

# East Gippsland Economic Insights Report

March 2026

East Gippsland Shire is projected to grow from 50,794 residents in 2025 to nearly 60,000 by 2046 (+18%), with growth driven primarily by an ageing population and in-migration of older households. The retirement-age population is forecast to increase by more than 31 per cent, particularly among residents aged 75 and over, creating rising demand for aged care, health services and accessible housing.

The local economy supports around 18,650 jobs, with employment concentrated in health care, retail, education, construction and agriculture. The workforce skews older and has a strong vocational skills base, supporting resilience across core service and production sectors.

Housing affordability pressures are evident, with 878 households identified as needing affordable housing, alongside rising house prices and rents. Planning and development activity remains strong, with \$306 million in approved development value, indicating continued private investment despite broader economic pressures.

Overall, the data highlights the importance of aligning land use planning, housing supply, workforce development and economic recovery measures to support a growing and ageing population while sustaining a diverse regional economy.

Median house prices are \$515,500 and units \$342,500, below regional averages, with rents around \$500/week for houses and \$370/week for units.

Dwelling approvals are steady for detached homes, while medium- and higher-density developments are rising. Planning and development activity remains strong, with 126 outcomes and a total development value of \$306 million, indicating ongoing investment in the region.

The region hosts over 5,000 businesses, led by construction, agriculture, and service-based industries including health, retail, and professional services. Local spending declined 36 percent in late 2025, with visitor spending hardest hit, reflecting economic pressures on the tourism sector. Online spending fell least, while residents now account for 73 percent of total local spending.

These trends highlight the importance of economic recovery measures, alongside planning, housing, and service strategies to support a growing and ageing population while sustaining the region's diverse and resilient economy.



# The headlines

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## Population & Ageing

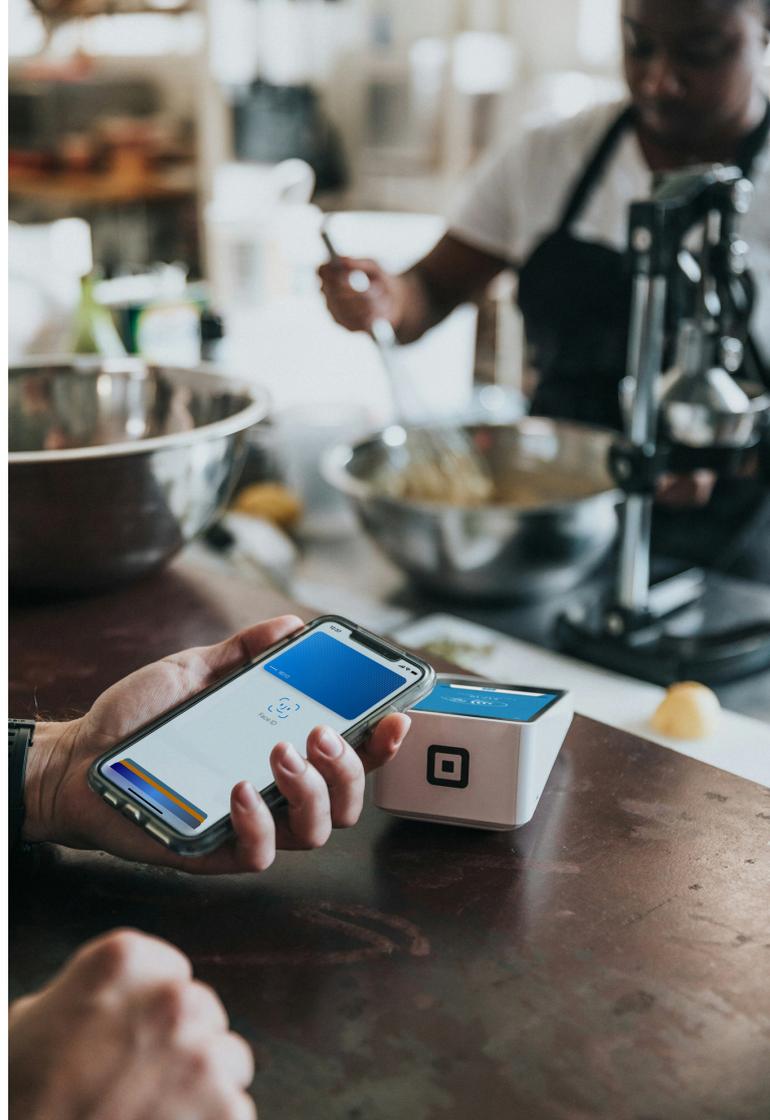
- Population growth of 18% by 2046, driven by ageing and in-migration.
- Retirement-age population rising 31%+, especially 75+; community ageing drives demand for aged care, health services, and accessible housing.

## Economy & Workforce

- 18,654 jobs, mainly in Health Care, Retail, Education, Construction, and Agriculture.
- Workforce skewed older; major roles: Professionals, Managers, Community Service, Technical, and Labour.
- Strong vocational education; most commute by car, 12% work from home.

## Housing & Development

- 878 households need affordable housing.
- Median house price \$515,500; unit \$342,500; rents ~\$500/week (houses), \$370/week (units).
- Steady detached home approvals; medium- and higher-density approvals rising; total development value \$306M.



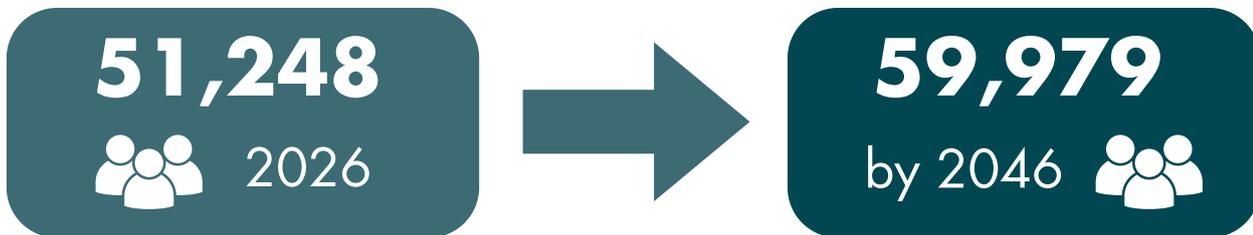
## Local Economy & Business

- 5,000+ businesses, led by construction, agriculture, and service sectors.
- Local spending fell 36% in late 2025, visitor spending hardest hit; residents now account for 73% of spending.

## Key Implications

- Growing demand for services, housing, and economic recovery measures.
- Planning must support a growing and ageing population while sustaining a diverse, resilient economy.

# EAST GIPPSLAND POPULATION



The East Gippsland Shire population forecast for 2026 is 51,248, and is forecast to grow to 59,979 by 2046. Forecasts produced by .id in early 2026 show steady growth, supporting planning for services, housing and future investment.

The age profile of the community is shifting, with fewer residents under working age and modest growth in the working-age population. The most significant change is in the retirement-age population, which is expected to increase by more than 31 per cent, driven by ageing residents and in-migration of older households.

As a result, demand for aged care, health services and accessible housing is expected to rise. Growth is strongest among residents aged 75 and over, particularly those aged 80 to 84, reflecting both population ageing and the region's appeal as a lifestyle and retirement destination.

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2021 to 2046, [National Forecasting Program](#), .id (informed decisions), February 2025.

## ***On the Ground –*** **Planning for Population Growth**

Population growth and ageing trends are being addressed through targeted land-use planning to unlock housing supply in key townships. The gazettal of the Paynesville and Eagle Point Structure Plan, along with residential rezoning, enables new housing in areas with established services and strong lifestyle appeal. These planning outcomes respond directly to forecast growth and changing household needs, particularly for downsizers and older residents, while supporting sustainable settlement patterns and long-term community growth.



# EAST GIPPSLAND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population

**49,422**

ABS ERP 2024

Land area

**20,931**

square km

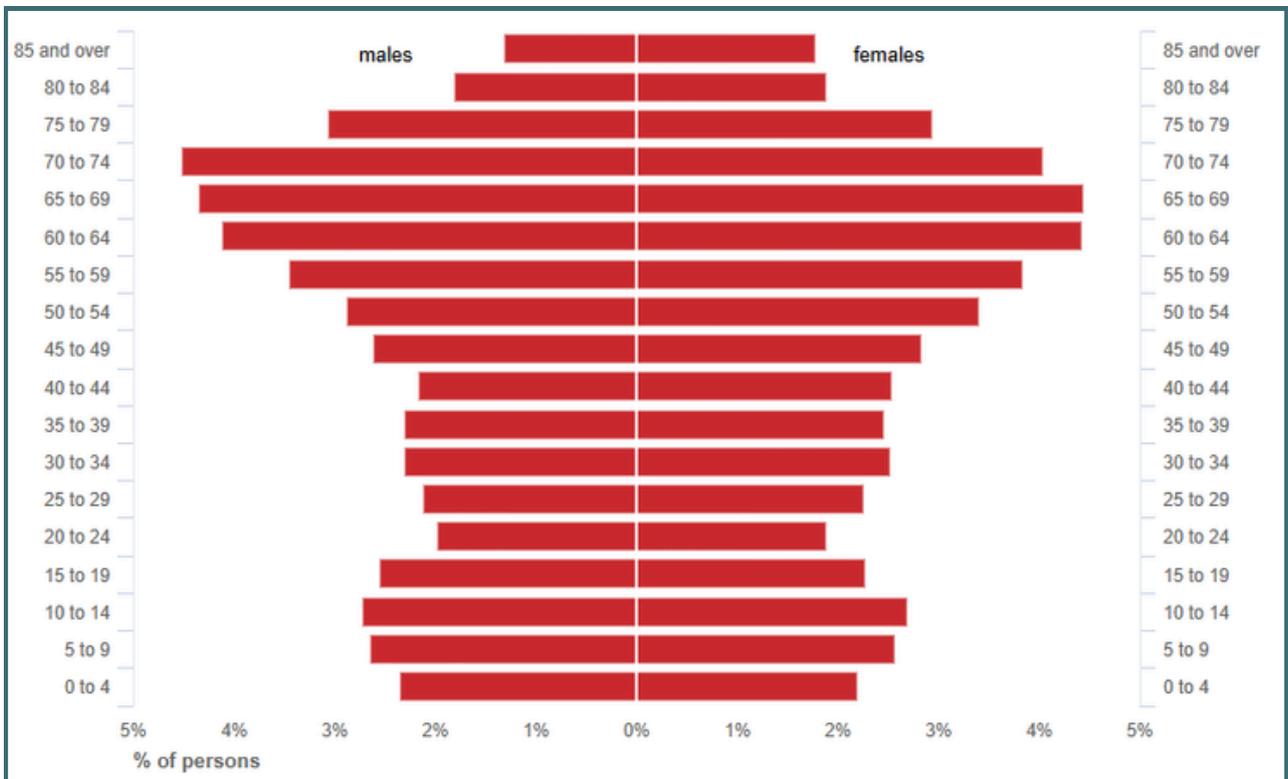
Population density

**2.36**

persons per square km

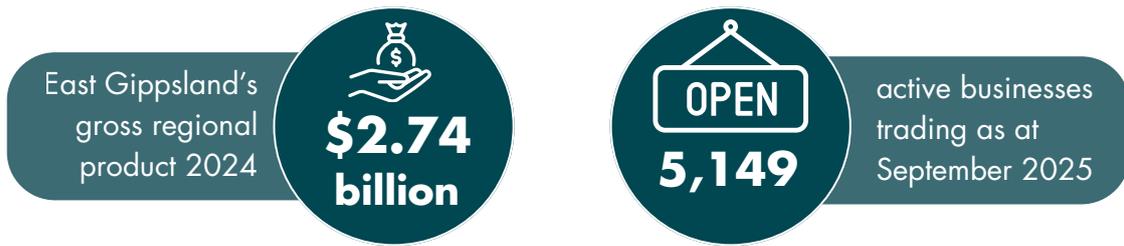
The 2021 age–sex pyramid for East Gippsland shows a predominantly older population, with the **largest share of residents concentrated in the 60 to 74-year age range** and noticeably smaller proportions of children, teenagers and young adults. This creates a barrel-shaped profile with a narrow youth base and a broad older-adult cohort, reflecting long-standing demographic patterns in the region, including the continued attraction of mid-life and retirement-aged households.

The distribution also highlights a higher proportion of women in the older age brackets, consistent with typical longevity trends. Overall, the 2021 age structure illustrates a mature and **ageing community**, providing important baseline context for understanding current population composition and future planning needs.

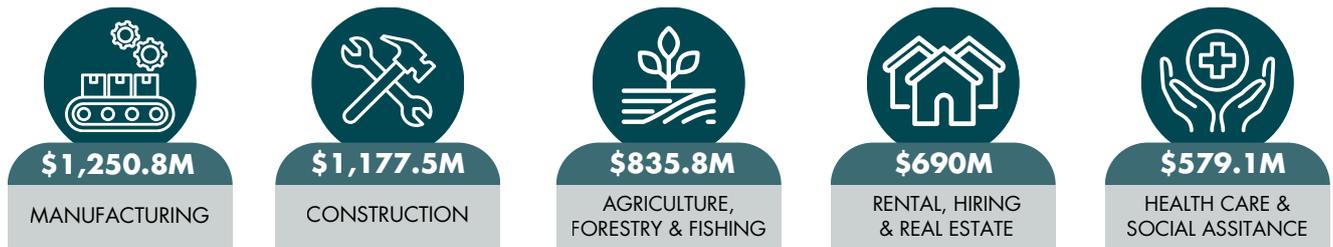


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#), selected year 2021 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id (informed decisions)

# EAST GIPPSLAND'S ECONOMY



## Top 5 sectors 2025 East Gippsland Economic contribution



## Top 5 sectors 2025 East Gippsland Employment (number of jobs)



East Gippsland supports around 18,650 jobs, with employment spread across a diverse range of industries. Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employer, followed by retail, education, construction and agriculture. Together, these sectors reflect a regional economy driven by health services, education, construction and primary production.

The workforce has a strong vocational profile, with over 40 per cent holding a Certificate or Diploma, and 13 per cent holding a Bachelor degree. Work patterns are mixed, with similar proportions of full-time and part-time workers, reflecting flexible employment arrangements across the region.

### On the Ground – Health and Care Sector Investment

Investment in health and care infrastructure reflects the region's growing and ageing population and the strong role of health services in the local economy. Recent projects include the Orbost Regional Health Aged Care Facility, health worker accommodation at Omeo District and Bairnsdale Regional Health, and the opening of Gippsland Lakes Medical Imaging's new purpose built clinic. Together, these investments support workforce attraction and retention, expand service capacity, and reinforce health care as one of East Gippsland's largest and most resilient employment sectors.

Source: ABS 2021 Census Place of Work Employment (Scaled) Disclaimer: All figures, data and commentary presented in this software are based on data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), most of which relates to the 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses. Using ABS datasets and an input / output methodology industrial economic data estimates for defined geographic regions are generated.

# WORKFORCE



**18,654**

**TOTAL  
EMPLOYMENT**  
2024



**18,081**

**LIVE & WORK  
IN EAST GIPPSLAND**



**691**

**LIVE IN  
EAST GIPPSLAND  
WORK ELSEWHERE**

Unemployment rate is

**4.7%**

as at March 2023



A decrease of

**1.4%**

from March 2022

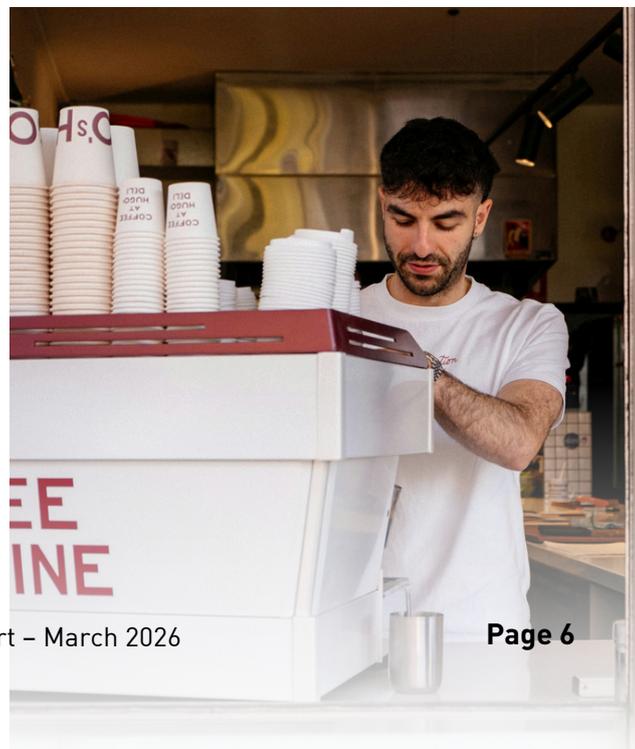
Income levels vary, but the largest groups fall between \$650 and \$1,499 per week, with many workers earning between \$800 and \$1,249.

Workers are spread across many occupations. The largest groups include:

- Professionals – 16.5%
- Managers – 14.9%
- Community and Personal Service Workers – 14.5%
- Technicians and Trades Workers – 13.8%
- Labourers – 13.6%

Travel behaviour is dominated by private car use. Around 68 percent of workers drive themselves to work. Working from home accounts for almost 12 percent, reflecting flexible arrangements common since 2020. Only small numbers use public transport or active modes.

Workforce age distribution skews older. The largest groups are aged 45 to 64, making up almost 44 percent of all workers. Younger workers aged 15 to 24 represent around 12 percent of the workforce.



# HOUSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND EAST GIPPSLAND

East Gippsland  
December 2024



**Median House Price \$505,000**

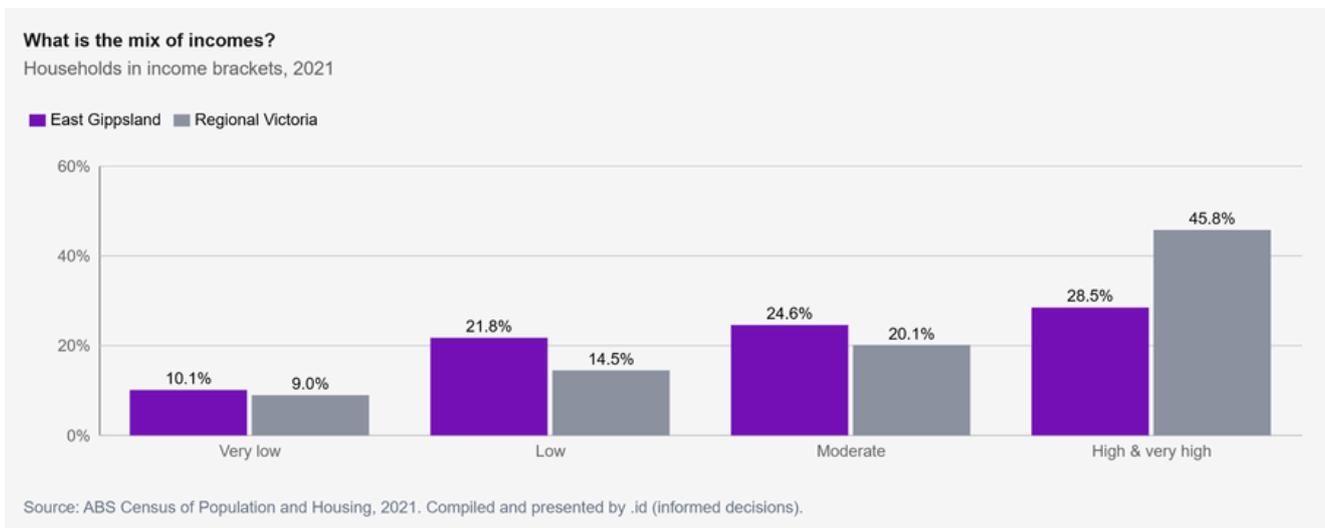
**Median Unit Price \$375,000**



East Gippsland has an identified need for 878 affordable housing households, equal to 4.4 percent of all households. Lone-person households make up the largest group in need, with 258 affected. **Median house prices reached \$515,500 in mid-2025**, below the broader regional Victorian median of \$590,000. Unit prices show a similar pattern, with East Gippsland at \$342,500 compared to \$435,000.

**Rental costs for houses sit at \$500 per week and units at \$370 per week**, close to regional Victorian averages. Over the year to June 2025, 169 property sales and 137 rentals were affordable to low income households, representing 19.1 percent of sales and 23.8 percent of rentals.

New dwelling approvals declined for separate houses (down by 52 to 320) but rose for medium and higher density homes (up by 18 to 22). Average household size has remained steady, and most homes are three bedroom separate houses, with four bedroom homes growing as an emerging trend.

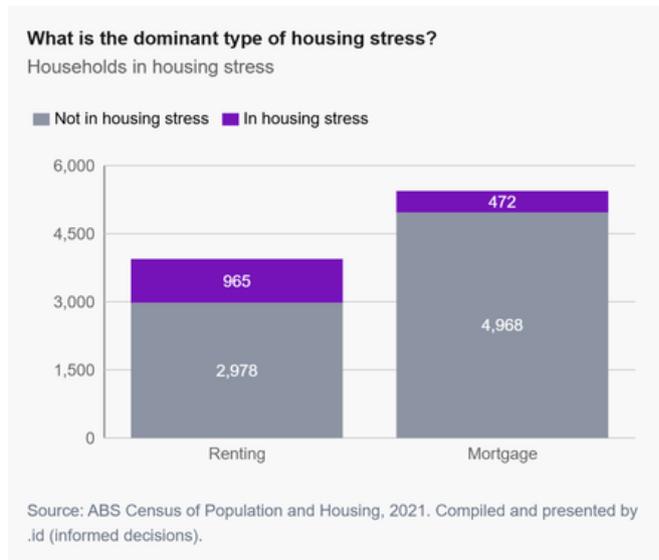


Comparing local incomes to the Regional Victoria benchmark provides insight into socio-economic conditions and how incomes relate to housing and rental costs. Incomes are grouped into standard ranges (very low to high) based on the Regional Victoria median, which are commonly used in Australia to assess housing need and affordability. Census data is used, and the income mix should be considered alongside rent, house prices and affordable housing availability to understand overall housing need.

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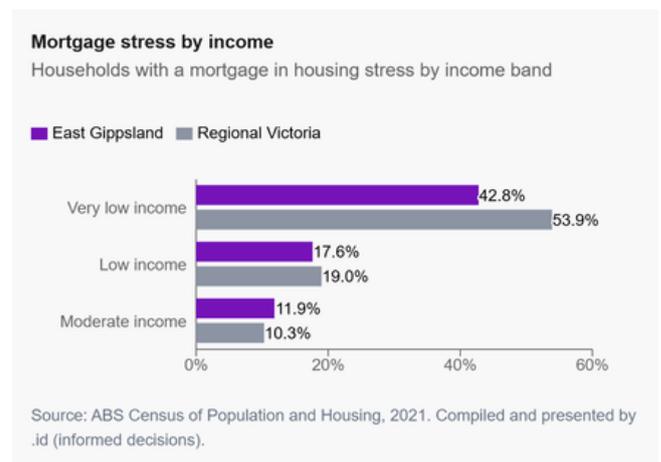
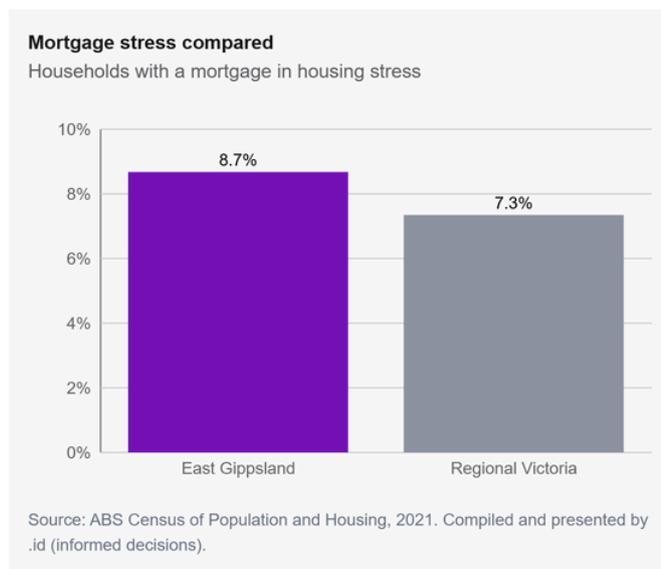
# Housing stress

**Housing stress** refers to lower- and middle-income households spending more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage repayments. It is a key indicator of housing affordability in an area, showing where households may be under financial pressure. High-income households are excluded, as higher housing costs are more likely a choice. Housing stress is measured as a share of all households and should be considered alongside the availability of affordable housing.



# Mortgage stress

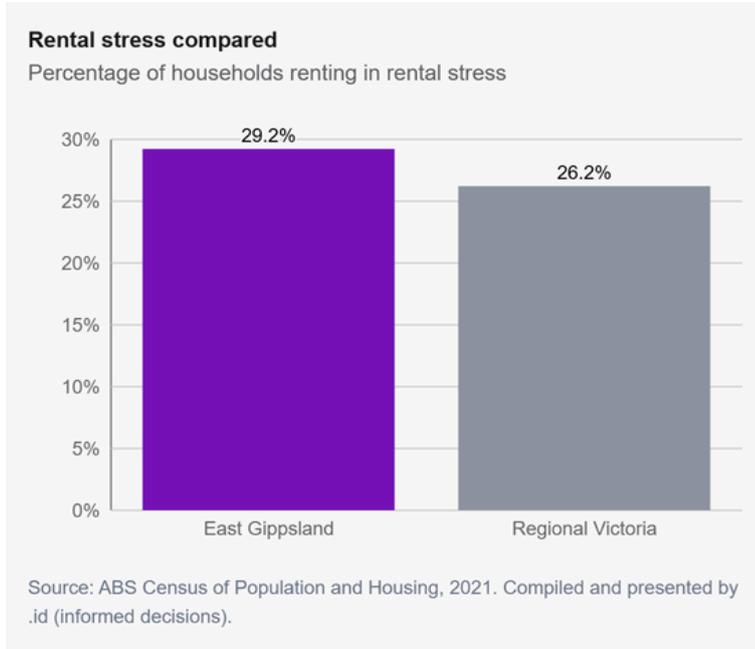
Of the 5,440 households with a mortgage in East Gippsland, 472 (8.7%) are in mortgage stress. This is higher than the Regional Victoria average.



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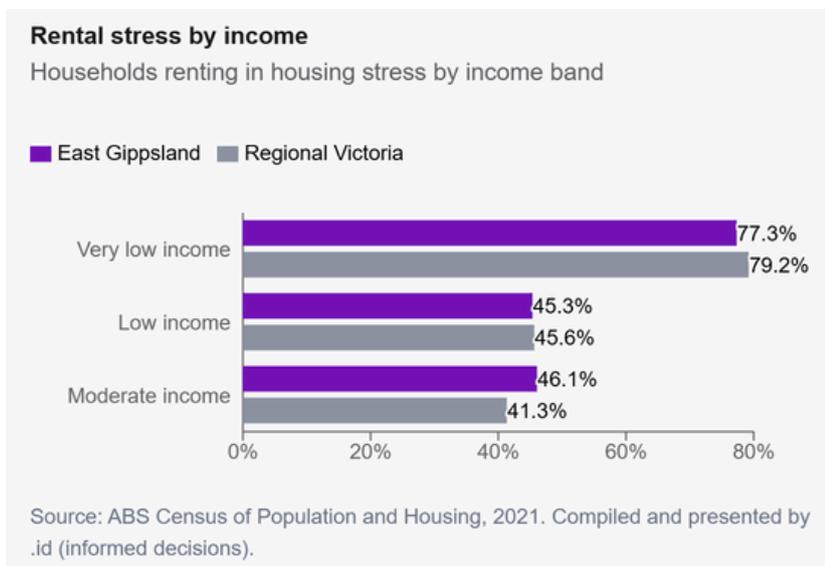
# Renting stress

Of the 3,304 households in private rentals in East Gippsland, 965 (29.2%) are in rental stress. This is higher than the Regional Victoria average.



Rental stress is a significant issue in East Gippsland, with almost three in ten renting households spending more than 30% of their income on rent—higher than the Regional Victoria average.

Spatially, rental stress is concentrated in key population centres such as Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale, indicating where affordability pressures are being felt most strongly.



Rental stress is most pronounced among very low-income households, where more than three-quarters are affected, highlighting the limited availability of affordable rental options.

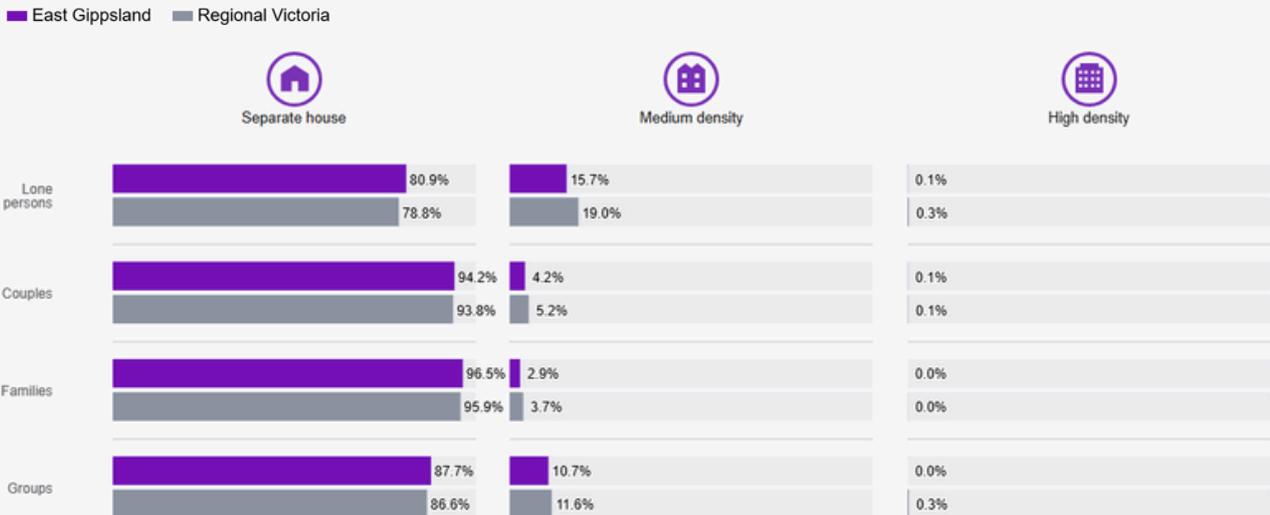


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# Housing consumption

## Who lives in what type of housing?

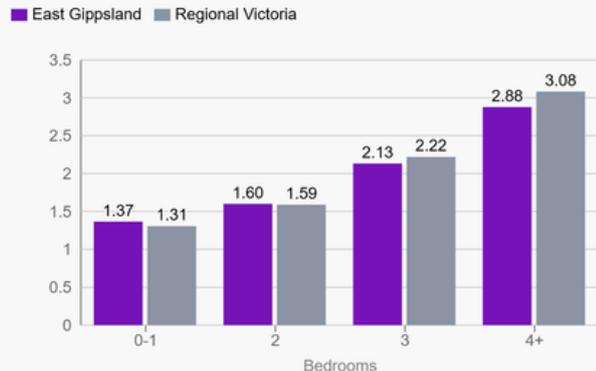
Percent of households in dwelling types by household type, 2021



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

## What is the occupancy rate of dwellings by size?

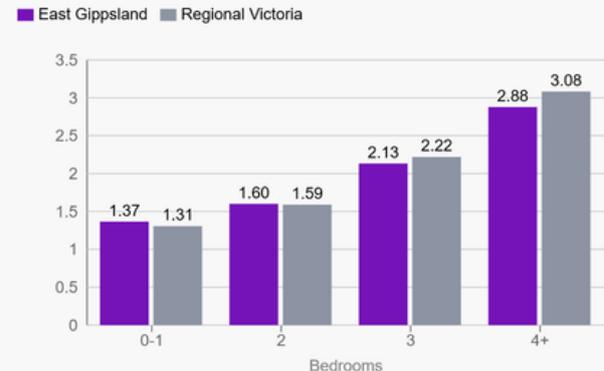
Average household size by number of bedrooms, 2021



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

## What is the occupancy rate of dwellings by size?

Average household size by number of bedrooms, 2021



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions).

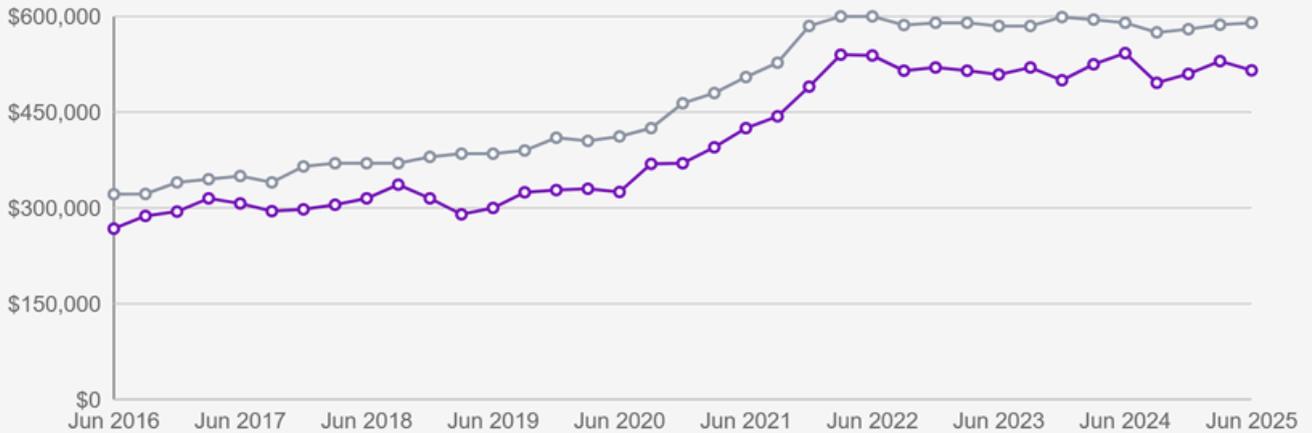
Housing consumption in East Gippsland is dominated by separate houses across all household types, with very limited use of medium- or high-density housing. Average household size increases with dwelling size, yet occupancy rates have declined slightly since 2016, indicating more space per household. Lone person households are most commonly living in one- and two-bedroom separate houses, a pattern consistent across most towns. Overall, the data points to a strong preference for low-density housing alongside declining household occupancy.

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### How have house prices been changing?

Quarterly median and entry-level (25th percentile) housing prices (and rolling 12-month % change)

— East Gippsland median — Regional Victoria median



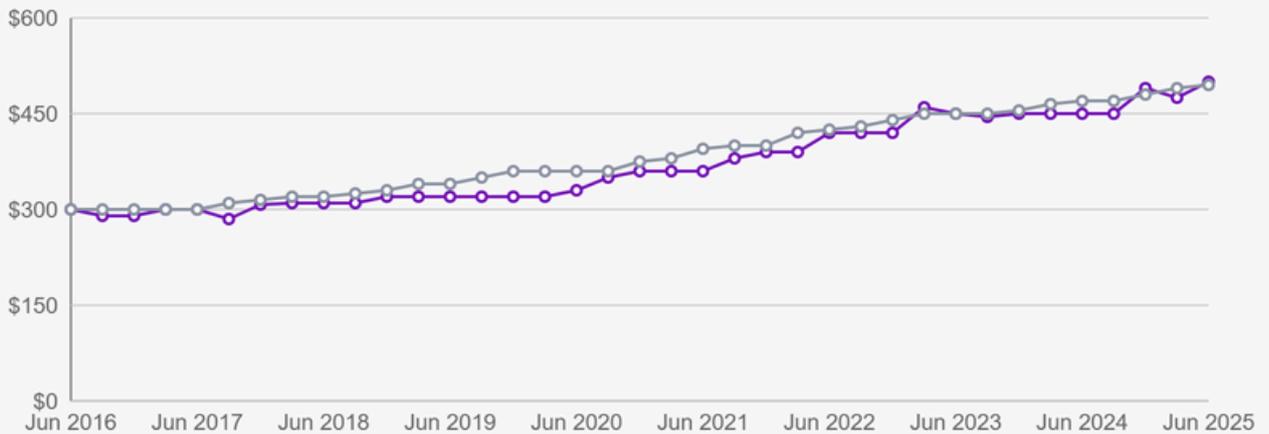
Source: Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions) using data from PropTrack Pty Ltd (ABN 43 127 386 298). Updated twice annually.

In the 5 years ending June 2025, median house prices have **increased** by an average of **9.7% p.a** in **East Gippsland** compared to an increase of 7.4% p.a in Regional Victoria.

### How have house rental prices been changing?

Quarterly median and entry-level (25th percentile) housing rental prices (and rolling 12-month % change)

— East Gippsland median — Regional Victoria median



Source: Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions) using data from PropTrack Pty Ltd (ABN 43 127 386 298). Updated twice annually.

In the 5 years ending June 2025, median house rents have **increased** by an average of **8.7% p.a** in **East Gippsland** compared to an increase of 6.6% p.a in Regional Victoria.

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# PLANNING PERMIT ACTIVITY

1 July to 30 September 2025

Planning activity in East Gippsland this quarter shows steady application volumes and strong processing performance. There were 124 applications received, 130 with an RA outcome, and 126 final outcomes, including 109 permits issued. Most permits came from new applications.

Processing efficiency improved, with about **82 percent of applications completed within timeframe**. VicSmart applications were processed quickly, while standard applications took longer. Average time to RA outcome was about 82 days, with a median of 43 days. Final outcomes tracked similarly.

Approved permits represented a significant uplift in development value, totalling 306 million dollars, with an average permit value of 2.8 million dollars. **Outcomes included 35 new dwellings and 342 subdivision lots**, indicating substantial development activity.

There was one appeal lodged and two appeal outcomes recorded.



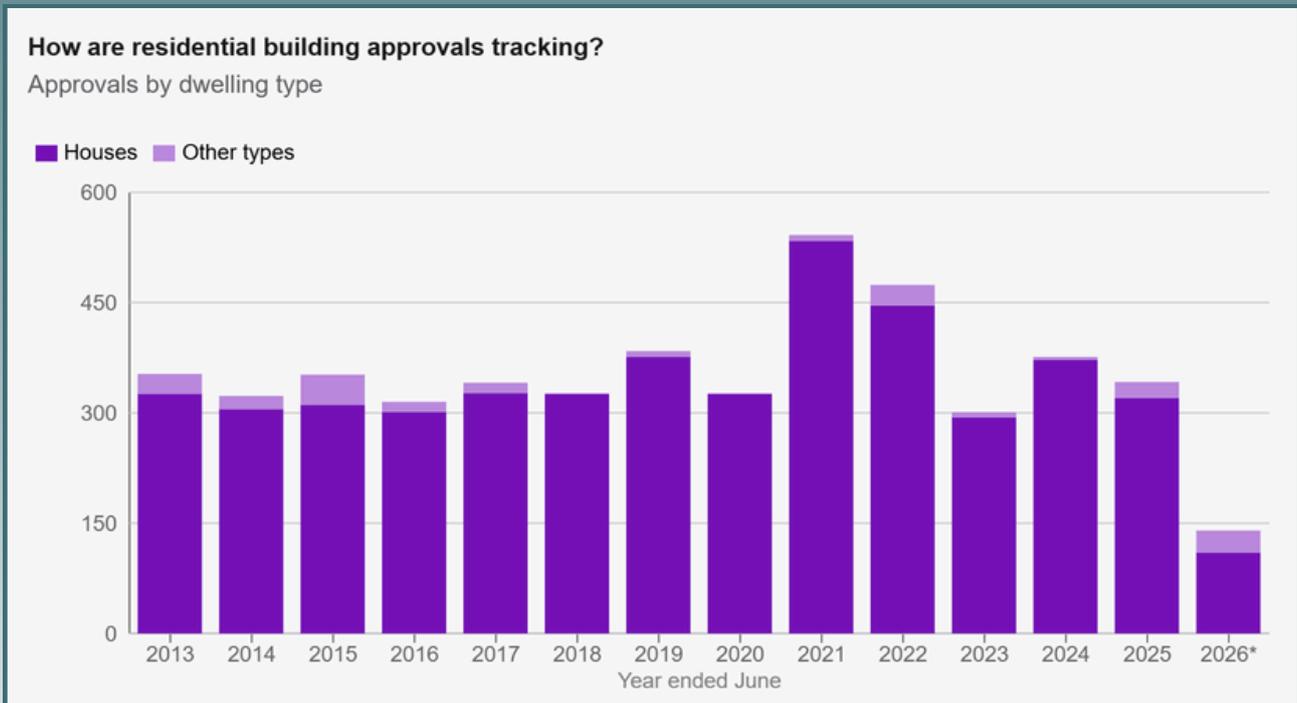
The total number of applications lodged, showing the volume of planning work coming into the responsible authority. It's broken down by application type to highlight how many are new versus amendments and helps compare incoming applications with those determined or approved.

The total number of applications finalised by the responsible authority, covering any outcome that removes them from RA processing. This helps show workload and delivery. It's broken down by application type to show the split between new applications and amendments.

The total number of applications completed, including decisions by the responsible authority or through appeal. Outcomes are either "Permit issued" or "No permit issued." Tracking permits issued helps indicate industry activity and economic impact. Additional metrics such as estimated cost of works, new dwellings and new lots are reported only for applications where a permit is issued.

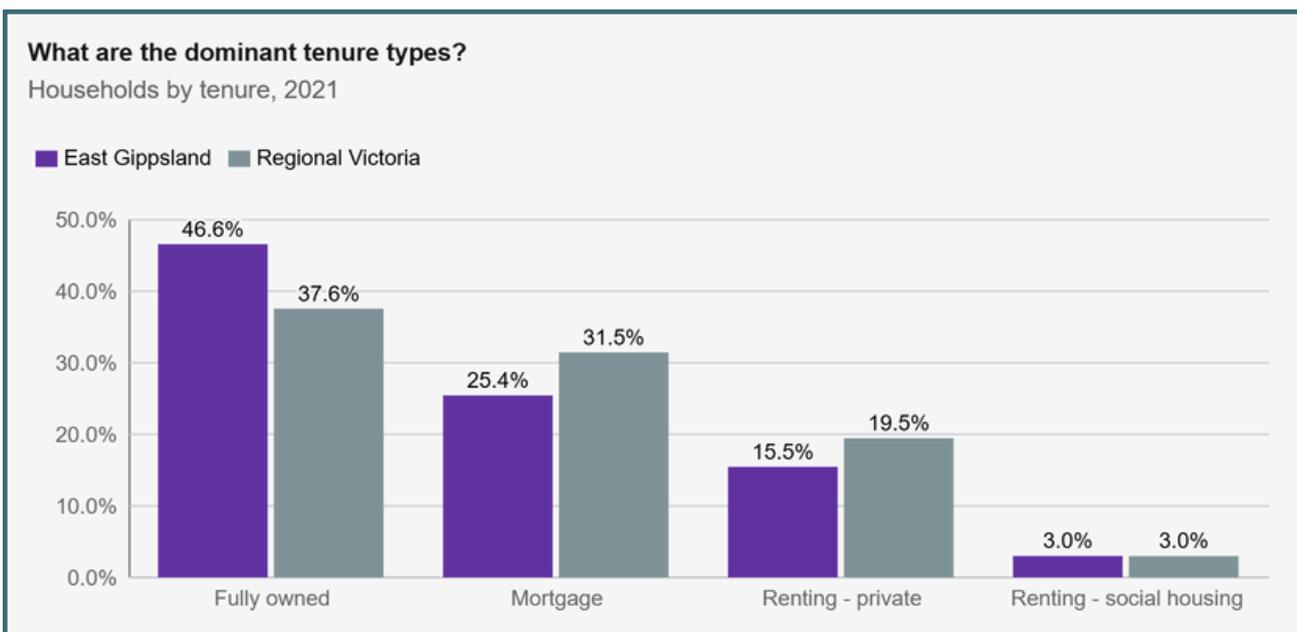
Source: Planning.vic.gov.au Disclaimer: The State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the planning application data reported on this webpage is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on this information.

# EAST GIPPSLAND HOUSING APPROVALS & TYPES



Residential building approvals in East Gippsland have fluctuated over the past decade, reflecting changing market conditions and construction activity. **Approvals peaked in 2021** before easing through 2022 and 2023 and **stabilising in 2024–2025**.

Detached houses continue to make up the majority of approvals, while multi-unit and “other dwelling” types remain a small but steady component of total activity. The 2026 figure reflects only the early part of the financial year, so it should be interpreted cautiously, as a full-year trend has yet to emerge.



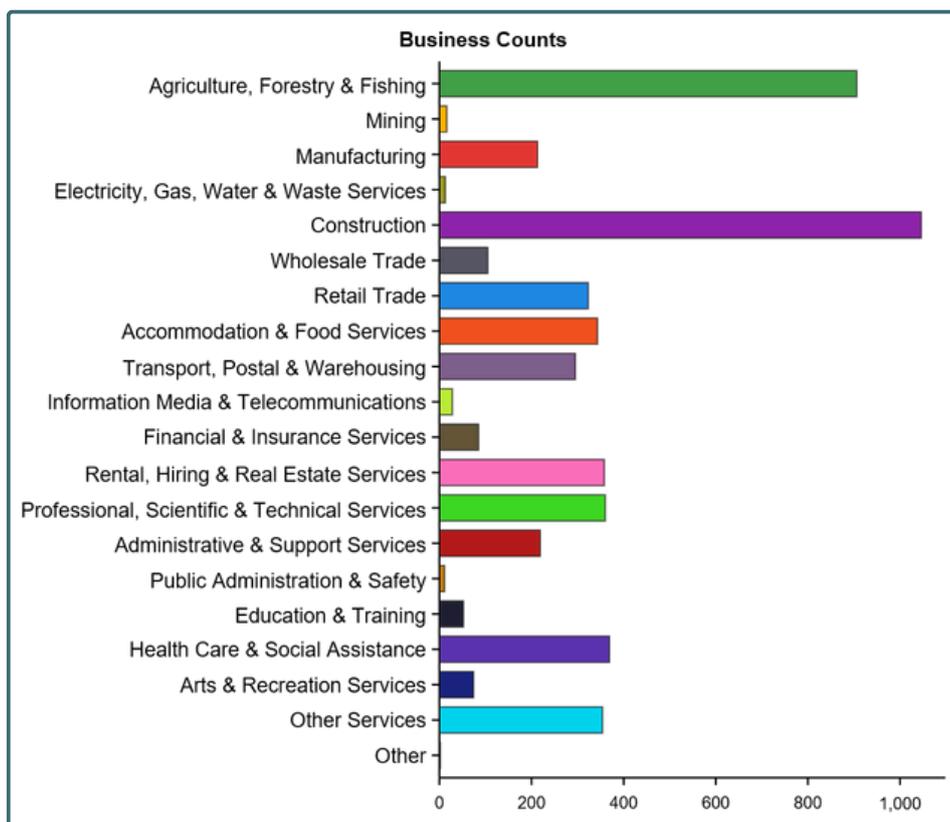
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021. Compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions)

# EAST GIPPSLAND BUSINESS DATA

as at 1 January 2026

Our region is home to **more than 5,000 local businesses**, creating a diverse and vibrant economy. The **construction industry** is currently the biggest part of our business community, followed closely by **agriculture**, which continues to be one of the area’s long-standing strengths.

We also have a strong mix of service-based businesses, including health care, professional services, real estate, retail, and hospitality—reflecting the day-to-day needs of locals and visitors alike. Smaller but still important sectors such as transport, manufacturing, education, arts, and financial services all contribute to a balanced and resilient local economy.



Overall, the region is supported by a healthy combination of traditional industries and growing service sectors, helping ensure stability and opportunity for our community.

Please note: Only active, GST-registered businesses are included in the data above (excluding super funds, investment entities, government, strata and deceased estates).

## On the Ground – Enabling Industrial Growth

Industrial infrastructure investment is underpinning business growth and diversification across the region. The completion of the South Bairnsdale Industrial Estate water augmentation project has removed a key servicing constraint for existing and future businesses, while the commencement of the Campbell Acres Industrial Estate is creating new, serviced industrial land to support manufacturing, logistics and trade-based activity. These projects align with strong construction and industrial business activity reflected in the data and provide confidence for continued private sector investment.

Source: ABS 2021 Census Place of Work Employment (Scaled) Disclaimer: All figures, data and commentary presented in this software are based on data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), most of which relates to the 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses. Using ABS datasets and an input / output methodology industrial economic data estimates for defined geographic regions are generated. Compiled and presented by REMPLAN.

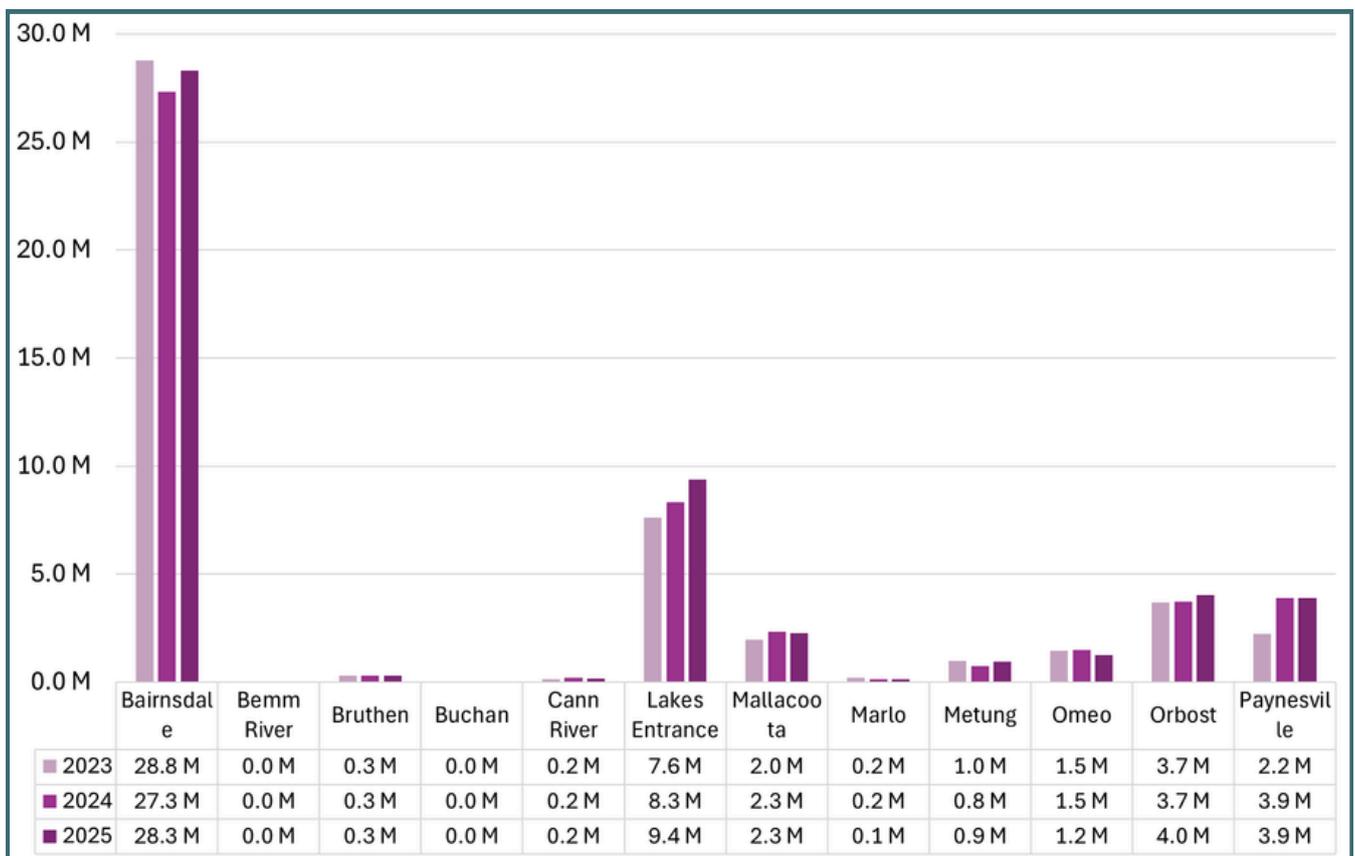
# EAST GIPPSLAND SPENDING TRENDS

## East Gippsland Spending Analysis: Q4 Year-on-Year (2023-25)

**Please note:** The data is suppressed (shown as \$0) when there is an insufficient number of merchants, transactions, or cardholders to meet the privacy thresholds. For Buchan and Bemm River, they each have a very small population, meaning there is not enough resident cardholders and/or resident spending to meet the privacy thresholds. When this occurs, the towns have not been included in the graphs, hence why Buchan and Bemm River are not always listed.

### RESIDENT LOCAL SPEND BY TOWN

Dollars spent by residents and local businesses in the towns within the region.



Resident local spend shows **overall stability across the region** between 2023 and 2025, with some clear shifts at a township level.

Bairnsdale remains the largest contributor, dipping in 2024 before partially recovering in 2025. Lakes Entrance demonstrates consistent and strong growth across the period, while Orbost and Paynesville also record notable increases, indicating strengthening local economic activity.

Smaller communities such as Buchan and Bemm River show emerging spend from a low base, while several towns including Marlo and Omeo experience modest declines by 2025.

Overall, the data suggests **steady resident spending with growth** concentrated in key population and tourism centres.

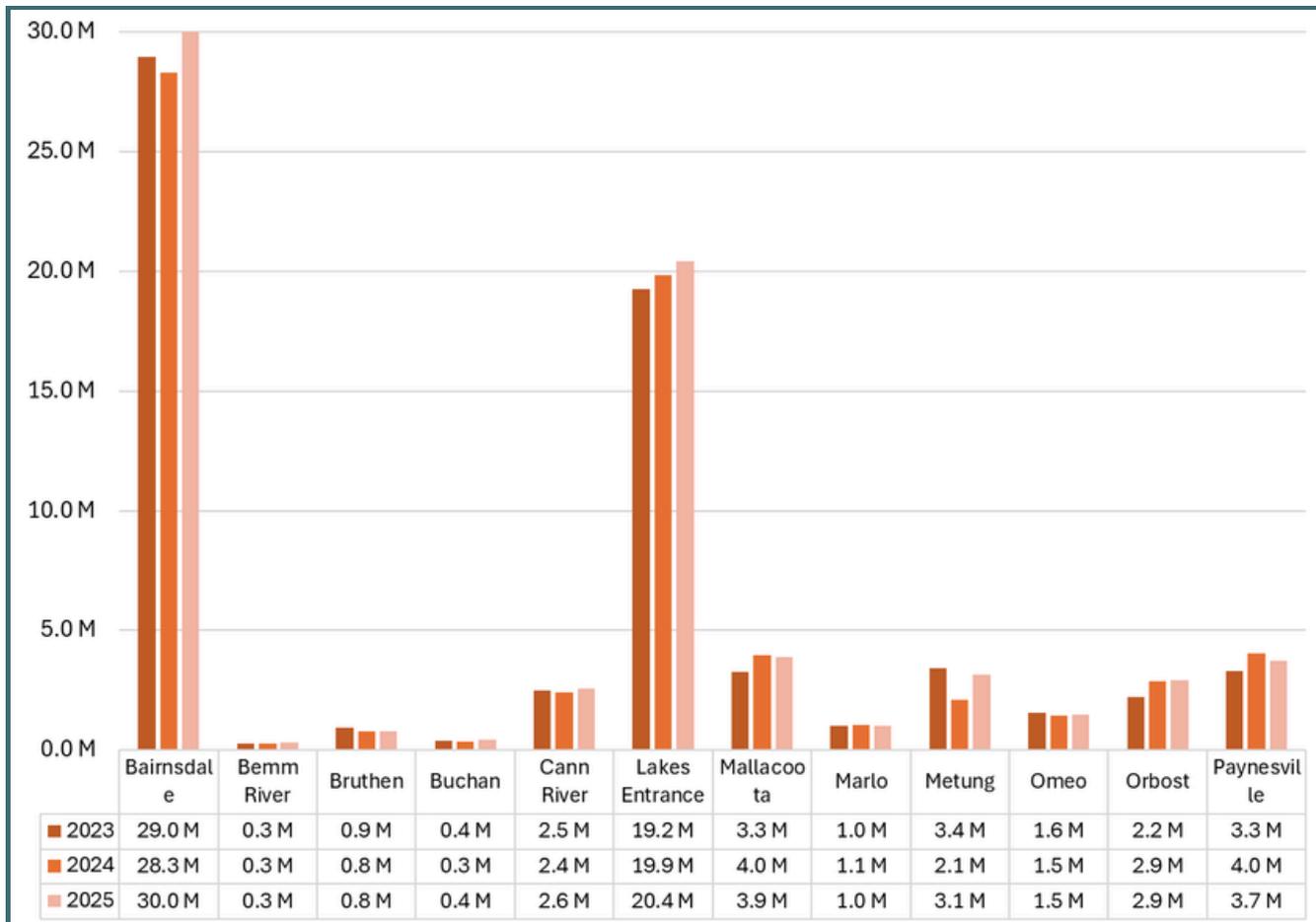
Source: Spendmapp by Geographia (2025) The data shown in Spendmapp provide an accurate, up-to-date, and detailed picture of expenditure activity for your region. It does this by taking real card transaction data and transforming it to create a comprehensive representation of your economy. These steps result in Spendmapp data that is detailed, trustworthy, and, most importantly, safe.

# EAST GIPPSLAND SPENDING TRENDS

East Gippsland Spending Analysis: Q4 Year-on-Year (2023-25)

## VISITOR SPEND BY TOWN

Tourist dollars spent in towns within the region.



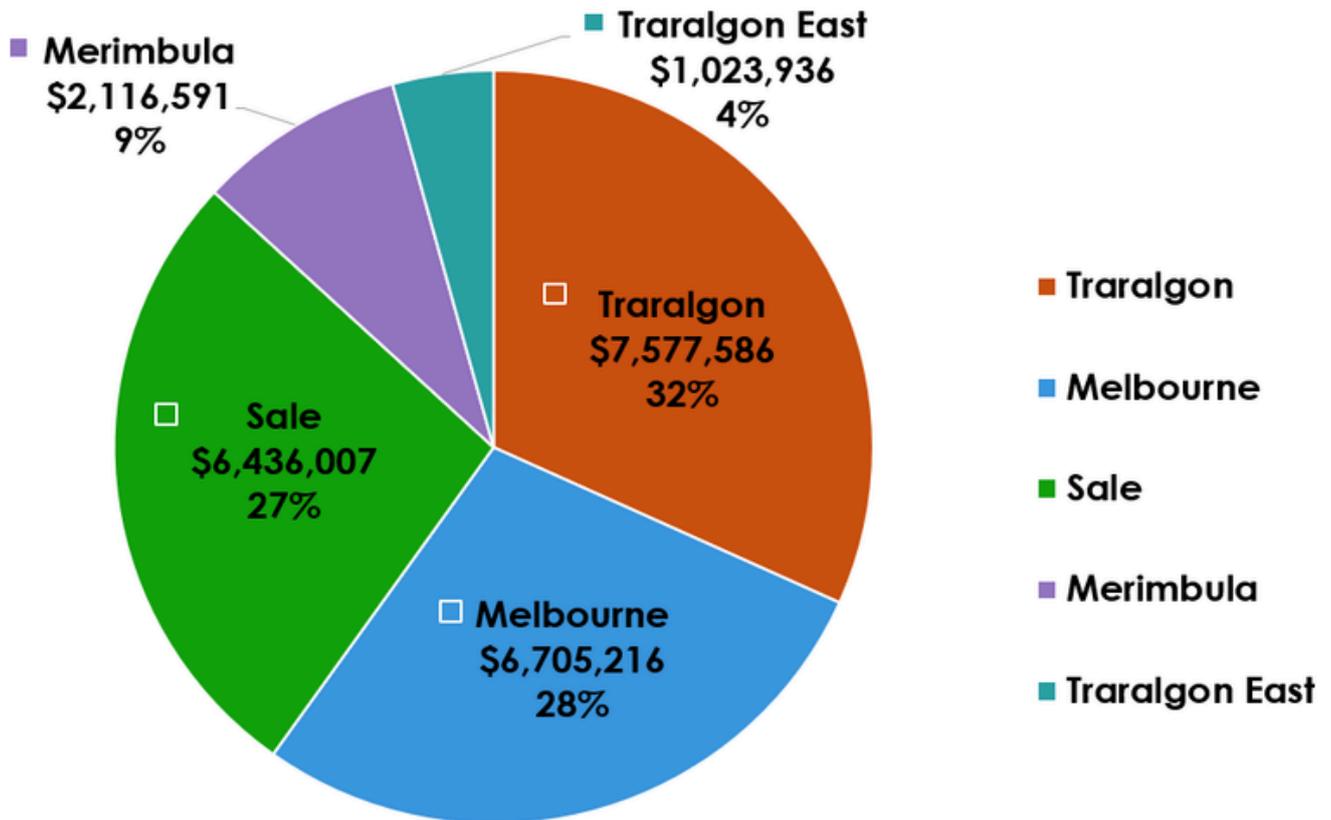
Visitor spend across East Gippsland remains strong from 2023 to 2025, with growth concentrated in key tourism centres. Bairnsdale continues to record the highest spend, rebounding in 2025, while Lakes Entrance shows steady year-on-year growth as the region’s primary tourism hub. Orbost and Paynesville also see solid increases, particularly in 2024, and Mallacoota maintains high spend despite a slight easing. In contrast, Bruthen and Omeo experience gradual declines, with smaller locations showing generally stable but fluctuating spend overall.

**On the Ground – Visitor Economy and Events**  
 Despite volatility in visitor spending, on-the-ground activity highlights the continued strength and diversification of East Gippsland’s visitor economy. Major events such as the Paynesville Classic Boat Rally, Gippsland Boat Show and Hooked on Lakes attract visitors across multiple seasons, supporting local businesses and regional dispersal. The opening of the final stages of the Omeo Mountain Bike Park further strengthens East Gippsland’s position as a year-round outdoor recreation destination, supporting visitation, overnight stays and flow-on spend in alpine communities.

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# EAST GIPPSLAND ESCAPE SPENDING

Where East Gippsland residents spend money outside of the region  
Top destination geographies (Jan-Dec 2025)



## Where East Gippsland residents spend money outside the region (by destination)

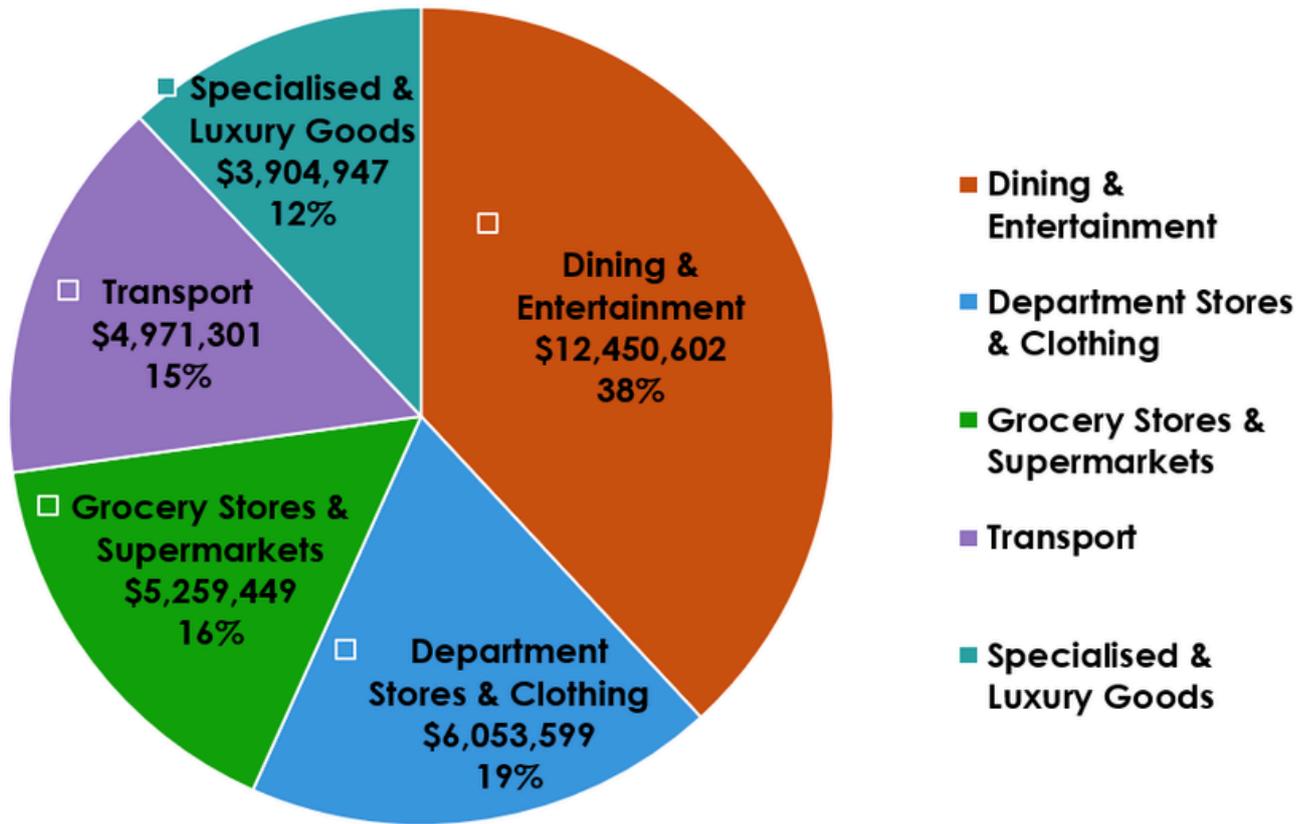
This graph shows the main locations outside East Gippsland where local residents are spending their money. The largest shares of spending are captured in nearby regional centres and major metropolitan areas, reflecting a mix of retail, service, and lifestyle trips that cannot always be met locally. These patterns highlight the ongoing role of surrounding centres as key economic destinations for East Gippsland residents, particularly for higher-order goods, services, and experiences.



Source: Spendmapp by Geographia (2025) The data shown in Spendmapp provide an accurate, up-to-date, and detailed picture of expenditure activity for your region. It does this by taking real card transaction data and transforming it to create a comprehensive representation of your economy. These steps result in Spendmapp data that is detailed, trustworthy, and, most importantly, safe.

# EAST GIPPSLAND ESCAPE SPENDING

What East Gippsland residents spend money on outside of the region  
 Top categories (Jan-Dec 2025)



## Where East Gippsland residents spend money outside the region (by category)

This chart breaks down what types of goods and services East Gippsland residents are purchasing outside the region. Spending is spread across everyday needs such as groceries and transport, alongside discretionary categories like dining, entertainment, and clothing. The mix of categories suggests both convenience-driven travel and intentional trips for experiences or products that may have limited availability locally, pointing to potential opportunities for local business attraction or expansion.



Source: Spendmapp by Geographia (2025) The data shown in Spendmapp provide an accurate, up-to-date, and detailed picture of expenditure activity for your region. It does this by taking real card transaction data and transforming it to create a comprehensive representation of your economy. These steps result in Spendmapp data that is detailed, trustworthy, and, most importantly, safe.

# OTHER INFORMATION

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To support local business operators, East Gippsland Shire Council provides a range of information, resources, and support services.

Council produces a regular business e-newsletter, Business Matters, which keeps business operators informed about economic development initiatives, grant programs, upcoming events, and business training opportunities across the region. If you would like to receive these updates, we invite you to subscribe to Business Matters.

Business owners can also access free, flexible, confidential, and tailored support through Council's Business Concierge service. The Business Concierge works alongside local businesses to help achieve their goals, connect them with relevant information and support programs, and assist with Council-related enquiries. For more information, contact our Business Concierge at [business@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:business@egipps.vic.gov.au).

To stay informed about broader Council activities, projects, services, decisions, and opportunities for community input, subscribe to Council's Community Matters newsletter.

Those interested in agriculture can also subscribe to AgriNews, Council's monthly agricultural newsletter, which shares the latest information on funding, programs, and opportunities relevant to the local farming sector.

For visitors or anyone interested in exploring East Gippsland, the Visit East Gippsland website provides information on local attractions, events, and tourism opportunities. You can scan the QR code to access the site directly.



SCAN HERE

Feedback is always welcome. If you would like to provide feedback or discuss economic development matters, please contact the Economic Development team at [economic.development@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:economic.development@egipps.vic.gov.au).

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