

# Annual Report 2019-20 for the Environmental Sustainability Strategy

## OUR VISION

East Gippsland will retain its unique environment. We are all learning how we can tread a little more lightly in our environment. We want to make changes that will help us do our job in the best way we can. By doing this, Council aspires to help all East Gippslanders to live more sustainably. Together we can make a difference.



# Environment Strategy

## Annual Report 2019-20



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### Mayor foreword

It's with pleasure that East Gippsland Shire Council can present this report on the Environmental Sustainability initiatives the organisation undertook during 2019/20 – a year when East Gippsland faced major challenges. Drought, bushfires and COVID-19 severely impacted our community, built environment, economy and our unique biodiversity and landscapes. This also highlighted the impact of a changing climate and the need for us individually and collectively to focus on the sustainability of our environment.

There is a resultant cumulative impact on both the quantity and quality of East Gippsland's natural estate, which will require focused and ongoing investment of research and resources to protect, replenish and expand what is left.

Significantly during this challenging time, Council still progressed major environmentally sustainable projects such as:

- Signing up to take part in the first Victorian local government Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), whereby electricity to run Council facilities such as street lighting, recreation centres, libraries, public toilets etc will be sourced from 100% renewable electricity. (This project will be rolled out in the coming year, and will slash Council's corporate carbon emissions in the future while supporting Victorian jobs).
- Progressing the second stage of the constructed wetlands project in East Bairnsdale, to provide a natural filter for stormwater before entering the Gippsland Lakes.
- Installed 73 kW of solar power systems on seven buildings - equalling 219 solar panels.
- Funding and hosting the Schools Sustainability Expo with over 300 students in attendance.
- Development of the Bairnsdale Integrated Water Management Plan and scoping a large water recycling project for the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange and Bairnsdale City Oval.
- Undertaking community engagement for the Victorian Government e-waste recycling program.

Details of these projects and more can be found in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2019-20 Annual Report.

We look forward to the development of the East Gippsland Council Plan and the next Environment Sustainability Strategy for East Gippsland to guide the work of Council.

Cr Mendy Urie – Mayor

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## Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2014-17

outlines East Gippsland Shire Council's position on issues relating to the protection, preservation and enhancement of our environment and provides a framework towards a more sustainable future. Though the strategy has an identified end-date of 2017, many of the initiatives and directions are enduring as outlined below as 'business as usual.'

A revision of this strategy is underway with an updated strategy to be released in 2021 for community feedback.

Council has a role in maintaining, protecting and enhancing the region's natural environment. We can do this by using our resources more efficiently, by reducing our everyday impacts, and encouraging the people of East Gippsland to do the same. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy Annual Report 2019-20 outlines the major achievements, project highlights and key performance indicators achieved by Council over this period.

Importantly, this annual report monitors and reports on the environmental actions from both the:

- Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2014-17
- Revised Council Plan 2017-21

## Business as usual Environmental Sustainability Strategy actions:

The following is an outline of what is now considered 'business as usual' in respect to environmental sustainability activities and focus:

- A shift in the direction towards an improved culture of sustainability across the organisation.
- Implement community awareness and behavioural change programs to encourage and support reduced use of energy and resources.
- Undertake projects to reduce Shire's resource and energy consumption as an organisation.
- Lobby state and federal government for funding and legislative support in relation to environmental sustainability policies, legislation and programs.
- Build on existing / create new partnerships to deliver environmental sustainability outcomes.
- Provide expert advice and guidance on policy development for Environmental Planning.
- Support local environment groups by providing them with information relating to funding opportunity as well as promoting Sustainability Gippsland.
- Support the community undertake initiatives through the Environment and Sustainability stream of the East Gippsland Shire Community Grants program.
- Develop and provide environmental sustainability information to the East Gippsland community through website, media, social media and Council publications.
- Support the ResourceSmart Schools Program, which is an initiative that helps schools embed sustainability and take action to minimise waste, save energy and water, promote biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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- Strengthen and develop new relationships with agencies and authorities to ensure a coordinated approach towards environmental sustainability i.e. East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA), Regional Catchment Strategy.
- Support and enhance existing Natural Resource Management programs and activities.
- Implementation of policies and strategies that support and encourage the protection and management of remnant native vegetation and revegetation.
- Keep informed of native vegetation regulations and promote best practice within Shire operations and to the broader community.
- Promotion, active involvement and connections to sustainability environmental programs and activities developed by other organisations /agencies /authorities.
- Maintain active membership of key conservation management networks, steering committees and work groups, working with partner agencies and community involved in sustainable natural resource management planning and works.
- Support local groups that focus on sustainable land management and facilitate stewardship.
- Provide efficient and environmentally sensitive waste services across the municipality.
- Work to include sustainable materials in our physical works and in our selection of external contractors.
- Work with business and industry to find solutions and consider the benefits environmental sustainability can have to their operations (e.g. reduced costs, improved image).
- Provide waste education to the community around recycling, littering and reducing landfill
- Advocate for and implement land use policies, plans and standards to guide land use development and promote sustainable design, development and heritage conservation. Supported through continual reviews and improvements to East Gippsland's Planning Scheme.





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### Challenges

The 2019/20 year was such a challenging year the community will remember for many years to come.

The devastating drought, bushfires and global coronavirus pandemic has taken an unprecedented toll on both our communities and the natural environment in East Gippsland. Recovery will take a long time.

Council worked with other agencies and groups involved in bushfire response and recovery throughout 2020 as part of the Natural Environment Recovery Group. This allowed communication, information sharing and collation across multiple agencies involved in environmental recovery and delivery.

In recognition of the environmental impacts of fire on Council reserves, we have submitted a number of grant applications seeking to assess the fire impact and regeneration of the high value biodiversity areas which existed pre-fire. Foreshore areas are now mostly accessible with walking tracks open again to allow the community and visitors access to appreciate the changed coastal values.

This report highlights what was able to be achieved during this time.



### Summary of achievements in 2019-20

A range of projects and programs from the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Council Plan have been implemented. Highlights for 2019-20 include:

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- Signed up to take part in a collective Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with other Victorian Councils and provided input into the draft tender specifications. This landmark Local Government PPA is tipped to be the largest emissions reduction project undertaken by local government in Australia. The initiative will enable 40 Victorian Councils to source 100% renewable energy for 10 years (from 2021/22).
- The next stage of the major constructed wetlands east of Bairnsdale was significantly progressed.
- Council worked with other agencies and groups involved in bushfire response and recovery as part of a Natural Environment Recovery Group which was set up in response to the fires. This allowed communication, information sharing and collation across multi agencies involved in environmental recovery and delivery.
- In recognition of the environmental impacts of fire on Council reserves, a number of grant applications were submitted seeking to assess the impact and regenerating biodiverse values where high value areas existed pre-fire. A process to assess burnt tree areas for initial hazard checks and associated works was undertaken.
- New 5% sustainability weighting added to Procurement Policy and to the criteria used to evaluate tender submissions; and climate change considerations were added to all council report templates.
- Council again progressed strategic planning into options for electric vehicles. The Gippsland wide electric vehicle feasibility study was completed informing an application to fund charging stations.
- Submitted the final report for Bright Futures Renewable Energy Project, outlining the: Multi-site Feasibility Study, Solar Bulk Buy and Energy Information Hub. This project saw the Cann River Bush Nursing Centre receive a donated solar system resulting from donations made as part of the Solar Bulk Buy (out of a field of 32 not-for-profit applicants), which was installed in May 2020.
- Jointly organised and funded the *Schools Sustainability Expo* hosted by Nagle College and open to all Gippsland schools, as part of the ResourceSmart Schools program and Shire community small grants.
- Mobile muster collected 18kg of mobile phones for recycling and a Detox Your Home event was run.
- Cann Valley Bush Nursing Centre was the recipient of the community solar donation resulting from the East Gippsland Shire Council Bulk Buy (completed the previous year).
- Installed 73 kW of solar power systems on seven buildings, equating to 219 solar panels. Solar systems were installed as part of the Local Government Energy Saver program (see next).
  - The Local Government Energy Saver Program was completed. This funding by Sustainability Victoria (SV) was part of the implementation of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Framework, to assist eligible regional Local Governments identify, prioritise and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades on community buildings. An additional \$10,000 was secured bringing a total of \$220,000 (of which Council contributed \$110,000) towards energy efficiency and solar upgrades. Facilities included: Bairnsdale City Oval; Lakes Entrance Aquadome where Council installed its biggest solar system to date at 45kW; Bairnsdale library; East Gippsland Art Gallery (was made energy neutral); Council's Corporate Centre; Squash & Table Tennis Centre; Orbost Service Centre and library; Paynesville's AJ Freeman Reserve; East Gippsland Historical

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Society; Forge Theatre; BARC and the installation of live Solar Analytics monitoring to six sites with solar.

- Council's operations were responsible for 6,152 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> –e (equivalent) (down from 6,548 tonnes) emissions, a decline of 396 tonnes compared to the year before and 1,448 tonnes compared to the 2014/15 baseline. This excludes landfill emissions, or emissions from contractors or refrigerants.
- Gas use at the BARC and Lakes Entrance Aquadome increased by 4,379 GJ and cost \$78,271 more compared to the year before, while streetlights cost \$16,926 more and used 4,214 GJ in 2019/20 (an increase in 55 GJ or 15,370kWh compared to year before) – the streetlights were up \$3,300 in OMR costs, and \$13,626 more for the cost of power.
- Water use from all Council accounts was 95,946 kL in 2019/20.
- Council undertook the gradual replacement of kerbside recycling bin lids with new yellow lids, bringing the Shire in line with Australian Standards - where yellow is the colour associated with recycling. Council's contractor Tambo Waste began providing yellow lids from the middle of 2019, and wheelie bins with yellow lids were also supplied to new houses, and when damaged bins were replaced.
- A new polystyrene processing machine was installed at the Bairnsdale Tip Shop to divert more than 150,000 cubic meters of waste from landfill each year. Recycling Enterprise Incorporated who manage and run the Tip Shop at Council's Bairnsdale landfill can now recycle polystyrene in an expanded polystyrene (EPS) processing machine.
- A Roadside Weeds and Pests Program Control Plan was funded by the Victorian Government for 2019/20. It resulted in 223 km of Regionally Controlled Weeds and 27 km of Regionally Prohibited Weeds were treated under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- This funding and in-kind contribution from Council staff resulted in a total of 250 km of roadside weeds treated, down from 453 km the year before as a result of the bushfires.
- The following environmental community small grant projects were funded in 2019-20:

Round 1: *Frouteville 2020 by F.INC (\$2,800)*

A community arts and sustainability festival the funding was to support the marketing of the event.

Round 2: *Sunset Cove Walking Track Extension by Paynesville Landcare Coastcare Group (\$4,500)*

In partnership with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation, the existing walking track was upgraded from Backwater Court to the gate. The plan is to develop the track into a cultural trail.





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### Reporting on actions

#### Strong communities: GOAL - East Gippsland communities plan for their future.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** Increase community participation in engagement activities to plan for their future by 10 per cent by 2019.

**Strategy 6:** Engage communities to develop plans and participate in decision making for their community.

**Strategy 7:** Build communities' capacity to plan for their future.

- **Waste Education Sessions**

Waste education sessions were held throughout 2019/2020. Paynesville kinder requested a session for their 25 students. This was based on the theme of recycling and featured a recycling game where students sorted items into the correct mini bin. Lakes Entrance Primary School also requested a session during their Stephanie Alexander program with Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH). This session with grades 3-4 students started by giving an overview of waste to landfill before completing a waste audit. The students enjoyed sorting their own waste and learning about what potential resources could be recovered.



At the end of 2019, the delivery of waste education sessions in schools was handed over to the Resource Smart Schools Officer and GLCH to create more consistency in the educators attending schools. During 2020 a request was made to join the Age Ambassadors during their meeting. We discussed waste and litter in East Gippsland, including the upcoming litter campaign in March 2020.

- **Schools Sustainability Expo - 5 Sept 2019**

East Gippsland Shire hosted the successful Gippsland Sustainable Schools Expo on Thursday 5 September 2019 with approximately 300 students from across Gippsland attending Nagle College.

The theme of the day was *Biodiversity - Safeguarding the Future*. Activities were based around the truly unique biodiversity in Gippsland. An acknowledgment of country was performed by local Nagle students,

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and the Mayor (at the time) Cr Natalie O'Connell introduced the event and recognised local teacher Andrea Savage for her dedication to setting up environmental curriculum at the secondary level at Nagle College.

Important messaging around the unique biodiversity in East Gippsland was provided to students with the following encouragement: "You as the next generation are the custodians for these special places and I hope you use today to learn and be inspired."



Primary students from Gippsland Grammar bravely shared their science discoveries from a Raymond Island ecology field trip, and students from Nagle College gave an overview of their school's environmental programs.

Will Tait was a thought provoking and entertaining MC for the day. A special thanks was given to all the schools students, teachers and helpers who attended and to each guest speaker who ran an informative activity with groups of 25 students. Nagle College was also acknowledged for lending their school to host the event.

Sample of feedback:

- *"Continue with this format if possible. I think the schools that didn't attend have really missed a vital and worthwhile learning experience."*
- *"In debriefing, we determined that each child gained a different piece of knowledge from the day."*
- *"We liked the expo stall holders and the new information we took away with us. The venue was lovely too."*
- *"The wonderful variety of workshops. The presenter was very engaging and so were the leaders of the workshops. We had Grade 3's and they loved all of it."*
- *"The outdoor activities. The friendliness of the presenters. The information that was easy to see fitting in at my own school."*



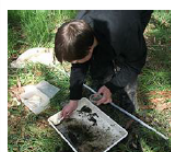
### Our Planet Enterprises- Will Tait "Bio-di-wottery-wot?"

What is biodiversity? Why is it so important? And once you know the answers to these questions, how do you help others understand? In this workshop for upper primary students, participants will tackle these questions and then find fun ways to help share what they've learnt.



### Bug Blitz- Dr John Caldwell Terrestrial Invertebrates

In this workshop, students will meet some live spiders, other arachnids and insects with opportunity for 'hands on' experience, discuss adaptive features and mimicry in the bugworld, taste edible bugs and learn to accurately draw a spider showing their main features. Why are spiders important for ecosystem health?



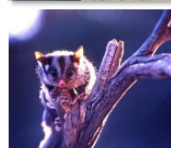
### Bug Blitz- Erin Nowak Waterwatch

In this workshop, students will explore live macro-invertebrates in trays, examine the creature features using magnifying glasses and digital microscopes, test water pH and salinity and make an assessment of the water quality. How do the creatures in water help us to assess water health?



### Diver Matt Incursions- Matt McArthur

Based on twenty-five years' experience in marine biology Diver Matt presents about the biodiversity of local waterways. Images, puppets and experiments collide in a session that fosters wonder and stewardship and teaches students that a scientific approach is easy to apply to everyday situations



### Stephen Henry- DELWP Who's there?

Discovering our hidden wildlife with the activity to be about using equipment and the signs the animals leave behind to find out about our local wildlife.



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**ResourceSmart Schools - Rebecca Lamble** Facilitator  
Gippsland + Sustainability Officer for East Gippsland  
**Habitat Game & Nest Box Detectives**  
Learn about the importance of tree hollows for our native animals. We'll play a habitat game, a chairs, and discuss ways to help our local habitats. Did you know it can take over 100 years to form? Nest boxes have been installed at the school.



**Andrea Savage - Nagle College**  
**Seed Sowing and Potting plants**  
Learn about collecting and sowing seeds and act potting plants for students to take home. There will be information on locally native plant play in keeping our local biodiversity healthy.



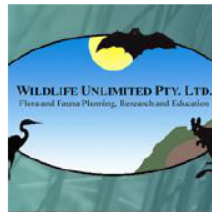
**Ian Southall - Energy trailer**  
**Mitigating the effects of climate warming**  
Renewable energy is a way to mitigate the effect climate. Renewable energy technologies produce emissions and pollution than intensive than coal sources such as coal, oil and gas. This can lead to emissions that is linked directly with rising global temperatures are driving the changing climate. Major negative effects on biodiversity.



**Martin Potts - Greening Australia**  
**Seeds for Success - How Native Plants Grow and**  
Students will be shown examples of seeds from native plants from the Gippsland lakes and study their weight and shape and how they disperse in the knowledge is helping in the restoration efforts of the Gippsland Lakes by Greening Australia and the team. They will learn how they might collect seeds and what they would need.



**DELWP - DR Kasey Stamation**  
**Southern Right Whales**  
Session includes, a brief background on southern to tell them apart from humpback whales. Why they are critically endangered 300 on south-east coast (historical and current).



### Wildlife Unlimited Going Batty or Frogs Alive

Come to an interesting presentation run by experienced field ecologists. You will learn fascinating facts about our local animals. If there's been recent rain we will meet at the swamp and listen quietly for frogs and learn their different calls. If no frogs that day, the ecologists will dazzle you with how important and diverse our local bats are. Did you know: 14 of the 16 species of microbats found in Victoria, call East Gippsland home?



### Marine Mammal foundation- Matt Montemurro

#### Sustainability in A Changing World

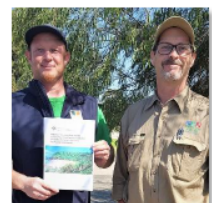
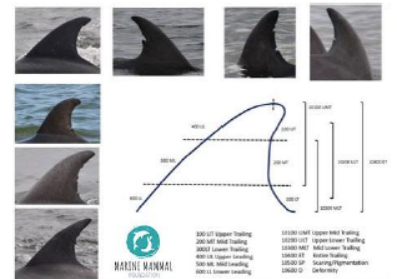
Our environment plays an important role in our daily lives, whether we realise it or not. Discover the impacts we are having on our natural world and the long-term concerns facing us locally and globally. Investigate the impact of plastic sustainability in our environment through the viewpoint of different community members and stakeholders.

OR

### Gippsland Lakes Burruran Dolphin Discovery!

Come and meet the Gippsland Lakes Burruran dolphins, get to know who they are, and everything we know about them. Learn how we can tell our dolphins apart, hear what they sound like under the water, and discover what we can all do in our daily lives to make a positive difference for our local marine environments.

**Equipment:** We will bring dolphin skulls, fin ID booklets, litter and marine debris.



### East Gippsland Conservation Management Network- Tom Crook

#### Rainforests. What, Where and Why.

The activity will look at rainforest from a bio-geographical perspective. Covering what rainforests are, what makes them different from other forest types, where they came from, how they came to be in East Gippsland and their specific habitat requirements. If there is time will also cover some management type issues/threats such as weeds/logging/deer etc.



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### • Environment Connect

Four editions of the Environment Connect newsletter were released electronically and hard copies made available (on display) in each service centre and library:

|                  | Winter 2019 | Spring 2019 | Summer 2020 | Autumn 2020 |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Email deliveries | 383 (↑ 35)  | 383 (↑ 38)  | 387 (↑ 36)  | 379 (↑ 34)  |
| Opens            | 141 (↑ 5)   | 146 (↓ 394) | 717 (↓ 206) | 567 (↑ 64)  |
| Clicks           | 19 (↓ 34)   | 21 (↓ 31)   | 28 (↓ 23)   | 57 (↑ 15)   |

*Note: arrows indicate a decrease or increase compared to the same edition the year before.*

- The industry average (for Government) has an open rate of 24%. Environment Connect this year had an average open rate of 44% (up from 37% the year before).
- Electronic copies can be downloaded from Council's main environment [page](#).
- There were 401 subscribers at the end of the year.

**EnvironmentConnect**  
Sign up to receive this newsletter by email:  
[eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Environment](mailto:eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Environment)

**Winter 2019**  
For immediate release — Dec 2019

Welcome to Environment Connect. A quarterly update from East Gippsland Shire Council on environmental activities and opportunities for community involvement.

**New E-waste**  
Important changes to y  
As of 1 July 2019 e-wa  
Instead, any electrical i  
point where it will be c  
recycled? And e-waste  
You're invited to attend:  
Tuesday 11 June  
• Orbst Service Ce  
• Cann River Comm  
• Mallocoota Mud B  
Wednesday 12 June  
• Metung Bowls Clu  
• Council office 55 P  
Thursday June 13  
• Omeo Hall, 179 D  
• Bruhen Hall at Spr  
Friday June 14  
• Bairnsdale library,  
• Paynesville Service  
During June 2019 ther  
New permanent e-was  
• Bairnsdale: 200 Jo  
• Orbst: 351 Bonar  
• Bruhen: 109 Grea  
• Omeo: 18 Margett  
• Mallocoota: Betka  
• Lakes Entrance: 51  
More information visit  
Further information: F  
[eastgippsland.vic](mailto:eastgippsland.vic)

**Spring 2019**  
For immediate release — Sept 2019

Welcome to Environment Connect. A quarterly update from East Gippsland Shire Council on environmental activities and opportunities for community involvement.

**Lakes Entrance Solar Li**  
Public lighting is the biggest electric  
year. (In 2015 Council secured fur  
energy). Stay tuned for more upda  
Further information: Wayne Burton,  
[Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au)

**Community Solar Dona**  
East Gippsland Shire Council receiv  
for profit organisations to receive a  
solar system, which is being donate  
For every solar system sold in the E  
percentage was donated to install s  
applications were open during July.  
organisations applied from acro  
Applications are now being ass  
electricity reduction, community be  
Shortlisted for inspection before  
Further information: Wayne Burton,  
[Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au)

**Autumn 2020**  
For immediate release — March 2020

Welcome to Environment Connect. A quarterly update from East Gippsland Shire Council on environmental activities and opportunities for community involvement.

**Bushfire recovery**  
The extreme summer bushfires have taken their toll in  
healing is now underway.  
East Gippsland Shire covers an area of 2,094,000 ha,  
Fires have impacted 56% of the Shire area over summ  
<https://www.egipps.vic.gov.au/bushfire-recovery>  
The recent rain has seen a flush of colour appear back in the landscape, but this has impacted  
negatively on the rivers and receiving waterways. Recovery will take time – the bushfire impact has  
been devastating for many, including the unique flora and fauna across East Gippsland.

**Summer 2019-20**  
For immediate release — Dec 2019

Welcome to Environment Connect. A quarterly update from East Gippsland Shire Council on environmental activities and opportunities for community involvement.

**Council aims for 100% renewable**  
East Gippsland Shire Council has agreed to participate in a tender to purchase  
electricity supplied from 100 per cent renewable energy over the next 10 years.  
The opportunity has been developed by a local government group consortium  
of 48 Victorian councils. The tender will be managed by the Municipal  
Association of Victoria and is for the purchase of renewable electricity in what's  
called a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). By participating, East Gippsland  
Shire Council will be able to access renewable electricity for their buildings and  
assets, such as street lighting, public toilets, aquatic centres and libraries.  
In addition to reducing Council's greenhouse gas emissions, participation in a PPA for 100 per cent  
renewable energy will demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability and  
deliver on the Council Plan commitment to reduce council's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by  
2021. The PPA will also provide price certainty with potentially cheaper electricity rates.  
Further information: Wayne Burton, Sustainability Project Planner  
[Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:Wayne.Burton@egipps.vic.gov.au)

**East Gippsland Community Emissions Profile**  
Community emissions profiles have for the first time, been developed for Australian local government areas.  
Here is the annual profile for East Gippsland:

Total municipal emissions  
**971 700**  
t CO<sub>2</sub>e

**Agriculture** 30.56%  
**Waste** 1.68%  
**Transport** 24.06%

**Electricity** 41.65%  
Residential 13.23%  
Commercial 9.04%  
Industrial 19.38%  
**Gas** 2.05%  
Residential 1.20%  
Commercial 0.26%  
Industrial 0.59%

[eastgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:eastgippsland.vic.gov.au) [feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au](mailto:feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au) [@egsc](https://www.facebook.com/egsc)



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**A liveable region: GOAL - We have safe, accessible, vibrant and well utilised public spaces and built environments that reflect the priorities of our community.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** By 2021, decrease the infrastructure renewal gap through increase expenditure on renewal projects.

### HEALTHY WATERWAYS

**Strategy 19: Ensure all new and renewed infrastructure incorporates best practice design, including: universal access, technology and sustainability elements.**

- **East Bairnsdale drainage wetlands & recycled content concrete**

A major project to construct new wetlands to protect the Gippsland Lakes began this year. Works to complete the stormwater retention basin including upgrading the drainage along Philips Lane and McMillan Street commenced after Council awarded a contract in early September 2019. The drainage



improvements to Phillips Lane and McMillan Street also included full road pavement reconstruction. The use of recycled concrete processed locally in East Bairnsdale was utilised for the pavement material. The use of recycled concrete a sustainable alternative to quarried crushed rock that provides excellent performance for road construction projects. The location of this project in close proximity to the recycling and processing facility created the ideal opportunity to use the sustainable product

This multi-year project will result in a new constructed wetland east of Bairnsdale just south of the Princes Highway. The project will resolve drainage issues, and the wetlands will capture stormwater during heavy rain and strip nutrients before the water enters Jones Bay in the Gippsland Lakes. The wetlands will be 45,000m<sup>3</sup> in volume, and will provide a natural filter for stormwater coming from the nearby. The construction is funded by Council and other government sources, including the Victorian Government Gippsland Lakes Coordinating Committee with \$465,750 from Love Our Lakes, and \$1,670,531 from the Australian Government Roads to Recovery Program.



# Environment Strategy

## Annual Report 2019-20



**Strategy 20: Support projects and initiatives that improve our open spaces and built environment for present and future generations, while mitigating effects on the environment.**

- **Progress Integrated Water Management projects**

East Gippsland Shire was involved in the development of the Bairnsdale Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan where East Gippsland Water is the lead agency. This was one of the key recommendations in the East Gippsland Strategic Directions Statement (see [water.vic.gov.au](http://water.vic.gov.au)).

In addition, an *Alternative Water Sources Business Case* was developed for the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange and Bairnsdale City Oval to investigate options to be more water efficient. The business case was submitted for external funding to progress a large alternative water project, which will see new best practice recycled water infrastructure project to save 12 megalitres of drinking water every year. The project will be overseen by East Gippsland Water and will save drinking water (currently used to supplement rainwater collected for irrigation and washdown).

Rainwater tanks have already been installed to collect stormwater from the new roof of the livestock exchange.

- **Water for wetlands**

The East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA), East Gippsland Shire Council, East Gippsland Water and Parks Victoria hosted a community event at Macleod Morass.

Guest speakers highlighted several projects that partner agencies are undertaking to use, re-use and redirect water to benefit the environment.

Redirecting stormwater for use at the Bairnsdale Oval and sale yards, the natural process of the Macleod Morass to filter wastewater, and the management of the wetlands to reduce threats and protect threatened species were all discussed.

Protecting and improving waterway health is a commitment of the Victorian Government's 'Water for Victoria' plan.





# Environment Strategy

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### • Water use

Water use from all Council accounts was 95,946 kL in 2019/20. This is down by 29,055 kL compared to the year before, and could be attributed to shutdowns due to the covid pandemic and water efficiency projects underway at the Livestock Exchange in Bairnsdale.

| Top 15 water sites in 2019/20: |                                                                        | Total Water kL |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1                              | Terminal Building, Bengworden Rd Bairnsdale                            | 10,364         |
| 2                              | Bairnsdale Aquatic and Rec Centre (BARC)                               | 7,667          |
| 3                              | Camp Park, Allan Drive, Mallacoota                                     | 6,526          |
| 4                              | Eagle Point Caravan Park, Camp Park Rd                                 | 4,621          |
| 5                              | Lakes Aquadome                                                         | 4,584          |
| 6                              | Orbost Outdoor Pool                                                    | 4,392          |
| 7                              | Bairnsdale Oval/Pavilion Macarthur St                                  | 4,250          |
| 8                              | Sprinkler system Esplanade Lakes Entrance                              | 3,177          |
| 9                              | Bairnsdale Outdoor Pool                                                | 2,823          |
| 10                             | Sprinkler system Main Street Gardens (Service to Bailey St) Bairnsdale | 2,271          |
| 11                             | Toilets & Gardens, Main Street Bruthen                                 | 2,178          |
| 12                             | Slip Bight Marina - Slip Road Paynesville                              | 1,923          |
| 13                             | Foreshore reserve Esplanade/Cunningham carpark, Lakes Entrance         | 1,736          |
| 14                             | Corporate Centre, Bairnsdale                                           | 1,384          |
| 15                             | Bruces Track Office/Depot                                              | 1,374          |

### PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

#### • Public Open Space & Trail Maintenance

Tracks have been managed in line with other years, with effort going towards restoration post the bushfires. Additional staff due to COVID assisted with proactive in management.

A number of trails have been improved over the year predominantly in Eastwood and Lakes Entrance, while the Mallacoota boardwalks had to be reinstated after the Black Summer bushfires using more sustainable materials.

A popular walking track in Mallacoota has been reconstructed as East Gippsland Shire Council continues rebuilding assets destroyed in the summer bushfires.

The Lakeside Drive Walking Track links Karbeethong and Mallacoota township. One of the walking track's boardwalks was partly damaged in two sections and was able to be repaired using existing materials to match the original structure.



# Environment Strategy

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However, two further boardwalks along this section of the walking track were destroyed and needed to be fully rebuilt. This 84-metre section was made of treated pine, including the deck (see photo).

Parks and gardens crews provided a high standard of work across all areas of public space under its management. Reviews of practices and processes were continued and improvements made.

Current and future parks and gardens upgrades are in line with predicted future climatic conditions with succulents and drought tolerant species now planted.

- **Bosworth Road Park – 3 December 2019**

A new public park was opened in December 2019 in Bairnsdale. The 16-hectare site near Macleod Morass is south of the Bairnsdale CBD and near the East Gippsland Regional Livestock Exchange and industrial area. This area operated as a landfill between 1979 and 2004, and was re-open to the public from as a shared space for walkers, cyclists and dog owners. There's more than 40,000 native plantings and 2.7 kilometres of trails.



Accessed off Bosworth Road (near Giles Street and east of Vegco), it's a rehabilitation success story that has saved East Gippsland Shire Council more than \$6 million.

The seedlings were planted as part of the phytocapping process three years prior. This includes landfill covered with locally native seedlings which assist with rehabilitation and reduce water logging. More information <https://bit.ly/3nUmQIs>



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- **Implement the Bairnsdale Sporting Facilities Plan**

This year saw the announcement of \$5 million for the WORLD sporting precinct development through the Building Better Regions Fund. Further development of designs for the precinct took place, and an additional grant submission to contribute significantly to the progress of the Bairnsdale Sporting Facilities Plan in 2019/20. The designs incorporated a range of sustainability elements around energy efficiency, rainwater capture and provision for sustainable transport.

- **National Tree Day – July 2019**

National Tree Day was again in late July 2019. The Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group (BULG) worked with Bairnsdale Secondary College VCAL students and Noweyung the weeks before to prepare the site for Tree Day along the popular community walking track.

Nearly 400 new seedlings were planted by the Bairnsdale Scouts on 28 July 2019 along the north bank of the Mitchell River in Bairnsdale.



*Photo: Bairnsdale Scouts joined 400 empty pots together after planting seedlings for National Tree Day.*

Representatives from the volunteer group attended the Victorian landcare awards on Friday 30 August 2019 at Government House, along with members from the Landcare group in Swifts Creek who received a special commendation for the Poets Walk.

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Council appreciates the coordinated assistance from the many community volunteers to help manage our public open space for conservation purposes across the vast shire.

- **EGSC Bushfire Resilience Webinar: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction**

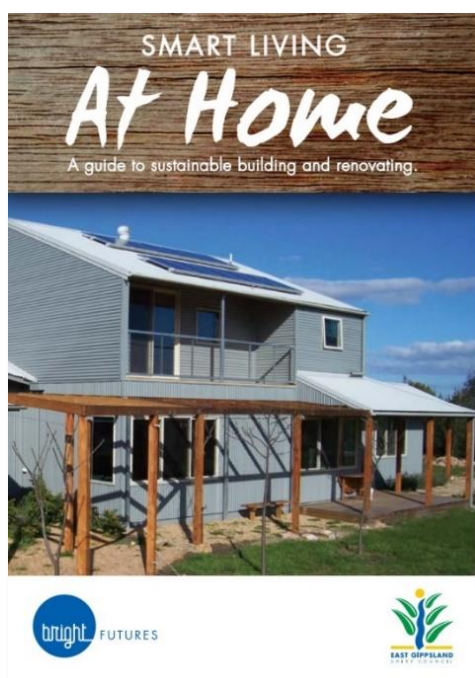
Stuart McConnell, Council's General Manager Bushfire Recovery, was one of four keynote speakers at the joint ICELI Oceania and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) webinar entitled City Resilience Stories Webinar Series: Applying the principles of resilience building and Disaster Risk Reduction for the unexpected.

The webinar was live streamed internationally on 13 May 2020, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic and climate and man-made disasters over the past 6 months, where Australian local governments have dealt with multiple disasters, from wildfires, flooding, and now the recent global pandemic. The webinar addressed the principles of resilience building for unexpected crises and disasters in cascade.

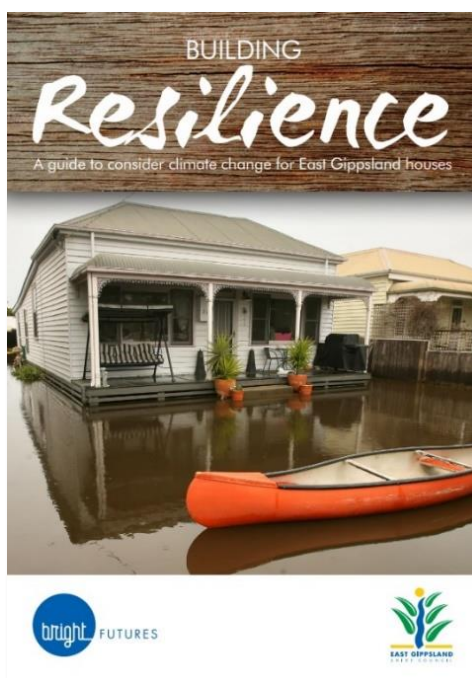
Other speakers included Cairns Regional Council and City of West Torrens in Adelaide, South Australia, with moderators from the UNDRR Office for Northeast Asia (ONEA) & Global Education and Training Institute (GETI) and the Regional Director, ICLEI Oceania.

- **Rebuild sustainably (booklets)**

As part of bushfire recovery two East Gippsland Shire sustainability booklets were promoted via the Bushfire Recovery newsletters. This resulted in six hardcopies being requested and posted to residents unable to access electronically or due to service centre closure. These booklets can either be downloaded or hardcopies collected from the nearest shire library or service centre:



**Smart Living: A guide to sustainable building (for energy efficiency)**



**Building Resilience: A guide to consider climate change in East Gippsland houses – 2,000 additional copies were printed in May 2020 due to stock running low.**

House design is rapidly evolving to meet the challenge of climate change and Council has a role to inform the community as information changes.



# Environment Strategy

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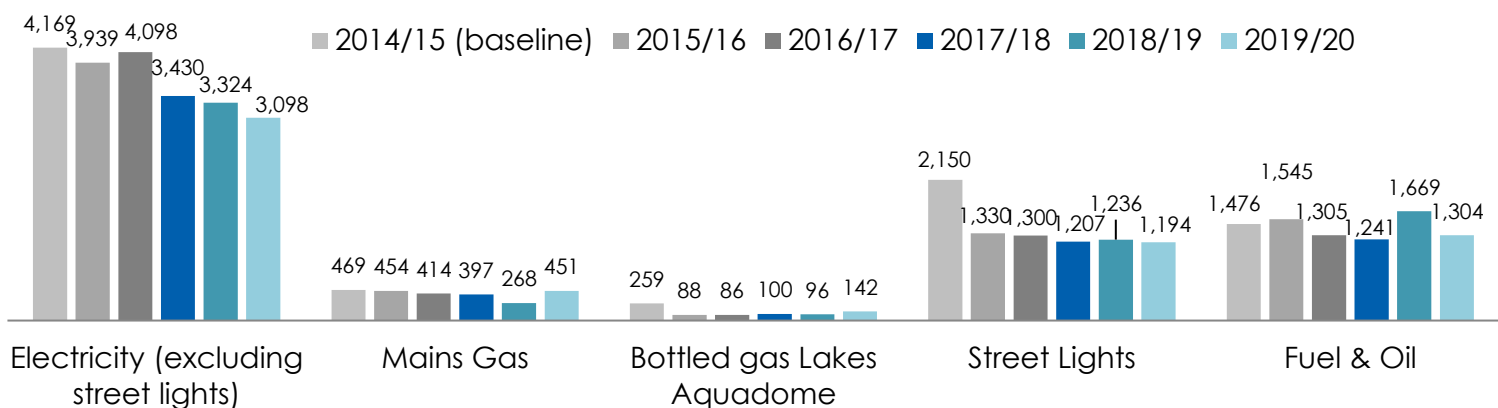
A liveable region: GOAL - Sustainable planning and growth supports thriving townships, while maintaining our commitment to sustainability and protecting our natural environment.

### ENERGY

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Reduce Council's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by 2021.**

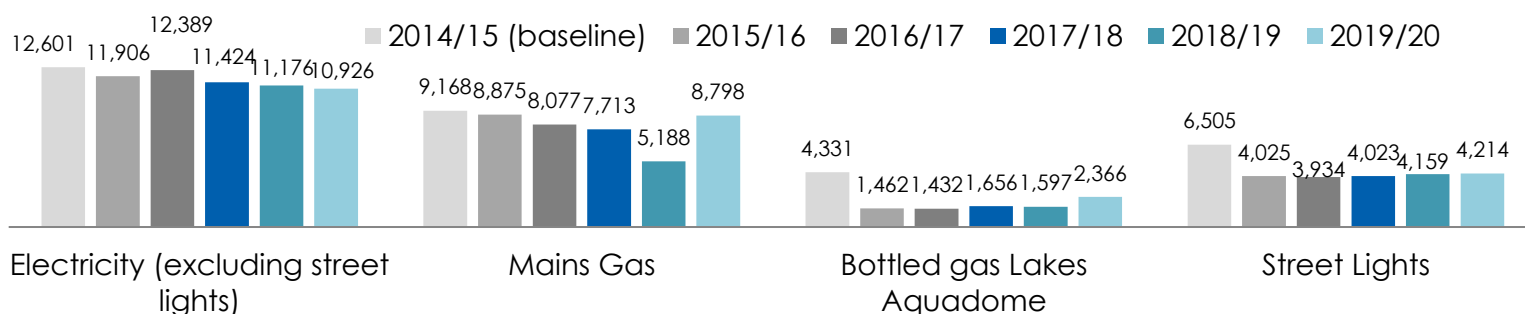
Council's operations were responsible for 6,152 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e (equivalent) emissions. This is a decline of 396 tonnes compared to the year before and 1,448 tonnes less compared to the 2014/15 baseline. This excludes landfill emissions, or emissions from contractors or refrigerants.

#### Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e emissions



Gas use at the BARC and Lakes Entrance Aquadome increased by 4,379 GJ and cost \$78,271 more compared to the year before, while streetlights cost \$16,926 more and used 4,214 GJ in 2019/20 (an increase in 55 GJ or 15,370kWh compared to year before). Specifically the streetlight cost increases were \$3,300 higher in OMR costs, and \$13,626 higher in electricity retail costs compared to the year prior.

#### Energy consumption in GJ



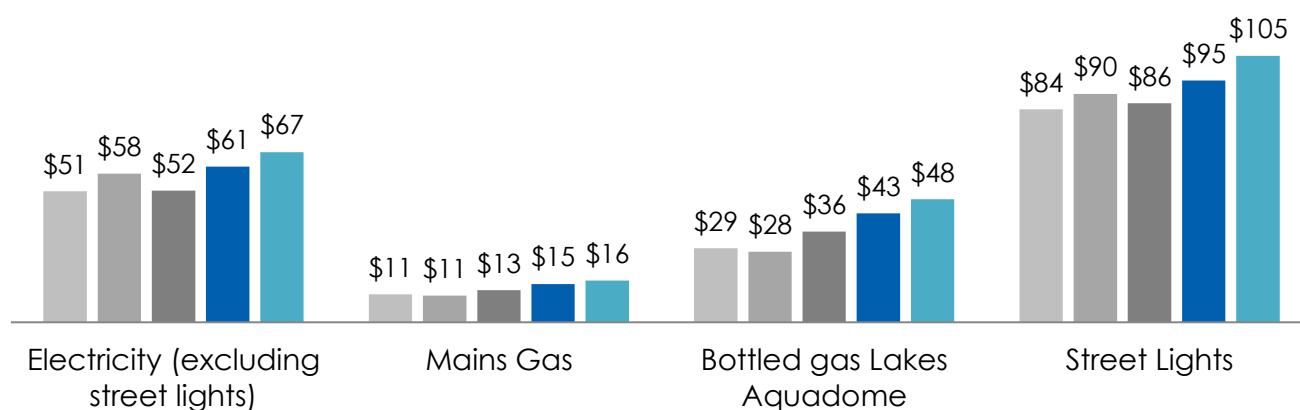
# Environment Strategy

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### Unit cost per GJ

■ 2014/15 ■ 2015/16 ■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19

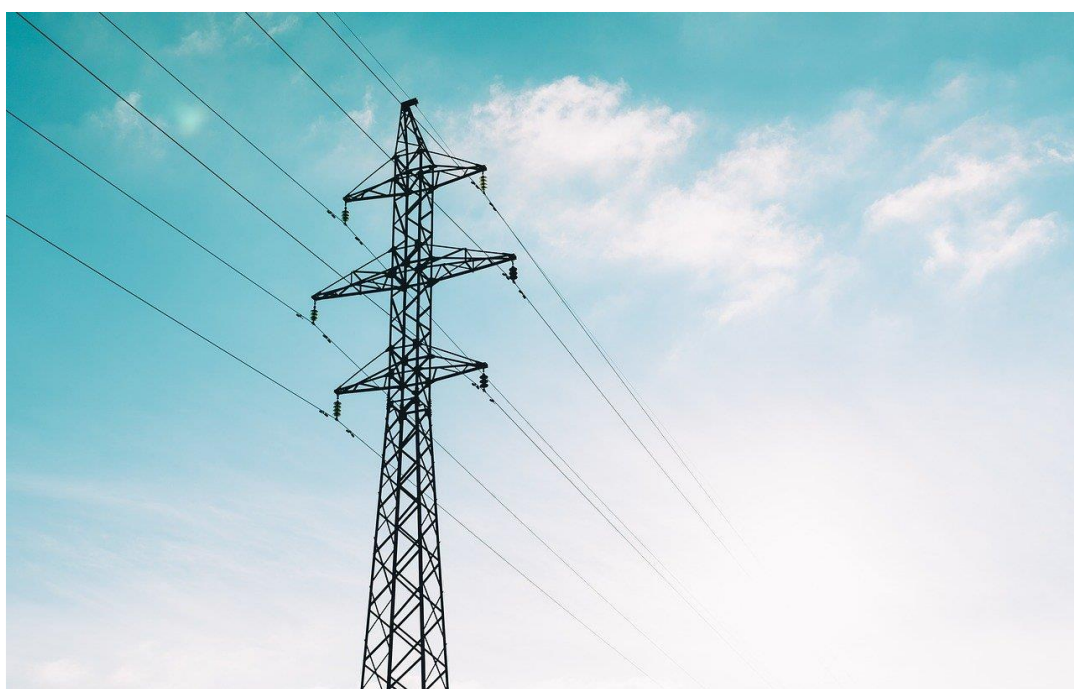


The trend of increasing electricity and gas prices has continued again diminishing the savings being made by energy efficiency and solar projects. However, if these projects were not undertaken Council would be paying significantly more and the corporate emissions would continue to rise.

#### • Power Purchase Agreement

Significantly during the year Council committed to participate in a state-wide Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with a consortium of 40 Victorian Local Governments. This will be for the collective procurement of energy from 100% renewable sources and the procurement will take effect in 2020/21 and beyond.

This Local Government PPA is tipped to be the largest ever emissions reduction project undertaken by local government in Australia. The landmark initiative will enable 40 Victorian councils to switch to 100% renewable energy from 2021-2022 and will go a long way to support carbon neutrality targets for many Councils.





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**Strategy 21: Work with communities to be resource smart and invest in innovative programs and projects to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions**

### **Major initiative 10 Implement the Renewable Energy Feasibility Study priority projects for East Gippsland**

The Renewable Energy Feasibility Study priority projects were implemented the previous year through a Solar Bulk Buy project, Multi-site Feasibility Study, and Energy Information Hub. The 'Bright Futures' Renewable Energy Project was completed and the business case submitted. More information: <https://yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/bright-futures-renewable-energy-project>

- **Community Solar Donation**

The not-for-profit Cann Valley Bush Nursing Centre received the equivalent of a 3.4kW solar system made possible through East Gippsland Shire Council's Solar Bulk Buy program. The program offered the opportunity for community organisations to apply to receive a free 3.4kW solar system valued at about \$4,000. The solar donation represented one per cent of total sales achieved as part of the Solar Bulk Buy program.



*Photo: Michael O'Brien (chairperson of the Board) with the new solar system recently installed.*

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The actual system installed on 27 May 2020 was 10kW, as the bush nursing centre self-funded the difference - to better account for the buildings daily electricity consumption.

Cann River Bush Nursing Centre was selected on the strength of its application from a field of 31 other local not-for-profits located in the municipality.

The bush nursing centre could see the value in upgrading the donation to a 10kW solar system, using \$8,000 of their own money, to assist in covering the Centre's daytime energy use. It's anticipated the installation of this solar system will reduce the organisation's power consumption by about half. Reduced operating costs means the centre can support other essential services.

**Background:** The East Gippsland Shire solar bulk-buy closed in July 2019. The successful program saw 60 systems and 8 batteries installed over the previous 12 months across East Gippsland buildings, mostly houses. This totalled 303kW of solar and 38kW of storage, and is saving 9,062 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions over the 20 year life of the equipment. The most popular system was 5-6 kW in size, accounting for 32% of sales.

The program was co-ordinated by the Yarra Energy Foundation, and for every system sold a percentage was donated to install solar on a local community facility.

A council requirement was to use local installers to install systems sold through the program. Solar energy has been recognised as an important way of reducing the impact of power prices while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Both are key council objectives.

### • Energy Efficiency and Solar Upgrades for Council facilities

Key sustainability initiatives were undertaken including energy efficiency and solar upgrades, which will provide ongoing savings and benefits.

Undertook stream three of the Local Government Energy Saver program. The aim of the program is to help eligible regional Local Governments identify, prioritise and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades on buildings.

The Local Government Energy Saver Program is delivered by Sustainability Victoria as part of the implementation of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Framework.

East Gippsland Shire Council matched funding of \$110,000 from Sustainability Victoria, to reduce operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions for publicly accessible buildings.

The following \$220,000 energy efficiency and solar upgrades took place:

- Bairnsdale City Oval – 10kW solar system and internal and external LED lighting upgrade
- Lakes Entrance Aquadome – 45kW solar system
- Bairnsdale library – 9kW solar system
- East Gippsland Art Gallery – internal gallery LED lighting, heat pump hot water, efficient air conditioning, 5kW solar system, 4-5 star fridge
- Council's Corporate Centre – 26kW solar system

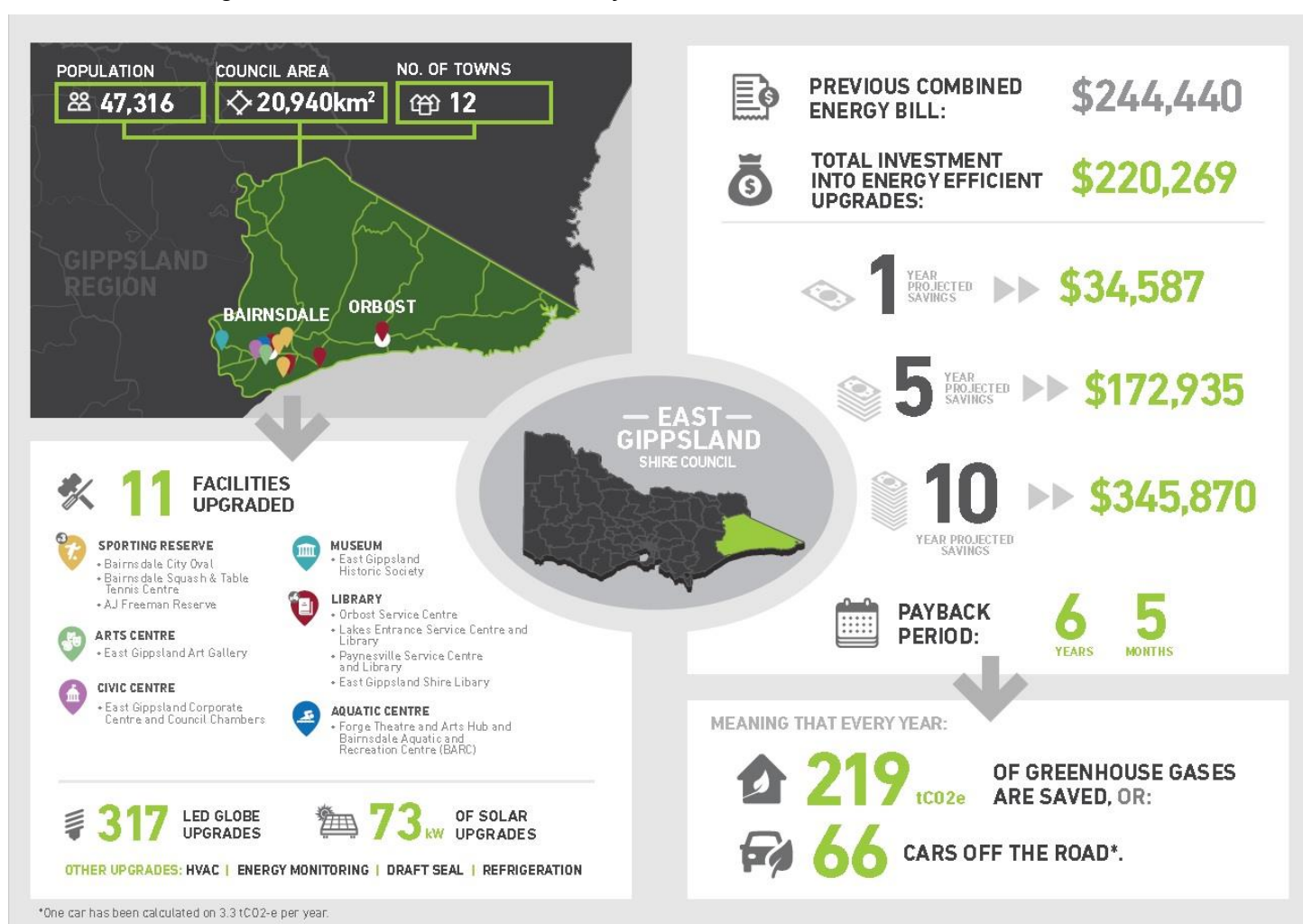


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- Squash & Table Tennis Centre – 5.6kW of solar installed, 9 x 100w LED floodlights (replaced 400w)
- Orbost Service Centre and Library – full LED lighting upgrade & solar analytics monitoring
- Paynesville AJ Freeman Reserve – 10kW solar system, timer on water boiler and LED lighting (with motion sensors in toilets)
- East Gippsland Historical Society – internal office LED lighting and 5kW solar system installed
- Forge Theatre and sections of BARC – internal LED lighting upgrade of 190 lights (gyms, foyer, toilets, office space) and a 10kW solar system was installed on the Forge
- Live Solar Analytics monitoring was added at: Forge Theatre, Paynesville service centre and library, Orbost service centre and library, Pyke Street business centre, Lakes Entrance Visitor Information Centre and the Lakes Entrance service centre. The Local Government Energy Saver Program was funded by Sustainability Victoria (SV) as part of the implementation of the Victorian Government's Climate Change Framework. Here is a summary:



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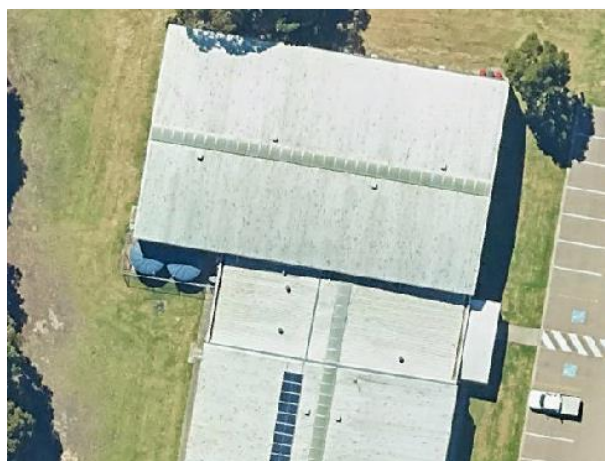
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The project has an overall payback period of 6 years and annual savings of \$35,000 and 219 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

- **Solar was installed in 2019/20 totalling 73 kW in size (or 219 solar panels):**

| Install date | Site Name                                               | Solar size (kW) |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sept 19      | 1. Squash and Table Tennis, Lucknow [community managed] | 5               |
| Sept 19      | 2. East Gippsland Historic Society [community managed]  | 5               |
| Sept 19      | 3. The Forge, Bairnsdale                                | 10              |
| Sept 19      | 4. Bairnsdale Library                                   | 10              |
| Sept 19      | 5. Main Corporate Centre, Bairnsdale                    | 26              |
| Sept 19      | 6. East Gippsland Art Gallery [community managed]       | 5               |
| Feb 20       | 7. AJ Freeman Reserve, Paynesville [community managed]  | 10              |



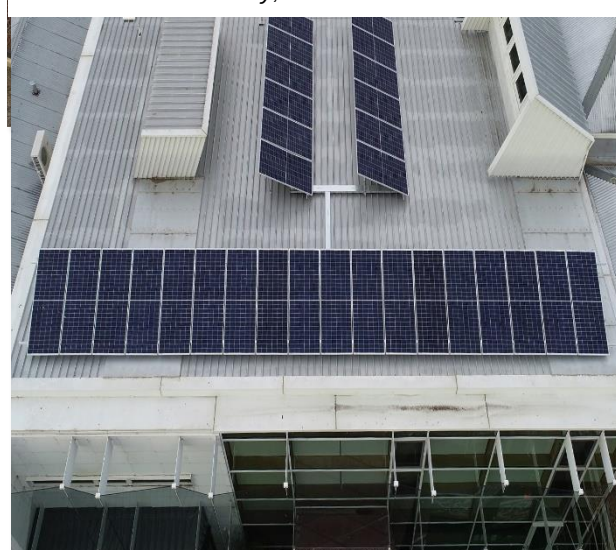
1. Squash and Table Tennis, 5kW solar



2. EG Historical Society, 5kW solar



3. The Forge, 10kW solar



4. Bairnsdale library, 10kW solar



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5. Main Corporate Centre & Council Chambers, 26 kW



6. EG Art Gallery, 5kW solar



7. AJ Freeman Reserve in Paynesville, 10kW solar

- **Gallery gets an energy makeover** - Friday 20 December 2020 (media release)

The East Gippsland Art Gallery has had a significant energy makeover, thanks to East Gippsland Shire Council.

Mayor Cr John White (at the time) said the improvements will enable the gallery to move towards an energy neutral art space for its daily operations.

“The gallery now has LED lighting, installation of a 4-star refrigerator, and heat pump hot water (to run during the day only) connected to a 5kW solar energy system and a new air conditioning system,” Cr White said. “Council is



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committed to reducing its emissions and recognises that climate change is a very real challenge for all local governments.”

East Gippsland Art Gallery director Crystal Stubbs said funding from Council and Sustainability Victoria had enabled the gallery to save on energy expenses and to replace a very old air conditioner.

“The upgrade to our gallery facilities has been amazing; our new energy efficient facilities ensure that our environmental impact is minimal. I can’t thank East Gippsland Shire Council enough for their support,” Ms Stubbs said.

More information: <https://bit.ly/39GIXNI>

### ***Photos of energy efficiency upgrade at East Gippsland Art Gallery:***

#### ***Before upgrade:***



#### ***After (energy efficient upgrade):***





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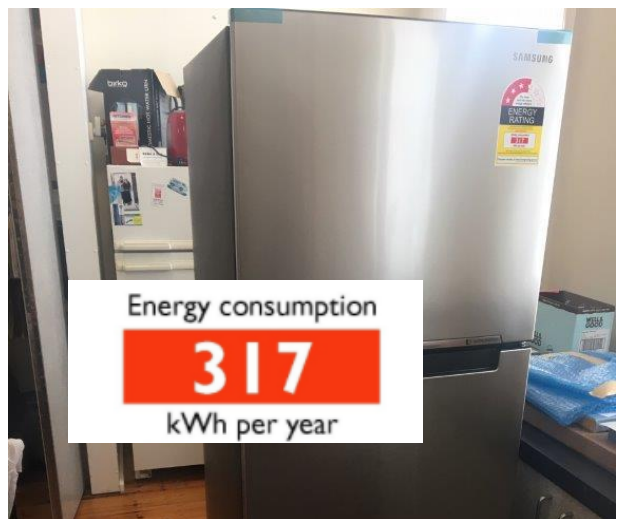
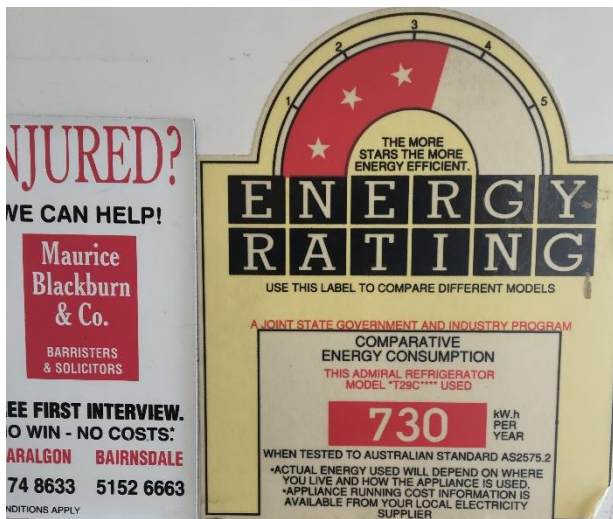
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*Before upgrade:*



*After (new energy efficient):*



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### LED lighting upgrades at various sites:

Over 300 old inefficient lights were replaced with LED globes and fittings. An example was the LED lighting upgrade of over 130 lights at the Orbost Service Centre and library, which resulted in an overall improvement in lighting quality as well as reducing emissions. The internal and external LED lighting upgrade at the Orbost building has predicted reductions of 18 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions a year and electrical savings of \$3,700 per annum. Mostly fluorescent tubes were changed to LED



**Photo: After LED the fluoro lights from Orbost were recycled**





# Environment Strategy

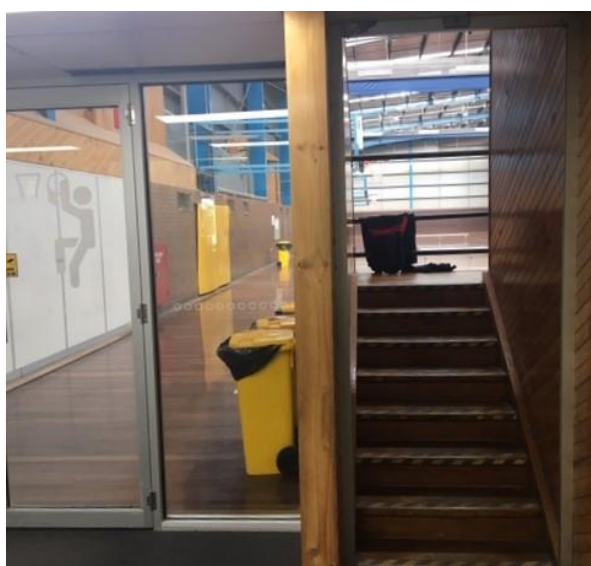
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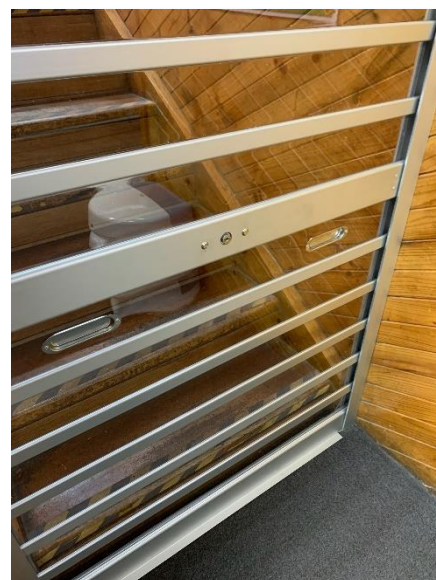
Extensive LED lighting upgrades also took place at the Forge and BARC, where motion sensors were installed in the toilets to make significant energy savings.

### **Draught proof roller door at BARC:**

A modern draught proof screen was installed at the BARC basketball courts, replacing an old grated roller door. The new Perspex roller door creates an air lock between the large uninsulated basketball courts and the BARC foyer. Remaining energy efficiency funds from the Sustainability Victoria LGES grant were used in April. This action will make savings as the air conditioner (in summer and heater in winter) will no longer try to adjust to the large temperature fluctuations coming from the basketball stadium.



Before (left) the old door allowed air to flow from the uninsulated three court basketball stadium into the main aquatic centre foyer at the BARC. The new transparent roller door (right) creates an air seal between the basketball courts and the main centre foyer (of the gym and pool), saving significantly on heating and cooling.



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### • **Charging the Regions: electric vehicle charging network study**

The Charging the Regions project undertook a study for participating regional, rural and metropolitan Councils across Victoria to:

1. Provide guidance to councils on the factors relevant to the placement of the various types of charging stations and costing for alternative charge station network options, including considerations of technical effectiveness, impact on the local economy, attractiveness to users and community desire to participate.
2. Understand role of local government in charging infrastructure including options for different ownership models and options to coordinate the maintenance and management of the statewide network once installed.
3. Understand the opportunities for ongoing collaboration in a statewide roll out



East Gippsland Shire Council is one of 54 Regional and metropolitan councils across Victoria that have come together to better understand their role in providing or facilitating public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the state.

The Charging the Regions project recognised the niche role local governments have in supporting public charging for electric vehicles, particularly in regional and rural areas where top up and destination charging is important. A number of councils across Victoria have or are beginning to install and encourage EV charging points in their communities. This project recognises the opportunities for alignment between councils to ensure the best strategic outcome for communities, councils, businesses and EV drivers.

The Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance led the project on behalf of 43 regional councils, 11 metropolitan councils, the Goulburn Broken Greenhouse Alliance, the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action, the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action and the Electric Vehicle Council of Australia. The project was funded through \$60,000 from local governments and an additional \$40,000 funding from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The final project report has been finalised and is available here <https://bit.ly/2Y8Z9BV>.

### • **Provide Smart Pedestrian Lighting options to Regional Roads Victoria that meet Council objectives for the Lakes Entrance Foreshore.**

A project between VicRoads, Council and Regional Roads Victoria was initiated for smart lighting along the Lakes Entrance foreshore as part of the seawall and streetscape upgrade.

Apart from being totally solar powered, the smart features of the lighting include 'follow me' lighting, and the ability to remotely monitor and maintain light performance (including setting timers to turn 'on and off' and vary the brightness).



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Smart lighting was installed on the Lakes Entrance foreshore and a technical review of lighting performance took place in September 2019.

### WASTE

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** By 2030, East Gippsland will reduce waste to landfills by 20 per cent.

**Major initiative 9 Reduce waste going into landfill, through introduction of e-waste services, education and introducing new approaches to reusing waste**

**Strategy 22: Develop and implement a waste recycling and reuse approach for the region that reflects world's best practice and the use of smart technology.**

It is estimated that through the kerbside collection contract 56 per cent of waste was diverted from landfill through the recycling of co-mingled materials, cardboard and garden organics. Council has also diverted additional waste through e-waste, batteries and green organics that were delivered to waste facilities by self-haul. COVID-19 saw the generation of considerable additional waste and mi-use of recycling and green waste collection services. However, a concerted campaign of public education and bin auditing saw this situation rectified.

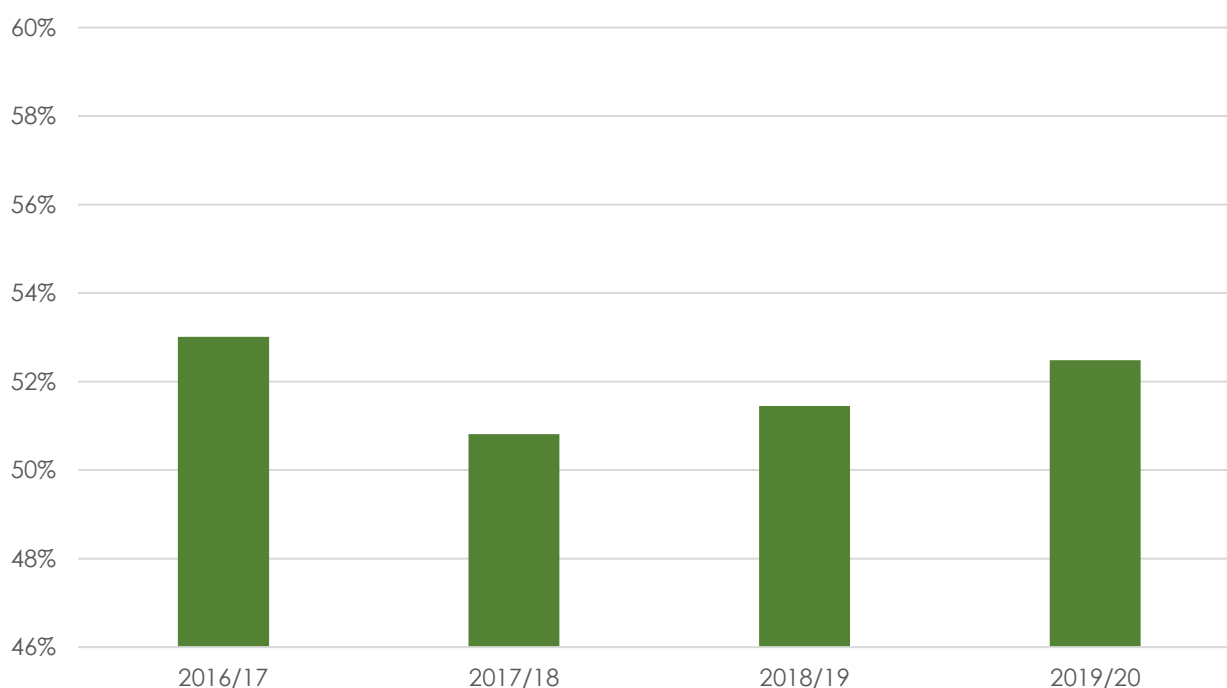
In 2019/20 there was an increase in the proportion of kerbside waste diverted from landfill (53%). This was from combined green waste and co-mingled recycling bins collected. (Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins x100).

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Percent of kerbside Green Waste & Recycling diverted from landfill



The increase in green organics collected from January to June aligned with the period when residents were firstly removing green waste around their properties due to the bushfire threat, and then residents were home more with COVID-19 restrictions increasing their time to maintain their properties and remove green organics. This was consistent with other local governments.

During 2019/20 Council continued to reduce waste going to landfill through the introduction of recycling and reuse programs that incorporated waste streams such as e-waste, mattresses, polystyrene, green waste, and scrap metal, as outlined below.

- **Recycling Bins in Major Towns**

A three year project is underway to replace and install street litter bin and recycle bin enclosures throughout the Shire and is now 66% completed. This included the strategic introduction of recycling bins where possible.

The areas where new recycling enclosures have been either installed or replaced so far include: Lakes Entrance, Metung, Bruthen, Paynesville, Johnsonville, Swan Reach and Nicholson.





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### • Recycle polystyrene at the Bairnsdale Tip Shop

A new polystyrene processing machine has been installed at the Bairnsdale Tip Shop to divert more than 150,000 cubic meters of waste from landfill each year.

Recycling Enterprise Incorporated who manage and run the Tip Shop at East Gippsland Shire Council's Bairnsdale landfill, are now recycling polystyrene in an expanded polystyrene (EPS) processing machine supplied by Council. The machine compresses polystyrene using heat and the product obtained is sent to a recycler for repurposing.

The partnership enables the voluntary community based social enterprise to reduce landfill and provide a valuable opportunity for locals who have had difficulty gaining employment.

The Tip Shop employed seven staff during the year, and diverts more than 150,000 cubic meters of landfill each year. This new opportunity to recycle polystyrene will benefit the whole community.

The new agreement helps combat waste challenges and builds a stronger local economy - and is a small step towards creating a circular economy. Council has provided the polystyrene processing machine and \$24,000 per annum in cash to operate and manage the recycling at the Tip Shop.

Council continued working with Resource Recovery Gippsland to explore options for collecting and managing Food Organics and Green Organics (FOGO), a requirement by the Victorian Government to be introduced in the future. A kitchen to compost program continues to operate in Mallacoota, after temporary closure during the summer bushfires.

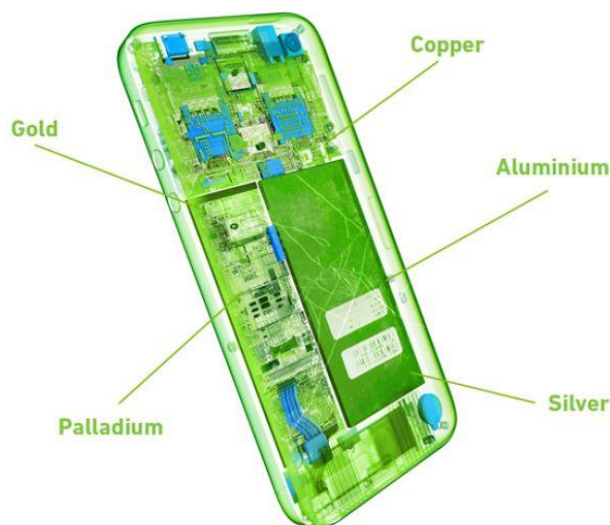
It is estimated that through the kerbside collection contract 56% of waste was diverted from landfill through the recycling of co-mingled materials, cardboard and garden organics. Council has also diverted additional waste through e-waste, batteries and green organics that were delivered to waste facilities by self-haul. COVID-19 saw the generation of considerable additional waste and misuse of recycling and green waste collection services. A concerted campaign of public education and bin auditing saw this situation rectified.

### • E-Waste

As of July 2019 e-waste was no longer accepted in any household bin (i.e., banned from landfill) across Victoria. Instead of being placed in general waste electrical items must be taken to dedicated e-waste drop-off points where it will be collected for recycling. With the Victorian wide ban Council undertook a dedicated awareness campaign.

Permanent e-waste drop off points (set up the previous months) were set up and maintained at:

- Bairnsdale: 200 Johnstons Rd, Forge Ck
- Orbost: 351 Bonang Road
- Bruthen: 109 Great Alpine Road
- Omeo: 18 Margetts Street
- Mallacoota: Betka Road
- Lakes Entrance: 5 Thorpes Lane



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E-waste includes anything with a battery, plug or cord that is no longer working or wanted. There is a cost, and this depends on the size of the item. E-waste is growing three times faster than general waste in Australia and up to 90% of mobile phones, TVs and computers can be recycled.

The community **e-waste info session** from the Bairnsdale library was promoted on social media and the Shire **website** updated to provide further details about e-waste.

### **Strategy 23: Increase recycling, reuse and regeneration through innovative waste management practices and ongoing community education.**

Educational programs included the Resource Smart Schools program and community education, via a mix of social media, media releases, website updates and Environment Connect newsletters.

Council was involved in the following waste education sessions and council events:

- **Orbost agricultural show – 9 March 2020**

On Monday 9 March a range of information was available from topics such as e-waste, recycling, sustainable gardening, and 'smart living.' A worm farm was provided for the event, and resulted in 170 litres of foodwaste being diverted from landfill.

The Orbost Agricultural Show was well attended on the long weekend on Monday 9 March, prior to social distancing restrictions. Council's support of the show - \$10,000 as part of a wide range of drought support and programs – is recognition that events such as the local show are an important community event. Council officers had many conversations around the impact of the fires and living with the threat and the smoke in an around Orbost.



**Photo: Sustainability Expo display at the Orbost Agricultural Show.**



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- **Trash Puppets**

Nungurner Primary School took the lead to organise Trash Puppets artists to visit various schools in East Gippsland.



Through playful workshops, participants were encouraged to think and talk about waste reduction, recycling right, and imagining something new from discarded materials.

The Trash Puppet workshops fostered hands on learning about waste and sustainability in a fun environment.

The artists ran creative animal puppet making activities using rubbish with students from Nungurner, Metung, Buchan, Bruthen, Nowa Nowa, Tambo Upper, Swan Reach Primary Schools and St Brendan's Primary School.



Puppets were creatively turned into animals using rubbish that would otherwise go to landfill, be recycled or end up as litter. The workshops were very popular with students who created some weird and wonderful puppets, using the puppetry techniques

*Photo: Student workshop with grade four students from St Brendans Primary School in Lakes Entrance.*

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taught. These included using strings, glove puppets, finger puppets, or combinations of all three techniques.

Families from local schools, East Gippsland Shire and ResourceSmart Schools Gippsland jointly funded the workshops, which also received a Regional Arts Victoria subsidy.

- **Clean Up Australia Day – March 2020**

Activities were promoted and East Gippsland Shire Council is encouraging residents to get involved in Clean Up Australia Day as it celebrated 30 years of keeping Australia beautiful. Event registration indicated clean-up sites located across the shire would take place over the weekend of February 29 - March 1, 2020.

- **Detox Your Home**

There were 106 households who attended the Detox Your Home in Bairnsdale on Saturday 9 November 2019 between 9am to 2pm.

Of these 61% of had not attended a Detox Your Home event before. In total there was 1,982 kilograms of hazardous chemicals collected, with an average of 18.5 kilograms per household.

- **Yellow Bin Lid Replacement**

Council promoted the gradual replacement of kerbside recycling bin lids with new yellow lids, bringing the Shire in line with Australian Standards, which consist of the following colours:



New yellow recycling bin lids were rolled out on residents' wheelie bins by Council's contractor Tambo Waste, who began providing yellow lids from the middle of 2019. The residential bin lid changeover was to bring the shire in line with Australian colour standards. Yellow is the universal colour for recycling, red for general waste and green for green waste / organics.

Wheelie bins with yellow lids will also be supplied to new houses, and when damaged bins are replaced across the Shire.



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- Mayors Poster Challenge 2020



*Poster by Penny Boyd was the winning entry aged 8-10 years, Omeo Primary School.*

The Mayors Poster Challenge opened in March and closed on 30 April 2020. The challenge was for young people across East Gippsland to create a poster exploring the theme of “Make our lakes and streams single-use plastic free.” While entries were down this year (likely due to remote learning), the submissions contained inspiring and creative messaging.

**END**

**For further information please contact East Gippsland Shire Council**

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