

Economic Development Strategy

Securing the prosperity
and quality of life for the
South Gippsland Shire

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

2021 - 2031



2	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	3
---	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	---

Acknowledgement of 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 encourage integrated decision making now and in the future.

Acknowledgements

Council would like to acknowledge and thank the business, community and agency representatives involved in this Strategy. We thank them for meeting the project team, attending consultation sessions and providing feedback throughout its development.



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, location and climate.

But we recognise our challenges.

This document sets out our economic strategy for the next decade. It contains strategic themes to guide Council's economic planning and secure South Gippsland's future.

This strategy is action-based and focused on priorities that will have the greatest impact. It acknowledges the need to balance environmental and community priorities. It's an opportunity to re-imagine the role local leadership plays in developing community identity and strengthening local industry.

This is a future-focussed strategy. But COVID-19 has shown we must be flexible and agile to achieve the best outcomes for South Gippsland. Our strategy provides opportunities through social, technological, economic and environmental changes and allows for ongoing review.

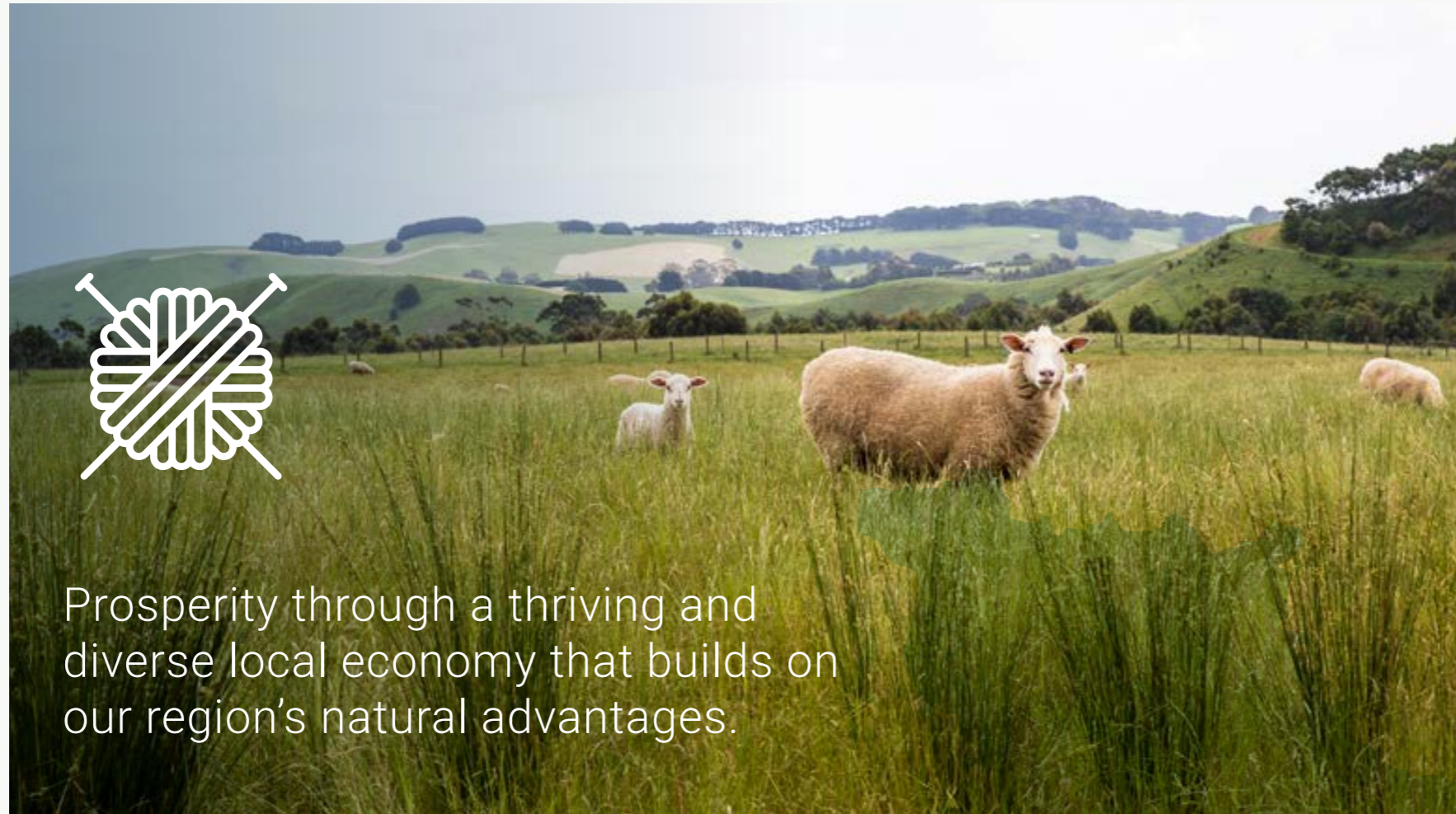
We have taken a people-centric approach to develop this strategy. We appreciate the valuable input from the community, business, visitors, government agencies and other stakeholders. It has helped develop actions to leverage our Shire's strengths and opportunities.

Council established the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) to bring together experts from different industry sectors. They've advised and overseen the development of the strategy. Their knowledge of a range of industries, unique backgrounds and experiences has enriched this strategy.

I acknowledge Council Administrators Julie Eisenbise, Rick Brown and Christian Zahra who took the initiative to develop this strategy. Their strong commitment to the process will benefit the local community and economy for years to come.

South Gippsland's best chance for success will come from working together. We look forward to future prosperity in South Gippsland as we work with the community and business to implement this strategy.

4	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	5
---	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	---



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

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	3
Executive Summary	7
Background	8
Council's role	8
Developing the Economic Development Strategy	9
Methodology	9
Consultation	9
Research	9
Development	10
Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	10
Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	10
Introduction	13
Key facts	15
Industry sectors	16
Strengths and Opportunities	20
<hr/>	
Vision	22
Goals	23
Guiding Principles	24
Strategic Themes	26
<hr/>	
Action Plan	32

Acronyms

EDSAG Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group	SBMS Small Business Mentoring Service	LVA Latrobe Valley Authority	GSRT Great Southern Rail Trail
RDV Regional Development Victoria	DJPR Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	NBN National Broadband Network	SEATS South East Australia Transport Strategy
SBV Small Business Victoria	DOT Department of Transport	F&FG Food and Fibre Gippsland	CRC Cooperative Research Centres

6	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	7
---	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	---



Executive Summary

The South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy is designed to achieve Council's vision to create a thriving, diverse and sustainable local economy built on our region's natural advantages.

South Gippsland's annual economic output is \$3.8 billion with 3,700 businesses supporting 11,000 jobs. Key industries include food and fibre, construction, energy, tourism. We focused the strategy on actions built around six strategic themes to maximise positive impacts in the most practical ways.

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

We will implement the actions through the Annual Action Plans. These will include the delivery of specific projects with clear and measurable outcomes.

The Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) will oversee the implementation of the strategy.

The following set of principles will guide Council's implementation of these actions. This will increase our success and balance the economic, social and environmental outcomes of the strategy.

- Enabling and solutions focussed
- People-centric
- Building community wealth
- Strengthening resilience
- Inclusive
- Triple bottom line
- Evidenced based decision making

We based the Strategy on an understanding of the strengths and opportunities of the South Gippsland economy, a wide range of inputs from many contributors and a knowledge of leading economic development practice. This includes Community Wealth Building, a people-centred approach to local economic development that aims to build a fairer and more sustainable economy.

Through its action oriented approach to implementing the Strategy, Council seeks to deliver its vision for a thriving local economy and become a leading practitioner of rural economic development.

8	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	9
---	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	---

Background

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

Economic development activities build the capacity of our local area to improve its economic future, prosperity and quality of life for all.

Rural economic development recognises the greater connection in rural areas between business, government and the community due to a higher level of economic and social interdependence.

A localised natural disaster, business or service closure may have greater consequences for a rural town. But the resilience and strong connections of rural communities also make it possible to implement economic development solutions not 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.

Council's role

Under the Local Government Act, one of the overarching governance principles for Councils is "the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district".

The Council Plan 2020-2024 included initiatives to develop an Economic Development Strategy and a separate Visitor Economy Strategy.

The South Gippsland Economic Development Strategy will 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 challenges and opportunities we are expected to face in the next decade.

One of Council's key roles is advocacy to other levels of Government to secure funding for projects the community and industry identify as priorities. Council is committed to engaging, understanding and responding to local needs.

See Appendix for the list of groups and agencies that Council works with.

Developing the Economic Development Strategy

Local government plays a significant and diverse role in the development of our regional economy. The infrastructure and conditions that support economic development are in part thanks to local government. Supporting and developing our local economy needs consultation and collaboration of all key players including government, business and the community.

Methodology

We developed a comprehensive method to create this strategy. It involved several components with a clear consultative approach at the forefront of the development of the plan. We identified key themes through community feedback, stakeholder engagement, expert knowledge, research, and current economic trends.

Consultation

We have developed the strategy 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.

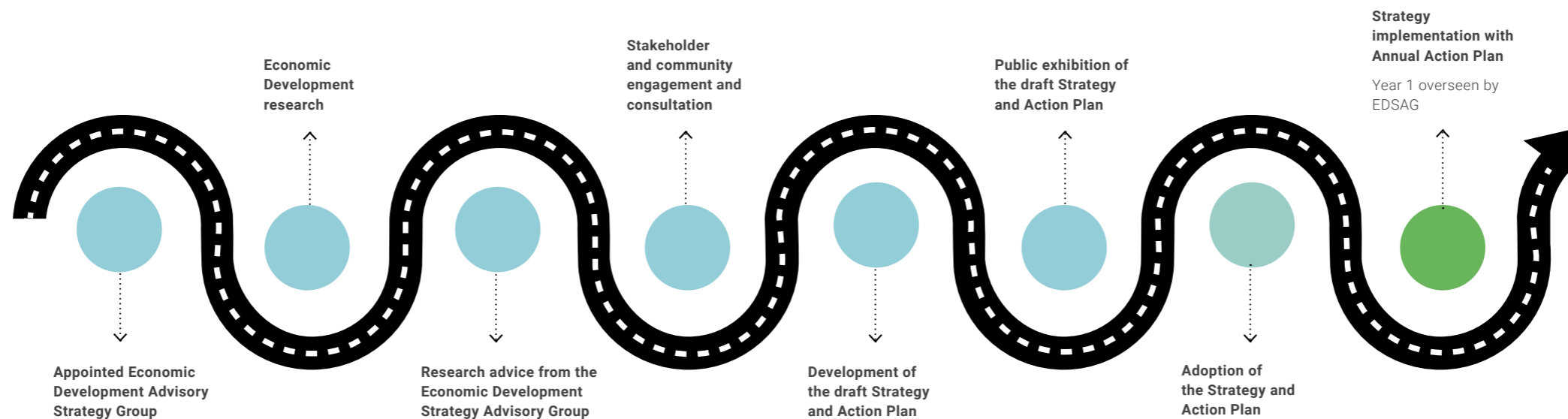
The consultation period ran between March and May 2021 and considered a wide range of views, recorded from nearly 400 pieces of feedback. The responses from the consultations were collated and were used to inform the strategy. In addition, we had input from industry sector experts and EDSAG, helping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

Research

Council conducted researching including an examination of the latest trends in economic development in Australia and from around the world. It also considered economic and social data analysis and reviewed strategies from other Local Governments.

This research included information from the professional

Methodology



10	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	11
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

association Economic Development Australia regarding contemporary strategy development, new practices and initiatives. Discussions took place with economic development professionals from around Australia, and a review of relevant articles. Statistical analysis included economic, population and social data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, REMPLAN, ID Consulting and Spendmapp.

Development

From this process, we identified key themes and objectives before developing an Action Plan which was formulated to address economic development issues. The Action Plan delivers practical solutions that Council and its strategic partners can deliver over the next 10 years. The Action Plan will be a live document that responds to challenges, opportunities and changes in policy direction as they arise.

Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)

Council established the Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG) to develop this strategy. The group brings together experts from different industry sectors to advise and oversee the Strategy. Council appointed members based on their knowledge of a broad cross section of industries, unique backgrounds and experiences.

Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members

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.
- **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.
- **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.



12	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	13
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----



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, Meeniyan, 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's population may be small but contributes significantly to Australia's agriculture, food and tourism industries.

14	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	15
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

Key facts



Annual economic output of **\$3.8 billion**



Gross Regional Product (GRP) of **\$1.85 billion** (or \$166,000 per worker)



Strong economy linked to agriculture and food manufacturing - **10%** of Victoria's dairy farms



3,700 businesses support **11,000 jobs**. Most of these are businesses less than 20 employees.



1.2 million visitors



New tourism attractions
– Reopened Port Welshpool Long Jetty and major projects at Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Artisan food and beverage production is a growing part of the South Gippsland economy.



Industry sectors

The South Gippsland Shire is home to a diverse range of industries which provide a strong economic base.



Food and Fibre

- Includes agriculture, timber and fishing
- Largest employer
- 1,400 businesses
- Key centre for dairy farming – 3 major processing facilities
- Export quality beef
- Significant growth in horticulture
- Fishing fleets at Port Welshpool and Port Franklin
- Growing artisan food sector including cheese, breweries and distilleries supported by Farmers markets



Knowledge Based Industries

- Important support for sectors relying on technology and people
- Support for many other sectors including IT, consulting, scientific, research, finance, insurance, education, media and communications



Construction

- Third highest output
- Major employer
- Growth driven by house and major infrastructure construction
- Potential to expand further with population growth
- Opportunities for training this growing workforce



Retail

- Increased Council investment in commercial centres to enhance liveability, accessibility and business opportunities
- Third largest employer
- Important for the economy and social functioning of towns



Visitor Economy

- Council investment in new attractions including Great Southern Rail Trail and Port Welshpool Long Jetty
- Investment opportunities in accommodation and attractions
- Dominant source of revenue for smaller towns

See separate strategy for further detail



Health and Medical

- Second largest employer in South Gippsland
- Major upgrades to health and aged care
- Aging population provides further opportunity for expansion



Energy

- Supports Bass Strait oil and gas
- Opportunities for hydrogen, solar, wind, battery and bio-energy as well as a second interconnector with Tasmania
- Need to balance growth against community expectations



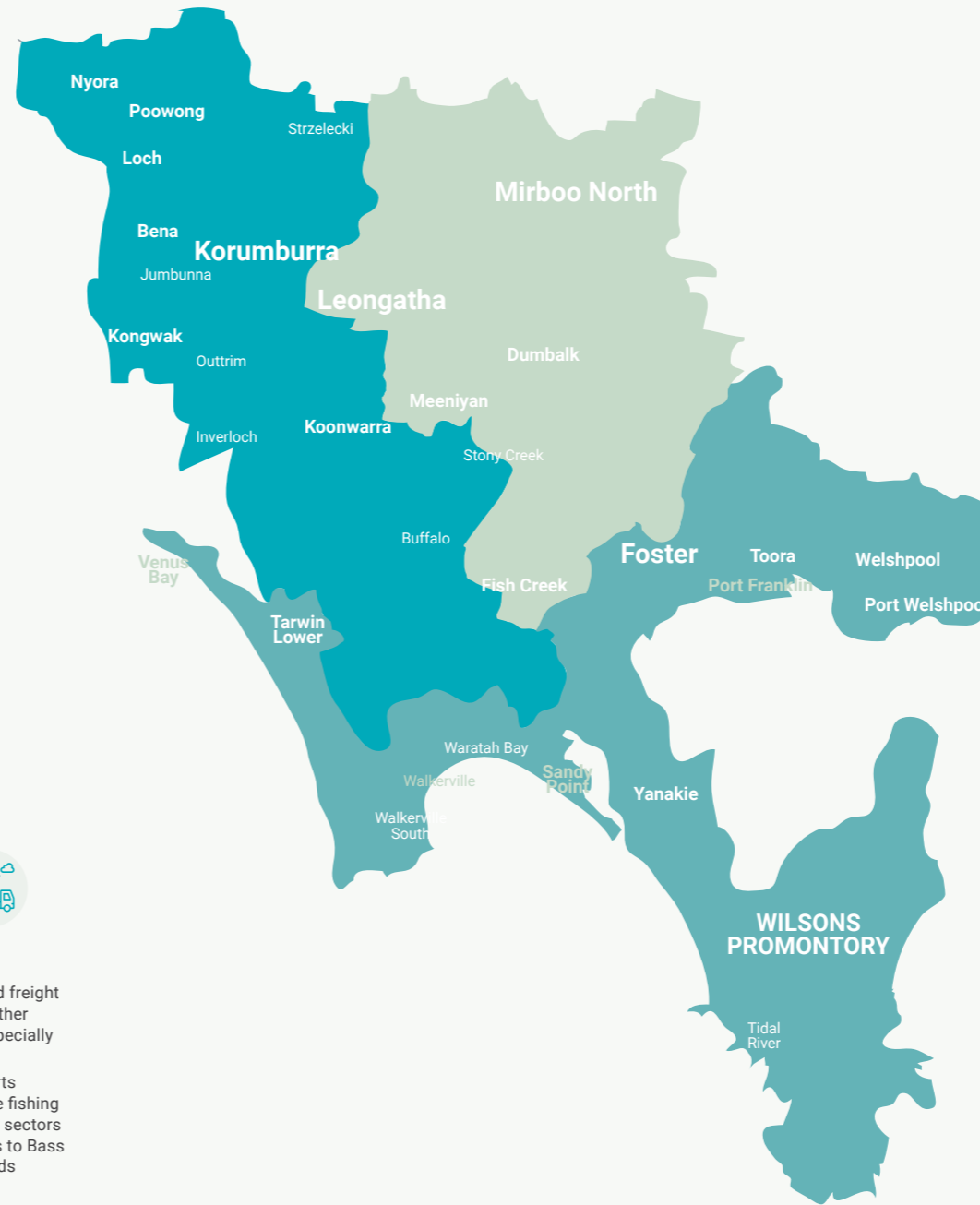
Advanced manufacturing

- Opportunities and funding as engineering and fabrication operations are brought back on-shore after COVID



Transport

- Strong road freight supports other sectors especially food
- Several ports support the fishing and energy sectors and access to Bass Strait islands
- Leongatha aerodrome has potential for flight operations and industrial uses.



Extractive Industries

- Major source of sand, rock and gravel for major construction in Melbourne.



Cultural and Creative Industries

- Small but important
- Links to visitor economy
- Important for attracting new residents
- Potential locations for film and TV projects

South Gippsland's proximity to Melbourne, climate, industry structure and people make it well placed for continued economic prosperity.

18	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	19
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----



The Prom comprises of over 50,000 hectares of wilderness and is host to some of Victoria's most spectacular natural scenery. It attracts over 500,000 visitors annually.

20	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	21
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

Strengths and Opportunities

The prosperity of the South Gippsland economy rests on a number of competitive strengths and opportunities.



Productive workforce

With low unemployment and a highly productive workforce, we have the potential to strengthen our economy.

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.

Proximity to Melbourne

South Gippsland is on the edge of Melbourne's rapidly expanding South Eastern suburbs providing opportunities for freight and accessibility.

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

Over 1,400 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing businesses and significant support networks for the sector's development and workforce.

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

Rail trails

The Shire has two excellent rail trails, the Great Southern (GSRT) and Grand Ridge. The GSRT will be the longest rail trail in Victoria providing new opportunities for business along the trail

Challenges

While we have many strengths, we also have some challenges including:

- Small population (same as Richmond in Melbourne) and a 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

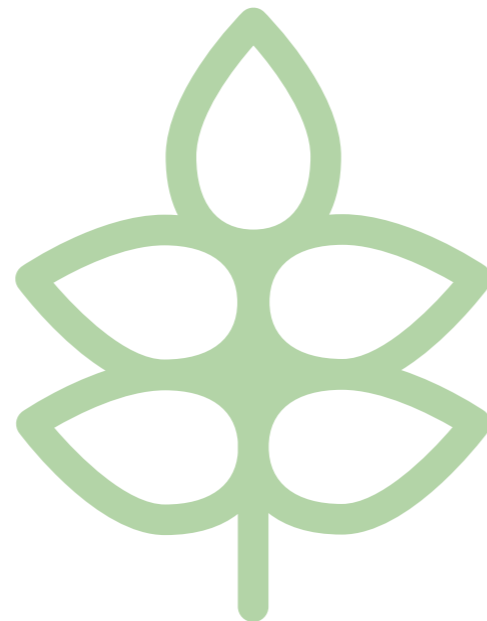


22	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	23
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

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.



Goals

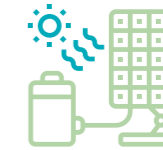
We want to build a sustainable and growing economy that:



Attracts and supports businesses to thrive and grow



Broadens, builds and strengthens industry sectors



Utilises the natural environment and improves liveability in the Shire



Builds on the benefits of our proximity to Melbourne



Creates and sustains local employment opportunities



Establishes the Shire as a food hub that feeds our State and beyond



Delivers services to support the growth of the local and regional economy



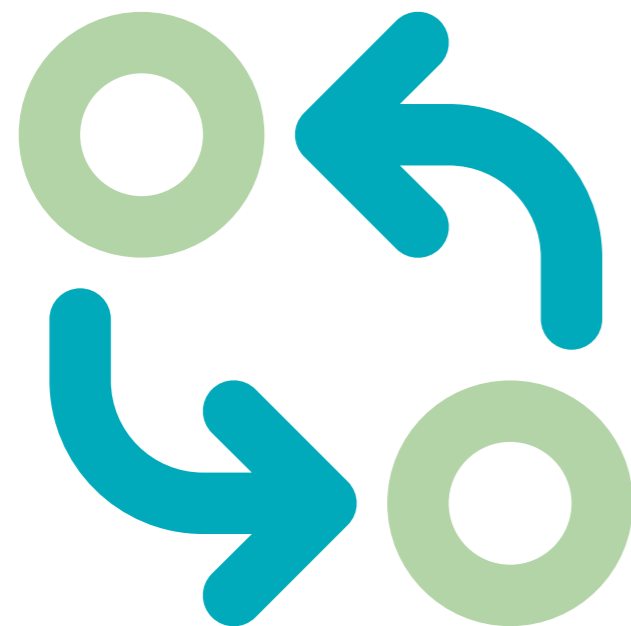
Cooperates with surrounding councils to support regional growth and prosperity

24	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	25
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

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, our strategy is guided by a set of principles.



Enabling and solutions focussed

Focussing on enabling beneficial economic activities.

Building our reputation as a Council that facilitates business growth and solves challenges.



People-centric

Building a positive culture in our dealing with business, investors, operator, customers and visitors.



Inclusive

Supporting the diversity of our residents and visitors and reducing activities that exclude people from the benefits of a strong economy.



Building community wealth

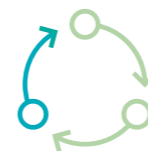
Fostering activities that build our collective social, intellectual, cultural, financial assets

Directing wealth into the local economy and giving local people greater control and benefits.



Triple bottom line

Balancing our economic objectives with social and environmental objectives, sometimes referred to as People, Profit and Planet. Responding to the challenges and impacts of climate change.



Strengthening resilience

Creating systems and networks to help us prepare for, withstand or adapt to major structure changes, economic and natural disasters.



Evidenced based decision making

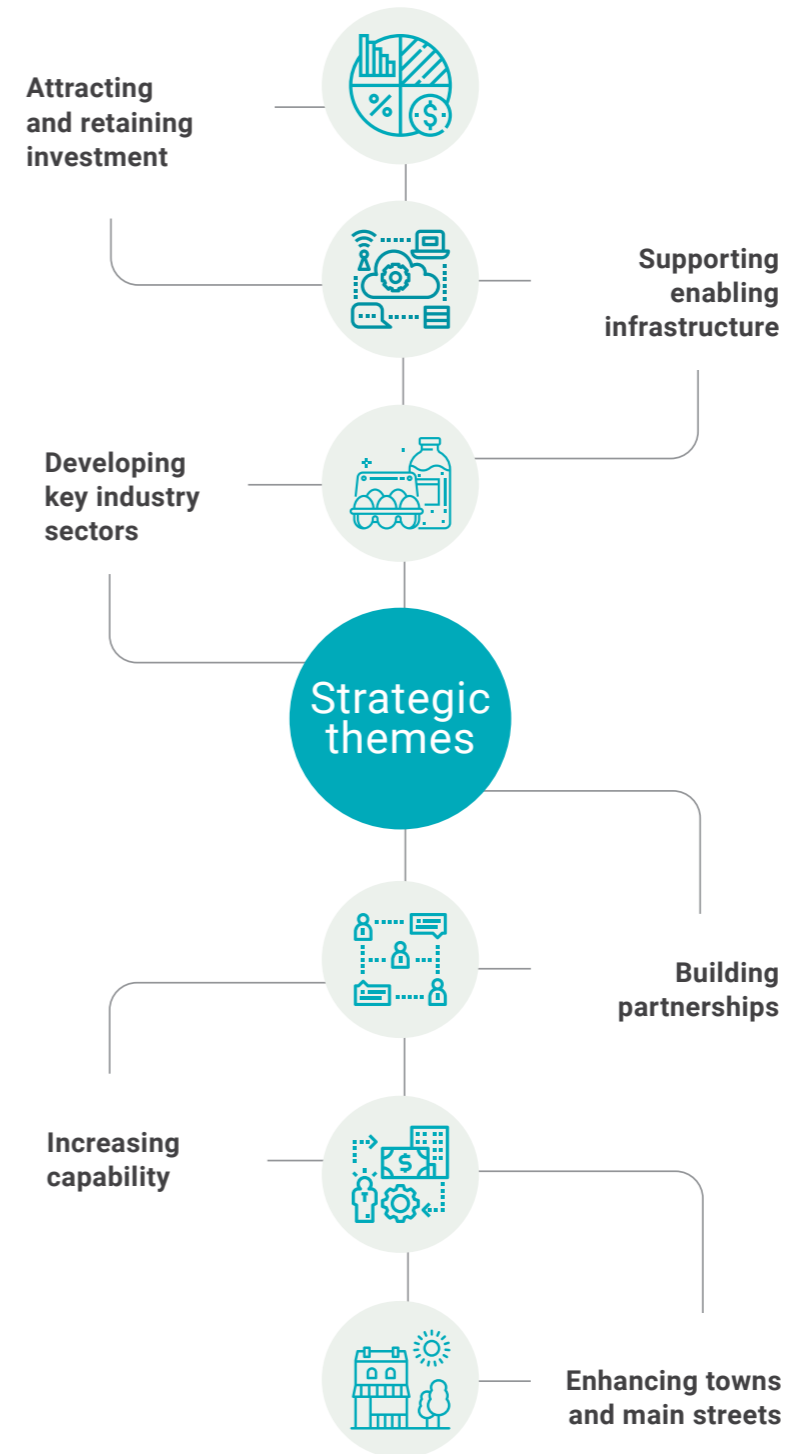
Using data, research and feedback from government, business and the community to implement realistic and viable initiatives.

26	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	27
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

Strategic Themes

The strategy development process led to the creation of six themes. They're deliberately action oriented, clear and practical. And they cover areas where we can have maximum impact on the South Gippsland economy.

By focusing on these themes, and identifying specific actions, we'll will achieve our goals.



28	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	29
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----



Attracting and retaining investment

The attraction of new investment is key to growing the economy and providing employment.

While much of this investment will come from existing businesses seeking to expand or diversify, we should ensure we're investment ready and recognised as a positive location to do business.

Strategic actions:

- Attract and grow investment through a

targeted Investment Attraction Program.

- Understand the opportunities and implications from development of the new energy sector.
- Improve opportunities for investors to develop land.
- Streamline Council's regulatory processes, and facilitate external processes, making it easier for businesses to invest.
- Seek innovation in Circular Economy Development.



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:

- Strengthen strategic partnerships to support economic growth.
- Enhance our business visitation and 'business intelligence' programs.
- Provide opportunities for business networking across the Shire.
- Support regional award programs to recognise and reward exceptional businesses.



Supporting enabling infrastructure

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 is now just as important. Council has a significant role in building business cases to secure infrastructure to support the business sector.

Strategic action:

- Advocate for continuous infrastructure improvements to support business growth based on the annual program of Priority Projects for Advocacy.



Increasing capability

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

As well as building skills, we'll also increase entrepreneurship, strengthen business resilience and our capacity to build community wealth.

Strategic actions:

- Support industry access a skilled and job ready workforce.
- Facilitate entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Strengthen business resilience and recovery.
- Develop local capacity to build and retain community wealth.



Developing key industry sectors

Industry sector development will build on our strengths and manage risk from economic, environmental and social changes. It assists emerging sectors that have the potential to grow and provide future employment.

Strengthening and growing key industry sectors will build innovation, add value to other sectors and expand economic capacity across:

1. Food and Fibre
2. Visitor Economy
3. Construction
4. New Energy
5. Knowledge based industries
6. Professional services
7. Advanced Manufacturing

8. Retail
9. Health and Medical

Strategic actions:

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



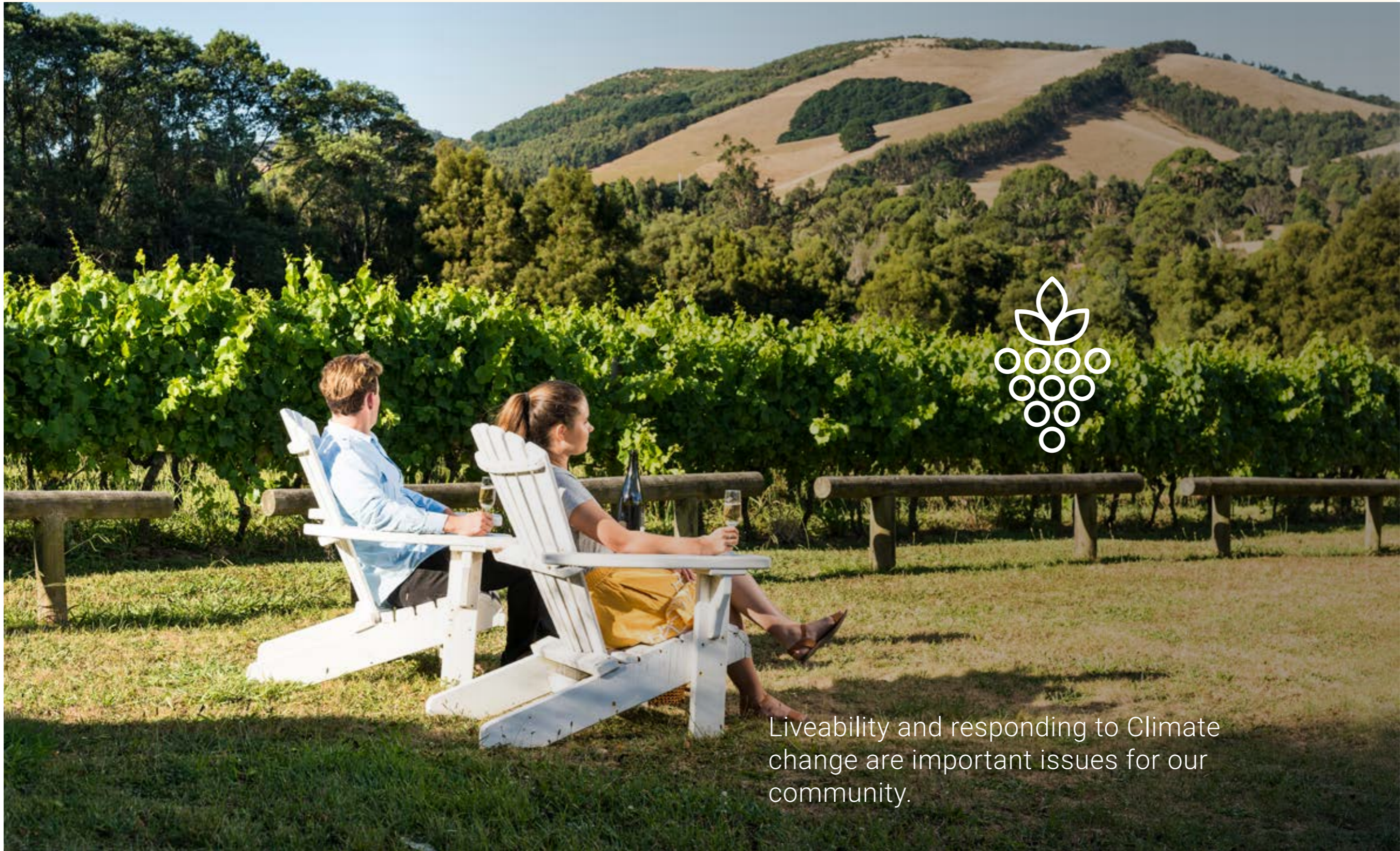
Enhancing towns and main streets

Our towns and villages are an iconic part of the Shire and perform important economic and social functions. We want South Gippsland to be a great place to live, by managing population change and community prosperity. Infrastructure development and support for the arts, cultural and heritage sectors will increase liveability.

Strategic actions:

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

30	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	31
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----



Liveability and responding to Climate change are important issues for our community.

Action Plan

An Action Plan has been developed with priorities based on the Strategic Themes. We have included projects for each theme in Appendix 1.

From this, we'll develop Annual Action Plans that reflect available funding, current priorities, and objectives.

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

Monitoring, measurement and public reporting will be part of the implementation of the Action Plan.

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

We recommend the establishment of an implementation leadership group with community membership to guide the strategy over the longer term.

As we implement this plan, we're committed to listening, learning and improving the way we do business.

We'll use our professional skills and knowledge to seek the best outcomes for our community.

And we'll strengthen the elements that make South Gippsland a great place to live, work, invest and visit.

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	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.	Invest Gippsland, RDV, Ausindustry, DGL
	1.1.2	Develop an innovative and accessible Investment Prospectus for potential investors.	RDV, Invest Gippsland
	1.1.3	Investigate attending and conducting trade missions annually to encourage future investment in the Shire	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.	
	1.2.2	Support the development of the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone.	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.	RDV
	1.3.2	Work with operators to enhance retention and expansion of existing businesses.	RDV, Ausindustry
	1.3.3	Undertake an Advocacy Plan to all levels of government to support investment enablers in the region.	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.	SBV, LVA
	1.4.2	Continue to provide the 'Business Concierge' service within Council.	LVA
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.	Sustainability Vic

2. Supporting enabling infrastructure

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

	#	ACTION	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.	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.	
	2.1.3	Conduct a digital connectivity audit to determine telecommunications needs/wants across the Shire.	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.	NBN, Telcos, Other Gippsland Councils.
	2.1.6	Advocate for improved public transport across the Shire	DOT
	2.1.7	Undertake an investigation into potential solutions for sewerage issues in Fish Creek.	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	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.	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.	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.	Dairy Australia, Industry bodies,

Continued on following page

34	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	35
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

3. Developing key industry sectors ...Continued

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	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.	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.	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.	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.	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.	DGL
3.5. Ensure Film Friendly Support	3.5.1	Grow and promote Council's readiness for Film Friendly Approvals.	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	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.	Invest Gippsland, GippsDairy, LVA, RDV, SEATS, One Gippsland
	4.1.2	Actively participate in industry specific groups, forums and expos as appropriate.	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.	RDV, Ausindustry
	4.2.2	Maintain and expand the Customer Relationship Management System.	
	4.2.3	Expand and formalise data analysis systems to support making more informed and evidence-based decisions.	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.	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	GBA, Wine Gippsland, Food and Fibre Gippsland,
	4.4.2	Encourage and support local businesses to enter regional and state-wide award programs.	

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	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.	Local/regional educational providers, LLEN
	5.1.2	Work with businesses to understand skills requirements and plan appropriately.	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.	TAFEs, LLEN, DOT
	5.1.4	Support the continuation of the Cows Create Careers Program.	GippsDairy
5.2. Facilitate Entrepreneurship initiatives.	5.2.1	Continue Startup Gippsland Program and initiatives to foster youth entrepreneurship.	Startup Gippsland, LLEN
5.3. Develop Business Resilience and Recovery.	5.3.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	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.	
	5.4.2	Establish a working group to support and develop the implementation of community wealth building initiatives.	Community
	5.4.2	Undertake initiatives to support and build local community enterprises.	Local enterprises
	5.4.3	Support local procurement initiatives to build capacity.	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.	
	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.	

36	Contents	Acknowledgement of Country	Acknowledgements	Foreword	Executive Summary	Background	Council's role	Developing the Economic Development Strategy	Methodology	Consultation	Research	Development	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group (EDSAG)	Economic Development Strategy Advisory Group Members	Introduction	Key facts	Industry sectors	Strengths and Opportunities	Vision	Goals	Guiding Principles	Strategic Themes	Action Plan	37
----	----------	----------------------------	------------------	----------	-------------------	------------	----------------	----------------------------------------------	-------------	--------------	----------	-------------	------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------	-----------	------------------	-----------------------------	--------	-------	--------------------	------------------	-------------	----

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	PARTNERS
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.	
	6.1.2	Work with local business associations to market main streets and town/shopping hubs eg: Shop Local Projects.	Mainstreet Australia, Business Associations
	6.1.3	Work in partnership with business associations to develop coordinated marketing and management programs.	Business Associations
	6.1.4	Investigate options to provide grass roots training and innovative initiatives for businesses and towns.	SBV, Mainstreet Australia
	6.1.5	Facilitate grant funding opportunities for trader and main street improvements.	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.	RAI
	6.2.2	Participate in a targeted and collaborative marketing campaign to attract new residents to the Shire.	
	6.2.3	Support development and implementation of the Social Housing Project.	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.	Creative Vic