

DATE

December 2013

TITLE

# Advancing Orbost 2020 Plan

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DOCUMENT

**Background Paper**

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PREPARED FOR

**East Gippsland Shire Council**

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## Executive Summary

This report summarises the outcomes from research and consultation that have been undertaken as part of the *Advancing Orbost 2020* plan.

### **The Orbost Economy**

The population of Orbost has been stable over the last decade, but is becoming much older (ageing is occurring at a faster rate than the rest of the region). At the same time the number of lower income residents is increasing. Many of the changes that can be observed in the Orbost economy (such as declining retail expenditure) are explained by this change in the population profile.

While there has been significant decline in some industries (agriculture and forestry), the Orbost economy has been notably resilient. The number of local jobs has remained stable. The growth of the health and social services sector has absorbed employment losses in forestry and agriculture, and at the same time the diversity of the economic base has increased.

Housing in Orbost is some of the most affordable in the region, and can be considered as an asset. Marlo's higher-end housing market ensures there is a mix of income groups and demographics in the local area, and complements the market in Orbost.

Orbost benefits from notable social, economic and environmental assets. These include the local environment, natural resources, liveability, affordability, local health services, an active community, and incoming migration.

### **Macro-Level Drivers**

A number of key macro level trends and influences will impact on the Orbost economy in the coming decades. These include:

- An ageing population and growth in the Australian health care sector.
- Within the agricultural sector - increasing capital intensiveness, decreasing labour intensiveness, and the need to attract investment to expand output. Medium to long-term prospects for the dairy industry are particularly positive.
- Renewable energy targets and the ongoing movement toward alternative energy sources.
- Ongoing structural changes in the economy facilitated by evolving communications speeds and technologies.
- Within the tourism sector – volatility in the face of economic conditions and changing consumer trends. There are opportunities for employment growth due to labour intensiveness of the industry and low barriers to entry.

### **Stakeholder Consultation**

Business, stakeholder and community consultation revealed a number of key themes:

- The appetite for change amongst large parts of the community. There also appears to be an interest in participating in the economic future of the town and becoming more self-reliant. The value of community cohesion and participation in small town economic development is crucial.
- The community envisions a local economy that builds upon its agricultural, lifestyle and natural environmental assets in order to grow the agribusiness and tourism sectors, and the size of the local population.
- There was significant interest in the branding and identity of the town, and the role that this can play in local economic development.
- Business sentiment in the town is extremely low, especially in the retail sector.

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## 1.0 Background

Geografia was engaged to develop *Advancing Orbost 2020*, an economic plan for Orbost and the surrounding region jointly funded by the East Gippsland Shire Council and Regional Development Victoria (RDV). The preparation of *Advancing Orbost 2020* has been carried out in partnership with the Project Steering Group. This is a representative body of local businesses and East Gippsland Shire Council.

From June to July 2013, Geografia undertook research and consultation with local businesses, stakeholders and the Orbost community. This process included:

- Analysis of the local economic context.
- Analysis of the macro-economic forces shaping the Orbost economy.
- Research into best-practice economic development in small towns, and the experiences of towns that have faced similar challenges to Orbost.
- One-on-one consultation with key stakeholders including local businesses, community groups and government stakeholders (See Appendix 1).
- A community workshop attended by 65 community members, and separate workshops with students at Orbost Secondary College.
- A drop-in consultation session at Nicholson Street.
- An online and hardcopy survey, which was completed by 180 Orbost residents.

This Report summarises the outcomes of the research and consultation. This Report informs the development of the *Advancing Orbost 2020 Plan* and a number of studies into potential projects in the town.

### Victorian Forest Industries Association Studies

In 2013, a study into options for the forestry industry in the East Gippsland Region was also carried out (Poyry, 2013) for the Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI). This study has outlined several strategic opportunities in the sector and, as a result, the *Advancing Orbost 2020* project did not go consider forestry in its analysis. It is recommended that both reports be read in conjunction. Specifically, the Poyry report highlights sixteen opportunities for the future of the forestry industry in East Gippsland. This includes analysis of bio-energy and bio-fuel prospects in the area. The top five opportunities for the forestry industry according to the Poyry study are:

- Maximising marketing and branding of local product in the medium-term.
- A lower grade, small-diameter saw mill in the area. This would increase the utilisation of small-diameter logs.
- Alternative industry options, such as firewood for local consumption, agro-culture, landscaping and horticulture products.
- Exporting non-sawlogs to China or India in the short-term.
- Value adding to local production, which would require transitioning local mills to dry processing. This would allow for production of decking, flooring, furniture, cladding etc.

At the time of preparing this report, VAFI is awaiting advice from the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) regarding potential pathways for the local forestry industry.

## 2.0 Understanding the Orbost Economy

### Summary

There are three broad trends in the Orbost community, that have a significant impact on the current and future status of the local economy:

1. A stable population, with little change in the number of residents over the past decade.
2. A notable ageing of the local population. The rate of ageing in Orbost has been faster than the general region.
3. An increase in the proportion of lower income residents in the township, and a substantial decline in the proportion of higher income residents.

Many of the changes that can be observed (such as declining retail expenditure) are explained by changes in the profile of local residents, rather than by any change in the size of the population. The ageing population is reducing labour force productivity, and decreasing income levels are affecting expenditure in the local economy. These issues are not unique to Orbost, and are affecting regional towns across Australia.

While youth and younger adults have a tendency to move away from Orbost, this reflects a trend in small towns. As well as attracting older adults approaching retirement, the Orbost area appears to benefit from inward migration of residents in the key age group of 35-44 year olds.

While there has been a decline in employment in the agricultural and forestry related industries in the past five years, this has been offset by growth in other sectors. The growth of health care and social assistance in the area has ensured the number of jobs has remained relatively constant.

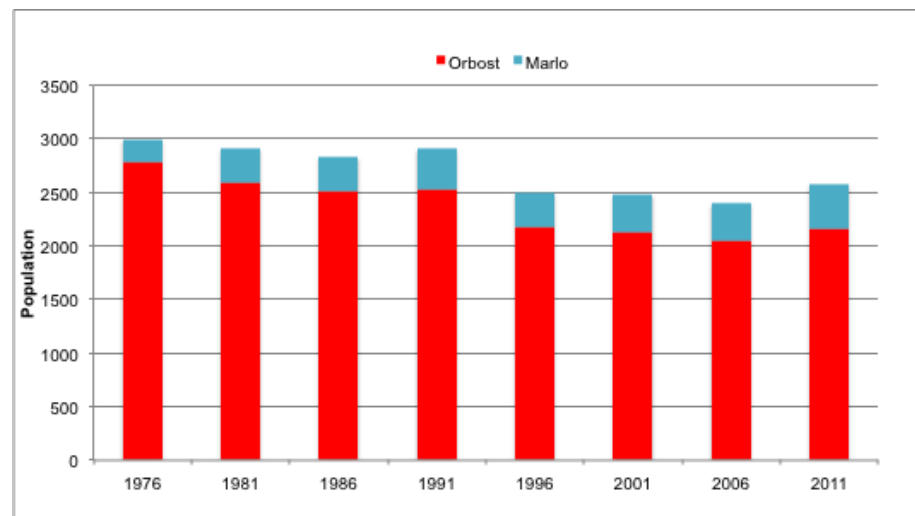
The industrial base of Orbost is diverse for a town that has historically been dependent on forestry. Industrial diversity in the town has increased over the past decade, suggesting there is some resilience in the local economy.

Housing in Orbost is amongst the most affordable in East Gippsland. By contrast, Marlo has much higher housing costs, making it one of the most expensive towns in the municipality. The presence of two distinct housing markets, attractive to different price points and groups, should be seen as an asset for the area.

### 2.1 Population and Demographic Change

#### *Population Size*

After a notable decrease during the 1980s and 90s, the population of the Orbost Township, and surrounding areas, has been relatively stable over the last decade (Figure 1). The population of Marlo is currently at its highest since the data became available (1976), with 423 residents in 2011.

Figure 1 Population change in Orbost and Marlo (1976-2011)<sup>1</sup>

Source: ABS, 1976, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011

The decline in population during the 1980s and 90s can be explained by a number of factors. These include:

- Restructuring of the public service. This included privatisation and rationalisation of various utilities, and local government amalgamation during the period.
- Structural changes in the agricultural and forestry industries. This includes a decline in the labour intensiveness of both industries during this period.
- A period of recession during the early 1990s.

As McKenzie (2012) notes, the population of Orbost, like other Victorian towns that have been historically dependent on forestry, has been relatively resilient despite the closure of sawmill facilities. McKenzie also points out that sawmill closures have mostly driven a change in the structure and profile of the population, rather than population size. This trend can be observed in Orbost, and is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

### ***Change in Age Structure***

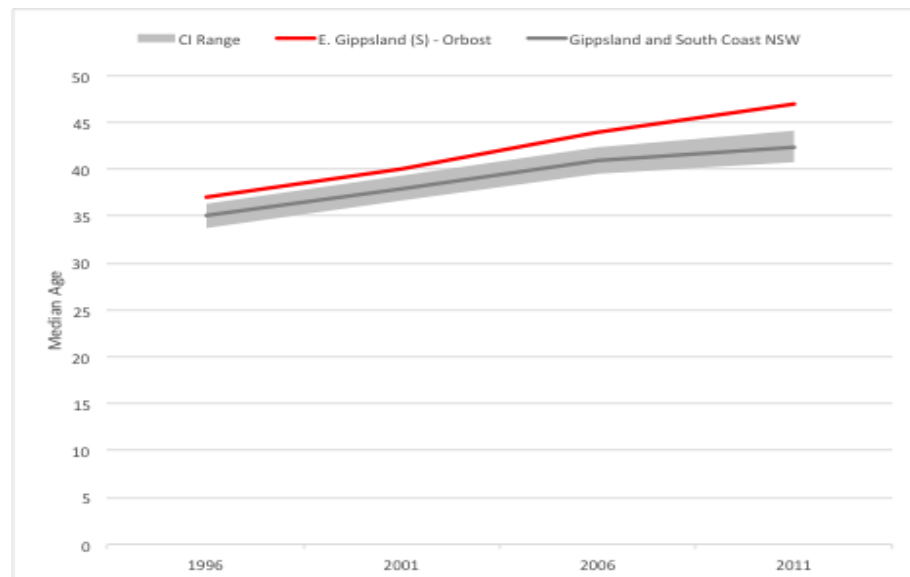
The central change in the structure of the Orbost community and economy is the ageing of the population. Over the last 15 years, the median age of the population in the Orbost Statistical Local Area (SLA)<sup>2</sup> has increased from 37 to 47 years old (Figure 2). The proportion of the population aged over 65 (the aged dependent) has increased from 14% in 1996 to 20% in 2013, largely at the expense of young dependents, whose share of total population declined from 24% to 19% during the same period (Figure 3). State Government projections show that aged dependency in the area will continue to increase in the coming decades (DPCD, 2011).

<sup>1</sup> The figures show the population within each town as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Urban Centre and Locality (UCL) geography. See Appendix 2 for further detail about this geography. Newmerella does not have a UCL area allocated by the ABS.

<sup>2</sup> The Orbost Statistical Local Area has geographically dispersed boundaries. The area captured in this SLA is described in Appendix 2. The geographical extent needs to be considered when interpreting these statistics. Orbost is, however, the major town and service centre within this wider area.

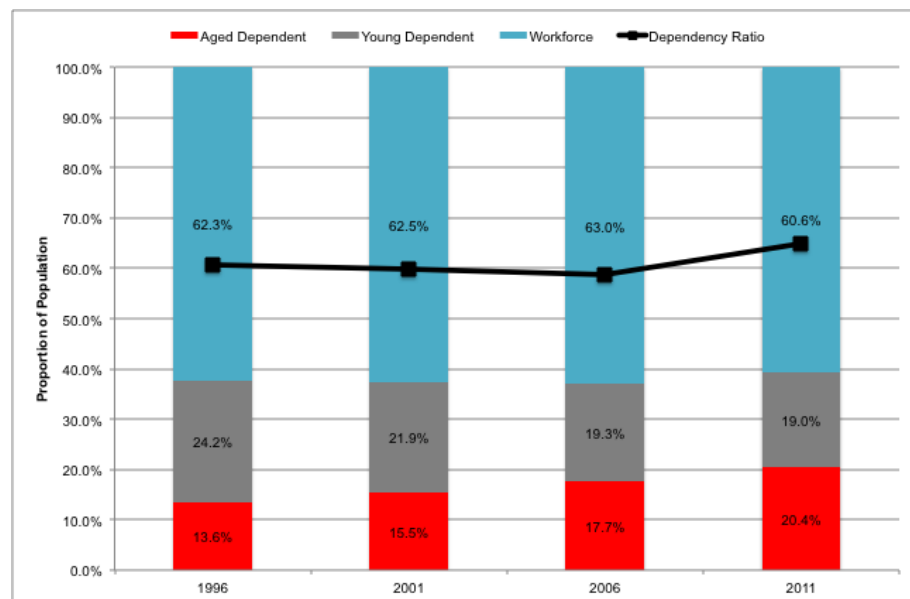


Figure 2 Change in median age in Orbost and regional area (2011)



Source: ABS, 2011

Figure 3 Change in age structure and dependency ratio (1996-2011) Orbost SLA



Source: ABS, 2011

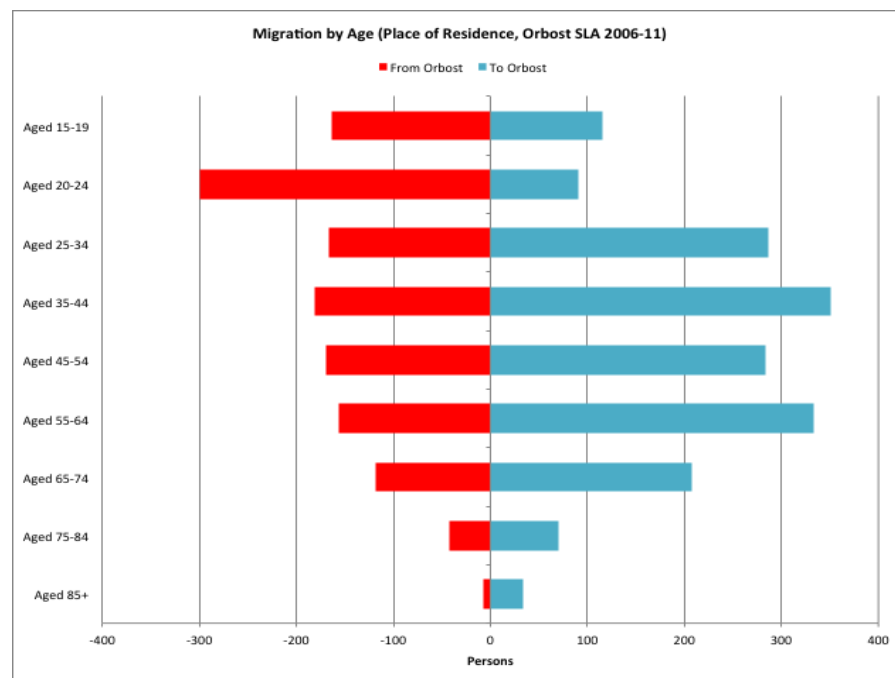
Orbost's ageing trend is not unique and is common to many other parts of rural and regional Australia. Moreover, smaller towns, especially those that are isolated, experience more rapid ageing than larger regional centres (Geografia, 2013). However, Figure 2 also shows that Orbost has an older population than the wider region (which includes Gippsland and the Far Southern NSW Coast). Additionally, the slowdown in the ageing of the population experienced elsewhere has not occurred in Orbost.

As with similar, small, relatively isolated towns, Orbost's ageing population is explained by a number of factors:

1. The ageing of the general Australian population (see Section 3.1).
2. Outward migration of younger adults, generally toward regional cities and Melbourne. As shown in Figure 4, a much higher number of 15 to 24 year olds have moved away from Orbost when compared to the number that have moved into the area in recent years.
3. Inward migration of older adults, especially retirees and those approaching retirement. Figure 4 illustrates the inward migration of residents at, or approaching, retirement age (i.e. aged 55 and above).

Figure 4 also shows that the Orbost SLA is attracting inward migration from working age adults (35-54). The net inward migration of this more productive employment group should be seen as a positive trend.

Figure 4 Inward and outward migration to/from Orbost SLA (2006-2011)<sup>3</sup>



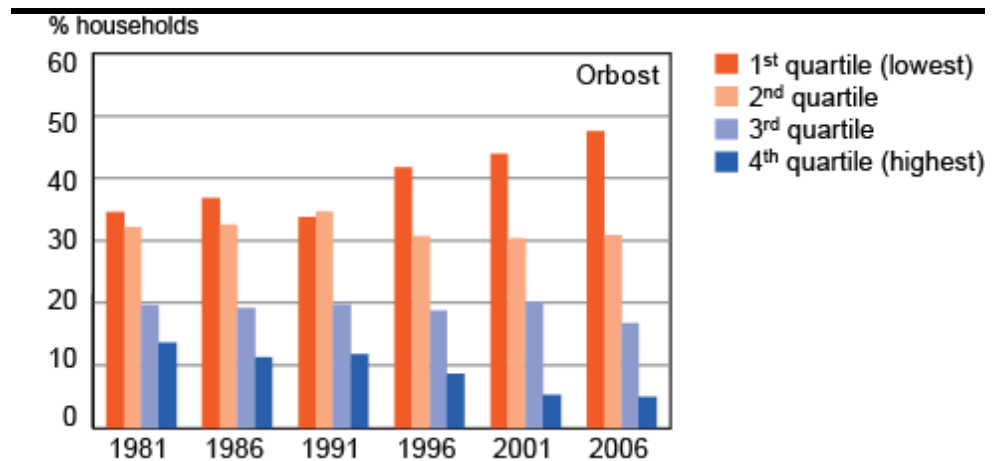
Source: ABS, 2011

### ***Change in Income Structure***

Over the course of the last thirty years, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of lower-income residents in Orbost. McKenzie (2011) found that the proportion of households that fall within the lowest income quartile has increased from around 35% to just under 50% in 2006 (Figure 5).

<sup>3</sup> This graph needs to be interpreted with caution, as the area encompassed by the Orbost SLA includes a very dispersed regional area including places such as Mallacoota, Buchan and Lake Tyers Beach. More detail is provided in Appendix 2.

Figure 5 Orbest income distribution by national quartiles (1981-2006)



Source: McKenzie, 2012

The increase in the proportion of low-income households, and a commensurate decrease in higher income households, can be explained by a number of factors, including:

- The restructuring of government services and administration (as described earlier). Higher income jobs associated with public administration employment in the area have generally declined.
- The ageing of the local population, with retirees and those approaching retirement generally in receipt of lower incomes.
- The affordability of Orbest (see Section 2.4), and the consequent attractiveness of the area to lower income groups.

## 2.2 Local Industries and Employment

### *Weakening Sectors*

In previous decades the Orbest economy has mostly been reliant on agriculture and forestry and the local employment profile shows that these industries are still the dominant employers in the area. Collectively, they account for approximately 500 jobs. The manufacturing sector, which includes some forestry related employment (i.e. sawmills), has also historically been a significant local employer (there were around 200 local jobs in this sector in 2011).

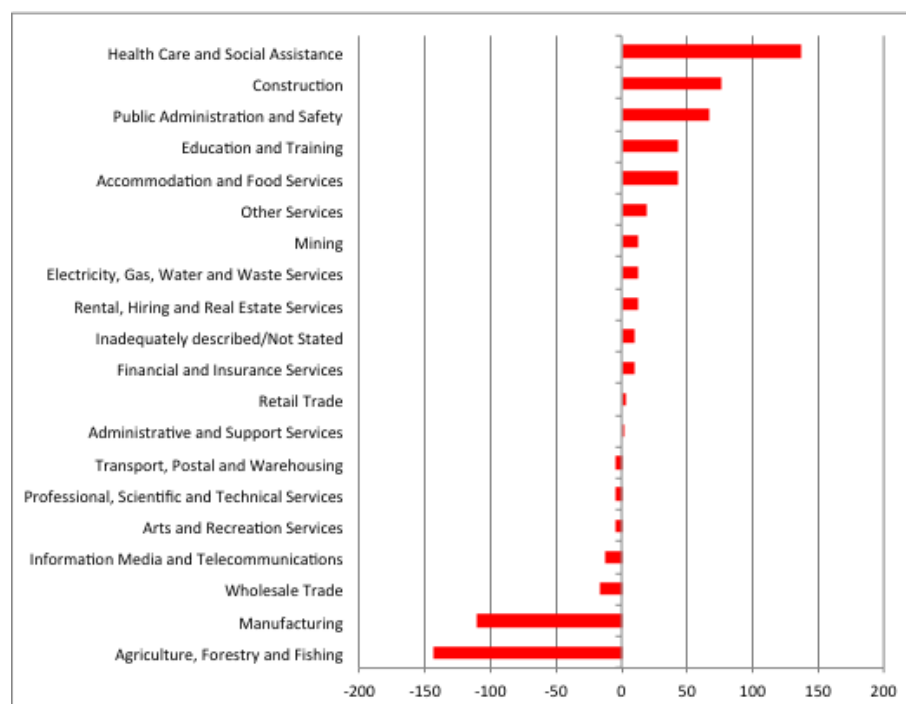
Since 2001, however, the number of Orbest SLA residents employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing sectors has declined. This can be attributed to:

- Changes in log allocations following the introduction of the State Government "Our Forests, Our Future" policy in 2002.
- Increased international competition in forestry related industries.
- The consequent closure of saw mills in the region.
- Decreasing labour intensity (i.e. a fewer number of employees required for each unit of output due to automation) in both the forestry and

agriculture sector. The issue of decreases in labour intensiveness in the agriculture sector is discussed in Section 3.2).

There are ongoing concerns surrounding the future of the forestry sector in the Orbost area. Although several sawmills continue to operate, consultation during this project revealed concerns about their long-term sustainability.

Figure 6 Change in industry of employment, Orbost SLA residents (2001-2011)



Source: ABS 2001, 2011

### **Growing Sectors**

Between 2006 and 2011 the total number of employed Orbost SLA residents increased by a net figure of 149. This would suggest that, despite the significant decline in employment in agriculture, forestry and manufacturing, other sectors have compensated for this. In fact, a number of sectors in the Orbost SLA show employment growth over the last ten years<sup>4</sup>, including:

- The health care and social assistance sector. An ageing population and increasing care expectations are the drivers of this growth and it reflects a trend across Australia more generally (see Section 3.1). The sector added around 130 local jobs between 2006 and 2011.
- The construction sector. Some consultation participants noted that there are a growing number of community members that work on interstate 'fly in, fly out' construction and mining sites. The growth of this sector may capture this trend. An additional 76 residents were employed in this sector in 2011 when compared to 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Changes in the employment of local residents (Place of Residence) data has been used at an SLA level to provide a proxy measure of local industry change given the high employment self-sufficiency of the local area. Comparative data is not available for Place of Work figures. The Orbost SLA has extremely high employment self-containment, therefore Place of Residence data is seen as a reasonable proxy measure of local industry change.

- Public administration and safety. An additional 67 residents were employed in this sector between 2006 and 2011.
- Education and training. An additional 43 residents worked in this sector between 2006 and 2011.
- Accommodation and Food Services. An additional 43 residents worked in this sector between 2006 and 2011. This is representative of transition toward a more service and experience based economy across Australia more generally during the period. Tourism related employment is generally captured in this sector.

### ***Employment Diversity***

The diversity of a local economy can be used as a measure of economic resilience. Economies that are overly dependent upon one or two sectors, or a small number of employers, are generally more susceptible to economic shocks and changes. Moreover, research suggests that such local economies are less flexible and responsive to change. This issue is discussed in some detail in Section 4.0.

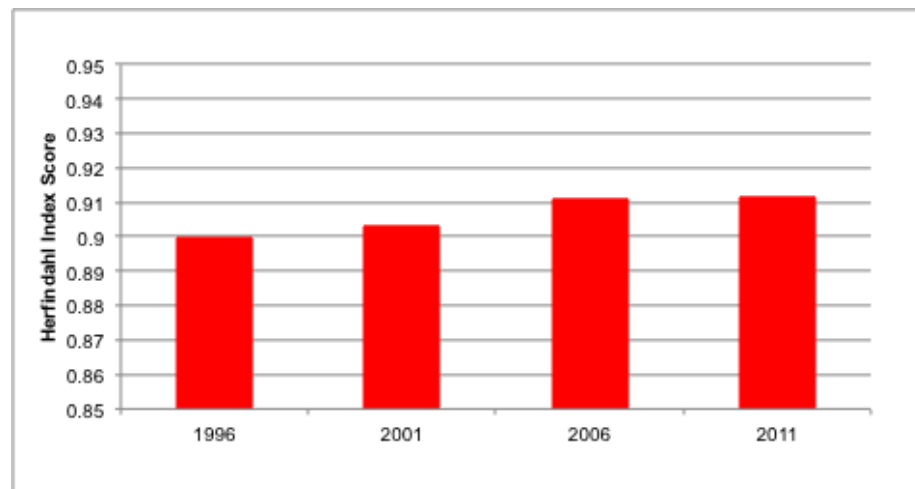
Figure 7 shows the employment diversity index<sup>5</sup> for Orbost experienced a modest increase between 1996 and 2011. Figure 8 compares employment diversity for Orbost with a mix of Australian towns that have had some historical reliance on the forestry industry and are similar in size to Orbost. Together, the figures suggest that Orbost's economy is relatively resilient. This is due to Orbost's role as a service centre (especially in regards to health services), coupled with the presence of other local industries (e.g. agriculture and tourism).

Despite ongoing challenges in the forestry industry, Orbost's economy benefits from more diversity than most other forestry towns. Moreover, the observation that employment diversity is increasing should be seen as a positive trend in the local economy. Ensuring this trend continues in the next decade will be a critical challenge.

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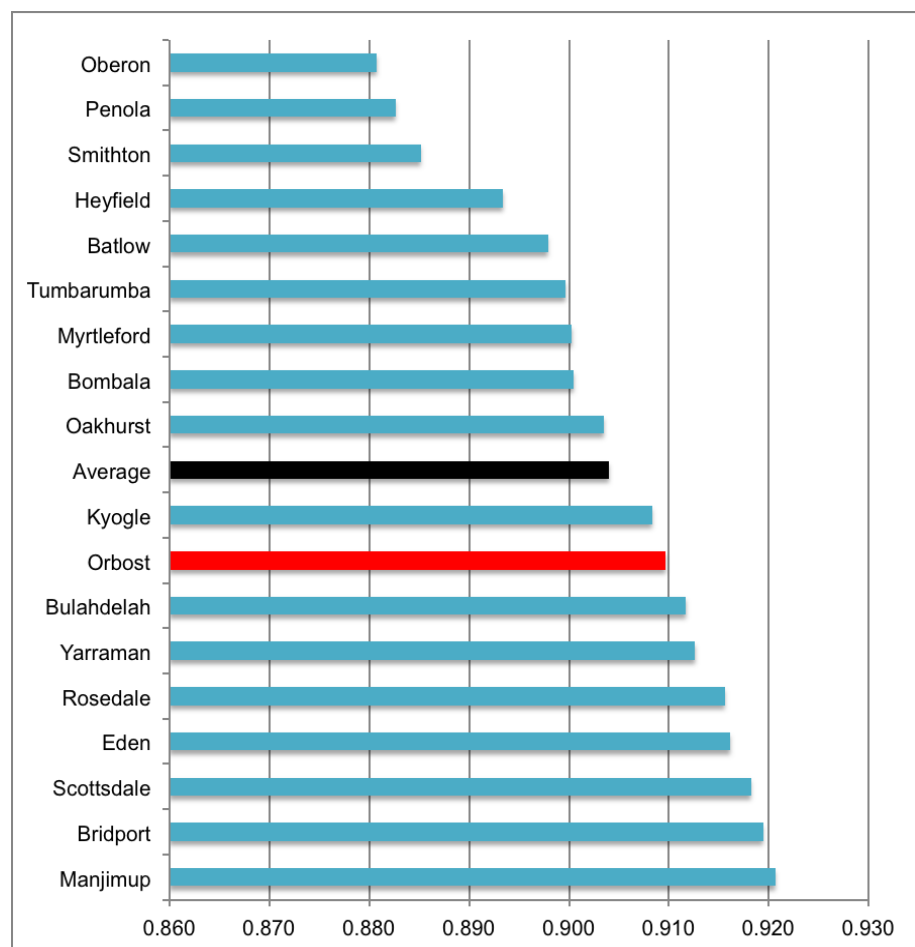
<sup>5</sup> This is the Herfindahl Index, in which a higher score (with 1.0 being the maximum) means a highly diverse economy.

Figure 7 Industrial diversity, place of residence, Orbost SLA (1996-2011)



Source: ABS, 2011

Figure 8 Industrial diversity, place of work, forestry towns (2011)



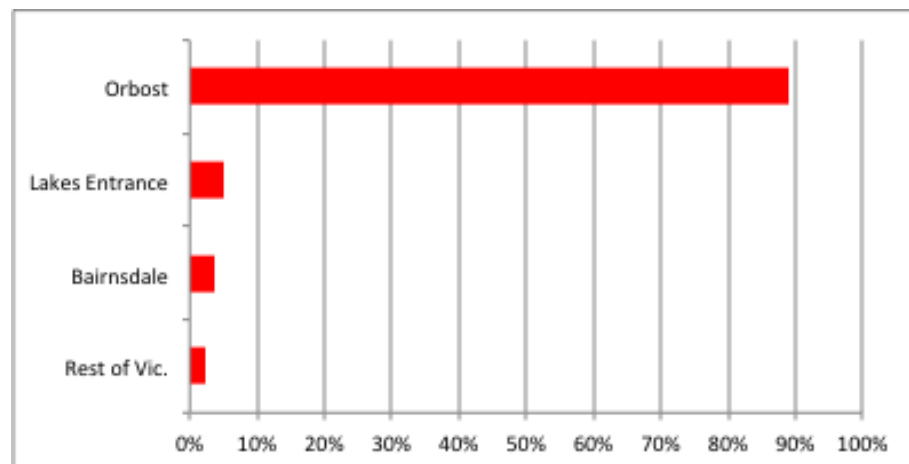
Source: ABS, 2011

### ***Economic Self-Containment***

Employment self-containment<sup>6</sup> in the Orbost SA2<sup>7</sup> is at 90% (Figure 9). This is a very high employment self-containment ratio and reflective of the spatial isolation of the area relative to major centres of employment. Not surprisingly, very few residents of the wider Orbost area (less than 10%) work in Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale.

The high employment self-containment ratio is a positive feature of the Orbost economy. Higher employment self-containment ratios are generally associated with lower levels of economic leakage, all other factors being equal. In other words, local residents would be less likely to purchase goods and services from outside because they are less likely to commute to outside areas for employment.<sup>8</sup> This is especially the case for high volume, non-discretionary, household goods such as groceries. Leakage in spending on lower volume, discretionary spending (e.g. electronics, entertainment, furniture, home goods) is less

Figure 9 Place of Work, Orbost SA2 Residents (2011)



Source: ABS, 2011

### **2.3 Education and Qualifications**

A notable predictor of economic resilience is the skills and capacity of a local workforce. Skilled workforces are more resilient and adaptive during periods of economic shock or transition. Moreover, skilled workforces can be important in attracting employers to local areas.

There is a lower level of educational attainment amongst younger adults in the Orbost area. Year 12 completion rates amongst 19 to 21 year olds, and the number of 20-24 year olds attending education or training is significantly lower than the State average (Figure 10). This is explained, at least in part, by the tendency for younger adults attending further education to leave the local area to access University, TAFE or apprenticeships. In this sense, the lower levels of education amongst this age group is not unusual, and does not depart significantly from the East Gippsland Shire average.

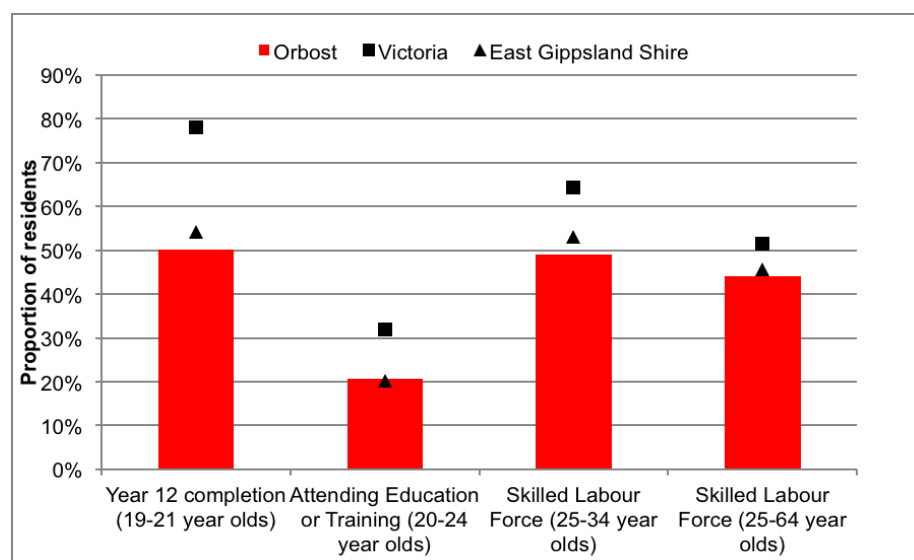
<sup>6</sup> The proportion of people who both live and work in the same area.

<sup>7</sup> The Orbost SA2 covers a similar area to the Orbost SLA. For further details, see Appendix 2.

<sup>8</sup> There is anecdotal evidence that suggests that a large number of Orbost residents may leave the area to buy goods from centres such as Bairnsdale, while attending sporting and social activities. This is likely to also influence economic leakage in the local community.

Skills amongst 25-64 year olds are substantially lower than the Victorian average, but similar to the level across East Gippsland Shire. This means that the local workforce can be considered to be less competitive than the Victorian workforce, although similar to East Gippsland generally. Additionally, when looking at adults who have recently become established in the workforce (25-34 year olds), there is a larger gap between skill levels amongst this age group in Orbost and the equivalent age group in Victoria and East Gippsland. In other words, younger adults in Victoria, East Gippsland and Orbost are all more skilled, but Orbost is becoming more skilled at a slower rate. This growing divergence in skill levels between Orbost and the wider regional and Victorian economies is an important consideration in the development of *Advancing Orbost 2020*.

Figure 10 Labour capacity and skill profile for Orbost SLA, East Gippsland and Victoria (2011)<sup>9</sup>



Source: ABS, 2011

## 2.4 Property Market

Figure 11 shows the median sales prices for homes in Orbost and Marlo, and compares these to Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale. Housing prices in Orbost have been persistently lower than other centres in East Gippsland and, in 2012, the median price was \$150,000. The relative affordability of housing in Orbost can be seen as an asset. As discussed in Section 5.0, consultation has suggested that affordability has been a major driver of migration to the area in recent years.

Marlo's median housing price is significantly higher at over \$300,000, reflecting the high amenity and ocean views in the town. The housing prices for Marlo exceed Lakes Entrance, another seaside location in the area. The higher-end Marlo housing market provides a complementary market to Orbost Township. In other words, there are a variety of housing segments, at different price points, in the area. These are likely to be attractive to different groups of people.

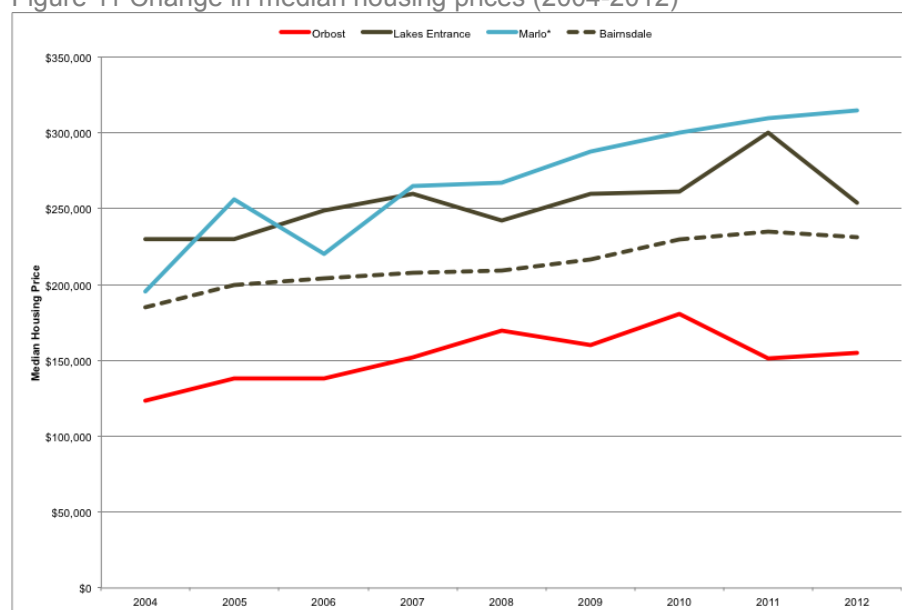
Over the past three years, the volume of housing stock on the market in postcode area 3888 (which encompasses Orbost, Marlo and the surrounding

<sup>9</sup> In line with Federal Government policy targets, 'skilled labour' is used here to define those with a qualification above Certificate Level II.



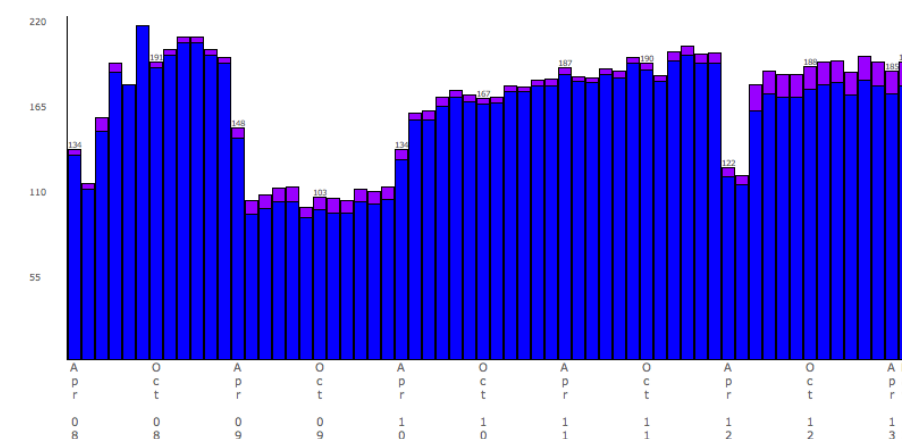
areas) has been largely consistent<sup>10</sup> at around 200 dwellings (Figure 12). Together with housing prices, this suggests the local market is in a state of general stability. The number of dwellings on the market is equivalent to 10% of houses in the 3888-postcode area, which reflects average market volumes in the Gippsland Region.

Figure 11 Change in median housing prices (2004-2012)<sup>11</sup>



Source: REA Group, 2013

Figure 12 Housing stock on market postcode 3888 (2008-2013)



Source: SQM Research, 2013

<sup>10</sup> The departure from trend in May and June 2012 appears to be due to a data error.

<sup>11</sup> The figure for Marlo includes a very small number of transactions per year. This needs to be considered in interpreting this figure.

## 2.5 Agricultural Production

Table 1 shows the 2012 quantity of agricultural production within Orbost SA2, as well as the area's share of statewide production for major local commodities.

A number of observations can be made:

1. A large number of both dairy and beef cattle are produced in the Orbost area. However, these account for a relatively low proportion of Victoria's headcount. Supply of cattle in the region are dispersed amongst multiple producers, rather than centralised with a few.
2. A large proportion (8.1%) of Victoria's maize is produced in the Orbost area. This industry is consolidated, with only two producers in the local area.
3. The number of sheep in the area accounts for a minor proportion of production across Victoria.

Table 1 Major Agricultural Commodity Production in Orbost SA2

| Commodity                                  | Victoria Count | Orbost SA2 Count | Number of agricultural businesses | Orbost SA2 Share of Victorian Production |
|--|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - Total (no.)     | 1,604,009      | 13,395           | 46                                | 0.8%                                     |
| Livestock - Meat cattle - Total (no.)      | 2,365,850      | 39,924           | 240                               | 1.7%                                     |
| Livestock - Sheep - Total sheep (no.)      | 15,212,015     | 29,220           | 77                                | 0.2%                                     |
| Cereal crops - Maize for grain - Area (ha) | 1,559          | 127              | 2                                 | 8.1%                                     |

Source: ABS, 2012

Further figures around local agricultural commodity production, and the contribution to state production, from East Gippsland is detailed in Appendix 6.

Overall, there appears to be strategic advantages in the East Gippsland area in the following sectors that may warrant further investigation in the context of Orbost:

- Dairy cattle
- Meat cattle
- Vegetable production
- Maize production
- Seed production
- Flower and nursery sectors

### 3.0 Macro-Level Drivers

#### Summary

Macro-economic forces, social trends and government policy impact on the future of the Orbst economy. Economic planning should respond to, and take advantage of, the following major drivers:

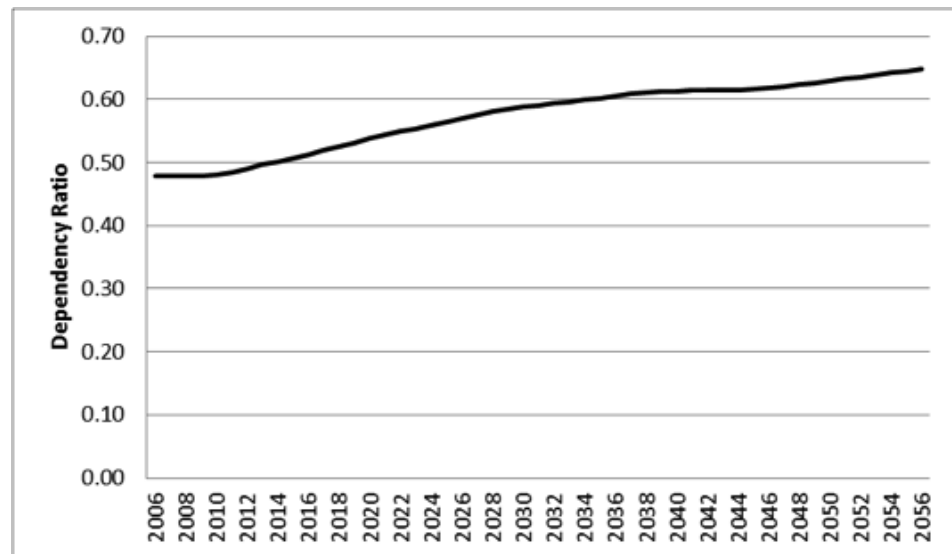
1. An ageing population and forecast growth in the health care sector. This sector will be the main driver of employment in Victoria in the coming decades.
2. Within the agricultural sector - increasing capital intensiveness, decreasing labour intensiveness, and the need to attract investment to expand output to respond to global market expansion. Employment growth will be increasingly associated with value adding to agricultural production and food manufacturing.
3. Renewable energy targets and the ongoing movement toward alternative energy sources.
4. Ongoing structural changes in the economy facilitated by evolving communications speeds and technologies.
5. Within the tourism sector – volatility in the face of economic conditions and changing consumer trends, as well as shifts in government policy. There are opportunities for employment growth due to labour intensiveness of the industry and low barriers to entry.

There are a number of key economic and social trends that are likely to shape the Orbst economy over the coming decades. These need to be considered when identifying the strategic opportunities and directions for the Orbst economy.

#### 3.1 Ageing Population and Healthcare

Over the coming decades, the Australian economy will experience the effects of an ageing population. Figure 13 shows the projected dependency ratio in Victoria. This is a measure of the number of non-working age persons for each working age person. The figure shows that, in Victoria, by 2054, the dependency ratio will increase from 0.5 in 2013 to 0.65 in 2054.

Figure 13 Projected dependency ratio, Victoria (2006-2056)



Source: Geografia; ABS (Cat 3222.0)

The impacts of the ageing population for rural areas such as Orbost include:

- Increased demand for health and ageing services and facilities. These include aged care services, retirement homes, medical services and in-home care.
- Decreasing per capita productivity, as the proportional size of the working age population decreases. Implications for local economies include reduced discretionary household spending, and reduced investment interest.
- Increasing competition for skills and labour.
- Changes in the demand of housing stock. This may include greater demand for smaller housing stock, and the retirement of farmers into townships.
- Complexities in succession planning for the agricultural sector. As the population ages and younger population groups increasingly reside in urban areas, there is less labour available to manage and operate farms.

From 2005 to 2010, the health care and social assistance sector added the most jobs in Victoria. During the same period, it was the second fastest growing sector in Australia after mining and job growth in the sector is expected to continue (APWA, 2013). This will be driven by ageing; increases in lifestyle related diseases; higher expectations of health care; and the labour intensive nature of the industry.

### 3.2 Agribusiness

A number of key trends that can be observed in the agribusiness industry are discussed below. Given the significance of the agricultural industry to the Orbost economy, it is important to consider the impact of these trends in the local context.

#### *Increasing demand for meat and dairy*

There is increasing worldwide and domestic demand for many agricultural commodities, coupled with significant constraints in the supply of such commodities. Meat and dairy industries, both well represented in the Orbost

area, generally benefit from a positive market outlook for supply side actors (IBISWorld, 2012).

#### ***Decreasing labour intensiveness***

The agricultural industry has been shifting from an employment intensive industry toward a technology and capital-intensive sector. Despite growth in agribusiness revenue over the last decade, there has been a decline in employment. Growing corporate interest in the industry is likely to drive further changes to employment, including more use of contract labour (IBISWorld, 2012). Employment growth in the agribusiness sector is increasingly associated with vertically integrated businesses such as packing, washing, transport or food production.

#### ***Corporate interest, industry consolidation and vertical integration***

There is notable corporatisation and consolidation occurring within the Australian agriculture sector and interest from larger companies to purchase or lease family farms. The consequence is that a smaller number of farms are accounting for a larger share of output. Corporatisation and consolidation of farms is driving increases in efficiency, capital investment, and changes to employment. Vertically integrated companies (e.g. food manufacturers) are especially interested in agricultural production investment.

#### ***Foreign investment***

There is increasing interest in Australian agribusiness from foreign investors, and opportunities related to capital investment from this group. Overseas investors have seen the Australian agricultural industry as being undervalued due to limited investment by Australia's institutional investors. Studies undertaken for Regional Development Victoria suggest that attracting additional overseas investment into the sector in Victoria can be a significant source of growth (McKinna et al., 2010). There are recent examples of active foreign investment in dairy processing industry the Gippsland Region.

#### ***Volatility and instability***

Due to the influence of external factors, volatility and unpredictability in the industry is expected to continue. These uncontrollable, external factors include currency fluctuations, international competition and market prices, and climatic patterns. Communities that are overly dependent upon the agricultural sector are likely to experience increasingly high levels of risk and economic volatility.

#### ***Boutique production***

With the growing corporatisation of the agribusiness sector, many smaller farms and producers are tending to focus on specialised items or markets. Notably, a recent international study of small farming networks found that, amongst other things, the viability of boutique production relies on innovation in commodity mix, farm practices and management (Bradley, 2012).

### **3.3 Energy Markets**

The Commonwealth Government has implemented a national renewable energy target (RET), which requires that 20% of energy comes from renewable sources by 2020. The Federal Coalition has indicated that, should it be elected, it will continue to support this policy. The compulsory target, coupled with decreasing capital costs in the renewable sector, a developing carbon market, and changing consumer preferences, has resulted in substantial investment in the renewable

sector since the early 2000s. These trends are expected to see continued interest and investment.

The Poyry report prepared on behalf of the VAFI (see Section 1) provides some more detailed analysis surrounding the potential for bio-fuels and bio-energy derived from local forest resources. The report notes a number of barriers to pursuing opportunities in this area, including the general financial feasibility of such projects, and legislative impediments. Other stakeholders in the Orbost community continue to explore opportunities for bio-fuels. Integrating smaller scale, bio-energy projects with other processing or manufacturing facilities may provide an opportunity in the short to medium term.

### 3.4 Communications and Broadband

The National Broadband Network (NBN) is expected to have a significant impact on work, education and health practices in regional and isolated areas that experience poor access to services, facilities and markets (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012; DBCDE, 2011). It will:

- Reduce the location-specific nature of some industry sectors, allowing for greater decentralisation of businesses and employment.
- Provide access to larger markets for small and home-based businesses, especially in isolated areas.
- Enhance opportunities for employees to work from home or remotely (tele-working). It is envisaged that tele-working will promote workforce participation, especially amongst the mature aged, and households requiring work flexibility (Deloitte Access Economics, 2012).
- Increase access to education, health and government services in isolated communities. This will include the use of online learning environments to access vocational training and higher education, and tele-health services to respond to an ageing population.
- Increase productivity for businesses in many sectors such as manufacturing, design, logistics and health.

In the event of a change of government, a national high-speed Internet network will still be rolled out, although it will be based on a 'fibre to the node', rather than 'fibre to the home' design. In this instance, households or businesses will be required to provide additional payment for connection to nodes.

There is no NBN installation scheduled within the Orbost area in the next three years. Any benefits associated with higher speed Internet connections are not likely to be experienced in the short term.

### 3.5 Tourism

An area such as Orbost primarily caters to the domestic tourism market. At a macro-level, Australia's domestic visitation has seen a period of slow growth over the last five years. IBISWorld (2012) makes the following forecasts in regard to the domestic visitor tourism market over the next five years:

- Timid growth in domestic tourism expenditure.
- Increasing demand for domestic air travel, at the expense of other forms of transport.
- Sensitivity to any economic downturn, due to the discretionary nature of tourism expenditure.
- Sensitivity to any increase in oil prices, especially for car based domestic tourism.

The tourism industry is primarily service based and therefore labour intensive. According to IBISWorld (2012), 30% of costs in accommodation are from labour. The figure is 20% in food services. In this sense, small increases in local tourism activity have the potential to have a disproportionately large benefit on local employment opportunities when compared to other industries. Relative to other sectors, capital investment requirements are also relatively low. This reduces the barriers to entry for small and medium size operators.

The nature-based tourism segment (including adventure-based tourism) is considered a substantial sub-market within tourism. It accounts for approximately 37% of domestic overnight visitation in Victoria (DSE, 2008) and it is arguably the segment that is most relevant to the Orbost area.

Government policy is increasingly favourable to tourism related development in national parks in Victoria and the State Government will now allow sensitive tourism related private sector developments within national parks. Enabling legislation was introduced in 2012, and a process has been implemented for the assessment of projects. In general, it appears that the policy changes are designed to attract more major projects that are targeted toward growing the international nature-based tourism market in Victoria.

## 4.0 Learning From Other Towns

### Summary

A review was undertaken into best practice local economic development in rural towns, using both case studies and literature. The key drivers of economic prosperity in small towns experiencing economic transition include:

1. Strong social capital
2. Self-reliance and embracing change
3. Attracting and retaining population
4. Catalytic businesses
5. Local entrepreneurialism
6. Strong branding and image
7. Economic diversity and resilience
8. Finding opportunities to value-add to primary industries
9. Prioritising local ownership and investment

A review was undertaken into best practice local economic development in rural towns, using both case studies and literature. The review focused on towns that have experienced a major economic transition from an existing industry base, such as forestry. The key findings of this review are discussed in the table below.

Table 2 Summary of Best Practice Local Economic Development

| Key Learning                                 | Description   | Example   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>1. Social capital</b>                     | <p>Social capital is the level of cooperation and the quality of social networks within a local community. Interaction, trust, a collective focus, and participation are key determinants of economic development in small towns (Bell &amp; Kilpatrick, 2000).</p> <p>Perhaps the most tangible and direct outcome of strong social capital is the establishment of community cooperatives or social enterprises (Evans, 2003). Social capital has other economic benefits such as keeping expenditure in the local area, promoting the local ownership of businesses, and building investment networks.</p> | <p><b>Casterton Cooperative Hardware, VIC</b></p> <p>An example of the outcome of strong community capital in a small town. Realising a commercial and social need the local community pooled investment to open a cooperative hardware store. The store retains local expenditure that would otherwise escape, and provides a crucial supply chain role in the agriculture sector.</p> |
| <b>2. Self-reliance and embracing change</b> | <p>A significant challenge for towns historically based on forestry is how to move away from a reliance on one major industry and on government or external involvement.</p> <p>Kenyon (2001) notes that the largest barrier to economic development in many towns is understanding, accepting and embracing change. Local economic development in towns that are experiencing transition may need to</p>   | <p><b>Deloraine, TAS</b></p> <p>In the face of ongoing decline of the forestry industry, community events have provided a major channel for economic activity. New Year's Eve events also focus on celebrating the town's history and identity. These attract outsiders, as well as building town identity. Smaller events have snowballed into larger</p>                              |



| Key Learning                                  | Description  | Example  |
|---|--|--|
|   | focus on cultural change in a local community as a base for economic change. Towns that promote broad participation and 'bottom up' economic development are more likely to develop economic resilience.   | events that have significant economic benefit such as the Tasmania Craft Festival (30,000 visitors).   |
| <b>3. Attracting and retaining population</b> | Social capital also has a key role to play in attracting and retaining population in a small town such as Orbost. Towns that have strong connections, a proud community and a strong identity are likely to retain and attract more community members with higher levels of economic capacity.   | <b>Balingup, Western Australia</b><br><br>High levels of liveability and social capital drove population growth after significant decline in the 1960s and 70s. Participatory planning and a strong community identity were drivers of this growth (Kenyon & Black, 2001).   |
| <b>4. Catalyst businesses</b>                 | Towns that have faced significant problems but have successfully transitioned are often characterised by a catalyst business. A catalyst business is generally a very prominent business that attracts attention from outside areas as well as internally. Catalyst businesses will often provide the basis for the development of a town identity, and excite and energise a local community.     | <b>Beechworth Bakery, Victoria</b><br><br>Established in 1984 in Beechworth, a town of 3,000 approximately 3 hours' drive from Melbourne. Now employs over 65 staff in the town, \$3 million annual turnover (Kenyon, 2002). The business has had a strong impact on changing the outlook and participation in a formerly declining town.  |
| <b>5. Entrepreneurship</b>                    | Related to catalyst businesses is the need for entrepreneurialism in a local area. Entrepreneurialism in a small town can be at an individual, small group or community-wide level. Various programs have been trialled in local communities that focus on encouraging entrepreneurialism, business skills and risk taking amongst youth. Youth competitions and grants are a key enabling device. | <b>Gulgambone, NSW</b><br><br>The community realised that the traditional model of a visitor information centre required reinvention and did not meet market desires. Entrepreneurially, the community created a combined information centre, café and gallery with a unique feel. The facility was more attractive to local community members and more financially self-sufficient. |
| <b>6. Branding and Image</b>                  | The development of a strong brand that resonates both locally and with outsiders has been a turning point for many towns.<br><br>Key learning from other towns include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need for brand to receive commitment from the wider</li> </ul>  | <b>Batlow, NSW</b><br><br>Traditionally associated with forestry, Batlow has recently developed a strong brand around local apple produce. The brand is extended to all aspects of town marketing including population attraction and events (e.g. Cider Festival  |

| Key Learning                            | Description   | Example  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <p>community, potentially through participative processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for a brand to be unique</li> <li>• Building a brand by using it across different events, local produce, businesses and signage is important.</li> <li>• Regularly refreshing a local brand in line with changing tastes and expectations.</li> </ul>  | in the town centre).   |
| <b>7. Diversity and Resilience</b>      | It is essential that local economies are not reliant on one or two major industries, or one or two major employers. Local economic development should seek to diversify the base of local economies, by pursuing projects in a mix of sectors. More diversity means that the local economy can “quarantine” the effects of a shock. Relying solely on individual major projects to drive economic development can create a risk in the longer term. | <b>Various</b><br>Various local governments have used techniques to organically grow a more diverse industry base. Mechanisms have included seed funding and grant programs, small business clusters, sectoral expert development officers in council and supporting home based businesses.                      |
| <b>8. Value Adding</b>                  | A decrease in labour intensity in many primary industries requires an increasing focus on how to grow vertically integrated businesses. These are generally more labour intensive, particularly in agriculture.   | <b>Lindenow, East Gippsland</b><br>Vegetable production in Lindenow is a local example of capturing value-adding activities in a traditional industry. The development of vegetable washing, packing and logistics businesses has created significant employment on the back of the local horticulture industry. |
| <b>9. Local Ownership and Financing</b> | Evidence shows that companies that are locally owned provide much greater economic and social outcomes than outside owned businesses. A growing number of economic development practitioners in the United States (e.g. Shuman, 2013) advocate strongly for local ownership as the key toward increasing self-reliance and local control in small townships. Various financing mechanisms can be used to encourage local ownership.                 | <b>Common Capital Holyoke, United States</b><br><br>A local fund in Western Massachusetts provides loans and business assistance to enterprises in the local area. Investors are able to invest in the fund collectively with a view toward diversifying the risk profile of their investments.                  |

## 5.0 Key Consultation Findings

### Summary

The key economic issues that arose during consultation included the lack of local employment opportunities, lack of opportunities for younger adults, the perceived lack of economic diversity, and the perception that the local population is shrinking. These topics featured prominently in both the community survey and consultation with businesses and community groups.

Business sentiment in the town is generally low. This sentiment was captured through the survey, as well as business consultation. There was particular concern about the future of the retail sector in Orbst from businesses and community members.

There are high levels of community pride and participation in the town. The large attendance, and positive attitude at the community forum, suggest that there is an appetite for change in large parts of the community. There also appears to be an interest in participating in the economic future of the town and becoming more self-reliant. The value of community cohesion and participation in small town economic development was discussed in Section 4.

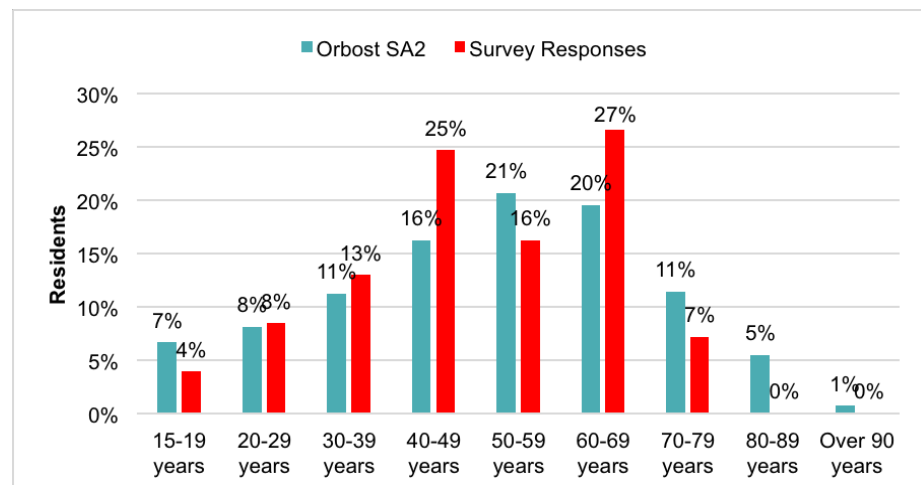
Consultation suggested there is a smaller group within the community that is more apathetic to change. Amongst parts of the community, there is attachment to the idea that external actors can stimulate the local economy (through a major new industry or project) rather than focusing on self-reliance and development. This is perhaps explained by Orbst's historical reliance on some state controlled industries and institutions.

The community values the liveability and amenity of the local area, and sees this as an important economic asset. This includes the local climate, the natural wilderness and the agricultural environment. The survey results suggest that the Orbst community envisions a local economy that builds upon these assets in order to grow the agriculture and tourism sectors, and the size of the local population. There was a high interest in the branding and identity of the town, and the role this can play in local economic development.

A community survey was made available on-line and in hardcopy format at the Orbst Library for a period of one month during July 2013. A total of 180 valid responses were received during this period. To reduce bias in the online version of the survey, the order of different answer options was randomised. Appendix 3 provides detailed results for all survey questions not addressed in this section.

The survey attracted responses from a range of age groups. As shown in Figure 14, there was a slight over-representation of 40-49 years olds and 60-69 year olds, when compared to population profile of the Orbst area. Overall, however, the survey captured a good representation of views within the community. Targeted consultation with key stakeholders and groups (such as the secondary school) was undertaken to complement the survey.

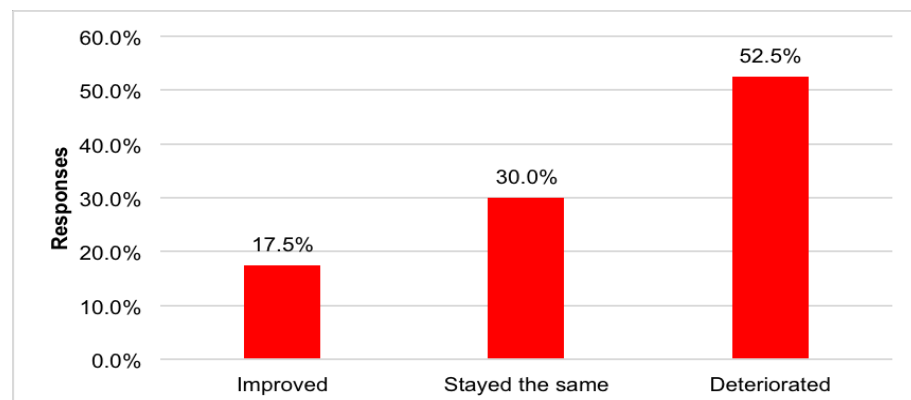
Figure 14 Age profile of survey respondents, compared to Orbst SA2 age profile



### 5.1 Business Sentiment

The survey captured the views of 40 local business operators. The business outlook can be described as generally pessimistic with over half of surveyed businesses expecting business conditions to deteriorate in the next five years (Figure 15). Compared to similar surveys recently undertaken by Geografia, sentiment in the Orbst area is relatively pessimistic. The large number of retail businesses that answered the survey may influence this result (see Appendix 3).

Figure 15 Local business expectations for the next five years



### 5.2 Economic Challenges

Survey respondents were asked to nominate the biggest economic issues in the community. Overwhelmingly, this was the lack of local employment opportunity. This was followed by concerns about the low level of economic diversity, perceptions regarding a shrinking population, and the lack of opportunities for younger people.

Figure 16 Biggest economic issues



The results of the survey largely reflect the concerns that the community and stakeholders raised during consultation. The lack of opportunities for younger people in the community was a particularly prominent issue. As was the visible decline of the retail sector in the Orbost, especially the number of shops experiencing difficulties or closing in the town centre.

### 5.3 Economic Assets and Vision

Survey respondents were asked to consider Orbost's economic assets and their vision for the Orbost economy. A key message that came from both the survey and the community forum was the community's value of the agricultural sector (Figure 17). In terms of a vision for the local economy, the desire for a prosperous farming and agricultural sector also featured prominently (Figure 18).

A second theme to receive prominence in the survey was the community's value of the local natural environment (Figure 17). Not surprisingly, opportunities related to nature-based tourism featured prominently in the community's vision for the Orbost economy.

The amenity and liveability of the Orbost area is a third theme that emerged from the survey results and the wider consultation program with the community seeing this as a significant local asset. The opportunity to leverage this to attract residents to the area is represented in the survey responses.

Figure 17 Greatest economic assets

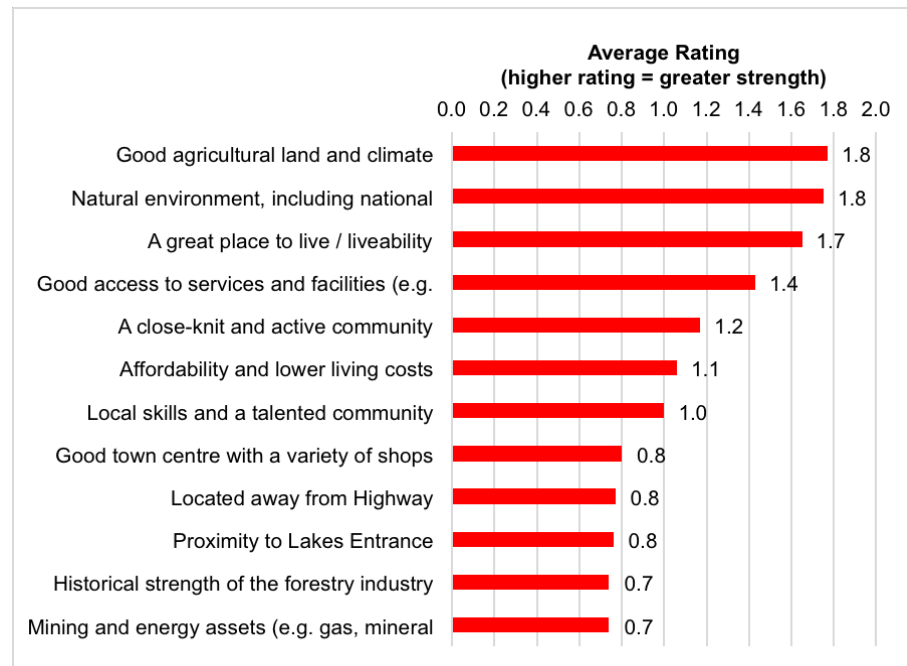
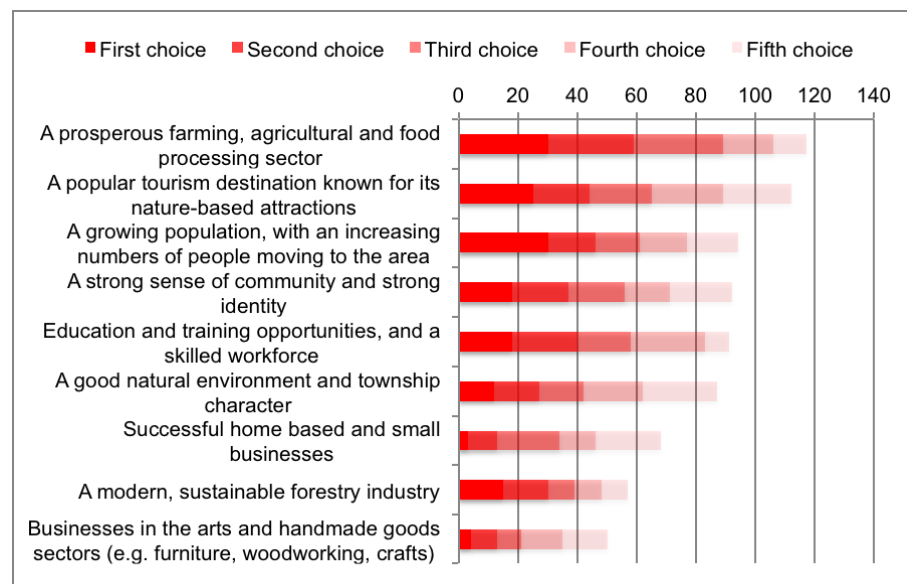


Figure 18 Vision for the Orbest economy



#### 5.4 Taking Economic Action

Survey respondents were asked to consider what priority steps should be taken to address the local economic issues they had identified. Attracting new businesses, growing local tourism, enhancing township character and amenities, and agricultural investment featured prominently.

Figure 19 Priorities for economic action



Survey respondents were also asked about their interest in participating in various community-based economic development initiatives. There was significant interest in organising local events and festivals, as well as in sharing and teaching skills to others in the community (Figure 19).

#### 5.5 Major Themes From the Community Workshop

On the evening of Tuesday 30/8/2013, a community forum was hosted at the Snowy Rovers Football Club. The forum attracted 65 community members and participants rotated between five small-group discussions focused on various themes. The intention of the forum was to discuss economic opportunities and ideas relating to each theme, rather than focusing on issues in the community.

Figure 20 Interest in participating in community-based economic activities



A number of key themes emerged from the community forum:

- Similar to the survey, a large emphasis was placed on the value of the **natural environment** in the local area and the opportunities to leverage this for tourism. Specific ideas that arose during the forum and received significant support included the development of an outdoor education centre, and more local cycling tourism.
- Opportunities for **boutique and alternative agricultural activity** featured prominently in the workshop, particularly related to helping build local tourism. There was substantial discussion regarding trialling alternative crops in the local area and in regard to opportunities for a community cooperative to promote agricultural activity.
- The **branding** of the town received significant attention over the course of the evening. Many community members discussed the need for Orbost to consider its identity, and expressed their views about what it might be. The relationship between internal town identity and external marketing or branding were discussed.
- Opportunities in **home-based care**, particularly for older persons, were widely discussed. Community members saw this as preferable for the community and saw potential to create local employment in this area.
- With regard to the **economic future for local youth**, community members agreed this should be a particular area of attention. Major ideas that emerged from the forum included the need to mentor local youth, funding youth programs, incorporating opportunities for youth into all economic development projects.

Before leaving, participants were asked to record the best idea they had heard during the evening, and to identify the next action that would be required to realise this idea. A total of 45 responses were collected and these are provided in Appendix 4.



## 5.0 Modelling the Impact of Potential Interventions

The economic impact of some potential economic outcomes has been analysed in Table 4 below. The impacts have been calculated using Geografia's Scenario Planner.

A hypothetical project generating 20 FTEs in food processing (manufacturing) is estimated to generate some 35.5 new FTEs in the region and \$1.9m in annual GRP. Taking into account the expected employment self-containment and age profile for that industry, it is also estimated to attract up to 41 new residents (including workers and their families).

For a small-scale tourism venture employing 5 FTEs, the total impact on local jobs is 7.4, with \$330,000 in additional GRP and up to 9 new residents.

In the case of an aged care development, 10 new FTEs is estimated to generate 13 new FTEs; \$750,000 in GRP and almost 14 new residents.

The closure of a sawmill, assuming 30 FTE jobs at the mill, is likely to result in a total loss of some 53 FTEs in the Orbost region, a reduction in GRP by around \$2.9m and, absent any new job opportunities, an out-migration of approximately 61 residents.

These estimates are relatively conservative mean values.

Table 3 Modelling the multiplier impact of economic outcomes

| Project              | Change in Full Time Equivalent Employment (FTE) | Total Impact (FTEs) | Total Impact (GRP) | Total Impact (Residents) |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Food Processing      | +20   | +35.5               | +\$1.9m            | +41                      |
| Tourism Enterprise   | +5  | +7.4                | +\$330,000         | +9                       |
| Aged Care Enterprise | +10   | +13                 | +\$750,000         | +14                      |
| Sawmill closure      | -30   | -53                 | -\$2.9m            | -61                      |

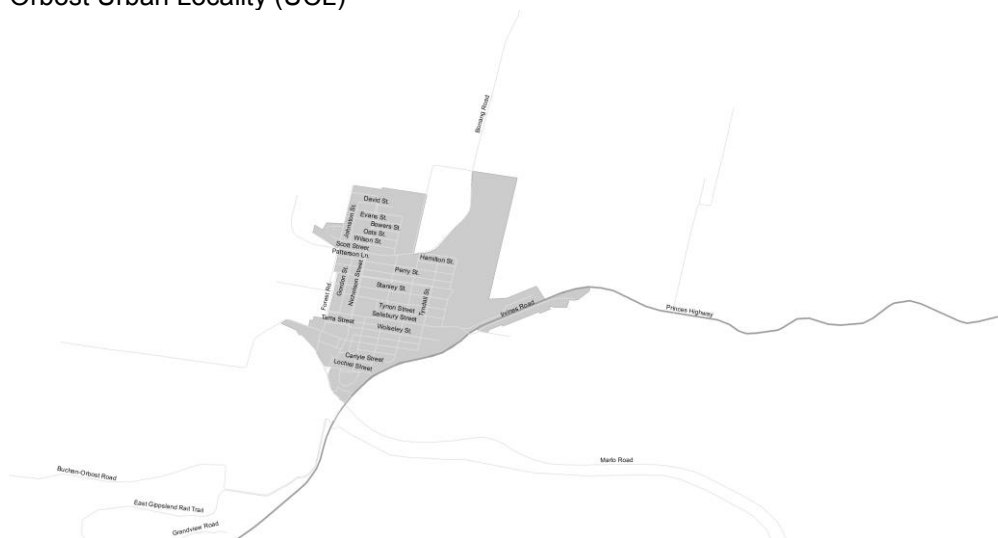
Source: Geografia Scenario Planner, 2013

## **Appendix 1: Individual Businesses and Organisations Consulted**

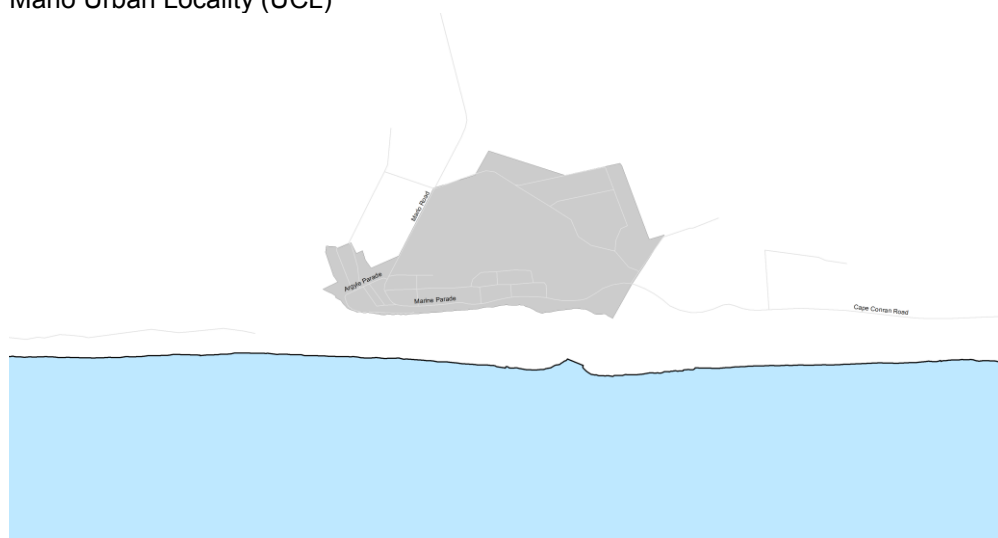
1. Orbest Motel
2. Orbest Women's Awareness Group
3. Orbest Neighbourhood House
4. Orbest Exhibition Centre
5. Feastonart Gallery
6. Orbest Health Service
7. Orbest Men's Shed
8. Wyndham Real Estate
9. Workways
10. Victorian Farmers Federation
11. East Gippsland Food Cluster
12. Orbest Secondary College
13. HSR Seeds
14. Murray Goulburn
15. New Bakery Operators
16. Orbest Agricultural Show
17. Snowy River Proteas
18. Snowy River Cycling
19. Auswest Timbers
20. Herberts Builders
21. Moogji Aboriginal Council
22. Marcus Oldham College Rural Entrepreneurship Program
23. Chooky's Roost
24. Regional Development Victoria
25. Old Butter Factory Owners
26. Parks Victoria
27. Victorian Association of Forest Industries (VAFI)
28. Bonaccord

## Appendix 2: Geographical Definitions

### Orbost Urban Locality (UCL)



### Marlo Urban Locality (UCL)



Orbost SA2

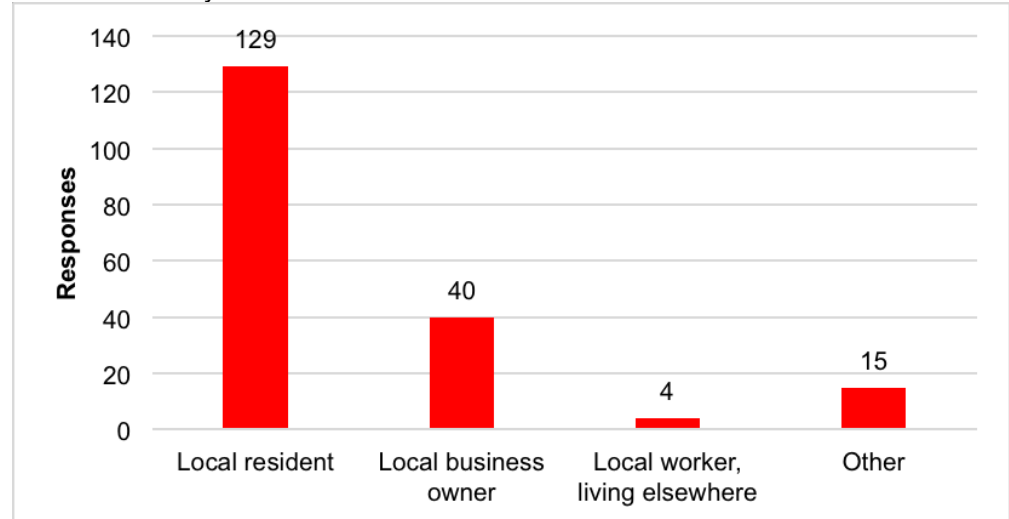


## Orbost SLA

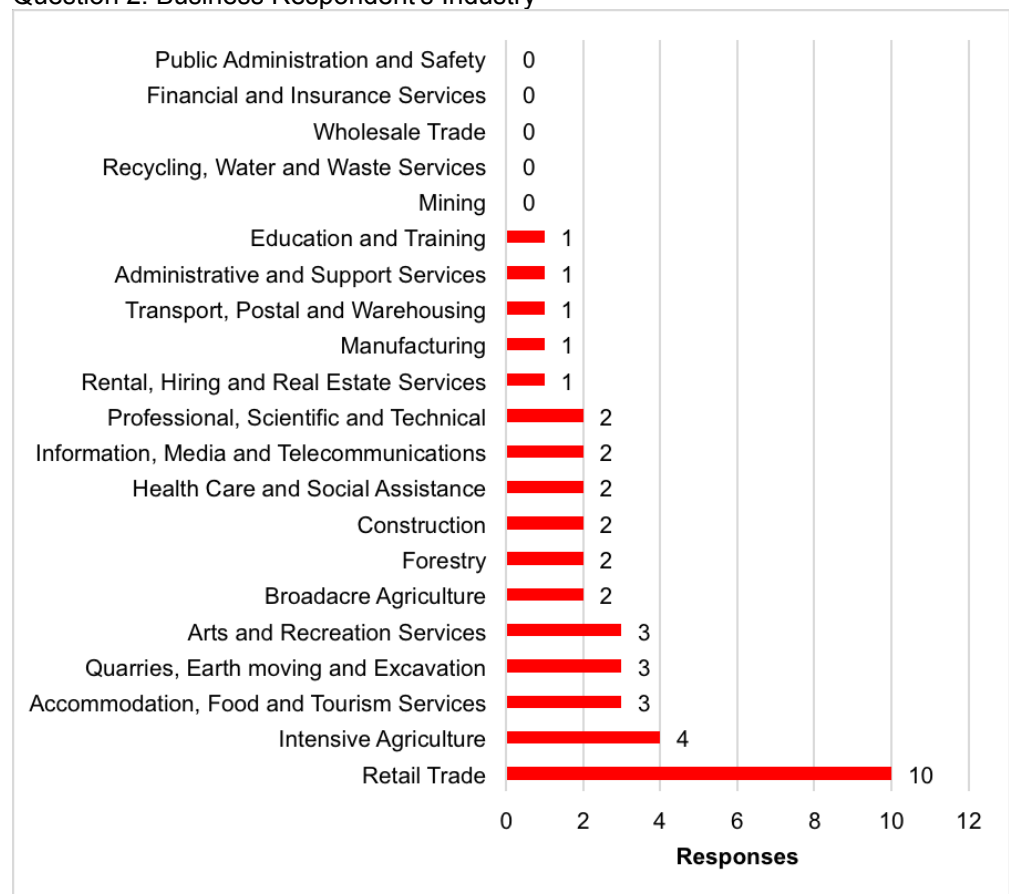


### Appendix 3: Additional Survey Results

Question 1: Are you a resident or business owner?



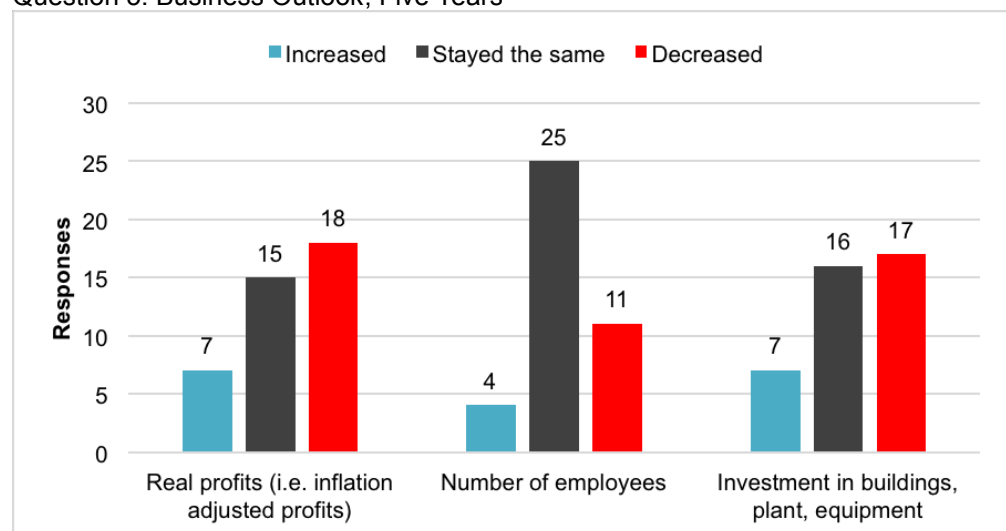
Question 2: Business Respondent's Industry



Question 3: Number of Employees



Question 5: Business Outlook, Five Years



## Appendix 4: 'One Big Idea' Outcomes, Community Workshop

| What's the best opportunity or idea you've heard all night?  | What's the next step toward making it happen?   | Keywords                  |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Branding around small farming brands to help grow the area to retail outlets like "Snowy".   | Funding for community group to control brand to sell outside Orbost.  | Branding                  |
| Attracting and keeping seniors: home based care; organised social activities; visiting specialists   | support an upgrade home facilities for senior and disabled care   | Seniors, Home-based care, |
| English Learning College – utilising homestay for international students needing to enhance and practise their spoken English – e.g. Japan, China  | Copy models that currently exist in other districts/states  | Language Education        |
| Building a cycle tourism industry  | Extend rail trail to Marlo. Build/fund mountain bike park.  | Tourism, Cycling          |
| Outdoor Education Centre   | Write to/contact every private/Catholic school in S.E. Australia and invite them then remove impediments to allow it to happen.                           | Outdoor Education         |
| Outdoor Education Centre.  | Research possible locations.  | Outdoor Education         |
| Home based care for the elderly  | Research possible locations.  | Seniors                   |
| Outdoor education activity centre (residential). Because: it is a "hero" product for creating awareness of area's potential for outdoor activity; also supports outside contractors for activities providing 'bread and butter' income for start-up business. Also able to cater for tourists. Attracts younger people as employees (families) | People to develop a strategy and money to make it happen. People with shared vision, planning and researching experience and networks to solve issues.    | Outdoor Education         |
| Keeping retirees in Orbost   | Promoting Orbost and its potential in the big cities.   | Seniors                   |
| Up skilling young people so that they stay in the town   |   | Youth, Skills             |
| Regional festival  | By having a regional short film at ABC or on local TV.  | Festival                  |
| Use the coast line.  | Get rid of ..... corner of .... Streets.  | Coast                     |
| Orbost Energy – if Orbost was to invest in solar panels on every house, it could become the first 'power station' town in Australia – Generating more energy than it uses. The technology is already available – jobs, training and expertise would follow.  | Run the idea past a present energy supplier like Momentum   | Energy                    |
| Outdoor Adventure Centre – youth activity, attracts city people and creates employment.  | Find an entrepreneur to run it but support them to set it up by developing the business plan with them, aiding in sourcing the site, loans and mentoring. | Outdoor Education         |

| What's the best opportunity or idea you've heard all night?   | What's the next step toward making it happen?   | Keywords                                |
|---|---|---|
| Develop home-based care/health services – fills a fairly immediate need, creates and provides careers and provides to the future.   | Develop a plan for what skills and positions are currently needed.  | Home-based care, Seniors, skills        |
| Branding  | How: marketing person vs surveys  | Branding                                |
| Linking sporting groups - coordinating committee, fundraising scholarships and resources e.g. bus, organise mentor programs for current and retired athletes to support youth.                      | Public notice in the paper  | Sport                                   |
| Ideas revolving around youth mentoring e.g. Upskilling youth with either existing locals or focusing on bringing people in with those skills to train youth and allow them to put those in to place | Finding people with the skills to pass them on to the youth and addressing which issues and skills are lacking and where the interest is from the youth into which sector they would like to get in to. | Youth, Skills                           |
| Marketing co-op – value adding produce  |   | Agriculture                             |
| Cycle capital – outdoor tourism   |   | Tourism, Cycling                        |
| Develop a home-based aged care system within Orbost/Marlo area and train/upskill our youth to create an industry that can provide this service and provide employment within Orbost                 | Develop this network – survey needs and how it can be developed with training in Orbost for Orbost people   | Home-based care, Youth, Skills, Seniors |
| Re-invigorate the agriculture sector  |   | Agriculture                             |
| Probably the umbrella thought that the image of our area is clean and green, and the amount of talk about cottage industries, gourmet food and tourism, value adding.                               | There are a few things happening already, probably just keep on going.  | Cottage industries.                     |
| Festival – a maize/corn theme e.g. – art, history, maize barns, dancing , food, curlip, etc. Hold it in Jan holidays.   | A festival organiser  | Festival                                |
| Developing bicycle and walking infrastructure for tourism and for youth and older people.   | Branding town – outdoor opportunities – advertising. Support maintenance of infrastructure and the accommodation.   | Tourism, Cycling                        |
| Weekend festival  | 1 <sup>st</sup> weekend in March. There will be a meeting inviting the local chamber of commerce.   | Festival                                |
| Branding the town and getting everyone on board   | Have a meeting and getting ideas out and about  | Branding                                |
| Create a cycle tourism industry – path from Orbost to Marlo, rail trail, mountain bike tracks, etc  | Funding. Marketing.   | Tourism, Cycling                        |
| Build an outdoor education centre.  | Marketing   | Outdoor Education                       |



| What's the best opportunity or idea you've heard all night?  | What's the next step toward making it happen?  | Keywords                 |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Development of an innovative ageing in the home/community package and support the facilities required  | Engage with ORH executive  | Home-based care, seniors |
| Development of a biomass energy production facility  | Resource production and allocation   | Energy                   |
| Promotion of cottage industry centre at Orbost   | Explore inputs like markets (farmers), courses (one off at a central location to attract visitors), small holders field days.  | Cottage industries.      |
| Better use of the Snowy Flats for food production for bulk or niche market produce   | Would need to be undertaken or run by a larger organisation?   | Agriculture              |
| Increase health service  | Just do it   | Health                   |
| Run/bike vs Curlip event   | Bike track along the river from Orbost to Marlo  | Cycling, Event           |
| Education, training, mentoring and supporting young people in post compulsory education to further develop skills through on-line education – building links with TAFE and utilising the secondary college | Getting stakeholders together to look at the possibilities, stepping out plans, a chronology with targets, accountabilities, etc.<br><br>Note: the about is seen as supporting the 'bigger' picture thinking in the business planning for the town and district encompassing agriculture – boutique industries, tourism with an emphasis on cycling adventure activities and aged care services. | Youth, skills            |
| Town brands  |  | Branding                 |
| Aged care facility (home based)  | Council to look at costings and feasibility of home based home care  | Home-based care, seniors |
| Orbost as a transport hub for Eastern Vic  | Attract truck retailers, spare parts, repairs to Orbost.<br>Use the truck hub as a transport base for other trucks delivering goods from micro and macro producers such as berries, jerky and meats  | Transport                |
| Tourism – needs trips to be organised  | Integrate agriculture boutique industries in tourist operation   | Tourism, agriculture     |
| Massive local event, with local brand to stand behind  | Getting a community committee together to discuss from a broad spectrum of inputs/demographics   | Event, branding          |
| Town specific event/market or festival   | Generating interest, finding a theme/town/identity. Getting community buy in.  | Festival, event          |
| Supporting the development of cottage industries helps agriculture, training and economic development  | Investigate other parts of Victoria with similar industries  | Cottage industries       |

| What's the best opportunity or idea you've heard all night?  | What's the next step toward making it happen?   | Keywords                          |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Aged care and housing – home based services. Supported housing.  | Develop feasibility study. Involve non-gov options, housing models, service delivery models, market segment studies.                                  | Seniors, Home-based care, housing |
| Pursue 'food bowl' of Asia – refer to Vic Government International business Strategy and Super Trade Mission, etc  | Strategy to pursue food bowl for export and how to develop sustainable/self-supporting elements: microbusinesses, branding, logistics, education etc. | Agriculture                       |
| For Orbost to have a new slogan or promotion to advertise how good our town is and what it has to offer. All the positives we have to offer for all ages, etc. | Find out and do homework in what the best way for this to happen. How do we promote our town.   | Branding                          |
| Young adult training centre – place where for example students going through correspondence can get together and study, socialise, encourage, be mentored, etc | Looking at resources available. Building a committee that is relevant and involved.   | Youth, skills                     |
| More Intensive Agriculture on the Snowy Flats eg Green beans, etc  | Setting up a cooperative to coordinate growing and marketing  | Agriculture                       |
| The enthusiasm associated with multiple micro/boutique industries  | Establishing a 'Snowy River Brand' that could be taken up by these fledgling industries   | Cottage industries, branding      |
| Best stop off for passing tourist trade for coffee etc. eg Yarragon  | Promote Orbost as the best coffee stop on the Princes Highway   | Branding, tourism                 |
| Outdoor education/adventure/environment centre   | Find possible land donors or someone who may want to develop land for this  | Outdoor Education                 |
| Improve recreation facilities, better skate park and dirt jumps for school aged children to use.   |   | Youth, facilities                 |

## Appendix 5: Individual Feedback from Community Survey

The image below provides a summary of the most frequent words used by members of the community in qualitative responses to the community survey.



**What do you think are the biggest challenges facing Orbost today, and in the future?**

- Unsupportive Shire council
- Residents need to be educated on the importance of shopping locally and why small businesses cannot compete against larger groups. Lack of employment opportunities means our community has very few people in the higher wage bracket to help the town's economy.
- Core infrastructure- energy (gas), broadband, roads
- Lack of sustainable vision for Orbost
- Alcohol and drugs
- First issue: the environment. Being close to nat. parks and UNESCO Biosphere, preservation of the environment is Orbost's greatest potential
- lack of change; nothing new to do or see
- health issues including to drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and
- LACK OF RECREATION FACILITIES
- Lack of proper public transport
- Ageing population requiring support services
- youth vandals
- lack of cultural diversity
- Lack of attention to infrastructure both State/Federal in remote areas
- Orbost has a great potential as a tourist town
- Healthcare.
- no industry
- None of the above concern me
- lack of forward thinking, stuck in the past, no promotion of the area's natural assets as a key tourism theme
- Realising that our future can no longer be tied to the timber industry.
- Transport of produce to Melbourne/Sydney/Brisbane
- lack of NBN and lack of gas
- On line shopping increasing
- This is wrong we don't have the support of council as we are up the river from lakes we have higher power costs than lakes we are not in the directories as lakes is we pay the same rates and more for other services and get less
- Seasonality of tourism - summer peak
- Low on NBN list
- We need help not just hollow words from the council and government
- All of the above should be first issue
- Lack of Shire support for East of Lakes Entrance' since Shire mergers

**What strengths does our community and economy have that we can build upon?**

- all churches meeting needs

- Men's shed
- Unique environment, green and clean
- Need an influx of talented/diversified/ energetic/skilled people
- the fact to have UNESCO Biosphere nearby is very, very special and has greatest potential for the future
- Unique marine area.
- the generosity of locals
- Historically rich - Man from Snowy River
- No traffic lights-Strength
- Newcomers bringing new ideas and energy.
- Climate & local foods, what more do you need
- diversity of produce that could be grown e.g. sub-tropical fruit
- our location to ocean and bushland tourism and history of the area including indigenous
- East Gippsland Rail Trail
- .... we need to run a festival every year even two of them to keep the shops open. Everyone's tail getting into things that are not supermarket, selling pizzas every night of the week ... the two places the do this and then undercutting them in costs
- The equitable climate can grow almost anything = Food bowl opportunity.

**What skills do you think our local community has? For example, you may have noticed a lot of people in our community with skills in woodworking, mechanics or the arts. Identifying these skills and talents will help us to prioritise projects and initiatives.**

- too many artist and woodworkers
- woodworking, agriculture, the arts, sporting talent, horticulture, outdoor activities, boating, entrepreneurial, hardworking
- Arts/crafts. Experience in many trades, farming, teaching
- Orbost/Marlo has a large group of people with talent in art sculpture (particularly wood). These talents need a centralised gallery/school to enhance and promote these skills in the Orbost/Marlo communities. At the moment, there is Feastonart and the Exhibition building at Forest Park. I think they should be in one building for promotion, teaching and exhibitions for the public.
- community spirit
- Strong tradition of self-sufficiency; forestry/forest products and woodworking, tradition of being administrative and service centre for Far East, farming (dairy and beef), caring for elderly, remote area tourism.
- Agricultural, educational and forestry skills.
- There are many older folk who have a wide range of skills from previous jobs and from life generally. Many of these skills are unknown and have not been surveyed.
- Educational skills, medical skills, natural environment
- Arts
- Whinging and bludging on the system
- Artists. Skilled retirees in town - management skills and life skills available. Environmental knowledge and skills

- Drinking - stupid aggression, low lifes. Retirees - good health services, recreational fishing, caravaners, motor bike riders, holiday trippers, a glut of houses on the market. - Cheap housing, encourage people to buy in and smarten the place up.
- Very active art groups
- Women in this community, of whatever age are largely an untapped resource with a range of skills, and potential to learn and apply skills. Many have the potential to be managers or business leaders or artisans, or doing trades or farming or IT, or in conventional female sectors i.e. to be working in education, small business, care sector or administration/accounting...
- I think opportunities for women to realise their potential, at whatever age, and wherever the starting point, and in whatever sector, be it the gender-wise the common or the less common areas of endeavour and skill.
- We have skills in offering hospitality, arts and crafts, farming although this needs more of a sustainable and less harming the environment approach.
- Tourist ventures are good, but vary, as do catering outlets.
- Forest/Coastal tourism, or ecotourism is also good, but could do with developing for lengthening the seasons...
- Orbost and surrounds has excellent tourism potential. Orbost is located just off the highway and a great place for a stop-over for travellers. The main street has great potential but is currently lacking greatly in interesting shops. Yes, we need good wood working skills, a potter, different high quality arts. We also need much better food outlets, where tourists can get coffees and food that is worth coming off the highway for. Currently you can't get a decent coffee in town, let alone food. Word spreads around very easily in this high tech world and there are all the 'grey nomads' constantly on the road. If we can attract multiple highly talented artists to Orbost's main street together with equally good food, Orbost will become a very desirable place to be. Also support all green efforts: keep the environment intact and plant long living trees along the streets. An attractive street scape also brings in tourists (see the lovely old trees in Maffra's main street). Skills to look after our national parks are needed as is green keeping around town.
- Good farmers, plenty of land for agriculture. Skilled hospital staff.
- There are a vast array of untapped talents - it would be great to tap into the wealth of knowledge, ideas and experience particularly those brought in with people new to the area with fresh ideas to reinvigorate the town. Hard to pinpoint specific skills, however the ideas are important and no doubt there are people that have the necessary skills to support the ideas or people who have the skills/interest may be enticed to the area if opportunities exist. I would like to see incentives and opportunities that a) allow these ideas to be brought forward (this process is a good start but there needs to be ongoing opportunity for these ideas to bubble through) and b) support the fresh ideas and business proposals to help ensure success. This isn't a value judgement but we clearly can't hang on strictly to the old industries (particularly forestry) and the ideas of those who have been in the town either born and bred or for a long time as it would be a sure fire way to ensure stagnation and continued decline of this fantastic town.
- Practical - hands-on skills
- Arts, Woodwork, Photography, Cheese making, History of area, Sports, Music, Horse skills, Fishing.
- I think there's a lot of resourcefulness and skills around in small scale home food production, bartering, preserving, value adding.
- In the medium to larger scale agriculture I think there's a lot of skill and resource around also. Even though the diversity in this sector has shrunk dramatically over the last 20 - 30 years, and there have been challenges driving these changes, agriculture still seems to be quite a strong and stable industry in the area. I believe that given what we know about population growth, predicted climate change, diminishing water supply and threatened/failing agricultural lands elsewhere in Australia; that our region could really benefit from building on these skills and protecting our agricultural resources.
- Skills include - writing, artists, woodworking, photography, mechanic, services, and hospitality.

- Arts. Young people with good ideas. Recreation ideas
- Music and handcrafts such as quilting
- Sporting Clubs. Senior Citizens. Art. Schools. Natural beauty.
- Health, Education, Trades
- Vibrant art scene, painting, needle crafts and woodworking. Have a wood design centre that is no longer being used which is a disgrace.
- there is a definite local skill around woodworking
- Community groups, Arts, Tourism, Sustainability, Sport and fitness
- artisan and artists skills in a variety of fields
- Knowledge of forest especially when at fire/flood risks.
- Arts and music
- Active art and woodworking community as demonstrated by galleries and indoor market. Historical aspect of the area should be recognised. Opportunities for micro businesses such as wine making and olive production due to fertile soils. Cheese making - great dairy industry opportunity. Growing aged care requirements in the community - community aged care provider opportunity
- Light and heavy truck driving. Country cooking expertise. Historical knowledge of area. Ocean and freshwater fishing. Agricultural multi-skills. arts
- We have experience and many skills in our older adults. Lack opportunities for younger persons. University educated young people need to leave the area to find employment opportunities.
- Possibly growing gardens and fresh food , not much stands out but if people had direction they could attain relevant skills
- Buying tickets in raffles - meat, wood, etc.
- Arts, fishing, wood working and boating.
- Like all communities we have a diversity of skills. Tertiary qualified people, traders, people, artists, etc. If employment exists, people with suitable qualifications will settle in the community. We should not be targeting projects based on the community's current qualification/interest profile.
- Working Ethics
- We have many artists & musicians in the area but no hub for them to gather & show case - the exhibition centre would be brilliant to bring people together, artists in residence, workshops, studios & many other opportunities - this would also help drawn the many tourists that drive past every day
- In general not enough. Educational outcomes and community expectations for educational outcomes are low, illiteracy is high. Insularity is a drawback and for some of the bright kids a tragedy. The farming sector is the major skills repository. It's a great pity Forest Tec wasn't located in Orbost. A high value woodworking industry would be great but forestry as we currently have it needs to hurry up and die and get out of the way so new things can grow.
- Woodworking. Farming. ecotourism
- Agricultural, Eco-tourism, Fishing, Arts, Sport and History and Indigenous culture.
- Arts. Agriculture
- Woodworking. Crafts. Individuals training for triathlons, endurance sports. Fishing. Four-wheel Driving
- I am part of the art community and see a lot of local talent in painting, textiles, woodwork, mosaic and ceramic, this area is untapped as yet and we are definitely a part of the east Gippsland art scene. This could be more exploited. We have a local gallery and also the

building at Orbost Exhibition Centre which a lot of municipalities would kill for and it is lying idle. So much could be done with this place to bring in the tourists etc. A lot of men in the district work in wood and the level of expertise is varied, this also brings in tourism. Anyone on holidays love to look at art galleries which show local art etc. There is an opening for younger people to be able to show their work, hopefully from the High School.

- Agriculture. Arts
- The people of Orbost & surrounding districts are very resilient. I feel the community is experiencing a change of direction as it moves from a town focusing on timber & agriculture into an era of uncertainty but with a real opportunity to embrace change & move forward. Using the areas natural assets & putting the town on the map by having an annual event could be embraced. The community garden is a great example of what can be achieved.
- The community has strong agriculture and timber industry skills, but these skills are being lost due to downsizing of the timber industry, although the arts are growing stronger with the arrival of retiring people from the cities bringing their skills and expertise to the region, but the arts are not going to secure the future of Orbost.
- Projects & activities for the elderly is a great opportunity for the future generation. The private gardens are a great asset to Orbost some are absolutely stunning & creative but not encouraged as an attraction. The woodworkers are amazing but sad the exhibition did not take place this year. The knowledge from old bush workers should be utilised while these men are still around to tell their stories & be made into an attraction of its own e.g.: a museum or a permanent shrine for those killed in the bush or trucks.
- Strong artistic community.
- None!
- Unfortunately, not many. Agricultural skills probably top the list.
- Manual workers willing to work hard
- charity groups, church groups all involved in helping the community
- arts and crafts of all kinds, variety of home grown produce, gardening club, sporting activities for all ages
- Most young people who push themselves to get to get reasonable secondary school results will leave. Generally the rest stay here, in low paid jobs. The exception are the ones who plan to work at ORH, e.g. Nurses. Growth area is Health. Orbost has high rate of old people and poor.
- Tourism, poor man's fishing town.
- No more or less than any other town. But the ones that are going places are the Arts, sustainable gardening/agriculture, and maybe a few nature based tourism ventures.
- There is a wealth of talent and expertise in the older community- craft, woodworking, practical handyman skills and particularly organisational skills (many have worked previously in Government departments), some technology skills. However, this supply is not necessarily available for economic benefit as it will dwindle as these people get "used up" in voluntary community projects/work.
- agriculture, gardening, mechanics & craft
- Arts, sculpture, ceramics, musicians, bush skills, Woodworking, aged experience, mid aged people (40 to 65 yrs. old) who are able and willing to pass on skills. Fishing & boat skills, we have an aerodrome at Marlo (scenic flights) and an indigenous history...not sure what skills that might provide but it has got to be something good; (cultural arts and guided walks???)
- Keen interest in sustainable and organic horticultural & Renewable energy group. Good and productive arts community
- Good service i.e. being friendly: great for tourism. Mostly in the category of hands on things e.g. art, wood work. Photography
- A lot of people have aged care skills and are required to travel out of town.



- Significant numbers of people (not necessarily locally born and bred) who have a knowledge and appreciation of the value of the natural environment and participate in a variety of voluntary ways to promote this aspect of our area.
- We need to encourage free camping for Fully Self Contained vans, providing water, a dump point and facilities for free camping at the golf course, policing a 7 day max free stopover perhaps combined with a green fees package could be done by the green keepers.
- We don't need be seen by the tourists as unfriendly toward longer stays. Most campers come prepared for a week's stay and will only restock from local business if there is no other reason to move on to a larger town. Shire donated or subsidised land should be available to any sustainable business willing to invest locally and employ locals. Assistance packages for advertising and promotion should be available for events coordinated by the chamber of commerce involving multiple businesses. Chamber president should be Shire employed and qualified/experienced not tired volunteers.
- Artistic skills. Practical skills for a range of physical activities- e.g. Participants in the agricultural sector generally have a broad range of manual and land skills. Forestry workers, former forestry workers having a range of bush skills- from understanding the bush, firefighting or roading.
- -athletic abilities -Machinery operation -Agricultural skills -Gossiping -Great musicians - Ability to support each other and stick together -Delivering important services -Having a very welcoming, friendly, social community
- Community very passionate about their area and come up with great ideas on how to improve it but too many put a downer on the projects
- There seem to be some individuals with skills that perhaps need to be brought together more as a business. An example is seen where local artists are able to exhibit and sell their products - this needs to be extended to other areas within our community
- A vast range of skills but nobody is able to organise these but a visit to the local men's shed would give a good idea of what is around as well as a lot of retired people have a lot of administrative skills and even though they won't come forward they are probably only waiting to be asked.
- The Arts. History of area, not just Forestry Orbost, Marlo, Conran including true and factual representation of the indigenous community. Broaden the interest of the area. Gardens Community Projects have added to the townships
- Centrelink applications. Arts has strong presence. Strong farming skills. Health, schools and DEPI main employers. Tourism as per Snowy River Cycling. strong community groups - OWAG, Chamber, Gardening, Historical, etc.
- Woodworking, Computing/IT, Great people skills
- Excellent service people with a wide range of skills
- Many talented artists. Many people with good mechanical skills. Many locals with a keen interest in Agriculture
- Farming is a skill that many local people possess but may not be able to solely benefit from due to financial difficulties within the industry, many of these people are just hobby farmers.
- I am not sure - many skilled people have left Orbost to seek employment and these include mechanics, plant & machinery operators & many ex business owners which then limits the opportunities for those left in the area both young and older
- Creativity, imagination, manual skills, compassion
- 1. Skills in plant and truck operation largely from the declining timber industry
- 2. An untapped variety of skills bought in by retirees to the area.
- Manual and machine operating skills
- In Orbost we are a very talented lot with mosaic painting organic foods wood working crafts as well as special diet cafe (Kay's kitchen) but the top end of town has not got the same street appeal as the bottom end... E.g. nowhere for tables no signage no events held there e.g. the Christmas fair it is all held in front of the Borg shops

- Agricultural skills, Natural Resource Management skills - weed control, revegetation etc., Tourism skills and hospitality skills. Skilled Health sector workers - Orbost Regional Health.
- Artistic talents of all kinds are found in many in the district. Such talents and skills should be fostered. Renewal energy knowledge and skills abound. This is an opportunity to marry these skills, the NBN and the liveability of the district to produce a 'silicon valley' based on sustainability and e-commerce.
- This community is friendly and welcoming and despite being near the end of the line with some financial and service support has a great deal to offer.
- Please move away from another wood expo idea/arts like this question is prompting for. Orbost does have skills in this area but also many others. Orbost's greatest skill is to unite behind initiatives as represented by the Relay for Life event. Unity and a sense of community should not be undervalued as an asset to an industry which may be interested in developing within the local area.
- arts
- woodwork, artists of old trades
- Our community has a strength of knowledge within wood trades Environment and farming we need to tap this
- Many younger men have skills in driving machinery so they are moving away as the forestry declines. Ones with completed apprenticeships move away. Farming is not popular so young ones don't want to take it on. People moving away make it harder for retail because they rise there prices to meet there costs. It is a very hard situation to be in and it will take time to work out or the region will just keep declining.
- Creative and artsy
- Skills don't help people find a job if there are no jobs in the town, we are following on from Cabbage Tree Creek, when they had 3 sawmills running it was a great town, now we have logging contractors closing down which is a follow on effect of government locking up the forest industry, this town runs on the logging, just like Cabbage Tree Creek did, sorry but that's my opinion.
- Sport and trades such as plumbing and building
- Every skill that is needed to make a thriving town and community exists within the town and surrounding areas, it is all the government red tape within the forestry, and parks land that is crippling these sorts of communities. Orbost has everything going for it weather, it be forest industries, e.g., logging, tourism, timber industries. The area should be used as a gateway for tourists, but so many restrictions and lack of info-structure in your coastal parks and bush are pushing a lot of people through to NSW area to spend their money and time.
- Tradesman- builders, plumbers & electricians. Hospitality- chefs/apprentices & front of house, e.g. waitressing.
- People within Tourism industry not being consulted!!
- We should have people skilled in everything to bring more things to the town
- A wealth of knowledge in middle to older aged residents in agriculture, forestry
- Agriculture. Woodwork. Tourism
- Lots of hidden talent in surrounding area ....all sorts of amazing. Skills but often cohesive.
- Creativity.

**Imagine you are living or working in or around Orbost in 2020. Thinking about the local community and economy, which FIVE (5) of the following things would you most hope to see?**

**– Other responses:**

- church growth especially in young people
- A community supported by its Shire council.

- Orbost needs a local bus service. Not to Bairnsdale, etc. I mean around the town of Orbost. Maybe a 35 seat bus, up and down Nicholson St? Everyone in Orbost walks everywhere. Great for exercise, but if I lived in Scott St and had to walk to the shops and back (there are people in Orbost without vehicles) a local bus service would be idea. Why hasn't anyone thought of this?
- Refugee centre
- The forestry industry, in its present way of operating is not sustainable and is destructive, not only to the environment, but to your identity.
- NO forestry
- More activities and attractions for kids and young adults.
- First; Diverse industrial area.
- Turf Hockey Field
- I strongly support nature based tourism also, and low impact tourism such as cycle tourism. I think that given our location we will not be a "popular" destination like some others, and I don't think we should aim for this anyhow - but aim for a steady sustainable flow of tourists that allows us to protect our natural assets and preserve a local community feel. I also strongly support a strong agricultural sector and the value adding of this also. I believe that smaller "cottage" industries will benefit more people in a more meaningful way, as compared to larger factories. And that these industries are best built on a strong sense of community and identity.
- Freedom from issues such as drugs/alcohol/abuse.
- Recreation facilities. Bike path to Marlo
- A greater diversity of activities for children/young people to engage in
- A place for older people to retire and be supported by aged care industry
- Emergence of one or two big sustainable businesses or industries with the capacity to employ up to 100.
- Capital expenditure on sustainable development from our taxes
- Indigenous History, Culture and Arts Tourism.
- not necessary a forestry industry, but any industry with employment opportunities
- An annual event that helps bring large numbers of people to the area. EG Byron Bay Blues festival for example. Focus on the young improving their self-esteem.
- Another industry to create employment not lose employment for the young school leavers to keep them in this beautiful region!
- More employment options
- I would prefer that my choices in this section be given the same 1st priority.
- Health and Fitness tourism. Organic food tourism
- Medical services to match the facilities and inexpensive property prices should see Orbost thrive as a retirement destination. A retirement village is desperately needed in Marlo.
- all of the above, hard to select 1 to 5
- Strong provision of Health services particularly opportunities in aged care, a growing sector.
- Again you cannot answer all the questions

**What top three initiatives or ideas do you think are most likely to advance Orbost? Other responses:**

- attractive to Christians

- Better facilities for tourists - heated swimming pool/leisure centre with child care services. Support our town from Council and Vic Government.
- Connect to gas and get NBN connected
- With the quality of agricultural land, water, ideal for food production. High quality organic food, milk, meat, fruit and vegetables.
- Build a university here - teaching: outdoor education, environmental science, marine biology, nursing, music, horticulture, agriculture.
- Build a retirement village/nursing home facility in Marlo on the land .... has for sale or over the road on .... place. Improve the boat ramp at Conran/ possible one at East Cape?
- A walking/cycling track from Mallacoota to Marlo with swing bridges where necessary and a variety of accommodation on the way. Construction of artificial reefs or wave ramps along wilderness coast to attract more tourists for surfing and diving.
- Better roads to old growth forests for added ecotourism.
- Camping passes so people actually pay to stay at roadside camps - \$100 a week or so more in peak.
- Find gold at Combienbar - start a new gold rush - restart the rodeo and country music festival at Nemmy.
- Good example: Daylesford, good eateries, bakery of high quality organic sourdough breads, antique shops, artists..... Stuff for tourists to do and buy!
- attracting new businesses, artists and artisans, and more investment in agricultural enterprises
- Tough to pick only 3 here. I would also consider the following initiatives valuable ideas: "Trialling innovative forestry and wood-related practices", "Attracting artists and artisans to the area" (this one could arguably have been in the top three!) and "Business planning and mentoring services"
- Enhancing township character and amenities and attracting new businesses will help with "buy local" - and at the moment with so many shops close, I think things really need to improve before we can expect people to "buy local". Small businesses such as the recently opened Historic Bakery are excellent cottage industries for Orbost.
- cycle tourism
- Improving the public transport system
- A centre for micro-businesses to operate and promote local produce and agriculture. Aged care and dementia care accommodation
- First things first. Cut red tape. Get the people back to work
- Education opportunities
- Promotion of Indigenous history, arts and culture.
- A network of connected bike/walking tracks extending along river.
- Improving the quality of local primary and secondary education.
- None but I think it's time that the logging sector was let go. It's been around far too long and has done a lot of damage and prevented other opportunities for the town and area.
- Current businesses in the town are relying on "goodwill" and the historic notion that potential customers have to buy in town - not so any more. This leaves many businesses with a lazy attitude to customer service and presentation.
- Again, these points should have equal priority
- Marketing excellent climate for sustainable and renewable living for healthy active lifestyle. Promoting closeness and ease of access to beaches and beautiful scenery. Art festival based on food. Affordable Housing. Increase awareness of Good Hospital and associated health/community care

- Medical spending should be focused on regional areas in order to draw the population out from the larger towns. Orbost has the facilities but very few procedures are offered here. Swap the funding dollars between Orbost and Bairnsdale.
- Lobby federal Government to set up a refugee centre here or house refugees here.
- Get the NBN here as fast as possible.
- The current community needs to be nurtured and developed not overrun with the arty farty crowd.
- Thinking about your vision for Orbost, do you have any SPECIFIC ideas or initiatives as to how the vision can be achieved?
- Orbost's benign country town atmosphere must be maintained. We should not threaten or undermine in any way what we already have here which is what attracts people to this area.
- SPECIFIC IDEAS
- Festivals - woodcraft, green (farming methods, power generation, building construction, architecture, etc.), dog and horse (not a rodeo - dog trials, show and competitions, etc.),
- Events - foot races, cycle touring, etc.
- Enterprises - Agricultural and horticultural type - including cider production, value adding to milk, farmers markets, etc.
- Enterprises - Agricultural and horticultural type - health resort, wood fired artisan bakery, flying/gliding, etc.
- Educational - Vet school campus, chef training, etc.
- Research - green energy, architecture, etc.
- Encourage companies between Melbourne and Orbost to relocate - e.g. small business/ manufacturing. Build a low-level security or prison farm near Orbost, would provide many jobs.
- The only hope for Orbost's future is in the lord Jesus Christ, etc.
- Upgrade Marlo/Orbost Airport to accept tourist flights 24/7. Also the Curlip approach road is pot holed everywhere. If you fix it up, people will come to use the facility and the Curlip. I have been down to where the Curlip is and I also believe it should be moved to a more prominent place, perhaps near Marlo jetty, because that's where the locals and tourists go. Also, in winter, the Curlip should be used on the Gippsland Lakes instead of sitting idle. I could promote Orbost as a tourist attraction.
- A proper plan with priorities. no random decisions
- Clearly defined and separate identity for the region (as distinct from the western part of East Gippsland (e.g. the Deep East).
- Core infrastructure to support industry and entrepreneurs (connect gas, connect NBN, improve road links to NSW and Canberra and internal roads (e.g. Bonag Rd, Deddick Rd)
- Support for tertiary training for local people (esp. young people who don't want to leave).
- Service (health and welfare, activities, training, connection to the wider world)) infrastructure to support promotion the area as a lifestyle living choice
- If expanding tourism, we need to become more family orientated. We have the beaches, parks, etc. but we need to also accommodate those that cannot access these things so easily - youth, elderly and need other things for all to do when the beach and parks are not the places to be.
- Picture theatre and holiday programs to attract youth//elderly - have a pool a stadium with a pool available and other options within the area. Local businesses need to go back to specialising and not trying to have everything, be unique, not greedy.
- This is a wonderful place to live. It is a fact of life that our population is growing older and the school numbers are declining, so we should make plans to cater for the older aged

groups and encourage them, both as visitors and residents, with services as well. Our wonderful environmental amenities must be protected and used wisely, with all businesses and industries given an environmental grading. This region could be marketed with an environmental excellence brand for the region. Something really special, not just like everywhere else.

- Recycling business - for TVs, electrical goods, etc. Aboriginal art/craft initiative - teaching traditional weaving, etc. Community bank - to fund projects, tapping in to tourism groups - e.g. cycling, art to attract more tourists.
- Promote the following:
- I'd like to see Orbost and surrounds become a centre for excellence in wine production, cheese making and other fruit and vegie growing. Seafood as well, rather than exploiting stocks. Good eating and coffee. A real destination of vibrancy and interest, natural beauty and great climate. The national parks 0 it is all here to be developed. Eating local, sustainable local industries and a vision and opportunities for young people to work. Wood working and custom furniture making, slow food and quality.
- Humane eradication of non-native feral species, protection of natural resources and wildlife.
- A designated hunting area where people are allowed to hunt and kill. Designated waterways as well.
- Change, and entrepreneurial spirit and investment needs to be attracted, to the town, making business start-up opportunities attractive, supported by Government incentives.
- Promote the potential for locally grown, produced & processed foods, currently travelling long road miles to get here, and of poor quality/nourishment, not fresh, and high cost. Why do we buy milk/meat / vegetables/fruit /cheeses etc. from elsewhere?
- Focus on the Care Sector and quality services and the quality of locally produced food & goods for a retiring/aging population. E.g. Develop positive housing/care provisions for the aging but staying-well-longer population that's going to be here ahead. Sensitive development of care facilities or clusters for people aging to have a good quality of life, housing and community and care. Move away from Nursing Home models. Training people younger to stay and work in more Care orientated work, of all levels, offering attractive access to such training & work.
- Better pay and conditions and housing or other incentives for staff to live here and work in this sector.
- Firstly, you need to go green. Without nature, a remote place like Orbost has absolutely NO hope for the future. Lobby the Australian government to stop expanding the main cities. Our largest cities are becoming unliveable and too congested and siphon away rural residents. This will cause great problems for both city and country in the future. We need to decentralise from the main cities. Promote Orbost to art schools/artists in major cities: green/sea change, cheap shop rent and housing and great opportunity for emerging artists.
- Local Tourism: Eco tourism. Places like Croajingolong Nat Park, Beware Reef and Erinandra... etc. are Victoria's greatest treasures! These are the last great places on Earth remaining, hence recognition by UNESCO. Preserve them! The future generation will thank you. These treasures are the only thing to put Orbost on the map.
- through more investment in education and new, different courses (and perhaps a closer university or TAFE), the younger generation can come up with new businesses, thus attracting people to the area through promise of more employment, thus a bigger and more popular community, with stronger culture and character.
- \* We need an East Gippsland "Gourmet Food Trail" They exist in SW Victoria, the Otways, central Victoria, the King Valley, the Ovens Valley, SW Gippsland and most of the rest of the state. This incentive WILL bring tourism and tourism dollars; it will provide support to existing businesses; it will provide opportunities for new areas; and it can tie in fantastically to support the agriculture sector (something we have a great tradition of in the area and should be very proud of)
  - Support for artistic and musical endeavours. Food and music provide colour and life to an area as well as business opportunities, helps make an area great to live in and provides for a great and value-added visitor experience. Many areas of

Victoria have re-invented themselves around these premises and are flourishing - look at the Otways, the Golden Triangle and areas around the Alps for starters.

- Shire and state Government need to incentivise attracting med-larger businesses to the area and work with businesses such as HSR (I have no affiliation) to ensure they remain a viable business and that this remains a viable area to carry-out business in.
- Work with industry training groups and local employers to identify training and up skilling opportunities for younger people - particularly in the trades where possible.
- Direct training and incentives to assist new businesses. I have seen too many businesses close up shop and too many open and close in the 11 years I have been connected with the area and I'm sure a little support and some small business training would go a long way.
- Recognising the tourism dollar potential of this amazing area and having specific programs or protocols for assisting tourism related businesses (including cottage industry, artisan and gourmet food experiences)
- We need to attract a varied range of industries to the area to get a diverse range of people to move here. For example Bairnsdale only expands due to its industry. We need to promote that we are close to the half way mark between Sydney and Melbourne. We have an industrial area mapped out at Newmerella. Maybe we could get government backing to help new industries set up in the area. Free land or at a small cost. Tourism also needs to be improved. We need things that will attract all age groups. A lot of parents will only go where children are catered for example: Mini golf, kids' activities, water activities [water slides, paddle boats, scuba diving]. A cheese or ice cream factory for the area would help the dairy industry and tourism. A working timber mill that is open to the public that shows the timber in each stage of production, from the start to finish. Timber products being made on the site and being sold. Whale watching we have a large number going along the coast each year.
- Tours of the reef with the seals, we have a number of ship wrecks around the reef for diving tours. Game fishing off Cape Conran as we have tournament fish that are not targeted. An aquarium at Cape Conran to look at the unique marine life that can only be found in our marine park. An annual festival example pioneer week with woodwork display, paddle steamer rides with history and re-enactments of early Orbost and district, art on the street, bush craft lessons. Work in with tour groups to bring tour busses into town if we had a package to offer example trip on the Curlip, Drive to Cape Conran, Lunch, Art Gallery, Gem Stone Gallery, Timber Mill Tour, Seed Co Op Tour, Dinner, Old Film Night at the Exhibition Centre and Tour, Accommodation. Look into agricultural produce that may be grown in the area. It was suggested that tea may be suitable to be grown in this area. There may be more produce that is suited to this area also. If there is any farm land that was suitable for growing such produce and was not being used by land holders if they would be interested in leasing it out.
- One specific vision I have is for small scale value added quality products to be available in Orbost, and for this to be something we are proud of and something that people from elsewhere enjoy sampling in Orbost. For example we have a strong dairy sector, but all this luscious milk from the Snowy River Country goes to make cheap powdered milk... Where can I buy a round of locally made organic raw brie? Or buy a hot pumpkin pie made from pumpkins grown on the deepest topsoil in the southern hemisphere?
- We also need to keep on protecting and repairing our natural assets, including our native forests. We are a perfect area to be home to a sustainable timber industry, but what is frequently referred to as "sustainable" is, in my opinion, far from sustainable. We could have something we could be really proud of in 50 years if we start working for it now.
- I think that it would be great to get a higher educational training facility in Orbost. So people have to travel to us to receive great education. Youth have low aspirations for tertiary education in part because they need to leave Orbost and can't afford to/there are not necessarily jobs to come home to.



- I also think that the youth of Orbost are an untapped resources. Some of their ideas could benefit from being heard.
- Continue rail train from Orbost to Marlo. Cycle-tourism
- Bike/walking track from Orbost to Marlo (Like Pambula to Eden). Bring Medical specialist to Orbost.
- Growing Tourism, getting people to stop.
- ... should offer free camping and get reduced rates for doing so. Build a tree top walk there too and attach local history of timber and mining too.
- Offer a free place to leave your caravan for the day while you visit the area.
- Offer free nine holes of golf if you stay at a local business
- build a mountain bike track
- turn the butter factory into an extreme park for skate and BMX.
- Promote 4wding showcase our worst tracts.
- Promote what's an hour away from each town, most places have amazing places that only locals know about.
- Create farm stays linking two or three types together.
- Create a walk from Marlo to Orbost via the flats and call it walking with cattle.
- Tourism: -
- Ask tourists and visitors what is missing (or what is needed) in Orbost.
- Then have the town decide whether the development is "right" for the town.
- Provide destinations and activities for visitors.
- Agriculture: - (do a strengths and weakness assessment)
- what can be best produced locally? Can it all be sold locally or does some need to be exported (within Victoria or elsewhere).
- What needs to be imported from other towns? Why? Can these commodities or items be made locally?
- More accommodation for our senior citizens
- Get the train back and running from Bairnsdale (from Orbost would be better but)
- More accommodation for tourists
- Vegetables in the paddocks
- Getting natural gas connected to Orbost. Offering council land for a peppercorn rental to attract business here. We are next to the Highway midway between Canberra & Melbourne. We need an industry i.e. valued added wood products
- develop furniture business from locally made products
- encourage the development of local vegetable production and processing
- A bio-mass plant set up near the Auswest timber facility at Brodribb. Including an interactive education & resource centre for tourists and students, hopefully something that will attract tertiary programs similar to Forestech programs and University groups.
- An exciting extension of this could be a suspension bridge to enable a tree top walk to view forest industry and natural bush.
- A tree top walk situated at Goongerah would be a tourist and education asset also.



- I envision Orbost surrounded by undisturbed natural environment, not exploited by greedy mining and forestry industries. The strengths of nature must be capitalized through an efficient long-term tourism industry rather than destroyed for short-term gain.
- develop micro-businesses not limited to the creative industry and assist with development of business ideas at the Orbost Exhibition Centre on the Snowy River
- attracting retirees to the area bus service from outlining areas, retirement village
- make the local council more pro - active
- Need more aged care accommodation as our elderly requiring high level care are having to live in nursing homes elsewhere.
- Community aged care providers who support elderly people to live independently in their homes safely.
- Ageing in place accommodation - hub type arrangement that includes local shops and suitable supports - similar to Eastwood arrangement.
- Aged care is a growing industry, particularly with Baby Boomers becoming older
- Convincing established but slow moving regional businesses that new technologies now exist that can create new opportunities. Look more closely at EBay style selling via the expanding postal system.
- Develop a strong lobby group to push hard for new business. Develop an ethos of citizens supporting local business, and local business supporting local business. Sensible development of tourism and aged care.
- Develop a refugee intake to bring colour and diversity
- In the short term I would hope to see more parking close to the Chemist - perhaps some spaces in the middle of Tarra St next to the rose bushes.
- In the long term, I would hope to see a mariner in Marlo near the jetty & boatshed with boat bays, a couple of shops and a well-developed area for tourists as well as fishermen.
- Sell the Curlip - it is useless. Put the money toward a small crop/vegetable co-up or approach people like Bon Accord and Mulgrove farms to get involved or for advice.
- Agricultural enterprises e.g. vegetable dehydration; Forestry enterprises e.g. timber frames, house lots etc. Tourism e.g., more promotion
- We need to attract about 6 small business operators with each employing about 10-20 employees. A larger employer would be more desirable but also makes us vulnerable to this business closing and sending the community into a similar situation as currently exists. Dependence on one industry is dangerous, e.g. the Timber Industry we are not likely to become an artist colony or Woodworker community. Tourism is an obvious project but climate makes this highly seasonable and uncertain.
- We need to move away from the old energy of timber & farming & the down & out mentality - - we have great potential for tourism & gathering many locals back into the township - so many people drive past Orbost on a daily basis
- We need a go to point for people with ideas at any time of the year to find connections and network with what is already available in Orbost or gather interested parties, this can also double as a place people who are looking for work can go to be inspired and get support to access funding for projects or professional development.
- Local cafes servicing travellers and locals could greatly benefit from barista courses to make Orbost a travellers "must stop". Such a course or courses could be provided locally. Once good coffee can be consistently served then they could follow up with better food (e.g. freshly made cakes - could local good cooks make these?). First thing is to get people stopping and sitting down. A bit of mentoring might help them develop a better ambience which also makes one want to stop. NB there are some good stops at the moment but owners come and go regularly and not all do a great job - this is not only an Orbost problem - but what if we were consistently great?
- The Shire has just awarded yet another contract to .... who have been favoured across the Shire to the detriment of a locally owned business that employed locals and gave

sponsorship dollars across community groups in the High Country and Far East of EG Shire. Ironical that Shire is trying to help Orbost develop local business after effectively killing one off. This business was viable, solvent, and locally owned & operated and the town gained a sense of pride that an Orbost business was delivering this service across the Shire. The Shire has not been visionary in that regard. Support is an important concept that could have made a difference here. It took away part of the town's morale and sense of identity. One of the town's larger employers gone through lack of strategic thinking.

- Let go of the forest industry in its current form. It doesn't have a future as a high volume extraction industry. Stop propping it up. In the long run that's cruel to the families concerned. Use that subsidy money to parachute them out in a respectful, dignified manner. A low volume, high value-adding industry would be a different matter but requires support, protection and regulation. Things a Country Party would have advocated for but a National Party never will.
- further development of ecotourism
- Initiate individualised meeting's relating to a specific target groups within the community. Indigenous, Agriculture, Eco-Tourism, Health, Education, Amenities,
- A centrally organised 'Orbost Sports Association' to co-ordinate all the competing sports in the area, advocate for improved facilities.
- Making the most of our old country town feel, and using the arts and more initiatives to bring tourism is the way to go I think. We have a beautiful park that is not advertised enough to visitors. Sightseeing to the beautiful drives around Orbost, not enough information is known. Even as far as the Errinundra Plateau, the Cabbage Tree Falls, Memorial plaque Falls Creek, you can go on and on, people want to visit as much as possible as well as looking locally in the town, we need to keep people here longer. Tourism is the only way this town is going to advance.
- There is no reason Orbost and its surrounding area cannot create a sustainable, profitable food-bowl for both local purchase and export to other areas within Australia. The environment is ideally suited to permaculture for agricultural purposes on large and small scale initiatives.
- We need a new industry or employment opportunities. I was unaware of the prison being turned down until it was published in the paper. The town's people and business owners should have been able to have their say. Not everyone can be employed by the hospital or DSE/Vic Forest. We will be leaving the town so my husband can get full time employment. It is sad
- Snowy River Festival show casing local music, crafts & produce. A conference centre & accommodation people came for training & courses.
- only as mentioned previously re new industry its ok to be a tourist town but the residents here cannot rely on seasonal tourism to survive
- Advertising our beautiful beaches, bush, bush walks, & logging history.
- The agricultural industry was so big in Orbost up until 20 years ago - encouragement for young farmers etc. to make this are their home, which in turn should promote development in industry to assist this going forward.
- Develop/ build an export quality abattoir, we have access to a prime live beef market and central location to Melbourne and Sydney for export or local sales, Orbost is also a prime location to build / expand current infrastructure to supply the far east of Victoria as well as southern NSW local markets, Orbost is currently the only abattoir east of Sale.
- Potentially could employ up to 50 people in all aspects of the operation e.g. slaughterman, boners, livestock buyers, maintenance staff, transport drivers etc.
- Sufficient land would need to be made available possibly alongside HSR seeds, being in close proximity to Natural gas supply.
- Governments should be giving incentives to business that relocate away from large cities to rural areas. No jobs, therefore no population
- Stop the dole and make everyone have to get a job!

- To attract and keep young families local education MUST be improved. How does Orbost Sec College rank on ENTER scores achieved? Unfortunately, not highly. To attract and retain professionals and business people, Orbost must offer a good standard of education for their children.
- State government backing
- We need to attract a large government facility like a prison or education facility relating to environmental studies (Orbost would make a grate uni town)
- Amenities for the elderly such as more specific parking, particularly close to the Chemist. A heated swimming pool for all ages and abilities. Perhaps charity organisations could use the space outside ..... for BBQs on Saturday mornings, not only raising money but offering a breakfast or lunch service and bringing people together.
- There are three main entries into town, two are unwelcoming. ....are feral. If the paint is coming off your front door and it has a hole in it, it says a lot about you and your home. Fix it.
- Too big a question to answer in this small survey. But first off is to start changing the culture of the town to accept change. How...?
- I suggest that government buy local vacant houses to house "illegal immigrants" who are not permitted to work for 5 years so that they can have a healthy lifestyle and grow some of their own food in our good soil. There are 5 primary schools in our area, some with few students so maybe one of these could be used for education of children and adults. There are also new houses on the market if better quality houses were required for support workers/translators, etc. We have good teachers but more could be brought in if needed.
- Far East Gippsland i.e.: old Orbost Shire, from Nowa Nowa north & east to NSW border contains approx. 13% privately owned land! & approx. 87% Crown Lands! WHY IS IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO CLEAR TREES FROM PRIVATE LAND FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES?
- INSANITY! A death wish on Far East Gippsland. Dying populations lead to shrinking services e.g. Medical/education & populations further declining.
- We need grant money to get workable initiatives off the ground. Initiatives which need to have a quick turnaround before expanding with confidence
- we need to recognise our assets and utilise them to our advantage
- we need people to support and mentor "first start" people having a go
- the oldies have seen all this before, ending in what they see as failure.
- Hold an annual Festival in Autumn based on Orbost's agricultural heritage, perhaps The Amazing {corn} Pumpkin Festival based around a regatta of giant pumpkin boats - see photos in Orbost Museum - Food fair/competition using corn and pumpkin recipes -
- Art and craft displays - games for kids
- The Orbost community needs to look forward rather than backwards. Unfortunately the timber industry is not the driving force it once was. Perhaps a working "museum/craft" centre can celebrate its achievements and how it once underpinned economic development.
- Orbost is a natural choice for cycling tourism. Infrastructure is here already (trails, roads, web-sites, a small tour group business). Practical assistance from the Shire council is necessary, a bike maintenance business would be useful and a promotional booklet - Cycling in Orbost - with maps etc. could bring even more cyclists in.
- The aged care industry could be further developed in Orbost. We have an excellent health service and other basic facilities for independent older people. It would provide employment -particularly to the middle group of residents (i.e. age wise).
- Really emphasizing what it is that makes Orbost such a beautiful town. That means promoting the local businesses, marketing the landscape and atmosphere, expanding accommodation possibilities (for locals and tourists alike) and overall investing some extra

dollars into the improvement of facilities... (Mostly from a tourism point of view however this I believe is the most practical form of growth for Orbost).

- Always include a range of young people (numerically in age BUT individuals who can think outside the square) and NOT trot out the tired old arguments about the timber industry. While it will remain an employment its importance as part of the C21 fabric of Orbost is diminishing. Let's not go back to the future.
- Community leadership is needed, unqualified volunteers have done an admirable job but lack the skills and knowledge to encourage any sort of confidence or enthusiasm from the business sector. The public are sick of being brow beaten into shopping locally. Provide the service at competitive rates, provide and organise interesting events to attract attention and the environment and atmosphere will sell itself.
- -Advertising/selling our community
- -Improving quality of education to attract more families, meaning more students going through the Orbost community and resulting in more employment opportunities
- -'Buy local' advertising to support our dying businesses
- -bringing back the forestry industry to bring back the families who were forced to leave due to loss of jobs. No industry = no population.
- -more employment opportunities to prevent people leaving for Western Australia type occupations
- More support from the Shire - it seems Victoria stops at Lakes Entrance.
- Nimbin' style attraction- the town is almost known for some 'alternative' forms of recreation, to the point of it being a bit of a strength! Making it more obvious and attractive for tourists to come and experience this in a safe and fun way, could promote arts, crafts and other forms of tourism. It may also reduce some crime which is related to using said 'alternate recreation'. Perhaps tapping in to medicinal agriculture in a similar way to Tasmania? Having something 'BIG' (e.g... similar to the big pineapple in OLD) which is visible from the highway could encourage tourists to drive in for a look, which may prompt them to spend a little money in the town at the same time. The town appearance (general 'ghost town' feel) and cost of rental for storefronts, including power, water, rates, makes it difficult to sustain small gift stores and the likes. Perhaps utilising the remote, rural feel and making the town more outback themed would draw tourism? The forestry industry is not regarded very highly in this age of environmental awareness and the cost (excepting maybe a train) of transporting agricultural goods, would make it difficult to expand these areas.
- Firstly the look of the main street with empty shops is not good. These empty shop fronts could be utilised with displays on the regions attractions and history such as the local historical society had recently.
- Secondly as many retired people now live in the area businesses could offer seniors discounts etc. especially in the supermarkets as many people shop out of town because of the high prices of food.
- Promote training opportunities with a future for young ones with a career based outcome... Example Forest Tech should have been in Orbost. Opening up more Pathways such as in Marlo, extend to both Orbost and Cape Conran, promoting, walking and bike riding and health.
- Open Coast road to Bemm River and Marlo, encouraging tourism through scenic tour opportunity, diverting tourists of the Highway to enjoy our beautiful scenery. Marlo walking tracks are very popular. Promote youth programmes where young ones have some where to go for entertainment, encourage youth to be involved in Ocean Rescue and promote water based activities for young ones. Marlo used to have a Yacht Club.
- Like all changes it will be many small things that make the difference. There is no one solution but the need to continually improve and advance. Less emphasis on the past with timber and more emphasis on a new future.
- The need to accept and exploit the Internet as a business tool. The distance factor becomes less of a problem as the technology improves. Opportunities exist but it needs a change in the way many businesses have historically operated.

- More shops and services locally instead of Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale.
- overturn the wasted years of locking the environment away to tourists and make our natural features a must see for visitors to far east Gippsland
- Better access to State Forests and National Parks for older people
- Encourage more intense agriculture, e.g., more cropping, or other labour intensive farming.
- We need Federal Government support to be able to expand and develop agricultural enterprises in Orbost due to the financial difficulties surrounding the trading and exporting of agricultural products.
- To achieve any specific ideas or initiatives in our community, there needs to be a focus on the issues of mental health, drugs and alcohol problems that are arising. There is no point in developing a town that is giving people the opportunity to pay cheap rent whilst receiving government pay and spending their money on drugs and alcohol whilst abusing our health services with repeated offenses related to drug and alcohol abuse. There is work in our community but we lack people who want to/need to work.
- No - at this stage I cannot see a future for my children in Orbost and have seen many younger people move away from the area for work and career opportunities
- Customer service workshops for local businesses & employees; increasing community involvement amongst younger people (under 40s);
- 1. Creation of a more diverse range of residential lots and housing around the area to give a greater range of choice for people considering moving to the area.
- 2. Provision of additional aged care accommodation and facilities within Orbost.
- 3. Production of energy and biofuels from biomass grown in the local area. This may include biomass from both public and private land.
- 4. The production of compost from wastes in the local area. EG wood chips, abattoir waste, local lime
- 5. More intensive use of the fertile snowy flats for vegetable growing with a linkage to existing transport systems/markets
- Become the green energy centre for Victoria using our natural resources
- We need to look at alerts say corn festival we grow corn export corn one of the biggest industries is corn come on get thinking corn festival
- Providing increased opportunities for tourism, based on sustainable tourism principles. For example a Conference Centre which provides accommodation and conference facilities as well as being carbon neutral/sustainable. Businesses would be able to attend the Sustainable Conference Centre having little to no impact or footprint.
- Higher end, nature based tourism accommodation opportunities could also attract the higher yield tourism market. More roofed cabins/accommodation at Cape Conran or in coastal precinct e.g... Marlo.
- May be opportunities for increased aged care/disability care facilities.
- Expanded playground facilities - families seek out good play grounds to stop along their highway journey, this may mean families stopping overnight and if we provided good tourism information at the playground (in Forest Park improved info boards) they may want to come back and explore the area.
- Orbost should be both a great destination for tourists as well as the gate-way to national parks.
- Orbost is remote enough from capital cities to have appeal but not too remote to not be attractive. Many lessons can be learnt from the Sunraysia District which has diversified away from agriculture to more tourism, other industries and then support services. Mildura is obviously larger than Orbost however there are still a lot of good lessons to be learnt.
- I am an outsider looking in and what appeals to me as a potential business operator is the pro-active local council (in business and community development), strong sense of

community and also particularly, the rich history that the area. This rich history should be capitalised on more to attract more visitors and increase the size of the local economy. The Orbost area is a great place to get away from the "rat-race" and have a quiet holiday, however there needs to be more activities for those who want them. The paddle-steamer is a good start.

- The airport facilities are great - this is an excellent piece of infrastructure that the Council has developed.
- Public Transport to and from Orbost is limited. It would be good to see a regular air service linking Mallacoota, Orbost and Melbourne (Moorabbin or Essendon). This service plus local tour operators need encouragement and assistance to become established. All this needs to be managed to preserve the uncrowded atmosphere of the region.
- More could be done with the historical asset of the area. The information boards along Nicholson Street was a good start but this needs to be taken further. For example, some sort of exhibition venue to showcase the forestry, agriculture, arts and crafts, the Snowy River, the local tourist information and of course adequate dining and refreshments.
- Orbost needs AN EVENT annually to place it on the state/national map. The Ag. Show, good as it is, is not the answer. It needs to be a niche market even that still speaks to the nation about Orbost that generates a big once a year economic surge and an ongoing increase in tourism and associated opportunities. My suggestion is:
- An annual regatta built around model steam boats [best held at Easter from Forest Park].
  - Targets niche groups of steam power, model boat and timber & machine enthusiasts
  - connects to SS Curlip marketing, Snowy River marketing and traditional Orbost industries
  - Connects with successful Marlo PS fete, Orbost forestry & history and iconic Snowy River
  - Provides an opportunity to connect with timber and boat building => Orbost Exhibition Centre
  - Could generate a competition for school students based around mechanical and timber classes
  - Provides an opportunity for expanded niche events around Steampunk enthusiasts
  - Steampunk connects with Youth, Visual and Sculptural arts and High Quality Timber products
  - Creates multiple tourism marketing opportunities not available at the moment
  - Could be connected with Bike Power tourism via regatta prizes for steam, bike, and hybrid boats!
- Orbost cannot afford to fall back on agricultural and forestry because these staples of the past are an important local industry but are not capable of generating the extra growth and tourism the region needs to thrive [not just survive].
- Deal with the actual community, the loggers etc. who are losing their history of Timber based income get them to choose something else and then earnestly facilitate Their choice...If one could create a God of tourism He/She could not provide enough tourists to justify Gippsland's investment in tourism. Invest in the community now and the future!
- Provide assistance to those wishing to work as sole operators in the forest (e.g. sleeper cutters), build a road that follows the coast line to Tamboon to promote the far Eastern end of the 90 mile beach instead of stopping at Lakes Entrance, reinstate the local forest commission to better manage the vast network of forest roads so tourists can use them which is currently lacking with several tracks becoming overgrown and impassable (e.g. Greens road Murrangowa), reinstate local Shire employees instead of using contractors who work for a price that leaves the area with poorly maintained roads and infrastructure.
- We need to think of a yearly attraction to bring in the tourists. We also need ..... to stick to being a supermarket and not trying to take over every shop in the town



- I don't have a vision for Orbost because everyone seems to enjoy going away and shopping in nearby towns because they have the attitude, it's their money to spend where ever they like, doesn't matter a great deal to some because they don't own a business or house so they move away at the drop of a hat.
- With local and state government support and the removal of so much red tape that exists within the area ALL of the above choices would develop by themselves. Within a thriving community the township will enhance, new training will follow naturally, new business will open gladly, more employment will be created, bringing with it more population, tourism, artisans. You as a local government have bound your own hands, hence slowly killing a beautiful once strong thriving town and community all in the name of so called protecting the area and locking it up for prosperity. You need balance not what you have been allowing because as you can see it killing the area and not working.
- Encourage tourists, to stop and inhale the air!!
- Promoting a sense if community pride in what we have - nature based assets and grow industry around making Orbost and surround a tourism friendly area. We need more investment in product development (tourism experiences and attractions) and then skilled workers. There needs to be more local training opportunities to give local youth hope of a better future. - Especially younger girls in the area. Young guys leave school can go to trades but there are not enough opportunities for younger women. Tourism is one of the biggest employers of women around the world which promotes a since of empowerment in women and therefore their communities (From selling crafts to managing businesses)
- I believe tourism could be an answer to helping the youth and community of Orbost.
- Developing a Paddock to plate food bowl involving tours, cooking, and gourmet products. Promoting paddock to plate as healthy living, environmentally friendly way to use food.
- Developing an awareness of the diversity of environment and industry to cater for creative pursuit like photography and art such as tours.

**What sort of local programs or initiatives would you be most interested in volunteering or participating in?**

- Need to wait until I retire and have time!
- I engage in voluntary work in Buddhist centres.
- I have volunteered at the Exhibition Centre in the past. The Exhibition Centre is a wonderful asset with potential.
- Participation in community cultural groups (already involved)
- Hockey Astro Turf Field
- Many of these things I think are a really good idea, but (probably like a lot of people here) don't feel that I have the time to commit personally.
- This question needs more space for comment.
- Helping in community welfare activities
- I work out of town - already a member of SES
- With 1 or 2 large businesses or industries coming to Orbost the development of small business etc. will follow.
- food sustainability getting people to grow healthy fresh food
- Unable to assist because of illness. Used to participate.
- I am a member of the Orbost Economic Development Committee
- I have done some volunteering work in the arts and doing workshops with Waratah House etc. and I am now getting older and think the younger people should do more. My ability to work is limited personally, I still work in the arts in my studio but am not....
- Helping disadvantaged youth

- If I had more skills needed for the above I would be very interested
- A community group to improve town's image
- If it relies on volunteers it's going to be slow. We're flat out just trying to break even.
- Already volunteer in aged care hostel and church programs.
- Paid positions for qualified people are what we need.
- have given several years on a volunteer basis, would not like to commit myself at this stage due to health
- I am not yet a resident of the area, however, if I was I would be interested in "Business mentoring & networking"
- I find the expectation of council and those in the tourism industry for the community to embrace volunteering both unfair and unrealistic as tourism actually prices both pensioners and the average Joe out of their town/homes. I.e. increased rates, tourist prices.
- If everything is volunteering how do you create employment and new money for the area??
- Sorry, I already do a lot of volunteer work. What I am looking for is paid work :(
- Do not live in the local area



## Appendix 6: Agricultural Commodity Contribution to Victoria

The table below provides a summary of East Gippsland's contribution to the production of various agricultural commodities in Victoria (where contribution is greater than 1%). It is used to help understand where there are clusters of local industry activity, and helps to identify areas that can be explored further in regards to strategic advantages and assets.

| Agricultural Commodity  | East Gippsland | Victoria   | EG contribution to Vic |
|---|----------------|------------|------------------------|
| Vegetables for human consumption - Broccoli - Production (kg)   | 5812377.5      | 27135407.3 | 21.42%                 |
| Vegetables for human consumption - Onions - Production (t) (i)  | 2964           | 25108.3    | 11.80%                 |
| Vegetables for human consumption - Carrots - Production (t)   | 6076           | 62266      | 9.76%                  |
| Nurseries, cut flowers or cultivated turf - Cultivated turf - Area (ha)   | 76.3           | 930.5      | 8.20%                  |
| Broadacre crops - Cereal crops - Maize for grain - Production (t)   | 1602.3         | 20880      | 7.67%                  |
| Vegetables for human consumption - Lettuces - Production (kg)   | 2786000        | 40306077.2 | 6.91%                  |
| Livestock - Other livestock - Goats (no.) (o)   | 3394           | 53349      | 6.36%                  |
| Livestock - Meat cattle - Cows and heifers 1 year and over (no.)  | 66311.1        | 1248465    | 5.31%                  |
| Broadacre crops - Cereal crops - Sorghum for grain - Production (t)   | 140.6          | 2848.9     | 4.94%                  |
| Livestock - Meat cattle - Total (no.)   | 111213.3       | 2362081.6  | 4.71%                  |
| Broadacre crops - Cereal crops - Maize for grain - Area (ha)  | 172.1          | 4180.2     | 4.12%                  |
| Nurseries, cut flowers or cultivated turf - Cut flowers - Total - Area (ha)                                     | 86.2           | 2505.5     | 3.44%                  |
| Livestock - Cattle - Total cattle (no.)   | 132379         | 4113754.7  | 3.22%                  |
| Hay and Silage - Pasture cut for hay - Production (t)   | 26662.7        | 972933.4   | 2.74%                  |
| Hay and Silage - Lucerne cut for hay - Production (t)   | 6381           | 239110.4   | 2.67%                  |
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - Heifers over 2 years (no.)   | 2076.5         | 103766.8   | 2.00%                  |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Ewes expected to lamb to Merino rams (no.)  | 55944.8        | 2940906.7  | 1.90%                  |
| Vegetables for human consumption - Capsicums (excluding chillies) - Area (ha)                                   | 1.8            | 102.5      | 1.76%                  |
| Hay and Silage - Pasture cut for hay - Area (ha)  | 4223.7         | 246364.4   | 1.71%                  |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Breeding ewes 1 year and over - Merinos (no.)                                     | 82044.5        | 5091405    | 1.61%                  |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Lambs marked - Merino lambs (no.)   | 35739.1        | 2329016.6  | 1.53%                  |
| Hay and Silage - Lucerne cut for hay - Area (ha)  | 735.1          | 50086      | 1.47%                  |
| Broadacre crops - Cereal crops - Sorghum for grain - Area (ha)  | 16.4           | 1159.7     | 1.41%                  |
| Hay and Silage - Pasture, cereal and other crops cut for silage - Production (t)                                | 12633.4        | 959955.6   | 1.32%                  |
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - All other dairy cattle (excl. cows in milk and dry) (no.)                            | 7953           | 637050.7   | 1.25%                  |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Breeding ewes 1 year and over at 30 June (merino and all other) - Total (no.) (j) | 114656.4       | 9325267.4  | 1.23%                  |
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - Total (no.)  | 21165.7        | 1751673.1  | 1.21%                  |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Ewes mated to produce lambs - Total (no.)   | 98697.5        | 8315440.5  | 1.19%                  |

|  |          |           |       |
|--|----------|-----------|-------|
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - Cows in milk and dry (no.)                                      | 13212.8  | 1114622.4 | 1.19% |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - Total (no.)  | 187908.2 | 15928166  | 1.18% |
| Livestock - Dairy cattle - Heifers 1 to 2 years (no.)                                      | 3814.3   | 325929.3  | 1.17% |
| Fruit and nuts - Orchard fruit and nuts - Other orchard fruit - Avocados - Production (kg) | 18101.5  | 1611918.5 | 1.12% |
| Hay and Silage - Pasture, cereal and other crops cut for silage - Area (ha)                | 1884.7   | 169099.3  | 1.11% |
| Livestock - Sheep and lambs - All other (no.) (k)  | 73251.8  | 6602898.6 | 1.11% |

Source: ABS, 2013

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