

Community Vision 2040

Reviewed 2025



Being together - Photo Competition Winning Entry by Charlotte Williams

East Gippsland Shire Council





An Aboriginal dance troupe performed at the opening of Inspire East Gippsland Tourism Summit and Eco Tourism Certification event, held at Metung.

Acknowledgment of Country

East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero, Bidawel, 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.

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Eyes of the Wise - Photo competition entry by Sophia Ciaglia

A Message from the Mayor

On behalf of the East Gippsland Shire Council, I'm proud to present the updated East Gippsland Community Vision 2040. This is a Community Vision created by the community, for the community.

The refreshed East Gippsland Community Vision 2040 was developed through feedback from over 2,500 community members including people from all backgrounds, age groups, regions and communities from across our shire.

The East Gippsland Community Panel played a crucial role in finalising the refresh of the East Gippsland Community Vision. The panel of 21 local community members worked together to confirm the themes and priorities for the Vision. The panel reviewed what the community had told us through our broad engagement and came up with the long-term plan that will meet both current and future needs of our region.

The review process showed that the core themes and priorities remain largely aligned with our original direction, confirming that the Vision is still on track and continues to reflect the community's values and goals.

This updated Vision also incorporates inspiring images from the Community Vision Photo Competition, which invited local residents to submit photographs based on the four key themes. We received 70 entries, and the winning photos are proudly displayed on the front cover and throughout the document.

I want to congratulate all people involved for coming together to create the East Gippsland Community Vision that will guide East Gippsland Shire in the years ahead.



Mayor Cr John White

The 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

The role of the Community Vision

The Community Vision 2040 reflects the hopes, values, and priorities of the East Gippsland community, guiding us towards the future we want to create by 2040.

This vision isn't something any one group can achieve alone. It's a shared journey that involves collaboration between Council, the community, agencies, and all levels of government. Together, we can turn this vision into reality.

While the vision extends beyond the scope of Council's direct influence, it sets the stage for us to work hand in hand with local and regional partners, advocating for what's needed. It's also a promise of how Council will align and allocate its resources to support the community in shaping our desired future.

As our community grows and changes, we'll review and update the Community Vision to make sure it stays relevant and reflects our collective aspirations. In line with the Local Government Act 2020, this vision will steer Council's efforts, guiding the development of our Council Plan and other key strategic plans. Together, we'll make sure we're always moving in the right direction.

Process of refreshing Our Community Vision

The Community Vision 2040 was first reviewed in 2020, with the community identifying four key themes that are crucial for the future of our region:

- Community
- Place
- Natural Environment
- Local Economy

Building on this, the Community Vision was revisited in 2024 in preparation for the development of the Council Plan 2025-29.

Council would like to express its deep gratitude to the 21 members of the Community Panel, who brought a wealth of experience from our diverse townships and settlements. These dedicated volunteers, from all walks of life, represented a wide range of perspectives across different demographics, sectors, and interest groups. They contributed countless hours crafting recommendations for the updated Community Vision, embracing the process with enthusiasm, respect, integrity, and passion.

Council is incredibly proud of the vision they have helped shape.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the more than 2,500 community members, local groups, and other stakeholders who participated in a variety of engagement activities.

Your valuable input, insights, and dedication to the future of our community are what make this place so special. We deeply appreciate your contributions, which will help guide us toward an even brighter future for our region.

I thought this was a brilliant way for council to engage with community on shaping the future of East Gippsland, and to do that through a community panel and I think a community panel is a very modern and inclusive community engagement process. I really, really enjoyed this process. I have been on some Community panels before, but I have to say I really liked this one.



- 2024 Community Panel Member

Snapshot of East Gippsland

Nestled at the easternmost edge of Gippsland, East Gippsland is a region of remarkable geographic and social diversity. As Victoria’s second-largest Shire, it spans 10 per cent of the state, covering 20,940 square kilometres, from Providence Ponds to the New South Wales border. Almost 80 per cent of this vast area (16,578 km²) is Crown land, including 39 per cent designated as National Parks (6,474 km²), with the remaining area made up of state forests, parks, and reserves. The amount of forested land within catchments is notably high and rare.

East Gippsland is home to some of Australia’s most significant natural assets, including the Gippsland Lakes system, iconic rivers like the Mitchell and Snowy Rivers, Ninety Mile Beach, and the Australian Alps. These landscapes support natural ecosystems and biodiversity that are unique to the region. Our environment is rich with diverse landforms and distinct vegetation types, ranging from alpine and sub-alpine areas to forested hills, fertile river valleys, and extensive Red Gum plains. This variety makes East Gippsland one of Australia’s most important reserves of native biodiversity.

The layout of the landscape is also distinctive: settled areas exist as islands within a vast sea of natural environments, a pattern that contrasts with most of Victoria, where urban areas typically dominate the natural surroundings.



East Gippsland Region Map



Local beauties in Lindenow - Photo competition entry by Susie Morris

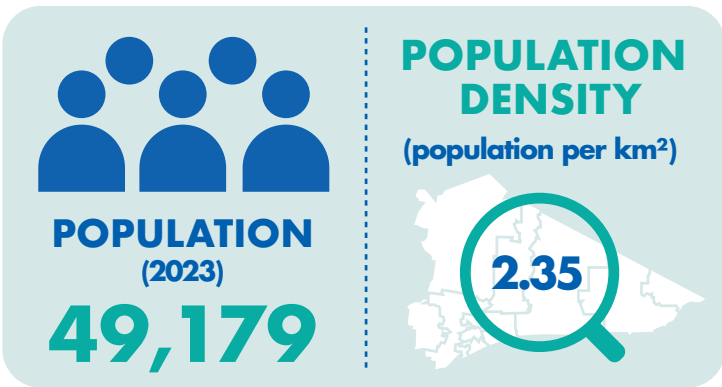
East Gippsland is home to a significant First Nations people population, comprising 3.5 per cent of the total population, compared to the state’s average of 1 per cent. First Nations people in this region have a profound understanding of their connection to the land, recognising the deep relationship between the environment and the communities who depend on it.

Both long-time residents and newcomers continue to appreciate the unique importance of place and our deep connection to the land. With 145 localities, the Shire is made up of distinct areas that come together to form larger districts shaped by long-established social and trade routes. Rivers, roads, and mountains have played key roles in shaping the connections between human settlements, creating a patchwork of communities spread across East Gippsland’s varied landscapes—from the high country and coastal areas to inland waterways, rivers, and the Gippsland Plains.

To better understand and meet the diverse needs of our communities, Council has developed a hierarchy of place, organised into 12 districts. This system identifies localities, remote and rural settlements, towns, service towns, suburbs, and the municipal centre, helping us respond to the unique characteristics of each area.



Figures are from 2021 Census unless otherwise stated

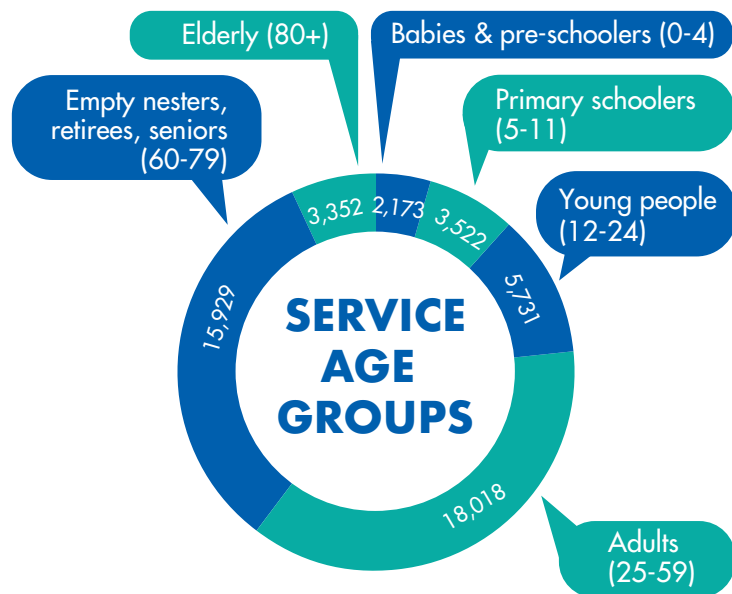


EAST GIPPSLAND POPULATION BY DISTRICT (2023)

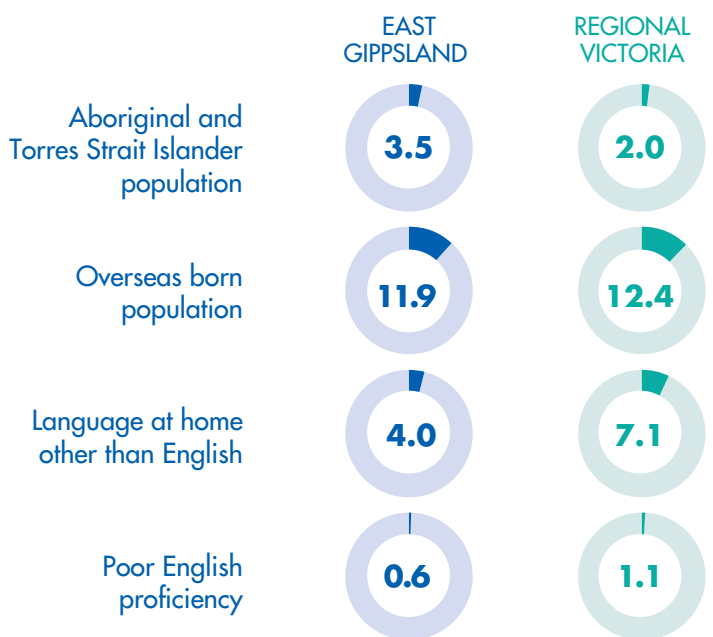
DISTRICT:			
Bairnsdale	17,666	Mallacoota	1,283
Bruthen	1,119	Metung	2,301
Buchan	448	Omeo-Swifts Creek	1,351
Cann River	448	Orbost	4,009
Lakes Entrance	8,716	Paynesville	6,491
Lindenow	2,520	Twin Rivers	2,941

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.



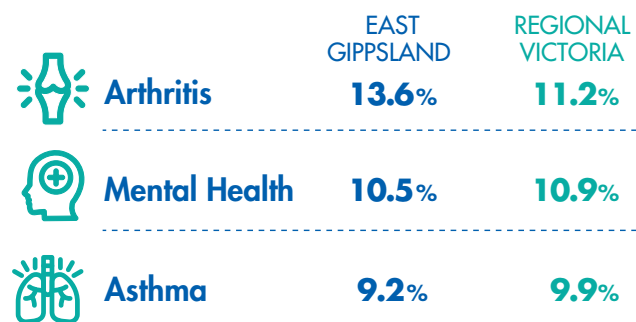
IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY (%)



HEALTH



TOP 3 LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

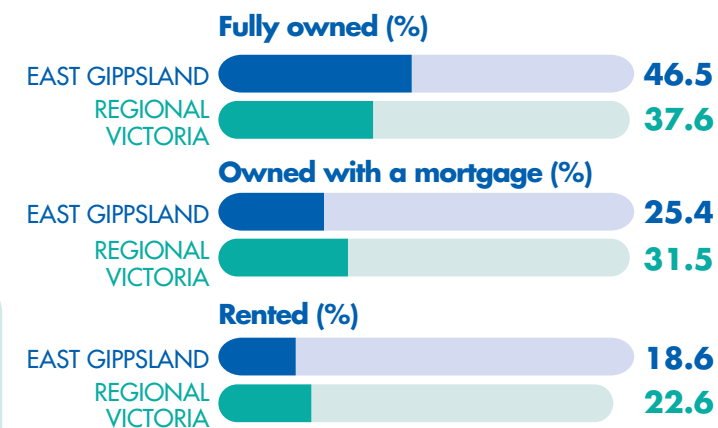


HOUSING

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.



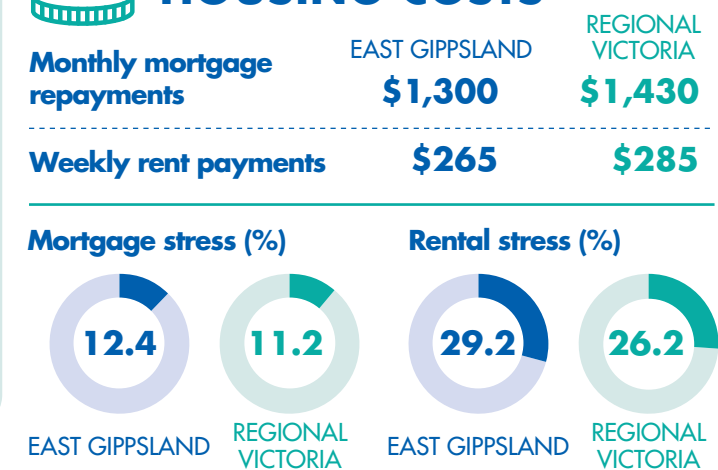
HOUSING TENURE



HOUSEHOLDS

	% EAST GIPPSLAND	% REGIONAL VICTORIA
Families with children	19.1	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	27.5

HOUSING COSTS



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



MAIN 3 METHODS OF TRAVEL TO WORK

	EAST GIPPSLAND	REGIONAL VICTORIA
Car as driver	63.3%	61.6%
Worked at home	12.6%	15.1%
Did not go to work	11.0%	11.1%

TOP 5 INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT (%)

	EAST GIPPSLAND	REGIONAL VICTORIA
Healthcare & social assistance	16.3	16.2
Construction	10.0	9.5
Retail trade	9.7	8.8
Education & training	9.0	7.2
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	8.4	6.6

YOUTH DISENGAGEMENT FROM EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (%)



Our Communities will include, encourage, respect and value everyone

Our priorities for the future

- Increasingly flexible and innovative delivery of health, community and aged friendly services at the local level is developed to meet the needs of all East Gippsland residents
- The community is supported to come together to create local solutions to local problems
- Opportunities for community participation in creative activities at all levels are supported, to build community cohesiveness, resilience and identity
- Independence, resilience and preparedness in the face of natural disasters and unexpected impacts on the community
- Communities are inclusive and there is an even higher level of tolerance and appreciation of difference
- The involvement of and contribution by local First Nations people is increasingly recognised, and its cultural heritage and role in self-determination about the future of the area are respected
- The need for vulnerable members of our community to be given special assistance to readjust to any major changes to their lives or livelihoods is recognised
- The unique character and history of local communities is celebrated



CFA - Photo competition winning entry by Krystal Lewis

Our Place will be accessible, safe, connected, and healthy



Kingfishers Dragonboat Team Hurrah!! - Photo competition winning entry by Kylie Findley

Our priorities for the future

- The municipality's infrastructure systems meet the future needs of the community, businesses, industries and visitors
- Population growth is planned and managed with a focus on attracting and retaining young people and families
- Improved networks of paths and trails to encourage cycling and walking for pleasure and for day-to-day activities
- Planning for future land use balances local priorities with environmental capacity
- New forms of transport to support efficient movement in and between small and dispersed townships and throughout the Shire
- Community infrastructure and facilities are designed and maintained in line with the accessibility standards
- High quality communications networks need to be expanded to enable all communities, businesses and services in the Shire to access new sources of information and take advantage of advances in electronic commerce
- The viability, diversity and attractiveness of our dispersed settlement pattern is maintained through focusing on the strengths and abilities of local communities

Our Environment will be managed and preserved for all generations

Our priorities for the future

- The ecological diversity and beauty of East Gippsland's State national parks, forests, waterways, beaches and oceans is managed and any potentially adverse impacts from human activity and natural events is minimised
- Sustainably managed agricultural land is protected to preserve the productive capacity of our rural industries
- Innovation to reduce emissions and waste including more local solutions for waste reduction
- The resilience of our ecosystem is enhanced through management of the impact of growth and minimisation of fragmentation of important habitats and vegetation corridors
- The community is more involved in planning to adapt to a changing environment and the impact of catastrophic events



Monkey Creek Bruthen - Photo competition winning entry by Emma Cargill

Our Economy will be sustainable, innovative, and supportive of existing and emerging industries

Our priorities for the future

- Younger members of our community are attracted and retained through improved education and employment opportunities and experiences
- Local enterprise is encouraged and supported, to create wrap around services to support the workforce shortages
- Education and workforce development opportunities are available for all levels of the community to ensure businesses across the Shire have access to a skilled workforce
- The region's agri-food production capabilities and efficiencies, and continued growth and expertise in environmentally friendly production practices and circular economy is promoted
- Our energy-driven economy is transformed into one that prioritises alternative energy sources, enhancing the resilience of towns across East Gippsland. This will ensure that that East Gippsland recognised as an environmentally sustainable and future-ready business location
- Investment is in future industries, including education and innovation
- The unique tourism offerings in towns across the Shire are leveraged to create a connected experience
- More cost-effective and efficient freight and passenger transport services
- A diverse mix of economic activity and a broader industry base that maximises the synergies between the various industry sectors
- Natural resource-based industries value-add in a range of innovative ways
- Water for agriculture and industrial processing to be secured through adoption of 'best practice' techniques to minimise demands for fresh water and maximise water reuse and recycling
- A collaborative and integrated approach to industry development and marketing
- Opportunities are identified and developed for natural resource-based industries to value-add in a range of innovative way



On the back, a past and a future - Photo competition winning entry by Sharna Johnson



Window into our forests - Photo competition entry by Marlo Campbell

Monitoring Progress

The Community Vision 2040 reflects the values and priorities of our communities, outlining the path we aim to take for the future. Achieving this vision is a shared responsibility, with Council, our communities, government, and community organisations all playing important roles.

Council will work towards realising the Community Vision through the development of four-year Council Plans, which outline our actions and priorities for each term. These plans will be supported by a set of indicators that will help measure Council's progress in relation to the vision's strategic themes and priorities.

To keep the community informed, Council will provide regular updates on the implementation of the Community Vision 2040. These updates will be communicated through various channels, including quarterly progress reports on the Council Plan and a detailed report in the Annual Report each year.

Community members will also have opportunities to engage in shaping the future of the Community Vision. Every four years, in line with the development of a new Council Plan after elections, the community will have a chance to provide input on what Council should focus on in the next term, ensuring the vision continues to align with community needs, aspirations, and values.

At a local level, community members can influence their place-based Community Plans, contributing directly to the implementation of the Community Vision. These district community plans provide a platform for active participation, where communities work together to bring the vision to life, building on the strengths and diversity of each district and its people.

I've had a great experience. It was lovely to meet all of you. I didn't think I'd be the right candidate to be part of this but, it was a very fulfilling, as well as being very daunting and I've learnt a lot. It's been a really good experience, a bit emotional on a personal level.

- 2024 Community Panel Member

East Gippsland Shire Council

273 Main Street

PO Box 1618 Bairnsdale VIC 3875

 **5153 9500**

 **eastgippsland.vic.gov.au**

 **EastGippyShire**

 **PO Box 1618, Bairnsdale 3875**

