



**AGENDA APPENDIX**  
**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday 16 April 2014**

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM DUE TO DOCUMENT SIZE.

THE ITEM IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE COUNCIL WEBSITE OR BY CONTACTING COUNCIL ON 03 5662 9200.

**E.9 LEONGATHA COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2014**

Appendix 1 – Leongatha Community Infrastructure Plan 2014

# COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

April 2014

## Leongatha 2014



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**Final 16 April 2014**

**South Gippsland Shire Council**

**Photos: Ken Fraser and Vicki Bradley**

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## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“First life, then spaces, then buildings: the other way around never works - Jan Gehl”*

Leongatha is the largest urban settlement in the South Gippsland Shire comprising an area of 4,135 hectares. In 2011 the total population of Leongatha was 5,334. By 2031 the population will have grown to around 8,000 people and will comprise 22% of the total population of South Gippsland.

### Background and Context

This is the second of a series of community infrastructure plans to prioritise allocation of funds to facilities for South Gippsland towns experiencing population growth over the next 20 years. The Korumburra Community Infrastructure Assessment was endorsed by Council in July 2012. Plans for Mirboo North, Venus Bay and Nyora will also be developed by the end of 2014.

The Leongatha Community Infrastructure Plan includes a detailed audit of current infrastructure; current and projected demographic information and guides prioritisation for infrastructure over the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

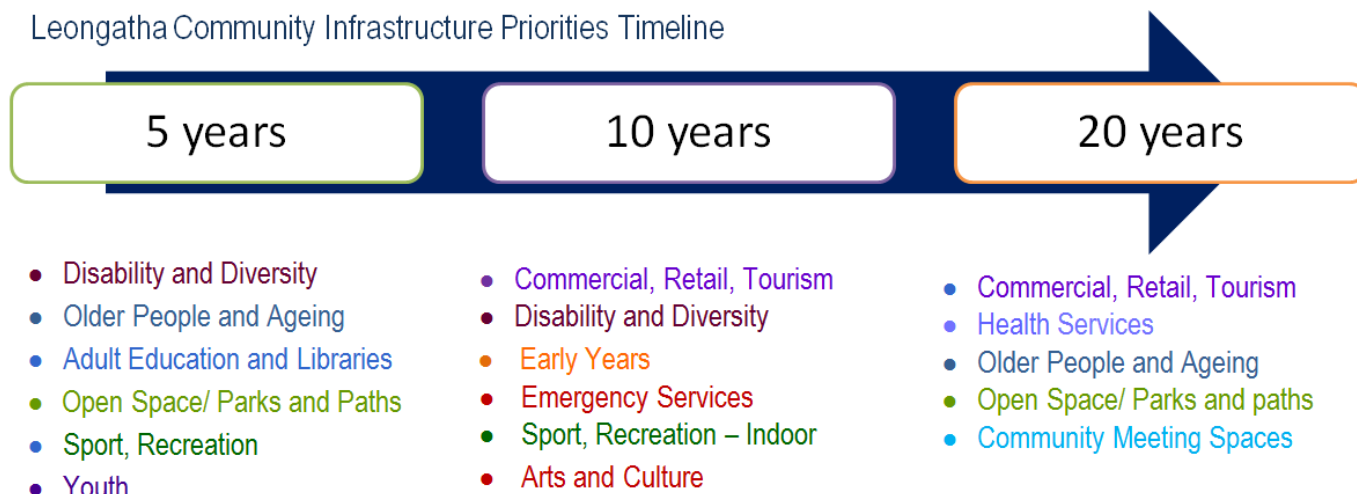
The report discusses the community infrastructure needs specific to Early Years, Disability, Older People and Ageing and Youth. Other sections of the report describe community infrastructure which influence the whole community as well as the groups in the community with specific needs. Strategic plans and guides and current best practice examples are referenced to make recommendations and priorities for the future. Its use by Council, outside organisations and the community will assist in supporting a coordinated approach to the needs of the Leongatha community.





## Identified Community Infrastructure Priorities

Leongatha Community Infrastructure Priorities Timeline



Areas not prioritised for the first 5 years remain important considerations for future planning and are discussed in full in the main document.

### **Disability and Diversity**

With each Census more people are identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, cultural support programs provide support to Aboriginal people in the local area. English courses for migrants are provided by community houses.

In Leongatha 336 people or 6.3% of the population report needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability, a higher proportion of the population when compared to Victoria 4.8%.

Recommendations:

- A diversity of housing stock catering for people with mobility restrictions close to the town centre.
- Improved access to retail businesses and around the town including public buildings, library and large entertainment venues.
- Age appropriate respite and long term care for younger people with disabilities.
- Support settlement of new migrants

### **Older People and Ageing**

People over the age of 65 in Leongatha are currently makeup 20% of the population with 13.8% living alone. This is higher than state average where 13.9% of the population are over 65 and 11.3% of this age group lives alone. By 2021 it is expected that Leongatha will have the most growth in the over 65 age group. People seeking lifestyle change in retirement and people moving from farms is expected to increase the number of older people living in Leongatha.

Recommendations:

- Increased services to people remaining in the home.
- Accessible and varied facilities and services support older people to actively participate in community life and community physical activity and maintain a sense of belonging in their local communities.



- Improved access to retail businesses and around the town.
- Mobility scooter parking and recharge points.

## **Open Space, Streets, Parks, Playgrounds**

As the town of Leongatha grows so too will the importance and value of open space. Access from new developments to the existing town centre will ensure movement of pedestrians is safe and inviting.

Recommendations:

- Paths providing pedestrian access between residential areas, the town centre, schools and active recreation precincts.
- Allocation of open space; wide, accessible walking and cycling paths; public toilets, seating, shade, parks and playgrounds that are accessible to wheelchairs, bicycles, skateboards and pedestrians.
- Larger public areas within the town centre for community gatherings and events.
- Allocate open space in new development to the west of Leongatha ensuring staged development provides adequate unencumbered open space at each stage.

## **Sport and Recreation**

Allocation of land for additional playing fields and a community centre in the Southern Leongatha development is required at time of agreement for rezoning the land for residential development.

Recommendations:

- Implement recommendations of Southern Leongatha Outline Development Plan: allocation of 4 ha of land for playing fields and a community facility

## **Library**

The current principal library based in Leongatha services the needs of the broader South Gippsland community in addition to those living in Leongatha. The current venue provides limited public access space (361m<sup>2</sup>) and cannot provide the variety of study and meeting spaces required in a modern library. A new library would serve the needs of the community for another 30 – 50 years.

Recommendations:

- Investigate a new library site close to the town centre with high public exposure to be constructed in 10 years.
- Consider in planning the co-location of a library with other community or civic buildings providing increased and varied spaces providing varied activity and study areas.
- Ensure new building is accessible and includes undercover parking space for mobility scooters, walkers and prams.

## Youth

Leongatha has become a hub for youth in South Gippsland. The range of education opportunities available in the town bring many young people to Leongatha for school and further education. Sport, the cinema, other entertainment retain young people within the town. Leongatha businesses provide part time work positions filled by students who attend school in Leongatha living in the town or in neighbouring towns or rural areas.

### Recommendations:

- Re investigate the Leongatha railway station as an area suitable for youth to meet, both indoor and outdoor.
- Safe indoor areas for quiet study, informal meeting with others, youth specific service provision considering expansion of space available in library or other centrally located space.

## Summary

Infrastructure priorities for Leongatha require the allocation of adequate and appropriate land for open space and recreation. The provision of links for the high proportion of people who walk, cycle and use mobility aids to navigate the town is also important. The Leongatha Traffic and Drainage Study 2013 provides a summary of recommendations connection of walking and cycling trails which when matched with provision of continuous footpaths will provide improved access across the town.

Within the town, improved accessibility will allow negotiation of shops, road crossings and services by people with mobility aids. A centrally located public meeting space which includes a library may provide a focus for the Leongatha community. This venue would provide a place which would not be commercial or member based and could provide a place for community members to meet informally, get out of extreme weather to rest and relax.

Connecting the community with paths and trails and providing places to meet for social, sport and service provision is essential to support a growing population of over 8,000 people by 2031. Completion of footpaths for all residential areas will help connect residents and encourage walking. A map of roads without footpaths is attached.

## Conclusion

Significant population growth fuels demand for accessible, coordinated and well-designed community infrastructure. Integrated community facilities and services are a vital component for creating healthy communities that support social inclusion and enhance the wellbeing of residents. Linking new residential developments with existing areas and the town centre will ensure a socially vibrant town centre that provides equitable, accessible facilities and services for everyone in the community.

Community infrastructure is essential to provide spaces and places for participation in community life and provides opportunities for community building.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Leongatha is the largest town in the South Gippsland Shire comprising an area of 4,135 hectares. In 2011 the total population of Leongatha was 5,334. The population of Leongatha is expected to increase by 1,368 people to 6,702 by 2021 at an average annual growth rate of 2.04% per annum over 10 years. By 2031 the population will have grown to around 8,000 people and will comprise 22% of the total population of South Gippsland. This represents an annual average percentage increase in the Leongatha population of 1.88%.

It is estimated that an average of 59 dwellings will be constructed each year from 2014 to 2031 on new residential and infill developments proposed in Leongatha.

With a growing population, the planning for high quality community infrastructure in Leongatha remains vitally important to benefit community health and wellbeing, participation, neighbourhood vibrancy and relationship building.

Community infrastructure includes the public and private facilities and services required to accommodate and support community services, programs, activities and a person's access to them. This is the second of a series of plans. The first community infrastructure plan was developed for Korumburra. Plans for Mirboo North, Venus Bay and Nyora will also be developed in the next 12 – 18 months.

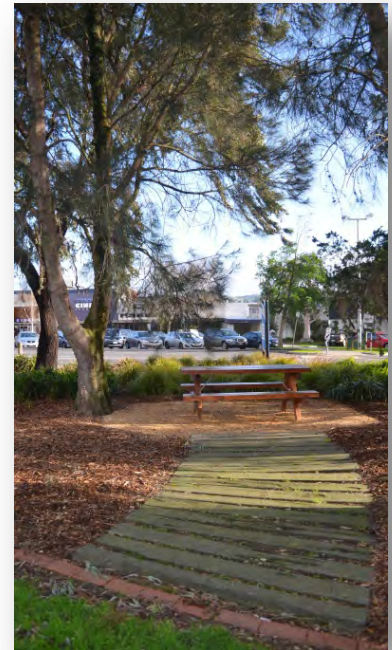
## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Guide the development, timing, design and location of community infrastructure over the next 20 years
- Identify and prioritise services and facilities required for an emerging population
- Present key recommendations for community infrastructure that will address needs over the short, medium and long term,
- Develop a plan of possible locations and facilities for identified priorities
- Determine funding sources and timing.

This document will be available for a number of Council actions:

- Negotiate development contribution,
- Inform community planning discussions
- Provide usage needs for detailed plans for new facilities or refurbishment of existing facilities
- Identify current best practice
- Inform strategic planning of the town centre including provision of retail, community spaces and services that are easily accessible
- Inform service level planning for Leongatha by Council and other service providers



- Advocate for greater provision of services in Leongatha.

Council is seeking to work in partnership with the community, other agencies and providers to offer an enhanced sense of community identity through the establishment of multi-purpose, shared community infrastructure to promote participation in social, education, arts, sport and recreation activities and programs.

## 1.2 Integrated Planning

Community Infrastructure Plan supports integrated planning. It draws on key policies and strategies of State and Federal government and Council. It brings together recommendations and actions from existing Council plans and applies them specifically to the needs of Leongatha.

### *Background and Context*

Leongatha is the largest urban settlement and major service centre for South Gippsland. It is an important business, industry, education, health and community centre for the South Gippsland region. Infrastructure in the town needs to accommodate people visiting the town from across South Gippsland to access services. The township is surrounded by rural hinterland used for dairy, beef and snow pea farming.

Proposed rezoning to take place from 2014 is expected to add an additional 1,000 new houses to the 391 vacant lots currently available (2012). This is expected to provide a further 23 years residential land supply.

Significant population growth fuels demand for accessible, coordinated and well-designed community infrastructure. Integrated community facilities and services are a vital component for creating healthy communities that support social inclusion and enhance the wellbeing of residents. Linking new residential developments with existing areas and the town centre will ensure a socially vibrant town centre that provides equitable, accessible facilities and services for everyone in the community.

The needs for community infrastructure are varied for the next 20 years with some identified for immediate action in the next 5 years, and others over the longer term.

This document describes current and forecast demographics for Leongatha. Current and future needs for services and facilities are discussed under 12 topics using existing strategic plans and guides and current best practice examples to make recommendations and priorities for the future.

Community infrastructure includes both 'hard infrastructure', and 'soft infrastructure'. Hard infrastructure is the physical built infrastructure that includes facilities and environments; soft infrastructure includes the services, programs, community supports, processes and information which support lifestyle opportunities, a sense of belonging and enhance quality





of life. In combination these are essential components of what can make Leongatha a great place to live, work, play and visit.

Community infrastructure is essential to provide spaces and places for participation in community life and provides opportunities for community building. The Leongatha Community Infrastructure Plan includes a detailed audit of current infrastructure; current and projected demographic information and guides prioritisation for infrastructure over the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Its broad use by Council, outside organisations and the community will assist in supporting a coordinated approach to the needs of the Leongatha community.



## 2 LEONGATHA CURRENT AND FORECAST DEMOGRAPHICS

The following provides a general description of the demographic profile for Leongatha in 2013. It relies heavily on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census either directly or through pre-analysed and graphed data prepared by .id Consulting for South Gippsland Shire Council.



With a current population of 5,332 Leongatha is the largest urban settlement in South Gippsland Shire and a key service centre for nearby townships and rural districts. Leongatha is a major business, industry, education, leisure, recreation, entertainment, health and community centre for the South Gippsland region. It is located 134km, a 90 minute drive from the Melbourne CBD. Leongatha is a centre for the dairy industry located at the intersection of the Bass Highway, Strzelecki Highway and the South Gippsland Highway and is surrounded by fertile agricultural land.

Leongatha is a centre for services and facilities for the broader South Gippsland area providing

- A dairy industry centre of state significance
- An industrial service centre
- A sub-regional health centre
- Administrative and depot centre for South Gippsland Shire Council
- A transport hub with connections to Melbourne and Gippsland
- A community services and facilities hub
- A sub-regional education and entertainment and recreation centre
- A retail and business centre.

European settlement dates from 1845, with land used mainly for farming and grazing. The township was established in the 1880s, when dairying became an important industry. Growth took place from the 1890s into the early 1900s, spurred by the opening of the railway line from Melbourne. A labour colony operated from 1893 to the early 1900s, clearing land for farming. The labour colony was subdivided in 1919 into dairy farms for returned soldiers. Leongatha developed as the largest township in South Gippsland Shire. The most significant development occurred during the post-war years. The population has gradually increased since the 1980s, a result of new dwellings being added to the area.

As a result of residential rezoning in Leongatha an additional 700 – 1000 new house lots will provide an additional 20 years land supply resulting in considerable population growth in this same period.

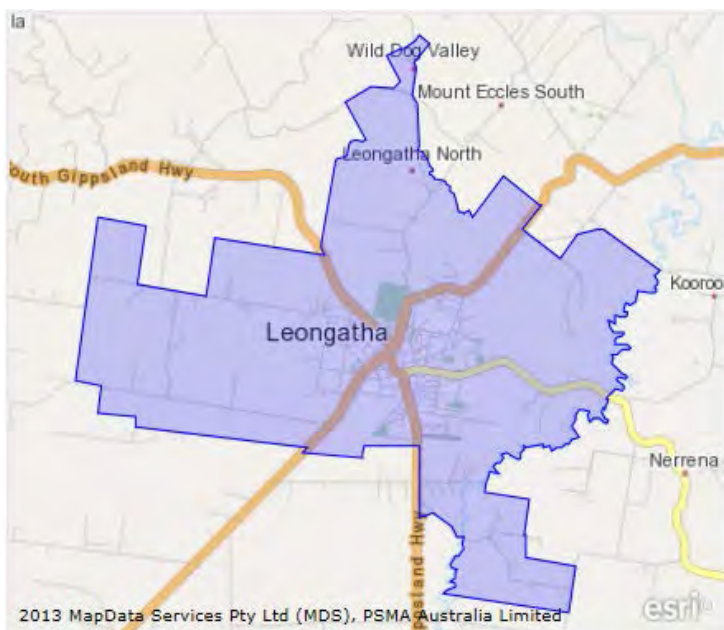
## 2.1 Current demographics

### 2.1.1 Summary

TABLE 1: LEONGATHA DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



MAP 1: LEONGATHA STATE SUBURB 2011



Source<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ABS, 2011 Census QuickStats Leongatha, view on 30 November 2012, [http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/SSC20738](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/SSC20738)

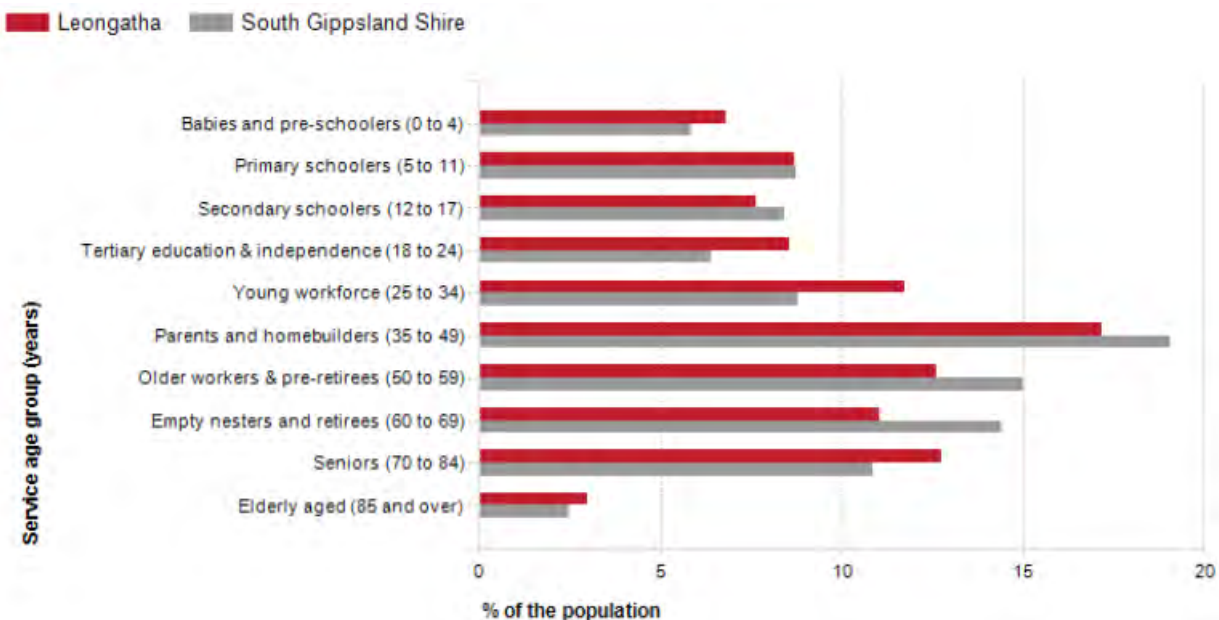


## Population

Currently there are 5,333 people living in 2,413 households in Leongatha with an average household size of 2.31. The population of Leongatha comprises 20% of the total population of South Gippsland.

By 2031 the population will have grown to 8,009 people living in 3,594 dwellings comprising 22% of the total population of South Gippsland. This represents an annual average percentage change of 1.88% in Leongatha and 1.26% for South Gippsland. In 2011, the most populous age group in Leongatha was 0 - 4 year olds, with 364 persons. This is followed closely by 10 - 14 year olds with 352 persons. By 2021 5 - 9 year olds will represent the largest percentage population group at 7.0% or 466 persons. The age groups expected to experience the greatest growth in number by 2031 is 40 - 49 years olds growing by 420 people from 2013.

**FIGURE 1: AGE STRUCTURE 2011**



Source<sup>2</sup>

The graph above shows variation in the age structure in Leongatha in 2011 to that of South Gippsland. Analysis of the service age groups of Leongatha in 2011 compared to South Gippsland Shire shows that there was a higher proportion of people aged 18 - 34 and people aged over 70 years. For Leongatha 18 - 24 year olds comprised 8.6% of the population compared with 6.4% for Gippsland and for 25 - 34 years olds there were 11.8% compared to 8.8% for South Gippsland. People aged over 70 comprised 15.7% in Leongatha compared to 13.4% in South Gippsland. There were 159 people over the age of 85 living in Leongatha in 2011.

In Leongatha 4% of people speak a language other than English at home. The dominant languages spoken at home, other than English, in Leongatha was Italian, with 1% of the

<sup>2</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting.

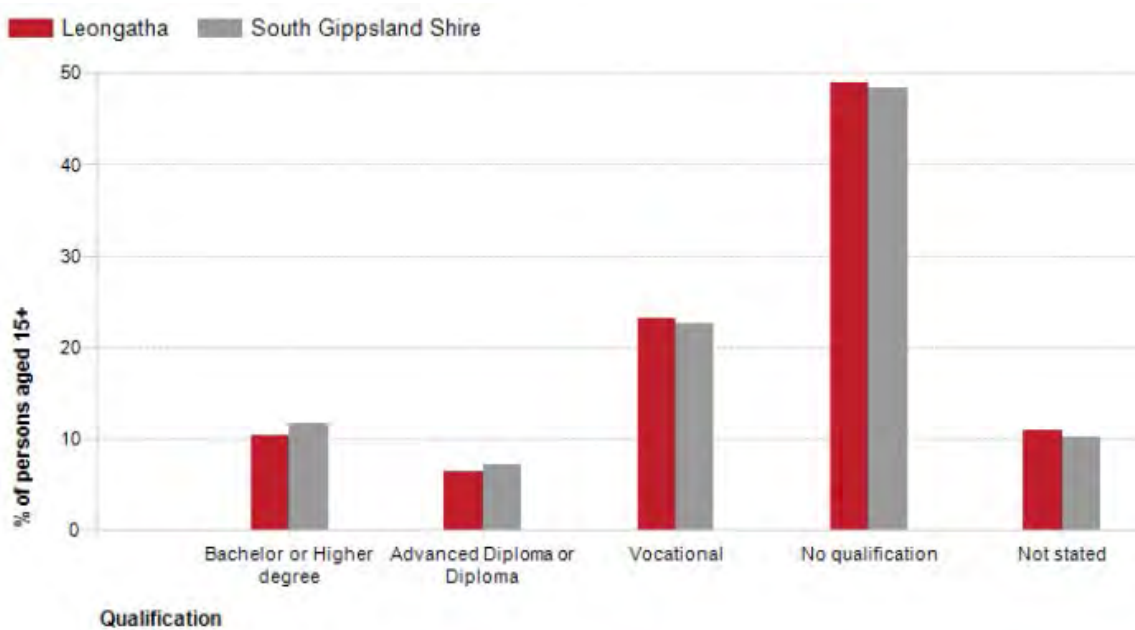
population (51 people) compared to South Gippsland where 1.1% speak Italian at home and Dutch 0.6 (30 people) compared to South Gippsland were 0.3% speak Dutch. This contrasts with Korumburra where Italian speakers comprise 2.5% of the population. In Leongatha, 29 people who speak a language other than English report having difficulty understanding English.

## Education

In Leongatha there were a lower proportion of people holding a Bachelor / higher degree or Advanced Diploma / Diploma (17%) than in South Gippsland (19%). The proportion of people with 'no formal qualifications' in Leongatha was equivalent to that in South Gippsland (49%).

Overall, 38.3% of the population left school at Year 10 or below, and 33.3% went on to complete Year 12 or equivalent, compared with 40.1% and 33.1% respectively for South Gippsland Shire. Education levels secondary education, post-secondary training and qualifications influence the socio-economic status of residents, employment opportunities and their level of income.

**FIGURE 2: HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ACHIEVED 2011**



Source<sup>3</sup>

## Employment

*The labour force is a fundamental input to domestic production. Its size and composition are therefore crucial factors in economic growth. From the viewpoint of social*

<sup>3</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting.

development, earnings from paid work are a major influence on levels of economic well-being.<sup>4</sup>

In Leongatha 97.1% of the workforce, 2,469 people are employed, of which 59% are working full time and 40% part time, 57.6% of the population aged 15+, Unemployment is very low at 2.9% with 40 people looking for full time work and 33 people looking for part time work<sup>5</sup>.

Analysis of individual income levels in Leongatha in 2011 compared to South Gippsland Shire shows that there was a similar proportion of persons earning a high income (those earning \$1,500 per week or more) and a lower proportion of low income persons (those earning less than \$400 per week). Overall, 7.3% of the population earned a high income, and 36.2% earned a low income, compared with 6.9% and 40.4% respectively for South Gippsland Shire.

The voluntary work sector is an important part of Australia's economy. The level of volunteering can indicate the cohesiveness of the community and how readily individuals are able to contribute to that community. South Gippsland Shire has a higher percentage of volunteers in comparison to Victoria and Australia. In Leongatha 27% of the population or 1,174 people reported doing some volunteer work in the previous 12 months in comparison to 17.7% for Victoria and 29.3% for South Gippsland.

**TABLE 2: VOLUNTEER WORK 2011**

| <b>Volunteer status</b>          | <b>Number in Leongatha</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Victoria</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| <b>Volunteer</b>                 | 1,174                      | 27.4     | 17.7            |
| <b>Not a volunteer</b>           | 2,789                      | 65.1     | 74.4            |
| <b>Volunteer work not stated</b> | 320                        | 7.0      | 7.9             |
| <b>Total persons aged 15+</b>    | 4,283                      | 100.0    | 100.0           |

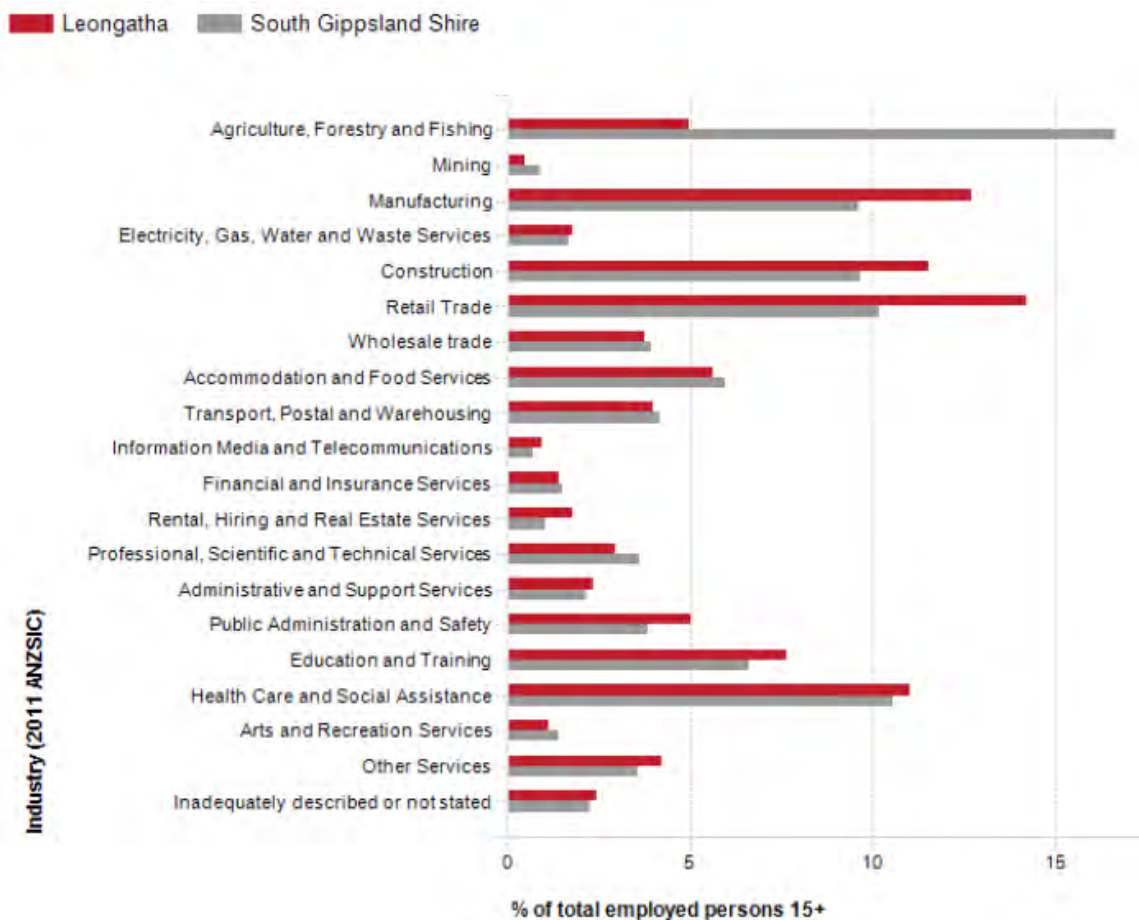
Source<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> ABS, 1995, *Australian Social Trends 1995*, viewed on 30 November 2012, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/5776C5B40EE1EBC8CA2569EE0015D892?opendocument>

<sup>5</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

<sup>6</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

**FIGURE 3: INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT**

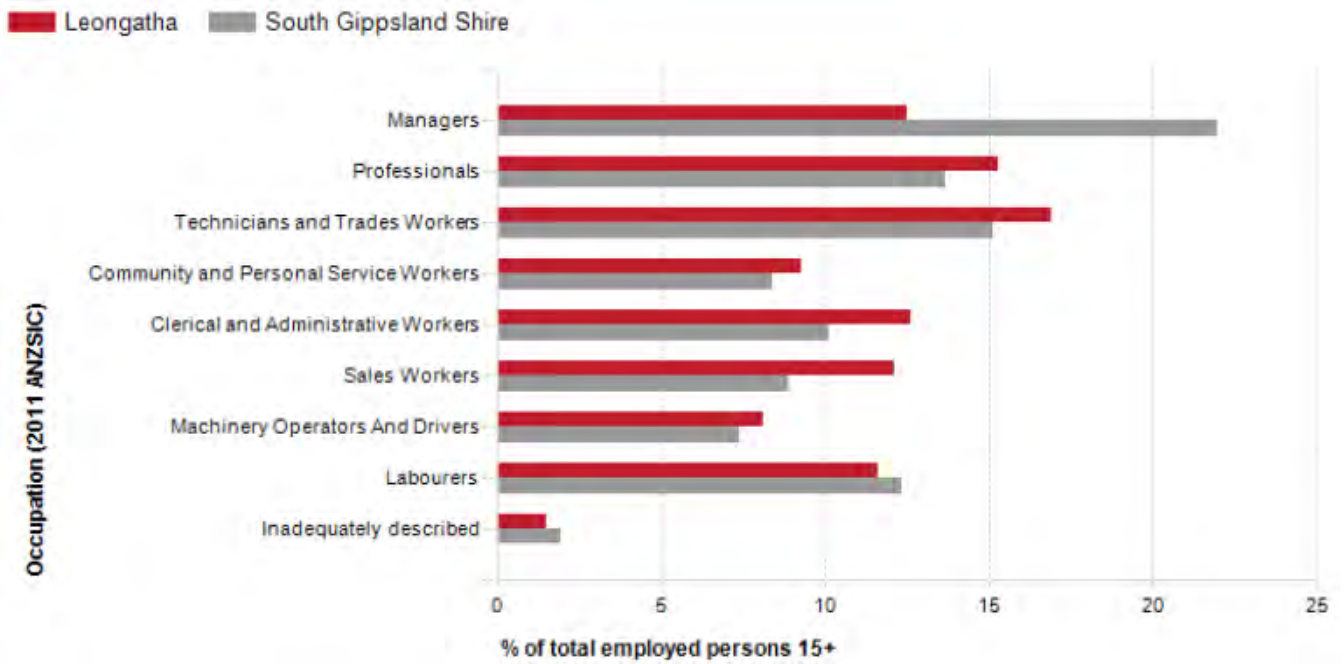


Source<sup>7</sup>

Figure 3 above shows the main industries of employment for people living in Leongatha: Retail Trade 348 people (14.2%); Manufacturing 312 people (12.7%); and Construction 283 people (11.5%) followed closely by Health Care and Social Assistance (270 people (11.0%). In combination these four industries employed 1,213 people in total or 49.4% of the employed workforce.

<sup>7</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

**FIGURE 4: EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION**



Source<sup>8</sup>

### *Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA)*

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) is derived from attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, jobs in relatively unskilled occupations and variables that reflect disadvantage rather than measure specific aspects of disadvantage (e.g., Indigenous and Separated/Divorced). The average for Victoria and for South Gippsland is 1000. Scores above 1000 are considered relatively advantaged and those below relatively disadvantaged. SEIFA is applied to a geographical area and does not necessarily imply anything about individuals living in the area. The index of relative socio economic disadvantage (SEIFA) is a relative measure and can be represented as the overall town relative to other areas or as areas within a town relative to other areas in the same town.

<sup>8</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

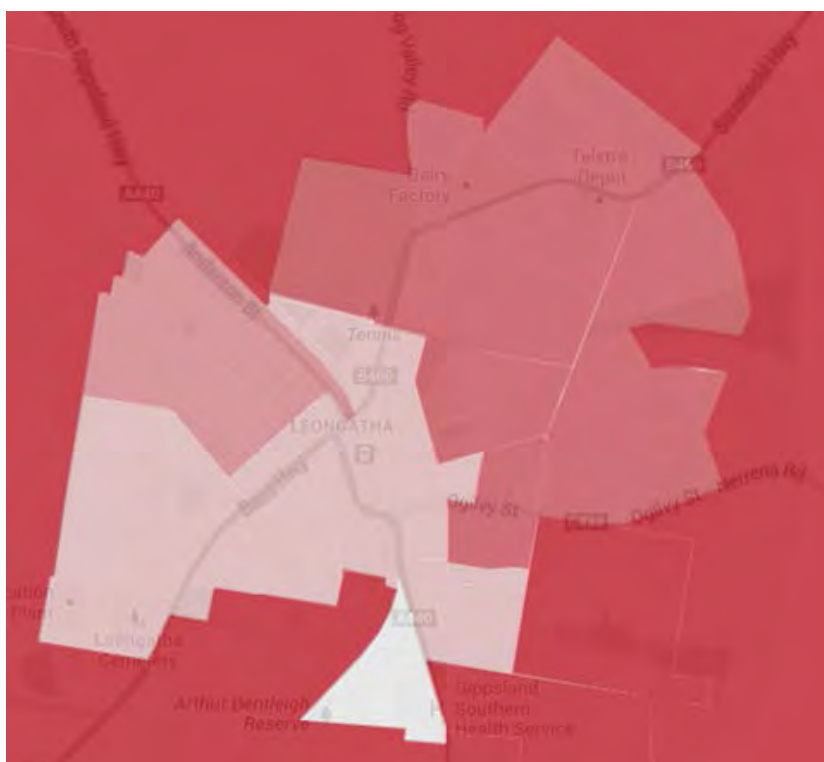
The table below represents relative SEIFA scores of Leongatha with other areas. Map 2 shows the relative SEIFA scores within Leongatha.

**TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF DISADVANTAGE LEONGATHA**

| Area                       | 2011 index |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Leongatha                  | 990        |
| Regional VIC               | 978        |
| Korumburra                 | 965        |
| South Gippsland Shire      | 1000       |
| Australia                  | 1002       |
| Mirboo North - Baromi      | 999        |
| Victoria                   | 1010       |
| Nyora - Poowong & District | 1015       |

Source <sup>9</sup>

**MAP 2: LEONGATHA**



Source<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

<sup>10</sup> Department of Health, *Gippsland Health Online*, viewed on 17 October 2012, <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/gippsland/gippslandhealthonline/index.htm>

## The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a measure of how young children are developing in different communities. It is a population measure of children's development as they enter school. The AEDI measures five areas of early childhood development: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school based); and communication skills and general knowledge. Data are collected every 3 years.

**TABLE 4: PROPORTION OF CHILDREN DEVELOPMENTALLY VULNERABLE – SOUTH GIPPSLAND**

| Local Community                      | Number of Children | Vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI | Vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Leongatha                            | 74                 | 29.2%   | 12.5%   |
| Fish Creek/Yanakie and surrounds     | 23                 | 9.5   | 4.8   |
| Foster and surrounds                 | 25                 | 9.1   | 4.5   |
| Koonwarra/Tarwin Lower and surrounds | 31                 | 20.0  | 10.0  |
| Leongatha and surrounds              | 93                 | 21.3  | 6.7   |
| Mirboo North and surrounds           | 51                 | 14.0  | 10.0  |
| Nyora and surrounds                  | 28                 | 21.4  | 3.6   |
| Poowong                              | 16                 | 6.7   | 6.7   |
| Victoria                             | 57,277             | 20.3  | 10.0  |

Source<sup>11</sup>

## Household and family structure

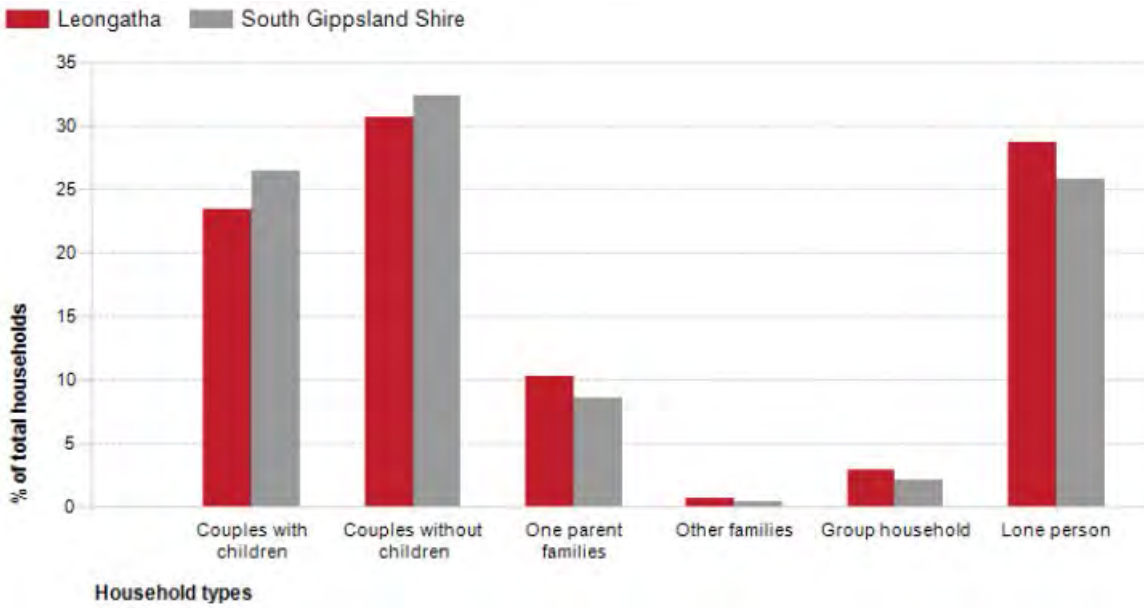
In 2011 there were 2,158 households in Leongatha, an increase of 217 households since 2006. The new households mostly comprised couples without children (+100 households) and lone persons (+64 households).

Leongatha has less couples with children (23%) and less couples without children (31%) than South Gippsland (27%) and (33%). In contrast the proportion of one parent families in Leongatha (10%) was similar to that in South Gippsland (9%). In contrast 29% of households in Leongatha were lone person households in comparison to 26% in South Gippsland. This proportion of households has remained similar to the distribution of household types recorded in 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Early Development Index, 2011, *Australian Early Development Index Community Profile*, South Gippsland, p.32, viewed on 30 November 2012, <http://maps.aedi.org.au/profiles/vic/static/reports/26170.pdf>.



**FIGURE 5: LEONGATHA HOUSEHOLD TYPES**



Source<sup>12</sup>

### *Families with Children*

In Leongatha in 2011 there were 301 couples with young children, comprising 14% of households. Households with children require different services and facilities than other household types, and their needs change as both adults and children age. When many families in an area are at the same stage in their individual lifecycles, it creates a town lifecycle. Knowing where a town is in a cycle of change helps planners make evidence-based decisions about the demand for services both now and in the future.

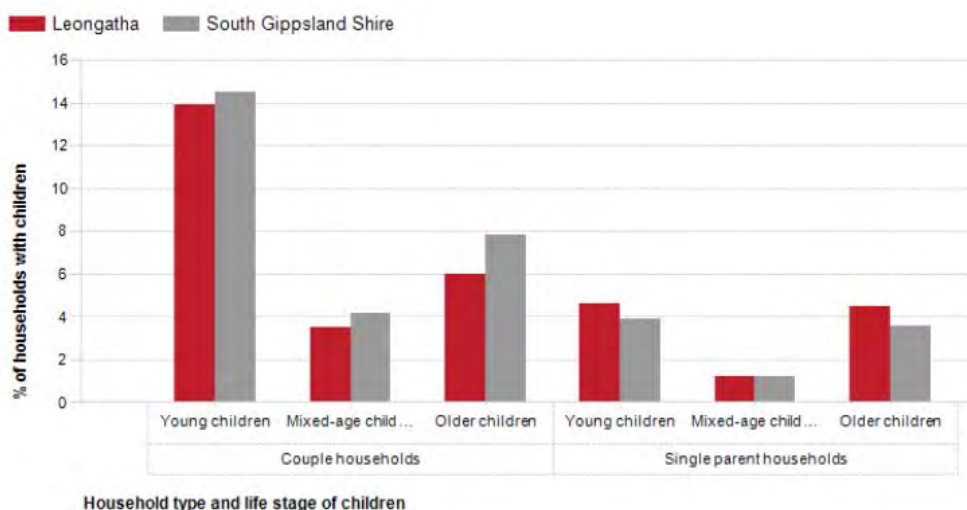
For households with children in Leongatha, life stage is based on the age of children in the household. The age of the parent(s) is not taken into account. Young children: Children aged under 15 years only. Mixed age children: One or more children under 15 and one or more children over 15 (must have 2 or more children). Older children: Children aged 15 and over only

Between 2006 and 2011 the number of households with children in Leongatha increased by 28 households (4%). There was a smaller proportion of couples with young children and a smaller proportion of couples with older children in Leongatha than in South Gippsland.

The proportion of single parent households with young children was 4.6% compared to 3.9% in South Gippsland and the proportion of single parent households with older children was 4.4% compared to 3.6% in South Gippsland, higher in both categories.

<sup>12</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

**FIGURE 6: HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN**



Source<sup>13</sup>

### *Lone Person Households and Households without Children*

There were a larger proportion of lone person households and a lower proportion of larger households (those with 4 or more people) in Leongatha compared to South Gippsland. There were 30% of lone person households (621) and 19% of larger households in Leongatha compared to 27% and 21% respectively in South Gippsland. The increase of older lone person households (65+) from 2006 was only 3 people.

There were a large proportion of older couples “empty nesters” without children, the largest growing group in Leongatha between 2006 and 2011 with an additional 71 people. Overall the number of households without children in Leongatha increased between 2006 and 2011 by 188 people.

### *Dwellings*

In 2011, there were 2,144 separate houses in Leongatha, 255 medium density dwellings, and no high density dwellings. Of all dwellings in Leongatha, 88.9% were separate houses; 10.6% were medium density dwellings, compared with 94.1% and 4.6%, in the South Gippsland Shire respectively. There are no high density dwellings in South Gippsland at all.

In 2011, a total of 89.6% of the dwellings in Leongatha were occupied on Census night, compared to 71.9% in South Gippsland Shire. The proportion of unoccupied dwellings was 10%, which is smaller compared to that found in South Gippsland Shire (27.8%).

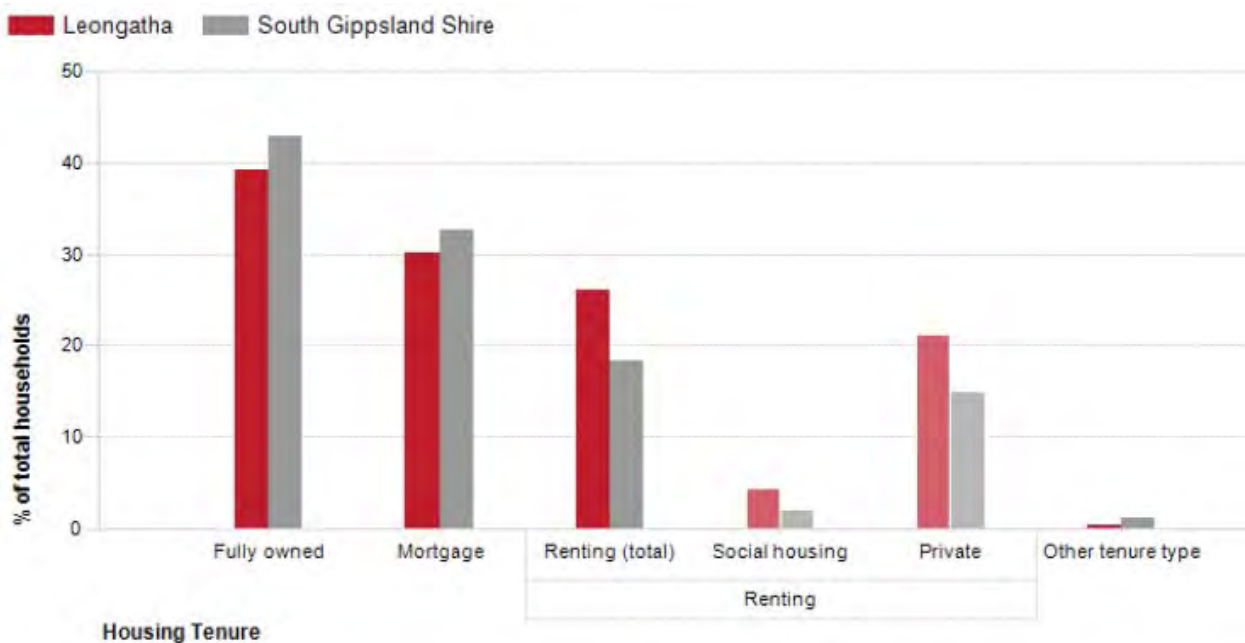
### *Home ownership/ tenure*

Home ownership when compared to household income and socio-economic status can provide information on housing affordability and stability of the population. In Leongatha 69% of households are purchasing or fully own their home and 26% were renting. Compared to South Gippsland a smaller proportion of households in Leongatha own their dwelling; more people are purchasing their dwelling; and more people were renters. There were over twice as many people in social housing in Leongatha 4.3% than in South

<sup>13</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

Gippsland 2% with an additional 13 people living in social housing since 2006. While there is information available describing the amount people pay in mortgage repayments or rent, this cannot be directly cross referenced to the household income to assess the percentage of household income people are paying for housing.

**FIGURE 7: HOUSING TENURE**



Source<sup>14</sup>

### Internet Connection

Whilst there has been an increase in the number of households with an internet connection between 2006 and 2011 of 485 households there remains fewer households in Leongatha with internet connection or dial up connection (31.8%) than in South Gippsland (30.1%). There were also fewer households with broadband connectivity (58.1%) in Leongatha than South Gippsland Shire (60.5%).

A fast internet connection is increasingly required for accessing essential information and undertaking domestic and no-domestic business leaving households with dial-up or not internet service being left behind as business is increasingly being conducted on-line.

## 1.3 Future population projections

### Forecast population summary

From 1996 to 2011 95 % of Victoria’s population growth has been within 150km of the Melbourne CBD. These areas are known as Melbourne’s hinterland (Map 3), defined as the areas immediately beyond metropolitan Melbourne and within 150km of the Melbourne CBD. It is expected that peri-urban pressures experienced by Warragul and Drouin and

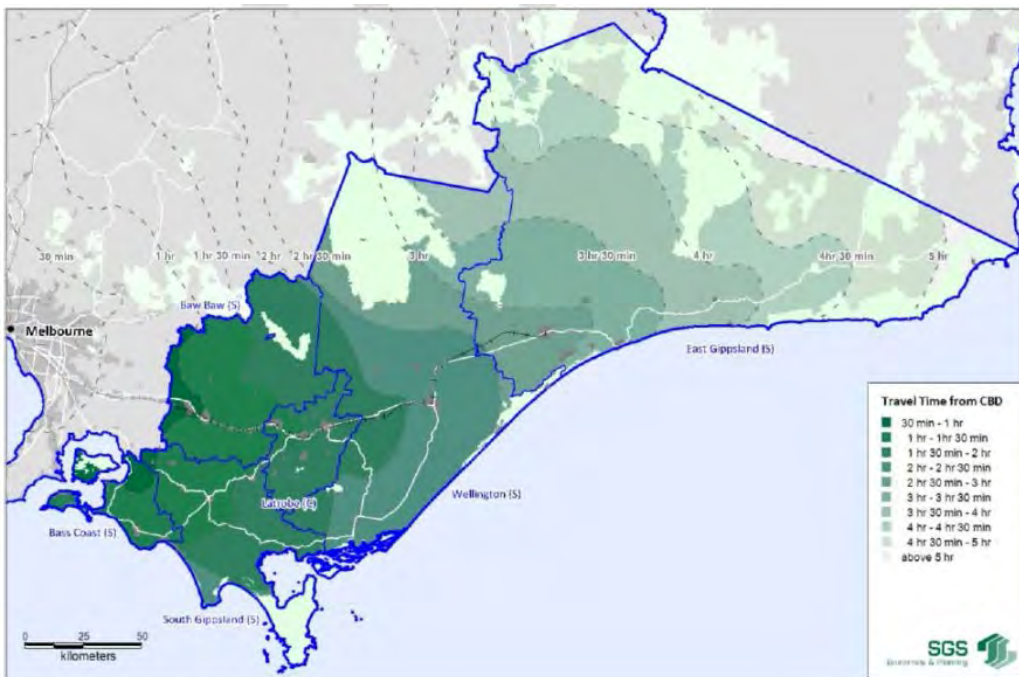
<sup>14</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2011* analysed by id Consulting

Wonthaggi and San Remo will also be experienced on towns in South Gippsland, particularly Nyora and Korumburra. Leongatha will continue to provide a centre for service delivery for South Gippsland including the towns experiencing growth to the west.

**MAP 3: MELBOURNE'S HINTERLAND**



**MAP 4: TRAVEL TIME FROM CBD**



Source<sup>15</sup>

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

<sup>15</sup> SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd, 2012, *Gippsland Integrated Land Use Plan, Population Framework (Draft)*, Gippsland Integrated Land Use Plan Project Steering Committee

TABLE 5: FORECAST GROWTH IN POPULATION & HOUSING SUMMARY LEONGATHA 2011 – 2031

| Leongatha                           | Forecast year |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                     | 2011          | 2016  | 2021  | 2026  | 2031  |
| Population                          | 5,334         | 5,995 | 6,702 | 7,368 | 8,009 |
| Change in Population (5yrs)         |               | 661   | 707   | 666   | 641   |
| Average Annual Change (%)           |               | 2.20  | 2.10  | 1.81  | 1.60  |
| Households                          | 2,266         | 2,502 | 2,789 | 3,078 | 3,369 |
| Average Household Size (persons)    | 2.36          | 2.37  | 2.37  | 2.36  | 2.35  |
| Population in non-private dwellings | 68            | 68    | 98    | 98    | 98    |
| Dwellings                           | 2,427         | 2,677 | 2,981 | 3,288 | 3,594 |
| Dwelling occupancy rate             | 93.37         | 93.46 | 93.56 | 93.61 | 93.74 |

This summary analyses data for the period 2011 – 2031. The short to medium term is likely to be the most accurate and useful forecast for immediate planning purposes. In 2011 the total population of Leongatha was 5,334. The population of Leongatha is expected to increase by 1,368 people to 6,702 by 2021 at an average annual growth rate of 2.04% per annum over 10 years. This is based on an increase of over 523 households during the period with the average number of people per household remaining stable.

### *Drivers of population change*

At the township level, the primary drivers of population change are the age structure of the existing population, the housing markets attracted to and away from an area and their associated demographic characteristics (fertility patterns, household types etc.) and the supply of dwellings and mix of housing stock in the area.

Dwelling additions - The addition of dwellings is the major driver of population growth, providing opportunities for new households (such as young people leaving the family home and divorces) or households relocating from other areas.

Current age structure - The age structure of the local population impacts on the South Gippsland Shire Council's household types and size, the likelihood of the local population having children or death, as well as the propensity for people to move. Age specific propensities for a population to have children or death are applied to each small area's base population. An older population will have fewer births, more deaths, while a younger population will have vice versa.

Birth rates - Birth rates are especially influential in determining the number of children in an area, with most inner urban areas having very low birth rates, compared to outer suburban or rural and regional areas. Birth rates have been changing, with a greater share of women bearing children at older ages or not at all. This can have a large impact on the population profile with comparatively fewer children than in previous periods.

Death rates - Death rates are influential in shaping the numbers of older people in an area's population. Death rates too have been changing with higher life expectancy at most ages, with men gaining on women's greater life chances.

Migration - Migration is one of the most important components of population change. While births and deaths are relatively easy to predict due to reliable age specific behaviour; migration is volatile, often changing due to housing market preferences, economic opportunities and changing household circumstances. Migration patterns vary across Australia and change across time, but most moves tend to be short and incremental in nature. Regional areas have larger moves due to the distances between towns and cities, where people often move for economic reasons, mainly the availability of employment or education and training opportunities.

The most mobile age groups in the population are the young adults. They tend to move to attend educational institutions, seek work and express a change in lifestyle. It is for this reason that young people often move the greatest distances and sometimes move against pre-established patterns. Market research has shown that empty nesters are more likely to move to smaller accommodation if appropriate and affordable alternative housing is supplied in the local area that is accessible to established social networks.<sup>16</sup>

**FIGURE 8: FORECAST NET MIGRATION BY AGE GROUP LEONGATHA**



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<sup>16</sup> ID consulting, 2012, South Gippsland Shire Council Population Forecast, viewed on 30 November 2012, <http://forecast2.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=326&pg=5000>



## *Assumptions concerning development*

Growth scenarios<sup>17</sup><sup>18</sup> forecast between 943 and 1,423 new dwellings will be constructed in Leongatha by 2031. This is between 47 and 71 houses built annually. The South Gippsland Housing and Settlement Strategy recognises Leongatha as the major existing and future residential area in the Shire and recommends the undersupply of residential land should be addressed as a matter of priority. Additional assumptions concerning development over the forecast period include:

- Silverback Court and Cambridge Place - 34 dwellings (2007-2012)
- Chamberlain Drive extension - 26 dwellings (2007-2012)
- Carr Avenue extension and surrounds - 78 dwellings (2007-2013)
- Vale Court and Laura Grove - 45 dwellings (2007-2018)
- Tanalina Estate - 27 dwellings (2009-2013)
- Shinglers Ridge - 81 dwellings (2010-2017)
- Springs Estate - 17 dwellings (2010-2016)
- Burrows Way - 18 dwellings (2012-2016)
- Old Korumburra Road - 135 dwellings (2014-2024)
- Leongatha South ODP - Area H - 50 dwellings (2014-2031)
- Nereena Road - 152 dwellings (2014-2031)
- Leongatha South ODP - Leongatha part - 400 dwellings (2014-2031)
- Low-moderate infill and structure plan development (4-18 dwellings per annum)



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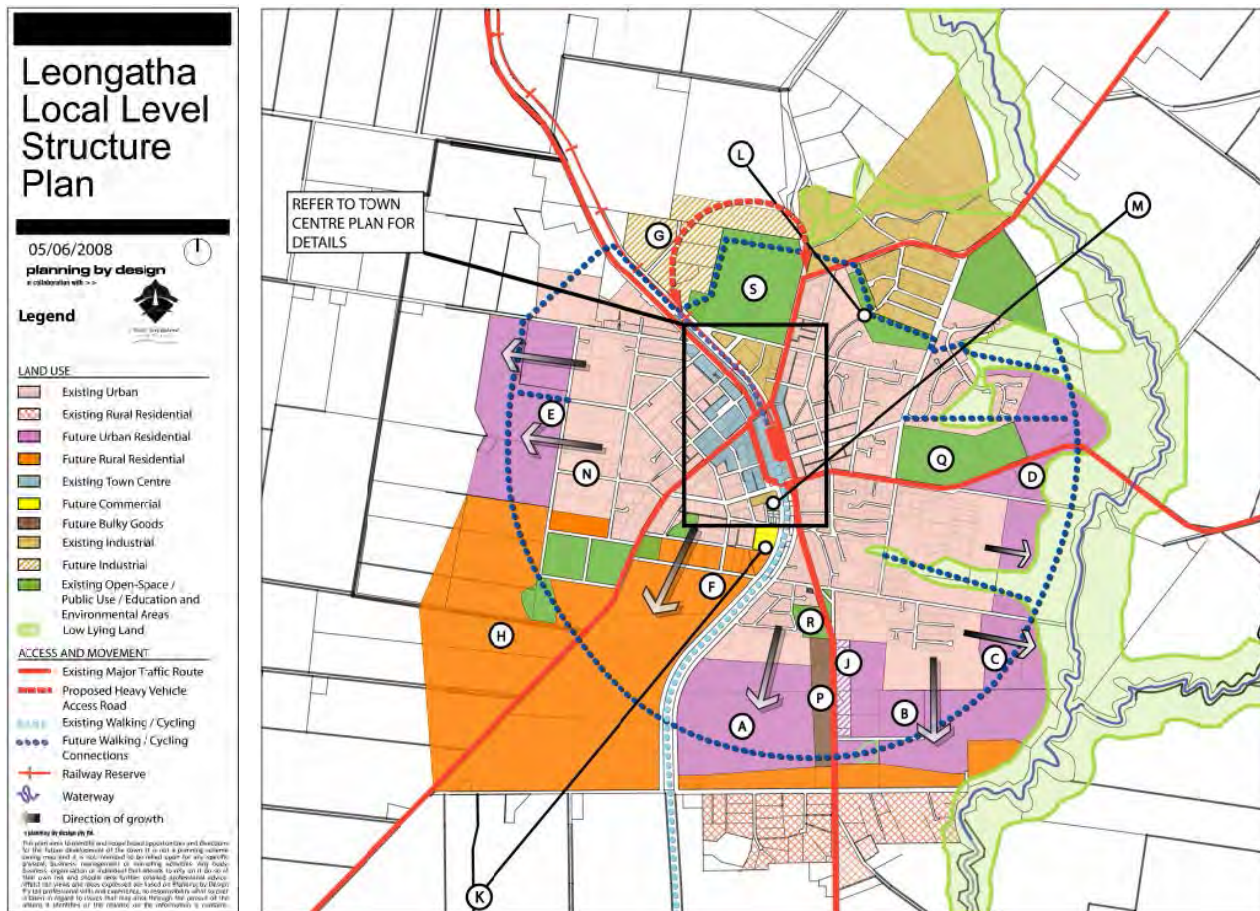
<sup>17</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council (2013) South Gippsland Housing and Settlement Strategy

<sup>18</sup> Urban Enterprise (2013) South Gippsland Shire Housing and Settlement Strategy Economic Analysis



The map below shows existing urban and rural residential areas and the areas expected to experience future urban and rural residential growth.

**MAP 5: LEONGATHA EXISTING TOWN BOUNDARY AND FORECAST GROWTH**



Source<sup>19</sup>

### Forecast population growth - Leongatha

The population of Leongatha is expected to increase by 1,368 people to 6,702 by 2021 at an average annual growth rate of 2.04% per annum over 10 years. This is based on an increase of over 523 households during the period in both new residential developments and infill areas within the existing town boundaries with the average number of people per household remaining stable at 2.37. Between 2021 and 2031 population growth is predicted to slow to an average 1.64% resulting in a population of 8,009 people by 2031.

There is a stable migration profile expected across the 2006-2021 period with a major gain of young families (0-14 years and 25-44 years); small gain of frail elderly persons (80 years and over) possibly moving to be closer to health and other services. There is expected to be a continued loss of young adults (15-24 years), many of whom are leaving the family home and moving to Melbourne for work or education. There is an increasing trend for couples and couples with young families to move or return to Leongatha at a younger age than in the past. Whilst most people moving into Leongatha will be of British ancestry it can be expected that a greater variety of ancestry will be represented in the future community.

<sup>19</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council, 2010, *Leongatha Structure Plan Map*, viewed 15 July 2013, <http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/Files/LeongathaStructurePlanMap.pdf>

## Forecast age structure

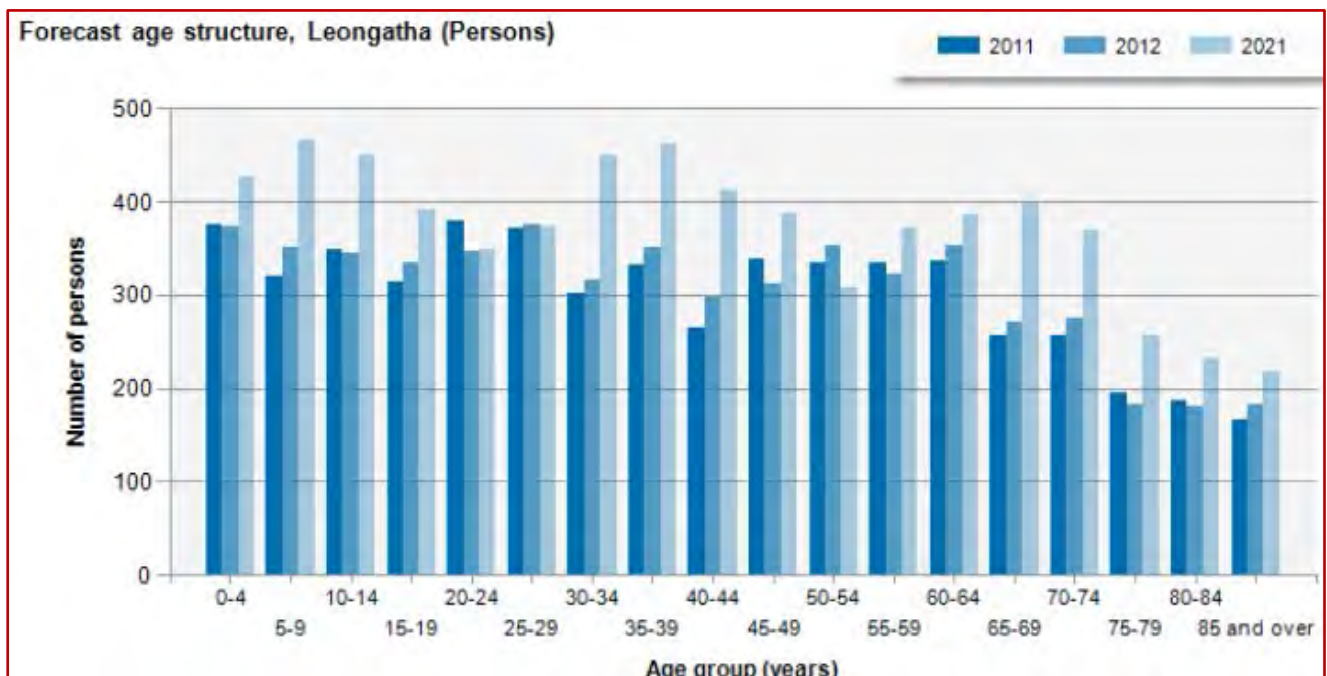
Age structure can be clustered in two ways, five yearly age groups which can be compared from one group to another. Alternatively service age groups can be described. Service age groups cluster the population into age groups which describe the type of service they are likely to require. For example teenagers and young adults between the ages of 12 and 17 years use a range of services including high schools, tertiary institutions and recreational facilities.

In 2011 the most populous age group in Leongatha was 35 – 39 year olds with 935 people. In 2021 this age group will continue to be the most populous age group with 1,262 people comprising 18.8% of the population. By 2031 this group will have increased by 40.4% to comprise 19.6% of the total Leongatha population with 1,568 people. People in this age group often have families are building new homes and are paying off their mortgages.

The number of people aged over 70 is expected to increase by 436 and represent 13.7% of the population by 2031. The number and distribution of persons aged 70 to 84 years has particular significance for the area’s health services, transport provision and aged care facilities.

Comparing five year age brackets, in 2021 the most populous forecast age group will be 5-9 year olds, with 466 persons. Children aged between 5 and 9 years of age place special demands upon an area’s health, educational and recreational facilities for its younger citizens.

**FIGURE 9: FORECAST CHANGE IN AGE STRUCTURE 2011, 2021, 2031**



Source<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> ID consulting, 2012

## Forecast household and family structure

The household type with the largest increase is forecast to be couples without dependents, which will increase by 361 households, remaining at around 34% from 2011 to 2031. Lone person households are forecast to increase by 330 people by 2031 rising by 52% from 2011 to comprise 29% of households in Leongatha. One parent families are forecast to remain at around 8% of the population rising by 98 households between 2011 and 2031.

**TABLE 6: FORECAST HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY TYPES - LEONGATHA**

| Household types                        | 2011         |            | 2021        |            | 2031         |            | Change<br>2011 to<br>2031 |
|--|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------------------|
|  | Number       | %          | Number      | %          | Number       | %          |                           |
| <b>Couples without dependents</b>      | 784          | 34.7       | 962         | 34.5       | 1,145        | 34         | 361                       |
| <b>Couple families with dependents</b> | 579          | 25.6       | 719         | 25.8       | 871          | 25.8       | 292                       |
| <b>One parent family</b>               | 180          | 7.9        | 229         | 8.2        | 278          | 8.2        | 98                        |
| <b>Other families</b>                  | 30           | 1.3        | 35          | 1.3        | 42           | 1.2        | 12                        |
| <b>Lone person households</b>          | 640          | 28.2       | 790         | 28.3       | 970          | 28.9       | 330                       |
| <b>Group households</b>                | 53           | 2.3        | 54          | 1.9        | 63           | 1.9        | 10                        |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>2,266</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>2789</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>3,369</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>1,103</b>              |

## Summary

Leongatha will remain the service centre for South Gippsland Shire with a higher number of young lone persons and couples without dependents that the Shire as a whole. New housing developments will also attract families and retirees to the area. Planning for future community infrastructure is underway in support of strategic planning projects supporting residential, industrial, business and retail land supply in the town. New residential developments will expand the current township in most directions except the north. Linking new residential developments with existing areas and the town centre will ensure a socially vibrant town centre that provides equitable, accessible facilities and services for everyone in the community.

## 3 EARLY YEARS

### 3.1 Introduction

Leongatha has the greatest supply of early years services in the South Gippsland. Early years services in Leongatha cater for both town residents and those coming to Leongatha for work and possibly those from neighbouring towns where there is no childcare available or there are childcare waiting lists.

Kindergartens and childcare centres in Leongatha have been designed to cater for growth with the ability to extend as required. This section describes community infrastructure priorities for kindergarten, long day childcare, other child care and playgroups. Other services for children under school age include Maternal and Child Health Services, Immunisation and specialist children's services and are included in the health section of this document.



### 3.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

South Gippsland Municipal Early Years Plan 2011 – 2016. The Victorian Government recognises that quality kindergarten services, through engagement of children in high quality learning experiences benefit all children and their families. The Council of Australian Governments national partnership on Early Childhood Education requires all states and territories to provide 15 hours of early childhood education in the year prior to school by 2013 (Universal Access).<sup>21</sup> These programs are to be delivered by four year university qualified early childhood teachers.

Policy and funding information on kindergartens is described in the Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria 2010–12 available from: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kindergartenpolicycriteria.pdf>.

South Gippsland Early Childhood Services Building Assets Policy Framework March 2013. Provides a framework for how and where new early years facilities are to be provided and existing facilities upgraded. It provides an overview of:

- Current early childhood policy
- Standards and operational requirements
- Current services and facilities
- Guidelines for assessing how and where new facilities are to be provided
- What existing facilities are to be upgraded

A range of broader policies influencing the provision of early years services include:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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<sup>21</sup> Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria, 2010-12*, March 2010, viewed on 17 October 2012, <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/childrensservices/kindergartenpolicycriteria.pdf>.



- The UN Framework for creating Child Friendly Cities
- Universal Access (preschool program geared at reaching all children the year before they start school)
- National Quality Framework for Early Education and Care services

### 3.3 Current Provision

#### *Kindergarten*

There are two community kindergartens in Leongatha managed by a combined parent committee of management. Hassett Street Kindergarten has capacity for 30 children. Allora Kindergarten has capacity for 27 children. Both kindergartens offer 4 year old and 3 year old kindergarten. Each kindergarten is within 800 metres of the town centre.

Leongatha Children's Centre and Time for Tots Child Care Centre both offer 4 year old kindergarten.

Kindergarten attendance in South Gippsland is amongst the highest in the state at 102.6%. This figure appears higher than 100% due to some children requiring a second year of 4 year old kindergarten and many children not attending kindergarten in the town where they live.

#### *Long Day Care*

Leongatha has two childcare centres offering long day care. Leongatha Children's Centre is a 90 place community childcare centre located in Symmons Street beside Allora Kindergarten and 780 metres from the town centre. Leongatha Children's Centre provides long day care, occasional care, out of school hours care and 4 year old kindergarten and currently have a waiting list for under 3 year olds. They have 170 families using the centre with between 30 – 40% coming from out of Leongatha including Inverloch, Korumburra, Mirboo North, Fish Creek etc.

Time 4 Tots is a privately operated childcare centre located in Brown Street 1.3 kilometres from the town centre. Time 4 Tots is a 120 place centre long day care, occasional care, out of school hours care and 4 year old kindergarten. Time 4 Tots currently has a room with capacity for 20 children closed due to lack of enrolments. Leongatha Children's Centre refer new enrolments to Time 4 Tots.

#### *Out of School Hours Care*

Out of school hours care is available at each child care centre. Leongatha Primary School is the home of out of school hours care run as a venue based family day care service. This service is open from children of primary school age from any school in the area.

A school holiday program delivered by the YMCA at South Gippsland SPLASH has recently closed due to increased regulatory requirements and inconsistent enrolment numbers compromising economy of delivering this service.

## *Family Day Care*

Family Day Care is managed by Uniting Care Gippsland. Family day care is available in Leongatha where there are seven family day care staff. It is reported that new legislative and qualification requirements have become a barrier to recruitment of new carers. Other home based childcare services have educators available in Leongatha.

## *Playgroups*

There are four playgroups in Leongatha meeting at the Old Kindergarten, Michael Place. Playgroups are available Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays weekly and the first Monday and third Wednesday of the month.

## *Other Family Services*

Foster care, Child First (child protection), integrated family services for vulnerable children and disability services are provided via services based in Leongatha and also provide outreach services across the shire. The West Gippsland Regional Library provides Rhyme Time and Story Time at the Leongatha library.

### **3.4 Consultation**

The Children's Services Providers Network meets quarterly to discuss current issues, services, enrolments and strategic planning. These meetings provide an opportunity for kindergartens, child care centres, family day care and out of school hours care providers to share best practice, discuss issues or identify areas of need in this sector.



### 3.5 Future Demand

In 2013, there are 458 children aged 0 – 5 years (8.6 %) of the Leongatha population 1.7% higher than South Gippsland. This is expected to drop to 7.6% by 2021 and 7.3% by 2031. In 2013, there are 458 children aged 0 – 5 years (8.2%) of the Leongatha population 1.7% higher than South Gippsland. This is expected to drop to 7.6% by 2021 and 7.3% by 2031.

TABLE 1 EARLY YEARS POPULATION GROWTH 2013 – 2031

| Age/years | Population 2013 |     | Population 2031 |     | Increase in number |
|-----------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------------|
|           | number          | %   | number          | %   |                    |
| 0 - 2     | 222             | 3.9 | 281             | 3.5 | 59                 |
| 3         | 75              | 1.4 | 100             | 1.3 | 25                 |
| 4 - 5     | 160             | 2.9 | 206             | 2.6 | 46                 |
| Under 5   | 457             | 8.2 | 587             | 7.3 | 130                |

While there is expected to be a drop in the percentage of children under the aged of five in Leongatha by 2031, the number of children under the age of five is expected to increase by 130 children to 587. It will be necessary to plan for early years services to meet the needs of this growing age group. For the South Gippsland as a whole the percentage of children aged under the age of five is expected to drop by 2% to 6.7% by 2031.

Working parents usually seek childcare in their home town or in the town in which they work. Leongatha attracts many workers from outside of the local community wishing to access childcare within the town. Whilst early years services will meet the needs of the Leongatha population for some years, additional places for children from outside town needs to be considered.



Childcare centres in Leongatha have capacity to provide 80 kindergarten places, 60 at Leongatha Children’s Centre and 20 at Time 4 Tots. All services have capacity to provide additional kindergarten places under their current service models with additional places possible using new management models.<sup>22</sup> About 50% of children aged 0 – 12

<sup>22</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council *Early Childhood Services Building Assets Policy Framework* March 2011



years in Australia usually attend some type of child care with 14% attending long day care. In Leongatha, using the same percentage of children attending long day care, 134 children would be expected to be attending long day care. Current enrolments indicate 282 children currently attending the child care centres in Leongatha.

The co-location of child care, kindergarten, maternal and child health services and early intervention services in Symmons Street represents best practice for integration of children's services in the one area as described in the text box below.

### 3.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

TABLE 2 GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS EARLY YEARS SERVICES

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Kindergarten</b>    | 3-year old kindergarten – 1 place per 3 children aged 3 years<br>4-year old kindergarten – 1 place per child aged 4 years<br>1 x 4 year old kindergarten to 10,000 people |
| <b>Long Day Care</b>   | 1 centre licensed for 120 places to 8,000 – 10,000 people   |
| <b>Family Day Care</b> | Dependent on availability of educators and community demand   |
| <b>Playgroup</b>       | 1 playgroup to 5,000 people   |

Source<sup>23</sup>

### Recommendations

Continue support for co-located children's services in the Symmons Street area and within 1 kilometre of the town centre where possible. Pedestrian access for parents with prams and children on bicycles is required. There is a lack of footpaths connecting residential areas west of Leongatha to the early year's services in Symmons Street and Brown Street. A path from the town centre provides good connection. Adequate footpaths will allow safe pedestrian activity in and around this area and support walking for parents of young children.

A study of where the current users of early year's services in Leongatha live is required. A considerable number of people come to Leongatha for work from outside the town. It is expected that a proportion of these people use early year's services in the town, particularly childcare and kindergarten. Anecdotally between 30 – 40 % of families using Leongatha Children's Centre live out of town. A detailed measure of the children from outside of Leongatha accessing current services would allow future planning to cater for Leongatha residents and those who live outside of the town.

<sup>23</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority, April 2008

## Best Practice

Integrated children's services provide better outcomes for children and families, particularly vulnerable or hard to reach families. The co-location of services supports community building and local connections, social and economic capital. Integrated children's centres provide a one stop shop for busy parents and parents with multiple needs and reduce confusion for parents about where to seek help providing more comprehensive service delivery. Integrated children's centres can provide a multi-disciplinary approach for professionals with opportunities to transfer knowledge and practices. Service coordination is enhanced resulting in less delay for access to services.

The integration of early years services can be within one building or a cluster of buildings within close proximity to each other.

Source<sup>24</sup>

## Kindergarten

Consolidating kindergarten services within 1 kilometre of the town is the preferred option allowing parents to access integrated early years services and schools readily. Further investigation into the extension of Allora Kindergarten could double the capacity to 54 places, however storm water and drainage easements in the area may be an issue. Fully funded 15 hour per week kindergarten models in childcare centres coupled with Allora and Hassett Street kindergarten services would allow for all 4 – 5 year old kindergarten in town for the next 20 years.

The Early Childhood Services Building Assets Policy Framework indicates that structurally the Council owned kindergartens are adequate for provision of service for the next 20 years.

## Long Day Care

Long Day Care in Leongatha has capacity to cater for 210 places. A balance between the needs of 0 – 4 year olds and the provision of kindergarten in long day care centres is required. Of all children who usually attended any care, the mean time spent in care was 17 hours per week. Of those children who usually attended formal care, 40% attended for less than 10 hours per week while 9% attended 35 hours or more per week. Long day care needs may be met for many families with 4-5 year olds with 15 hours of kindergarten now provided to all children. South Gippsland has more than 100% kindergarten attendance resulting in many families

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<sup>24</sup> Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 'Research and Evidence', in *Integrated Children's services*, last updated 9 March 2011, viewed on 17 October 2012, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmangement/integratedservices/research.htm>.

possibly having their childcare needs met through their child's participation in a kindergarten program but this would only be the case during school term times.

### *Other services*

Maternal and child health services and specialist children's services continue within the Leongatha Children's Centre. The option of extending early years services from this consultation space for an allied health practitioner or immunisation services could expand the Centre's use as a multipurpose hub.



**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF CURRENT EARLY YEARS SERVICES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

| <b>SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE</b>      | <b>MAIN PROVIDER</b>  | <b>CURRENT SERVICE AND MODEL</b>  | <b>SERVICE FACILITY</b> | <b>RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED</b>  |
|---|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Education: 4 year old kindergarten</b> | Leongatha Kindergartens<br>- Allora; Hassett Street<br>- Leongatha Children's Centre;<br>- Time 4 Tots                    | Sessional kindergarten governed by committee of management<br>Kindergarten programs within childcare centre |                         | Investigate alternative program delivery models to increase capacity.  |
| <b>Long day childcare</b>                 | - Leongatha Children's Centre<br>- Time 4 Tots  | Community child care centre<br>Private child care centre  |                         | Integration with Allora kindergarten and other early years services  |
| <b>Occasional childcare</b>               | - Leongatha Children's Centre<br>- Time 4 Tots  | Occasional care   |                         | Occasional care continued  |
| <b>Family day care</b>                    | - Uniting Care Gippsland coordinates Family Day Care in South Gippsland.<br>- No infrastructure requirements              | Support educators enrolment training  | to for and              | Family Day Care provides flexibility in care<br>Increasing demand will require recruitment of additional Family Day Care educators |
| <b>Playgroups</b>                         | - Back to Basics Playgroup<br>- Blooms Playgroup<br>- Right at Home Playgroup<br>- Uniting Care Family Day Care Playgroup | Tues 10 – 11.30<br>Mon 10 – 12<br>Fri 10 – 11.30<br>1 <sup>st</sup> Mon and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed of month    |                         | Continued maintenance of the old kindergarten building in Michael Place  |
| <b>After school hours care</b>            | - Leongatha Primary School<br>- Leongatha Children's Centre<br>- Time 4 Tots  | Operated Primary School<br>Community childcare<br>Private   | by                      | Continue after school hours care in the schools and childcare.<br>Investigate vacation care.                                       |

## 4 YOUTH

### 4.1 Introduction

*The provision of specific infrastructure to allow young people to socialise, engage and recreate in accord with the broader community is important for the overall health and wellbeing of the community<sup>1</sup>.*



Teenagers and young adults between the ages of 12 and 19 years use a range of services including high schools, tertiary institutions and recreational facilities. Currently people aged 12 - 19 years are the most populous age group in Leongatha (553) and comprise 9.9% of the community. In the immediate rural surroundings of Leongatha the proportion of this age group is even higher with schools, training, part time work, sport and entertainment bringing more youth to the town. By 2031 there will be more than 800 people aged between 12 – 19 years comprising 10.2% of the population.

This chapter describes services and facilities specifically designed and allocated to youth aged between 12 and 19 in Leongatha. Further discussion of the education and training needs of young people are included in the chapter [Education, Learning and Libraries](#).

Youth services and infrastructure may include youth counselling, youth engagement, youth development, support and advocacy, access and meeting places both indoor and outdoor and information provision. Young people come to Leongatha from surrounding towns and rural areas for school, part time work, health services, regional sport and entertainment. Services and facilities for youth in Leongatha need to cater for the broader youth population beyond the town population.

### 4.2 Council Plans and Strategies / Government Policy

[South Gippsland Shire Council Youth Policy](#) South Gippsland Shire Council aims to increase opportunities for young people to have input into local government planning, strategy, policy and program decisions via their facilitation of the Youth council.

[Engage, Involve, Create: Victorian Government Youth Statement 2012](#) Describes the ways in which the Office for Youth supports youth through government programs and funding

[Office for Youth](#) The Office for Youth runs a range of programs that youth can become actively involved in. The programs and services are designed to encourage young people to be aware of and get involved in their community.



Office of Youth Affairs Provides funding to locally delivered services for youth including, but not restricted to Anglicare

Schools as Community Facilities The Victorian Government has released guidelines designed to help government schools and communities develop partnerships around sharing school facilities. The guidelines discuss the benefit of entering into a sharing agreement and provide information on the legal framework that surrounds this type of agreement.

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria The peak body and leading policy advocate on young people's issues in Victoria

Victoria Police Child and Youth Strategy 2009 – 2013 This investigates the methods to reduce: crime, road trauma and violence and antisocial behavior. It also investigates methods to improve youth engagement and effective diversion processes.

### **4.3 Current Provision**

Currently people aged 12 - 19 years are the most populous age group in Leongatha (553) and comprise 9.9% of the community. In the immediate rural surroundings of Leongatha the proportion of this age group is even higher with schools, training, part time work, sport and entertainment bringing more youth to the town. Youth specific services are regionally based and generally located in Leongatha.

Extensive sports and recreation facilities and clubs cater for young people as part of the broader community. Youth specific organisations include the South Gippsland Youth Council, scouts, guides, pony club and swimming club.

Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College provides Catholic secondary education for students from across South Gippsland and Bass Coast. GippsTAFE and Community College Gippsland are based in Leongatha and provide training for young people. Further details about education providers are available in the Education, Learning and Libraries chapter of this document.

The Leongatha Library is used by youth for school work, tutoring, online activities, meetings with counsellors and case workers and a study space after school. Many students use the internet facilities at the library to research homework and to wait for parents and guardians to pick them up after work.

### *Transport*

Leongatha town bus services operate on school days only and are available for use by the general public on these days. Generally young people use these services to travel to school. There are 3 town bus services. The morning services operate between 8.30am to 8.55am. The afternoon services operate from 3.25pm to 3.50pm. These services can be used to access South Gippsland SPLASH, the Recreation Reserve, the town centre and Leongatha Children's Centre. These buses are not a return service running once only at the times above.

Public buses are available between Leongatha, Wonthaggi and Traralgon. There are three services in each direction per day on weekdays and two on weekends. In addition there are also buses running school days only from Wonthaggi via Cape Paterson and Inverloch to Leongatha Secondary College leaving Wonthaggi at 7.35am, arriving in Leongatha at 8.40am. This service returns via the same route leaving Leongatha Secondary College at 3.35pm, arriving at Wonthaggi at 4.30pm.



A V/Line coach services operate between Leongatha and Melbourne and Leongatha and Yarram. There are 8 services approximately every 2 hours. Services to Melbourne leave Leongatha from 5.55am to 6.55am weekdays. Services to Yarram leave Leongatha 4 times per day from 11.13am to 8.58pm. There are 8 coach services from Melbourne to Leongatha arriving between 8.35am and 11.01pm.

The L2P Driver Education Program is an initiative facilitated by Council to help drivers to achieve the skills and experience required to gain their probationary licence. The program targets young people who experience difficulty in finding a supervisor to help them achieve the required 120 hours of driving experience. This program is available to young people in any area of South Gippsland.

There are currently two on-road cycle lanes in Leongatha, along Long Street between the town to Ogilvy Street and along Ogilvy Street to the education precinct.



### *Youth Council*

South Gippsland Shire Council encourages young people to have input into local government planning, strategy, policy and program decisions via the youth council. The main function of the Youth Council is for young people to get together and take an active part in helping youth activity in South Gippsland. Youth Council members range between 12 to 25 years of age. Generally there are about 15 young people on the team from across South Gippsland.



## Recreation and Leisure

For a detailed description of recreation and leisure in Leongatha refer to the chapter with that title in this document.

Leongatha Skate Bowl is located in the Recreation Reserve between the football oval, velodrome and toilets. It is a concrete bowl ranging from flush – 2m deep with figure eight shape with mini snake run and rollover. It has a platform for rolling in and launching off.

There are numerous sporting clubs in Leongatha most welcoming young members. Many Leongatha sporting clubs have junior competitions and training sessions. Clubs primarily catering for people under 18 are the Leongatha Little Athletics Club which trains at the velodrome in the Recreation Reserve, the Leongatha Swimming Club and the South Gippsland Bass Swimming Club which train at South Gippsland SPLASH and the Berry's Creek Pony Club which trains at the Leongatha Equestrian Park. Other youth specific groups include Scouts and Girl Guides and church based youth clubs.

Church youth clubs provide activities to their younger congregation who use church halls and facilities during the week as well as on worship days.

## Youth specific health services

A Youth Access Clinic is available at the Jeffrey Street Clinic in Leongatha. This provides a drop in service (no appointment necessary) and is bulk billed. Young people accessing the clinic need a Medicare or health care card.

## 4.4 Consultation

The South Gippsland Youth Council provides an opportunity for young people to provide a voice for youth and youth needs in South Gippsland. Council's community strengthening team facilitates the youth council and will work with the Leongatha community to help develop goals and actions for the whole community including youth. This consultation will discuss public space initiatives and services to include youth in the local Leongatha community.



## 4.5 Future Demand

*The provision of specific infrastructure to allow young people to socialise, engage and recreate in accord with the broader community is important for the overall health and wellbeing of the community<sup>25</sup>.*

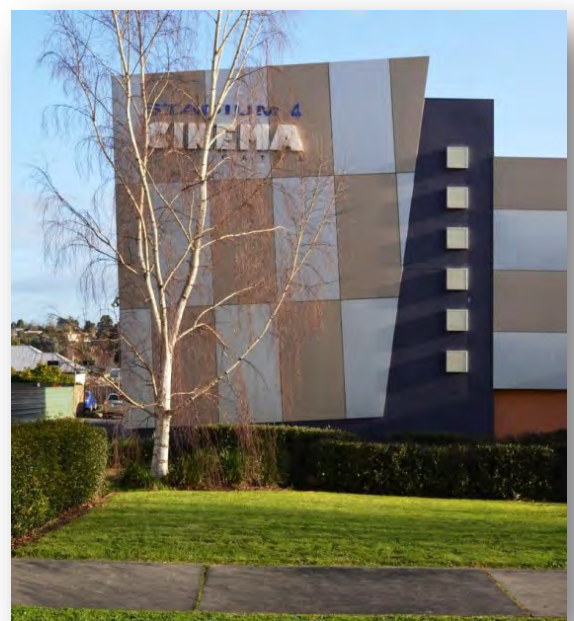
Currently people aged under 19 comprise 25% of the population in Leongatha. This proportion is expected to increase to 25.9% by 2021 and then drop back to 25.4% by 2031. In 2011 there were 524 people aged 12 – 19 (9.6%). By 2021 this age group is expected to increase to 664 (9.9%) by 2021 and 816 people (10.2%) by 2031 a total increase of 292 people over the 20 year period.

Leongatha will remain a service centre for South Gippsland attracting young people from neighbouring towns for school, training, part time work while at school, sport and entertainment. Planning for youth specific services and facilities need to account for a population of 12 – 19 year olds which is larger than that described for the Leongatha town population.

It is difficult to determine the actual number of young people coming to Leongatha to access services and facilities in the town. An examination of the population of 12 – 17 in Leongatha compared to the secondary school populations is a good example. Approximately 1,000 students are enrolled at the secondary schools in Leongatha while only 407 people aged 12 – 17 years were recorded as living in Leongatha on the 2011 Census. This is a good example of how planning based only on the Leongatha population would underestimate the youth who use the services and facilities in Leongatha on a regular basis.

Young people aged 12 – 17 years living in Leongatha comprise only 40% of the secondary school population. Whilst some of these students travel by school bus to and from school and do not regularly access services in the town, as young people reach 15 and gain independence or part time work they may use services and facilities in Leongatha more often. Considering this potential doubling of the 12 – 17 population to include young people visiting from outside of Leongatha, infrastructure planning for services, facilities and spaces for youth should cater for the larger population.

Movement and transport of a population of people between 1,000 and 2,000 people without driver's licences needs particular consideration. Bus services transporting young people to and from Leongatha from surrounding towns and pedestrian and cycle



<sup>25</sup> NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009, *Built 4 Kids: A good practice guide to creating child-friendly built environments*, viewed on 30 November 2012, [http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/Built4Kids\\_complete.pdf](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/Built4Kids_complete.pdf)

paths, are required to support young people to safely access services and facilities. Sporting clubs in Leongatha bring many young people into town where socialisation with the broader community also occurs. Existing sporting clubs will see an increase in membership as the population grows. There may also be greater viability for sports not currently represented in the area. An additional recreation field in the south of the town catering for alternative sports such as soccer, hockey or rugby has potential to expand the range of sports available locally. There may also be an opportunity to allocate land to an improved athletics track on this site, however a synthetic track is unlikely to be financially viable in the near future.

## *Transport*

It will be unviable to provide youth specific services in the smaller towns expecting young people from Leongatha to access them while Leongatha remains the service centre for much of the broad population.

For youth, walking and cycling are important modes of transport that allow independent access from residential areas to schools, the town centre, bus stops and recreation areas. Outside of school days, young people in outlying towns, not on the main bus routes, are unable to reach Leongatha using public transport. Centralised activities, services and facilities for youth in Leongatha will place demand from young people living in neighbouring towns to travel into Leongatha on weekends and school holidays.

Consideration of the number of young people accessing services within Leongatha from outside the town, the provision of bus services between towns in addition to school bus services would allow young people to be independent and travel safely from where they live. Within Leongatha the town bus service providing links for students within the town centre to school will need to be extended into future residential developments planned for the town. This will necessitate the extension of current services and possibly an additional service to reduce travel time.

## *Recreation and Leisure*

Formal recreation options for youth will increase membership and expand the existing range of sporting clubs and options available in Leongatha. Details regarding capacity for formal recreation to meet future needs are described in the [Sport and Recreation](#) chapter of this document. Increased opportunities for unstructured physical activity both indoor and outdoor and associated social meeting places will be in demand for the 25% of the population aged 19 and under by 2031. Redevelopment of the skate bowl is a high priority in the Recreation Reserve Master Plan.



## 4.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Some states have developed urban design guidelines for children and youth as part of broader youth policies<sup>26</sup>, as crime prevention strategic planning<sup>27</sup>, and to improve safety and inclusion of children and youth in the local community<sup>28</sup>. Neighbouring Councils with such as Casey Shire Council have developed extensive youth strategies to address needs of their large youth population.

The youth specific urban design guidelines reflect themes of access and circulation, inclusive design, mixed uses (and users), safety and surveillance, separate but visible areas, performance needs and basic services. Below is a summary of these guidelines.

**TABLE 1 YOUTH DESIGN GUIDELINES – FOR YOUTH FRIENDLY PUBLIC AREAS**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Access and Circulation</b></p> <p><b>Allow for access and circulation on foot, bikes, skateboards or scooters.</b></p> | <p>Maximise access to public transport.</p> <p>Locate pick up and drop off points as close as possible to public spaces and young people’s activities.</p> <p>Bus pick up and drop off points should be well-lit, seating, 10 minute parking, increased public space for school bags, secure bike storage facilities, positioned in active locations with casual surveillance opportunities.</p> <p>Walking and cycling paths which should be well-lit and provide surveillance opportunities.</p> <p>Safe, easy to use, connecting routes to youth facilities such as skateboard ramps, basketball courts where skateboards, bikes and scooters can be used.</p> <p>Allow shared use of public areas that are varied, lively and safe suitable for a variety of users or groups.</p> |
| <p><b>Range of users</b></p> <p><b>Integrate rather than segregate young people from the wider community.</b></p>            | <p>Public spaces which are flexible to accommodate wide range of users. Larger spaces and wider paths to accommodate walkers and a wheeled item such as pram, wheelchair, bike or skateboard.</p> <p>Seating in public areas at the edge of footpaths where through movement and access to shops is not blocked, seats can be easily observed. This provides opportunities for watching passers by and hanging out as an activity rather than an obstruction.</p> <p>Youth specific facilities integrated into town centre and positioned where there is passing life and activity at street level possibly in shop fronts.</p>   |
| <p><b>Mix of Uses</b></p> <p><b>Encourage range of uses</b></p>  | <p>Encourage range of uses including ‘magnets’ for young people such as food outlets and cafes.</p> <p>Include a mix of retail, commercial and entertainment as well as government agencies and community services.</p> <p>Encourage residential uses above shop fronts in town</p>   |

<sup>26</sup> Department Urban Affairs and Planning, 1999, *Urban Design Guidelines With Young People In Mind*, Planning NSW.

<sup>27</sup> R. White, 1998, *Public Spaces for Young People*, Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department, Canberra

<sup>28</sup> NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | centre to facilitate activity, providing youth services and facilities at street level.  |
| <b>Making safer places</b><br><b>Improve perception of safety in public spaces.</b>                | <p>Avoid extensive blank walls at ground level. Active edges such as glazed shopfronts are preferable and provide casual surveillance opportunities.</p> <p>Activate the public domain through maximising the number of entries to buildings from the street.</p> <p>Provide adequate lighting to back lanes to support their use as safe shortcuts and pedestrian routes.</p> <p>Landscaping of public spaces should not obscure pedestrian eye-level sight lines or sterilize large areas.</p>                                 |
| <b>The public stage</b><br><b>Provide venues for public entertainment and public communication</b> | <p>Design formal and informal spaces for public entertainment.</p> <p>Design street furniture to be multi-functional for both seating and as a stage.</p> <p>Design spaces large enough for a variety of uses/users including markets, public performances, and other community activities.</p> <p>Public noticeboards or poster kiosks as a forum for community communication and to control bill posting.</p> <p>Public art to channel youth self-expression and control graffiti via sculptural or walls, murals, paving.</p> |
| <b>Keep public space public</b><br><b>Retain free public spaces, open at all times.</b>            | <p>Provide spaces in the public realm in addition to arcades, shopping malls or arcades.</p> <p>Keep public spaces uncluttered, simple and flexible.</p> <p>Prevent car parking in public spaces.</p>  |
| <b>Separate but visible</b>  | <p>Provide skate parks in public areas in locations that are visible to other public spaces users but separate from main paths of movement.</p>  |
| <b>Basic services</b><br><b>Public services that are discreet but accessible</b>                   | <p>Co-locate public toilets, sanitary facilities, phones in public areas where they are easy to find, discreet and where surveillance opportunities exist.</p>   |

Source<sup>29</sup>

## Recommendations

### Outdoor public space

Provide outdoor public space to accommodate the needs of all community members, a public meeting space that includes good access for pedestrians and those on bikes, scooters and skateboards. This area should be adequately lit, have multi-purpose seating and enough space to be used for performance and entertainment or markets.

<sup>29</sup> R. White, 1998 *Public Spaces for Young People*, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra



### *Indoor areas for quiet study and informal meeting*

Indoor areas for quiet study, informal meeting with other young people, youth specific service provision or waiting for lifts from parents or friends are needed close to the town centre. The Leongatha library currently provides space for many young people after school hours for study. Upper primary and teenagers need their own space in the library which would be used for tutoring, study space and meeting space. Expansion of the library could provide a range of spaces including an editing suite for music and film or areas for interactive electronic games. The needs of young children, youth and young adults may include these specialised spaces but also the broader library services currently available so should be integrated with the library to allow access to the remaining library services, staffing and supervision.

### *The skate bowl*

A skate bowl can be the main meeting place for young people. Upgrading the Leongatha skate bowl is a key priority of the Leongatha Recreation Reserve Master Plan. There has been extensive consultation with local young people about the upgrade and the development of the plan and prioritisation of this redevelopment is a high priority.

### *The Railway Station building*

Undercover, well lit, easily seen meeting places would allow young people to socialize safely within the town. Ideally this area would be close to shops and toilets and would have places where bikes and skateboards are out of the way for other pedestrians. These youth meeting places could be in the town centre near the Safeway car park, at recreation points accessed by young people including the skate bowl or at the Leongatha Railway Station where access is linked with existing public transport school bus and the town footpath network. This area remains well lit and close to the town centre and provides car access for parents to pick up young people if necessary.





**TABLE 2: YOUTH SPECIFIC FACILITIES & SERVICES – CURRENT & RECOMMENDED**

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE        | MAIN PROVIDER                         | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL  | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Youth specific outdoor recreation    | Council                               | <p>Skate bowl at recreation reserve</p> <p>Sporting clubs – swimming club, pony club, little athletics...</p> <p>School outdoor and indoor facilities available for community use and weekend access.</p> | <p>Upgrade the skate bowl as outlined in Recreation Reserve Master Plan</p> <p>Equestrian plan considers access via existing pathways for residents in Leongatha to ensure independent access on horseback.</p> <p>Continued use of school facilities outside of school hours both formally by local clubs and informally by young people.</p> |
| Youth specific indoor meeting spaces | Scouts / Guides Association           | <p>Scout hall used for scouts</p> <p>Guide hall used for guides and older people's activity programs</p>  | <p>Temporary shop front space can be utilized with the provision of basic furniture and adequate supervision located in the main street.</p> <p>Further investigate funding for use of Leongatha Railway Station for a youth space.</p>  |
| Paths and Trails                     |                                       | As outlined in the South Gippsland Paths and Trails strategy 2010   | Wider shared paths to allow for walking and wheeled vehicle side by side   |
| Study spaces                         | Leongatha Library                     | Private study desks within current library.   | <p>Continued allocation of study space and specific needs rooms within library.</p> <p>Additional space for mix of youth social and study needs within a larger library, access centre or shop front.</p>  |
| Public Realm                         | No specific town public meeting space | Parks and public areas are away from the town centre. Informal meeting places often include Memorial Hall and Safeway.  | Public meeting place which includes informal entertainment areas, multi-functional street furniture which can double at a stage/plinth, poster kiosks, small break out sitting areas, toilets and free from cars.  |
| Youth services                       | Youth specific services in Leongatha  | Youth specific services – youth council, youth access clinic, church youth clubs, youth support services  | Increase youth services in response to growing population considering the additional young people who come to Leongatha for school and to access existing services.  |

## 5 OLDER PEOPLE & AGEING

### 5.1 Introduction

Aged care services in Leongatha occur in purpose built facilities, community meeting places and in the home. Council provides Home and Community Care (HACC) to frail older people and their carers. Other aged care services provide level 1-4 community care packages directly or through Council as a brokerage arrangement. Many older residents are unable to readily leave the home to access the services they need. Carer support services are also provided by other providers under a brokerage system. Currently 20% of the Leongatha population is aged over 65 with 14% of these people living alone.



For the purpose of this project aged care services include:

- Retirement villages
- Residential Aged Care (low and high care)
- Home and Community Care (HACC) (Assessment services, home care, personal care, respite, property maintenance, meals on wheels and community transport)
- Senior Citizens Centres
- Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS)
- Personal Alert Victoria (PAV)
- Post-Acute Care Program (Home nursing, home care, personal care, allied health, home based respite)
- Aged Care Mental Health Service
- Allied Health, Acute Services, Outpatient Care, Volunteer Program, Community Services
- Planned Activity Groups, one on one respite and community outreach programs

### 5.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

South Gippsland Active Ageing Plan 2012 - 2016 (AAP) Focuses on addressing issues that older residents have said are important in enabling them to participate in the community as they age.

South Gippsland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWB) is a key strategic document which is a legislative requirement for all Local Governments under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. The MPHWB Plan contains actions and measures to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community including older residents and those with a disability. The plan must be developed within 12 months of a Council election and is effective for 4 years.

The Improving Liveability for Older People (ILOP), an initiative of the Department of Health, has seen \$1.5 million allocated throughout Victoria to assist in making a positive difference to the quality of life, social participation, health and well-being of older people in towns with a significant ageing population. South Gippsland Shire Council is one of twelve Councils to receive an ILOP grant, receiving \$100,000 to implement this project over two years from 2012-2013. The work will be informed by the wishes of the community through an extensive community consultation process.

### *Broader Policies*

Gippsland Regional Dementia Plan 2011-2014 (Department of Health) Lifestyle strategies including preventative initiatives such as participating in regular physical activity, leisure and social activities can reduce the risk of developing dementia. This plan has been developed in recognition of the prevalence of dementia across Gippsland which is expected to increase in the next ten years.

Gippsland HACC Diversity Plan is a strategic population planning initiative that supports and encourages Home and Community Care service delivery which is responsive to and respectful of the specific characteristics of the person seeking services.

The Living Longer Living Better aged care reform package provides \$3.7 billion over five years.

This reform gives priority to providing:

- More support and care in the home
- Better access to residential care
- More support for those with dementia
- Strengthening the aged care workforce

This will be progressively implemented from 1 July 2012 to give early benefits to consumers and providers but also to ensure there is a smooth transition for consumers and providers and sufficient time to adapt and plan ahead of further reform.

Community Common Care Standards are applicable to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, Community Aged Care Packages level 1 – 4 based on needs and the National Respite for Carers Program. There are three standards:

- Effective Management
- Appropriate Access and Service Delivery
- Service User Rights and Responsibilities

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program is Victoria's principal source of funding for services that support frail aged people, younger people with disabilities, and carers. In Victoria the program supports over 275,000 frail older people and

people with disabilities. HACC is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments and provides priorities for funding of HACC services.

The Active Service Model is a quality improvement initiative that focuses on promoting capacity building and restorative care in community care service delivery. The goal of the Active Service Model is to assist people in the HACC target group to live in the community as independently and autonomously as possible. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that clients are able to gain the greatest level of independence they can possibly achieve, and equally, that they can be as actively involved in making decisions about their life as they can be – such as the type of services they receive and the goals they wish to achieve.

The Aged Care Act 1997 guides the provision of services including community packaged care programs—the Community Aged Care Packages (CACP), the Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) and the Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) programs.

Victorian Government Residential Aged Care Policy 2009 describes the Victorian Government role in supporting accredited residential aged care providers.

### 5.3 Current Provision

Services for older people in Leongatha are provided in purpose built facilities, community meeting places and in the home. Council provides home and community care to frail older people and their carer's. Many older residents are unable to readily leave the home to access the services they need. Carer support services are also provided by a number of other providers under a brokerage system funded by a variety of sources including but not limited to Human Services, Home and Community Care, Department of Veterans Affairs and Traffic Accident Commission.



Offices for many community and care services for the older people are located in Leongatha and include Anglicare, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Department of Human Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Uniting Care Gippsland, Salvation Army and Villa Maria. These organisations provide services across most of South Gippsland to clients who meet certain age, ability and funding criteria.

Activities in accessible venues which allow older people to get together socially are valuable for promotion of health and wellbeing. Venues such as the Dakers Centre, Mens Shed, community house, SPLASH swimming pool and library host many

activities specifically designed to interest older people. The chapter on meeting places in this document discusses these further.

### *Home and Community Care (HACC)*

Home and Community Care (HACC) Program provides basic support services to frail older people, people with a disability and their carers assisting them to live independently. Assessment is required for a person’s eligibility. Eligibility is based on a person’s current health and wellbeing, their priority of need and availability of services. An officer visits the client, their family and other networks to develop a Care Plan reflecting their needs and goals.

Council provides HACC Services to eligible community members in all areas of South Gippsland. Latrobe Community Health Service provides a HACC response unit, linkages packages and veteran’s home care. Gippsland Southern Health Service provides district nursing, allied health, palliative care.

**TABLE 1: HACC SERVICES**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Home Care</b>           | Home care assists clients to maintain a safe, healthy and hygienic home environment.<br>Assistance may include tasks such as vacuuming, sweeping and washing floors, cleaning bathrooms and toilets, changing bed linen, basic shopping and assistance with paying bills and banking.   |
| <b>Personal Care</b>       | Personal care services provide support to people who have difficulty with daily personal care tasks such as showering, dressing, meal preparation and application of pressure stockings.  |
| <b>Respite Care</b>        | Respite enables carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities. Individual respite requirements are discussed and time spent during respite is based on activities that are meaningful and of interest to the client.  |
| <b>Meals on Wheels</b>     | Provides nutritious and diet specific meals delivered to client’s homes by volunteers. Menu choice on a 5 week cycle, each meal includes a soup, main meal, sweet (or fruit/yogurt) and juice. Meals are delivered to people living in Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster townships. Clients living outside these townships can arrange collection of frozen meals. |
| <b>Community Transport</b> | Assistance with transport aims to support individuals where no other form of transport is available, for activities such as medical appointments or shopping.<br>The program is supported by Council, with the provision of Council owned cars and buses, and volunteers who complete the driving.  |
| <b>Home Maintenance</b>    | This program provides basic assistance to clients with the maintenance of their home to ensure a safe and secure environment such as installation of ramps, rails and gutter cleaning.  |

## *Community Aged Care Packages*

Community aged care packages are provided by service providers external to Council that bid for government funding to deliver services or provide private services on a user pays basis to case managed clients. Currently Community Aged Care packages are provided by Baptcare, Benetas and Calvary Silver Circle and Villa Maria to people with ongoing care needs. These services are flexible depending on the client's needs and may include case management, personal care, transport, home care, shopping, laundry, respite carer support, after hours support, medical referral to other services, home and garden maintenance and access to social activities.

## *Carer Support and Respite Services*

Council provides carer support via their HACC services. Baptcare, Benetas, Calvary Silver Circle, Villa Maria, Latrobe Community Health Service and Mental Illness Fellowship also provide support to carers of frail aged. Support includes in home respite, helping with leisure activities for the carer, day programs, camps weekends and accommodation support and short term residential respite and study assistance for the carer.

## *Residential Aged Care*

Residential aged care is provided by government and non-government providers. The Australian Government is responsible for regulation, funding and planning of residential aged care. The Victorian Government facilitates the development and enhancement of the industry in the state via public sector service provision. In Leongatha there are 2 residential aged care facilities: Koorooman House with 36 high care beds and Woorayl Lodge Hostel is a community based facility with 40 low care and 2 respite beds. Woorayl Lodge has purchased land to the south of Leongatha to expand their facilities and are currently developing a business plan for this site. South Gippsland Shire Council Home and Community Care includes the provision of respite and transport to eligible clients.

## *Over 55s Living*

Leongatha has two 'over 55's age group' developments, 'The Grange' and 'Mountain View'. 'The Grange' is located 1.7km from the town centre via paved footpaths and provides separate two and three bedroom units which are wheelchair friendly.

'Mountain View' is also targeting the over 55's retirement age group. This new development includes a range of two and three bedroom units located 1.3km from the town centre. It has a community centre, indoor swimming pool and bowling green. There are currently no footpaths in Shingler Street linking this development to the town centre.



There are numerous one to three bedroom unit developments within a 1km radius of the town centre with flat paved access to shops, services and senior citizens centre (Dakers Centre). Whilst these are not specifically designated for over 55's living, they are available for rent or purchase at a range of prices and are suitable for older people of all ages and abilities.

## 5.4 Consultation

The South Gippsland Active Ageing Plan 2012 - 2016 included extensive consultation in its development. Methods of consultation included:

- Surveying 1200 residents (with a 20% response rate)
- Community forums, contact with local community groups, information to Home Community Care clients, partnership input from health services and council officers

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for the next period, 2013 – 2017 includes extensive consultation across the South Gippsland community and with service providers via interview, focus groups, print and online survey. It is expected the draft plan will be available to community comment in April/May 2013 and be adopted by Council by July 2013. There will be opportunities to review the plan and evaluate strategies annually.



## 5.5 Future Demand

People over the age of 65 in Leongatha are currently make up 20% of the population with 13.8% living alone. This is higher than state average where 13.9% of the population are over 65 and 11.3% of this age group lives alone. By 2021 it is expected that Leongatha will have the most growth in the over 65 age group. There will be an additional 412 people in this age group representing 22% of the population. This percentage of the population of over 65s will remain at around 22% and increase to 1801 people by 2031. For South Gippsland Shire the percentage of the population over 65 will rise to 39%. While over 65s are more active and independent than in the past, it is from 65 years of age group and older that people require more services due to deterioration of health including vision and mobility.

TABLE 2: POPULATION LEONGATHA FORECAST OVER 65

| Year | Number of people over 65 | Percentage of whole population |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2013 | 1124                     | 20%                            |
| 2021 | 1474                     | 22%                            |
| 2031 | 1801                     | 22.0%                          |

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*"The level of participation in the community is often dependent on the level of physical and cognitive ability of people. Maintaining health and wellbeing as we age is therefore integral to continuing participation."*<sup>31</sup>

Council currently contributes approximately 17% of the cost of the HACC program with the remainder funded through State Government and service fees charged to clients. It is anticipated that Council's contribution will remain at that level unless Government Policy commitments change.

Current settings and modes of delivery will continue. The level of service provision is likely to change over the next couple of decades in response to people living longer and managing chronic disease in their own homes. Aged services provision will become more diverse extending into partnerships with health services. One such area could include supporting people with specific conditions such as Dementia. While services provided in the home will experience increased demand with a growing older population, nursing homes and hostels will also grow.

Retirement and lifestyle villages are beginning to become more prevalent in Gippsland with people seeking country living with the services provided in retirement villages. Within Leongatha the current supply of small accessible housing close to the town centre is likely to also meet this need. Whether servicing a retirement village or privately owned or leased independent housing, aged care providers will

<sup>30</sup> ABS, *Housing and Population Data 2006 Forecast* analysed by id Consulting.

<sup>31</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council, *Active Ageing Plan 2012-2016*, p.1, South Gippsland Shire Council, viewed on 25 July 2012, [http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/files/AppE.1\\_Active\\_Ageing\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/files/AppE.1_Active_Ageing_Strategy.pdf).

experience an increase in the demand for HACC, community transport, recreational activities for older people, community house activities, passive open space and medical services.

The Leongatha Senior Citizens Club meets in the Dakers Centre a purpose built senior citizens centre located within 1km of shops and services. Other users of the centre include physical activity groups for older people, the South Gippsland Singers and events. The Dakers Centre has potential to provide for activities and events for the broader community. With expanded use of the centre beyond senior citizen's activities Baby Boomers in their older years are more likely to view the centre as providing a range of activities that may suit them as well as the generation of 'elderly' people that currently use it. The Dakers Centre is currently used by the Senior Citizen's Club, Country Women's Association, South Gippsland Singers, Woorayl, Probus, Gippsland Southern Health Service and Weight Watchers. This is a good facility which is accessible to all but is currently under-utilized.

Unstructured social meeting points for older people where craft activities, coffee and chat take place include the library and the Community House. The current location and structure of the community house restricts access by people with limited mobility, the library has limited space. The Senior Citizens Centre (Dakers Centre) is generally only accessible to bookings by larger groups.



The Victorian Government residential aged care policy 2009 states that low residential aged care is increasingly a less favoured option with the government supporting older people choosing to stay at home for as long as possible. Government community care policies and programs have promoted and supported people to remain in their own homes. While data shows there is less demand for low level care, demand for high level care is increasing. If the supply of residential high care services fails to meet this increased demand there will be greater pressure on Victoria's community care, sub-acute and acute service system. The current provision of residential aged care services by government and non-government

providers will meet expanding need for residential aged care services to ensure residential aged care remains an option for the ageing Leongatha community. Moving into residential aged care within one’s home town allows easy continued interaction with family and friends.

## 5.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. As such, general standards developed for more densely populated areas are not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns. Provision of services and facilities for older people should consider availability of accessible public facilities within a town the size of Leongatha located in the central business district.

The following planning criteria have been applied by State Government in growth areas to define provision of aged care services:

**TABLE 3: AGED CARE SERVICES GROWTH PLANNING CRITERIA**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Residential aged care</b>   | 88 places per 1,000 residents aged 70 and over                                     |
| <b>Respite care</b>            | 1 respite / planned activity group per 40,000 to 60,000 people                     |
| <b>Meals on Wheels</b>         | 1 dispatch centre per 40,000 to 60,000 people                                      |
| <b>Senior Citizen’s Centre</b> | Provision to meet in 1 large multi-purpose meeting place per 8,000 – 10,000 people |

### Identified Models for Delivery

Increasingly government funding supports people remaining in their own home with supports provided to continue living independently.

Even, wide paths connecting residential areas with passive recreation spaces, sporting facilities, health services, community centres, library and cultural areas are needed to encourage older people to participate in activity. Developers of age specific developments need to consider pedestrian access to community facilities and shops for future residents.

## *Recommendations*

### *Accessible and varied facilities and services support older people to actively participate in community life and community physical activity and maintain a sense of belonging in their local communities.*

Accessible and varied facilities and services support older people to actively participate in community life and community physical activity and maintain a sense of belonging in their local communities. Facilities that provide inter-generational interaction bring broader opportunities for all ages and abilities. Multi-purpose community facilities where a range of services and activities are offered provide a central meeting area for community interaction for people who are increasingly living independently in their own homes. The opportunity to get out of the house to meet with others becomes increasingly important as people age and increasingly live alone.

For those people in residential aged care, their connection with the community and integration with community social structure is beneficial. Residential aged care services that provide a range of supports and ongoing linkages ensure the continued wellbeing and involvement of their residents with the broader community including those older people living independently and younger generations.

### *Increased services to people remaining in the home*

Home based services meet many needs of the older population including Home and Community Care, District Nursing and Meals on Wheels. They require limited infrastructure and do not rely on the client having independent transport. Advocacy for the continuation of these services to meet the increasing population is required.

### *Mobility scooter parking and recharge points in town centre.*

The needs of home based care will increase as more people remain at home. Opportunities to get out into the community and access additional external services will remain. Availability of transport to appointments both within Leongatha and to Melbourne is available and should be clearly promoted to older people living in their own homes. The Dakers Centre is a readily accessible centre close to the town centre and should be utilized for a greater range of activities for all ages. The Leongatha branch of the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation is the principal library of the area and contributes to the range of places that older people can access readily for social and educational purposes. A mobility scooter recharge point at the library would allow older people to enjoy the library services while recharging their scooters.



## *Improved access to retail businesses and public venues*

Access within the town centre via community bus and an increasingly connected footpath network is of a good standard. Many services have offices in Leongatha that older people can attend. There is a need for pedestrian networks to provide shared access for wheeled mobility scooters on with even surfaces, gutters and road crossing points. The pedestrian networks also need to be accessible by all users and encourage older people and people with disabilities to come into the town centre to access services provided there.

Working with existing businesses within the town centre to increase accessibility for all will encourage independent movement around the town centre.

New residential developments in Leongatha should attract sufficient developer contributions to ensure continuous provision of pedestrian access that includes off road mobility scooter and wheelchair access. There is a continuing need for varied housing types within easy access of the town centre. A continued supply of a range of units and townhouses for a range of budgets will ensure that older people and people with disabilities have ready access to current services and facilities within the central 1 – 2 km radius of the town centre. It is expected that people will move to Leongatha from other areas of the Shire including smaller towns and farms and from outside the Shire due to the convenience and services provided and affordability of housing.



**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF CURRENT AGED AND DISABILITY SERVICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

| <b>Service / Infrastructure type</b>      | <b>Main provider</b>   | <b>Current Service and Facility model</b>   | <b>Recommended Service and Facility model to meet future need</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Home and Community Care (HACC)</b>     | South Gippsland Shire Council<br><br>Veterans Affairs<br><br>Latrobe Community Health Service    | In home care provided via intake and assessment criteria to determine eligibility.<br><br>Specific service for veterans<br><br>For people with mental illness | Continue current model of delivery with increased advocacy for funding to meet need to Dept Health   |
| <b>Personal Care Packages</b>             | Baptcare<br><br>Benetas<br><br>Calvary Silver Circle   | Eligibility assessed via intake system. Service provided in the home  | Current service model expanded to meet population need limited by funding allocation   |
| <b>Carer and respite support services</b> | Latrobe Community Health Service<br><br>Baptcare<br><br>Benetas<br><br>Mental Illness Fellowship | Eligibility assessed via intake system. Service provided in the home  | Current service model expanded to meet population need limited by funding allocation   |
| <b>Residential Aged Care</b>              | Gippsland Southern Health Service  | 2 residential aged care facilities:<br><br>Koorooman House:<br><br>36 high care beds<br>Woorayl Lodge Hostel:<br><br>40 low care and 2 respite beds.          | Expansion of both high and low care residential aged care is to be expected with the ageing population. Continue planning for expansion of facilities at the new site for Woorayl Lodge. |

## 6 DISABILITY AND DIVERSITY

### 6.1 Introduction

One-in-five Australians reported as having some kind of disability.

Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>32</sup>.

People with a disability include people who were born with disability, and those who acquired disability during their life through ageing, accident or illness. Disabilities include: intellectual disability, physical disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury, neurological impairment, psychiatric disability, and any combination of these.

The ageing of the Australian population and its increased longevity are leading to greater numbers of people with disability. In 2003, there were an estimated 3.9 million people with disability in Australia. As the age and disability of the population increases, the ratio of carers to people with disability is projected to fall.

For the purpose of this project this chapter includes:

- Disability Assessment
- Aged Care Mental Health Service
- Day programs
- Diversity within the Leongatha population
- Home and Community Care (HACC) (Assessment services, home care, personal care, respite, property maintenance, meals on wheels and community transport)

### 6.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

South Gippsland Disability Action Plan (DAP) works to improve the way Council services respond to the needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers and service providers. At a strategic level, the plan seeks to foster a community and partnership approach towards building a more inclusive community, in which people with a disability have increased opportunity to participate in their community and make meaningful choices about their lives.



<sup>32</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability  
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml> accessed 24 July 2013

South Gippsland Active Ageing Plan 2012 - 2016 (AAP) Focuses on addressing issues that older residents have said are important in enabling them to participate in the community as they age.

South Gippsland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) is a key strategic document which is a legislative requirement for all Local Governments under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. The MPHWP Plan contains actions and measures to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community including residents with a disability. The plan must be developed within 12 months of a Council election and is effective for 4 years.

Gippsland HACC Diversity Plan 2012 – 2015 is a strategic population planning initiative that support and encourages Home and Community Care service delivery which is responsive to and respectful of the specific characteristics of the person seeking services.

Gippsland Home and Community Care (HACC) Aboriginal Plan 2012 - 2014

Victorian State Disability Plan 2013 – 2016 The plan provides a direction across the Victorian Government so that all government policies, programs, services and infrastructure are able to take full account of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The Disability Act 2006 and the Disability Regulations 2007 replaced the Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986 and Disability Services Act 1991. The Disability Act (Victoria) provides for a whole-of-government response to the rights and needs of people with a disability and a framework for the provision of high quality services and supports for people with a disability.

Federal (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) and State (Equal Opportunity Act 2010) Legislation stating that it is against the law to discriminate on the grounds of disability.

## 6.3 Current Provision

### Population Diversity

TABLE 1 LEONGATHA POPULATION DIVERSITY 2011

| Population  | Number | %    | South Gippsland Shire |
|---|--------|------|-----------------------|
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population                | 38     | 0.7  | 0.8                   |
| Australian born   | 4,580  | 85.9 | 84.3                  |
| Speaks a language other than English at home                    | 218    | 4.1  | 3.5                   |
| People needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability | 336    | 6.3  | 5.3                   |

The majority of the Leongatha population are Australian born, with 0.7% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The ancestry of the remaining population in Leongatha is mostly British and European with an increasing representation of people from India and Sri Lanka in recent years. The top five countries of birth for people living in Leongatha were the United Kingdom, Netherlands, New Zealand, Italy, Germany and India. In Leongatha 5% of people come from countries where English is not the first language and 4.1% speak a language other than English at home.

The South Gippsland indigenous community is very diverse, with people whose family backgrounds range across Australia (it was identified that not many were directly connected to the South Gippsland area itself). The land area of South Gippsland is accepted as being approximately 30% Gunai/Kurnai traditional land, and 70% Boonwurrung traditional land. Of the 3 indigenous groups living in the Shire there is no one Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), with whom to establish strong working relationships.

'Disability' is an umbrella term for any or all of the components: impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction, as influenced by environmental factors. Impairments are 'problems in body function or structure such as significant deviation or loss'. Activity limitations are 'difficulties an individual may have in executing activities'. Participation restrictions are 'problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations'<sup>33</sup> Disabilities can be categorised as intellectual, psychiatric, sensory/speech, acquired brain injury and physical/diverse. Physical/diverse disabilities are the most commonly reported disabilities.

Disability statistics for the Leongatha population relate directly to need for assistance due to a severe or profound disability with 336 people or 6.3% of the population needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This is based on subjective assessment self-reported in the 2011 Census. In Leongatha of the 336 needing assistance, 194 people were aged over 70 years. This shows the increased disability people experience as they age.

Dementia describes the symptoms of a large group of illnesses including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, alcohol-related dementia, AIDS-related dementia and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Symptoms include loss of memory, intellect, rationality, social skills and normal emotional reactions. Dementia is not a normal part of ageing. Most people with dementia are older, but it is important to remember that most older people do not get dementia. It is not a normal part of ageing. Dementia can happen to anybody, but it is more common after the age of 65 years. People in their 40s and 50s can also have dementia.

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<sup>33</sup> WHO (World Health Organization) 2001a. International classification of functioning, disability and health. Geneva: WHO p 7 - 10.



“Dementia is considered to be the leading cause of disability in older Australians aged 65 years and over. It is the fastest growing source of major disease burden, and is projected to overtake coronary heart disease in relation to total wellbeing costs by 2023. Within two decades, dementia is expected to become the third greatest source of health and residential aged care spending.”<sup>34</sup>

Prevalence of dementia within South Gippsland is shown in the table below, showing an increase in prevalence of nearly 36% in the next ten years. (Data from Access Economics: Projections of dementia prevalence and incidence in Victoria 2010 – 2050, Victoria in Future 2008 as published in the Gippsland Dementia plan 2011-2014.)

TABLE 2 PREVALENCE OF DEMENTIA IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

|                 | 2010         |                | 2015         |                | 2020         |                | Change in dementia prevalence 2010-2020 % |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|---|
|                 | No of people | Percent of LGA | No of people | Percent of LGA | No of people | Percent of LGA |   |
| South Gippsland | 424          | 1.5            | 524          | 1.8            | 622          | 2.1            | 35.8                                      |

Source <sup>35</sup>

## Disability support

Disability support increasingly involves the person with a disability to have more flexibility and control to choose the support they receive. Support packages are funded by the Department of Human Services to assist a person to meet their disability support needs. Outreach support provides up to 15 hours per week of home and community support to people with a disability to assist them to live independently.

Supported accommodation is provided to people who require rostered support and is targeted to people with the highest support needs. The Victorian Aids and Equipment Program provides people with a permanent or long term disability with subsidised aids, equipment, home and vehicle modifications.

Community life and jobs support is provided through a range of programs and approaches.

Young adults are supported through a transitioning program providing support to



<sup>34</sup> Department of Health (Gippsland), 2011 Gippsland Dementia plan 2011-2014

<sup>35</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council Diversity Plan 2012 - 2015

young people with a disability who want to pursue further education, training and employment. Specialist disability employment services are also available.

Group Services are activities organised or provided directly by community service organisations for people with a disability aged 16 years and over. Activities are developed with the person and/or their supporters in ways most relevant to their needs and preferences. Activities can be across a range of lifestyle areas, including daily living and pre-vocational skills, community participation and recreation. Participants are funded through Individual Support Packages.

The Gippsland Auslan Interpreter Service (GAIS) provides interpreters for people who are deaf or have hearing loss and use Auslan to communicate. Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS) is the auspice for this service. Auslan interpreters who work locally can also be engaged in a private capacity. For remote access, a video relay interpreting service supports deaf people to communicate in Auslan with hearing people. This service can be used in the same room or by a remote interpreter. Examples of how this service may be used are with a health professional or in a job interview.

### *Carer and family support*

Carer and family support is available for families of children with a disability and carers of adults with a disability. Respite support provides short-term breaks for carers of people with a disability and families. Short-term breaks can be overnight, or during the day, breaks can be in-home, in residential settings, with another family, out in the community or other flexible arrangements. Flexible Support Packages provide a range of supports for people with a disability and their families. Individual Support Packages provide flexible funding, based on planning, to suit the particular needs of people with a disability. Family Options provides short term and long term alternative family placements for people with a disability who are unable to live with their own family.

### *Service Provision*

The disability supports described above are provided to people with disabilities living in Leongatha. Disability service providers based in Leongatha are listed in the table below. People in Leongatha also receive services from outside of the town from as far as Latrobe Valley and Melbourne.

Disability services in Leongatha are provided in purpose built facilities, community meeting places and in the home. Carer support services are also provided by a number of other providers under a brokerage system funded by a variety of



sources including but not limited to Department of Human Services, Home and Community Care, Department of Veterans Affairs and Traffic Accident Commission.

Offices for many community and care services for people with disabilities are located in Leongatha and include Yooralla Firstbase, Anglicare, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Department of Human Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Uniting Care Gippsland, Salvation Army and Villa Maria. These organisations provide services across most of South Gippsland to clients who meet certain age, ability and funding criteria.

Home and Community Care (HACC) Program provides basic support services for people with disabilities and their carers, assisting them to live independently. Assessment is required for a person’s eligibility and is focused on the older community. Eligibility is based on a person’s current health and wellbeing, their priority of need and availability of services.

TABLE 3: HACC SERVICES

| Service             | Definition  |
|---------------------|---|
| Home Care           | Home care assists clients to maintain a safe, healthy and hygienic home environment.<br>Assistance may include tasks such as vacuuming, sweeping and washing floors, cleaning bathrooms and toilets, changing bed linen, basic shopping and assistance with paying bills and banking.   |
| Personal Care       | Personal care services provide support to people who have difficulty with daily personal care tasks including showering, dressing and application of pressure stockings.  |
| Respite Care        | Respite enables carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities. Individual respite requirements are discussed and time spent during respite is based on activities that are meaningful and of interest to the client.  |
| Meals on Wheels     | Provides nutritious and diet specific meals delivered to client’s homes by volunteers. Each meal includes a soup, main meal, sweet (or fruit/yogurt) and juice.<br>Meals are delivered to people living in Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster townships. Clients living outside these townships can arrange collection of frozen meals. |
| Community Transport | Assistance with transport aims to support individuals where no other form of transport is available, for activities such as medical appointments or shopping.<br>The program is supported by Council, with the provision of Council owned cars and buses, and volunteers who complete the driving.  |
| Home Maintenance    | This program provides basic assistance to clients with the maintenance of their home to ensure a safe and secure environment such as installation of ramps, rails and gutter cleaning.  |

The Certificate IV in Disability, Diploma of Disability and Advanced Diploma of Disability courses are provided using flexible delivery via the Leongatha campus.

Qualifications in these courses allow people to work in disability service provision as day and disability support and case managers and coordinators.

Council provides Home and Community Care Services to eligible community members in all areas of South Gippsland. Latrobe Community Health Service provides a HACC response unit, linkages packages and veteran’s home care. Gippsland Southern Health Service provides district nursing, allied health, palliative care, home based withdrawal for alcohol and other drugs are subcontracted to provide linkages and EACH packages in the home.

### *Disability Services*

Group services, employment services and education for people with a disability are available in Leongatha. Additional services are provided to clients in Leongatha by services based in other areas. The table below lists only those services with offices or case workers based in Leongatha. These provide services across South Gippsland and Bass Coast. This is an example of the role Leongatha plays as a service centre for the shire and surrounding area.

**TABLE 4 DISABILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS WITH OFFICES OR CASE WORKERS BASED IN LEONGATHA**

| Organisation                         | Service/s   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>South Gippsland Shire Council</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preschool Field Officer - offers support to children with additional needs and their families to assist inclusion into State funded Kindergarten Programs including children with a disability, koori children and children with a non-English speaking background.</li> <li>- Rural Access Worker - works with local groups and organisations, businesses and the broader community to strengthen the community's capacity to provide support to people of all abilities and their families.</li> <li>- Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee – provides strategic and practical advice to Council on matters related to access, inclusion and disability.</li> <li>- Home and Community Care – see Table 1 below The Home and Community Care team have a Diversity Plan to guide the provision of suitable services to the full range of clients access HACC services.</li> <li>- Issue parking permits for people with disabilities, applications for multi-purpose taxi program, a 50% reduction in taxi fares to assist people unable to use public transport independently because they are frail, aged or have permanent disabilities.</li> <li>- Volunteer visiting service for the aged and for those with disabilities.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Anglicare</b>                     | - Shared family care, respite accommodation funded by Department of Human Services – out of home care for infants and children aged 0 – 6 with developmental delay or 6 – 17 with intellectual disabilities.  |
| <b>CRS Australia</b>                 | Disability management service – assistance provided to people with disabilities or injuries to find employment.   |
| <b>Department of</b>                 | - Range of funding and services for people with disabilities including  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Human Services</b>                           | community care and housing, shared supported accommodation, eligibility assessment according to the Disability Act 2006, individual support packages, educational and vocational support, and disability employment service.   |
| <b>Gippsland Southern Health Service</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability respite for 18 – 64 year old people with disabilities.</li> <li>- District nursing, housebound residents with disabilities to assist with medication and support.</li> <li>- Koorooman House – accommodation for the aged and people with intellectual or physical disabilities. Respite care also provided for this group.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Interchange Gippsland</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respite accommodation for children and young people up to 18 years old with intellectual, sensory or physical disabilities or autism spectrum disorders.</li> <li>- Host program and family choices programs.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ostara Australia, Employment Innovations</b> | - Specialised employment service providing placement, training and support in the open labour market for young people and adults with disabilities.  |
| <b>SNAP Gippsland</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychiatric disability rehabilitation support service for young people and adults 16 – 64 who have serious enduring or recurring mental illness and associated psychiatric disabilities.</li> <li>- Home based outreach support program.</li> <li>- Housing and support program.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Salvation Army Social Housing Service</b>    | - Psychiatric disability program – outreach support for young people and adults 18 and over with psychiatric disabilities to support independent living skills.  |
| <b>Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc (GDAI)</b> | - Provide advocacy and support to individuals with disability and are based in Morwell. New Wave Self Advocacy is an advocacy support service for people with disability by people with disability and are co-located with GDAI.   |
| <b>South Gippsland Carer's Group</b>            | - Self-help and support group – support and information for people who are providing disability care for friends and relatives including children and adults.  |
| <b>Villa Maria</b>                              | - Extended aged care at home packages for the aged and people with disabilities  |
| <b>West Gippsland Regional Library Service</b>  | - Housebound library service for the aged and those with disabilities. Books are delivered to the home.  |
| <b>South Gippsland Specialist School</b>        | The school caters for children aged 5 – 18 who have an intellectual disability. Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning is provided for students in years 11 and 12.   |
| <b>Woorayl Lodge</b>                            | - Hostel accommodation for the aged and people with intellectual, mild psychiatric or physical disabilities capable of independent living and minimal support.   |
| <b>Work Solutions</b>                           | - Disability employment services – providing placement, training and support in the open labour market for young people and adults with disabilities.  |



## Yooralla FirstBase

- Provides a range of services and support to people in South Gippsland with a disability. This includes individual support packages, education, recreation, aid and equipment, community connections, independent living skills, individualised support and pre vocational training. Occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech pathology, community health care, generalist counselling, disability support and day programs are also provided.

- Individual programs include gaining access to educational courses, sporting and recreational groups and finding employment.

Individual Support Packages are funded by Department of Human Services, Disability Services. Support packages are allocated to a person for assistance with meeting their disability support needs. The funds may be used to buy a range of supports chosen by the person to help achieve their goals. This may include individual and/or group based supports such as a day service. An Individual Support Package can help people to continue to live in the community by providing supports to live as independently as possible; strengthen relationships with family, friends and other community members, and participate in the community. Individual support packages are available to people living in Leongatha.

Community based homes for people with a disability are located in Leongatha. There are also people with disabilities living independently or with others in shared accommodation that are not specifically designated for people with disabilities.

## *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Support Services*

Services and supports to people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island descent and people of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities are based in Bass Coast with service provision into South Gippsland. These include Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation, Warreeny Indigenous Sports Committee and Bass Coast South Gippsland Settlement Committee. A Koorie Engagement Support Officer is based and Leongatha



delivering the Learning Stones program which aims to create an indigenous cultural safe space for awareness and community participations within South Gippsland and Bass Coast schools. Gippsland Multicultural Services and Centre for Multicultural Youth are located in the Latrobe Valley. There are also some community specialist groups.

Interpreter services are generally accessed by appointment or over the phone using TIS National a free interpreting service to non-English speaking Australian citizens or

other providers on a fee for services basis including Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service and Interpreter Line. Interpreter services are available for people who are deaf to communicate with hearing people using Auslan (Australian sign language) as outlined above.

Community Houses provide English as a Second Language classes to new migrants to South Gippsland.

#### Meeting Places

The Dakers Centre is a venue where people with mobility aids can have confidence that activities and events held there are accessible. The library provides a non-commercial, non-member based venue where residents can sit and relax and shelter from the weather and undertake recreational and learning activities. The current design provides limited space for scooter, pram and walker 'parking' and access and includes counter heights which are too high for people in wheelchairs.

### **6.4 Consultation**

The Disability Action Plan 2013 – 2016 has been developed by Council with input from the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee. This plan outlines practical and strategic activities that will be undertaken by Council across four key areas, as designated by the Disability Act. As such, the Plan addresses the barriers to participation by people with disability and seeks to achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for the next period, 2013 – 2017 includes extensive consultation across the South Gippsland community and with service providers via interview, focus groups, print and online survey. The Plan and associated annual implementation plan was adopted by Council in June 2013. There will be opportunities to review the plan and evaluate strategies annually.

### **6.5 Future Demand**

As the South Gippsland population ages the number of people reporting need of assistance in Leongatha will increase. Services can expect to experience an increase in demand. The self-directed approach adopted by the Department of Human Services allows people with disabilities to take charge of the planning, design and implementation of services and supports they need. Traditional funded disability supports will remain but increasingly this will include informal supports, community supports that all people use and the existing funded disability supports. Community supports including recreation providers, training providers and social groups will need to prepare to be inclusive of people with a variety of disabilities who select to be part of their group or service.

As the Leongatha population grows, so too it becomes more diverse. Between 2006 and 2011 there was an increase of 254 people who reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. In the same period there

has been an increase in people born in Italy, Germany, India and New Zealand with an increase of 86 people from countries of non-English speaking backgrounds. This range of people will continue to increase over the next 20 years resulting in a more diverse community placing different demands on current services and possibly needing access to interpreter services.



## 6.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Disability standards, legislation and policy seek to ensure that people with disabilities have the access they need to live, work and participate in their communities. These standards include:

- Disability standards for accessible public transport – providers and operators of public transport must comply with these standards that set out the minimum requirements for access by people with disabilities, their families and carers.
- Disability standards for education – these standards aim to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education and training free from discrimination, and on the same basis as other students.
- Disability standards for premises – these standards aim to give people with disabilities better access to a wider range of public buildings. Many of these standards are incorporated into the Building Code of Australia and include guidance on bathrooms, kitchens and paths of travel that are capable of being adopted in any development.

Infrastructure Design Manual was designed to document and standardise Council requirements for the design and development of municipal infrastructure. It provides greater clarity and consistency for consultants, developers and residents who need to know more about the rules, regulations and standards for new infrastructure when developing land. It aims to expedite Council engineering approvals and ensure that minimum design criteria are met in regard to the design and construction of municipal infrastructure regardless of whether it is constructed by Council or a developer.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was enacted by the Federal Government to promote fairness and equity for people with a disability and to ensure that people who have a disability have the same rights and level of access to opportunities and services as other members of the community. The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services or facilities, against people on the basis that they have, or may have a disability.

A national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) will allow people with significant and permanent disability to choose the support they need and how that support is provided. This scheme, DisabilityCare Australia has been launched in four sites in Australia, the full scheme is rolled out nationally by July 2019. DisabilityCare will provide an information and referral service to help people with disability access mainstream, disability and community supports.

Source <sup>36</sup>



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<sup>36</sup> Department of Human Services <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability> accessed 30 July 2013

## *Recommendations*

### *A diversity of housing stock catering for people with mobility restrictions close to the town centre.*

A diversity of housing stock is encouraged in Leongatha to support the increasingly diverse community. People with increasing levels of mobility restrictions will need to be catered for in future residential development design as well as any ongoing improvements in the town centre. Available and accessible housing close to the centre of town to support less able people to live independently with access to shops and community services. New public buildings meeting DDA requirements will be welcoming and accessible to all. Existing public buildings require constant review to ensure any upgrading includes consideration for people with limited mobility.

### *Affordable and Accessible Housing*

Affordable housing for all the community with particular inclusion of indigenous families, older couples and people with disabilities of all ages should be catered for. Larger family homes out of town are not as suited to many of these groups who may not have access to transport. For people with children of school age, affordable housing close to the education precinct would allow children to walk to school and parents to access the shops on foot if they do not own a car.

### *Age appropriate respite and long term care for younger people with disabilities.*

Supported residential accommodation for younger people with disabilities will meet some of the needs of the higher than average proportion of people with disabilities in Leongatha. Currently aged care facilities cater for young people with disabilities both for respite and long term care. Age appropriate services for the younger population are required. High levels of service provision in the town and a built infrastructure improvement program will ensure that Leongatha is suitable for people with disabilities to live as independently as possible while also accessing a range of specialist services. Independent living units located close to shopping and community services would suit people with disabilities and older people looking to downsize their housing. Ideally a supply of this type of housing would be designed within disability standards, be affordable and on longer lease rental arrangements. Similar accommodation is currently available but there will be an increased demand with increasing support for independent living and an increase in people with disabilities living in Leongatha.

Current government funding supports independent living. The self-directed approach will allow people with a disability to identify their needs with a broader range of services and supports being accessed. Services and supports used by the broader community will increasingly be accessed by people with disabilities where they have not before. Organisations in Leongatha that provide for the broader community will benefit from reviewing staff training in the disability discrimination act



and venue access to be ready to meet the needs of people with a broad range of disabilities.

### *Support settlement of new migrants*

Acceptance by the current Leongatha community that diversity in the population brings a richness and variety to the town will require information, education and celebration in schools, sport and recreation clubs, social clubs, retail providers and service providers. Self-help and advocacy groups can support this acceptance and their role will support the needs of all people in Leongatha. Support for these groups will be required as the population grows and becomes more diverse.

Provision of English as a Second Language courses to new migrants will continue to assist their settlement in South Gippsland and contribution to the communities in which they live. These classes can be conducted a range of venues depending on the number of participants. Ideally they should be in venues that are central and easy to find for people who may be new to the town.

### *Improved access to retail businesses and around the town including public buildings, library and large entertainment venues.*

Strategic planning for the town centre to consider increased use of mobility scooters is required. This would be a shared role of Council and business owners to develop a system for mobility scooter parking that provides safe access to pedestrians and motorists as well as access for people using mobility scooters.

For people using mobility scooters the library is a place where they can recharge scooters while using the library space. Accessibility in the current library is limited, the provision of more space for mobility scooters, walkers and prams and a lower section of counter would increase the availability of this area for all.

The library provides a place where people can residents can sit, relax and shelter for the weather and undertake recreational and learning activities. In the absence of other sheltered pedestrian malls or shopping centres it is important that a library in Leongatha continues to meet this need.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF CURRENT DISABILITY SERVICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| Service Infrastructure type      | Main provider  | Current Service and Facility model   | Recommended Service and Facility model to meet future need   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Services to the home             | South Gippsland Shire Council<br>Gippsland Southern Health Service<br>Villa Maria and others<br>West Gippsland Regional Library<br>Anglicare                         | Home and Community Care (HACC)<br>District Nursing<br>Extended aged care home packages<br>Housebound library service<br>Home care 0 – 17 year olds   | Continued services in response to increased demand   |
| Respite & Carer Support Services | South Gippsland Shire Council<br>Anglicare<br>Gippsland Southern Health Service<br>Interchange<br>Gippsland Latrobe Community Health Service<br>Woorayl Lodge Hostel | Respite services via HACC<br>Respite children 0 – 17<br>Koorooman House<br>Children up to 18 years<br>Children of parents with mental illness<br>Respite aged and people with disabilities | Increased service provision in response to increased demand  |
| Accommodation                    | Department of Housing<br>Department of Human Services<br>Gippsland Southern Health Service<br>Salvation Army   | Rental housing<br>Funding for accommodation service<br>Koorooman House<br>Housing including emergency housing  | Age appropriate, accessible accommodation for range of needs.  |
| Education and Employment         | South Gippsland Specialist School<br>Yooralla FirstBase<br><br>CRS Australia<br>Ostara   | Education p – 12 including VCAL<br>Employment assistance – young people over 18<br>Disability employment service<br>Disability employment service  | Increased enrollments expected<br>Ongoing service with increased advocacy to local businesses for support  |
| Accessible facilities            | South Gippsland Shire Council<br><br><br><br>Business premises owners  | Access to Council facilities Infrastructure Design Manual<br><br><br>Access to premises for retail, business, recreation   | Assets maintained to standards. New roads and paths support access for all especially in town centre<br>All new buildings accessible including Council buildings/library<br>Ensure access for all into shops and offices |

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Town paths, parking, and access</p>  | <p>South Gippsland Shire Council</p> <p>Business premises owners</p> | <p>Public paths, trails, car parks, roads</p> <p>Private car parks</p> | <p>Implement parking strategy recommendations<br/>Safe Healthy Active Communities recommendations<br/>Parking suitable for people with additional mobility needs.<br/>Council and business premises to consider adequate parking and adequate space/movements for mobility scooters.<br/>In Leongatha.</p> |
| <p>Supporting diversity<br/>- English as a Second Language<br/>- self-help groups for diverse interests</p> | <p>Community Houses</p>  | <p>Government funding for eligible migrants</p>                        | <p>Increased settlement programs in partnership with local businesses and services<br/>Expand support to self-help groups with diverse interest</p>  |

## 7 ARTS AND CULTURE

### 7.1 Introduction

Arts and cultural activities are provided on a regular basis in Leongatha's halls and a 4 screen cinema by commercial and community organisations. Local clubs and associations allow people interested in art, theatre, music and cultural activities to enjoy them as a participant or spectator.

Larger facilities within Leongatha are an asset to the community providing a range of art and cultural activities which brings visitor from outside the town providing economic and social benefit to the local community. Council is an active member of Creative Gippsland and support arts and cultural events across South Gippsland. The private sector also plays a significant role in the provision of arts and culture via galleries, entertainment venues, hotels, and education courses.

The delivery of arts and cultural activities promotes South Gippsland Shire as a destination, attracts visitors, engenders community pride and strengthens the connection between the arts community and Council. Music and art activities promote good health and wellbeing for all ages and provide opportunities for social connection and provide a vibrancy to the town. Community and tourism events are described in the South Gippsland Economic and Tourism Strategy.

### 7.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

Arts Victoria is pursuing policy initiatives that support the contribution of arts and culture to liveability and competitiveness. Investment in cultural precincts, along with support for vibrant and diverse arts programming Statewide, are two ways of enhancing the reputation and attractiveness of Victoria as a place in which to live, work and invest.

### 7.3 Current Provision

Leongatha Art Gallery is managed and operated by volunteer staff of the Leongatha Art and Craft Society (LACS) Incorporated which as a non-profit organisation has supported the local community since 1972. It is located on the corner McCartin St & Michael Place opposite the Post Office. There are a number of local art groups servicing the Leongatha community.

Leongatha has capacity to host music and arts events in Memorial Hall, Mesley Hall and the Dakers Centre. Further details of meeting/gallery/performance venues are discussed in the Community Meeting Rooms chapter of this document.

Outdoor music events are often held at Mossvale Park a park of English and European Trees located about 16km to the north of Leongatha. There is a soundshell



and toilets and participants are required to provide their own seating. There are regular music events held throughout the warmer months of the year.

Leongatha Lyric Theatre Incorporated is a local theatre group founded in 1965 which produces, presents and develops performing arts events within the Shire of South Gippsland and surrounding areas. The group conducts training courses in theatre crafts and acting and involves many community members in production of at least 2 shows each year on stage, front of house and back stage. Audiences come from within Leongatha and outside the area with 30% of the 2013 audience (1000 people) coming from outside the 3953 postcode area.

The Stadium 4 Cinema is located within the town centre, has 4 cinemas and hosts a variety of fundraising events each year. It is the only full time cinema in South Gippsland attracting people from neighbouring towns.

There are two dance schools based in Leongatha offering dance classes for all ages. The closest regional performing arts centre is located in Warragul in the Baw Baw Local Government area. There is no dedicated performing arts centre in the South Gippsland Shire.

The South Gippsland Brass Band and South Gippsland Singers provide music for the district for entertainment and ceremonial occasions. The South Gippsland Brass Band has a 120 year history performing at Anzac and Australia Days and other civil events throughout each year and rehearses in the historic court house. The South

Gippsland Singers rehearse at the Dakers Centre and perform concerts and ceremonies throughout the year and join the South Gippsland Brass Band to perform carols by candlelight at the recreation reserve.

Council is an active member of Creative Gippsland and supports arts and cultural events across South Gippsland. Creative Gippsland is a collaborative partnership of Council officers responsible for arts and culture in each of the 6 Gippsland Shire Councils.

Each member supports their

own network of artists, performers, galleries and venues. It is also supported by Regional Arts Victoria's Wellington-based Regional Arts Development Officer (RADO). A range of festivals and events are on offer across a variety of venues in Gippsland throughout the year.





Council facilitates an Arts Network which provides an opportunity for members to discuss cultural events and celebrations and explore possible opportunities to work together. Meetings are held in Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster.

The Rotary Art Show is held annually in September in Memorial Hall. The private sector also plays a significant role in the provision of arts and culture via galleries, entertainment venues, hotels, arts and culture, and education courses.

Leongatha features a number of events that draw large crowds. The Daffodil Festival, Rose Spectacular and Rotary Art Show are all held annually. The Lyrebird Arts Council brings many musical performers and bands to South Gippsland. They are involved in the Mossvale Music Festival, concerts in Meeniyan Hall and increasingly use Memorial Hall for larger music concerts.



## 7.4 Future Demand

The diversity of arts and cultural activity are expected to expand as the population expands. Leongatha is the service centre for much of the shire and expected to continue in its provision of larger entertainment venues for music, theatre and expos. There are numerous art galleries located in smaller towns across Gippsland providing visitors and locals motivation to travel across the shire visiting these. Each gallery offers a different style, character and exhibitions.

Rather than increase gallery space in Leongatha there is likely to be an increase in the number of small galleries in towns across the shire to meet the needs of the larger population both resident and visiting. The Great Southern Rail Trail which runs from Leongatha, south of town provides an opportunity for outdoor art installations. A public meeting area or a shared facility with a library could provide an area for both indoor and outdoor art display. It could also provide space for small scale outdoor performances both formal and informal. Lighting, seating and building design can contribute to the artistic character of the town.

Outdoor music festivals will continue to increase in popularity. Whilst Mossvale Park provides a suitable venue for these events, public transport does not regularly pass the park. Some event organisers have provided bus transport from neighbouring towns but this is not the case for all concerts and festivals provided at Mossvale Park. Dedication of open space within the town would allow open air concerts and festivals to be accessible to more people. Extensive consultation would need to be conducted with the community to determine whether such facilities would be used if located in the town and to assess the potential impact on any residents near by.

## 7.5 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. As such, general standards developed for more densely populated areas are often not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns.

TABLE 1: GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS FOR ARTS CENTRES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Regional Arts Centre</b>              | 1 per municipality – closest Warragul Regional Arts Centre |
| <b>Co-located Performing Arts Centre</b> | 1 to 40,000 – 60,000 people                                |
| <b>Community Arts Centre</b>             | 1 to 40,000 – 60,000 people                                |
| <b>Multi-purpose Community Centre</b>    | 1 to 40,000 – 50,000 people – high level                   |
| <b>Multi-purpose Community Centre</b>    | 1 to 8,000 – 10,000 people – low level                     |

### Best Practice

Cultural infrastructure includes people and organisations, technology and places and buildings. “People and organisations, with their skills, expertise and experience, sometimes referred to as ‘soft infrastructure’, are critical to cultural infrastructure...” (Cultural Infrastructure Directions 2012-2014, p.2) Technology enables innovation and artistic practice. Different forms of technology contribute to the wide range of cultural and artistic work. Arts and cultural activity happens in many different ways and in varied places.

### Recommendations

#### *Redevelop Mesley Hall as a performance / conference facility.*

Leongatha does not currently have a purpose built performance or conference facility. With newly constructed school buildings now complete, Mesley Hall is no longer required for school activities and could be redeveloped into a theatre and music venue. The transferral of Mesley Hall from Department of Education (DEECD) to community management would allow community funding grants to be sought to improve the facility. The nearest arts centres are outside South Gippsland. Local arts and conference facilities have potential to bring considerable economic benefit to the town.

The redevelopment of Mesley Hall as a performing arts and conference centre would enhance the attraction of Leongatha as a town for arts and cultural

performance. Memorial Hall provides a larger venue and the Dakers Centre a smaller one for music and theatre events and art shows while the courthouse is suitable for smaller plays and as a rehearsal space.

### *Provide outdoor public space for temporary art installations*

Provision of outdoor public space which allows for display of temporary art installations within the town centre, local parks and the rail trail should be considered. Current consideration of a central public space in Leongatha has considered art and cultural components being part of those areas.

The use of existing recreational facilities within Leongatha for outdoor events has not been supported by the recreation reserve committee as all facilities are heavily used by local sporting clubs with little capacity to organise larger events.



**TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED ART AND CULTURE IN LEONGATHA**

| Service / infrastructure type  | MAIN PROVIDER   | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL  | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Buildings:</b><br/>Memorial Hall, Dakers Centre, Mesley Hall Courthouse</p> <p>- Art gallery</p> <p>- Cinema</p> | <p>Council</p> <p>Leongatha Gallery Community</p> <p>Private</p>                      | <p>Music, theatre and art space.</p> <p>South Gippsland Brass Band practice and small plays</p> <p>Volunteer Leongatha Art and Craft Society</p> <p>Stadium 4 Leongatha – 4 cinema complex.</p> | <p>Mesley Hall- Investigate the transferring to a community facility for theatre and music.</p> <p>An asset for local entertainment of all ages to be supported to continue business where possible.</p>                                |
| <p><b>Outdoor festival / music space</b></p>   | <p>Council</p>  | <p>Mossvale Park with sound shell</p>   | <p>Investigate possible sites within town for outdoor festival / music space OR</p> <p>Public transport to Mossvale Park</p>  |
| <p><b>Technology</b></p>   | <p>Not yet provided in Leongatha</p>  | <p>Private business provides technology to enhance art and cultural activities from outside of the town.</p>  | <p>Support technology to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase access to and engagement with arts and culture</li> <li>- as a creative medium</li> <li>- for preservation and sharing of cultural materials.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>People and organisations</b></p>   | <p>Skills, expertise and experience of the people of Leongatha is rich and varied</p> | <p>Skills and expertise of community is directed via individual community groups and organisations.</p>   | <p>Community Directions Statement for arts and culture groups</p> <p>Skills and professional development in arts</p> <p>Art display partnership businesses as an ongoing feature beyond Daffodil Festival.</p>                          |

## 8 COMMERCIAL, RETAIL AND TOURISM

### 8.3 Introduction and Definition

Leongatha is a major service centre for the Shire of South Gippsland. Large employers in Leongatha include a milk processing factory, hospital, 4 secondary schools a specialist school and 3 primary schools.



Strip shopping and larger retail outlets are located in the town centre. Leongatha has 89ha of industrial land and 5ha of town centre retail/commercial activity and 8ha out of centre 'bulky goods' retailing. Leongatha is located on cross roads linking north and south between Mirboo North and the coast and the South Gippsland Highway linking Melbourne with Wilsons Promontory and other local attractions to the east.

Population growth is expected to attract an increase in commercial and retail activity. Office space to accommodate services for the sub-region will be required with the increasing population in both South Gippsland and Bass Coast.

### 8.4 Policy and Council Plans and Strategies

South Gippsland Council Plan 2013 – 2017 To work with the business community to support existing businesses, diversify employment opportunities and to attract new businesses is a key goal in the Council plan.

South Gippsland Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017 aims to build on South Gippsland's economic strength to enhance the economic wellbeing and quality of life of its residents.

Leongatha Structure Plan 2008 Recognises the town centre as a primary location for business, retail, entertainment, community and tourism activities. It identifies a Bulky Goods Retail Precinct on the western side of the South Gippsland Highway and a Commercial Investigation Area on the eastern side of the Highway.

Southern Leongatha Outline Development Plan 2011 to guide the integrated planning of the proposed residential and commercial land uses to the south of Leongatha.

Leongatha Industrial Land Supply Study 2013 (Draft) provides Council with clear strategic direction for future industrial growth in

Leongatha up to 2031 and will also inform future changes to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.



Tourism Victoria: 2020 Tourism Strategy This strategy focuses on industry wide, strategic issues across both the tourism and events sectors. Through seven priority areas, the 2020 Tourism Strategy outlines how Tourism Victoria, working with key stakeholders, will implement identified actions to realise the potential of the tourism market.

## 8.5 Current Provision

### *Retail*

The Leongatha is the largest shopping precinct in the South Gippsland Shire. It provides a range of small retail clothing and food stores including the largest range of cafes in South Gippsland. Larger retail outlets include variety stores, whitegoods and bedding stores and two supermarkets. The shopping precinct spans two main streets, Bair and McCartin Streets. The two supermarkets are located behind the main streets and have adjacent retail stores opening onto the adjacent car parks. The car parks and stores are accessible via arcades from Bair and McCartin Streets. Specialty food stores include 4 bakeries, a butcher, a health food store and 5 cafes. There is no green grocer in the town, with fruit and vegetable available from supermarkets only. Fast food chains are located along the South Gippsland Highway on the western side of town on entry from Melbourne.



A third supermarket is currently under construction due to be completed mid to late 2014. Retail stores in Bair and McCartin Streets change regularly with store vacancies remaining in Bair Street for more than 3 years.

### *Industry and commercial*

Leongatha is the industrial centre of South Gippsland with 104ha of industrially zoned land. The industrial area is located at the northern edge of the town and is dominated by the Murray Goulburn dairy factory. Murray Goulburn is the largest business in Leongatha employing around 400 workers in the dairy production factory. The Leongatha Industrial Land Supply Study has identified additional areas suitable for industrial land development. This report identifies a significant undersupply of (gross) industrial land in Leongatha and need for a further 19ha to 26ha to be made available for industrial uses by 2031. Expansion to the north of the Woorayl Golf Club is the most popular recommendation for the extension of industrial land.

A proposed new bulky goods area on the South Gippsland Highway has potential to provide more capacity for retail and wholesale outlets to the south of Leongatha but ensure that it provides specialised service provision and does not weaken the main town retail area.



Dairy, beef and horticulture are key agribusinesses supported by Leongatha. Snow peas are grown in the paddocks surrounding Leongatha with 70% of the national crop exported from this area. Wine grapes are grown on the outskirts of Leongatha supplying to larger wineries.

Leongatha has an aerodrome where there has been a recent growth in businesses operating there. It has strong scope for further growth. Trucking transport industries are also based in the industrial estate north of the town.

Many health, education, welfare and employment organisations have sub-regional offices in Leongatha from where services to South Gippsland and Bass Coast are delivered.

## **8.6 Tourism**

Leongatha attracts tourists travelling from Melbourne to Wilsons Promontory and is 30 minutes from the beaches of Inverloch, Venus Bay and Sandy Point.

The Great Southern Rail Trail begins in Leongatha and extends around 68 kilometres to Welshpool. The trail is accessible by foot, bicycles, horses and wheelchair.

The South Gippsland Tourist Railway runs between Nyora and Leongatha on the Great Southern Railway following the closure of the line to passenger and freight trains in 1993. Tourist trains run on Sundays, school holidays and public holidays from the Leongatha station.

Leongatha features a number of annual events drawing large crowds for further detail see the arts and culture chapter of this document.

## **8.7 Consultation**

Consultation in the development of the Council plans listed above has taken place. Suggestions regarding areas for industrial and commercial development have been incorporated into the plans.

A recent application by the Country Fire Authority to relocate to the main street of Leongatha, Bair Street was met with disapproval from retailers and the chamber of commerce based on the potential of Bair Street to provide increased retail area.

## 8.8 Future Demand

### *Retail*

There will be continued support to new businesses wishing to establish in Leongatha. Bulky goods zoning on South Gippsland Highway south of Leongatha provides opportunity for further retail on the outskirts of town providing good parking and ready access. Vacancies in Bair Street allow for expansion of retail to the southern and northern side of the street while McCartin Street has a high occupancy rate for retail. Increasingly developments such as the new supermarket and motorcar retailer will be expected in Leongatha further consolidating the town's role as a central 'service centre' for the remainder of the shire.

As residents move to Leongatha and more visitors travel through the town, a review of weekend opening hours may be considered by the chamber of commerce. An increased shopping population may become more viable with a larger population.

The proposed alternate truck route proposed to redirect trucks from Bair Street will allow increased parking and re-invigoration this part of the town.

### *Industry and Commercial*

Leongatha remains the business centre for South Gippsland with opportunity for expansion within the town centre for offices and industry. Generally, population-driven demand for industrial property is likely to translate into demand for smaller industrial estates which provide a local service industry function. The transport, dairy, manufacturing and service industries are expected to grow with the proposed supply of additional industrial land and the resident population. The possible transfer of farm related industry towards Koonwarra would further enhance the possible expansion.

Increasing office space will be required as more organisations use Leongatha as their southern base for service provision. With the redevelopment of the Leongatha hospital an increase in health consultants and services may expand into the town centre.

### *Tourism*

Leongatha will remain on the cross roads for tourist traffic for South Gippsland. Opportunities for further accommodation within the town may need consideration. An ample supply of cafés encourages tourist to consider Leongatha as a stopping point on their journey from Melbourne to natural attractions in the area including Wilson's Promontory, galleries and markets. Café proprietors will need to consider weekend opening hours to cater for increased tourism passing through the town.

## *Recommendations*

### *Further invigorate the existing retail*

Further invigorate the existing retail in Leongatha attracting further diversity in the range of retail and variety stores especially in Bair Street. The proposed heavy vehicle alternate route may reinvigorate and enhance the town centre by allowing increased parking in Bair Street and an environment more conducive to outdoor seating for cafes. Plans to liven this part of town to make the most of the new environment will benefit the whole retail area. The construction of an Aldi supermarket will bring more people to Leongatha for grocery shopping providing further opportunity to encourage expansion of retail which was previously unviable. A review of weekend opening hours for retail should be conducted. Trials of extended retail hours might include limited extension of adjacent stores in some areas of the town centre only. The Industrial Land Study 2013 outlines recommendations for expansion of industrial land in Leongatha.

### *Investigate tourist accommodation and conference venue*

Redevelopment of Mesley Hall into a performing arts and conference centre would bring additional people to the town to use the facility providing direct economic benefit to the local community. With associated 4 star motel accommodation, tourist and business visitors would be encouraged to remain in the area. An existing motel may be refurbished and become part of a large chain to meet this need. Bed and breakfast or self-contained unit accommodation within town would fulfil a recognised need for visiting specialists, trainers, entertainers etc. Currently business visitors tend to come to Leongatha as a day trip from Melbourne returning in the same day.



## *Retail as part of Southern Leongatha Development*

Support the development of a convenience store (Coles Express or similar) as part of southern Leongatha development. This will provide access to tourists using the proposed heavy vehicle bypass and would provide access to groceries to residents in the Southern Leongatha area. Development in this area must not weaken the existing retail area and provide specialised service provision. Support agricultural industry adjacent to Koonwarra sale yards.

Consider how vacant retail space for office accommodation for sub-regional service providers in health, education and welfare is allocated and clustered for the convenience of the client. The clustering of services in similar areas of the town increases their accessibility for the client allowing multiple appointments to be arranged.

### **Research**

The concept of Economic Gardening was first developed by Chris Gibbons in Littleton, Colorado in 1987 - City of Littleton Business / Industry Affairs([www.littletongov.org](http://www.littletongov.org)). The strategy is used in many regional areas of the USA with great success and has resulted in economic and employment growth in the communities in which it has been implemented.

The primary aim of the initiative is to work cooperatively with established businesses to support growth and therefore the potential to generate local employment. It is also outward looking by encouraging businesses to seek markets beyond the local region - thus attracting wealth to our local area.





TABLE 1: CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED RETAIL AND TOURISM SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE | MAIN PROVIDER  | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL  | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Retail                        | A range of retail stores include newsagents, clothing, sports, gift stores and notably a number of cafes, restaurants and two hotels. Two supermarkets, one variety store and two whitegoods stores, bedding/furniture stores. | Independently managed and owned businesses  | <p>Continue independent management and ownership.</p> <p>Reinvigorate Bair street if heavy vehicle alternate route is constructed.</p> <p>Review weekend opening hours and models.</p>   |
| Tourism                       | South Gippsland Tourist Railway<br><br>2 x motels 1 x caravan park.  | Tourist rail with limited days operation<br><br>Private providers   | <p>Refurbishment of existing motel</p> <p>B &amp; B or self-contained serviced units within the town centre.</p> <p>Redevelop Mesley Hall as a performance / conference centre</p>   |
| Industry                      | Major manufacturing businesses<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Hospital   | Some key businesses expanding<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Managed by Gippsland Southern Health Service | <p>Support to existing businesses to encourage expansion and employment</p> <p>Provide appropriately zoned land for commercial development. Support development of additional agricultural industry adjacent to Koonwarra Sale yards.</p> <p>Pursue light commercial and bulky goods stores with highway frontage south of Leongatha.</p> <p>New building under construction</p> |

## 9 COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES

### 9.1 Introduction

Leongatha has a broad range of community meeting spaces catering to events from small meetings to large festivals and concerts. Council has a range of meeting rooms for Council and external users. Memorial Hall and the Daker's Centre (Senior Citizen's Centre)

Flexible indoor meeting spaces are affordable and available for use by a variety of different groups for a variety of different purposes. They can cater for sport and recreation, education, community group meetings and events. The quality and accessibility of the building vary greatly with some buildings more suited to passive than active uses.



### 9.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

- Department of Education and Training (2005) *Schools and Community Facilities, Melbourne*
- Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, (2009) *Getting it Together: An Inquiry into the Sharing of Government and Community Facilities*
- Department of Planning and Community Development, (2010a) *A Guide to Delivering Community Precincts*
- Department of Planning and Community Development (2010b) *A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities*

### 9.3 Current Provision

Space necessary for community events and meetings are well supplied for the current population of Leongatha. Leongatha is a centre for organisations providing services to South Gippsland and Bass Coast. Whilst these organisations have desk space for workers in the town, they do not always have meeting rooms. There is a need for flexible office meeting rooms within the town during daytime hours. The need for corporate meeting space in Leongatha has been recognised by a private provider who has a 'boardroom' for hire by the hour in town.

#### *Community meeting rooms*

There are many community meeting rooms available in Leongatha. Historically clubs and community organisations in Leongatha have provided purpose-built clubrooms and meeting rooms. These are managed by incorporated community groups, Section 86 committees of management, sports clubs, churches, and Council. Detailed mapping of current meeting rooms in Leongatha is not complete; however there appears to be many meeting spaces that are under-utilised.

Schools in Leongatha enhance the supply of larger halls and gymnasiums for community use out of school hours. School gymnasiums and halls are available for sports, dancing and music activities by the wider community. The construction of new school buildings in the education precinct has provided halls and gymnasiums within the new buildings while also providing an excellent site for community meetings and activities within the old primary school site. This site has a range of classrooms and a gymnasium in good condition for a range of user groups. This site is currently administered by Community College Gippsland, a registered training provider. Community College Gippsland allows the facilities to be used by a Men's Shed Group, Yooralla First Base, and a Taekwondo club and is open to the facilities being used by other group. A newly constructed Technical College also has classrooms available for use outside of class time.

The Daker's Centre and Memorial Hall are Council owned buildings that provide large venues for community meetings and events. Mesley Hall is located on a secondary school site has been used by community groups for concerts, events and theatre productions. With the construction of a new school this hall has been recommended for community use. These halls can be booked for events by the community. Their capacity is discussed in the attached table.



The community house and churches have smaller meeting rooms available for use. The availability of church meeting rooms can be limited due to funerals and other church services.

The Leongatha Library has its book collection on wheel away shelving allowing use of the library building as a meeting venue out of library hours. The West Gippsland Regional Library Service encourages the promotion of this capability of the library as a meeting space but requires adequate notice to prepare the area for this purpose.

### *Office meeting rooms*

Leongatha is the location for many organisations providing services to South Gippsland and into Bass Coast. Meeting room space for these organisations is mostly not provided within these offices. There is limited office style meeting rooms available for hire to external organisations.

Council has a range of business meeting rooms available to outside organisations for hire, however their availability is limited particularly on Wednesdays Council days. In addition to community meeting rooms discussed below, a business meeting room is

available at Uniting Care Gippsland and a 'boardroom' available for hire from a private provider.

## 9.4 Consultation

Consultation regarding public use of school buildings occurred in the planning of the school precinct. The need to maintain Mesley Hall as a public facility was strongly emphasised and accepted as part of the development. The West Gippsland Regional Library Service supports the use of the Leongatha Library as a venue for evening meetings with the capability of the book collection to be wheeled aside.



## 9.5 Future Demand

### *Community meeting rooms*

With regular maintenance, current community meeting rooms in Leongatha should meet community needs for the next 20 years. Outside of school and business hours, community members have a broad range of rooms and halls available for a range of activities. Many halls and meeting rooms have commercial grade kitchens which provide opportunities for catering and cooking activities. A coordinated listing of the rooms available would assist in the booking of the community rooms, halls and kitchens in Leongatha and may be managed by the Citizen's Advice Bureau and updated by the meeting room owners/managers.

### *Office meeting rooms*

With an increase in population in South Gippsland, more organisations may choose to establish offices in South Gippsland rather than service the area from Latrobe Valley or Melbourne. It is likely this office space would be located in Leongatha to allow a central location and liaison with other locally based organisations.



Planning to include meeting rooms within larger offices in Leongatha would be a desirable feature to reduce pressure on existing office meeting space.

### Barriers to efficient use of meeting rooms

Barriers to efficient use of meeting rooms are applicable to all towns including Leongatha and may include:

- Location of meeting rooms outside of the Leongatha Town Centre
- Lack of knowledge within broader community regarding cost, access and booking arrangements for current meeting rooms
- Perception by outside user groups that meeting rooms such as the Senior Citizens meeting rooms or Sporting club rooms are limited to use by those groups only
- Committees of management reluctant about sharing use and management of their meeting rooms
- Physical access of older buildings restrict use by older people and people with a disability
- Cost for use of some meeting rooms can be prohibitive for some groups
- Church based meeting rooms often have good quality meeting rooms, halls with stages and kitchens but are unavailable at short notice if there is a funeral
- Disrepair of some meeting rooms
- Insurance costs a deterrent to groups to make the rooms available for hiring

## 9.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. As such, general standards developed for more densely populated areas are not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns. The following should be considered as a guide only.

**TABLE 1: GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS FOR MEETING ROOMS**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Level 1 Meeting Space for Community Activities (local government, schools, churches, private-for-profit)</b> | 1 - 20 people (30m <sup>2</sup> )<br>21 – 50 people<br>51 – 100 people<br>101- 200 people (400m <sup>2</sup> ) |
| <b>Level 3 Community or Government Secondary College</b>  | <b>200+ people (400m<sup>2</sup>)</b>  |

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<sup>37</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority.



## Recommendations

### Business meeting rooms

Planning for new offices in Leongatha should include allocation of meeting rooms for business meetings to cater for up to 20 people. New community members wishing to arrange events will require information about the range of community facilities available in Leongatha. A central registry of available community meeting rooms and current contact details and conditions of use would assist community members in arranging events in Leongatha therefore providing increased opportunity for community interaction between existing and new community members. Sporting and community clubs with meeting rooms and halls have the opportunity to benefit from promotion of their facilities for use by the broader community, attracting hire fees to support the clubs.

### Shared facilities

The provision of facilities for single group use is inefficient and costly for maintenance. Combined use of halls and meeting rooms provides increase income for hire fees and increased opportunities for interaction and partnerships between user groups. A broader range of users results in a greater group from which to invite participation in committees

of management. A committee of management which is representative of all users of a facility can be drawn from a larger group and has potential to represent a greater selection of the community in both age and skills.



<sup>38</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008

## 10 EDUCATION, LEARNING AND LIBRARIES

### 10.1 Introduction

Leongatha is a local and regional education centre for South Gippsland. Government, independent and catholic schools are located in Leongatha catering for primary and secondary students. Tertiary education options include GippsTAFE, located in a new purpose built facility opened for the 2011 year and Community College Gippsland located on the old primary school site. Gippsland Southern Health Service hosts Monash University nursing courses. South Gippsland Specialist School is located in the town and caters for children with disability, some children sharing their time between the specialist school and state school. The West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation has its principal library for the area at Leongatha.



A Commonwealth Government initiative to establish a trade training centre based in Leongatha has received funding approval. Virtual training opportunities in partnership between schools and registered training organisations will deliver training in identified regional skill shortages. In the case of South Gippsland those trades are Building and Construction, Automotive, Agriculture and Horticulture.

The infrastructure types described in this section are:

- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- Libraries
- Adult education and community training
- Trade training centre
- Local Learning and Employment Network

Kindergarten and Childcare is described in the Early Years chapter of this document.

### 10.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

Schools as Community Facilities The Victorian Government has released guidelines designed to help government schools and communities develop partnerships around sharing school facilities. The guidelines discuss the benefit of entering into a sharing agreement and provide information on the legal framework that surrounds this type of agreement.

People Places – A guide to public library buildings in New South Wales 2000 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) The West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation has adopted a service model based on the NSW benchmarks.

### 10.3 Current Provision

Leongatha has two combined (P- 12) schools, the South Coast Christian College and South Gippsland Specialist School. There are two primary schools, one state primary

school, and one catholic primary school. Secondary schools include Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College and Leongatha Secondary College.

Leongatha Primary School, Leongatha Secondary College, South Gippsland Specialist School and GippsTAFE are located on a 56 acre education precinct in Ogilvy Street. The catholic primary school is located 200 metres towards town from the education precinct. The Christian School, Regional College Catholic College and Community College all located within 1 kilometre of the education precinct. The Regional Catholic College is also located on a 55 acre site with the Christian School adjacent. Some classes are shared between the two schools. Schools provide significant playing field facilities for the broader community. These are discussed further in this document in the chapter Sport and Recreation.

The South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and Employment Network supporting young people to transition from school to employment is based in Leongatha.

The Leongatha Library is located on the corner of Smith Street and Michael Place opening 6 days per week. Community College Gippsland and GippsTAFE are registered training providers of adult and community education in Leongatha. Community education is also available from Leongatha Community House within the central business district.





## Schools

TABLE 1: LEONGATHA SCHOOLS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

| SCHOOL NAME                              | SCHOOL TYPE        | SECTOR      | NUMBER OF STUDENTS |
|--|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Leongatha Primary School                 | Primary (P- 6)     | government  | 557                |
| Leongatha Secondary School               | Secondary (7 – 12) | government  | 475                |
| Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College | Secondary (7 – 12) | catholic    | 520                |
| South Coast Christian College            | Combined (P-12)    | independent | 134                |
| South Gippsland Specialist School        | Specialist         | government  | 46                 |
| St Laurence O’Toole Primary School       | Primary (P-6)      | catholic    | 186                |

Source<sup>39</sup>

Some students living outside of Leongatha attend the government and catholic primary schools. Mary MacKillop draws students from South Gippsland and Bass Coast local government areas. Students from Leongatha also attend Newhaven College on Phillip Island, St Paul’s College in Warragul and some boarding schools in Melbourne.

## Library

Leongatha Library is located on the corner of Michael Place and Smith Streets Leongatha. The library service is provided through a Service Agreement between the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation (WGRLC) and South Gippsland, Baw Baw and Bass Coast Shire Councils. The current Leongatha Library has 361m<sup>2</sup> public access space and does not meet the recommendations for allocation of space.<sup>40</sup> People Places 2000 provides for a hierarchy of facilities adopted by WGRLC: Principal – provides service to the whole municipality and supports services from other small libraries. Leongatha is the Principal library in South Gippsland. There are also Community level services, Neighbourhood level services and a mobile library service in South Gippsland.



<sup>39</sup> Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) accessed 5 July 2012

<sup>40</sup> State Library of New South Wales, 2011, *People Places: A guide for public libraries in New South Wales*; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Sydney.

The Friends of the Leongatha Library has been established for 21 years and raises funds, carry out volunteer duties and support and promote of library services

Libraries offer the space, resources and programs to support learning opportunities for all. In addition to providing free internet connection and loans, the Leongatha Library offers eReader and tablet classes Baby Rhyme Time and Story Time. The Leongatha collection has recently been placed on wheeled shelves to allow the library to be used as an after-hours meeting venue. Currently the West Gippsland Library has 38% of the population as members and aims to reach 40% of the population as members by 2015.<sup>41</sup>

The report Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries; A study of socio economic value of libraries (2011) indicates current spending in Victoria on library services is \$36 per person per year.<sup>42</sup> This report highlights Victorian public libraries return \$3.56 for every \$1 spent.

### *Post-Secondary Education*

Monash University and Gippsland Southern Health Service provide nursing training at the hospital in Leongatha.

Online and virtual classrooms are used by secondary and post-secondary education providers based in Leongatha. Classes are taught between secondary schools by a teacher based in Leongatha linking with students located in their own school settings in another town. GippsTAFE and Monash University Gippsland deliver distance education to students based in Leongatha using online resources and virtual blackboards. Funding for a trade training centre using teleconferencing to deliver trade training in partnership between schools and registered training organisations will be based in Leongatha.

South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) is based in Leongatha and aims to help improve education, training and employment options for young people aged 10-19 years. LLENs work particularly to assist those at risk of making poor transitions from compulsory schooling to the next stage of their lives and careers. LLENs continue to be managed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN covers both Bass Coast and South Gippsland and provides programs and opportunities to connect employers, education and training providers, government groups, agencies and individuals to help turn business and community needs and ideas into new and innovative programs for young people. The South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN is involved in the funding and establishment of a trade training centre based in Leongatha.

### *South Gippsland Trade Training Centre*

Funding has been approved for the South Gippsland Trade Training Centre (TTC) with purpose built Heavy Vehicle automotive training facilities at the Leongatha

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<sup>41</sup> West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation, *Library Plan 2012 - 2016*

<sup>42</sup> SGS Economics & Planning, 2011, *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries*, State Library of Victoria, p.3.



Secondary College. The Trade Training Centre Program is a Commonwealth Government initiative to establish trade training facilities for schools in areas of identified regional skill shortages. Leongatha Secondary College, Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College and Cairo Christian School are trade training partners.

The South Gippsland TTC will comprise a multi-site model for distributed delivery of four industry areas:

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Building and Construction
- Automotive.

These industry areas have been identified by the South Gippsland Shire and industry partners as requiring skills development and are projected to undergo further growth.

The distributed model designed for this TTC will involve the use of training hubs from where programs will be delivered. Each school site will receive the theory aspects of this training, along with appropriate practical aspects, via the ICT platform. Where complex practical aspects of the training are required, students will visit the training hubs for face-to-face training.

Each school will be equipped (where required) with equipment and facilities to ensure that both theory and practical components of the courses can be undertaken in the home school where appropriate.

A blended delivery model will be developed that includes instruction via the ICT platform, practical work in the home school (or nearby facility) and with occasional practical sessions at the RTO, particularly for complex practical tasks.

Existing automotive training facilities at Leongatha Secondary College will be expanded to accommodate Heavy Vehicle automotive – a skill need identified by business partners. A local RTO in Korumburra, Apprenticeships Group Australia will be expanded to accommodate larger numbers of students undertaking Carpentry, and to incorporate Plumbing and Electrotechnology into the range of programs this region can offer.



Agriculture and horticulture will be delivered via the ICT platform from two RTOs. Each school will have upgraded facilities and equipment to ensure much of the theory and practical can be achieved via the ICT platform. Where it is required students can also attend face-to-face practical sessions at the training hubs.

The South Gippsland Trade Training Centre will be a “virtual” Centre. Like many rural and regional areas the delivery of trade training is restricted because of

small numbers across many locations and limited transport options for students to access training organisations. Funding will be used to upgrade existing training facilities and these will then be connected to all secondary schools through the installation of video conferencing facilities. Trade training will be delivered through a blended learning approach.

### *Adult and Community Education*

Community College Gippsland, GippsTAFE and Leongatha Community House provide adult and community education in Leongatha. Community College Gippsland is a registered training provider located on the old primary school site. Co-located with Community College Gippsland is Yooralla First Base. Yooralla First Base provides day and employment support to people with a disability.

GippsTAFE is located in the education precinct with the Leongatha Secondary School, Leongatha Primary School and South Gippsland Specialist School. The new campus opened in January 2011 offers modern infrastructure and facilities alongside a variety of innovative training and educational programs designed and implemented to support the needs of industries and individuals from the South Gippsland region. These programs include Automotive, Administration, Aged Care, Community and Disability Services, Children's Services, Hair and Beauty, Hospitality, Health, Nursing and Training and Education.



The GippsTAFE Campus features a purpose built training kitchen and restaurant, training salon for hairdressing and beauty therapy and specialised nursing rooms. It also features interactive learning spaces and expanded computer facilities, an enhanced learning resource centre and library.

Leongatha Community House is located on in the central business district close to shops. Accredited training in first aid and food safety are provided. General interest courses, information technology, art and craft and computer and internet access are provided. With the location of welfare and community service offices in Leongatha some of the counselling and community services provided in community houses in neighbouring towns are not provided in the Leongatha community house.

The Leongatha University of the Third Age U3A meets in people's homes and at Community College Gippsland on a Friday. U3As are learning co-operatives for older people, which encourage healthy ageing by enabling members to share in many educational, social and creative activities.

## 10.4 Consultation

The Catholic Diocese of Sale is has undertaken strategic planning for increased student population for St Laurence’s Primary School and Mary Regional Catholic College in the future. Mary MacKillop College has students from across South Gippsland and from the Bass Coast where populations are also increasing. The Department of Education and Early Childhood development have identified the growth in young people under the age of 17 in strategic planning for the town. A new construction is currently underway to replace the Leongatha Secondary College. This is the final new building in the education precinct following the Specialist School, Primary School and GippsTAFE rebuilds.

A meeting was conducted with the Friends of the Leongatha Library who discussed the diverse range of activities expected from the modern library and the space limitations of the current facility to provide this diversity. A submission to this plan recommended that a larger library be part of the town infrastructure by 2024.

## 10.5 Future Demand

In 2021, the most populous forecast age group in Leongatha will be 5-9 year olds, with 466 persons. The number of people aged under 15 is forecast to increase by 397 (42.0%), representing a rise in the proportion of the population to 20.0%. The number of people aged over 65 is expected to increase by 517 (54.0%), and represent 22.0% of the population by 2021.

The age group which is forecast to have the largest proportional increase (relative to its population size) by 2021 is 70-74 year olds, who are forecast to increase by 105.0% to 369 persons. The older population of Leongatha will grow with the existing residents and those moving into town from city areas for a rural lifestyle. The community house and registered training organisations cater for the range of learning needs of the older population in Leongatha. Allowance will need to be made for increased participation in the university of the third age (U3A) or similar education opportunities for the older population.

### Schools

Leongatha has a broad range of schools catering for the needs of the local and regional communities. The Regional Catholic College and Leongatha Secondary College attract students from neighbouring towns. There is a tendency for students move between the secondary schools depending on the availability of subjects for senior



students with some senior classes shared between the adjacent Catholic Regional College and Christian School. GippsTAFE provides opportunity for secondary school students undertaking Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) to complete some studies in the TAFE environment.

With large grounds for both Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College and the Leongatha Education Precinct, there is ample space for most schools in Leongatha to meet the need for increased student enrolments over the next 20 - 30 years. Leongatha is fortunate to have new facilities for the Specialist School, Primary School, Secondary School and TAFE on the education precinct site.

St Laurence O'Toole Primary School is the only school within the town with any space constraints. The Diocese of Sale is directing planning for future schools in Gippsland to South Gippsland. With the extensive space available at Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College, the option of accommodating St Laurence O'Toole Primary School on the same site is possible. With increasing enrolments at the primary school, grades 5 and 6 could relocate to the Regional College site. This school has a recently completed hall providing increased indoor space for sport and entertainment for the school and community.

## Library

The West Gippsland Regional Library Service Library Plan 2013-2017 recognises the significant number of holiday homes being turned into permanent dwellings, with people retiring to the coast and country. Retirees are a core market for the library and tend to be high users, putting greater pressure on stock.<sup>43</sup>



The plan continues to recognise that as the population increases, there are also some population shifts, with larger towns growing in size and smaller ones shrinking. The increased mobility of the population means that where some areas were previously thought of as 'remote', people are now regularly driving into town to shop, which adds an additional element to any planning around services. With such a massive influx of potential new users over the next 10 years, it is vital that libraries research, monitor and respond to the changing requirements of those who want to use our library service.

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<sup>43</sup> West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation, *Library Plan 2011 - 2015*



It is planned that the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation work with Council to develop a concept plan for a new Principal Library located in Leongatha. Future library planning aims to create library spaces that are multi-functional community hubs. There is strong support for the notion of the library as a community hub or 'piazza', co-located with other Council/community services and/or a café or other traffic-generating commercial enterprises.

The changing needs of older people have been considered where this increasingly computer literate group may require services at home. For early years and youth and the introduction of e-books, digital libraries and user created content will be highly relevant as will the blurring of lines between recreation and study areas. The community requirement for both physical and virtual space has been considered and the capacity of public libraries to meet the individual and community expectations for technology into the future questioned.

Modern libraries include a variety of spaces catering for the needs of the different users. Tutoring space, study space, noisy and quiet spaces are needed for the range of uses necessary for a library. Private, small spaces where people can meet and discuss issues without others hearing is needed. Ideally specific spaces for upper primary and teenagers would include places to meet tutors after school, provide quiet study space with electronic connection. Increasingly there is also need for specialist areas such as an editing suite for music and film, a place to play electronic games which involve whole body movements or a 'making space' for craft activities for all ages.

### *Adult and community education*

The old primary school site provides an ideal location for a range of adult education opportunities through Community College Gippsland, Yooralla First Base, the Leongatha Men's Shed and U3A. There is adequate space for indoor and outdoor activities for future training needs. A commercial kitchen and substantial outdoor space provides opportunities for food related community and training opportunities. GippsTAFE facilities provide specialist training areas for hospitality, hair and beauty and information technology courses that will meet the needs of the South Gippsland community for the next 20 years.





## 10.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. As such, general standards developed for more densely populated areas are not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns. Provision of education services and facilities for aged and disability should consider availability of accessible public facilities within a town the size of Leongatha. The Community College Gippsland site is ideal for these purposes.

The following planning criteria have been applied by State Government in growth areas <sup>44</sup> to define provision of education services:

### *Schools and Adult Education*

**TABLE 2: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY HOUSE GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Primary Schools</b>                   | 1 school to 8,000 – 10,000 people = 1 primary school / 3,000 households  |
| <b>Catholic Primary School</b>           | 1 school to 18,000 people  |
| <b>Secondary Schools</b>                 | 1 school to 25,000 – 30,000 people = 1 secondary school / 9,000 households   |
| <b>Catholic Secondary School</b>         | 1 school to 58,000 people  |
| <b>Independent non-government school</b> | 1 school to 40,000 people  |
| <b>Government Specialist School</b>      | 1 school to 55,000+ people   |
| <b>Community House</b>                   | Meeting spaces that include component elements of larger community facilities. Floor and land areas required will depend on the type and range of activities to be accommodated but should include 1 – 2 dedicated rooms for private counseling services, multi-purpose training rooms with internet access, multi-purpose meeting rooms with internet access that can be used for training, physical activity groups, with wet and dry areas. |
| <b>Library</b>                           | Provide library services from facilities that are centrally located, highly visible, close to activity centres and compliant with National standards (People Places 2012) as a minimum. Include the provision of community meeting spaces and incorporate the recommendations of the Statewide Library Building Audit.   |

<sup>44</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority.

## Best Practice

International, Commonwealth and state policy direction encourages the development of integrated hubs which support the co-location and/or integration of services. These can include education hubs, sporting hubs or community hubs. Hubs provide multiple spaces clustered together on one site servicing the neighbourhood / district / sub-region / region.

Hubs allow different people to meet and interact and create a focal point for activity. They bring people together and build a sense of place. They increase efficiencies in the built form and provide better return on infrastructure costs by enabling multiple service providers to share facilities over and increase range of hours.

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## Recommendations

### Schools

The education precinct for public education in Leongatha is a best practice approach to provision of services. The possible co-location of Catholic primary and regional college on the same site continues this approach. The Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) and Catholic Education office are responsible for the allocation of services on existing sites in Leongatha for primary, secondary education and specialist education. The responsiveness of Leongatha schools to fluctuating student populations will remain an annual calculation to balance student numbers with provision of adequate teaching and administration staff. St Laurence O'Toole Primary School has limited space for growth on their current site for both school buildings and play space. Investigation of co-location with Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College could be considered to accommodate increased student enrolments.

### Adult Education

Coordination between providers of adult education in Leongatha is required. A list of courses available from all providers in the town that includes method of delivery, time and venue would allow prospective students with the ability to choose the option which best suits them locally prior to looking outside the area. Comprehensive information about local training has potential to keep adult students within the town supporting local business.

Planning for location of a future Leongatha library in a community or education hub is within current practice for library planning. Siting of a new library should be in a prominent position within the central business area that is readily accessible to the

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<sup>45</sup> S Rossiter, 2007, *Feasibility Study of Community Hubs for the Parramatta Local Government Area- Briefing Paper*, Elton Consulting, Bondi Junction.

community. Potential to locate the Library within a community hub and service centre provides improved access to a broader range of services. Increased space for community activities within the library can maximise the value of a facility that is supervised by library staff during extended business hours.

### *Technology*

The introduction of the National Broadband Network will assist in the advancement of on-line learning and remotely delivered education, particularly in post-secondary education. This will provide opportunity to link secondary school virtual classrooms maximizing staffing across schools and increasing subject availability at VCE and VCAL level. Distance education will be enhanced by faster upload and download internet speeds. The library service relies on fast internet at both permanent venues and mobile sites with the principal library in Leongatha providing a venue for many community members to access the internet for research and pleasure. The provision of this service should be maintained at the highest standard available.

### *Library*

At 361m<sup>2</sup> for public access, the current library at Leongatha has limited space for the current community to use the library in the variety of ways required. The Leongatha library services the needs of many people beyond the immediate population of Leongatha. There is limited opportunity for growth on the current site necessitating investigation of an alternative library site. A new library site would ideally continue to be located within the heart of the business area in a shared use facility and would allow a variety of meeting areas of round 2000m<sup>2</sup>. Its co-location with a civic / council facility with community services, the citizens' advice bureau, art gallery or community house is possible.

Alternatives currently within Leongatha include redevelopment of the 'Carino's site', temporary location in vacant shops in Bair Street or a new building on the old rail yards. A point of high public exposure is a key siting consideration for libraries. A well-designed, purpose built library in a shared use facility has potential to meet the needs of the Leongatha community for 30 to 50 years.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF CURRENT EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE            | MAIN PROVIDER   | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL   | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED  |
|--|---|--|---|
| Leongatha Primary Primary School         | DEECD land and building maintenance                       | Education precinct 56 acres  | Continue on current site  |
| Leongatha Secondary College              | DEECD – land and building maintenance                     | Education precinct. New buildings to be completed 2013.  | Continue on current site  |
| St Laurence O’Toole Primary School       | Diocese of Sale   | Buildings located next to catholic church owned by Diocese of Sale                                       | Consider co-location with Mary MacKillop College  |
| Mary Mackillop Regional catholic college | Diocese of Sale   | 55 acre site   | Consider inclusion of Catholic primary school on site   |
| South Coast Christian School             | A non-denominational Christian Parent Controlled School   | A parent managed Christian school - Cairo Christian school from 2014                                     | Continued model   |
| Leongatha Community House                | Community house   | House Bruce street Leongath  | In or adjacent to Community College Gippsland   |
| Leongatha library                        | West Gippsland Regional Library                           | West Gippsland Regional Library is funded by 3 local governments and state government.                   | Prominent location in central business area either as an individual building or as part of multipurpose building. |
| Post- Secondary                          | GippsTAFE, Community College Gippsland, Monash University | Registered training organizations  | Current models  |
| U3A                                      | U3A Leongatha   | Courses delivered from a variety of venues including RSL, Community College Gippsland and members’ homes | Single site with other providers possibly Community House, Community College Gippsland or Men’s Shed              |

## 11 HEALTH SERVICES

### 11.1 Introduction

The rural health care system consists of a diverse range of public, private and not-for-profit services. Leongatha is well serviced by a broad range of public and private health services. Leongatha hospital is currently being redeveloped with completion expected by the end of 2013. The new hospital will provide acute and allied health services.



Private medical centres, maternal and child health services, counselling, ambulance, private allied health services, district nursing services, immunisation services, aged care services and residential aged care are all provided within the town. Many people travel into Leongatha for health services and visiting specialists. Referrals out of Leongatha for health are to Latrobe Regional Hospital, Melbourne metropolitan hospitals, Warragul and Wonthaggi.

Description of aged care services including residential aged care are described in the Aged and Disability chapter of this report.

### 11.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

Health services in Leongatha are provided by public and private health providers. The Victorian Government is responsible for delivering a wide range of health services to the community. This is achieved through planning, policy development, funding and regulation of health service providers and activities which promote and protect Victorians' health, including:

- Health care services through public hospitals, community health services, ambulance services, dental services and public mental health, drug and alcohol services
- Residential and community care for older people, support and provide assistance to enable people to function independently in their own homes, positive ageing programs, healthy and active living programs and seniors cards
- Health promotion and protection through emergency management, public health and related preventative services, education and public health regulation

The Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012 – 2022 Rural and Regional Plan provides the blueprint for the planning and development priorities for the Victorian



healthcare system. The plan addresses the health system; workforce recruitment, development and training; service integration and governance.

The Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011 – 2015 provides a framework and priorities for preventative health. The plan aims to *'improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians by engaging communities in prevention, and by strengthening systems for health protection, health promotion and preventative healthcare across all sectors and all levels of government.'*<sup>46</sup> The plan has nine priority areas and four priority settings in which to work. These are local communities and environments, workplaces, early childhood and education settings and health services.

The Draft Gippsland Regional Plan 2013 is a long-term strategic plan that aims to manage the emerging challenges in the Gippsland region to shape a successful future. Priority six, Health and Wellbeing is one of 10 priority areas and identifies the need to *'Improve the health and wellbeing of a range of people in Gippsland who currently have below average health status'*.<sup>47</sup>

Support networks exist for primary and community health in Victoria. These include Primary Care Partnerships which are a State funded voluntary alliance of health organizations. They work in partnership with health promotion, service coordination and integrated chronic disease management. Council and most health services and social welfare services located in Leongatha are members of the South Coast Primary Care Partnership, delivering shared projects that support the South Gippsland and Bass Coast communities.

Gippsland Medicare Local is an organization that supports integrated provision of private, primary health in Gippsland. General practices and private allied health providers are supported in service provision and training by the Gippsland Medicare Local which is primarily funded by the Australian government.

### 11.3 Current Provision

Council services funded by the Department of Health include Home and Community Care (HACC), Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and immunisation. Council HACC services are described in Aged and Disability section of this report.

Leongatha is a service hub for people living in the shire. Key services that people travel into Leongatha for include gynaecology, general surgery and ENT services. It has been reported that people travel to Leongatha from the outer suburbs of Melbourne to avoid waiting lists for some specialist services in metropolitan public hospitals. Transport into Leongatha is primarily through private vehicles (95%) with community transport providing the remainder. Travel time to Leongatha from the catchment takes around 15 – 30 minutes with some people travelling up to an hour.

Travelling out of Leongatha for health services is common. Wonthaggi receives referrals from Leongatha for dermatology, ophthalmology and cardiology if the

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<sup>46</sup> Department of Health, 2011, *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011-2015*, Prevention and Population Health Branch, Melbourne, p1

<sup>47</sup> Gippsland Regional Plan Project Control Group, 2010, *Gippsland Regional Plan*, p16

patient lives close to Wonthaggi. Paediatric patients are generally referred to Warragul where there are many specialists providing services. The majority of patients referred out of Leongatha are sent to Latrobe Regional Hospital, 73km from Leongatha with others transported to Dandenong and Monash hospitals, 1 ½ hours from Leongatha.

### *Immunisation*

Immunisation services are provided by Council and medical centres for all of the community according to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines. Council provides immunisation services in the Uniting Church Hall, Peart Street, Leongatha on the first Tuesday of each month. This service is for children aged 2 months to 4 years and adults. Secondary school immunisations are provided at the Leongatha Secondary School annually. The Council immunisation team also provides education to the community. Medical centres provide immunisations by appointment.

### *Maternal and Child Health*

Maternal and Child Health Services are provided at the Leongatha Children's Centre, Symmons Street Leongatha. The service is provided Mondays 8.30 – 12 noon, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and alternate Fridays 8.30 – 4.30. An Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Program is available via referral from the Maternal and Child Health nurse. Families most likely to benefit from this program are mothers with post-natal depression, significant parent/infant bonding issues, teenage parents, mothers with physical or intellectual disabilities, families with multiple births or other special needs.

### *Leongatha Hospital*

Gippsland South Health Service (GSHS) operates two hospitals with the main campus at Leongatha and a secondary location in Korumburra, 15km to the west. The Leongatha hospital provides specialist general acute, minor surgical, urgent care, aged and residential, allied health and community services. The hospital is located in Koonwarra Road and is managed by Gippsland Southern Health Service. The hospital was redeveloped and a new hospital completed at the end of 2013. The new Leongatha Memorial Hospital provides:

- 25 multiday acute beds (including maternity)
- Ten same day acute beds
- Two beds for palliative care



- A dedicated emergency/urgent care facility
- Obstetric Procedures suite
- Operating theatre and procedure room
- Medical imaging
- Pathology
- Central sterile supply department.

The redevelopment has also provided facilities for Community/Primary health care, education, administration and support services (kitchen, laundry, staff cafeteria and stores). The overall floor space of the new building is approximately 6350 square metres. The nearest regional hospital is located in Traralgon approximately 73km from Leongatha.

### *Visiting Specialists*

Specialist services in Leongatha are provided by visiting doctors through the Leongatha hospital. All specialist services available in Leongatha are provided on a visiting basis. Visiting services are supported by the hospital through fee for low cost use of consulting rooms and operating theatres as well as MBS payments for services provided. Visiting specialists are closely integrated with the operations of the hospital with much of the administration handled by the hospital.

Visiting medical services include: dermatology; general surgeon/endoscopist; endocrinologist; gynaecology; Ear Nose and Throat /head and neck surgeon; neurologist; ophthalmologist; orthopaedic surgeon; paediatrics; physician; psychiatrist; surgical assistant; urology; and sports physician.

### *Allied Health*

Allied health services in Leongatha are provided by public and private providers. Gippsland Southern Health Service (GSHS) provides allied health services including alcohol and drug, antenatal clinic, audiology, dietetics, diabetes education, continence nurse, cardiac rehabilitation, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, social work, needle syringe program, speech pathology and stomal therapy. GSHS also provides planned activity groups and chair based exercise groups in the Dakers Centre.



A range of district nursing services are provided by GSHS in the home. District nursing services provide aged, frail and housebound residents to monitor health and assist with administering medication. Health promotion programs focusing on access to healthy and affordable food are delivered across the GSHS catchment including the Leongatha community.

Private health service providers include allied health and alternative and complementary therapies. These include but are not limited to dentistry, psychology, physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic, audiology, pilates, massage therapy, myotherapy and podiatry.

Leongatha is the main health service centre for the district with a variety of many health services provided. There are two pharmacists providing with limited, shared Sunday opening hours, specifically for filling prescriptions. There are also two optometrists, four dentists and two denture clinics. There are three physiotherapists, three chiropractic clinics, two podiatrists, and a range of alternative therapists.

### *Doctors and Primary Health*

Leongatha Healthcare Three clinics are located at Koonwarra Road Leongatha, Jeffrey Street Leongatha and Reilly Street Inverloch. An emergency clinic is available Saturday mornings at the Koonwarra Road clinic. A youth access clinic is available Monday afternoons from the Jeffrey Street clinic. Doctors service the Leongatha campus of Gippsland Southern Health Service, the hospital and two aged care clinics, Koorooman House and Woorayl Lodge in Leongatha. The hospital relies on doctors from this practice for their urgent care service on a fee for service basis.

Long Street Family Medicine Is located within 1 km of the town centre. Bulk billing is available and the clinic is open weekdays and Saturday mornings.

### *Carer Support*

The South Gippsland Shire Council provides carer support as part of their Home and Community Care Program. Carer support programs including Commonwealth Respite and Carelink, planned overnight respite and dementia education and carers program. Case management for aged care services is provided by the HACC response unit, disability services including Auslan interpreter service, flexible support packages and veterans' home care. The Department of Veterans Affairs has an office in Leongatha.

### *Consultation*

Discussion has occurred with the Manager Community Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service. Gippsland Southern Health Service has considered the services necessary in Leongatha, Nyora and Leongatha and the potential for growth in the populations of these towns. A review by Gippsland Southern Health Service of district nursing, allied health, community health and health promotion services have informed plans for increased services and highlighted the need for increased funding in this sector.

## 11.4 Future Demand

In response to people living longer and implementing self management of chronic diseases at home, Council's role in provision of services may further diversify into partnerships with health services for delivery of support programs for people with specific conditions. There is a precedent established for partnerships between council, health services and Gippsport for planned activity groups and health promotion programs.

It will remain necessary for people to be referred out of Leongatha for surgical and specialist services only available at Latrobe Regional Hospital or in metropolitan Melbourne. Leongatha will remain the service centre for the district with an increasing range and number of services provided by public and private health providers.

The new Leongatha hospital will provide new facilities for visiting specialists including surgeons. It is expected that attracting and recruiting additional specialists to Leongatha will be enhanced by the improved facilities that will be available in the new hospital. Visiting services to Leongatha hospital will continue to rely on the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program. This program provides payments for over half of the visiting specialist services to Leongatha hospital. Their integration with local health services is valuable and will continue as demand increases.

While the current visiting specialist services meet the major priorities of the community there are some additional specialities and levels of service identified as required for the larger population across South Gippsland. These include neurology/neurosurgery, orthopaedics, psychiatry, breast surgery, paediatric surgery, cardiology and gastroenterology. High risk paediatrics and gynaecology have also been identified as required in Leongatha.

Services provided in the home will experience increased demand as the population of Leongatha increases and people live longer and manage chronic diseases effectively. Demand on acute health, primary health, community and social services will increase for Leongatha residents and those from across South Gippsland and Bass Coast who use Leongatha as a service hub. A detailed description of the needs for aged and disability services that includes home and community care and meals on wheels is described in the [Aged and Disability](#) chapter in this document.



Immunisation for school aged children including secondary school children will remain a priority with a large number of 0 – 4 year olds moving through the system over the next 15 years. Gradual growth in younger families moving to Leongatha will require forward planning for maternal and child health services and immunisation services for children under 5 year olds. Services for children in this age group are described further in the chapter [Early Years Services](#).

### Best Practice

A systems approach should be adopted and is important for achieving responsive, person centred care over time through the different stages of disease progression. The Wagner Model for improving chronic illness care was developed by the MacColl Institute for Healthcare Innovation (USA) and has been endorsed by the Victorian Department of Health as the model for guiding Integrated Chronic Disease Management initiative in Victoria. It aims to provide a framework that helps to identify the systems changes necessary to improve the coordination of care for people with chronic disease. Evidence indicates that people who participate in chronic disease management programs have a better quality of life experience fewer complications are more likely to remain in their own home and reduce their overall use of health care resources.

## 11.5 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

TABLE 1: INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS FOR HEALTH

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Community Based Health Precinct</b> | 1 to 50,000 people  |
| <b>Level 3 Health Centre</b>           | 1 to 50,000 people – 100,000 people (includes GP care, nursing, some specialist care, access to diagnostic, procedural and observation facilities)  |
| <b>Level 2 Health Centre</b>           | 1 to 10,000 – 50,000 people (includes services such as drug and alcohol services, counselling services, community nursing, allied health services and integrated health promotion and primary prevention) |

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While the above service benchmarks indicate Leongatha has high level of health care provision these growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only and in reference to neighbouring health services provided in Leongatha, Wonthaggi and Latrobe Hospitals.

<sup>48</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority, April.

<sup>49</sup> Aged, Community and Mental Health, 2000, *Literature Review of Effective Models and Interventions for Chronic Disease Management in the Primary Care Sector*, Department of Human Services

## *Recommendations*

### *Increased capacity for acute and primary care*

The new Leongatha hospital facility and an additional medical practice will provide increased capacity for acute and primary care. An increased number of some specialist services and an increased range in the specialist services provided in Leongatha will ensure that Leongatha remains a health service hub for the broader area.

### *Visiting allied health service in private practice*

Increasingly doctor's practices are providing visiting allied health services within the practice. As private businesses the range and frequency of visiting services will be based on economic viability and patient demand. The need to provide doctors to the urgent care service at the hospital is a burden on Leongatha Healthcare when attracting and retaining new doctors to the area. While extended hours doctors services to the local community is currently served on an 'as needs' basis by this arrangement, consideration for funding for a more permanent after hours service may need to be considered in the long term. The need for a more permanent service will best be monitored by the hospital and Leongatha Healthcare.

Allied health services will continue to be delivered from specialised public and private facilities with increasing opportunities for delivery of some services from community facilities. Office space in the town will continue to be in demand for pharmacy, dental, podiatry and alternative health services for Leongatha residents and for people visiting the town.

### *Self-help health groups*

Health focused self-help groups are likely to increase in number and may require assistance in their establishment from Council, public health and primary health services. Venues to host the group may be in community centres, doctor's practices or community health facilities. There are currently a broad number of self-help health groups that meet in Leongatha facilitated by GSHS, Leongatha Healthcare and private service providers.

Health promotion and illness prevention activities include addressing the determinants of health which influence the Leongatha community. The health of the community can be maintained through the provision of a connected footpath system and open space for walking and active transport, opportunities for community members to come together socially to participate in shared interests and provision of healthy and affordable food. The priorities of healthy eating, physical activity and mental health and wellbeing are currently being addressed by shared work of Council and local health services via Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing and Health Promotion Plans.

## *Home based care*

Home based care and support services will be required to plan for an increased demand for services it cater for an increase in the older population and more people remaining in the home. As more people approach old age and develop self-management skills to manage chronic disease they will remain independent and continue living at home. Health provision costs can be expected to move from acute settings such as hospitals into community and outreach service settings. Advocacy for funding in these areas should be strongly supported.

## *Leongatha Hospital – Acute and allied health*

Continued planning for delivery of health services in the existing hospital system on the current site should include plans for expansion of beds and in-patient services. Community health services could be delivered in multi-use community facilities where planned activity groups, self-help support groups and physical activity groups may be offered.

Opportunities for a range of social activities within multi-use community facilities that are accessible to people of all abilities should be offered. There are currently a broad number of groups that meet in Leongatha which will possibly include more health focused self-help groups requiring some support from Council and other service providers. Further detail on community meeting places and models is available in this document, Chapter [Community Meeting Spaces](#).



TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED HEALTH SERVICES FOR LEONGATHA

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE  | MAIN PROVIDER                                     | CURRENT AND MODEL   | SERVICE FACILITY        | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED                           |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| Acute hospital<br>Community health<br>Allied health<br>Counselling<br>Visiting specialist services<br>Outside users as below | Gippsland Southern Health Service                 | Hospital consulting for specialists<br>Radiology, allied health, community health           | with rooms for visiting | Increased of service provision to meet the changing community needs                  |
| District nursing service   | Gippsland Southern Health Service                 | Home visit  |                         | Current service model expanded to meet population need limited by funding allocation |
| Private General Practice   | Leongatha Healthcare<br>Long Street Family Clinic | Stand alone clinics<br>Bulk billing clinic  |                         | Retain current services expand to meet current need.                                 |
| Immunisation   | South Gippsland Shire Council                     | Leongatha meeting rooms 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday each month<br>Secondary school as scheduled |                         | Investigate service at Leongatha Children's Centre as Early Years hub                |
| Maternal and child health  | South Gippsland Shire Council                     | Mon 8.30 – 12noon<br>Tue, Wed, Thur and alternate Fri<br>8.30 – 4.30                        |                         | Expanded hours to meet needs of increased births x 1.5%                              |
| Private allied and complementary health  | Range of private providers                        | Consulting rooms operating hours  |                         | Current model  |
| South west community mental health service   | Latrobe Community Health Service Korumburra       | Outreach service on phone triage  |                         | Retail current model of deliver  |

## 12 LAW AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

### 12.1 Introduction and Definition

Councils are required under Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act 1986 to undertake municipal emergency management, response, recovery and relief activities that include:

- Establishing a municipal emergency management planning committee (MEMPC)
- Facilitate the development and maintenance of an emergency management plan by this committee and to allow its audit
- Appoint a municipal emergency resource officer to coordinate the use of council resources for emergency response and recovery.

All emergency services are provided by the public sector with support from community organizations and individuals. The fire services property levy funds the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and Country Fire Authority (CFA) and is collected with Council rates under the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012.

This section describes law and emergency services in Leongatha including:

- Ambulance
- Fire
- Police
- State Emergency Service
- Legal services

### 12.2 Policy and Relevant Council Documents and Plans

South Gippsland Emergency Management Plan Version 1.6 April 2013 - To ensure the South Gippsland community will have appropriate management strategies in all emergencies the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) has prepared a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMPC) in accordance with the requirements of Section 20(1) of the Emergency Management Act 1986. The aim of this Plan is to detail the agreed arrangements for the prevention of, the response to, and the recovery from, emergencies that could occur in the South Gippsland Shire as identified in Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act, 1986. There are 3 sub plans to this plan in South Gippsland including:

- Municipal Fire Management Plan 2013/2016
- Heatwave Plan
- Pandemic Plan and
- Flood Emergency Plan version 1.4 Feb 2012 - 2015

Ambulance Victoria Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2016 The strategic plan sets the direction for the organisation over the coming years to meet the challenges of an





evolving environment and the Victorian community's need for a high-quality ambulance service.

Victoria Police Blue Print 2012 – 2015 This plan describes planned police service delivery through the 5 key areas of effective service delivery, improved community safety, working with stakeholders, achieving through our people and developing our business.

Victorian State Emergency Service Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015 The plan reflects the reform agenda outlined by the Victorian Government's White Paper outlining the future direction for emergency management in Victoria. The White Paper was released in December 2012.

### 12.3 Current Provision

All emergency services are provided by the public sector with support from community organizations and individuals. The fire services property levy funds the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and Country Fire Authority (CFA) and is collected with Council rates under the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012. Councils are required under Part 4 of the Emergency Management Act 1986 to undertake municipal emergency management, response, recovery and relief activities that include:

- Establishing a municipal emergency management planning committee (MEMPC)
- Facilitate the development and maintenance of an emergency management plan by this committee and to allow its audit
- Appoint a municipal emergency resource officer to coordinate the use of council resources for emergency response and recovery.

The fire services property levy funds the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and Country Fire Authority (CFA) and is collected with Council rates under the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012.

#### *Ambulance - Ambulance Victoria*

State Government funded service. Leongatha ambulance branch is a 24 hour branch operating 7 days per week. During the day, four staff service two ambulances between 8am and 6pm and at night two staff service one ambulance between 6pm and 8am.

There is a single response mobile intensive care (MICA) ambulance based in Wonthaggi. Air Ambulance Victoria operates five air ambulance helicopters. These are based at Essendon, Bendigo, the Latrobe Valley and Warrnambool. The ambulance helicopters are used as an emergency response to critical medical situations. They can provide an advanced level of care, quick attendance and fast transport of an injured patient to a major hospital. They are also involved in search and rescue, winch operations and sea rescue.



## *Fire - Leongatha Country Fire Brigade (CFA)*

This is a voluntary on-call service to town and district. A new fire station was approved for construction on a vacant lot in Bair Street (South Gippsland Highway). It is anticipated the new building will be complete and ready for use by April 2014. The current fire station is located in Anderson Street (South Gippsland Highway) and will be sold. Equipment available allows for rural and urban fire fighting. Structure fire risk in the South Gippsland municipality consists of a mix of residential, commercial and industrial premises in Leongatha. The CFA has special management plans for large industry including Murray Goulburn and Leongatha Hospital.

## *Police - Leongatha Police*

State Government funded service. Leongatha station is not a 24 hour station. Normal operation hours are 8am - midnight with extended hours Friday and Saturday nights. The nearest 24 hour station is at Wonthaggi, 38km or 30 minutes from Leongatha. During hours that local police are not working, the area is covered by routine



patrols from the Wonthaggi station. Local members are on call to respond to incidents requiring police attention outside of normal operation hours.

A document signing and signature witness services is being introduced in conjunction with local Justice of Peace at the Leongatha police station when police will also be in attendance. It is anticipated an hour will be allocated in the morning and in the afternoon on Mondays and will be publicised to encourage the community to conduct their business at these times.

## *Court and legal services*

The nearest court is the Magistrates and Children's Court and Sherriff's Office located on Bridge Street Korumburra. Legal services - Legal Aid services for are provided from a Morwell office. There are two private law firms with offices in Leongatha.

## State Emergency Service

Leongatha State Emergency Service (SES) is located in Watson Street Leongatha. Leongatha SES has a wide range of roles including planning for and responding to floods, severe storms, earthquakes, road accident rescue & search and rescue. They provide support to Police, Ambulance and the CFA. During major events such as flooding or severe storms, the SES works closely with both South Gippsland Shire Council and Bass Coast Shire Council and other emergency services. Leongatha SES is an accredited road rescue unit and is part of the Victorian SES Road Rescue Network. The Leongatha SES is one of two SES teams in South Gippsland, the other is in Foster.

The Leongatha SES team has:

- a primary response vehicle "Rescue One" - Isuzu truck with custom body fitted out to carry tools and equipment
- two support/response vehicles - a Nissan Patrol 4X4 (Leongatha 2) and a Nissan Navarra 4X4 (Leongatha 3)
- equipment trailers
- a Driver Reviver caravan

### 12.4 Future Demand

Emergency service demand will increase in Leongatha as a result of the population increase in the town and an expected increase in people travelling to Leongatha for services and through Leongatha as tourists. For the local community an increase in the proportion of people over 65 is expected to increase from 20% of the town population to 22% by 2021 and 22.5% by 2031. The older population over 65 is more likely to experience illness and conditions requiring ambulance services. The infrastructure needs of people aged over 65 are broad. Facilities, services and community needs for older people are required for a range of areas within this plan.

#### Ambulance

Ambulance services in Victoria have been experiencing an increase in demand for more than a decade. Since 1999-2000, ambulance caseload in Victoria has grown by an average of 5.1 per cent per annum, with both emergency and non-emergency incidents increasing by nearly 65 per cent. Other ambulance services around the world are experiencing similar demand pressures. These demands include demographic change (ageing and population growth), which accounts for about 25 per cent of the increase in emergency demand. Trends in the health of the community play a key role, notably the increasing burden of chronic disease. Other factors also include changes in medical practice and patient management (e.g. the trend to early discharge and treatment in the community), social changes (e.g. the increasing number of people living alone), reduced accessibility to other health

services in some areas (especially general practitioners) and rising community expectations<sup>50</sup>.

There are plans for 24 hour ambulance services in Korumburra by 2015. This will mainly benefit the growing population of Korumburra and the western area of the shire but may also reduce the times that Leongatha ambulance is required to provide services to the west of the shire.

### *Fire - Leongatha Country Fire Brigade (CFA)*

Asbestos is present in the current site Leongatha Fire station posing a potential risk to members and the public. The Country Fire Authority (CFA) relies on volunteers to provide the fire fighting service to the town and district. Demand on the service will increase with the number of dwellings and commercial businesses growing. The increase in the population also provides opportunity for an increase in volunteers with the CFA. The new building and site will more fire fighting resources for a larger community.



### *Police - Leongatha Police*

Crime statistics are produced annually by Victoria Police. Statistics are available for the whole South Gippsland Shire rather than down to township level. South Gippsland has a lower number of crimes recorded against the person and against property per 100,000 of the population compared to the Gippsland Region and the Victorian State average. This low crime rate reflects in the 99.4% of the population who report feeling safe or very safe in South Gippsland in comparison with the Gippsland Region or Victorian average. When walking alone at night 88.4% of persons in South Gippsland felt safe or very safe, compared to 73.4% in the Gippsland Region and the Victorian State average of 70.3%.

Increasing police services across Leongatha and Korumburra in combined rostering provides a response to the increasing populations expected in both towns. As each

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<sup>50</sup> Ambulance Victoria Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016 accessed 16 July 2013, <http://www.ambulance.vic.gov.au/About-Us/Strategic-Plan-Consultation/Strategic-Plan-2013---2016.html>

town increases, so too can the police rostering in response to need and funding available maintaining crime rates at the current rate per 100,000 of the population. The Victoria Police Blue Print 2012 – 2015 describes an expected increase in demand for all services in response to a growing population. In line with the Victoria Police Blue Print increased hours of rostered police would be required with the increase in the population of Leongatha to help the community feel safe and be safe by ‘ensuring police are accessible, visible and respond promptly’

### State Emergency Service

There will be increased demand on the SES in the area. A larger population will result in increased traffic in the area resulting in a greater risk of road traffic accidents requiring support from the SES. Impact of climate extremes on a larger population of Leongatha and surrounding areas will impact on service calls to the SES in times of flood, fire and other natural disaster.

## 12.5 Industry benchmarks and trends

The key criteria for determining the need for facilities are population size and the capacity of nearby stations or units to satisfy area demands and meet response times. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. As such, general standards developed for more densely populated areas are not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns.

The following general standards apply to the provision of emergency services in growth areas and metropolitan areas:

**TABLE 1: GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Emergency Services Precinct<br/>Police, Fire, Ambulance, SES</b> | 1 per 40,000 people   |
| <b>Police Station</b>   | 1 station per 37, 037 (metropolitan Melbourne)                |
| <b>CFA</b>  | 1 station per 14, 739 (growth area average)                   |
| <b>Ambulance Victoria</b>   | 1 per 56,583 residents (growth area average)                  |
| <b>SES</b>  | 1 per 108,866 (metropolitan Melbourne) 45 volunteers per unit |

Source<sup>51</sup>

\*\* NOTE: In order for Emergency Services to meet response times for South Gippsland towns the capacity of stations and units are key to their provision within Leongatha.

<sup>51</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority.



## Best Practice

In the past most emergency services have been located in standalone facilities. More recently, where circumstances allow, emergency services precincts with fire, police, ambulance and SES facilities have been developed. With new facilities for Police and CFA already in place an emergency services precinct is unlikely in Leongatha.

### *Recommendations*

#### *Response times for emergency services*

Goal provision levels for emergency services should ensure appropriate response time outcomes are achieved (ASR Research 2008).

Short response times for ambulance in Leongatha is influenced by the area the Leongatha ambulance is required to service. Increased service provision in neighbouring towns such as that proposed for Korumburra has potential to reduce local response times for the growing Leongatha community. Similar consideration for Foster could be beneficial for the whole Shire.

An increase in people moving to Leongatha from metropolitan Melbourne and an increase in youth may result in an increased demand on Victoria Police. An increase to a 24 hours roster at Leongatha Police Station provides an increase in police members available for response to needs in Leongatha relating to road traffic accidents, law enforcement and community engagement. Whether this is the best model for an area with a relatively small population is uncertain. Identifying best models for policing is best provided by Victoria Police. Crime prevention measures including entertainment for young people as an alternative to alcohol consumption should be considered.



An increase in older people living at home will place increased demand on emergency ambulance services. Older people are at greater risk of time critical health incidents requiring timely emergency ambulance such as cardiac and pulmonary events. Ambulance services meeting the need for a more localised community will allow more effective response times.

Overall emergency service provision to meet the needs of a growing community requires regular review taking into account both the town population and surrounding farm population. Consideration for the impact of major incidences in local industry should be regularly reviewed by combined local emergency service strategic planning and incidence training scenarios.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CURRENT EMERGENCY SERVICE AND LAW SERVICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE    | MAIN PROVIDER         | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL   | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Ambulance                        | Ambulance Victoria    | 24 hour roster:<br>day = 2 x 2 paramedics<br>night = 1 x 2 paramedics                      | Increase provision in neighbouring towns to ensure Leongatha ambulance available locally<br><br>New building required |
| Police                           | Victoria Police       | 8am to midnight x 7 days / on-call<br>Broad call out district                              | Extend service hours in response to need and efficiency in next 5 years.  |
| Leongatha Country Fire Authority | CFA                   | Volunteer service to urban and rural fires and road traffic accidents                      | New facility to be constructed by early 2014  |
| State emergency service          | SES                   | Volunteer service  | Adequate facility and equipment, ongoing volunteer recruitment  |
| Legal services                   | Two private law firms | Legal aid from Morwell Office<br><br>Within offices in town and neighbouring town services | Continue current model.   |

## 13 OPEN SPACE, STREETS, PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

### 13.1 Introduction

There are opportunities to enhance quality and refine the form and function of open space to better reflect population changes and community needs. Council acknowledges that the design of quality open space within residential and commercial areas provides health, lifestyle, social, economic and environmental benefits. Active by Design principles are incorporated in the Infrastructure Design Manual and South Gippsland Planning Scheme and guide the allocation of infrastructure benefitting public health and wellbeing.

This chapter describes:

- Open space
- Playgrounds
- Paths and Trails
- Community gardens
- Public realm

Outdoor sports and recreation facilities including ovals, playing fields and courts, indoor sports and recreation and aquatic facilities are described in a separate chapter entitled Recreation and Leisure

### 13.2 Policy and Council Plans / Strategies

Australian Government Active Urban Design Protocols 2011.

Heart Foundation of Australia (2009) Blueprint for an Active Australia.

South Gippsland Shire Council Asset Management Strategy 2013 This strategy assesses adequacy of the current status of asset management practices and establishes a long term framework that is necessary to address the gap between current status and the desired status in asset management.

South Gippsland Shire Council Leongatha Traffic and Drainage Study 2013 Discusses open space allocation and the provision of new roads and missing cycle connections to support planned development. This study looked at the costs of future drainage and transport requirements.

South Gippsland Shire Council Open Space Strategy 2007 analyses the open public space available in South Gippsland, for the purpose of long term strategic planning





acquisition and development of future reserves and facilities, and in order to provide a basis for Council policy and decision making.

South Gippsland Shire Council Active Ageing Plan 2012 – 2016 This plan aims to ensure that the older residents of our community participate in community life and are valued for their knowledge, wisdom and life experiences

South Gippsland Shire Council Paths and Trails Strategy 2010 The aim of the 2010 Strategy was to review the status of the bicycle and walking facilities in the South Gippsland Shire and to identify the work required to provide an improved network of bicycle, walking and horse riding facilities within the municipality.

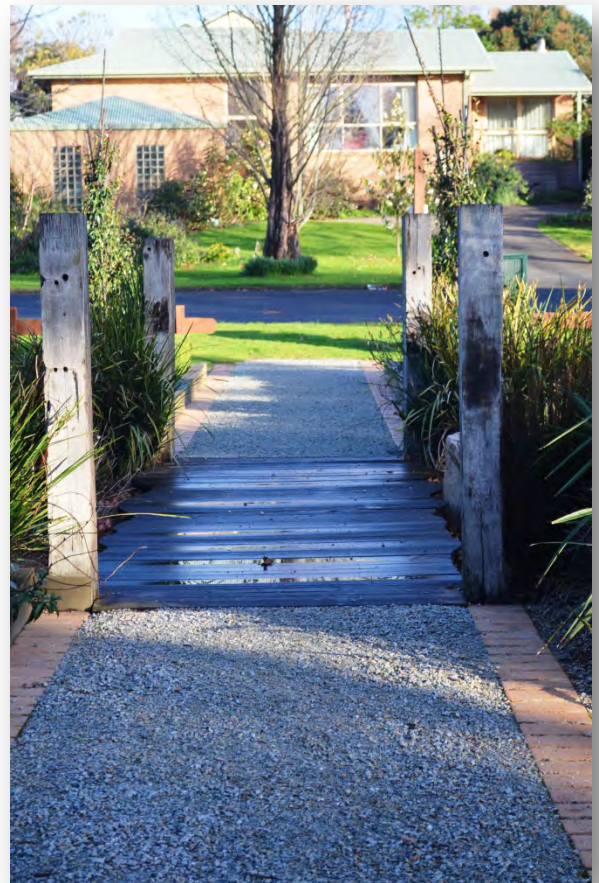
South Gippsland Shire Council Recreation Plan 2008(SGSC Recreation Plan): Volume 4 Implementation Plan provides the strategic directions for future planning of recreation facilities in South Gippsland Shire. The Recreation Plan established a profile of programs and services, and recreation facilities, analyses recreation demand to 2028, and determines priorities for recreation services and facilities to increase participation in leisure and sport.

Victorian Government Urban Design Charter promotes the 12 key aspects of good urban design: structure, accessibility, legibility, animation, fit and function, complementary mixed uses, sense of place, consistency and variety, continuity and change, safety, sensory pleasure and inclusiveness. The expectation is that when these principles are collectively present, the certainty of creating well used, valued, memorable places is assured.

South Gippsland Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017 The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan provides a strategic direction for a range of organisations and communities of South Gippsland for the implementation of priorities and strategies toward creating an environment which supports the health and wellbeing of the community. It includes objectives to support active communities through provision of environments which encourage walking and cycling.

The SGSC Recreation Plan established a profile of programs and services, and recreation facilities, analyses recreation demand to 2028, and determines priorities for recreation services and facilities to increase participation in leisure and sport.

South Gippsland Open Space Strategy 2007. This strategy provides an analysis of open space including recreation facilities, content for policy provision, development



levy contributions and local areas planning and remains a relevant document for current community infrastructure planning in Leongatha.

The Leongatha chapters of the Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy have identified the following initiatives:

- Ensure that recreation and open space facilities are provided to serve new residential areas in the south of the town
- Develop a network of off-road trails using creek and rail corridor and drainage reserves
- Retain diversity of different types of spaces including bushlands, wetlands, horticultural spaces and reserves for sport and social/ family recreation accessible from the town
- Review the layout of facilities on the Recreation Reserve
- Investigate site options for emerging / expanding sports provision including a dedicated athletics track, permanent equestrian sports, and expansion / resurfacing of tennis facilities.

Leongatha Structure Plan 2008 Strategies of the Leongatha Structure Plan include:

1. Implement the recommendations from the Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy.
2. Ensure future access initiatives and development adjoining Leongatha Recreation Reserve does not jeopardise the future expansion of the reserve
3. Ensure the preparation of outline development plans for future residential development provides for recreation and open space provisions

The recommendations of the Recreation Plan, Open Space Strategy and Leongatha Structure Plan are still relevant for Leongatha today and in the next 20 years and should be used in reference for future planning for sport, recreation, open space, streets, parks and playgrounds.

### **13.3 Current Provision**

#### *Open space*

Leongatha has a range of parks and playgrounds distributed through the inner 1 – 1.5km radius of the town centre. Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College, the education precinct, recreation reserve and a range of parks and playgrounds distributed through a 1.5km radius of the town centre provides the impression of open space. Railway Park and Apex Park at the intersection of the Bass Highway and Anderson Street and a treed verge to the west provide a green welcome to visitors to the town. There are 14 playgrounds in Leongatha including those within school grounds.

Waterways and drainage reserves provide open green space between some residential areas. These areas are often steep, treed and not useable as recreation space due to their water management function i.e. they are waterlogged and often inaccessible after South Gippsland's frequent and heavy rain.



Dedicated pedestrian and cycle links across town and from new residential areas to the town centre are limited. Increasingly, footpaths are being constructed but do not often provide pedestrian connections between streets. The Great Southern Rail Trail provides pedestrian, cycling and horse riding out of the town to the south.

The Recreation Reserve provides open space close to the centre of town that contributes to passive recreation opportunities as well as formal sports as described in the Sport and Recreation chapter.

The South Gippsland Paths and Trails Strategy 2010 recommended that there are pedestrian connections across town including existing residential streets and waterways. Whilst open space allocation should not count encumbered land, the strategic use of waterways or conservation reserves can provide pedestrian connection for active transport and passive recreation. The South Gippsland Open Space Strategy 2007 noted 'the quality of local open space in the more recently developed settlements, (and in newer subdivisions) is considerably poorer than those in well established areas.'<sup>52</sup> Therefore future residential development needs to be carefully managed to ensure open space can deliver the benefits required.

### *Paths and trails*

In recent years Council has undertaken a footpath construction program where there were no footpaths or disconnected sections of footpath that has resulted in an increase in footpaths in many residential streets in Leongatha. (See map appendix 1) South west of the town centre there remain many residential areas with no footpaths making pedestrian access hazardous. There are two on-road cycle lanes providing access along Long Street and Ogilvy Street to schools. Access across town for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly students travelling to school is poor.

The Great Southern Rail Trail runs between Leongatha and Foster. A recent extension to Welshpool is scheduled for completion by the end of 2013 providing a total length of approximately 68km. The Rail Trail provides opportunity for walking, cycling and horse riding for people travelling to and from Leongatha. Access to the Rail Trail and



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<sup>52</sup> South Gippsland Shire Council and @ Leisure, 2007, *South Gippsland Open Space Strategy Vol. 1: Open Space Strategy*, Leongatha, viewed on 24 August 2012, [http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/files/Open\\_Space\\_Strategy\\_2007.pdf](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/files/Open_Space_Strategy_2007.pdf)

along it can be difficult for older people on mobility scooters, people in wheelchairs or people who are vision impaired.



### *Playgrounds and parks*

There are 14 playgrounds with children's play equipment located across town including those in schools. McIndoe Park and the Recreation Reserve are regional parks. McIndoe Park is the most well equipped park in Leongatha with a playground for children with disabilities to access the equipment via accessible surfaces and a specially designed swing. This park provides play equipment, an undercover barbeque/ picnic area, toilets and an open space suitable to run and kick a ball and a short cricket pitch. Most current residential areas have a park nearby but often lack the footpaths to reach it safely.

### *Public Realm*

This report defines the public realm as the connections and spaces between destinations. The public realm includes the natural and built environment used by the general public on a day-to-day basis such as streets, shopping centres, parks and public infrastructure. Some aspects of privately owned space such as the bulk and scale of buildings, or gardens that are visible from the public realm, can also contribute to the overall result.



Leongatha has arcades and connections between both McCartin and Bair streets to the car parks and shops behind. Some areas such as those behind the historical society next to Memorial Hall and outside Council offices in Smith Street contain picnic tables and grassy areas that are suited to people taking a break at lunchtime or waiting to meet someone. While events are also conducted in these areas they have limited capacity.

### *Community Gardens*

Funding has been received to establish horticultural training centre and community garden at Community College Gippsland in Leongatha. A community garden, individual plots, botanical display gardens and an orchard are planned and will offer recreation and social networking opportunities. A resource centre, propagation facilities, hothouse, and shade house will underpin the educational opportunities on offer, which will encompass accredited training, short courses and workshop style learning.

## **13.4 Consultation**

Key recommendations included in the South Gippsland Open Space Strategy, Recreation Plan and Paths and Trails Strategy were gained from extensive community consultations. They discuss the provision of open space, playgrounds and connecting paths and trails for Leongatha. These recommendations are still relevant for Leongatha. The community strengthening team and sustainability team are receiving increased interest in community gardens for towns across South Gippsland including Leongatha.

## **13.5 Future Demand**

Residential development is proposed to the south and west of Leongatha. The Leongatha Land Supply – Social Impact Assessment (2012) discusses related land rezoning proposals including community and recreation facilities and open space. As at October 2012 it is estimated approximately 391 vacant residential lots were available in Leongatha<sup>53</sup>. Proposed new rezoning of residential land will add an additional 1,000 new lots to provide residential land supply for the next 16 – 23 years and support the population to increase to just over 8,000 people in the same period.

The allocation and development of open space for recreation and social amenity in the new residential areas should be made at initial development stage. This ensures that new residents benefit from the provision of open space, parks, paths and playgrounds from the time the first house is constructed. As a minimum requirement open space will need to be located within 400m of dwellings in new developments and be suitable for use by all ages. Incidental physical activity should be maximized by providing developments linking pedestrian and cycle walkways across town especially to the centre of town, schools and recreation precincts.

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<sup>53</sup> Urban Enterprise (2013) South Gippsland Shire Council Housing and Settlement Strategy – Economic Analysis



The construction of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure remains an issue for Leongatha. The Leongatha Traffic and Drainage Study, when complete at the end of 2013 will inform the cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to assist connection across town and from proposed new residential areas. The South Gippsland Open Space Strategy 2007 identified a need to progress cycling and walking trail developments to connect green belts, schools, housing and recreational facilities as part of potential future development. The Recreation Plan: Volume 4 Implementation Plan identifies open space, off-road trails and local walking circuits as a priority for Leongatha. The South Gippsland Paths and Trails Strategy 2010 identified routes for cycling and walking. All these plans provide guidance to the allocation of developer contribution funds to support cycling and pedestrian infrastructure for the next 5 – 20 years.

FIGURE 1: LEONGATHA PROPOSED AND EXISTING TRAILS AND PATHS



Source<sup>54</sup>

With an increase in older adults, more accessible parks, paths and open space will be required. The older age group will be more likely to be more unstable on their feet, experience increasing vision impairment and use mobility aids such as walkers, sticks, mobility scooters and wheelchairs. Improvements to access will also benefit people of all ages with physical disability. Paths provided should be wide and flat

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Nixon Land Use Management, 2010, Paths and Trails Strategy 2010, South Gippsland Shire Council, Leongatha.

where walkers, cyclist and mobility scooters can pass safely. As a larger proportion of the aged population cease driving, the provision of suitable paths for walking becomes increasingly important.

Families are expected to increase the most in the next 20 years resulting in an increase in the number of children travelling to schools and requiring safe access for walking and cycling.

Access to open space in a local neighbourhood is generally free of charge, local parks are important in providing accessible, low cost, family-based opportunities for social and family recreation including running and informal play such as kicking a ball. Passive recreation opportunities including space to take a walk should be catered for. Council’s role is to work closely with the land development industry and other providers to deliver a diverse range of open space functions and opportunities conveniently located to serve each residential community.

### 13.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Applying simplified open space planning standards such as an “area to population” ratio (i.e. 4ha per 1000 people), or a percentage of land area, or allowing developers to determine what open space shall be provided have been shown as ineffective in delivering a diversity of high quality open spaces opportunities which serve the majority of residents. A range of different open space types suitable for a variety of uses and benefits should be provided. The allocation of open space should not count encumbered land or waterways but consider their use to extend and connect public open space to make the best use of local natural features.

The Open Space Planning and Design Guide (June 2013) and the Open Space Strategies Practice Note 70 (July 2013) provide a hierarchy of open space requirements to be considered in assessment of open space. Consideration of the type of open space required for the size and purpose of a town should be considered as well as location of open space types within a town.

**TABLE 1 OPEN SPACE GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Neighbourhood level passive open space reserves</b></p> | <p>Small parks are required within 150 – 300m. Requirement of the subdivision act where 5% of a developable subdivision as an open space contribution or via the local planning authority stipulating open space contribution between 5% and 10%</p> <p>Approximately 2% of all land is required just to provide a park of 1ha within 400 – 500m of all dwellings.</p> <p>Additional land is required to compensate for barriers such as rail, creek and industrial land plus arterial roadways that form barriers to pedestrian movement.<sup>55</sup></p> |
| <p><b>Neighbourhood level passive open space</b></p>          | <p>1ha within 400 – 500 metres of residential dwellings</p> <p>Amalgamate 1ha parcels to form larger more functional</p>  |

<sup>55</sup> Department of Planning and Community Development, *Victorian Planning Provisions* (clause 56.04) on 24 October 2012, <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/vpps/>



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>reserve<br/>Level 1</b>                      | reserves on a case by case basis   |
| <b>Level 2</b>                                  | 3ha to 4ha within 2 kilometres of all residents. Equivalent to 5.43% of residential land area.<br><br>Regional public open space where available along streams and permanent water bodies. |
| <b>Higher order passive open space reserves</b> | Linking People and Spaces: A strategy for Melbourne's open space network   |

### *Recommendations*

Open space provides a broad range of social, health, environmental and economic benefits to individual and to the community as a whole. Council acknowledges that the design of quality open space within residential and commercial areas provides health, lifestyle, social, economic and environmental benefits. Flat open space, pocket parks and more formal recreation areas provide space to kick a ball informally or for children to run and play but should be connected with a network of off road pedestrian and cycle ways that are safe and wide enough for mobility scooters to negotiate with ease.

### *Paths and Trails Strategy recommendations*

Past planning has ensured that public land is allocated to provide access for pedestrians and cyclist in an off road network around Leongatha. It is time for this network is funded and constructed. There is a risk that without the allocation of funds to the development of this network in existing areas of Leongatha the community, particularly children and older people will lose the opportunity to negotiate the town on foot, bike or mobility scooter. Such a network has the potential to increase independence, increase opportunities for incidental social interaction and increase opportunity for informal physical activity. It would reduce the need for many parents to drive their children to school resulting in less traffic on the roads around schools and increased opportunity for children to become familiar with their local community while participating in active transport to school.



## *Strategies identifying the need for pedestrian/cycle access in Leongatha*

The Leongatha Traffic and Drainage Study 2013, the South Gippsland Open Space Strategy 2007 the Recreation Plan: Volume 4 Implementation Plan and the South Gippsland Paths and Trails Strategy 2010 all identify the need for pedestrian and cycle access across Leongatha and provide guidance on the allocation of developer contribution funds to this infrastructure in the town. This is a priority for the next 5 – 10 years to connect existing areas of the town and a priority for any future residential developments in the future.

### *Linking new residential areas*

New residential areas should have local open space allocated for formal and informal recreation within easy access by foot for the local residents. New residential areas should be connected to the town and schools via off road, shared pedestrian cycle trails. Wide, shared paths with seating and lighting, allocation of land for shared community areas would allow space to kick a ball, walk or build a community garden.

### *Public community areas*

Within the town centre the allocation of larger public areas for community gatherings, events would invite community engagement. These areas provide casual places to relax and socialise or present larger outdoor public events. Such areas would require adequate lighting and ready surveillance from surrounding areas.

#### **Best Practice**

##### Healthy by Design

Sutherland, E and Carlisle R (2004) Healthy by Design: an innovative planning tool for the development of safe, accessible and attractive environments Vol. 18(11–12) NSW Public Health Bulletin

##### Key design principles

- ✓ Connectivity
- ✓ Environments for All People
- ✓ Mixed Density
- ✓ Mixed Land Use
- ✓ Parks and Open Space
- ✓ Social Inclusion
- ✓ Supporting Infrastructure
- ✓ Active Transport
- ✓ Aesthetics
- ✓ Safety and Surveillance

## Open space

Open space required to serve new residential developments should be supplied in developable land, separate to, but abutting land required for drainage/retention, preservation of native vegetation or heritage values. The nature of any open space contribution shall therefore be expressed as a percentage of the developable area. Encumbered land is not taken as open space to satisfy the demand for: sport, or social /family recreation functions but may be used to enhance connection between areas of open space.

Where there is no social /family recreation space within 400m Council will seek to take a minimum 5% (unless negotiated separately between Council and developer).of land subdivided as open space, or an equivalent cash contribution, as specified by the South Gippsland Planning Scheme and/or Subdivision Act 1988 (s18).

## Paths and Trails

The recreation reserve is popular for informal recreation including walking or jogging. A walking trail around the perimeter of the recreation reserve and adjacent golf club would extend jogging and walking opportunities in the town.

Active by Design principles recommend connections through townships that provide safe, inviting opportunities for social inclusion, non-motorised movement and open space for all community members. Where these connections intersect existing parks and paths, seats and lights will provide opportunities to rest and talk with others. More people out walking around the town will enhance the current impression of safety reported by the local community.

## Playgrounds and parks

The range of parks currently available in Leongatha provide for a variety of uses and needs. Children's playground equipment need not be provided in all areas. Play spaces can be encouraged without providing play equipment. Small parks can be treed areas with seating and lighting which provide for unstructured social family activity, rotundas for barbeques and relaxation with access routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Examples include landscaping, interactive art installations,



water features etc. A putting green, half basketball court or permanent cricket nets invite a variety of informal recreation. An additional regional park located adjacent to the new playing fields and community centre in the Southern Leongatha area would reduce parking pressures in Bent and Tailor Streets adjacent to McIndoe Park.

### Public Realm

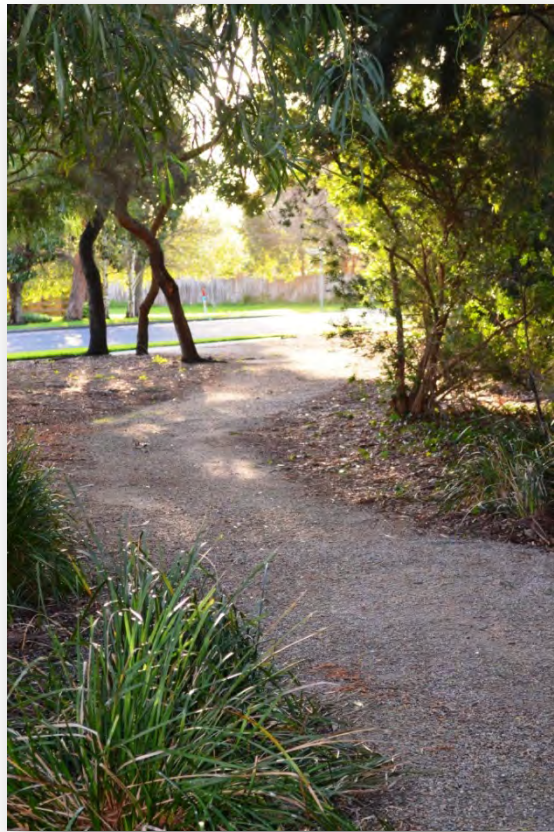
A central and flexible public meeting place located in the town centre allows easy access for pedestrians and may become a centre for social, community activity on an as needs basis. A community or civic building co-located could provide indoor and outdoor sitting areas and may link into local cafes or shops, the library or cinema. The allocation of space that allows for outdoor art installations and events as well as informal gatherings would provide a focus for residents and visitors to Leongatha.

TABLE 2: OPEN SPACE, PARKS, PLAYGROUND, PATHS AND TRAILS LEONGATHA CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE | TOTAL NUMBER | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL  | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|---|
| Parks                         | 22           | 2 x regional parks (McIndoe and Recreation Reserve)<br>6 x neighbourhood parks<br>14 x local parks  | Local parks within 400m of dwellings in all new developments.<br><br>Pedestrian access from all residential areas to other town parks.  |
| Paths and Trails              |              | As outlined in the South Gippsland Paths and Trails strategy 2010   | As outlined in the South Gippsland Paths and Trails strategy 2010: Jogging /cycling trails around existing recreation reserve. Walking/cycling trails across town to schools and town centre. |
| Playgrounds                   | 10           | McIndoe Park<br>Recreation Reserve<br>Ellen Lyndon Park<br>Arthur Bentley Reserve<br>Tania Park<br>Horticultural Park<br>Mary Checkley Park<br>Shinglers Ridge<br>Cnr Griffin Rd and Chamberlain Dve<br>BMX track | Playgrounds in new residential areas within 400m of houses.<br><br>Imaginative landscaping and design could replace play equipment in some cases.   |
| Public Realm                  |              | Council offices, Safeway<br>Carpark   | Central public meeting  |



|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  |  | <p>Walkway/park next to Memorial Hall<br/>Apex Park McCartin St<br/>Cnr Bair and McCartin St – paved area</p> | <p>space both indoor and outdoor including outdoor art, café, seating, and shade in forecourt of community building. Outdoor stage, passive recreation and landscaping to invite use.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|





## 14 SPORT AND RECREATION

### 14.1 Introduction

The following infrastructure types assessed in this section are

- Indoor sports and recreation
- Outdoor sports and recreation including sports fields and ovals and hard surface courts.
- Aquatic facilities

Open space, streets, parks and playgrounds for non-structured active and passive outdoor activity are described in a separate chapter.



### 14.2 Council Plans and Strategies / Government Policy

Leongatha Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2013 This plan has identified improvement projects which balance the needs of the user groups while considering the broader needs of the community.

South Gippsland Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017 The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan provides a strategic direction for a range of organisations and communities of South Gippsland for the implementation of priorities and strategies toward creating an environment which supports the health and wellbeing of the community. It includes objectives to support active communities through provision of environments which encourage walking and cycling.

South Gippsland Aquatic Strategy consultant's report 2009  
<http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au>

South Gippsland Shire Council Paths and Trails Strategy 2010

South Gippsland Shire Council Recreation Plan 2008: Volume 1 Strategy & Actions

South Gippsland Shire Council Recreation Plan 2008: Volume 2 Locality Analysis

South Gippsland Shire Council Recreation Plan 2008: Volume 3 Consultation Findings

South Gippsland Shire Council Recreation Plan 2008: Volume 4 Implementation Plan

The Recreation Plan established a profile of programs and services, and recreation facilities, analyses recreation demand to 2028, and determines priorities for recreation services and facilities to increase participation in leisure and sport.

South Gippsland Open Space Strategy 2007 This strategy provides an analysis of open space including recreation facilities, content for policy provision, development

levy contributions and local areas planning and remains a relevant document for current community infrastructure planning in Leongatha.

The Leongatha Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy for Leongatha have identified the following initiatives:

- Ensure that recreation and open space facilities are provided to serve new residential areas in the south of the town
- Develop a network of off-road trails using creek and rail corridor and drainage reserves
- Retain diversity of different types of spaces including bushlands, wetlands, horticultural spaces and reserves for sport and social/ family recreation accessible from the town
- Review the layout of facilities on the Recreation Reserve
- Investigate site options for emerging / expanding sports provision including a dedicated athletics track, permanent equestrian sports, expansion and resurfacing of tennis facilities.

Leongatha Structure Plan 2008 Strategies of the Leongatha Structure Plan include:

4. Implement the recommendations from the Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy.
5. Ensure future access initiatives and development adjoining Leongatha Recreation Reserve does not jeopardise the future expansion of the reserve
6. Ensure the preparation of outline development plans for future residential development provides for recreation and open space provisions

The recommendations of the Recreation Plan, Open Space Strategy and Leongatha Structure Plan are still relevant for Leongatha today and in the next 20 years and should be used in reference for future planning for sport, recreation, open space, streets, parks and playgrounds.

South Gippsland Shire Council Asset Management Strategy 2013 This strategy assesses adequacy of the current status of asset management practices and establishes a long term framework that is necessary to address the gap between current status and the desired status in asset management.

### **14.3 Current Provision**

Council has a strong commitment to the provision of sports infrastructure of appropriate quantity and quality to maintain participation. In planning for recreation facilities and services South Gippsland Shire Council has identified the following key goals:

- Leadership in recreation policy and planning
- Create a network of off-road trails around each locality
- Provide the appropriate quality and quantity of sports infrastructure to maintain current participation
- Provide a wider range of outdoor swimming opportunities and

- Introduce mechanisms to fund priority projects that are effective, equitable and assist with implementation of financial and recreation planning objectives

Leongatha is a large town hosting a number of indoor and outdoor district level sporting activities. The plans listed above provide detailed a description of the variety of indoor and outdoor sporting and recreation services and infrastructure in Leongatha.

The private, public and community sectors all have a role in providing for sport and recreation. Some sport and recreation opportunities can be operated at a profit and may be provided by the private sector. The community is the major provider of sport and recreation in Leongatha and it relies on the contribution of volunteers on committees of management and community clubs. These clubs and section 86 committees play an important role in assisting Council with asset management and maintenance responsibilities.

### *Indoor sports and recreation*

South Gippsland SPLASH has two full indoor courts used for basketball (including Basketball for all), indoor soccer, volleyball and group fitness programs. The centre is owned by Council and managed by the YMCA.

Local schools and private providers also provide indoor facilities where gymnastics, dancing, taekwondo, badminton, table tennis and squash can be played.



Leongatha has a private gymnasium where exercise classes and exercise equipment are available for members and casual participants.

Group fitness classes are provided at the gym, SG SPLASH, private facilities, the Guide Hall and Dakers Centre by a variety of providers.

Leongatha Taekwondo conducts classes in the gymnasium at the old primary school which is permanently set up with mats. When other users of the facility wish to use the gymnasium they are expected to lift the mats and return them after use.

Leongatha Gymnastics Club is a regional club servicing the Bass Coast and South Gippsland. They meet at the St Laurences Primary School gymnasium/hall and need to set up and pack away equipment. There is currently a waiting list due to limited access to the facilities at the school. Their ability to host events and competitions are also limited.

## *Outdoor sports and recreation*

The Leongatha Recreation Reserve is a 34 hectare reserve located on the Strezlecki Highway (Roughhead Street) and includes tennis courts, velodrome (with a small oval in its centre used for little athletics), golf course, playground, large sheds housing a car club and table tennis, the Small Bore Rifle Club, skate bowl, croquet lawn and many buildings including the

SPLASH indoor aquatic centre and open space with a skate bowl and playground. There are more than 13 user groups of the reserve.

Source<sup>56</sup>

The Woorayl Golf Club is located adjacent to the recreation reserve. The Leongatha Bowls Club is located in Hughes Street also within close proximity to the recreation reserve.

Several schools provide major ovals in the north and north east of the town. Sports fields, ovals and hard surface courts in schools allow for local football, soccer, and two cricket teams to host matches in Leongatha.

An equestrian park located in Tilson Court Leongatha and is used by the Berry Creek Pony Club and the Leongatha and District Equestrian Club.

Leongatha Cycling Club runs road and track cycling events in the South Gippsland and Bass Coast areas. Track cycling is held at the Leongatha Velodrome during summer. The road season runs from April to September. The location of the BMX track in Horn Street is being reviewed.

## *Aquatic facilities*

South Gippsland SPLASH located within the recreation reserve in Leongatha has an indoor heated aquatic facility and sports courts. This facility includes a 25 metre lap and recreation pool, a leisure pool and toddler pool and is owned by Council and managed by the YMCA. The pools are used for lap swimming, learn to swim, swimming carnivals and aqua aerobics. The pool hosts training for 2 swimming clubs.

There is an indoor heated lap pool at the Mountain View Retirement Village and South Gippsland Specialist School, however these are not currently public facilities.

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<sup>56</sup> Leongatha Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2013



## 14.4 Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the Leongatha and district communities in the development of the Aquatic Strategy, Recreation Plan; Recreation Reserve Master Plan; Open Space Plan; and Paths and Trails strategy via town meetings and household surveys.

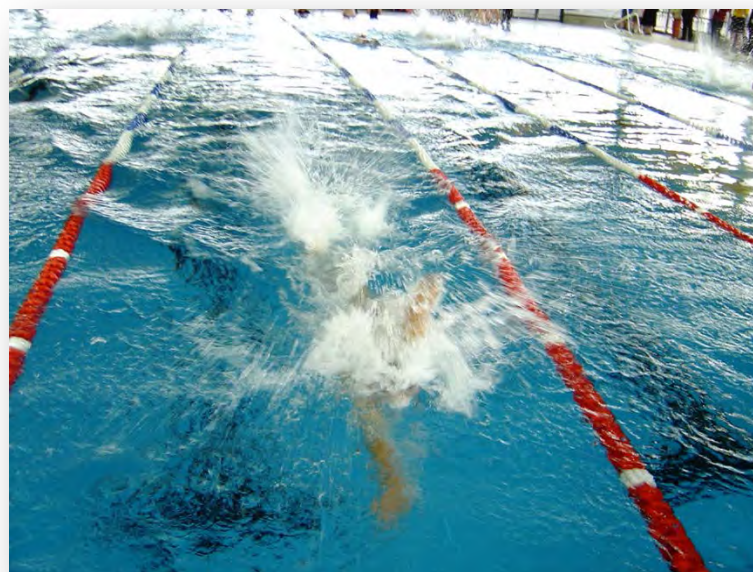


## 14.5 Future Demand

Leongatha clubs will continue to attract people from out of the town centre as members. Leongatha is the site for subregional clubs such as athletics, cycling, taekwondo and table tennis and with these clubs continuing to attract members from the increasing Leongatha community and the broader community. It is likely that as the Leongatha population grows that some sub regional clubs will be located there as the indoor recreation facilities are of a particularly high standard and Leongatha is relatively central to surrounding towns.

South Gippsland SPLASH is the only heated indoor swimming pool open throughout the year. This aquatic facility is booked by the local Leongatha swimming club and the South Gippsland Bass Swimming club on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the year. During winter other swimming clubs, netball and football clubs use the pool facilities for training. It would be expected that as the memberships of these clubs grow that there will be increasing demand to use the facility for training. Aqua aerobics is held in the pool five mornings and two evening each week with swimming classes booking lanes at other times.

With the ageing community additional facilities for rehabilitation and exercise for older community members will be required. The proposed addition of a hydro pool





to the South Gippsland SPLASH facility will provide a facility to meet the rehabilitation needs of South Gippsland residents. The 25 metre pool attracts a number of community members undertaking exercises as part of rehabilitation. These residents require an area where they can walk and exercise rather than swim laps and area often restricted when swimming clubs or swimming lessons and lap swimmers use the majority of the pool and young children seek the 25 metre pool for playing water based games.

The range and size of school grounds and facilities in Leongatha is an asset for wider community sport and recreation. The Leongatha Education Precinct has two large playing fields, hard court surfaces. Following the completion of the new secondary school buildings in late 2013, tennis courts, basketball and netball courts and a smaller hockey field at the education precinct are to be refurbished. These outdoor facilities allow two cricket clubs to play on the site while also providing recreation and sport opportunities for the three schools and TAFE located on the site. The capacity of the newly built education facilities on this site have maintained large areas of land for recreation while also providing more efficient use by all the education precinct tenants. The promised redevelopment of hard courts including basketball, netball and tennis courts is a priority on completion of the secondary school.

The Leongatha Primary School moved from its old site in Horn Street to the education precinct in 2011. The original primary school site has been retained by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and is currently managed by Community College Gippsland. Amongst the classrooms remaining there is also a large outdoor area, a small oval and gymnasium. A community Taekwondo club uses the gymnasium three times a week and a community garden is proposed for the outdoor area. Many local residents use the oval and grounds to walk dogs or ride skateboards. The retention of this facility for the community will continue to be a great asset particularly with a growing community.

Mary MacKillop Regional Catholic College also has large sports ground available for community sporting club use. Growth in the population may necessitate colocation of the St Laurence O'Toole Primary School onsite with Mary MacKillop but the 55



acre site provides ample capacity to house both schools and an increasing student population without compromise to the facilities available.

The larger population overall will allow for stronger club membership including increased volunteers for committees of management. A larger population will improve club membership and the opportunity to maintain a broader range of sports and recreation options. The increased population will also allow the establishment of multiple teams for traditional sports. Changing preferences for participation to more informal, casual activities such as; walking and bike riding needs to be catered for.

In the next 10 years there is expected to be relatively stable migration into Leongatha with the major gain in families. The age group forecast to have the largest proportional increase relative to its current population size by 2021 is 70 – 74 years olds who are forecast to increase by 105% to 369 people.

The population of people aged over 65 years will increase from 20% of the Leongatha population in 2013 to 22% in 2021 and 23% by 2031. The needs of this older age group will move from the high energy contact sports to sports such as tennis, table tennis, croquet, aqua movers and group exercises specifically to meet the needs of older adults.

The older population of Leongatha will grow placing pressure on existing facilities which traditionally cater for this age group including lawn bowls, croquet and indoor fitness activities. There may be increased expectation for greater variety of sports provided for all age groups from people moving into the area. Access to all the facilities will require walking and cycling tracks to account for the younger population on bicycles, people on foot and older people and people with a disability on mobility scooters or wheelchairs.

Sporting clubs often have difficulty recruiting committees of management. People between 30 – 49 years will increase by 772 people or 26% of the population by 2031 from 23% in 2013. This age group will be ideal recruits for both junior and senior sporting clubs in Leongatha. Children under 19 years will increase by over 600 people remaining at 25% of the population by 2031. Combining these two population groups may result in a considerable increase in families where both children and parents participate in sport.



Playing fields for ball sports and indoor gymnasiums and halls are in good supply for the current population however with population growth there remains a need to allocate at least 4 hectares for additional playing fields in the Southern Leongatha area west of the South Gippsland Highway. The upgrading of facilities to allow growth in membership and the level of competition offered locally will also be required.

The viability of local golf courses are under question. Leongatha South is the premier course and has the strongest membership and there is the opportunity for a merger of the Leongatha South, Woorayl and Meeniyen clubs is an option.

## 14.6 Industry Benchmarks and Trends

Growth area planning criteria apply to densely populated areas and are to be used as a guide only. Rural municipalities are characterised by dispersed population pockets and towns with much of the population requiring services located out on rural properties. While general standards developed for more densely populated areas are not applicable for our smaller more dispersed towns, consideration of the sub-regional role of Leongatha needs to be considered when planning for future growth.

Recommendations for growth areas are to provide a minimum of 2ha of active open space excluding golf courses per 1,000 people. This is to be distributed between active open space reserves, tennis facilities, lawn bowls with more detail provided below.

**TABLE 1 RECREATION GROWTH AREA BENCHMARKS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Indoor aquatic /fitness centre</b>               | 1 centre for every 40,000 to 50,000 people  |
| <b>Double court indoor recreation centre/stadia</b> | 1 centre for every 20,000 – 30,000 people   |
| <b>Neighbourhood active open space</b>              | 1 area of 8ha in size to provide for two sports ovals per 6,000 people  |
| <b>Neighbourhood reserve pavilion</b>               | 1 per 6,000 people or per designated active recreation reserve  |
| <b>Tennis</b>                                       | 1 x court per 2,500 people<br>1 x 2 court free to the public tennis court no pavilion per 25,000 to 35,000 people<br>1 x 6 – 10 court complex per municipality                        |
| <b>Netball</b>                                      | 1 outdoor netball court per 3,500 people;<br>1 x double court netball court per 16,000 people<br>1 x 8 court complex per 50,000 people<br>Maximise use of school sites where possible |
| <b>Lawn Bowls</b>                                   | 1 x 4 green facility for 40,000 people  |

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Passive open space</b>        | 0.7 to 1ha of passive open space per 1,000 people or 300 400 households<br>205 to 4ha passive open space per 2km radius |
| <b>Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails</b> | As per Active by Design guidelines  |

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## Recommendations

Opportunities for future recreation development are described in the Recreation Plan and Open Space Strategy and are still relevant for the growing population of Leongatha. Leongatha remains a central town for the Shire for services and sub-regional sporting events. South Gippsland SPLASH will remain the focus for year round indoor aquatic activities and any provision of a hydrotherapy pool will be at the SPLASH facility. As recommended in the recreation plan, specific needs exist for expansion of the athletics track, and allocation of land for additional playing fields in new residential developments to the south and west of the town.



### Indoor sports and recreation in new developments

The supply of indoor sports facilities in Leongatha are adequate for the current population, however with future growth specialisation of some facilities and location of facilities closer to new developments is required. Promoting currently under-utilised facilities such as the Dearthcott Sports Centre at the education precinct would ensure that all sports requiring indoor facilities are catered for including any newly emerging sports currently not offered in the town.

### Specialised venues

The specialisation of some facilities for specific sporting activities is required. The Leongatha Gymnastics Club are a strong club with a waiting list which would benefit from a venue where equipment could be permanently erected, program hours could be extended and competitions and events could be held. An investigation of current

<sup>57</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority.

## *Additional outdoor sports and recreation*

Many sports are played within or near the recreation reserve providing convenience for those residents accessing a range of sports for different family members. While schools provide access to indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in the north and east of the town,



communities to the south do not have as ready access. An additional playing field and community meeting/club rooms in new residential development to the south of Leongatha will improve access to recreation to residents in the south of the town. For Southern Leongatha open space reserves have been identified in consultation with developers of new residential areas. These areas would allow for a 4 ha minimum open space reserve suitable for playing fields suitable for hockey or soccer. 1 ha of land reserved adjacent to the reserve would be designated to a community hub/ meeting/ club rooms of at least 400m<sup>2</sup> meeting growth area authority recommendations<sup>58</sup>. The Great Southern Rail Trail would provide good pedestrian and cycle access to this recreation facility.

## *Athletics track*

Allocation of land for a full size athletic track to allow for sprinting events of over 400 metres would meet some identified needs of the Leongatha Little Athletics Club as a need for the town. A new facility would encourage expansion of club membership and the ability of Leongatha to host regional competitions, however a synthetic track is not recommended.

## *Shade*

The provision of shade for outdoor sporting reserves and playgrounds is required through natural trees and built infrastructure. Shade should be increased in sporting reserves and playgrounds through the provision of natural and built shade. Cancer Council Victoria guidelines to identify tree species should be used.

Consideration to allocate an additional regional park in Leongatha is required as the town grows to the south and west is required. This would provide a park similar to McIndoe Park elsewhere in the town.

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<sup>58</sup> Australian Social & Recreation Research Pty Ltd, 2008, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, Growth Areas Authority.



## Hydrotherapy pool

South Gippsland SPLASH is used year round for aquatic activities drawing a range of ages from across the Shire to use the facility. The provision of a hydrotherapy pool would provide for the many people requiring pool based rehabilitation exercise programs who are currently sharing the busy pool with other users.

**TABLE 2: OUTDOOR SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN LEONGATHA**

| SERVICE / INFRASTRUCTURE TYPE         | TOTAL NUMBER | CURRENT SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL  | RECOMMENDED SERVICE AND FACILITY MODEL TO MEET FUTURE NEED   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|---|--|
| Children's playgrounds with equipment | 14           | In dedicated parks and schools  | Children's playground within 400 metres of all residential areas connected with pedestrian access.   |
| Croquet greens                        | 1            | Within recreation reserve. Association and golf croquet played 3 x days per week  | Extension of days provided possible with increased interest in the sport.  |
| Designated open parkland              | 16           | Areas identified in the recreation plan included railway reserve, cemetery, service and drainage easements as well as playgrounds and maintained public parks                   | Service and drainage easements should not be used in the calculation of public open space. This is further discussed in the open space chapter of this document. |
| Equestrian facilities                 | 1            |   | A larger multipurpose site would provide for a range of equestrian uses.   |
| Golf club                             | 1            | Woorayl Golf Club is a 9-hole course of 5789 metres is slightly undulating and lightly bunkered. Adjacent to the recreation reserve it is easily accessed from the town centre. | Continued model with investigation of additional uses of this open park for the community.   |
| Indoor courts/ gymnasium              | 6            | SG SPLASH, Dearicot Centre, Mary MacKillop, St Laurence's Primary School, Community College Gippsland   | Further community facility with additional playing fields to the south and west of Leongatha with new residential development.                                   |
| Lawn bowls greens                     | 2            | Synthetic greens and club house. 92 members and pennant and social  | Current model allows for expansion of the club on the current site to increase playing   |

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
|   |   | competitions.  | days to more days of the week.  |
| <b>Off road paths for walking and cycling</b> |   | Great Southern Rail Trail runs from the Horticultural Park in Leongatha south to Welshpool.  | Increase pedestrian connection between residential areas as outlined in paths and trails strategy and Leongatha   |
| <b>Outdoor courts - netball,</b>              | 8 | 2 x netball associations – Leongatha and District Netball Association – play on outdoor courts<br>Leongatha Football/Netball Club – play indoors at SG SPLASH<br>Night netball in summer on outdoor courts | Maintenance on 8 <sup>th</sup> outdoor court to remove pine tree and improve drainage<br><br>Possible additional outdoor courts near oval for Football/netball club games |
| <b>Playing fields – football, school use</b>  | 4 | Recreation reserve – 1 oval used for football, cricket<br>Leongatha education precinct – 2 ovals School athletics on west oval<br>Mary MacKillop – 1 oval used for soccer and schools                      | Additional playing field in southern Leongatha area for soccer or hockey  |
| <b>Playing fields - cricket</b>               | 3 | Recreation reserve – turf wicket (shared by associations)<br>Leongatha education precinct 2 x ovals – 1 x turf wicket, Town club west campus<br>1 x Imperials club east campus                             | Current facilities managed by clubs<br>Increased security of ground on East campus to reduce vandalism  |
| <b>Public gathering</b>                       |   | There are no designated outdoor public gathering areas in Leongatha  | Public gathering area associated with public building such as library or public meeting rooms   |
| <b>Skate parks</b>                            | 1 | Skate bowl located within recreation reserve.  | Provide shelter and seating at the skate bowl. Junior / beginners area.   |
| <b>Swimming pool</b>                          | 1 | South Gippsland SPLASH indoor heated 25m pool, leisure pool and toddlers pool  | Add hydrotherapy pool to existing facility.   |

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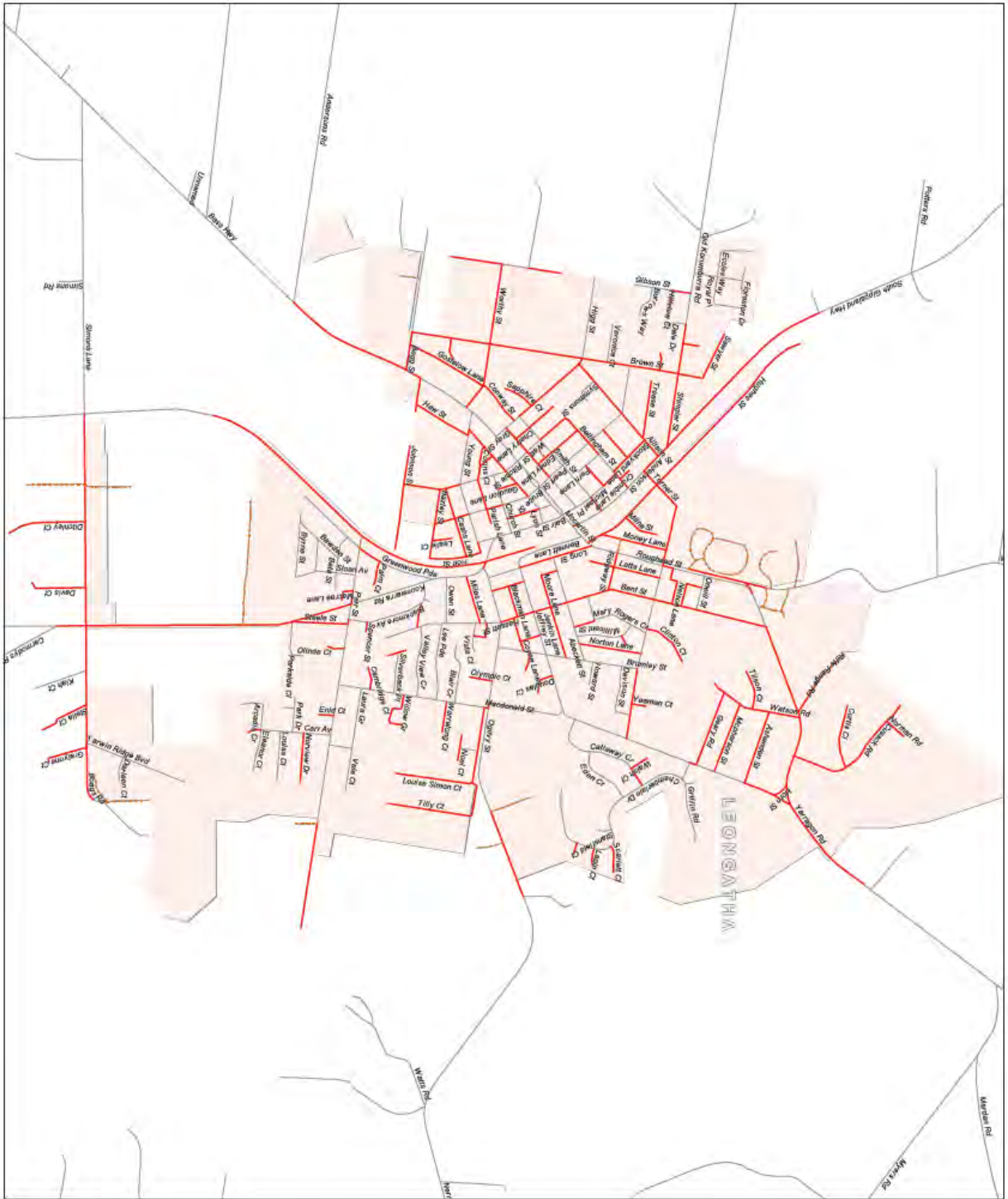
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## Appendix 1: Leongatha residential roads without footpaths map



Data Source:  
 Shire Boundary - Victoria August 2013  
 Roads - Victoria August 2013  
 Footpath Survey - 2012



Project 1, CDN 91  
 COORDINATE SYSTEM: MGA ZONE 55  
 DATUM: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GEODESIC DATUM  
 ELLIPSOID: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GEODESIC DATUM  
 SPHEROID: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GEODESIC DATUM  
 DATUM SHIFT: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GEODESIC DATUM  
 AXIS: AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GEODESIC DATUM  
 UNIT: METRE  
 SCALE: 1:10000  
 DRAWN BY: [Name]  
 CHECKED BY: [Name]



South Gippsland Shire Council

Township of Leongatha  
 Roads without Footpaths  
 As at August 2013