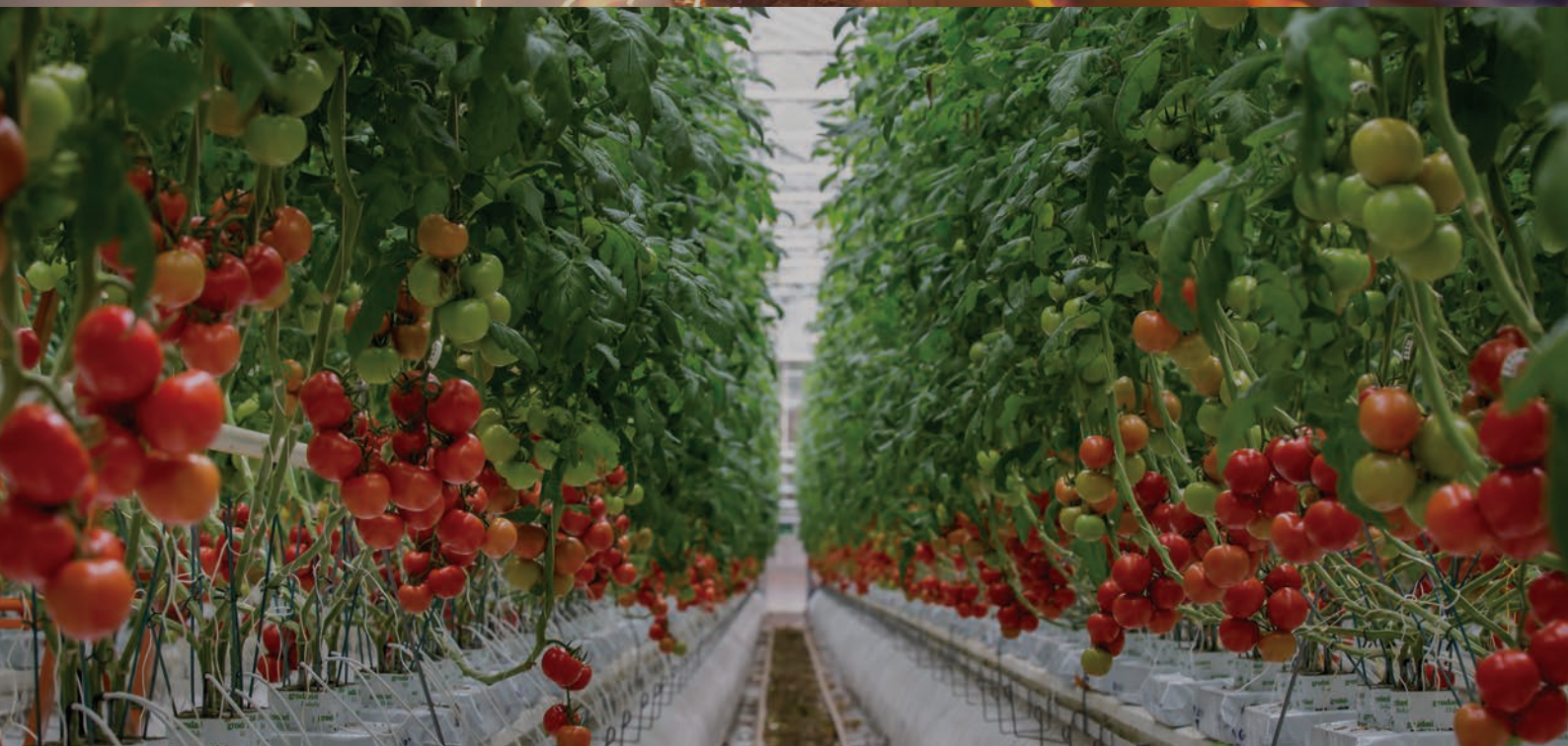




GIPPSLAND REGIONAL PLAN 2025-2030

Regional Growth Through Transition





A REGION OF OPPORTUNITY

INTRODUCTION A Shared Gippsland Vision

Gippsland stands at a pivotal moment in its economic history.

As Australia and Victoria move towards a net zero emissions future, the region faces a significant transition. Gippsland's longstanding area of specialisation, brown coal power generation, is drawing to a close, and with it an extensive and highly skilled supply chain.

At the same time, the oil and gas industry is beginning to decommission a number of its offshore assets. The end of native timber harvesting continues to reverberate through smaller regional economies, and the fishing industry is continuing in its efforts to diversify and innovate following the closure of commercial fishing in the Gippsland Lakes. Rapid growth and demand for housing

along the peri-urban fringe will maintain pace, alongside powerful manufacturing activity along the M1 corridor. Gippsland's world-class agricultural products remain in high demand both nationally and internationally, and its treasured natural assets will continue to attract record numbers of visitors to the region.

These factors will influence and shape Gippsland over the life of this plan.

This shift is not simply a response to policy but a fundamental challenge that will touch every aspect of Gippsland's identity: our workforce, our communities and our long-standing role as the State's energy heartland. The decisions we make now will shape how we honour and leverage our industrial legacy while

embracing opportunities for new industries to diversify the economy and create an economic future anchored in the regions abundant strengths.

With thoughtful planning, genuine partnership, determination, and a clear sense of purpose, Gippsland can lead this transition and emerge stronger, more diverse and well equipped for the future.

The Gippsland Regional Plan focuses on eleven elements: six priority sectors and five enabling priorities. The Plan provides a shared direction to guide investment and coordinated action by government, business, industry and the community.



FOREWORD

The Gippsland Regional Plan 2025–2030 represents a shared vision and collective ambition for our regional economy.

At its core, the Plan recognises a simple truth: that thriving regional economies build thriving communities.

Gippsland is a place of extraordinary natural resources, stunning landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and resilient communities. While diverse in character, we are united by a single ambition: to build a strong, diversified economy that enables individuals to live meaningful, productive, purposeful lives.

The development of this Plan has been shaped by engagement with strategic partners and community informed leaders across the region, supported by a broad range of thoughtful strategies, insights, and evidence-informed research.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who have contributed their insights and expertise. Your input reflects a shared determination for Gippsland to continue its role as a significant contributor to the Victorian and Australian economies.

Gippsland continues to evolve. Our transition to a net zero economy is nationally significant, and we are committed to navigating this time with strength and optimism.

We are building capacity and embracing opportunities across our regions key industry strengths:

energy, agriculture, tourism, health, education, and advanced manufacturing.

Over the next five years, through the Plan we will focus on:

- Building economic momentum and diversification while the economy transitions to net zero.
- Strengthening industries that harness Gippsland's natural advantages.
- Increasing productivity and capturing greater value from our food and fibre sector.
- Driving energy developments that continue our proud legacy as an energy leader.
- Growing advanced manufacturing and the knowledge sector.
- Enabling thriving communities through increased workforce participation, equality, and strong health, education, wellbeing and housing outcomes.
- Building connectivity and infrastructure that creates jobs and links people, places and opportunities.
- Supporting skills and innovation that prepares our workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

The Gippsland Regional Plan 2025–2030 represents a commitment to collaboration, resilience, and shared strength—a commitment to building a future where Gippsland's people, industries, and communities continue to grow and prosper.

Regional Development Australia - Gippsland

Funding and Auspice Partner - Gippsland Regional Plan

Wellington Shire Council

Delivery Partner - Gippsland Regional Plan

With the support of the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group:

Bass Coast Shire Council
Baw Baw Shire Council
Committee for Gippsland
East Gippsland Shire Council
Gippsland Regional Partnership
Latrobe City Council
Regional Development Australia - Gippsland
South Gippsland Shire Council
Wellington Shire Council



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai, Bunurong, Wurundjeri and Taungurung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community. We pay respect to their Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

THE VISION FOR GIPPSLAND

By 2040, Gippsland aspires to be the most liveable region in Australia – a place to live, work, invest and play.

At its core, the 2025–2030 Gippsland Regional Plan supports the significant economic transition underway, strengthening the region through investment, diversification, and cooperation to ensure Gippsland remains a place where people can live, work, invest, and play.

OUR REGION IN TRANSITION

At 41,372 square kilometres, the Gippsland Region makes up almost 20% of Victoria, from the State’s eastern-most point to the edge of Greater Melbourne. It encompasses snowfields in the north and beach resorts along the almost 1,000 kilometres of the coastline to the south and east. Most of the 311,284 residents live in central and southern towns surrounded by forest and farmland, energy assets and tourism destinations.

This broad and diverse landscape supports over 311,284 residents, 147,411 jobs and a dynamic, multifaceted \$24.5billion economy. It is one of the nation’s most important exporters of energy, minerals, food and fibre and has a thriving tourism and service economy. Long-term planning for the region must consider a range of opportunities and challenges

The Plan is an iterative document which updates its strategic priorities, context evaluation and measures of success in response to changes and opportunities.

Over the last five years, there have been significant changes to the economy, the communities that make up Gippsland, the environment and the social and political context.

1. **The transition.** Transition is occurring in almost every sector of the Gippsland economy. Agriculture, energy, manufacturing, forestry, aviation, and construction. Moving to net zero, the increasing use of technology, the intersection between fuels and organics is having widespread impacts on our region’s employment, environment, community and

economic landscape. The Plan seeks to ensure that Gippsland is well placed to prosper now and into the future.

2. **Presenting Gippsland as an investment-ready region in an environment of rapid policy and economic shifts.** This refers not only to the changes underway in communities and industries in transition, but also to the broader policy context, in which the trajectory of specific industries may be unclear. At a minimum, the Plan should ensure that investment attraction initiatives address business uncertainty and present a case for investment in Gippsland.

3. **Managing external and internal development pressures.** There are multiple pressures on Gippsland (e.g., transition to net-zero, population growth, cost of living, and natural disasters). The Plan requires enablers to manage this pressure and must support stakeholders work to address pressures, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing, productivity uplift, inclusion, workforce participation and so forth.

4. **Responding to the accelerating pace of change.** Risks (and opportunities) can appear (and disappear) rapidly. By being high-level and non-prescriptive, the Plan will be flexible enough to adapt.

5. **Working within the constraints on local action.** There are financial and jurisdictional limits on stakeholder action. The Plan can be the document that demonstrates the value of investment in Gippsland to agencies and investors with more resources and authority to act.

6. **Identifying and leveraging emerging and new policy priorities.** Economic transitions require policies and regulatory settings that facilitate and enable outcomes. To navigate this, the Plan needs to stay focused on its primary objective: the region’s economic development. It must, therefore, have the flexibility to maintain alignment with other regionally relevant issues, plans and strategies



Our Economy

24.5 BILLION
Gross regional
product (2025)

27,635
Total number of
businesses (2025)

4.1 BILLION
Annual total local
spend (2025)

147,411
Number of
jobs (2024)

KNOWLEDGE SERVICES

Continues growth and development
of the regions vocational education
and tertiary training sector is
essential in building
workforce capability.

Park

Snow

Beach

By 2040,

Gippsland aspires to be the most liveable
region in Australia — a place to live,
work, invest and play.

Our visitors

Gippsland's visitor economy is
supported by 8.9m domestic and
international visitors and travel
to the region annually.



**MELBOURNE TO
GIPPSLAND 1.5 HOURS**

311,284
Call Gippsland home
(2024)

13%
Agriculture

7.3%
Electricity, gas, water,
and waste services

Significant
contributions to
Victoria GVA (2025)

80.7%
Mining

The largest area of public
land in Victoria, with
1.6m hectares
encompassing forest,
state and national parks,
Marine Coastal Parks and
Reserves and Ramsar
Wetlands.

GIPPSLAND

● Melbourne

GIPPSLAND IS
Approximately 41,500 km²

● WARRAGUL

● TRARALGON

● LEONGATHA

● WONTHAGGI

● BAIRNSDALE

● SALE

World class
geothermal aquifer
positioned around
Latrobe Valley

ENERGY

Responsible for delivering 50% of
the State's electricity, and home to
Australia's first declared offshore
wind zone.

More than 700
kilometres of
Victorian coastline

Wellington
(46,533)
+ 0.8%

East Gippsland
(49,422)
+ 0.6%

Baw Baw
(61,905)
+ 2.4%

Latrobe
(78,845)
+ 0.7%

Bass Coast
(43,557)
+ 2.3%

South Gippsland
(31,022)
+ 0.7%

Six LGAs

Local government area (2025 population)
Average % population growth since 2021-22

Gippsland produces 9% of Australia's total
supply of beef and dairy due to its stable
temperature and environment.

FOOD AND FIBRE

Growth opportunities exist in
Gippsland's food production sector,
including high value dairy products
to Victoria's major export markets.

FROM LOCAL INSIGHT TO REGIONAL DIRECTION

State-of-play analysis examining economic, population and workforce data ensures the Plan reflects current conditions and measurable trends.

Together, these approaches ensured the priorities reflect both regional perspectives and evidence-based analysis.

INSIGHTS

Data analysis tested through stakeholder engagement highlights important conditions and trends:

- Gippsland is in an accelerated phase of transition (in communities, economies, land use and technologies). This creates both opportunities and risks, so the Plan must be high-level and flexible to respond to them.
- There is potential (and a need) to improve economic self-containment by reducing outflow of expenditure and people.
- While population growth and development have been steady, they have varied across the region, creating pressures in some parts of Gippsland and a loss of critical population mass (to support local services and businesses) in other places. This creates the need to support decisions that rebalance growth across the region.
- Coordinated regional action is essential. The Plan should provide a framework to support Gippsland stakeholders to use shared language, a common focus, and data-informed insights.
- The Plan must acknowledge delivery constraints as real conditions to be managed, rather than background context.

FROM INSIGHTS TO PRIORITIES

These insights helped define a ‘matrix’ of growth-driver industries and essential enablers that can underpin Gippsland’s development and the achievement of the 2040 vision. These were:

- Six priority sectors: where Gippsland has strong development potential and a plausible competitive advantage.
- Five enabling priorities: the shared foundations required for those sectors to grow and deliver region-wide outcomes.



A REGION OF ECONOMIC STRENGTH

Understanding Gippsland’s economy today

The State of Play

Gippsland’s \$24.5 billion economy plays an important role in Victoria, particularly through its strengths in energy, agriculture and resource industries. The region is home to more than 27,635 businesses and supports over 147,411 jobs across a diverse mix of sectors.

Employment growth has been strongest in health care, education and construction, reflecting the needs of a growing and ageing population. While population growth has remained steady, it varies across the region, creating different pressures and opportunities for local communities.

Together, these trends highlight the importance of workforce development, economic diversification and continued investment across Gippsland.

What do the indicators tell us?

Focusing on the critical elements (e.g., growth potential and challenges), the data for Gippsland reveals:

- Growth and export opportunities. Gippsland presents economic development opportunities for Australia in energy, food and fibre, critical minerals and tourism. In many cases, these industries offer high-income job opportunities and potential for export revenue.
- The value of population servicing industries. Growth is strongest in population servicing industries, such as health and education. These are important employers, underpin other industries and are critical to the quality of life, although they do not generally generate export revenue and usually have lower median incomes.

- The opportunity to increase economic self-sufficiency. The sheer size and diversity of Gippsland means it has the capacity to increase all forms of economic self-sufficiency, particularly as the region’s population grows.
- The multiple benefits of the visitor economy, as a contributor to local amenity, entry point for workers and businesses and export revenue generator across much of Gippsland.
- Housing Growth – Gippsland can meaningfully deliver on the Victorian Government’s housing supply targets. Appropriate land, well developed opportunities, appropriately developed infrastructure and effectively supported land use planning responses will improve regional housing affordability, increase housing choice and supply in regional towns and support population and economic growth outside Melbourne.

A CLEAR DIRECTION FOR GIPPSLAND

What this means for the plan

There are five important conclusions to draw from the analysis:

1. Attracting, retaining and training skilled labour to all parts of Gippsland is as important as any infrastructure asset. Fundamental to this is having strong, sustainable, vocational education and training and tertiary education providers. The existing Gippsland training landscape will require investment and support to keep pace with structural economic change over the next 15 to 30 years.
2. Economic resilience and sustainability must factor in self-sufficiency. Outflows of expenditure, labour, and profit are losses that should be plugged to the extent possible. The Plan must lift local economic capture, not just overall scale. Per-capita indicators show that more needs to be done to convert activity into local jobs, incomes and spending, through the redirection of economic outflows.
3. Foundational industries such as food and fibre, mining and energy, leverage a long history of expertise and established supply

chains. They generate significant export revenue and continue to offer growth and diversification potential. They are also essential to Australia's economic future, putting Gippsland at the heart of the national economic development agenda.

4. There is scope for driving growth through knowledge industries/sector and advanced manufacturing, both of which can build on the existing industries (particularly food and fibre, energy, housing and defence). These sectors deliver high-skilled, highly paid jobs and are critical to any region's development pathway.
5. Gippsland has an abundance of tourism assets. The sector provides important entry level jobs and relatively low barriers for businesses, early-career workers and those who are testing opportunities for participation. The opportunity is to mature product and enhance market offerings to increase value capture, creating a sophisticated ecosystem which supports long term career and professional development.

Introduction

The evidence confirms that Gippsland is a region of economic scale and State significance, underpinned by high-value export industries, solid employment growth and a rapidly expanding visitor economy. However, growth and prosperity are unevenly distributed across sectors, communities, and regions.

Gippsland's future depends on how well it navigates the current transition, converting economic activity into distributed higher-value jobs, stronger local self-containment and more resilient outcomes. This requires building on established strengths

largely through incentivising and supporting investment in the priority sectors. This must be supported by targeted investment in the enablers: skills, infrastructure, services and workforce transition.

Priority (growth driver) industries

Gippsland's economy spans all industries, with many businesses, jobs and supply chains across agriculture, manufacturing, construction, professional services and more. Activity in these industries extends across the region, though they are concentrated in particular areas.

Notwithstanding the diversity and range of Gippsland's economy, there are key industries that leverage Gippsland's strengths and can be catalysts for growth and development.

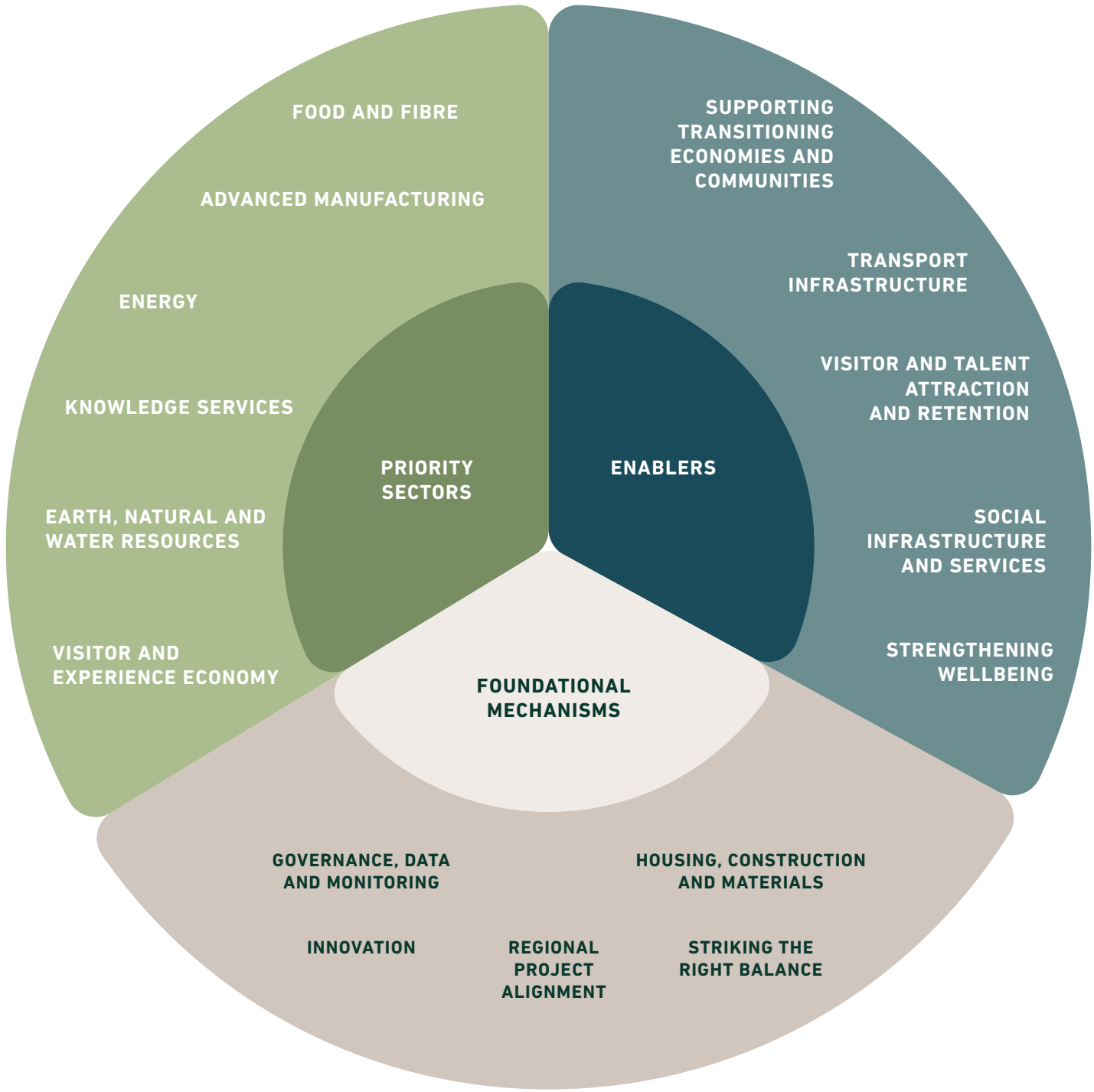
The six priority sectors have the most potential to deliver on:

- Attracting investment
- Generating export revenue
- Providing well-paid, stable and skilled employment and, therefore, attracting talent to the region
- Supporting a sustainable, inclusive and resilient development pathway.



HOW GIPPSLAND GROWS

Together, these priority sectors, enablers and foundational mechanisms create a coordinated framework for Gippsland’s long-term growth and prosperity.



Introducing the **SIX PRIORITIES**

The following priorities identify the sectors and enabling actions that will shape Gippsland’s growth.

FOOD AND FIBRE

Feeding the Future

PRIORITY SECTOR

Food and fibre is a foundation of Gippsland’s export economy and an important contributor to Australia’s food security. The sector supports around 13,200 jobs (8.9% of regional employment) and contributes approximately \$2.1 billion in Gross Value Added, with strong agricultural and fisheries production across the region.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Supporting the ongoing use of productive agricultural land through clear land-use planning, buffers and pathways for farm innovation and upgrades.
- Improving productivity through agritech adoption, supported by training, extension services and

- support for smaller businesses. Expanding local value-adding and processing, including cold-chain and logistics improvements to capture more of the supply chain within Gippsland.
- Strengthening water reliability and farm resilience through coordinated water planning, climate adaptation and improved infrastructure.
- Leveraging Gippsland’s unique geothermal energy resource to lift agricultural production.
- The increasing intersection of the food and fibre sector and energy sector – two of Gippsland’s largest regional economic contributors.
- Productive water and water infrastructure for highest economic purpose – supporting food and fibre, bioenergy, knowledge sector, environment/visitor economy uplift.
- Improving transport efficiency to support regional productivity, freight connectivity and workforce mobility.
- Enhance existing food and fibre

sectors to leverage processing and value capture activities.

Challenges ahead:

- Balancing the demands of residential growth, industrial land and productive agricultural uses – providing clarity and certainly on the interface between different land uses.
- High freight costs and inefficiencies due to a lack of investment and a heavy reliance on road freight, taking the focus away from rail and port solutions for Gippsland.
- Climate impacts, water security and biosecurity risks.
- An ageing workforce and the need for training and skills development.
- The need for clear and timely planning decisions that balance community considerations.
- Protecting high value agricultural land through the planning scheme to preserve sector opportunities.

ENERGY

Powering the Transition

PRIORITY SECTOR

Energy is Gippsland’s defining strategic advantage and a nationally significant transition sector. The region currently supplies around 50% of Victoria’s electricity, and the shift to new energy systems will be one of the most significant forces shaping Gippsland over the coming decades.

The energy system also anchors supply-chain opportunities, particularly offshore wind, transmission, and associated port and industrial precinct development. Along with mining, it also offers some of the best-paid, skilled jobs in regional Australia.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Sequencing infrastructure and approvals so Gippsland is investment-ready (through transmission planning, enhanced port capability, and land supply).
- Developing local supply chains and procurement pathways so major projects generate sustained regional jobs and business growth.
- Creating an integrated workforce transition and skills and vocational education and training aligned to actual project timing.
- Strengthening community confidence and benefit-sharing, with a focus on local participation and transparent project delivery.

Challenges ahead:

- Transition execution risk. Collective efforts must support the development of replacement industry and employment sectors that match closure timelines.
- Industrial land supply, port planning and transmission bottlenecks can stall private investment.
- Large projects can create tension if local benefits (particularly employment opportunities) and community impacts are not handled transparently. A high reliance on international and Drive-in-Drive-out (DiDo) skilled workers.
- Emerging energy sectors are constrained by regulatory and policy settings that lag industry development, underscoring the need for more agile, contemporary and risk-based approaches.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Building the Next Generation of Industry

PRIORITY SECTOR

Advanced manufacturing offers a pathway to higher-value industry and economic diversification in Gippsland. The sector builds on the region’s existing manufacturing base, energy advantages and food and fibre supply chains.

Manufacturing employs around 9,027 people (6.1% of regional jobs) and contributes approximately \$989 million in Gross Value Added. Future growth will depend on moving further up the value chain through automation, specialised fabrication and stronger integration with energy, housing and defence supply chains.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Growing anchor demand by linking manufacturing expansion to the energy build-out (from offshore wind to decommissioning/rehab supply chains).
- Lifting competitiveness through Industry 4.0 adoption, supported by training, demonstration sites, and practical advisory capability.
- Expanding development-ready industrial land and employment precincts through fast-tracked development processes and trunk infrastructure delivery.
- Building specialist skills pipelines (mechatronics, welding, instrumentation, digital design) through VET partnerships and employer-led training models.
- Harnessing Gippsland’s defence and aviation sectors to support manufacturing capability and supply chain transition.

Challenges ahead:

- Automation, robotics, and digital technologies are needed to stay competitive.
- Serviced industrial land constraints and freight costs mean that growth depends on precincts that are zoned, serviced, and development-ready.
- Advanced manufacturing needs skilled engineering, digital, and technician pathways, not just general labour. Strong skills and a tertiary education capacity will be essential if the Region is to leverage this opportunity.
- As manufacturing sectors transition, gaps in national and international accreditation may limit their ability to compete in new and emerging industries.

KNOWLEDGE SERVICES

Ideas Driving Growth

PRIORITY SECTOR

Knowledge services are a pathway to higher-income jobs, stronger local economic self-sufficiency, and improved quality of life. This sector can be a job-based attractor for skilled knowledge workers seeking a hybrid work life.

As a proxy, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Information Media and Telecommunications, and Financial and Insurance Services account for around 5,882 jobs and contribute approximately \$589 million in Gross Value Added. These capabilities also support innovation across priority sectors including advanced manufacturing, energy and agriculture.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Growing local professional services capacity that supports the region’s major investments (planning, engineering, environmental, digital, project services) through critical investment in education and training in the Region.
- Making Gippsland’s remote-work competitive through reliable connectivity, work hubs, and an attraction proposition for mid-career professionals.
- Building vital education-to-employment pathways (VET/ university partnerships, internships, employer-sponsored training) that keep talent local and support a stronger understanding of work pathways from education to post-education.
- Supporting digital adoption across SME’s and priority sectors.
- Encouraging local procurement of professional services.

Challenges ahead:

- Limited in-region course opportunities, relatively low school completion rates and higher economic barriers to post-school education take-up, which are exacerbated by Gippsland’s geographic and service delivery challenges.
- Areas without reliable digital connectivity (including incomplete NBN coverage) are structurally disadvantaged for knowledge work.
- Ongoing talent attraction and retention challenges.

EARTH, NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES

Sustaining Our Natural Advantage

PRIORITY SECTOR

Gippsland’s natural assets — including water resources, productive soils, forests, marine environments and minerals — remain a significant foundation of the regional economy and a platform for future industries.

Mining continues to be the largest contributor within this sector, generating around \$5.9 billion in Gross Value Added and supporting some of the highest-paid jobs in regional Victoria. While employing around 3,100 people, the sector plays a key role in Gippsland’s economy and in supplying critical resources.

Gippsland’s natural assets also underpin water security. These can support other high-water- and energy-intensive industries in which Gippsland has comparative advantages.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Clearer land-use planning across agriculture, resource extraction, tourism and emerging energy industries.
- Turning rehabilitation and decommissioning into a coordinated industry opportunity (skills, contracts, innovation, land renewal outcomes).
- Investing in natural capital and water security initiatives to strengthen long-term resilience and enable new industries.
- Promoting Gippsland’s comparative advantages in land, water, infrastructure, ports and energy.
- Leveraging public land management to support economic and environmental outcomes.

Challenges ahead:

- The closure of coal fired power generators, reduction of oil and gas extraction.
- Managing rehabilitation and transition of legacy assets to support long term economical diversity.
- Protecting landscapes, water quality and environmental values for long term productivity.
- Freight and transport constraints, particularly road-dependent supply chains.
- Ensuring timely planning decisions.
- Adequate resourcing to manage, elevate and capitalise on the public land estate in regional areas.

VISITOR AND EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Sharing Gippsland with the World

PRIORITY SECTOR

The visitor and experience economy supports regional businesses, employment and local amenity across Gippsland. It generates external spending, provides entry-level job opportunities and contributes to the cultural and economic aspirations of Traditional Owners.

Tourism-related industries — including Accommodation & Food Services and Arts & Recreation Services — employ around 12,600 people (about 8.6% of regional jobs) and contribute approximately \$679 million in Gross Value Added.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Developing cultural experiences which acknowledge the importance of cultural expression, reflection and creative opportunities.
- Developing higher-value tourism and cultural experiences and longer stays.
- Spreading visitation across seasons and across the region to reduce congestion and distribute economic benefits.
- Strengthening the visitor and experience economy workforce through housing, training and career pathways.
- The sector’s wages are relatively low, so the challenge is lifting value (yield) rather than just volume.

- Seasonality and infrastructure constraints: Visitor flows can strain infrastructure in peak periods while leaving capacity underused off-season.
- Distance of product from large population centres – emphasising the importance of efficient transport networks.

Challenges ahead:

- Predominantly entry level wages across the sector, highlighting the need to increase visitor yield rather than simply volume.
- Seasonal demand and infrastructure pressures during peak periods.
- Gippsland’s distance from major population centres, reinforcing the importance of strong transport connections.

Introducing the FIVE ENABLERS

Foundations for Growth and Liveability

The enabling priorities provide the foundations that allow Gippsland’s growth sectors to thrive and communities to prosper.

SUPPORTING TRANSITIONING ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

Navigating Regional Change

ENABLERS

Several industries across Gippsland — including timber, fishing and brown coal power generation — are undergoing significant structural change.

Communities connected to these industries, from timber towns in the north-east to coal communities in the Latrobe Valley and coastal fishing towns, are navigating economic and workforce transition. Gippsland's peri-urban edge is also experiencing change driven by population growth and urban development, increasing demand for land, infrastructure, energy and water. The Gippsland Regional Plan recognises the need to support communities and industries through this period of transition.

Opportunities include:

- Embedding transition planning within existing regional mechanisms.
- Strengthening local procurement and

supplier readiness so major projects create sustained regional business and employment opportunities.

- Supporting proactive approaches to place-based responses for affected towns and worker cohorts so communities experience transition as a whole of community and economy-wide renewal.
- Developing evidence informed recommendations which position legacy assets and land into investment ready opportunities.
- Advocating for faster pathways for enabling infrastructure and industrial precinct development.
- Establishing place and context sensitive transition responses which leverage existing industrial land, assets and workforce experience, in new net zero opportunities to mitigate the decline of coal fired power generation.
- Investing in services and infrastructure to support a growing regional population and workforce.

Challenges ahead:

- Timing and sequencing risks, where legacy jobs decline faster than new opportunities scale, or the skills profile can adapt.
- Labour shortages and skills gaps, increasing reliance on drive-in/ drive-out or fly-in/fly-out workforces, reducing local benefit capture.
- Community confidence and social licence, becomes pressured where benefits are unevenly distributed.
- Complex governance and coordination across agencies and jurisdictions can slow delivery.
- Land use conflict between housing growth, industry and agriculture.
- The structural economic transition associated with the closure of coal fired power generation will have significant implications for the Latrobe Valley and the broader region.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Connecting Gippsland

ENABLERS

Transport infrastructure is a critical enabler for Gippsland's economy, supporting freight movement, access to markets, workforce mobility and visitor travel. Demand on the network is increasing as population growth and major energy and industrial projects place greater pressure on existing transport infrastructure.

Opportunities include:

- Improving freight connectivity and efficiency across key corridors, including last-mile upgrades, heavy vehicle routes and stronger links to ports and export supply chains.
- Strengthening passenger connections within Gippsland and to Melbourne,

through reliable and integrated rail, bus and local transport networks.

- Sequencing transport upgrades with priority sector investment, enabling works, access roads, and precinct connectivity to be delivered in time to unlock private investment and reduce construction bottlenecks.
- Expanding freight and passenger rail to improve regional productivity and connectivity.
- Developing regional transport and logistics hubs linked to key assets such as ports, airports, rail terminals and intermodal freight facilities.
- Building resilience in transport networks to improve access during extreme events and support faster recovery.
- Leveraging infrastructure investment to proactively facilitate the significant economic transition underway across Gippsland.

Challenges ahead:

- Long project lead times and funding competition, which can delay regionally important infrastructure.
- High reliance on road transport, creating safety and capacity pressures as freight and commuting grow.
- Complex approvals and coordination requirements, including land access and environmental considerations.
- Infrastructure vulnerability to natural disasters and ageing assets, increasing maintenance demands and disruption risks.

VISITOR AND TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Attracting People and Opportunity

ENABLERS

Attracting and retaining people is both an economic and a liveability objective. It determines whether projects can be delivered, whether new businesses can scale, and whether the demographic profile and geographical distribution of Gippsland's population can become more balanced.

Opportunities include:

- Defining and widely promoting a clear Gippsland value proposition for key worker cohorts and investors, focusing on career pathways in the priority sectors, quality of life, and the ability to build a long-term future in Gippsland.
- Reducing friction for relocation and retention by implementing projects that align housing supply, childcare, schooling, health access and digital connectivity with growth areas and emerging project locations.
- Building visible career pathways that keep talent local, including employer-led training, internships and cadetships, through partnerships with business, TAFE and universities.

Challenges ahead:

- Housing constraints, including competition between short-stay accommodation and worker housing in high-demand locations.
- Competition for skilled workers from Melbourne and other regions, particularly when local services, amenities and career progression are not clear or reliable.
- Seasonality and workforce instability in tourism, where low wages and irregular hours make retention difficult unless yield and career pathways improve.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Strong Communities, Strong Future

ENABLERS

Social infrastructure and services support quality of life, workforce participation and economic opportunity across Gippsland. The health and education sectors alone employ more than 40,699 people (around 27.6% of regional jobs), making them critical both to community wellbeing and the regional economy.

Strong social infrastructure ensures that Gippsland's economic opportunities are accessible to communities across the region.

Opportunities include:

- Expanding education and skills pathways aligned to the priority sectors, including modernised training facilities, employer-led programs, and clear school-to-work transitions for local

young people.

- Strengthening health, wellbeing and community service capacity, including primary care access, mental health support, and workforce attraction for critical service roles.
- Developing affordable and diverse housing options that support for vulnerable cohorts to participate in the economy and caters to the regions changing demographics.
- Housing growth is aligned to integrated infrastructure delivery, ensuring development is tailored to regional needs.
- Supporting economic self-determination for First Nations Peoples through active engagement and support for economic development opportunities.
- Investing in amenity and community infrastructure that lifts everyday liveability, such as sport and recreation, arts and culture, public spaces, and inclusive and welcoming town centres that benefit residents and visitors alike.
- Enhanced workforce participation to

uplift regional productivity, particularly of cohorts not traditionally engaged in the workforce.

- Provide targeted support to workers in sectors undergoing economic transition.

Challenges Ahead

- Workforce shortages in health, education and care services can cap service capacity.
- Uneven service demand across Gippsland, with fast-growing areas facing pressure on housing and services, while slower-growth areas risk losing critical mass for viable service delivery.
- Funding and governance fragmentation across levels of government and agencies, making delivery difficult without clear alignment and sequencing.
- Rising service needs linked to ageing, inequality, disadvantage and climate events, which can increase demand faster than infrastructure and workforce can respond.

STRENGTHENING WELLBEING

Thriving Communities

ENABLERS

Strengthening wellbeing is a foundational enabler of sustainable economic development. Regions with high levels of physical, mental and social wellbeing are better positioned to attract and retain a skilled workforce, support productivity, foster innovation and adapt to economic change.

In periods of structural transition, such as Gippsland’s shift toward a more diversified and net-zero economy, wellbeing becomes critical.

Economic change can place pressure on individuals, families and communities; proactive investment in health, social connection, housing, education and access to services helps maintain confidence, stability and social cohesion.

This, in turn, enables communities to engage positively with new opportunities, support workforce mobility and retraining, and sustain local demand.

The Gippsland Regional Plan recognises service agencies as key strategic partners in strengthening wellbeing and promoting inclusive economic and social outcomes, collaboratively working to ensure all community members are supported and valued.



FOUNDATIONAL MECHANISMS

GOVERNANCE, DATA AND MONITORING

The Gippsland Regional Plan establishes a shared and cohesive vision for the region and sets out a coordinated suite of economic development priorities.

Shared leadership and collaboration, across partnerships, unions, and alliances established either for specific initiatives or as enduring structural arrangements, are recognised as having equal purpose, merit, and value in driving outcomes. The Plan acknowledges that these varied forms of collaboration play a critical role in delivering regional economic and community benefits.

The Plan deeply respects the role of standalone specialist and purpose driven agencies in supporting many of the key factors that create conditions for our community to thrive.

Annually, partners to the Gippsland Regional Plan will have an opportunity to share data, evidence and performance reporting to inform the broader regional efforts. This will allow partners to assess the effectiveness of actions and respond to emerging challenges or opportunities.

HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

Housing is a fundamental enabler spanning every economic sector. Access to affordable housing provides opportunities for workforce development and maximises opportunities to develop prosperity in place. Shortages and rising costs constrain workforce attraction and industry expansion.

The Plan acknowledges the importance of supply side developments to increase the availability of housing including innovations within the construction sector to reduce actions that inhibit the market and increase innovation. Land and trunk infrastructure supply are also essential enablers of housing development.

Planning scheme amendment processes must better seek to balance risk, speed and the limited financial capacity of many local government entities.

REGIONAL PROJECT ALIGNMENT

The Gippsland Regional Plan provides a data and evidence-based framework to identify projects that demonstrate alignment and capacity to facilitate economic uplift at the regional level.

INNOVATION

Innovation is critical for an economy in transition, and a strong, place-based vocational and tertiary education sector is an essential ingredient in embedding innovation as an enduring enabler of regional growth.

Gippsland’s comparatively low level of agricultural value-add highlights a significant opportunity to build innovation and industry capacity. While agriculture is one of the region’s most valuable economic sectors, much of its output continues to be exported in raw form.

The Plan supports the development of opportunities to increase value-adding across agriculture and other key economic sectors, strengthening resilience, productivity, and long-term regional prosperity.

STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

The Plan balances immediate transition pressures and market conditions with long term transformation and diversification.

Managing peri-urban growth and the protection of the region’s highest value productive land remains a key focus alongside environmental, industrial and infrastructure demands.

Prosperity and inclusion continue to be an ongoing social responsibility upheld by the Plan. Long term economic resilience is tied to environmental sustainability, requiring policy settings that balance supporting economic activity and competitiveness while embedding sustainability into growth pathways.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
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Geografia

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IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURING SUCCESS

The Gippsland Regional Plan provides a framework for coordinated action to advance the Gippsland vision and deliver measurable regional outcomes. Implementation will rely on collaboration between government, industry and community stakeholders, supported by shared evidence and data.

Progress will be monitored through a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that track change across the region. These indicators use SMART metrics to ensure performance monitoring is accurate, timely and relevant, focusing on outcomes rather than inputs as a clearer measure of the Plan's objectives.

The measures reflect the core elements of the Gippsland vision: making the region a place to live, work, invest and play. As Gippsland navigates economic transition over the coming years, indicators may shift as priorities, investment and actions respond to emerging opportunities and support the region's long-term development.

ACTIONING THE PLAN

Project identification:

Not all initiatives delivered in Gippsland will have a region-wide impact. Regional actions supported through the Plan should align with its objectives and priorities.

Regional Plan projects should:

- Align with one or more of the Plan's objectives, supporting people living, working, investing or playing in Gippsland.
- Support one of the Plan's eleven strategic priorities.
- Deliver measurable benefits at a regional scale, beyond local or neighbourhood outcomes.

Monitoring and Decision Making

Regional Development Victoria will monitor progress against the agreed measures in partnership with the Gippsland Regional Plan Leadership Group.

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