

East Gippsland Shire Council

# Council Plan

## 2025-29

Incorporating the Municipal  
Health & Wellbeing Plan



Adopted at Council meeting held on 23 June 2025



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## Acknowledgement of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero, Bidwell, Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Duduroa Dhargal, Jaithmathang people as the Traditional Custodians of this land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire, and their enduring relationship with country. The Traditional Custodians have cared for and nurtured East Gippsland for tens of thousands of years.

Council values their living culture and practices and their right to self-determination. Council pays respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland, their Elders, past, present, and future.

# Mayor's message



*"This plan reflects your voice – and a commitment from us to keep delivering, listening and adapting."  
– Mayor Cr John White*

I'm proud to present the Council Plan 2025–29 – our strategic roadmap for the next four years. This plan sets out the outcomes we're striving for, the priorities we'll focus on, and how we'll measure our progress. It also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, which shapes our efforts to protect, promote and improve health and wellbeing across East Gippsland.

The direction of this plan has been guided by one of the most comprehensive deliberative community engagement programs we've ever undertaken. Over the last 12 months, more than 4,000 people shared their ideas, hopes, and priorities for the future of our region. Their insights helped shape this plan and ensure it aligns with our long-term Community Vision 2040.

In July and August 2024, we reached out through face-to-face conversations, a community survey and local events – connecting with more than 2,500 residents. Then in December, we brought together a deliberative engagement panel of 22 community members from across East Gippsland.

This panel explored key challenges and opportunities and provided thoughtful input into the revised Community Vision, Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Plan, and Health and Wellbeing Plan. In January, we worked with 33 health partner organisations to help refine our health and

wellbeing priorities. And in February, we asked our community to help us prioritise services and allocate funding. Nearly 1,000 people contributed to this process, with 492 individuals sharing detailed suggestions and comments.

This level of participation reflects a strong sense of connection and shared purpose in East Gippsland. On behalf of Council, I thank everyone who took part.

The Council Plan 2025–29 reflects your voice – and a commitment from us to keep delivering, listening and adapting as we move forward. I'm confident that together, we're building a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant East Gippsland.

**Mayor Cr John White**

# Council Vision

To foster inclusive, connected, communities and places where all East Gippslanders prosper, and endeavour not to leave anyone behind.

## Our Community Vision

In 2040, our people, place, environment and economy will be inclusive, connected, sustainable and resilient for the growth and wellbeing of our unique and diverse communities.

- » **Our Communities:** Will include, encourage, respect, and value everyone.
- » **Our Place:** Will be accessible, safe, connected, and healthy.
- » **Our Environment:** Will be managed and preserved for all generations.
- » **Our Economy:** Will be sustainable, innovative, and supportive of existing and emerging industries.

## What is a Council Plan?

Our Council Plan details what we aim to achieve, how we plan to do it and how we will measure success. It includes things like improving community wellbeing, supporting communities, and making the most of what we have got. This Plan also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, which guides our activities in maintaining, improving, and encouraging community health and wellbeing.

## How to read the plan

### Strategic themes

The long-term objectives that Council aims to achieve.

### Outcomes

The outcomes Council seeks to achieve over the next four years.

### Priorities

The areas Council will focus on to achieve the outcomes.

### Our Focus

The initiatives and projects that Council will deliver to achieve the Council Plan. Council's role in these initiatives has also been identified:

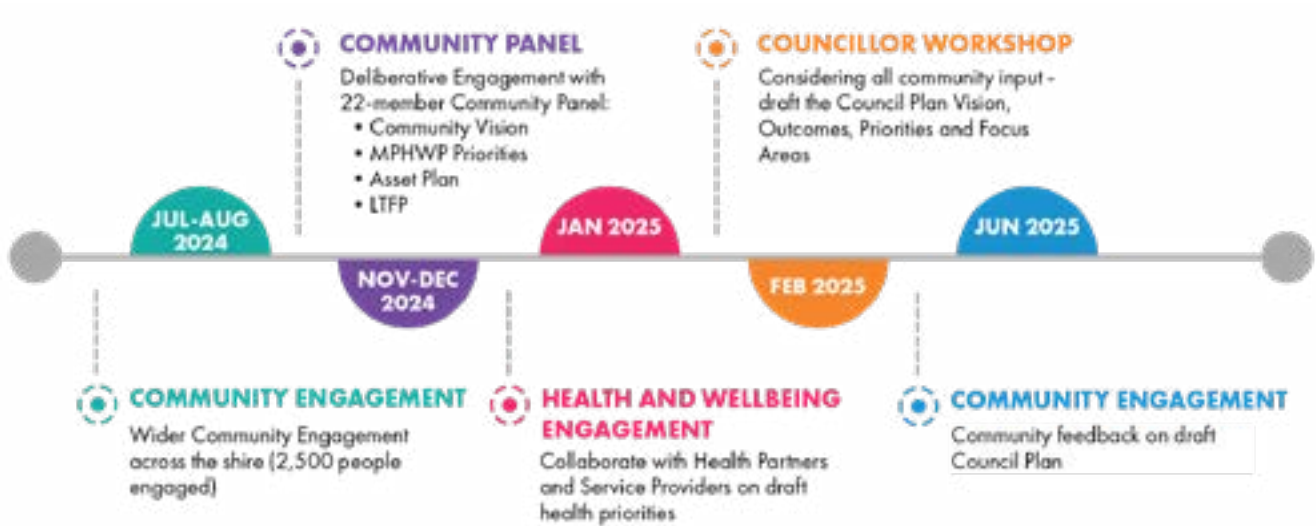
<b>Deliver</b>	Council has a direct responsibility for delivery of the initiative.
<b>Advocate</b>	Council actively seeking either financial or policy support from the Victorian and Australian Governments for community priorities.
<b>Partner</b>	Council works with community groups and agencies to deliver the initiative

### Measures

How Council will measure and monitor performance against the four-year outcomes of the Council Plan.

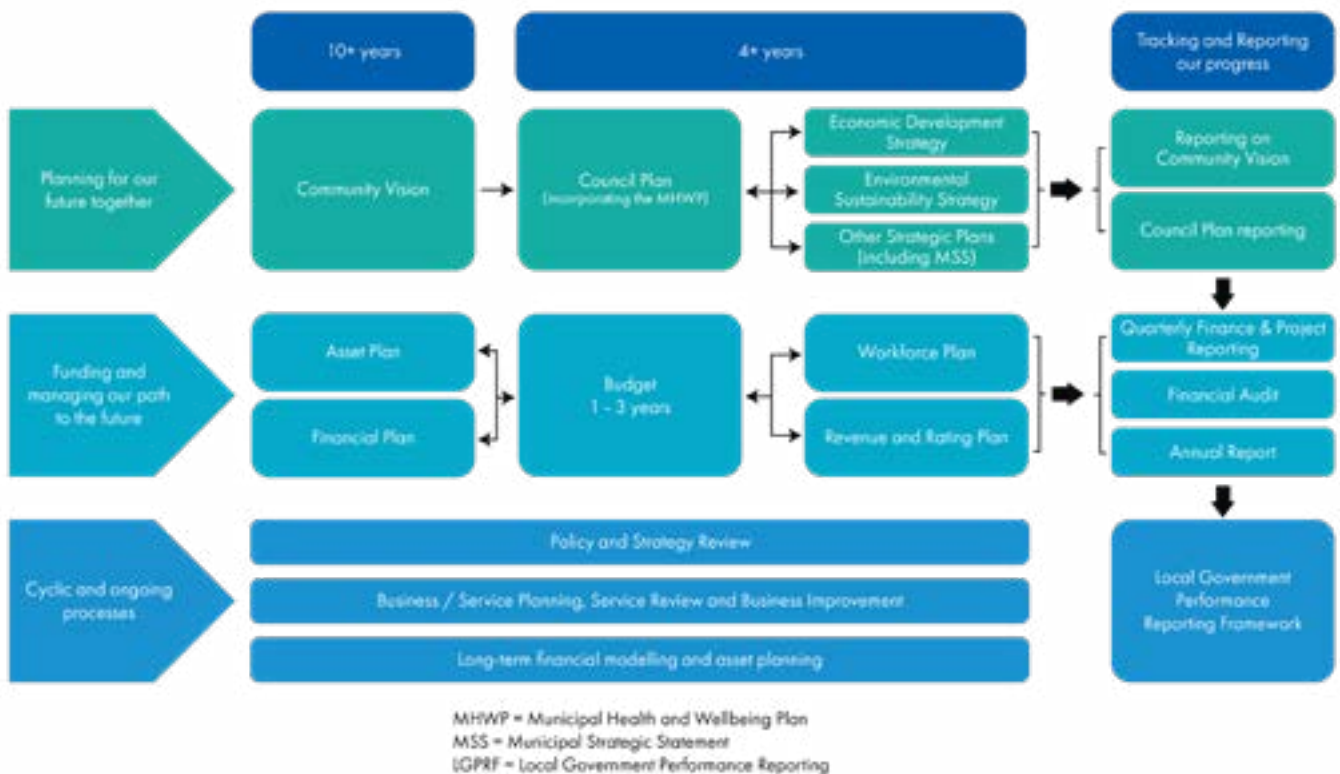
♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

# How did we develop the Council Plan?



# How does the Council Plan fit in with our strategic planning?

Our Integrated Planning Framework aligns strategies, initiatives and goals with our community’s long-term vision. It considers future planning, funding, and service delivery interdependencies to ensure East Gippsland is well-planned, financially stable, and progressing towards a prosperous future.



## Reporting against our Council Plan

To ensure transparency and accountability, Council regularly monitors and reports on progress against the outcomes and priorities set out in this plan. Each strategic theme includes clearly defined outcomes and associated measures that allow us to track performance over the four-year period. Progress is assessed through a combination of quantitative indicators and qualitative insights and is reported to

the community via our Annual Report and quarterly performance reports. This approach ensures that our actions remain aligned with community expectations and legislative requirements, and that we can adapt our efforts where needed to achieve meaningful results.

# Councillors

East Gippsland Shire Council is an unsubdivided municipality made up of nine Councillors who each represent the whole shire. Elections are held every four years in October; the last election was held in 2024.



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# East Gippsland – who we are

East Gippsland is a large and vibrant region, covering approximately 21,000 square kilometres - about 10% of Victoria. As the state's second-largest Shire, it stretches from Providence Ponds to the New South Wales border. Almost 80% of the region is Crown land, including national parks, state forests, and reserves, making it one of Australia's most important biodiversity reserves and ecotourism destinations.

The region is home to incredible natural landscapes, including the Gippsland Lakes, Mitchell and Snowy Rivers, 90 Mile Beach, and the Australian Alps. It features a mix of alpine areas, forested hills, fertile river valleys, and red gum plains, supporting unique ecosystems and wildlife. Unlike much of Victoria, where urban areas dominate, East Gippsland's towns and settlements exist as islands within vast natural environments, reflecting its strong connection to the land.

Throughout its growth into a flourishing economic and tourism hub, attracting over one million visitors annually, East Gippsland has retained its identity and sense of place. The region is also an abundant food producer year-round, with fertile soils, good rainfall and a mild climate.

East Gippsland has a significant First Nations population (3.5%), compared to the state average of 1%. First Nations People have a deep cultural and environmental connection to the land, recognising the vital link between nature and the communities that rely on it.

With 145 localities, East Gippsland's communities are shaped by rivers, roads, and mountains, influencing trade and social connections over time. To better understand and support these

communities, Council has developed a hierarchy of place, organising the region into 12 districts, from remote settlements to service towns and the municipal centre. This place-based planning approach ensures that each area's unique needs and characteristics are recognised and supported.

East Gippsland has seen significant population changes in recent years. As of 2023, the population was 49,179. The region is expected to continue growing, with projections indicating it will reach approximately 50,794 by 2025 and approximately 59,979 by 2046. This growth is largely driven by residential development and people moving into our region. While some remote rural areas might experience minimal growth or even a decline, the overall trend for East Gippsland is positive, with steady population increases anticipated in the coming decades, particularly for those seeking a seachange or treechange from city life.

Over time, housing ownership rates in East Gippsland have shown a steady increase. In 2016, about 42.2% of households fully owned their homes, and this figure rose to 46.5% by 2021. Similarly, the proportion of households with mortgages remained relatively stable, with a slight increase from 25.9% in 2016 to 25.4% in 2021. These changes reflect broader trends in housing affordability and availability, as well as shifts in the socio-economic landscape of the region.

Since the development of the last Council Plan, our community has experienced changes in demographics and the issues we face. To explore and compare these year-on-year demographic changes, please visit the ID Profile website at [profile.id.com.au/east-gippsland](https://profile.id.com.au/east-gippsland)

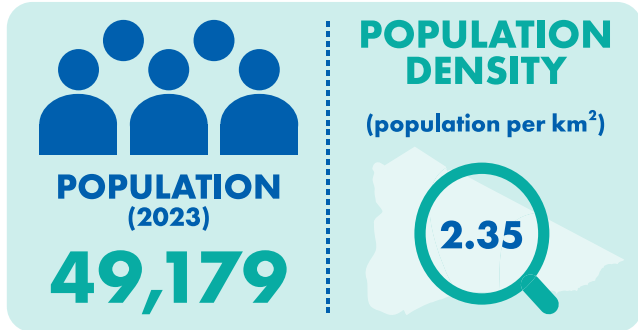
# East Gippsland at a glance

DEMOGRAPHIC DATASET

## EAST GIPPSLAND



Figures are from the 2021 Census unless otherwise stated.



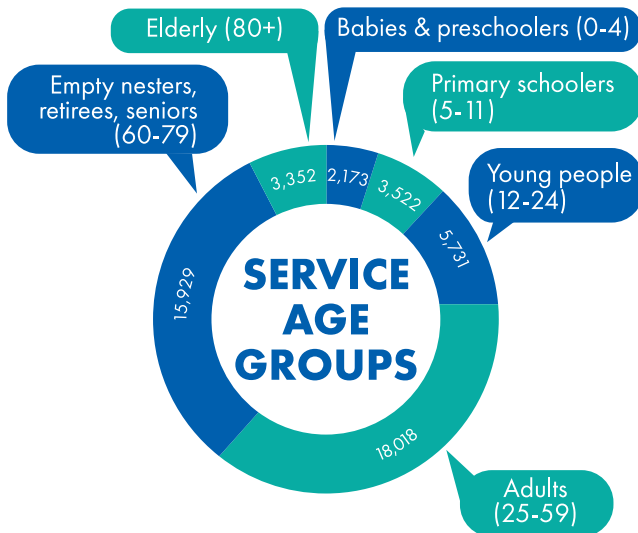
## EAST GIPPSLAND POPULATION BY DISTRICT (2023)

### DISTRICT:

Bairnsdale	<b>17,666</b>	Mallacoota	<b>1,283</b>
Bruthen	<b>1,119</b>	Metung	<b>2,301</b>
Buchan	<b>448</b>	Omeo-Swifts Creek	<b>1,351</b>
Cann River	<b>448</b>	Orbost	<b>4,009</b>
Lakes Entrance	<b>8,716</b>	Paynesville	<b>6,491</b>
Lindenow	<b>2,520</b>	Twin Rivers	<b>2,941</b>

## AGE TRENDS

The median age of the community is 52 years, with 39% of the population aged over 60 years. Lone person households make up 29% of all households, with 32.5% of households made up of couples without children, indicative of an older population.



## IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY (%)

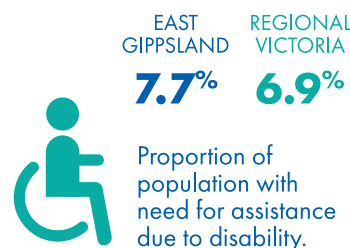
	EAST GIPPSLAND	REGIONAL VICTORIA
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>
Overseas born population	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Language at home other than English	<b>4.0</b>	<b>7.1</b>
Poor English proficiency	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>



## MEDIAN AGE

	EAST GIPPSLAND	REGIONAL VICTORIA
Median Age	<b>52</b>	<b>43</b>

## HEALTH



## TOP 3 LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

	EAST GIPPSLAND	REGIONAL VICTORIA
Arthritis	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
Mental Health	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
Asthma	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>

# HOUSING



Full ownership of homes is the dominant tenure type in the East Gippsland Shire, with around a quarter of all homes being owned with a mortgage and around a fifth of homes rented. Almost one-third of all households are people who live alone. The average household size in the Shire is 2.2 persons per household.

## HOUSEHOLDS



Families with children

% EAST GIPPSLAND

19.1

% REGIONAL VICTORIA

24.6



Families with young children

10.1

13.5



Families with mixed-age children

2.8

3.5



Families with older children

6.2

7.6



Couples without children

32.5

28.0



Lone person households

29.0

37.5

# EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIOECONOMIC WELLBEING



% EAST GIPPSLAND

% REGIONAL VICTORIA

Labour force participation

48.4

57.4

Employment rate

95.6

95.9

Unemployment rate

4.4

4.1

Change in employment rate 2016-2021

2.0

1.9

## TOP 5 INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT (%)

EAST GIPPSLAND

REGIONAL VICTORIA

Healthcare & social assistance

16.3

16.2

Healthcare & social assistance

Construction

10.0

9.5

Retail trade

Retail trade

9.7

8.8

Education & training

Education & training

9.0

7.2

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

8.4

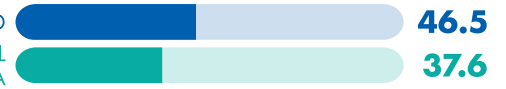
6.6

Accommodation & food services

# HOUSING TENURE

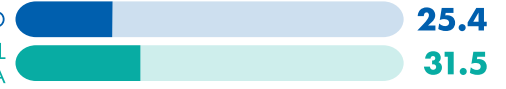
Fully owned (%)

EAST GIPPSLAND  
REGIONAL VICTORIA



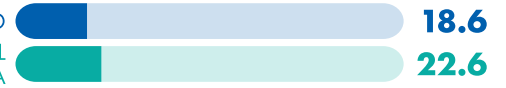
Owned with a mortgage (%)

EAST GIPPSLAND  
REGIONAL VICTORIA



Rented (%)

EAST GIPPSLAND  
REGIONAL VICTORIA



## HOUSING COSTS

\*As at December 2024 via [housing.id.com.au/east-gippsland](https://housing.id.com.au/east-gippsland)

Monthly mortgage repayments

EAST GIPPSLAND

\$1,354

REGIONAL VICTORIA

\$1,430

Median weekly house rental\*

\$480

\$480

Median weekly unit rental\*

\$370

\$395

Mortgage stress (%)

Rental stress (%)



EAST GIPPSLAND

8.7



REGIONAL VICTORIA

7.3



EAST GIPPSLAND

29.2



REGIONAL VICTORIA

26.2

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



EAST GIPPSLAND

\$1,115

REGIONAL VICTORIA

\$1,369

## MAIN 3 METHODS OF TRAVEL TO WORK



Car as driver

EAST GIPPSLAND

63.3%

REGIONAL VICTORIA

61.6%



Worked at home

12.6%

15.1%



Did not go to work

11.0%

11.1%

## YOUTH DISENGAGEMENT FROM EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (%)



EAST GIPPSLAND

11.7

9.3

REGIONAL VICTORIA

SEIFA index of socioeconomic disadvantage

EAST GIPPSLAND

963

REGIONAL VICTORIA

985

SEIFA socioeconomic disadvantage rank out of all Victorian LGAs

EAST GIPPSLAND

63<sup>rd</sup> (out of 80)

# Challenges

*East Gippsland Shire faces significant challenges over the next four years.*

## **Our Region:**

**Addressing social issues:** Many in our community don't have stable housing. We recognise the significant disadvantage in parts of our community and the challenge with access to services to support that. There is a need for clear policies and collaborative efforts with partner agencies to support the most vulnerable residents. The goal is to provide safe and secure housing options for all community members. We are working to address homelessness and encourage affordable and more diverse housing. Clear policies and collaboration with partner agencies are essential to support vulnerable residents and ensure safe, secure housing for all.

**Housing supply:** The Victorian State Government's housing strategy Plan for Victoria, which targets 11,000 new homes in East Gippsland by 2051, presents several challenges for the region. Meeting this ambitious goal requires extensive planning and coordination to ensure the necessary infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and community services, is in place to support new developments. Securing future land and housing supply in line with the *East Gippsland Housing and Settlement Strategy 2023* involves identifying suitable locations and ensuring locations have the necessary infrastructure, utilities and social services to ensure timely affordable development and wrap around services for new residents. Balancing growth with the preservation of East Gippsland's unique environmental and cultural heritage adds complexity to planning efforts. The region must also navigate regulatory barriers while addressing the strain on resources and workforce. Overall, while growth is supported, it requires careful planning, coordination, and collaboration to overcome these challenges.

**Economies in transition:** East Gippsland is undergoing significant changes as traditional industries decline or are phased out, posing economic and social challenges for rural communities. Economic development and reinvention are crucial for improving the overall economic well-being and social cohesion of residents. Investment in the economic restructuring of small towns is essential for community and wellbeing benefits and to reduce future reliance on Commonwealth welfare programs. The *East Gippsland Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032* aims to achieve high levels of economic prosperity by valuing the natural environment, putting the community at the centre of decision-making, and fostering an inclusive and innovative community.

**Planning for climate events:** Our shire is vulnerable to coastal hazards, inundation, fire, and extreme natural events which we have seen over the last few years. Individuals, businesses, and government must work together to meet these challenges. We are committed to planning for a changing climate, assisting communities to adapt to future conditions, and enhancing community resilience to extreme weather events. The *East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032* outlines clear targets and a detailed roadmap for managing and mitigating the impact of climate change and achieving sustainable resource management.

**Preventing violence:** We are committed to working towards a community where everyone is safe, valued, and enjoys equity of opportunity. Acknowledging the prevalence and impact of family violence, we regard all forms of violence against women as unacceptable. Leading by example as an employer, service provider,

advocate, funder, and key stakeholder, we aim to build relationships based on respect and provide gender-equitable and non-discriminatory opportunities. Participation in the East Gippsland Partners in Prevention Network and delivery of projects and programs in partnership with key prevention stakeholders are guided by the *East Gippsland Partners in Prevention Network Strategy and Action Plan*.

**Promoting equality:** As a community leader, we have an important role in promoting equal participation for all, both in the community and as a service provider and employer. We are committed to addressing inclusiveness and recognises the importance of policy change and programs to remove systemic causes of inequality. We recognise and deliver on our obligations under the *Closing the Gap* national agreement and have a *Reconciliation Action Plan* to guide our own internal processes. Actions are being implemented to address disadvantage, challenge stereotypes, and apply a gender lens across decision-making and service delivery. Key components of this approach include leadership that models fairness and opportunity for all, accessible data and demographic insights, and support for community-led prevention efforts. Guidance and support for community prevention, availability of data and demographics, and leadership modelling fairness and opportunity for all are key components. In line with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Council has a *Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)* that delivers initiatives such as equity impact assessments, staff training, resource development, and creating a gender-equitable workforce.

### **Our Council:**

**Ensuring financial sustainability:** Sound long-term financial management is critical to providing the financial certainty and flexibility needed for efficient and effective service delivery and asset management. The financial sustainability of Council is crucial for the long-term wellbeing of the community. Given the size and dispersed nature of the shire, along with the range of assets that

require maintenance and renewal in the context of rate caps, managing the budget effectively is essential. Additionally, an ageing population means increasing expectations on council services. We must prioritise spending and secure adequate funding and resources to meet the needs of residents while planning for future growth and development.

### **Embracing organisational adaptability**

**and innovation:** To drive progress and innovation, we must foster a culture of adaptability and continuous improvement. Encouraging innovative thinking and supporting our people through this transition is essential. Addressing risk aversion and empowering our people will enable better service to the community and achievement of strategic goals.

**Navigating red tape:** The community faces challenges in navigating bureaucratic hurdles and regulatory barriers. We are committed to streamlining and simplifying our processes and reducing red tape, to improve efficiency and support economic growth and ensure we are easy to do business with.

### **Engaging Well and recognising that**

**Community Matters:** Community engagement is crucial for us to foster trust and transparency, our policies and services need to be tailored to the real needs of the community. We are committed to ensuring active participation in decision-making processes that will lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes. We will ensure that community matters in all that we do.

**An efficient, focused organisation:** To meet the challenges of the next four years we will also need to focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. To ensure that resources are dedicated to our highest priorities, we will ensure that we focus on what matters most. Our people will need to be nurtured to deliver great outcomes, our systems and processes streamlines for efficiency, and our focus firmly on working with our communities to deliver what matters most.

# Theme 1 - Community wellbeing and social responsibility

*We foster a strong sense of belonging, inclusivity, and shared responsibility, ensuring that all members of our community are supported, valued, and empowered to thrive together.*

## **How this theme is important for the health and wellbeing of our community**

Belonging and social inclusion are critical components for mental health and overall well-being. Emphasising mental health and well-being helps reduce stigma, foster social connections, enhance physical health, boost productivity, and create safer communities. Initiatives that promote high levels of well-being play a crucial role in driving social and economic success. These initiatives result in improved learning outcomes, increased creativity, greater productivity, stronger relationships, better physical health, and longer life expectancy.

## Outcome – A connected and inclusive community, endeavouring not to leave anyone behind.

Priority – We work with local communities to deliver a shared future.

Our focus	Our role
Develop place plans that strengthen community engagement across our region. These plans will align and prioritise community needs and service levels.	Deliver
♥ Advocate for appropriate levels of accessible health and wellbeing services to address the needs of our growing and ageing community.	Advocate
♥ Support participation in recreation and physical activity and pathways for our young and not so young community members.	Deliver
♥ Work to enhance the accessibility of our towns and community health by developing and implementing Active Transport projects with a focus on promoting health and wellbeing and meeting infrastructure gaps.	Deliver
Identify the non-sporting facility needs of communities, supporting current and potential future user groups, and prioritise shared facility use.	Deliver
♥ In collaboration with community partners, advocate for improvements to public and community transport across the shire.	Advocate
Implement the <i>Sporting Facilities Plan</i> and the <i>Public Open Space Strategy</i> and undertake sporting facility planning for areas and sports not addressed through these existing plans.	Deliver
Implement engagement practices that encourage community involvement in our projects and services and respond to the engagement preferences of local communities	Deliver
♥ Provide inclusive and equitable access to our services, processes, and facilities for all community members.	Deliver
♥ Implement our <i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i> and deliver on our obligations under the <i>Closing the Gap</i> national agreement.	Deliver Partner
Manage recreation facilities, parks, and open spaces to meet the community's expectations and priorities.	Deliver

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Outcome – A stronger collaborative community that is actively engaged and supported

### Priority – Support the social wellbeing of our community

Our focus	Our role
♥ Work with partners to support remote community health and wellbeing, and opportunities for youth.	Partner
Implement our <i>Culture and Creativity Strategy</i> to enhance the cultural life of all our communities.	Deliver
Develop plans for our community infrastructure to ensure sustainable growth and enhance our quality of life in a financially responsible manner.	Deliver
♥ Provide a strong advocacy voice for health, education and support agencies that work on the ground to support communities.	Advocate
♥ Engage with older residents to promote involvement in the community, knowledge sharing and enhancing their sense of purpose and well-being.	Partner
♥ Develop a policy position and advocacy program for homelessness; affordable and social housing.	Deliver
♥ Support the provision of more social and affordable housing and housing diversity through land use planning.	Advocate Partner
♥ Advocate for and support initiatives that prevent all forms of violence, including family violence, by collaborating with local organisations and agencies to raise awareness through education and ensure those affected are supported.	Advocate Partner
♥ Support community organisations and health partners to deliver initiatives aimed at promoting healthy eating, active living (including active movement and shifting attitudes towards physical activity) and reducing harm from gambling addiction, alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes and other drugs.	Advocate Partner
♥ Value, promote and celebrate the unique cultural, social, and individual differences within our community, fostering a welcoming environment and strengthening community bonds.	Deliver Partner
♥ Collaborate with partners to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable community members are planned for and addressed.	Partner

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Annual targets

Measure	Target			
	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Community participation in council engagement opportunities.	Increased participation year-on-year	Increased participation year-on-year	Increased participation year-on-year	Increased participation year-on-year
Percentage of the municipal population that are active library members	≥ 15%	≥ 15%	≥ 15%	≥ 15%
♥ Number of community members volunteering in Committees of Management.	≥ 500 volunteers	≥ 500 volunteers	≥ 500 volunteers	≥ 500 volunteers
♥ Number of visits to aquatic facilities per population	≥ 11 visits	≥ 11 visits	≥ 11 visits	≥ 11 visits
♥ Community perception of safety.	Baseline year	Increased perception compared to previous year	Increased perception compared to previous year	Increased perception compared to previous year
♥ Percentage of social and affordable housing within the community.	31.1% (based on December 2024 data from <a href="https://housing.id.com.au/east-gippsland">housing.id.com.au/east-gippsland</a> )	Increased percentage compared to previous year	Increased percentage compared to previous year	Increased percentage compared to previous year

## Supporting strategies, policies and plans

- » *Age-friendly Communities Strategy*
- » *Community Engagement Policy*
- » *Culture and Creativity Strategy*
- » *Events Growth Action Plan*
- » *Gender Equality Action Plan*
- » *Public Open Space Strategy*
- » *Sporting Facilities Plan*

## Council services that drive the delivery of this theme

- » Animal Management and Local Laws
- » Aquatic and Recreation Centres
- » Asset Management
- » Building Maintenance
- » Culture and Creativity
- » Committees of Management
- » Community Resilience
- » Community Planning
- » Emergency Management
- » Environment and Public Health
- » Libraries
- » School Crossings

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

# Theme 2 - Prosperity

*We embrace sustainable economic growth, fostering opportunities that enhance livelihoods, innovation, and long-term financial stability for our diverse communities.*

## **How this theme is important for the health and wellbeing of our community**

Supporting access to learning opportunities and driving economic investment through local employment is crucial for enhancing social connections, mental health, and self-expression. Continuous learning helps individuals remain adaptable in a changing world, while local employment provides a sense of purpose and community. These opportunities lay the foundation for financial stability and contribute to long-term economic growth. Together, they enable individuals to build relationships, improve their well-being, and achieve greater independence, ultimately enhancing their quality of life and fostering interconnected communities.

## Outcome – Thriving, self-sufficient communities with strong local businesses and social enterprises

Priority – Strengthen economic opportunities through local investment and employment

Our focus	Our role
Leverage local strengths to create more opportunities for businesses, enhancing economic resilience and ensuring spending positively impacts the community.	Deliver Partner
Focus our effort on initiatives that drive business and job growth for communities and industries in transition, such as the timber industry.	Deliver
♥ Foster a supportive environment where agribusinesses can flourish and contribute to the local economy.	Deliver Partner
Plan and develop council infrastructure and services to support business growth.	Deliver
♥ Advocate and work with partners to remove barriers to economic and business growth, including water, energy and digital providers.	Advocate Partner
Review the Procurement Policy to prioritise local contractors (where feasible and competitive) to support local business and job growth.	Deliver

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Priority – Support the growth and development of our towns

Our focus	Our role
Complete the <i>Bairnsdale 2050 Plan</i> and initiate projects that support growth, enhance the town's presentation to attract investment, and improve the quality of life for our community.	Deliver
Proactively seek new investment opportunities for our commercial and industrial areas.	Deliver Partner
Advance our planning for cultural and civic hubs, creating spaces that celebrate our heritage and support community activities.	Deliver
Investigate mechanisms to address shop vacancies to revitalise CBDs.	Deliver
Our commercial services such as caravan parks, marinas, airports and livestock exchange meet the needs of our current and future communities.	Deliver

## Priority – Promote East Gippsland's places and opportunities

Our focus	Our role
♥ Actively promote East Gippsland as a vibrant and welcoming community to attract and grow a skilled workforce.	Deliver
Promote East Gippsland's many features, advantages and experiences to investors and tourists.	Deliver Partner
Support East Gippsland's tourism offerings to attract visitors.	Deliver
Support our economy to grow, collaborate and attract new markets and increase market share.	Deliver Partner

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

Priority – Build a skilled and resilient local workforce that can adapt to new opportunities and challenges

Our focus	Our role
Support existing learning hubs to provide opportunities to study locally.	Partner
♥ Advocate for reskilling to prepare the East Gippsland workforce for new opportunities.	Advocate
♥ Advocate for wrap-around services to encourage and retain hard-to-get skills in the region, ensuring our community benefits from a stable and skilled workforce.	Advocate
Advocate for local training pathways to enhance skill development and career opportunities	Advocate

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Outcome – A well-functioning planning system that responds to our communities’ needs

Priority – Appropriate planning processes that the community understands

Our focus	Our role
Advocate to State Government for planning process efficiencies.	Advocate
Simplify and streamline our planning and regulatory processes.	Deliver
Assist local businesses, developers and residents with navigating planning permits and other regulations.	Deliver

Priority – Land use planning – we have plans for the right things

Our focus	Our role
Secure future land and housing supply in accordance with the <i>Housing and Settlement Strategy 2023, Plan for Victoria</i> and associated plans for Paynesville, Eagle Point, Lucknow/East Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Omeo/Swifts Creek and Lindenow.	Deliver
Deliver the Lakes Entrance Northern Growth Strategy to enable long-term land supply.	Deliver
Finalise the <i>Coastal Marine Management Plan</i> .	Deliver
Initiate strategies that facilitate adequate supply of zoned residential, industrial and commercial land to support growth Shire-wide.	Deliver

## Annual targets

Measure	Target			
	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Number of ABN registrations in East Gippsland	% increase year-on-year	% increase year-on-year	% increase year-on-year	% increase year-on-year
Number of visitors to our region	Increase in visitors compared to previous year	Increase in visitors compared to previous year	Increase in visitors compared to previous year	Increase in visitors compared to previous year
Feedback from local businesses on satisfaction with economic support and development efforts	Increased satisfaction compared to previous year	Increased satisfaction compared to previous year	Increased satisfaction compared to previous year	Increased satisfaction compared to previous year
Feedback from community members on their satisfaction with the planning system	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average
Percentage of planning applications decided within the specified timeframe (60 days for regular permits and 10 days for VicSmart permits)	55%	60%	65%	70%

## Supporting strategies, policies and plans

- » *Customer Experience Strategy*
- » *East Gippsland Events Growth Action Plan*
- » *East Gippsland Planning Scheme*
- » *Economic Development Strategy*
- » *Housing and Settlement Strategy*
- » *Planning Compliance Policy*

## Council services that drive the delivery of this theme

- » Economic Development
- » Events
- » Livestock exchange
- » Planning and Building
- » Tourism

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely in Australia, showing a harbor with a marina full of boats, a residential area with houses, and a large green park area. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and green circular graphic.

# Theme 3 - Making the most of what we've got

*By using our assets and natural resources wisely, we protect them, adapt to change, and support future generations.*

## **How this theme is important for the health and wellbeing of our community**

A healthy natural environment is vital for food, clean air, and water. Our parks reduce stress and boost mental well-being. Proper management of natural resources improves community quality of life. Efficient waste management and a circular economy minimise environmental impact. Preserving cultural heritage connects us to our history. Maintaining and wisely using assets aligns with community needs. Sustainable resource management, climate risk planning, and safeguarding heritage are priorities for a resilient future.

## Outcome – Natural assets are well-managed and protected

Priority – Promote sustainable management of natural and environmental assets

Our focus	Our role
<p>♥ Invest in Council’s natural areas to manage the threat from pests, enhance preservation of biodiversity and explore future offset opportunities. Develop management plans for key areas, work with partners to deliver on-ground works and advocate for external funding</p>	<p>Deliver Advocate Partner</p>
<p>Advocate to State and Federal governments to promote the use of public land for nature-based recreation, natural values management and economic development opportunities.</p>	<p>Advocate</p>
<p>Work with partners to champion the development of an ecological audit of the Gippsland Lakes and a Gippsland lakes research and education centre dedicated to environmental research and education, including regular auditing of the health of the Gippsland Lakes.</p>	<p>Advocate Partner</p>
<p>Advocate for agreements between State, Local Government, and the community to ensure long-term stewardship of natural areas, including incorporating local knowledge and community aspirations in the management of crown land.</p>	<p>Advocate</p>
<p>♥ Review flood mapping, schedules, and policy using the best available data, considering climate change, sea level rise, and increased rainfall intensity.</p>	<p>Deliver</p>

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Priority – Promote environmental sustainability including mitigation and planning for climate risks

Our focus	Our role
♥ Incorporate findings of the Climate Risk Assessment Project into strategic planning and decision-making to mitigate risk and adapt to a changing environment, ensuring our community is well-equipped to handle these challenges.	Deliver Partner
♥ Advocate for community-led forest management by creating opportunities for local involvement in managing sections of state forest, with a focus on biodiversity, fire mitigation, and other uses.	Advocate
Partner with community, industry and social enterprise to increase recycling and develop circular economy opportunities across East Gippsland.	Partner
♥ Implement educational programs and awareness campaigns to enhance community resilience, readiness and understanding of climate-related issues and minimise the impact of natural disasters.	Deliver Partner
Implement a transition plan to guide future waste and recycling services and education programs in response to Recycling Victoria policy.	Deliver
Design waste services for efficiency and to reduce landfill waste.	Deliver
♥ Work with communities to plan for natural disasters and emergencies, strengthening capacity, infrastructure, resilience, preparedness, and recovery	Deliver

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Outcome – Our cultural heritage is managed and preserved

Priority – The management, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage of the community

Our focus	Our role
Advocate for funding to create a heritage skills knowledge hub, dedicated to preserving and promoting heritage skills.	Advocate
♥ Manage, preserve, and promote the cultural heritage of our community by delivering projects and programs designed to protect historical sites, support cultural events, and engage the community in preserving their cultural identity.	Deliver Partner
♥ Work with First Nations people to recognise and celebrate their rich cultural heritage, connection to country and rights to self-determination.	Partner

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Outcome – Our assets are well maintained, utilised and meet community needs

### Priority – Make the most of Council assets

Our focus	Our role
Conduct a review of Council assets and actively engage with our community on the rationalisation of under-utilised and end-of life assets and promote co-location of user groups rather than exclusive use.	Deliver
Continue to prioritise the maintenance of roads, drainage and footpaths, considering how important they are for our community.	Deliver
Complete a review of our aquatic and recreation facility assets to identify appropriate maintenance and renewal programming for each site.	Deliver
♥ Ensure the accessibility of community assets by mapping accessibility features and conducting audits.	Deliver
Increase our focus on maintaining and renewal of existing assets over the creation of new ones, focussing on cost management and community need.	Deliver Partner
Work with partners to identify strategies and incentives to encourage private landowners to take an active role in managing weeds on council and Crown land adjacent to their properties.	Deliver
Review renewal and maintenance programs to ensure our infrastructure, including public amenities remains safe, reliable, and efficient.	Deliver

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Annual targets

Measure	Target			
	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Council sealed local roads and footpaths meeting service level needs	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%
Capital renewal programs driven by renewal modelling using updated condition data	Baseline year	55%	60%	65%
Percentage of the Capital Program delivered by the end of the financial year	≥ 70%	≥ 70%	≥ 70%	≥ 70%
Number of people utilising the Omeo Mountain Bike Trail	Increased utilisation compared to previous year	Increased utilisation compared to previous year	Increased utilisation compared to previous year	Increased utilisation compared to previous year
Number of community members participating in environmental conservation projects	Baseline year	Increased participation compared to previous year	Increased participation compared to previous year	Increased participation compared to previous year
Community satisfaction with appearance of public areas	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average

## Supporting strategies, policies and plans

- » *Advocacy Strategy*
- » *Asset Management Plan*
- » *Culture and Creativity Strategy*
- » *East Gippsland Sporting Facilities Plan*
- » *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*
- » *Public Open Space Strategy*
- » *Roadside Vegetation Strategy*

## Council services that drive the delivery of this theme

- » Aerodromes
- » Boat ramps and marinas
- » Building maintenance
- » Caravan parks and campgrounds
- » Environmental Planning and Sustainability
- » New and replaced infrastructure and Project Management
- » Open Space
- » Property Management
- » Raymond Island Ferry
- » Roads, Bridges, Footpaths and Drainage
- » Waste and Recycling Service

# Theme 4 - Managing Council well

*We ensure effective leadership, transparent decision-making, and responsible management, fostering trust and collaboration to build a resilient and forward-thinking community.*

## **How this theme is important for the health and wellbeing of our community**

By providing inclusive and equitable access to services, processes, and facilities, we ensure that everyone's needs are met, fostering trust and security. Well-managed services enhance public health, support mental and physical well-being and promote social inclusion, reducing isolation and strengthening community connections.

## Outcome – Council operates transparently and effectively with public trust

Priority – Council is transparent, easy to engage and do business with

Our focus	Our role
<p>We will enhance community engagement by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Making our budgets and financial documents easier to understand.</li> <li>» Engaging with our community early to ensure their voices are heard from the start.</li> <li>» Targeting our engagement to the ways our communities prefer to connect with us.</li> <li>» Using a range of approaches to engage with and report back to our community.</li> </ul>	<p>Deliver</p>
<p>♥ Deliver high-quality, responsive, and compassionate customer service to prioritise and effectively address the needs and well-being of our community.</p>	<p>Deliver</p>
<p>Through our Digital Transformation Program, we will simplify systems and processes to make it easier to do business with us and help the community find what they need. This includes a transparency hub, website upgrade, online mapping services, and a new finance system for online payments and improved self-services.</p>	<p>Deliver</p>

♥ Our Focus Areas that deliver on Health and Wellbeing Priorities are marked with this icon.

## Outcome – Decision-making is streamlined, efficient, and responsive to community needs

Priority – Council services are efficient and effective

Our focus	Our role
Design and implement our Organisational Plan to drive continuous improvement.	Deliver
<p>Ensure that our services are efficient and meet the needs of our community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Develop and implement a service planning framework to inform strategic decision making and ensure our resources are allocated effectively.</li> <li>» Conduct regular service reviews to ensure continuous improvement and identify areas for enhancement.</li> <li>» Develop a strategy for financial sustainability to ensure adequate funding and resources will meet the needs of our community while planning for future growth and development.</li> <li>» Review and improve Council’s approach to Project Management to deliver a rigorous, efficient and objective framework that covers all aspects of the project lifecycle.</li> <li>» Review our local laws to ensure they are clear and focus resources on the highest community priority.</li> <li>» Seek external funding for priority projects and services aligned to the priorities of Council.</li> </ul>	Deliver

## Annual targets

Measure	Target			
	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Percentage of customer enquiries responded to within required timeframes	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%	≥ 95%
Reduction in the number of customer complaints	Fewer complaints than previous year	Fewer complaints than previous year	Fewer complaints than previous year	Fewer complaints than previous year
Community satisfaction with consultation and engagement	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average	≥ Large Rural Council average
Increased effectiveness of Council engagement activities	Increased engagement participation compared to previous year	Increased engagement participation compared to previous year	Increased engagement participation compared to previous year	Increased engagement participation compared to previous year
Percentage of community engagement plans developed for Council projects	100%	100%	100%	100%
Efficiencies achieved from business service improvements	Increased efficiency	Increased efficiency	Increased efficiency	Increased efficiency

## Supporting strategies, policies and plans

- » Customer Experience Strategy
- » Digital Transformation Program
- » Procurement Policy
- » Public Transparency Policy
- » Risk Management Policy
- » Service Review Policy

## Council services that drive the delivery of this theme

- » Communications, Community Engagement and Civic Events
- » Community Leadership and Advocacy
- » Customer Service
- » Finance
- » Governance
- » Information Services
- » Property Management
- » Risk Management and Compliance
- » Strategy and Performance


# East Gippsland Shire Council

## Health & Wellbeing


### [snapshot]





## Our People


 Age 0-29  
**27.7%**


 Age 65+  
**30.9%**


 **Life expectancy**  
F 85.2 years  
M 79.2 years  
[expectancy at birth]


 **52**  
median age  
10 years less for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

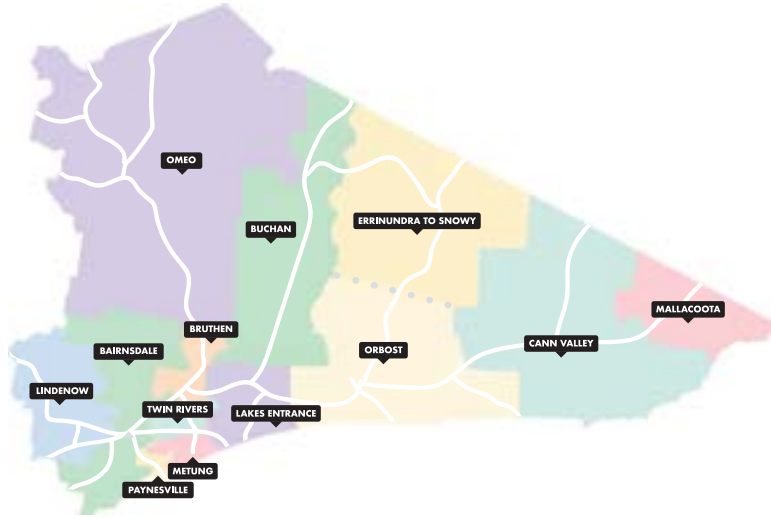
 **5.4%**  
adults reported as identifying LGBTIQA+  
(VPHS 2023)

 **43,084**  
People who only speak English

 **19.2%**  
Volunteered with a group or organisation in the past 12 months.

 **28.4%**  
reported having a disability (self-reported - VPHS 2023)

 **6,040**  
provide unpaid care for a person living with a disability, chronic illness and/or aged.  
F 14.6% M 10.1% [2021]




**East Gippsland Total Population**  
**49,179**  
[2023]


**Forecast Population 2046**  
**59,979**


 **3.5%**  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples


 **79.6%**  
Were born in Australia


## Households


 **2.2**  
average household size


 **66.1%**  
Family households (ABS 2021)

 **31.4%**  
Lone person households (ABS 2021)

 **48.1%**  
below the minimum weekly wage  
F 53.4% M 43%

 **\$605**  
Median weekly individual income  
\$772 Victoria

 **31.7%**  
Experience rental stress  
30% or more income spent on rent.

 **58.4%** Overall livability score  
Perception of what residents believe makes somewhere a good place to live and how they experience the area. (Gippsland Views 2024 id profile)

## Health & Wellbeing



**83%**

feel very satisfied or satisfied with life. (high- very high satisfaction)  
(VPHS 2023)



**40.8%**

average household self-reported very good to excellent health status.  
(VPHS 2023)



**24.6%**

adults who were unable to see a GP when needed in the past 12 months.  
(VPHS 2023)



**97.5%**

average household 5-year-old children fully immunised.  
(PHN)



**24.8%**

people at risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.  
(VPHS 2023)



**32.2%**

consume sugar sweetened soft drinks daily.  
(VPHS 2023)



**23.6%**

worried about running out of money to buy food in the last 12 months.  
(sometimes-definitely)



**60.6%**

adults did not meet the physical activity guidelines.



**61.7%**

people who were overweight or obese.  
(VPHS 2023)



**16.9%**

people who smoke tobacco or vape daily.  
(VPHS 2023)



**1388**

people received specialist homelessness services in 2022-2023.  
(Homes Victoria 2023)



**39.7%**

average household population with at least one long-term health condition.



**19%**

adults experience high to very high levels of psychological distress.



**14.9%**

adults who sought professional help for a mental health problem in the last 12 months.  
(VPHS 2023)



**19.6%**

adults expressing loneliness.  
(VPHS 2023)



**35.4%**

of people complied with fruit consumption guidelines (recommended 2 serves of fruit per day).



**7%**

of people complied with vegetable consumption guidelines.

## Transport



**88.6%**

of the households owned at least one car.  
(profile id)



**0.4%**

used public transport to get to work.  
(profile id)



**4.1%**

rode a bike or walked to work.  
(profile id)

## Education and Employment



**38.2%**

persons over 15 years completed Year 12 or equivalent in 2021.



**4.4%**

unemployed labour force in 2021.  
**F 52.2% M 25.1%**  
(profile id)



**49%**

persons who reported being in the labour force worked full-time in 2021.  
**F 35.5% M 62.2%**  
(profile id)



**38.4%**

persons aged 15+ who are Employed, Part Time in 2021.  
**F 52.2% M 25.1%**  
(profile id)

## Violent behaviour

### Ranked 1st

East Gippsland is ranked highest in Victoria for reported incidents of Family Violence.

(VICPOL Crime Statistics Agency)



**73.4%**

affected family members identified as female



**26%**

identified as male



**18.8%**

of incidents had a child present



**2013**

incidents responded to in 2023/24 period

# Community Health and Wellbeing

## Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, Council has a responsibility to protect, promote, and improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

East Gippsland's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is embedded into our Council Plan to streamline our approach to address health and wellbeing priorities through council services and initiatives. This includes actions that support improved social, cultural, economic, physical, and environmental wellbeing.

Our approach to health and wellbeing has been shaped through an analysis of:

- » The priorities of the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-27* and the requirements of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, and *Climate Change Act 2017*.
- » The health status of our community based on information from State Government departments, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), VicHealth data, and the East Gippsland Health and Wellbeing Profile (see page 35).

## Our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our community

Council is committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging, inclusivity, and shared responsibility, and strives to ensure that all members of our community are supported, valued, and empowered to thrive together.

# Our Community Health and Wellbeing Priorities

As part of the review of our Community Vision 2040 and in preparation for the development of this Council Plan, Council engaged with over 2,500 community members in mid-2024 to discuss the key health issues facing our region. The community identified six health priorities as being most significant. These priorities align with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027. To ensure we are addressing the right priorities, Council worked with health partner organisations to review community health needs and shape a plan that truly reflects East Gippsland's health and wellbeing priorities.

Our community health and wellbeing priorities are:

## **Prevent all forms of violence**

- » East Gippsland currently sits at number one for the highest number of reported family violence incidents in Victoria and has consistently rated in the top four for over a decade.  
(Victorian Police Crime Statistics Agency – Data calculated per 100 000 population).

## **Improving mental health and wellbeing**

- » Wellbeing is a key determinant of overall health, and is a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors.
- » Wellbeing is a subjective quality of life measure, based on satisfaction with present experience. By prioritising good mental health and wellbeing, we reduce stigma, increase social connection, improve physical health, promote productivity and create safer environments.

## **Active living**

- » Active living benefits everyone, regardless of age, enabling individuals to lead healthy, fulfilling, and purposeful lives. Outdoor public spaces, as well as urban parks and playgrounds, are important spaces for physical activity, social connection and general community wellbeing. Cool, UV protective shade promotes equitable, safe participation in these health-supportive behaviours.

## **Climate change and its impacts on health**

- » A safe climate, access to clean water, good quality air, safe and nutritious food, and healthy, natural environments that include cool UV protective shade, are essential for good health and wellbeing.

## **Healthy eating**

- » Good nutrition is crucial for overall health and wellbeing. It helps achieve and maintain a healthy weight, protects against chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and certain cancers, and supports a strong immune system.

## **Reducing harm from alcohol and drug use**

- » While the impacts of drug use on health and wellbeing can vary, related harms can impact physical health through increased risk of chronic disease, exposure to infectious diseases, and mental health and wellbeing impacts on the individuals, families and communities.

## **Working together on our health and wellbeing priorities**

Council embraces a collaborative approach to improving health and wellbeing. We have a strong commitment to partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, service providers and partners, and the wider community.

Council plays an important role in leading, supporting, and advocating for our community's health and wellbeing planning. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for everyone, both now and in the future. It achieves this by shaping and improving the places, services, and environments – whether physical, social, natural, cultural, or economic – that impact our health and wellbeing.

Council cannot do this alone - collaboration is essential and some actions in this plan will be led by other organisations.

Council will continue to work with health experts and community partners to address the priorities of this plan. Our partners include Department of Health Victoria, hospitals and community health services, Aboriginal controlled community health organisations, emergency services, environmental departments and organisations, sporting clubs, schools, early years settings, businesses and communities.

East Gippsland health organisations and the services they provide are essential for community health and wellbeing. We acknowledge and thank all our community health partners for their continued support and dedication to deliver on East Gippsland's health priorities and broader acute health provision across our region.

## **How we will measure our impact**

Changes in community health and wellbeing can take years and sometime decades to see real improvements in data. To measure the impact of our work, and the work of health partner organisations, Council will report annually on quantitative data sourced from the Victorian Population Health Survey (VPHS) and the Crime Statistics Agency (CSA).



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