feedback relates to the importance of it being completed and its capacity to attract visitors and contribute economically to towns along the route.

### Shared facilities to strengthen food and fibre value add

Supporting the specialty food sector particularly regarding logistics and building their capacity.

### Branding and positioning of South Gippsland as a region

Lack of brand awareness of a clearly defined brand and the associated marketing of that brand.

### Reduction in regulatory burden and red tape by Council

Stronger understanding of the needs of the business community and systems to streamline processes to assist business development in a timely manner.

### Clear municipal land use planning approach

Strategic land use planning to build the ensure the availability of sites for development as the Shire grows.

### Role and functions of towns including growth areas determined

Recognition of the importance of our towns and the different roles they play in the economy.

### More visitor attractions and accommodation

Increasing the current accommodation and attraction offerings to retain visitors for longer whilst increasing economic yield.

### Renewable and clean energy initiatives

Identifying the significant changes occurring in energy generation and the opportunities this may have for the area but also managing potential impacts.

### Essential infrastructure improvements.

Ongoing infrastructure improvements that will be needed to maintain and attract businesses and visitors.



## Competitive strengths and opportunities

### Strong economy

As a small regional Shire we punch above our weight economically. Consistently producing a greater economic output than many similar sized Local Government Areas. With low levels of unemployment, we have a hard working and highly productive workforce.

### Consistent rainfall and high quality soils

Naturally blessed with high levels of rainfall, this natural occurrence lends itself to rich fertile soil, perfect for food production and associated manufacturing.

### Established centre of food production

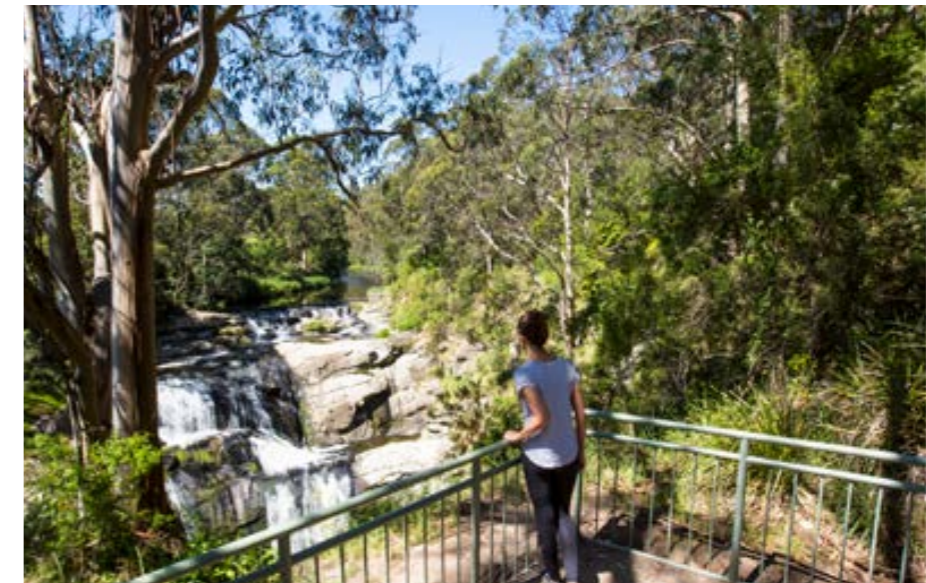
Known as one of Australia's centre for food production, our region is home over 1,400 businesses in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector. The Shire has significant support networks to support the development of sector. have a hard working and highly productive workforce.

### Rail Trails

The Shire has two excellent rail trails, the Great Southern (GSRT) and Grand Ridge. The GSRT is on its way to becoming the longest rail trail in Victoria and they will provide new opportunities for business along the trail, from increased visitation and new linkages to other Shires

### Proximity to Melbourne

Melbourne is one of the fastest growing cities in Australia and South Gippsland sits on the edge of the rapidly expanding South Eastern suburbs. The Shire is within a critical travel distance from Melbourne for freight and accessibility.



### Strong and resilient community

Our community is the great strength of the area and have shown their capability in response to challenges as they have arisen. South Gippsland has very high levels of volunteerism and community involvement. New residents are bringing skills, enthusiasm and vibrancy to the area

### Beautiful natural environment

South Gippsland's natural beauty such as our rolling green hills, spectacular coastline, waterways and iconic Wilsons Promontory are key attractions for residents and visitors. These features assist the marketability of the Shire to visitors and businesses.



### Challenges

While it has many strengths, South Gippsland has a number of challenges that include:

- Small population (same as the Melbourne suburb of Richmond) and consequent small rate base.
- Higher infrastructure costs due to topographical issues and small towns.
- Dispersed settlements.
- Lack of a major regional centre.
- Levels of educational attainment.
- Limited public transport



# Vision

The Council Plan lays out the following vision for economic prosperity.

To establish the Shire as a thriving and diverse local economy that builds on our region's natural advantages.

## Build a sustainable and growing economy that:

Attracts and supports businesses to thrive and grow. Broadens, builds and strengthens industry sectors. Creates and sustains local employment opportunities and establishes the Shire as the 'food hub' that feeds our State and beyond.

Develop plans that will balance and utilise the natural values of the environment, improve the Shire's liveability and build on the benefits of our proximity to Melbourne.


Deliver services that support the growth of the local and regional economy. Work together with surrounding councils to support regional growth and prosperity.

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# Guiding principles

This Strategy focuses on economic outcomes but recognises there are other broader social and environmental objectives to also be achieved. To achieve these objectives, the Strategy is guided by a set of overriding principles that will influence its implementation.



**Enabling and solutions focussed**  
Focussing on ways and means to enable beneficial economic activities. Building our reputation as a Council that seeks to facilitate business growth and acts to solve the challenges to this.

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**People-centric**  
Aspiring to build positive ways of dealing with people Council deals with businesses, investors, operators and continues to build a positive culture for dealing with customers and visitors.

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**Inclusive**  
Policies that are inclusive and supportive of the wide diversity of our residents and visitors and reducing activities that exclude people from participating fully in the benefits of a strong economy.

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**Building community wealth**  
Fostering activities that build our collective social, intellectual, cultural, financial assets and that directs wealth into the local economy and delivers greater control and benefits into the hands of local people.

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**Triple bottom line**  
This is closely linked to this is balancing our economic objectives with social and environmental objectives, sometimes referred to as People, Profit and Planet.

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**Strengthening resilience**  
Strengthening our ability to foresee, adapt to, and leverage changing conditions to our advantage. This includes shocks to the community from economic and natural disasters and major structural changes. It involves creating systems and networks to allow us to withstand the shocks, recover quickly from them or avoid the shock altogether.

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**Evidenced based decision making**  
Decisions based on best available data sources, research and practices. This will be informed by ongoing feedback from government, business and the community that will assist to implement realistic and viable initiatives.

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# Strategic themes

The Strategy development process led to the creation of six strategic themes. The themes are deliberately action oriented, clear and practical. They are designed to encompass areas where we can have maximum impact to build the South Gippsland economy.

## The six themes are:

- 1 Attracting and retaining investment
- 2 Supporting enabling infrastructure
- 3 Developing key industry sectors
- 4 Building partnerships
- 5 Increasing capability
- 6 Enhancing towns and main streets





## Strategic themes

### 1. Attracting and Retaining Investment

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

The attraction of new investment is a key priority for Council. A significant proportion of this investment will come from businesses already located in the Shire that are seeking to expand or diversify.

#### Strategic actions for this theme are to:

- Attract and grow investment to the Shire through the implementation of a targeted Investment Attraction Program.
- Understand the opportunities and implications from development of the new energy sector.
- Improve opportunities for investors to develop land in the Shire: Be investment ready.
- Streamline Council's regulatory processes, and facilitate external processes, making it easier for businesses to invest in the Shire.
- Seek innovation in Circular Economy Development.

### 2. Supporting Enabling Infrastructure

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

Infrastructure provision is one of the most important elements of economic development. Roads and utilities such as energy, and water are critical but digital connectivity has become as important as these traditional infrastructure elements. Council has a significant role in building the business cases to achieve the necessary infrastructure to support the business sector.

#### Strategic action for this theme is to:

Advocate for the continuous development of infrastructure improvements to support business growth in the Shire.

To assist this Council has developed an annual program of Priority Projects for Advocacy.

### 3. Developing Key Industry Sectors

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

All industry sectors of the economy are important and will be assisted but the following sectors are recognised because of their level of contribution to the economy or their capacity for future expansion and ability to value add to other sectors. They are also consistent with sectors outlined in the Gippsland Regional Plan.

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Food and Fibre             | 6. Professional services  |
| 2. Visitor Economy            | 7. Advanced Manufacturing |
| 3. Construction               | 8. Retail                 |
| 4. New Energy                 | 9. Health and Medical     |
| 5. Knowledge based industries |                           |

Industry sector development involves building on our strengths but also recognising and managing risk from economic, environmental and social changes. It provides an opportunity to assist emerging sectors that have the potential to grow and become more significant parts of the economy and provide future employment.

#### Strategic actions for this theme are to:

- Provide industry with sector specific and specialised information to maintain viability and an edge in a competitive environment.
- Provide our businesses with the capability, capacity and information required to successfully do their jobs.
- Support the expansion of the speciality food sector.
- Continue to invest in and further develop the visitor economy.
- Ensure Film Friendly support.

### 4. Building Partnerships

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

Council will work with other levels of Government, business and community to deliver strong outcomes. This theme will support the strengthening of networks, direct interaction with Council staff and celebration of local business achievement.

#### Strategic actions for this theme are to:

- Strengthen strategic partnerships to support economic growth.
- Enhance our business visitation and 'business intelligence' programs.



## Strategic themes

- Provide opportunities for business networking across the Shire.
- Support regional award programs to recognise and reward exceptional businesses.

### 5. Increasing capability

Building the skills, training and knowledge of our current and future workforce, embracing lifelong learning and removing barriers to education.

As well as building skills, this theme also seeks to increase entrepreneurship, strengthen our business resilience and capacity to create and build community wealth.

#### Strategic actions for this theme are to:

- Enable and support industry to access a skilled and job ready workforce.
- Facilitate Entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Strengthen Business Resilience and Recovery.
- Develop local capacity to build and retain Community Wealth.

### 6. Enhancing towns and main streets

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.

South Gippsland towns are among the most iconic parts of the Shire and the perform important economic and social functions and recognise the capacity of arts, cultural and heritage sectors to further liveability.

#### Strategic actions for this theme are to:

- Support our towns, villages and mainstreets to grow and thrive, well into the future.
- Target new residents and sustainable increased population to support our future economic viability.
- Leverage off the arts, cultural and heritage sectors for economic benefits.

## Strategy implementation and action plan

An Action Plan has been developed with priorities based on the Strategy Themes.

Projects have been included for each of the themes in Appendix 1.

From this, Annual Action plans will be developed during the life of the Strategy. These will reflect available funding, current priorities, and objectives.

The Action Plan is intended to be a live document that is subject to ongoing review and will be adjusted in line with budgetary considerations.

Monitoring, measurement and public reporting will occur regarding the implementation of Action Plan.

The Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) will guide the Strategy implementation during the first year.

It is recommended that an implementation leadership group with community membership also be established to guide the Strategy over the longer term.

OUR COMMITMENT as we implement this plan is...to keep listening, learning and improving the way we do business, to use our professional skills and knowledge to seek the best outcomes for our community and strengthen the elements that make South Gippsland a great place to live, work, invest and visit.

## Acronyms

**EDSAG** – Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group

**RDV** – Regional Development Victoria

**SBV** – Small Business Victoria

**SBMS** – Small Business Mentoring Service

**DJPR** – Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

**DOT** – Department of Transport

**LVA** – Latrobe Valley Authority

**NBN** – National Broadband Network

**F&FG** – Food and Fibre Gippsland

**GSRT** – Great Southern Rail Trail

**SEATS** – South East Australia Transport Strategy

**CRC** - Cooperative Research Centres

# Economic Development Strategy Action Plan

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

2021 – 2031



## Action Plan 2021 – 2031

### 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	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
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.	S	Invest Gippsland, RDV, Ausindustry, DGL
	1.1.2	Develop an innovative and accessible Investment Prospectus for potential investors.	S	RDV, Invest Gippsland
	1.1.3	Investigate attending and conducting trade missions annually to encourage future investment in the Shire	M	Invest Victoria, DJPR, RDV, Austrade
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.	M	
	1.2.2	Support the development of the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone.	S	Energy Vic
1.3 Improve opportunities for investors to develop land in the Shire: Be investment ready.	1.3.1	Develop a solutions focussed Industrial Land Supply Strategy to support new development.	S	RDV
	1.3.2	Work with operators to enhance retention and expansion of existing businesses.	S	RDV, Ausindustry
	1.3.3	Undertake an Advocacy Plan to all levels of government to support investment enablers in the region.	S	RDV, Invest 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.	S	SBV, LVA
	1.4.2	Continue to provide the 'Business Concierge' service within Council.	S	LVA
1.5 Seek innovation in Circular Economy Development.	1.5.1	Undertake an initiative to develop the Circular economy with partners, consistent with Council's Sustainability Strategy.	M	Sustainability Vic

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### 2. Supporting Enabling Infrastructure

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

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
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.	S	South Gippsland Water, RRV, Utility providers.
	2.1.2	Develop and implement an Annual program of Priority Projects for Advocacy to State and Federal Governments.	S	
	2.1.3	Conduct a digital connectivity audit to determine telecommunications needs/wants across the Shire.	S	NBN, Telcos
	2.1.4	Advocate for better digital connectivity across the Shire.		One Gippsland, Telcos
	2.1.5	In partnership with key stakeholders, investigate developing a business and community telecommunications education program.	M	NBN, Telcos, Other Gippsland Councils.
	2.1.6	Advocate for improved public transport across the Shire	S	DOT
	2.1.7	Undertake an investigation into potential solutions for sewerage issues in Fish Creek.	S	Fish Creek C DG, South Gippsland Water

### 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	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
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 their fields to support future growth.	M	RDV, Ausindustry, F&F G, CRCs, Universities
	3.1.2	Support industry to leverage off research institutes and published statistical data/information to apply for grants and other funding opportunities.	M	Universities, CRC's, Research institutes
	3.1.3	Investigate conducting an industry cluster development/ Smart specialisation program in identified sectors.		RDV F&F G,
	3.1.4	Support Industry Trade events that support industry development such as the South Gippsland Dairy Expo.	M	Dairy Australia, Industry bodies,

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## Action Plan 2021 – 2031

### 3. Developing Key Industry Sectors ...Continued

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
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.	S	Small Business Victoria, SBMS
	3.2.2	Continue to deliver business communication tools and resources such as the Business e-newsletter and associated business web pages.	S	SGSC
	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.	S	Small Business Victoria, SBMS
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.	S	RDV, Ag Victoria, F & F G.
3.4. Continue to invest in and further develop the visitor economy.	3.4.1	Implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy.	S	DGL
3.5. Ensure Film Friendly Support	3.5.1	Grow and promote Council's readiness for Film Friendly Approvals.	S	Film Victoria

### 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	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
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.	S	Invest Gippsland, GippsDairy, LVA, RDV, SEATS, One Gippsland
	4.1.2	Actively participate in industry specific groups, forums and expos as appropriate.	S	RDV, Ausindustry
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.	S	RDV, Ausindustry
	4.2.2	Maintain and expand the Customer Relationship Management System.	S	
	4.2.3	Expand and formalise data analysis systems to support making more informed and evidence-based decisions.	S	ABS, Data providers
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.	S	Small Business Victoria
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	S	GBA, Wine Gippsland, Food and Fibre Gippsland,
	4.4.2	Encourage and support local businesses to enter regional and state-wide award programs.	S	

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### 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	PRIORITY (H, M, L)	PARTNERS
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.	S	Local/regional educational providers, LLEN
	5.1.2	Work with businesses to understand skills requirements and plan appropriately.	S	Business and industry associations
	5.1.3	Continue to support access to vocational education and training through a range of targeted initiatives including student transport.	S	TAFEs, LLEN, DOT
	5.1.4	Support the continuation of the Cows Create Careers Program.	S	GippsDairy
5.2. Facilitate Entrepreneurship initiatives.	5.2.1	Continue Startup Gippsland Program and initiatives to foster youth entrepreneurship.	M	Startup Gippsland, LLEN
5.3. Develop Business Resilience and Recovery.	5.3.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	Ongoing	RDV, Business Associations, MEMPC, DGL
5.4. Develop local capacity to build and retain Community Wealth.	5.4.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	S	
	5.4.2	Establish a working group to support and develop the implementation of community wealth building initiatives.	M	Community
	5.4.3	Undertake initiatives to support and build local community enterprises.	M	Local enterprises
	5.4.4	Support local procurement initiatives to build capacity.	S	GROW Gippsland
5.5. Create systems to support accessing grant funding opportunities for local businesses and community enterprises.	5.5.1	Maintain a website of relevant grant funding opportunities.	S	
	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.	M	

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**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	PRIORITY (S, M, L)	PARTNERS
6.1. Support our towns, villages and mainstreets to grow and thrive well into the future.	6.1.1	Support infrastructure developments to enhance our mainstreets.	S	
	6.1.2	Work with local business associations to market mainstreets and town/shopping hubs eg: Shop Local Projects.	S	Mainstreet Australia, Business Associations
	6.1.3	Continue to support Mainstreet trader initiatives.	S	Business Associations
	6.1.4	Investigate options to provide grass roots training and innovative initiatives for businesses and towns.	S	SBV, Mainstreet Australia
	6.1.5	Facilitate grant funding opportunities for trader and mainstreet improvements.	M	SBV
	6.1.6	Promote new business opportunities from the expansion of the Great Southern Rail Trail and increased visitation.		Business Associations
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.	S	RAI
	6.2.2	Participate in a targeted and collaborative marketing campaign to attract new residents to the Shire.	M	
	6.2.3	Support development and implementation of the Social Housing Project.	M	Adjoining Councils
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.	M	Creative Vic