

Great South Coast

REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

2014 -19

INTRODUCTION

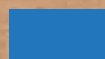
The Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan provides a blueprint for the growth and evolution of our region.

The original plan, created in 2010, was updated in 2014 with the input of the Great South Coast Board, its four Pillars and a range of other stakeholders.

It represents a truly “ground up” approach to strategic planning and reflects the aspirations of our entire region.

This plan addresses the challenges and opportunities we expect in the areas of economic development, connectivity, environment, health and wellbeing, land use and liveability.

The success of this plan depends on our capacity to work together as we collectively strive to achieve our vision for the future.



CONTENTS

- 
- 4 **THE GREAT SOUTH COAST GROUP**
 - 6 **ABOUT THIS PLAN**
 - 8 **THE GREAT SOUTH COAST TODAY**
 - 12 **OUR CITIES AND TOWNS**
 - 14 **OUR ASPIRATIONS**
 - 18 **EMERGING CHALLENGES**
 - 20 **POSITION THE GREAT SOUTH COAST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**
 - 22 **IMPROVE CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND BEYOND THE GREAT SOUTH COAST**
 - 24 **SUSTAIN THE NATURAL ASSETS OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST**
 - 26 **STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITIES OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST**
 - 28 **INCREASING COLLABORATION IN THE GREAT SOUTH COAST**

THE GREAT SOUTH COAST GROUP

The Great South Coast Group is a formal alliance of government, industry and community.

Jointly funded by the Shires of Colac Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Glenelg and the City of Warrnambool, this independent Company Limited by Guarantee has three primary functions:

1. To bring together different facets of our regional community to make strategic decisions about our regional priorities.
2. To advocate with one voice to state and federal governments and other investors about issues impacting our region.
3. To attract the resources needed to deliver programs and projects that no other organisation or individual has the mandate to deliver in our region.

OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Our Board is comprised of the Mayors and CEOs of our member municipalities, along with four independent, skills-based Directors.

Sitting beneath the Board are four Pillars, membership of which is drawn from government, industry and community.

The Pillars have broad portfolios of interest based upon the key issues and challenges within the Great South Coast:

> Position for Economic Growth

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Leadership and entrepreneurship
- Future workforce
- New and renewable energy
- Tourism
- Population

> Improve our Connections

- Transport
- Power and telecommunications
- The digital economy
- Social connectivity

> Sustain our Natural Assets

- Natural resources protection
- Nature-based tourism
- Climate change impacts
- Settlements and land use

> Strengthen our Communities

- Education attainment
- Health and wellbeing
- Healthy, liveable and resilient communities
- Recreation, arts and culture

Within the Pillars are a number of Working Groups that are formed to focus on particular issues or projects. Working Group membership may be drawn from one or more Pillars.

MEMBERSHIP

Participation on the Great South Coast Pillars and/or Working Groups is open to any person or individual with a stake in the Great South Coast region.

Membership is entirely voluntarily and we depend upon the goodwill of our leaders and citizens to progress the work of the Great South Coast Group.

To find out more and to download a Pillar Group application form visit www.greatsouthcoast.com.au.

PRIORITISING OUR WORK

Each of the Pillars is responsible for selecting its own areas of focus and activity.

Fully-costed, detailed project plans may be submitted to the Board for its consideration as a priority project for the region. The Board has developed a prioritisation matrix for this purpose.

What is a regional project?

A Great South Coast regional project can originate from any regional stakeholder. To be considered a regional project it must:

- > Deliver benefit to more than one municipality in the region
- > Address one or more of the strategic goals in the Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan
- > Have an assigned “champion” who is willing to take carriage of that project. A champion may be an individual or an organisation
- > Have a strong likelihood of funding.

Who ‘owns’ regional projects?

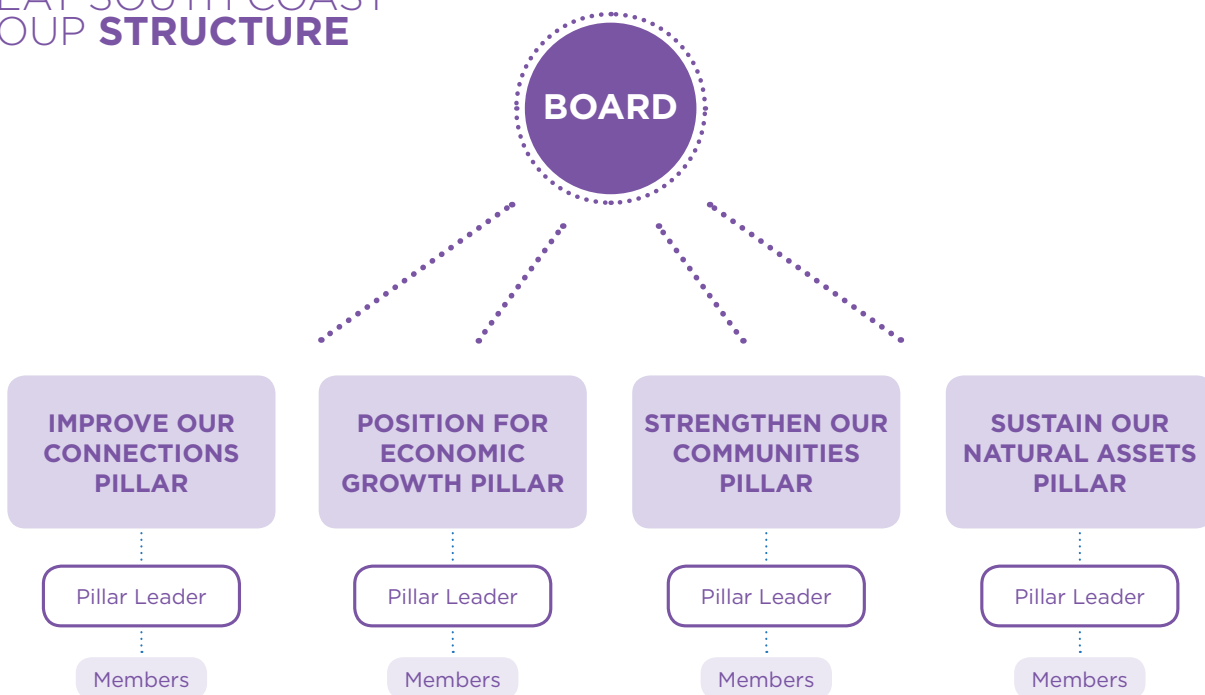
Projects may be auspiced and developed by the Great South Coast Group or by other organisations, such as Councils, business networks, government departments or agencies, community groups, universities, and so on.

Ownership, and therefore responsibility for delivery of projects always remains with the auspicing agency.

MAP OF OUR REGION



GREAT SOUTH COAST GROUP STRUCTURE



ABOUT THIS PLAN

WHAT IS A REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan explores the challenges and opportunities our region will face as it grows over the next decade and beyond. It identifies the economic, environmental and social issues that are predicted to impact upon our way of life and presents a regionally agreed position as to how we ought to respond to them.

The plan looks beyond the current terms of local, state and federal governments and beyond municipal boundaries to find an agreed framework to plan for and work towards our region's future vision.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Changing populations, emerging industries, environmental impacts, transport and internet connectivity, educational outcomes and the health status of our people all create serious challenges for the Great South Coast region.

This plan aims to ensure these and other critical issues are recognised by governments.

By working together across municipalities, industries, governments and interest areas, we can move purposefully towards our future.

HOW WAS THE PLAN DEVELOPED?

This plan builds upon the original 2010 Regional Strategic Plan, which was developed by stakeholders from across the region.

Retaining their original intent, this new plan seeks to provide a sharper focus for the work of the Great South Coast Group. It also reflects the work the group has already completed.

Each of the Pillars has had direct input into the revised Strategic Goals which will form the basis of an annual operational plan.

Other strategies and plans were also taken into account during the review of this plan, including the Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan, municipal plans and the strategic objectives of Regional Development Australia and Regional Development Victoria.

HOW WILL THE PLAN LEAD TO ACTION?

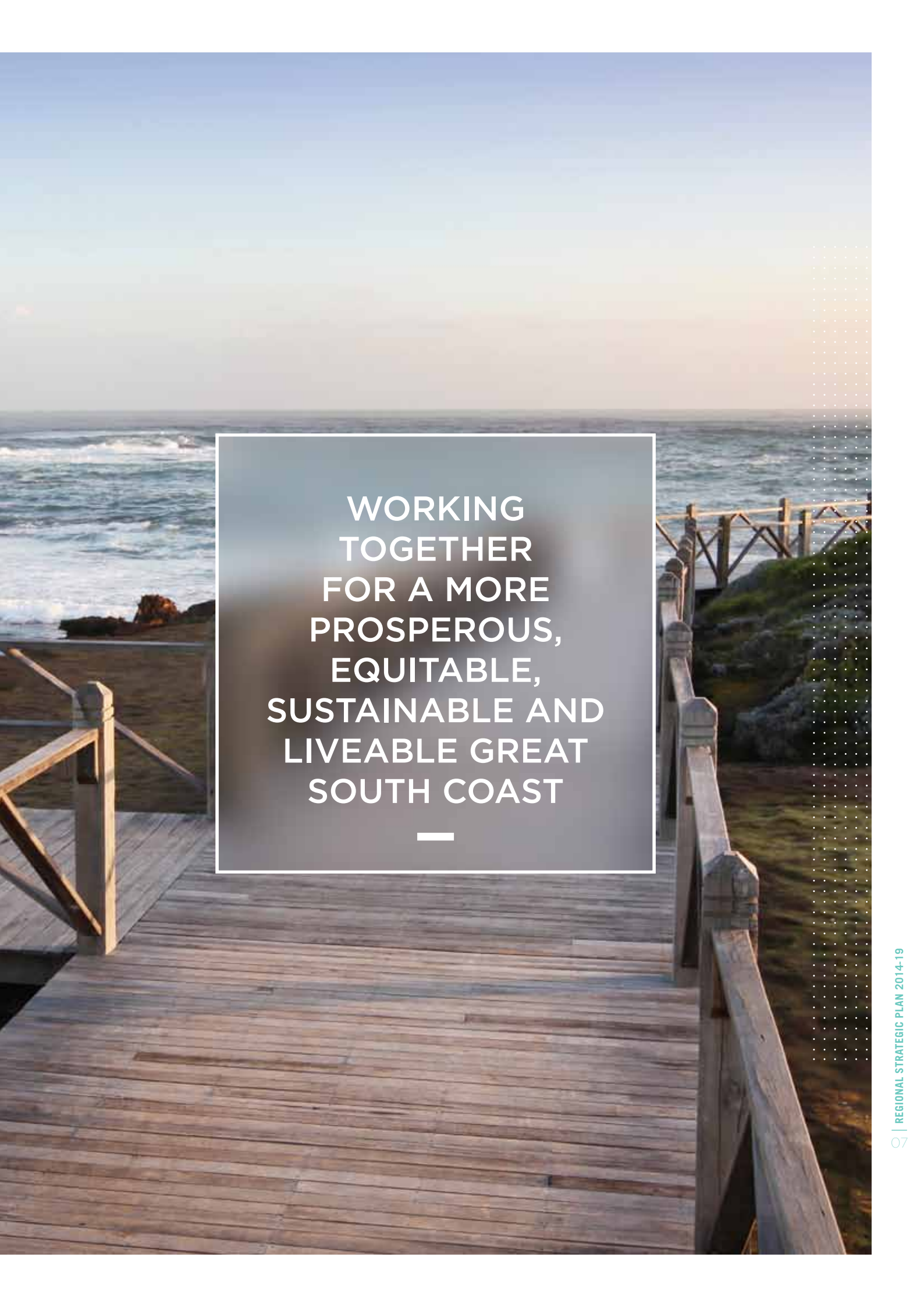
The Strategic Goals set out in this plan will help us to prioritise the things we need to do to achieve the future we want.

This clear picture of our priorities will help us to secure local, state and federal government support and other investment in our region.

Importantly, the plan will help to encourage cooperation between all tiers of government and the region's businesses and community groups.

Each year, our Pillar Groups will create an annual work plan based on their priorities and drawing on the strategic goals of this plan.





**WORKING
TOGETHER
FOR A MORE
PROSPEROUS,
EQUITABLE,
SUSTAINABLE AND
LIVEABLE GREAT
SOUTH COAST**

THE GREAT SOUTH COAST TODAY

Rich, productive agricultural land, iconic national parks, bountiful waterways, sites of cultural significance, spectacular coastline, historic towns and friendly communities – the Great South Coast has a natural advantage.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

The Great South Coast region is located in Victoria's south west. Traversing some 27,000 square kilometres, the region extends from Colac and Apollo Bay in the east to the South Australian border in the west.

With a rugged coastline and a northern boundary aligned to the Great Dividing Range, the region is one of diverse landscapes. These include the Ramsar-listed wetlands of the Corangamite Shire, the Grampians and Otway Ranges, the western volcanic plains and the Glenelg River system, among others.

Our region also includes iconic tourism destinations such as the Great Ocean Road, Port Campbell National Park (featuring the Twelve Apostles and Loch Ard Gorge), the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd), the Kanawinka Geotrail and the Budj Bim cultural heritage precinct.

The region's reliable rainfall and rich volcanic soils support a robust agricultural industry. Forestry and fishing are also economic mainstays, with one of Australia's few deepwater ports located in Portland.

These assets are important components of our region's economic and liveability strengths and many are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and population growth.

OUR ECONOMY

Key economic drivers:

- > Agriculture
- > Tourism
- > Retail trade
- > Healthcare and social services

Agriculture is our region's economic mainstay, with an estimated 60 per cent of the Great South Coast economy in some way dependent upon food and fibre production.

The Great South Coast produces 4.5 per cent of Australia's agricultural value from just 0.44 per cent of the country's total land mass. It produces over a third of Victoria's milk, a third of its beef and a third of its lamb. Nationally, more than a quarter of Australia's milk is produced in the Great South Coast.

Agriculture and forestry combined are our largest employers, accounting for around 16 per cent of our regional workforce. (The state average is 2.2 per cent.)

With the unveiling of recent Government initiatives, including the Food to Asia Action Plan, it is clear the time to rally our agricultural sector has arrived. This will ensure we are well positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities domestically and overseas.

Our manufacturing sector generates more than \$4 billion annually, a quarter of which is derived from dairy products. Milk processing takes place in Allansford, Koroit, Colac, Cobden, Camperdown, Dennington and Simpson, with meat processing in Warrnambool and Colac and timber processing in Portland and Colac.

Other significant manufacturing includes aluminum production near Portland, mineral processing at Hamilton and wind turbine fabrication and assembly at Portland.

Forestry is an increasingly important sector, with nearly 20 per cent of the nation's forestry in or near the Great South Coast.

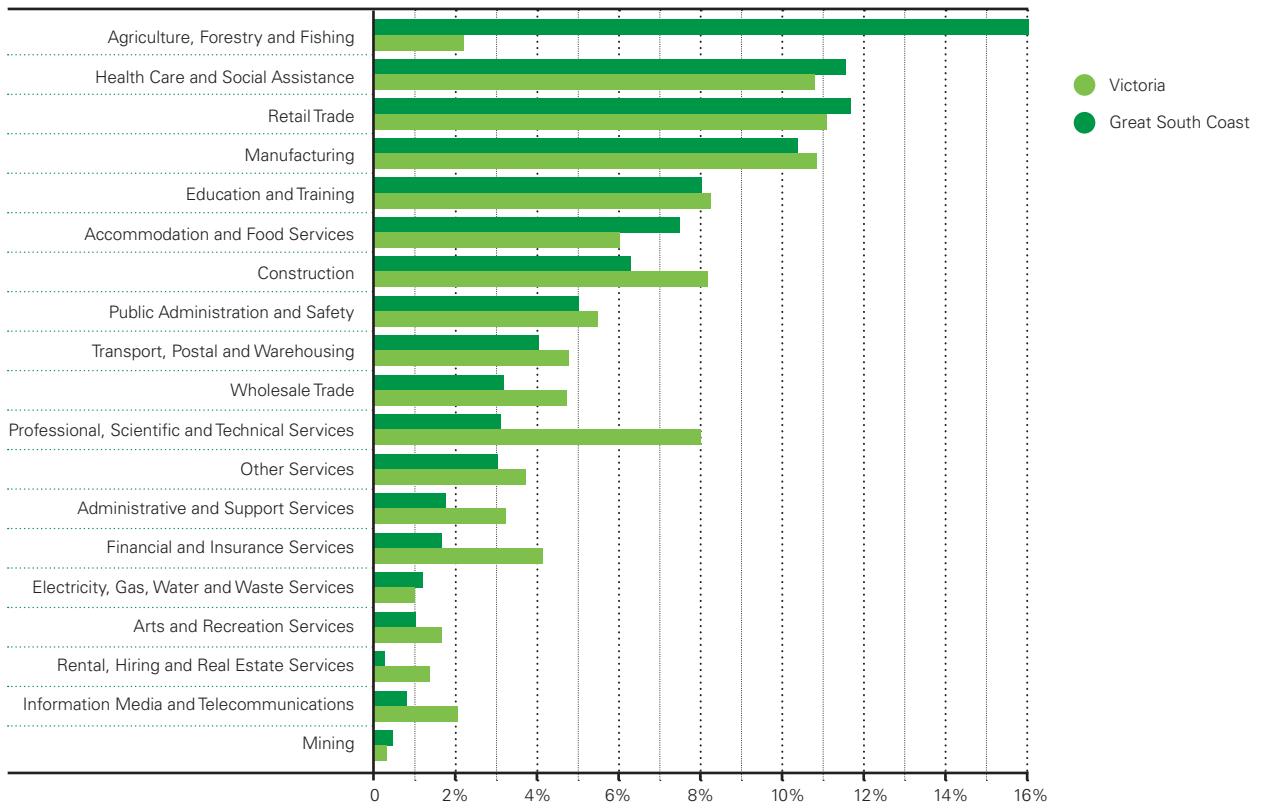
The Port of Portland provides business in the Great South Coast, the Green Triangle region and beyond with direct access to national and international markets. Each year, the port handles 6.2 million tonnes of trade worth \$2.5 billion. This includes aluminium ingots, grain, woodchips, logs and mineral sands, 95 per cent of which is exported or raw materials that will be used in the production of export cargoes. About 400 people are directly employed at the port.

Our retail and construction sectors currently contribute more than \$580 million to our economy each year. This sector is our third largest employer behind agriculture (16 per cent) and healthcare (14 per cent), employing more than 11.5 per cent of our workforce.

This is, in part, fuelled by a buoyant tourism industry. Almost half of all international overnight visits to regional Victoria are in the Great Ocean Road region. With its wealth of natural assets and rich cultural heritage, the Great South Coast is poised to become an important hub for nature-based and adventure-based tourism.

THE GREAT SOUTH COAST HAS A NATURAL ADVANTAGE

GREAT SOUTH COAST VS. VICTORIA
INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN 2011



Compared to the Victorian average, significant proportions of the Great South Coast workforce are engaged in agriculture, retail, education and training and health care services.

OUR PEOPLE

In 2012, more than 120,000 people called the Great South Coast home.

Of those, around 33,000 live in Warrnambool, with 10,200 people in Hamilton, 10,900 in Portland and just under 12,000 in Colac.

Future projections indicate the population will grow more slowly in the Great South Coast than it will in Victoria as a whole. Whilst the state is preparing for almost 40 per cent more people by 2031, it is estimated our population will grow by just 16.4 per cent over the same time.

Most of that growth will occur in Warrnambool which is expected to account for 40 per cent of our region's growth from 2011 to 2026. This represents a 25 per cent boost to the city's population.

Moyne Shire is expecting a more modest 13 per cent population rise, with an eight per cent rise tipped for Colac Otway Shire.

Other municipalities are bracing for small population declines in the period until 2031 - Southern Grampians Shire (-1.12 per cent); Corangamite Shire (-1.27 per cent).

Population changes in the Great South Coast will impact housing supply. As the average household size decreases from 2.5 people to 2.3 people, the number of dwellings needed to house those people will increase at the rate of about one per cent per annum. This is faster than the projected rate of population growth.

Population distribution In 2012

	Female	Male	LGA	Total % of GSC Region
Southern Grampians	8,083	8,316	16,399	13.39%
Glenelg	10,056	9,721	19,777	16.15%
Warrnambool	16,193	16,775	32,968	26.92%
Corangamite	8,365	8,022	16,387	13.38%
Moyne	8,122	8,099	16,221	13.24%
Colac-Otway	10,475	10,260	20,735	16.93%
Total	61,294	61,193	122,487	100.00%

Population impacts on our workforce

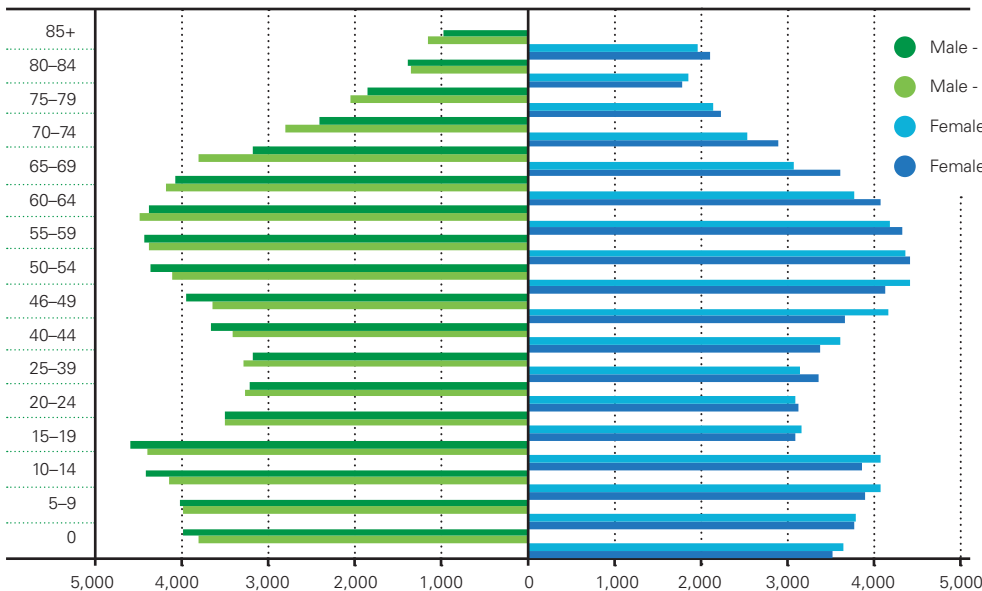
Longer-term demographic projections show there will be more elderly people and fewer younger people living in the Great South Coast in the future.

The historically unprecedented projected increase in aged and frail people will have a potent impact on families, communities and on health and community services.

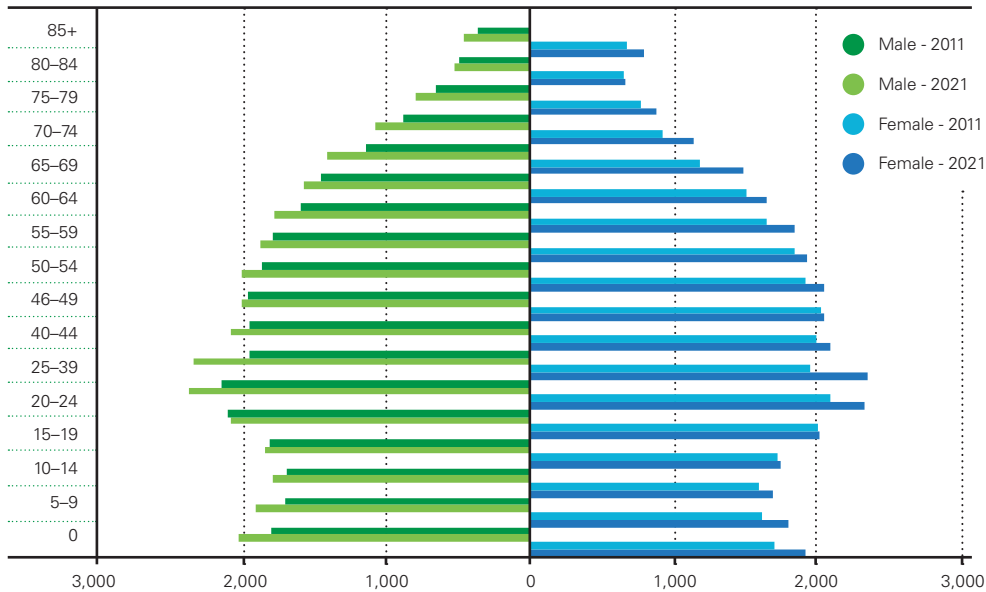
Similarly, the lower numbers of young people will have significant implications for workforce provision in the Great South Coast. Already, a number of our industries - including agriculture - are experiencing workforce shortages.

Providing the necessary workforce for our current and emerging industries is shaping up to be one of our greatest challenges. This situation will not be helped by our lower than average Year 12 and tertiary education attainment rates.

GREAT SOUTH COAST DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN 2011-2021



VICTORIA
DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN 2011-2021



EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

Our region's below average education attainment rates have a direct bearing upon our health, our economy and our capacity to meet future workforce requirements.

The completion of upper secondary education has become an important international benchmark and predictor of future life outcomes.

Our poor educational outcomes are of grave concern for a range of reasons. Low education attainment not only impacts the financial futures of our young people – it can also influence a range of social and health problems. These include lack of confidence and motivation, depression, substance abuse, homelessness and criminal behavior. These issues then become community concerns and costs.

Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates: 2006 and 2011

	'06	'11
Queenscliffe (G21)	78.4	76.5
Surf Coast (G21)	72.8	75.5
Greater Geelong (G21)	68	69.8
Golden Plains (G21)	58.7	61.8
Warrnambool	61.8	60.6
Colac Otway	54.2	57.2
Moyne	55.7	57
Southern Grampians	57	56
Corangamite	53.6	52.5
Glenelg	48.4	51
G21	68	69.9
Great South Coast	56.5	57
Regional Victoria	60.4	61.6
Metropolitan Victoria	74.5	77.7
Victoria	71.5	74.4



OUR CITIES AND TOWNS



THE CITY OF WARRNAMBOOL

Warrnambool

Seaside Warrnambool is the largest urban area within the Great South Coast region and is the dominant service centre.

Warrnambool City is projected to accommodate more than half of the Great South Coast region's resident population over the next 30 years.

This growth is placing pressure on the city's housing and service provision. With some capacity for outward growth, there are also significant infill opportunities, including the potential for medium density housing, to provide a diversity of housing options.

Townships near Warrnambool, including Allansford, Koroit, Port Fairy and Terang, are increasingly housing people working in Warrnambool. These townships provide lifestyle and more affordable housing options for the area, reducing the immediate need for further outward expansion of Warrnambool into productive agricultural areas. Higher density housing will be encouraged in some of these areas.

Population forecasts indicate moderate growth for Warrnambool City, generally.

Warrnambool City population forecast

Year	Population
2011	32,592
2021	39,416
2031	43,934

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

Colac

Colac is a major inland town and key agricultural, industrial, commercial and service centre at the region's eastern end.

With a population of just under 12,000, Colac has substantial potential to accommodate more residents. Its proximity to Geelong, Melbourne and Ballarat make it attractive to commuters seeking lifestyle opportunities outside those larger centres.

The growth of tourism around the Great Ocean Road, Apollo Bay and the Otways, along with the availability of lifestyle choices in small bush townships and coastal villages, indicate continued growth potential for this part of the region.

Colac Otway Shire population forecast

Year	Population
2011	20,343
2021	22,786
2031	25,120

CORANGAMITE SHIRE

Camperdown

A key service centre for one of Australia's most significant dairy centres, Camperdown is the largest township within the Corangamite Shire. It is expected to see an increase in agricultural and manufacturing functions to generate employment opportunities.

The town's rich character, high liveability values and proximity to both Colac and Warrnambool are likely to underscore residential growth.

Terang

The surrounding dairy industry is likely to support medium future growth in this township and in neighbouring communities, such as Timboon.

Port Campbell

Development in this coastal township is likely to be limited to key locations within the existing settlement. Tourism will be a key economic driver.

Corangamite Shire population forecast

Year	Population
2011	16,504
2021	18,172
2031	18,821



GLENELG SHIRE

Portland

With its deepwater port and road linkages to South Australia, Portland is a key gateway to the region. Each year, more than \$2.5 billion worth of trade passes through the port, including aluminium ingots, grain, woodchips, logs and mineral sands.

Although a significant service centre, the town's population is projected to remain stagnant into the future - a factor that is likely to have ramifications for the workforce of this significant industrial and port-related employment base.

Portland's seaside locale and proximity to the Limestone Coast region of South Australia make this a popular tourist destination and it is anticipated that the growth in nature-based tourism will have a positive impact upon this part of the region.

Heywood

The gateway to the Budj Bim Cultural Heritage Landscape, Heywood is expecting medium growth in its residential corridors as tourism expands in the region.

Casterton

Regional Casterton is an important service centre for the Shire's north. It is also considered to be the 'birthplace' of the Australian kelpie and has a small, but growing role to play in regional tourism.

Glenelg Shire population forecast

Year	Population
2011	19,843
2021	22,214
2031	23,155

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Hamilton

Hamilton is the Great South Coast's other major inland town. Having evolved as a major service centre for the surrounding agricultural industry, Hamilton has a range of health, education and other services.

Despite having several hundred years' of potential housing land available, Hamilton's population is expected to decline in coming decades.

However, there are significant opportunities to capitalise on the quality lifestyle and economic potential of this area in the future, particularly in health and education.

Nearby Dunkeld and Peshurst are emerging as future tourism and lifestyle locations that may serve as dormitory settlements for Hamilton's future workforce. Similarly, the townships of Coleraine, Balmoral, Wannon and Cavendish are all within easy driving distance for commuters.

Dunkeld

Dunkeld plays an important role as the southern gateway to the Grampians National Park. It is likely to enjoy moderate growth as it supports tourism and agriculture into the future.

Coleraine

A small service centre for agriculture and lifestyle township, Coleraine is expected to remain relatively static in terms of population.

Southern Grampians Shire population forecast

Year	Population
2011	16,510
2021	18,256
2031	19,004

MOYNE SHIRE

Port Fairy

Port Fairy is a prominent tourism destination within the Great South Coast, with a rich annual calendar of cultural and tourism activities.

Koroit

Koroit, with its heritage values and historic buildings, is an increasingly important residential alternative to Warrnambool.

Mortlake

An important hinterland service centre, Mortlake's proximity to a major gas power station has potential to expand employment opportunities.

Moyne Shire population forecast

Year	Population
2011	16,175
2021	18,496
2031	19,884

OUR ASPIRATIONS

We will value and protect our natural assets and environment.

Our people will be healthy and well educated and every individual will have opportunity to reach their full potential. They will have diverse lifestyle options in cities, towns and villages that are well connected.





OVER THE NEXT
10 TO 15 YEARS,
WE WILL WORK
TOGETHER TO
CREATE A THRIVING,
MULTI-FACETED
AND RESILIENT
ECONOMY

A BUOYANT, DIVERSE ECONOMY

We will have a diverse and resilient economy in which a range of industries – including agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, mineral sands and mining, energy, tourism and the service sector – are supported.

We will foster new opportunities for investment in our region and will have the infrastructure we need to support our economy and our communities.

Entrepreneurship and innovation will be valued and actively encouraged.

We will achieve industry growth and community strength by attracting more young people to our region to study and work.

This will help us to ensure we have a skilled workforce for our future.

The Great South Coast region will also be Australia's renewable energy centre of expertise.

We will have developed our wind, gas, wave and geothermal energy sources and invested in the technology and knowledge required to build the renewable energy sector in Australia.

A THRIVING, RESILIENT AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

The Great South Coast will become Australia's most productive, innovative and sustainable food production region.

We will build upon our existing agricultural strengths to create an engaged, well-connected and collaborative industry.

We will have a ready supply of skilled workers available to the sector and the transport infrastructure we need to ensure our produce is transported quickly and cost-effectively.

Our high quality produce will be in demand from a range of markets and there will be strong recognition of Great South Coast produce as a premium "brand".

Land use and climate change impacts are well managed to enable sustainable growth of the industry whilst also protecting the region's biodiversity and liveability values.

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED FOR NATURE-BASED TOURISM EXPERIENCES

The Great South Coast will be Victoria's premier nature-based tourism destination.

And as the western gateway to the Great Ocean Road, we will become an internally renowned destination in our own right.

THE GREAT SOUTH COAST VALUES EDUCATION AND IS RENOWNED AS A LEARNING COMMUNITY

We will be renowned not only for the sustainable management of our environmental assets, but also for our focus on and respect for Indigenous culture and heritage tourism.

We will seek to leverage our iconic tourism destinations, including the Great Ocean Road and the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd), to disperse and increase tourism yield throughout the region.

A VALUED ENVIRONMENT

Our environmental and heritage assets will be valued and carefully managed to ensure their longer-term protection.

This will be balanced with the need to ensure urban growth, commercial, industrial and residential development.

We will ensure fast and effective response to natural hazards such as bushfire and floods and will mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL

The Great South Coast values education and is renowned as a learning community.

As such, each young person in our community will have opportunity to attain Year 12 or equivalent and will be encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential.

Our university cities, including Warrnambool and Hamilton, will offer relevant tertiary and technical courses to build a skilled workforce for our future. Research will underpin our innovative focus.

Working collaboratively, our community takes collective responsibility for ensuring this is achieved.

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY REGION WITH EQUITABLE, ATTRACTIVE AND AFFORDABLE LIFESTYLE OPTIONS

Our cities, towns and villages will provide a range of housing and lifestyle options for families.

They are comprised of communities that encourage civic engagement and a sense of place through enhanced public spaces and streetscapes, ready access to the arts and diverse options for community participation.

Diversity will be celebrated in all its forms.

We will take measures to reduce disadvantage and to ensure our people are socially connected.

Volunteerism will be valued as an important social connector and supporter of our communities.



WE ARE WELL CONNECTED

We will significantly improve public transport, telecommunications and social networks to support lifestyles and industry across the region, including in smaller rural settlements.

Modern telecommunications and high-speed Internet will be accessible to all and will serve to improve the competitive position of our businesses and industries.

Our road, rail and airport infrastructure will be upgraded to facilitate the expected growth in agriculture, forestry, tourism and manufacturing and to ensure the safety of our residents.

And our region will be connected by a network of accessible parks and trails.

THE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE REGION

We will create healthier communities by providing spaces and places for healthy, active lifestyles and by focusing on early life foundations for good health.

We will reduce smoking, alcohol and other drug consumption. We will also reduce obesity and mental health issues and we will improve the lives of people in disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

We will do this through promotion of healthy lifestyle choices and the development of healthy communities in which to live, work and play.

EMERGING CHALLENGES

Recognising the issues challenges ahead is an important first step towards addressing them. Although significant, our challenges are not insurmountable and may even lead to unexpected opportunities for our region.

MANAGING GROWTH

Strategies to encourage higher growth need to be supported within the Great South Coast.

Key challenges:

- > Managing the competing demands of urban growth and agriculture.
- > Upgrading and maintaining our road and rail networks and public transport links to meet the growing demands of our both residents and visitors.
- > Housing affordability.
- > Sustainable management of our natural resources.
- > Maintaining and upgrading tourism infrastructure.
- > Ensuring access to education.
- > Sourcing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet our emerging demands.
- > Planning and delivering key infrastructure.
- > Encouraging population growth above current and forecast trends to offset our ageing population.
- > Arresting small town population decline.

SMALL TOWN POPULATION DECLINE

As communities age and employment centres shift, a number of our small towns are experiencing significant population decline.

This transition has a number of social impacts upon those communities.

Key challenges:

- > Nurturing social connections.
- > Ensuring access to a workforce for agricultural production in rural and regional areas.
- > Ensuring transport access and connectivity.
- > Enhancing the liveability of our small towns.

ACCESS TO A
WORKFORCE
FOR
AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION
IN RURAL AND
REGIONAL
AREAS

PROTECTING OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Our natural environment contributes significantly to the economic, cultural, environmental and lifestyle values of our region.

However, continued pressure for development of industry, lifestyle choice and tourism creates environmental and service delivery challenges.

Key challenges:

- > Minimising the impacts of coastal population growth and increased visitation on our delicate environment.
- > Planning for and mitigating the effects of climate change, including coastal erosion, inundation, extreme weather events and sea-level rise.
- > Identifying and acknowledging the value of our natural assets.
- > Identifying and acknowledging the value of our Indigenous cultural heritage and significant sites.

BOOSTING EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

Our region's education attainment levels are significantly below the Victorian state average and are among the worst in Australia.

This has a significant bearing on our people in terms of their life and health and wellbeing outcomes, and on our economy and capacity to meet workforce demand.

Key challenges:

- > Understanding that we all have collective responsibility for this intergenerational issue.
- > Ensuring an integrated pathway along the life continuum, from birth through to adulthood.
- > Understanding where and how we can best influence educational outcomes for our young people.
- > Fostering a culture in which life-long learning is valued and supported.



EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES

By 2026, it is expected that more than 30 per cent of our population will be over 60 years of age.

Around half of our total population will be living in the main urban centres of Warrnambool, Hamilton, Portland and Colac, with the balance living in towns and rural communities across an area of 27,000 square kilometres.

Ensuring all our communities are linked and that our residents can access services and infrastructure is a significant issue.

Key challenges:

- > Ensuring good inter and intra-regional transport services, particularly in smaller rural communities.
- > Gaining access for all to telecommunications services and high-speed Internet.

DISADVANTAGE

There are significant pockets of disadvantage within the Great South Coast region.

These are characterised by lower incomes, education and skills levels and higher levels of unemployment, family and health issues.

Key challenges:

- > Improving access to services and education.
- > Reducing health inequalities.
- > Strengthening neighbourhoods and community connectivity.

WE WILL FOSTER A CULTURE OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A DRIVER OF GROWTH

DRIVING OUR ECONOMY

International trade fluctuations, climate variability and climate change leave our agriculturally-dependent economy vulnerable.

Our challenge is to understand how best to diversify agriculture and our economy, more generally.

Key industries for value-adding economic growth include meat production and dairying. Forecast increases in production are likely to generate need for more processing and manufacturing facilities beyond 2020.

A ready supply of natural gas off Port Campbell is likely to prove attractive to industry.

Key challenges:

- > Developing a more cohesive, connected and collaborative agricultural industry that is ready to respond to emerging opportunities.
- > Providing infrastructure to support growth.
- > Foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship as a driver of growth.
- > Encouraging diversification and value-adding within agriculture, tourism and other key industry sectors in the Great South Coast.

IMPROVING OUR HEALTH

Smoking, unhealthy eating, alcohol consumption and physical inactivity in the Great South Coast are all occurring at significantly higher rates than the Victorian average.

The region also has high levels of obesity, diabetes, violent crime and family violence.

Key challenges:

- > Ensuring equitable access to quality health care and services.
- > Encouraging healthier lifestyle choices.
- > Implementing a whole-of-community approach to regional health issues.

POSITION THE GREAT SOUTH COAST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



Our regional economy faces new challenges in terms of diversification, access to a skilled workforce and infrastructure efficiency to allow growing and emerging industries to compete in a global market.

Enhancing the economic productivity of our region will not only result in greater prosperity – it will boost our standard of living, enhance our liveability, improve our health outcomes and contribute to our capacity to protect our natural environment.

By 2031, the Great South Coast's largest economic sectors are expected to be healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing and construction. Healthcare, retail trade and accommodation are likely to be our largest employers.

Other significant sectors for our future include retail trade, professional and scientific services and tourism.

Today, the Great South Coast is near full employment, although youth unemployment remains high.

OUR AGEING WORKFORCE

Population ageing is one of the biggest challenges for our region. In 20 years' time, over a quarter of our population will be aged 60 or older.

This will place increasing pressure on our health care system and our economy, in general.

Importantly for our growing economy (all Great South Coast municipalities are predicting jobs growth of up to 35 per cent in the next 20 years), our ageing population is likely to result in significant skills and workforce shortages.

The issue is compounded by the fact that our already small pool of potential workers has comparatively low skill and education levels.

COMPETING LAND USES

The region's well-watered coastal fringe is experiencing development pressure at the same time as an intensification of agricultural land use.

The threat of losing high quality agricultural land to residential development will erode agricultural production capacity and impede rural exports.

We need to support industrial development that takes advantage of our natural assets whilst at the same time seeking to protect them.

A MORE COHESIVE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

The Great South Coast region produces 25 per cent of the nation's milk and a significant proportion of its prime lamb, wool and beef.

Aquaculture is emerging as a commodity with strong growth potential.

However, our food and fibre industry lacks cohesion and coordination across the various commodities.

Regional leadership and cross-commodity collaboration will position us to take full advantage of emerging global opportunities.

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

Portland's deepwater port and the road and rail infrastructure which serves it are critical components of regional and state freight transport systems. They provide regional producers with a gateway to global markets.

Constraints to the growth of the port need to be identified and managed to ensure we can accommodate future demand.

Additional rail access and terminal improvements and highway and arterial road improvements are urgently needed.

FOSTERING INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The dynamic enterprise sector is recognised as a driving force of modern economies.

The Great South Coast Group recognises it has a critical role to play in encouraging innovation, research and development in the region.



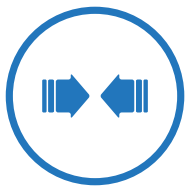
KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR OUR REGION'S ECONOMY:

- > Economic dependence upon agriculture and its vulnerability to offshore influences.
- > Competition between agriculture and peri-urban and rural residential development.
- > Decreasing investment in agricultural research and innovation.
- > The capacity of our transport system to manage projected bulk freight volumes.
- > The need to manage the impact of increased freight volumes on our liveability and tourism values.
- > Access to an appropriately skilled workforce.
- > We do not have a clear understanding of our future workforce needs.
- > Uncertainty in the renewable energy sector.
- > Significant barriers to private investment in tourism and a lack of high-end tourism products and supporting infrastructure.
- > Our ageing population.
- > Lack of access to high-speed broadband.

Strategic Goals

- 1.1 Better understand and plan for the future labour and skills needs of current and emerging industries.
- 1.2 Grow the value and capacity of the Great South Coast's food and fibre industry.
- 1.3 Build our leadership and entrepreneurial capacity, with a particular focus on small to medium enterprise and on innovation.
- 1.4 Develop and communicate a vision for the Great South Coast as a unique and active participant in the global economy, with a recognisable brand and product offering.
- 1.5 Advocate for increased investment in infrastructure and services for our region.
- 1.6 Seek to position the Great South Coast as a premier nature-based tourism destination whilst supporting the development and evolution of our regional tourism industry, generally.
- 1.7 Continue to support investment in new energy technologies including wind, solar, geothermal, wave and gas power generation.
- 1.8 Better understand levers to population growth with a view to increasing the Great South Coast population, generally.

IMPROVE CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND BEYOND THE GREAT SOUTH COAST



Strong physical, virtual and social connections are pivotal for a prosperous, equitable and sustainable region.

Transport, power, internet and telecommunications are critical components of the Great South Coast region's economy, liveability and social cohesiveness.

Key drivers of these are industry (particularly in agriculture, timber and mineral sands), climate change impacts, the rise of nature-based tourism, shifting populations, changing work patterns and telecommuting, the rise of e-health and our ageing population.

SUPPORTING GROWING AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

Declining investment in the Great South Coast's regional roads over many years has resulted in a degraded arterial network that does not have capacity to service the projected freight increases and growth in tourism.

The lack of access to high speed broadband internet seriously impedes our business and service sectors and their ability to grow and become more productive.

This is also a significant constraint to our efforts to address disadvantage and social connectivity for rural and remote communities.

Portland's deepwater port is critical to the economic health of our region. Handling major flows of grain, wool and timber, the port is a hub for industry.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY NETWORKS

Our sub-standard public transport system is a constraint to the productivity and liveability of our smaller communities.

Lack of public transport hampers access to education and health services and employment in larger regional centres.

Key factors contributing to community strength are:

- > Close personal networks, including family, work, friends and neighbours, all provide the foundations for dealing with everyday life. They can influence a person's capacity to take on challenges, develop new skills or explore new roles and experiences.
- > Community networks, such as sporting clubs, business, community and volunteer organisations, all provide opportunity for inclusion and participation.
- > Strong, inclusive government – local, state and federal – provides people with the capacity to identify and assess issues, enter into public debate, take action and speak out with confidence.
- > Volunteerism – a strong indicator of community strength – has experienced a decline in many areas of the region.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE

Easy access to major regional centres, fast broadband internet and good mobile telephone coverage are all critical to attracting and retaining young people.

With almost half of our Great South Coast population aged over 45, we will need to ensure we can attract more young people to fill critical labour shortages and to maintain a demographically balanced community.

PREPARING FOR AN OLDER POPULATION

One of the major challenges for our ageing population is ensuring all our communities are well linked to quality services and infrastructure.

As more of our older residents lose the ability to drive, good public transport, community networks and telecommunications will become ever more important.





KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR OUR REGION'S CONNECTIVITY:

- > The capacity of our transport system to manage projected freight volumes.
- > The potential for significant freight increases to impact on our liveability and tourism values.
- > Declining investment in our regional road network.
- > Lack of access to high-speed broadband.
- > Climate change risks to local ports and associated infrastructure.
- > Mobile telephone blackspots.
- > Declining volunteerism.
- > Poor public transport links with rural and regional communities.
- > Need for region-wide planning to strengthen community infrastructure.
- > Deteriorating levels of social connectedness and increasing levels of social isolation.

Strategic Goals

- 2.1 Advocate for transport infrastructure and services to maximise regional productivity, enhance connectivity and increase safety for residents and visitors.**
- 2.2 Ensure that our regional freight network:**
 - > Minimises our carbon footprint
 - > Strengthens our competitive advantage
 - > Enhances our liveability
 - > Acknowledges our tourism values.
- 2.3 Advocate for high-speed broadband to be accessible to all our residents.**
- 2.4 Identify and seek to address the connectivity needs of all our communities.**

SUSTAIN THE NATURAL ASSETS OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST



Addressing environmental challenges, including climate change, water security, land use and the health of our ecosystems, will help to create a healthy regional community.

The Great South Coast region's terrestrial and aquatic systems underpin its economic and liveability strengths.

Large tracts of undeveloped, pristine coastline sit alongside internationally significant volcanic landscapes, national parks and large areas of productive agricultural land.

However, the impacts of European settlement and our changing climate mean that our once extensive ecosystems are highly fragmented.

A range of land use changes, including raised bed and broad acre cropping, mining, increased irrigation, bluegum farming and rural residential development have accelerated the loss of native vegetation and shrunk habitats for a range of threatened species.

The majority of the region's river basins are in poor to moderate condition. Algal blooms in the region's waterways are more common and there are significant areas of dry land salinity and soil acidification.

The highly modified and fragmented nature of the landscape means biodiversity is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate changes.

MANAGING CLIMATE CHANGE

Low lying coastal and estuarine locations are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including storm surge, temperature increases and sea level rise.

Port Fairy, Portland, some parts of Warrnambool and a number of small, low lying coastal settlements have infrastructure systems already vulnerable to flooding and storm events.

The Otway Ranges and the Grampians have a history of devastating bush fires.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE PRESSURES

Our love of seaside living is putting pressure on coastal ecosystems and resources. Predicted future urban and semi-rural growth along the coast will only add to this pressure.

Residential development must also take account of our tourism values.

Strategic intervention needs to ensure that the transition of rural landscapes is informed by an understanding of the landscape's broader environmental functions.

These functions ought to be protected and enhanced through investment priorities.



WATER USE

Demands from agricultural, industrial, environmental and urban/rural residential sectors dictate how our precious water reserves are managed and used.

Studies associated with a number of reviews in the Great South Coast region in recent years have identified a range of risks to our water resources.

Climate change and variability is the most significant of these.

It is likely that the next 50 years will be warmer and drier than the last 50 years.

Higher average temperatures, increased evaporation rates and reductions in rainfall and catchment runoff will result in less water being available for surface storage after aquifer recharge and environmental flows.



KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR OUR NATURAL ASSETS:

- > The need to recognise and acknowledge our natural assets.
- > Poor coordination between agencies managing natural resources and natural assets.
- > Continuing loss of habitat and fragmentation of natural landscapes and ecosystems.
- > Population and development pressures on ecosystems and natural assets.
- > Increasing water demands and poorly regulated groundwater reserves.
- > Uncertainty around the scope and scale of climate change impacts.
- > Risk analysis and information sharing in relation to climate change.
- > Intensification of residential development along the coast.
- > Competition for land between industry and rural residential living.

Strategic Goals

- 3.1 Advocate for better integration of natural resource management into agricultural, rural residential and commercial activities.**
- 3.2 Support activities and other measures that help us to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.**
- 3.3 Help to educate our community about sustainable use of natural resources, including groundwater and inland waterways, the marine environment, land use, etc.**
- 3.4 Promote and advocate for programs that encourage sustainable waste management and better management of environmental hazards.**
- 3.5 Promote sustainable nature-based tourism within the Great South Coast region, ensuring the environmental and cultural values of our natural assets are acknowledged and protected.**
- 3.6 Facilitate closer collaboration with and between natural resource management bodies and community groups.**

STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITIES OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST



The strength, resilience and liveability of our communities will determine the strength of our collective future.

Strong communities are places where people can feel safe and can achieve their full potential because they are well equipped to respond to challenges and change.

Such communities offer access and opportunities for all people who live there.

They inspire active, confident and healthy lifestyles.

LIVEABILITY

Being a part of a healthy, liveable community helps encourage healthy behaviours and choices.

It can increase our feelings of safety and connection with nature and others so that we feel we belong.

National, state and regional health strategies clearly identify the need to proactively plan, design and create sustainable communities that encourage healthy living.

Ready access to education, health services and employment are important challenges for many of our communities, particularly the smaller and more isolated communities.

DISADVANTAGE

Almost 10 per cent of our regional population lives in areas of disadvantage.

Every Great South Coast municipality has pockets of the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage, with lower incomes, education and skill levels and higher levels of unemployment, family and health issues.

Many of our communities are experiencing population decline – a key predictor of disadvantage.

Our Aboriginal community is also known to experience higher levels of disadvantage across a broad range of indicators.

In addition, our region is experiencing increasingly high levels of disadvantage.

Many of our inequalities could be reduced through better access to education and better living and working conditions.

HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Much good work is already underway in our region to provide opportunities for active living, including regional walking and cycling trails and park networks.

However, more work is needed in this area if we are to have any hope of reversing the rise in preventable chronic illness.

Planning for places and systems where people are encouraged to walk, cycle and use public transport as a matter of course ought to be a priority.

STRONG VOLUNTEER NETWORKS

Volunteer networks provide vital services across the region and act as important social connectors.

Volunteer networks underpin emergency response systems and are the foundation of sporting and health support structures.

Our ageing population, together with workforce pressures, will create more need for volunteerism.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts can have a powerful positive impact on issues such as discrimination, homelessness and violence in the community.

For individuals, connection with arts and cultural events and activities can help to increase self-esteem and boost other skills.

The Great South Coast has a strong arts and culture foundation upon which to encourage greater diversification and participation.



KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR OUR COMMUNITIES:

- > Low aspiration.
- > There is a need to strengthen the liveability aspects of our communities to attract and retain people.
- > There is inequality in access to educational opportunities.
- > We do not have a clear understanding of our future workforce needs.
- > How can we attract more young people to live, learn and work in our region?
- > Access to affordable housing and student accommodation.
- > We have an ageing population.
- > There is a need to address disadvantage and inequality of access across the region.
- > We experience higher rates of domestic violence.
- > Our health and human service delivery models need to intensify their client focus and strive for greater integration.
- > We have higher levels of obesity, mental illness and chronic disease and lower levels of physical activity and healthy eating.
- > Volunteerism is declining.

Strategic Goals

- 4.1 Drive educational attainment and build a learning community.**
- 4.2 Strengthen community health, wellbeing and resilience.**
- 4.3 Increase inclusion and participation in recreation, arts, culture and community life.**
- 4.4 Improve equitable access to education, health and community services.**

INCREASING COLLABORATION IN THE GREAT SOUTH COAST



Leadership, communication and strong alignment to agreed priorities will take our plan from a vision to reality.

Working as a regional team we can speak as one voice to State and Federal Governments and present them with a clear message about what our region needs to achieve its future vision.

Our ability to exchange information and ideas and to pool resources will help us to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies.

LEADERSHIP

The Great South Coast Group has a role to play in terms of determining the strategic direction of our region.

Taking account of regional aspirations and the priorities of our member Councils and our communities, we will provide strong leadership to ensure our collective vision is realised.

A GENUINELY REGIONAL APPROACH

The power of this Regional Strategic Plan can only be fully realised if we continue to engage people from all business, government and community sectors to participate in its implementation.

The Great South Coast Board is committed to fostering broad participation from across the region in the understanding that a truly collaborative regional alliance will consist of disparate member organisations with a range of work cultures and alignments.

WORKING WITH OTHER REGIONAL GROUPS

The Great South Coast Group is one of a number of regional organisations operating in this region. It is important that we establish strong and productive working relationships with them.

Government organisations, including the Barwon South West Regional Development Australia committee and the Regional Management Forum, operate in networks of influence that could accelerate support and funding for our priority projects.

In order to advance projects of mutual benefit, sound relationships will also be cultivated with neighbouring regional alliances, particularly our sub-regional partners, G21 Regional Alliance and the Grampians region to our north.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is critical to the success of the Great South Coast Group.

Communications strategies are developed to ensure regular and transparent communication with all Great South Coast stakeholders.

These strategies will aim to:

- > Inform supporters and participants, Councillors, funding bodies, media and the community about regional issues and activities the Great South Coast Group supports
- > Engage people and organisations to participate in regional activities
- > Build the reach and influence of the Great South Coast Group.

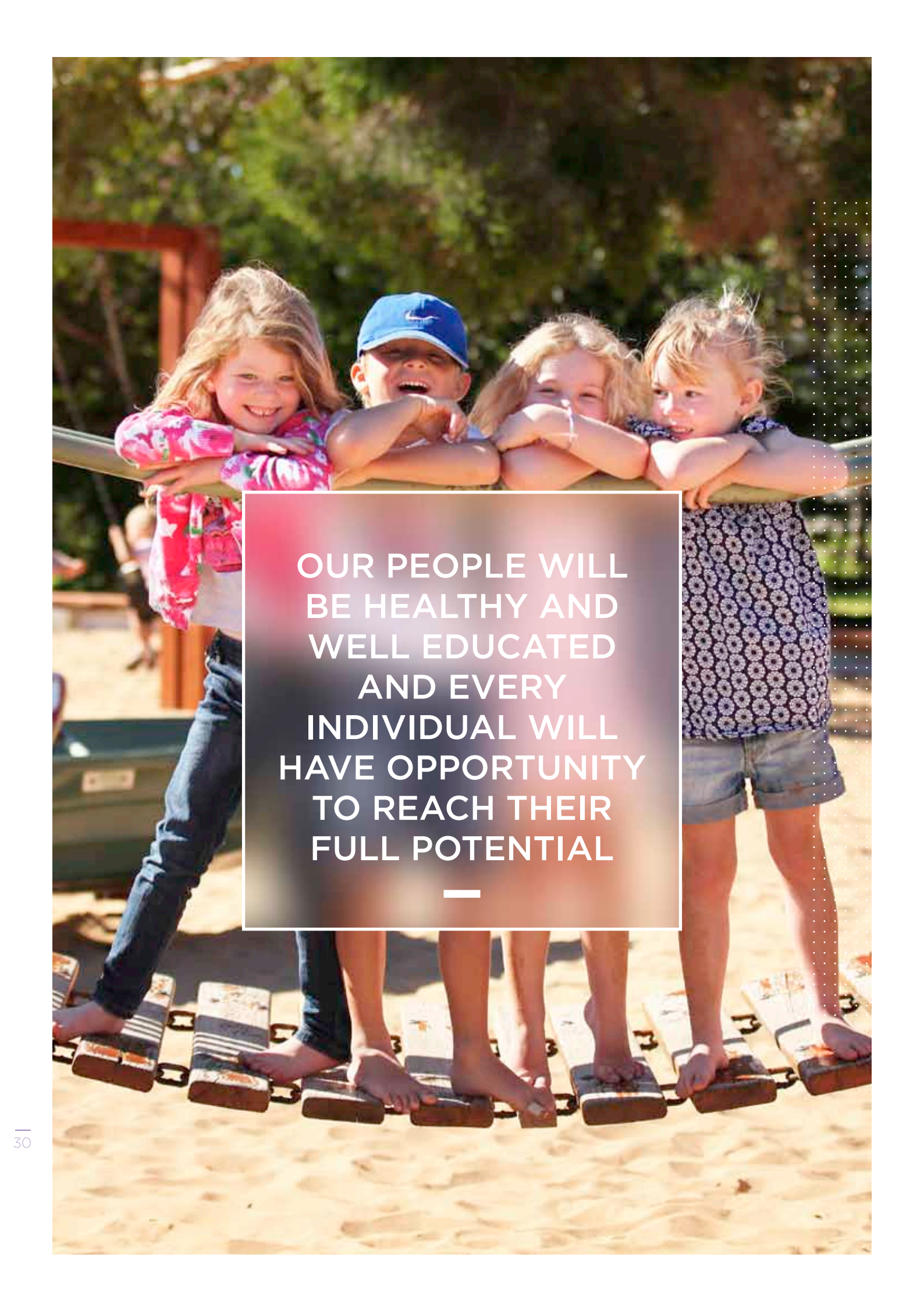
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION:

- > The need to ensure a truly regional approach that is supported by all our members and stakeholders.
- > Securing resources to implement our projects.
- > Ensuring all stakeholder roles and responsibilities are clear.
- > Managing the expectations of our stakeholders and the Great South Coast community.
- > Ensuring a consistent approach to project prioritisation.
- > Communicating frequently and transparently.
- > Ensuring we have up-to-date data and information about our region.
- > The need to strengthen our research, data and evaluation capacity.

Alan Lane Community Gallery

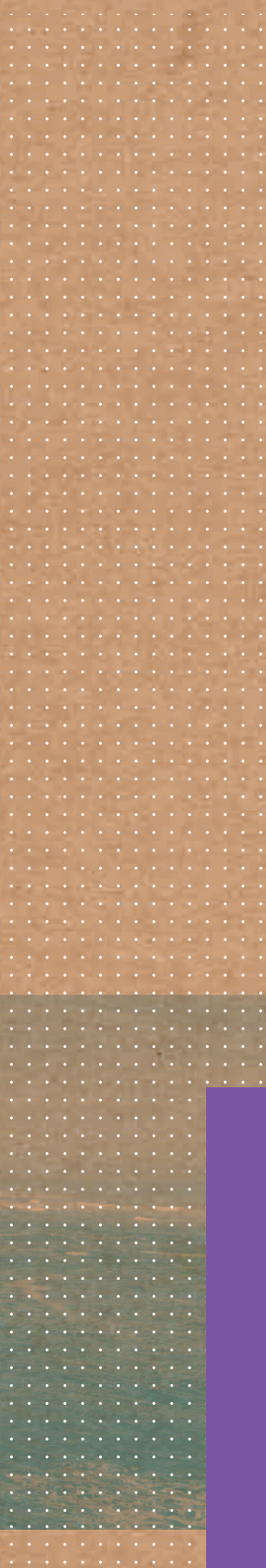
Strategic Goals

- 5.1 Provide leadership and strategic direction to achieve our vision.
- 5.2 Secure resources to deliver the strategic goals and actions of the Regional Strategic Plan.
- 5.3 Develop strategic communications and marketing initiatives to support the implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan.
- 5.4 Build and foster collaborative networks within the Great South Coast region, identifying and addressing barriers to cooperation.
- 5.5 Build mutually beneficial and cooperative relationships with neighbouring regions.
- 5.6 Bolster our region's capacity for research, data collection and analysis.

A photograph of four children (three girls and one boy) standing on a wooden bridge-like structure at a playground. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred green area, likely trees or bushes. The children are wearing casual clothing: a pink floral shirt, a blue baseball cap, a white shirt, and a blue patterned dress. The bridge is made of wooden planks and is set on a sandy ground.

OUR PEOPLE WILL
BE HEALTHY AND
WELL EDUCATED
AND EVERY
INDIVIDUAL WILL
HAVE OPPORTUNITY
TO REACH THEIR
FULL POTENTIAL





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