

# EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL **END OF TERM REPORT 2016-2020**



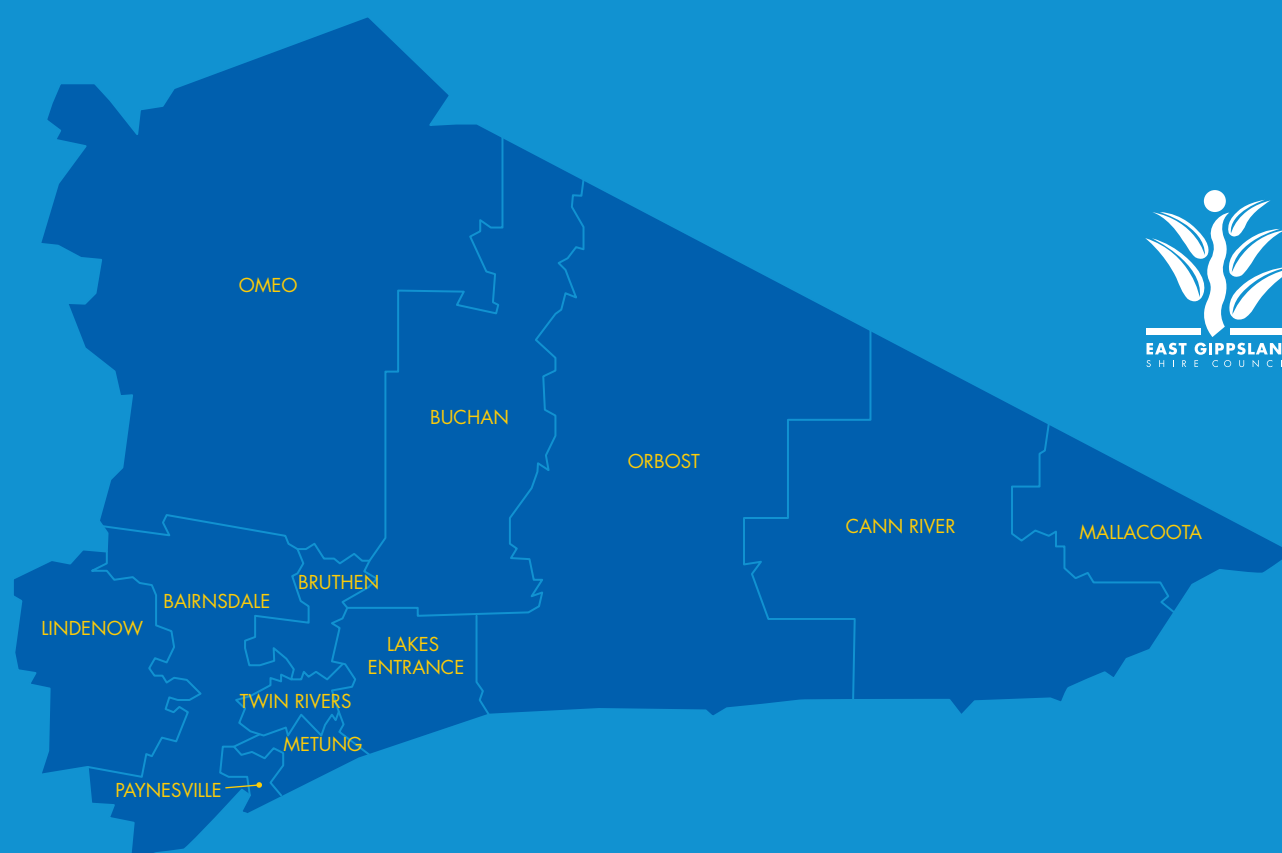


*East Gippsland Shire Council acknowledges the Gunaikurnai, Monero and the Bidawel people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses East Gippsland Shire.*

*We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland and their Elders past and present.*

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

*The aim of this report is to provide the community with an update of the achievements made by the East Gippsland Shire Council during its term of office from November 2016 – 30 June 2020.*

With the election of its Councillors, East Gippsland Shire Council adopted a Council Plan 2017-21 in June 2017. This plan identifies where the East Gippsland community wanted to be at the end of the Councillors' term. It outlines the community's priorities and aspirations and how these will be achieved. This plan assists in shaping the future by providing the direction for the provision of key projects and services which enable Council to meet the needs of the community and deliver good quality services and facilities.

# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

*The close of East Gippsland Shire Council's seventh term is a milestone for the community and Council.*

Together with other government agencies, organisations, community groups and individuals we have achieved a great deal for the region over the four-year Council term. The outcomes highlighted in this report are testament to the vision, innovation and resilience of people in our community to make the most of its assets to be an enviable place to live, work and invest.

Over the course of the term we have invested over \$100 million on capital works that have included a number of high-profile infrastructure projects that have improved our region's liveability and will benefit our community and economy for decades to come.

In addition, we completed projects that supported the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of community members, and others that focussed on our natural environment and the effects of the changing climate on our municipality.

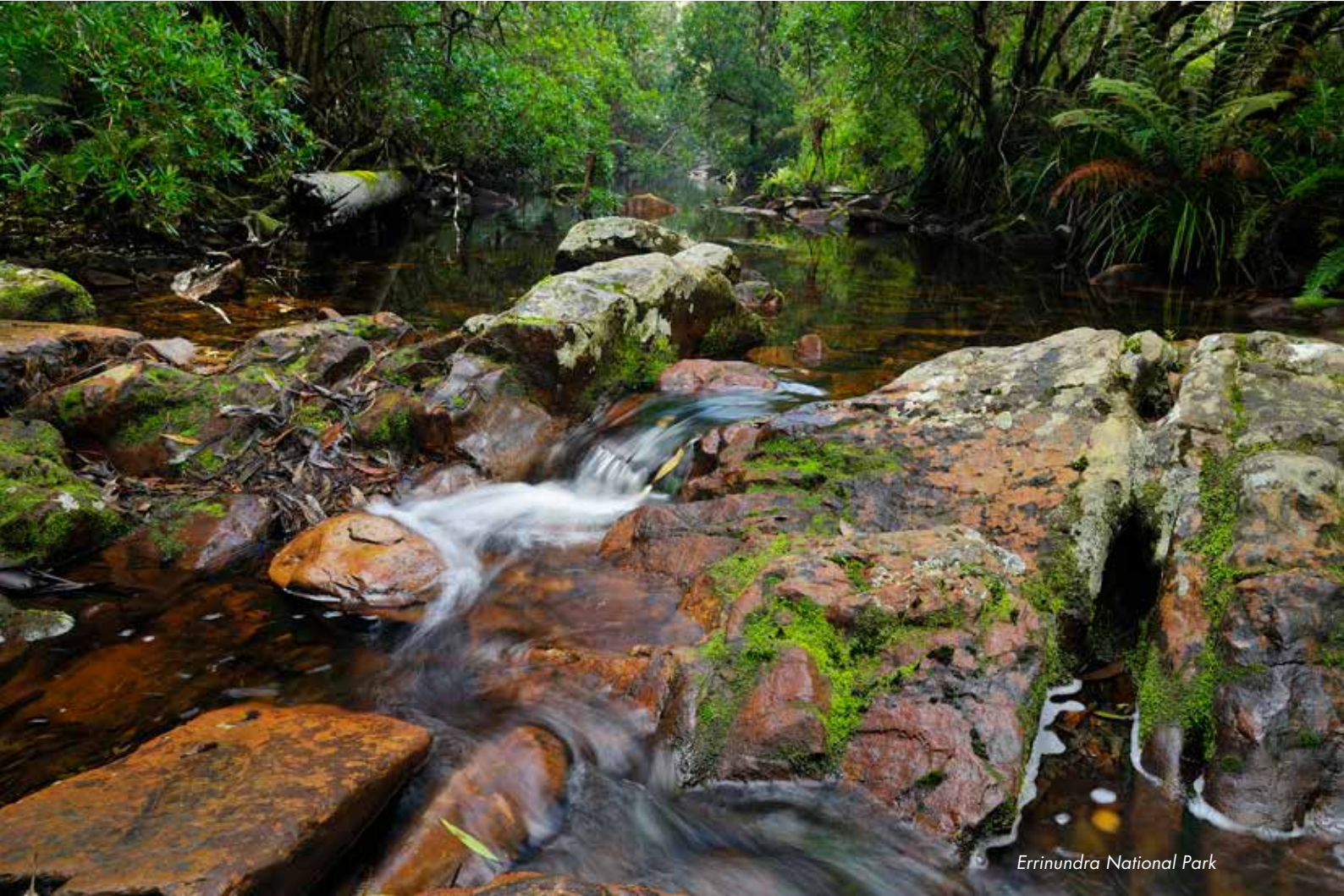
While this Council term has had many highlights, the final year of the term has been one of compounding crises for our region. The ongoing drought, Black Summer bushfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic are significantly impacting our residents, businesses, and our built and natural environment.

We have advocated strongly and worked to support the community during these challenges.

It has been both humbling and a privilege to serve the East Gippsland community over the past four years.



Back L-R: Anthony Basford (CEO), Cr Jackson Roberts, Cr Joe Rettino, Cr Colin Toohey, Cr Ben Buckley, Cr Richard Ellis  
Front L-R: Cr Mark Reeves, Cr Natalie O'Connell, Cr John White, Cr Marianne Pelz



Errinundra National Park

## COUNCIL VISION AND MISSION

### VISION

*East Gippsland is the most liveable region in Australia. A place of natural beauty, enviable lifestyles, and opportunities.*

### MISSION

*A leading local government that works together with our communities to make East Gippsland the most liveable region in Australia.*

# COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

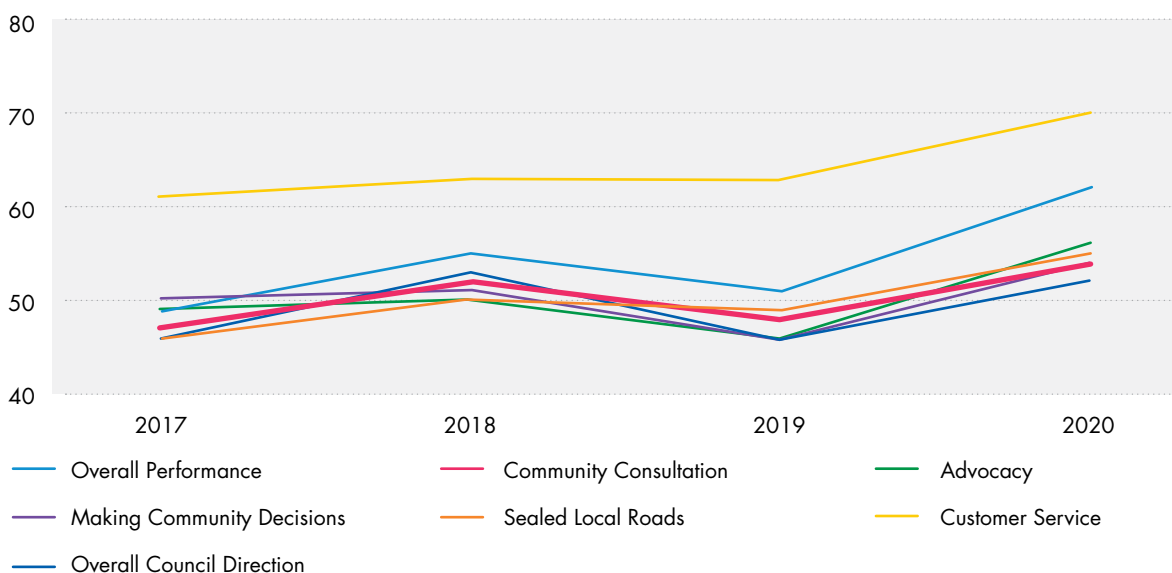
*East Gippsland residents have the opportunity to participate in an annual survey to check their satisfaction with Council's performance and services. Local Government Victoria coordinates this survey throughout Victorian local government areas.*

The survey, a legislative requirement, is conducted by an independent research company, which randomly selects 400 East Gippsland residents aligned with the

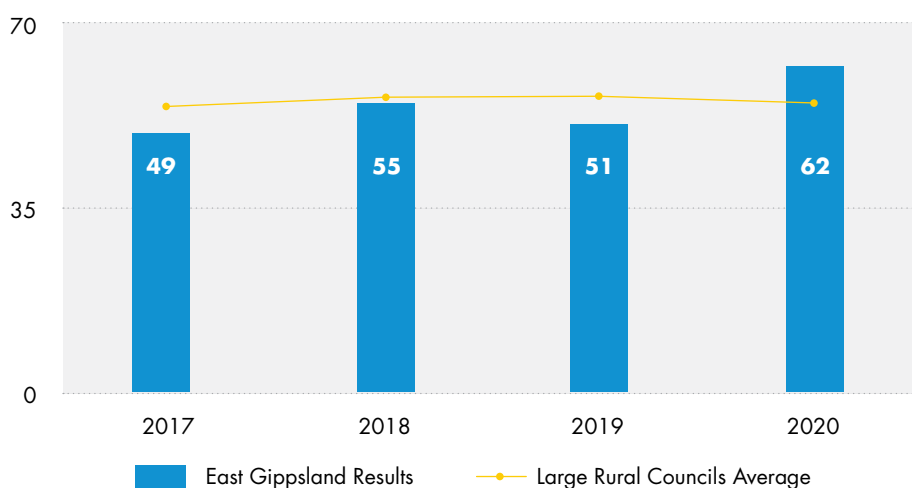
shire's demographic profile to interview. The survey is conducted annually in February and March, except for the 2020 survey was conducted in June due to the Black Summer Bushfires.

The survey questions relate to the seven core local government measures, which are overall performance, customer service, community consultation and engagement, sealed roads, advocacy, overall council direction and making decisions in the community's interests.

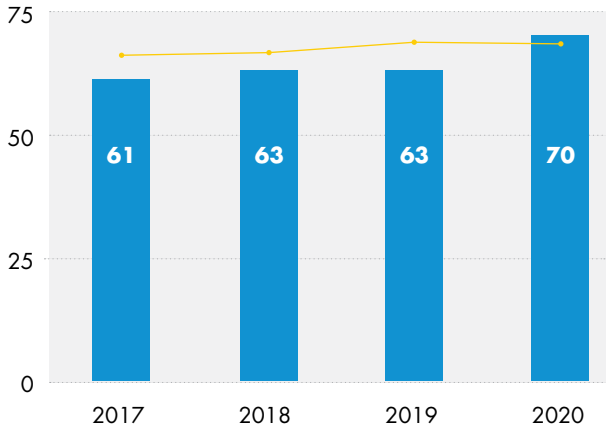
## Summary of core measures



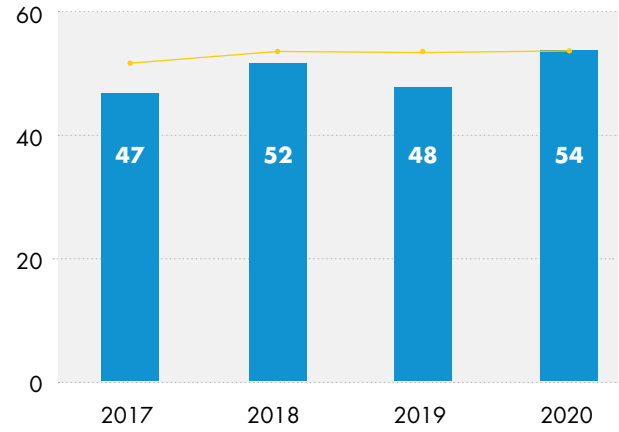
## Overall performance



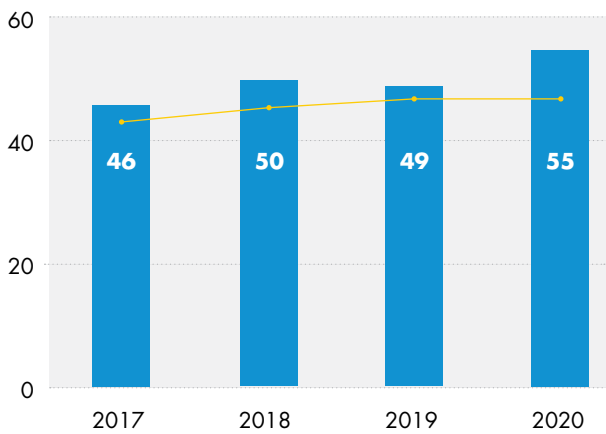
### Customer Service



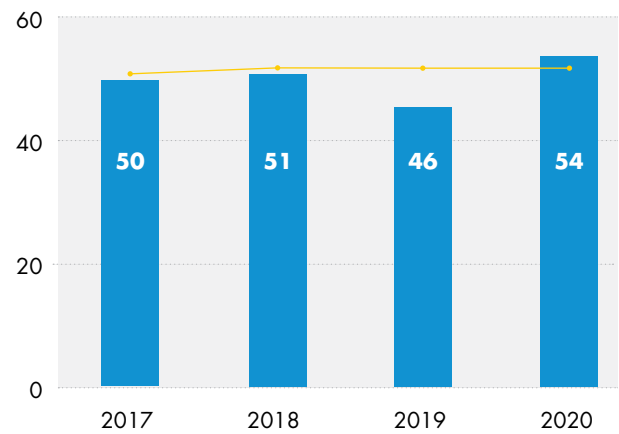
### Community Consultation



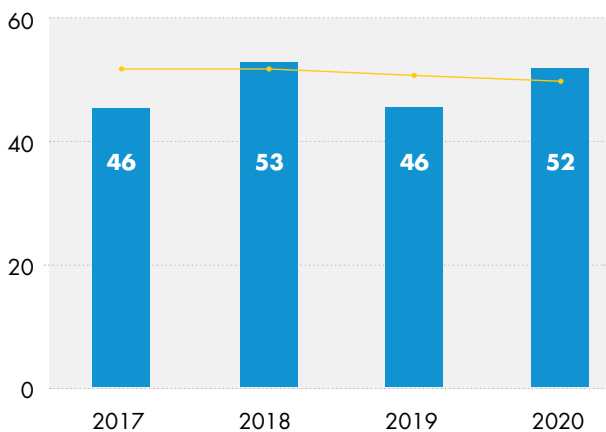
### Local Sealed Roads



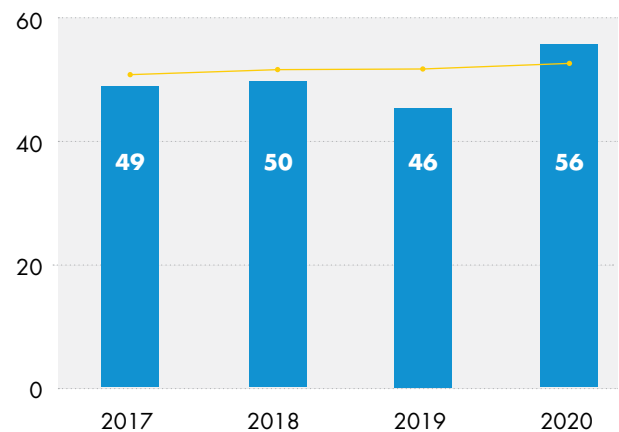
### Community Decisions Made



### Overall Council Direction



### Lobbying



## ORGANISATION AWARDS



Council received a national award for its Bairnsdale Airport in 2018, named 'Small Regional Aerodrome of the Year' at the Australian Airport Association National Airport Industry Awards.



Council won the *Parks and Leisure Regional Award* for the Best Regional/Rural Industry Contribution Award in 2019 for the Bairnsdale Sporting Facilities Plan.



Council was Highly Commended in the *Local Government* category at the HART Awards and was also Highly Commended at the Wurreker Awards in 2018 for its Cross Cultural Awareness video.





Orbost Outdoor Pool won the *Facility Management Award – Seasonal* at the 2019 Aquatics and Recreation Victoria Awards.



The 'Bright Futures' project was recognised at the Aquatics and Recreation Victoria Awards where the project won the *Sustainability Award* in 2017 for initiatives at the Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre.



Council received a Special Commendation in the '*Infrastructure Innovation for a Strong Climate Future*' category of the United Nations Association of Australia's World Environment Day Climate Action Awards in 2017 for its 'Bright Futures' project.



Council received a Highly Commended Award at the Municipal Association of Victoria's Technology Awards for Excellence in the *Strategy and Planning Achievement of the Year* category in 2018 for its drone program.

# MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON EAST GIPPSLAND

## DROUGHT

*East Gippsland Shire was one of only two Victorian municipal areas determined to be eligible for Australian Government drought support in late 2018. The eligibility criteria were linked to rainfall deficiency and the economic reliance on agriculture in the municipality. This designation came after an extended period of lower than average rainfall that for most of the shire, began in the summer of 2015-16.*

Council took a proactive role in seeking to understand, respond to and plan for drought. This has included the implementation of a number of proactive initiatives that have seen the Drought Reference Group formed, a Drought Assistance Officer employed and direct support provided to affected community members and organisations.

In October 2019 it was announced that East Gippsland Shire Council would receive the Victorian Government's \$1.51 million Local Government Service Support Payment as rate relief for all farm properties. Council also resolved to allocate \$500,000 to a range of drought initiatives that included:

- individual support through a number of recognised charitable organisations;
- support to supply household water;
- support for a range of strategic and future focused projects; and
- a range of advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives.



Cr Mark Reeves and Cr Marianne Pelz at the Multi-agency Drought Support Hub, East Gippsland Field Days 2019



Cr Natalie O'Connell, Premier Daniel Andrews and Agriculture Minister Jaclyn Symes discuss drought assistance funding in 2019



Cr John White inspects the fire damage to a Sarsfield property

## 2019-20 BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES

*As East Gippsland had experienced significant drought and there was severe, widespread dryness in the region, lightning strikes were quick to ignite numerous fires in the region in November 2019. Unfavourable conditions and remote locations meant the fires were difficult to contain and several fires joined, creating fires of a magnitude previously unseen.*

On 29 December, the Emergency Management Commissioner urged holidaymakers not to travel to East Gippsland and asked all visitors to leave. This was followed by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews declaring a State of Disaster on 2 January 2020 for multiple areas, including East Gippsland. During this time, all 46,000 residents were directly or indirectly impacted.

It was the first time the government had used the State of Disaster provisions, which were created following the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

In addition to multiple relief centres set up within East Gippsland area, neighbouring Councils further supported fleeing residents, in areas such as Sale, Morwell and over the NSW border in Delegate. Council activated a local recovery centre in Bairnsdale in early January to provide customer service and manage call-out operations for all bushfire recovery enquires. Recovery centre staff called affected residents to share information about the assistance that was available. Council also set up an automated referral service to speed up the delivery of support.

These unprecedented fires caused unfathomable damage, loss of life and so much more. Our forests, wildlife, homes and sheds: wiped out in fires that seemed unstoppable. Our economic impact will not be really understood for years.

During and following the fires, several remote communities were isolated for long periods by closures of major arterial roads including the Princes Highway, which led to a shortage of essential goods.

The fire impacted 56 per cent of the East Gippsland area and with all roads officially declared safe on 2 April 2020, the road to recovery has commenced.

### **Bushfires impact on East Gippsland**

- Three fatalities.
- More than 392 homes destroyed or damaged.
- 56 per cent of East Gippsland impacted by bushfire, or over 1,100,000 hectares burnt.
- Princes Highway cut for 37 days.
- Great Alpine Road, Bonang Highway and Monaro Highway closed for periods of time.
- Telecommunications, power, water and many minor roads impacted.
- 75 per cent loss in annual tourism expenditure.
- Estimated loss of visitor expenditure for Gippsland of \$170-180 million.
- Air and sea evacuations from Mallacoota and Omeo by the Australian Defence Force.



*Sunny Point Bridge, Benambra*

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*East Gippsland Shire residents, businesses and communities have been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact has been exacerbated by the 2019-20 summer bushfires; three and half years of below average rainfall; and timber, fishing and farming industry transitions.*

Residents have been impacted by these events and changes either directly or indirectly, through impacts on their families, friends and/or the communities in which they live. To deal with the complexities of COVID-19, Council closed certain public facing services, while others were required to commence working remotely. During this time no permanent staff were stood down and up to 45 permanent and casual staff were offered alternative duties so they could continue to work through this period.

Throughout the pandemic Council's decision to close and reopen facilities and services was done in line with advice from the Chief Health Officer and the Victorian Government's restrictions. Council's reopened businesses and services have transitioned to an operating model that observes the Victorian Government's social distancing restrictions.

This included the development of the 'East Gippsland – The way we do business now' plan that was designed to be dynamic and reviewed in response to government announcements and other changing circumstances. It was built on what Council learned about delivering our services since the pandemic began and sets out what Council will do to emerge from set restrictions in a way that benefits our community, supports its staff and continues to safeguard the health and wellbeing of both.



Impacts COVID-19 has had on service delivery



Council meetings were forced to be held online following COVID-19 restrictions.

# STRONG COMMUNITIES

## STRONG COMMUNITIES - MAJOR PROJECTS

### Place Planning

Place Planning is a project that helps communities shape a plan for their place, reflecting how it is now and how it could be into the future. The plan will build community knowledge and understanding of Council processes and incorporates data gathering and community profiling activities.

The development of district level community plans using a place planning approach has occurred in three districts: Cann Valley, Twin Rivers and Mountain Rivers (Snowy to Errinundra). The three plans have been presented to Council and were adopted.

The evaluation of the place-based model and review of the three districts is complete, along with the development of a Community Readiness Model. This will inform future practice for the development of District Community Plans across the remainder of the shire. District Community Representative Groups have been established in each district.



A range of engagement approaches have been used as part of the project, including: formal online surveying using Your Say and Survey Monkey, community asset mapping workshops and visioning workshops. A large amount of data has been collected and will be used to evaluate the reach of engagement activities.



Place Planning meeting held with the Twin Rivers community



Grant Connors (CEO Aquatics and Recreation Victoria) touring the BARC upgrades

## The Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre Upgrade

The Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre (BARC) redevelopment was opened to the public on 13 May 2019, with an official opening held on 29 June 2019.

The project was delivered on time and on budget (\$6.63 million) using a local building company. The redevelopment includes an expanded aquatic area with a new warm water pool, interactive children's water play area and upgraded all-accessible change facilities. The reception and café areas were also expanded and upgraded as part of the redevelopment.

Since the project's completion, a significant amount of positive feedback has been received from the community, especially from families and people with a disability.

Membership at the BARC increased 43.5 per cent from 1 January 2018 to 1 January 2020 (781 members up to 1,121 members).

## Implement the Bairnsdale Sporting Facilities Plan

A range of projects identified within the Bairnsdale Sporting Facilities Plan have commenced and are in development. The upgrade to WORLD sporting precinct in Bairnsdale is going ahead with the approval for \$5 million in funding through the Building Better Regions Fund. The works will include an upgraded pavilion for hockey and netball user groups, new lighting and amenities for the main hockey pitch, an eight-court regional level netball facility with four courts to be marked for both futsal and netball, a soccer precinct that includes a dedicated pavilion and two pitches with lighting, car parking and new walkways and connections.

Other work relating to the Plan includes the upgrade to the Lucknow Recreation Reserve Netball Courts, preparation for the upgrade of the Lucknow Recreation Reserve Pavilion and a grant application was submitted to upgrade the Lucknow Gymnastics Pavilion.



*The redeveloped reception and café area of the BARC*



*The WORLD sporting precinct upgrade project*

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2016-17 RESULT	2019-20 RESULT	TREND
Number of library activities people have engaged in	362,537	335,379* (394,338 in 2018-19)	↘
Number of people participating in performances and presentations at the Forge Theatre Bairnsdale	15,561	9,706* (17,757 in 2018-19)	↘
Number of Local Incident Management Plans completed or reviewed	6	6	—
Immunisation coverage rate	94%	96%	↗
Attendance at Council operated recreation centres and aquatic facilities	361,891	264,374* (388,928 in 2018-19)	↘
Number of animals reclaimed by Council officers	525	612	↗
Time taken to action animal management requests	2.36	2.60	↗

\* Bushfires and COVID-19 impacted the 2019-20 result

# LIVEABLE REGION

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE SPENDING OVERVIEW

- \$33.511 million Capital Works program delivered against a budgeted \$50.891million (2019-20)
- \$30.1 million Capital Works program delivered against a budgeted \$41.9 million (2018-19)
- \$22.344 million Capital Works program delivered against a budgeted \$35.561 million (2017-18)
- \$23.7 million Capital Works Program delivered against a budgeted \$32.3 million (2016-17)

### Capital expenditure over Council's term (in millions)

Roads, Footpaths and Bridges	\$40.45	
Land and Buildings	\$11.40	
Plant, Furniture and Equipment	\$10.40	
Parks and Recreation	\$6.99	
Other	\$3.99	*Does not include 2019-20 figures, due the end of year financials still being finalised at time of reporting.
Waste	\$2.54	
Drainage	\$2.35	



Works to improve access to the Mitchell River walking track in Bairnsdale

# A LIVEABLE REGION – MAJOR PROJECTS

## IMPROVED STREETSCAPES ACROSS THE REGION

### Orbost

The streetscape on the western side of Nicholson Street involved new footpaths, street furniture, landscaping, drainage and kerb works, and plantings of trees and various plants. The works to the eastern side of Nicholson Street involved improvements to the footpaths, tree planting, retaining walls, furniture and general streetscape amenity, between the kerb line and the shopfronts. The main pedestrian crossing was also updated.



*Nicholson Street Orbost streetscape*

### Bairnsdale

The upgrade to Service Street streetscape included constructing a new roundabout at the Service / Francis Street intersection, installing new traffic outstands, replacing paving on the eastern side of Service Street and landscaping. The works along Nicholson Street include raised pedestrian crossings, new tree plantings and seats, lighting, and footpath upgrades.



*Nicholson Street Bairnsdale streetscape*

### Cann River

Cann River Streetscape upgrade works included civil works to roads and footpaths and landscaping of the main commercial area. Two other projects complemented the streetscape upgrade: the wi-fi bar that local school students designed and built; and the redeveloped bus shelters, which were constructed by Public Transport Victoria and transferred to Council ownership.



*Wi-fi bar, Cann River streetscape*

## Lakes Entrance

Streetscape works to the south side of The Esplanade were undertaken to improve safety, enhanced traffic management and improved the amenity of the township. There has also been works on traffic calming and road safety improvements in Church Street. This work has progressed in partnership with Regional Roads Victoria.

Further improvements to Lakes Entrance streetscape are ongoing, with works continuing along the north side of The Esplanade. Two blocks have been completed to date, with the project intended to see the entire length of town centre updated.

The streetscape works have been complemented by projects to replace sections of the seawall. These works provide critical protection from inundation while also resulting in a fantastic board walk experience for both the local community and visitors.



*Lakes Entrance seawall replacement*

## Twin Rivers

The townships of Nicholson, Johnsonville and Swan Reach have received significant enhancements with a further partnership project between Council and Regional Roads Victoria. The works provided pedestrian pathways, safe crossing points, and other traffic treatments. Key objectives of the works in these towns were to enhance access for pedestrians, improve amenity and change the road environment to encourage and promote safe speeds.



*Swan Reach streetscape*



*Nicholson streetscape*

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECT

Council has installed solar panel systems (panels and inverters) on Council facilities and community buildings as follows:

COUNCIL BUILDINGS	COMMUNITY OPERATED BUILDINGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lakes Entrance Service Centre (14.5 kW system);</li> <li>• Orbost Service Centre (9.9 kW);</li> <li>• Omeo Service Centre (17kW);</li> <li>• Bairnsdale Business Centre (13 kW);</li> <li>• Paynesville Service Centre (40kW);</li> <li>• Community and Education Hub Bairnsdale (7kW);</li> <li>• Lakes Entrance Aquadome (45kW);</li> <li>• Forge Theatre (10.5kW);</li> <li>• Bairnsdale Library (9.8kW); and</li> <li>• Corporate Centre (26.25kW).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Gippsland Art Gallery (5kW);</li> <li>• AJ Freeman Reserve, Paynesville (10kW);</li> <li>• Bairnsdale City Oval (10kW);</li> <li>• Lucknow Squash and Table Tennis Centre (5.6kW); and</li> <li>• East Gippsland Historic Society (5.28kW).</li> </ul>



Solar panel systems on the Omeo Service Centre (above), Bairnsdale City Oval Pavilion (top right), and on the Lakes Entrance Aquadome (bottom right)

## RENEWABLE ENERGY FEASIBILITY STUDY



The Renewable Energy Feasibility Study business case was completed in 2019. The project identified and investigated opportunities for delivering long-term renewable energy solutions to the region. The business case summarised the findings of the three successfully tested pilot

programs run from July 2018 to March 2019: the Multi-site Feasibility Study, Solar Bulk Buy, and Energy Information Hub.

Ten businesses were identified and received a technical report on the viability and design of a solar system for their business. Recommendations to implement energy saving measures, such as LED lighting, were also made. This project is expected to see \$1.76 return to the community from every dollar invested by Council and project participants (over the 20-year life of the project).

The Solar Bulk Buy finished on 30 June 2019, with 62 systems sold and eight batteries installed. The project offered discounted prices for solar products, due to the volume of sales. The project saw 322kW of solar power installed for residential systems and 15kW for commercial, which is expected to save 9,062 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions over the 20-year life of the equipment.

Implementation of the Energy Information Hub was completed as part of New Energy Jobs Fund project. The project included a range of energy efficiency and independent solar information sessions for residents, including workshops and drop-in sessions. In total 270 people attended information sessions and the Energy Information Hub was directly attributed with participants' realising savings of at least \$5,770.



*Official opening of the Lindenow-Glenaladale bridge*



*Official opening of Giles Street bridge, Bairnsdale*



*Cr Joe Rettino at the official opening of the Buchan-Orbost Road bridge*

## REPLACED AND CONSTRUCTION BRIDGES

Over the term of office Council has replaced 81 timber bridges with steel and concrete bridges, and a further five timber bridges with concrete culverts. Three of the major replacements and construction projects are:

The **Lindenow-Glenaladale bridge** was demolished and replaced, taking almost 12 months to complete. Invitees to the official opening in May 2018 included local primary school children and adults who were at the primary school when the former bridge was opened in 1959.

The construction of the bridge at **Giles Street**, Bairnsdale saw an extension of Giles Street and a bridge constructed over McGee's Gully in Bairnsdale. The infrastructure links the Giles Street and Saleyards Road industrial precincts. It was built on an unmade section of road and provides a more direct route for heavy vehicles and people working and visiting the businesses in the industrial estates.

The former Buchan – **Orbost Road bridge**, the last multi-span timber bridge in the shire, was replaced with a concrete and steel bridge. The bridge was officially opened with a Civic Event in July 2018.

## ACTIONS FROM THE WASTE FACILITIES AND DISPOSAL STRATEGY

The Waste Facilities and Disposal Strategy identifies areas for review with regard to the existing waste management practices and sites, and provides recommended actions. Some of the actions out of the strategy are:

### Closure of landfills

- The final cap design for the Lakes Entrance site is finalised and the work to transition to a transfer station can be completed.
- Orbost and Mallacoota closed landfills have been rehabilitated with phytocap and tree growth monitored.
- Metung, Orbost, Mallacoota and Eagle Point closed landfills continue to have groundwater bores monitored.
- Cann River landfill is progressively being rehabilitated.

### Construction of landfill cells

- The capping of Cell 1 and 2 at Bairnsdale Landfill is complete. Construction of cell 3B was opened in January 2020, which was earlier than planned to respond to the additional waste of the bushfires.



*The Bosworth Road landfill in Bairnsdale was rehabilitated. The design incorporates usable public open space areas and is planted out with approximately 50,000 native trees*

### Improve existing and construct new waste transfer stations

- Design for Lakes Entrance Transfer Station
- Design for upgrades to Bemm River and Bruthen transfer stations. Bemm River is now supervised by a staff member to introduce standardised services and control waste entering the facility.

### Increasing resource recovery and recycling

- construction of a major electronic waste collection facility at the Bairnsdale Landfill
- the introduction of recycling and reuse programs that incorporated waste streams such as e-waste, mattresses, polystyrene, green waste, and scrap metal.











### Waste education and awareness

- 138 waste education sessions conducted, with an estimated 4,537 people attending. These sessions include public information sessions, school education sessions and promotion at community events.



*Bruthen Transfer Station after receiving a facility upgrade*

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2016-17 RESULT	2019-20 RESULT	TREND
Capital Expenditure spent on projects	\$23.7 million	\$33.5 million	
Emissions from Council's energy use (CO <sub>2</sub> )	7,181	6,152	
Council's energy use (GJ)	25,766	26,172	
Target area roadside weed control treated	978 km	250 km	
Number of kerbside waste and recycling collection bin lifts	1,575,466	1,237,929	
Number of kerbside waste and recycling collection bins missed	371	229	
Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill	53.01%	52.48%	
Time taken to decide planning applications	49	41	
Planning applications decided within 60 days	85.44%	82.44%	
Infrastructure renewal gaps (Assets renewal compared to depreciation)	89.64%	112.51%*	 <p><i>*Figure is from 2018-19 due to 2019-20 end of year financials still being finalised at time of reporting.</i></p>

# A GROWING REGIONAL AREA WITH OPPORTUNITIES

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### Approved Omeo Mountain Bike Trail



Council has been pursuing and progressing the development of the Omeo Mountain Bike Destination Project over the past four years. The \$4 million Omeo Mountain Bike Trail has obtained state and federal funding.

An Omeo Mountain Bike Feasibility Report was prepared in 2017. The Feasibility study included economic assessment, trail assessment, project development strategies and detailed operational considerations. The report identified a trail network in excess of 170 kilometres could be established and that Omeo could become a unique and appealing mountain bike destination.

Following the Feasibility Report, Council developed other supporting material, including preliminary Environmental and Heritage Reviews.

In 2019, a tender was awarded to develop a detailed Master Plan. The Master Plan is intended to provide all the information needed to progress to the construction stage. The Omeo Mountain Bike Destination Business Case has been developed alongside the Master Plan.

### 2018 Rural Councils Victoria Summit

The rural summit is Rural Councils Victoria's major annual event and was held in Lakes Entrance on 16 to 18 May 2018. In total 124 people attended the event.

The summit is a forum for councils, business and industry leaders to examine the unique and diverse challenges faced by rural towns. The summit featured an engaging program of keynote presentations and panel discussions that explored the theme of Liveability – Victoria's Back Yard.



*Chris Riddell presenting at the Rural Councils Victoria Summit in Lakes Entrance*



*James Flintoff from Regional Development Victoria*



*The Barry Sheene Tribute riders were waved off by Cr John White, Jordan Hare and Cr Joe Rettino*



### **Hosted the Barry Sheene Tribute Ride event annually**

Riders from across Australia head to Phillip Island each year for the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix. As part of the event Council coordinates and hosts the annual Barry Sheene Tribute Ride, which sees over 300 riders participate each year.

Riders of all ages gather together to ride as one out of Bairnsdale as one to pay homage to the late, great Barry Sheene, one of the MotoGP's champion of champions who died of cancer in 2003. The event includes a dinner at a local restaurant on the Wednesday evening with entertainment and, importantly, an auction to raise funds for a nominated charity foundation.








### **Developed the Ageing Well in East Gippsland – Age-friendly Communities Strategy 2017-30**

The Age Friendly Strategy was adopted by Council in December 2017. It was developed using a broad range of consultation techniques including information postcards, interviews and meetings with a range of aged community members and groups, liaison with service providers, and a community survey.

An action plan was developed focusing on two demonstration projects - one on housing, stock planning and availability for older adults and the other on the establishment of Age Friendly Ambassadors for East Gippsland.

The Age Friendly Ambassadors identified the top three projects to focus on - public seating (age friendly infrastructure); community palliative care (support for people dying with dignity) and the housing project. Following its work on the project, Council is a member of World Health Organisation Age Friendly Communities.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2016-17 RESULT	2019-20 RESULT	TREND
The number of registered businesses in the region	4,428	4,403	 <i>Result is from 2018-19.</i>
East Gippsland's Gross Regional Product	\$2.212 billion	\$2.587 billion	
Unemployment rate	8.1%	4.5%	
Year 12 students continuing to higher education	45.5%	42.0%	
Events held in the region (with event permits)	96	82	 <i>Bushfires and COVID-19 impacted the 2019-20 result.</i>
Total visitors to the region	1.203 million	1.608 million	 <i>Figures are as at 31 December each year.</i>
Total international visitors to the region	37,000	46,000	 <i>Figures are as at 31 December each year.</i>

# GOOD GOVERNANCE

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### Began live streaming Council meetings

Council began live streaming its council meetings in February 2018 using the first meeting of the year to trial the new technology. For the trial, Council enlisted the help of a number of residents from across the shire, in particular those who had requested live streaming in the past, so it could get a user perspective of how the technology worked.

The Victorian Ombudsman's recent report on local government transparency listed live streaming council meetings as one measure that contributes towards a Council being transparent with its community.

### Council meetings held outside of the Council Chambers

Commencing in 2019, Council held Ordinary Council Meetings outside of the Council Chambers at the Corporate Centre in Bairnsdale. Meetings have been held in Omeo, Orbost, Lakes Entrance, Cann River and Mallacoota.

The meeting held at Mallacoota was the first Council meeting held in the town for 20 years. Community and Council activities were grouped around the location of the Council Meetings to maximise community and councillor participation.



*Council meeting being live streamed over YouTube*



*Council meeting held at the Orbost Service Centre*

### **Councillor Ben Buckley's service recognised**

Councillor Ben Buckley was recognised for his 25 years' service to local government in 2017. Cr Buckley first served as a Councillor for the former Omeo Shire, a role he held for 12 years that included one term as Shire President. He first became a Councillor on East Gippsland Shire in 2003 after five former councils were amalgamated in 1994.

Cr Buckley was presented with a service medal on behalf of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

### **Council celebrates 150-year anniversary of the proclamation of the former Shire of Bairnsdale**

Council celebrated the 150-year anniversary of the proclamation of the former Shire of Bairnsdale in 2018. The shire was one of five former shires that amalgamated in December 1994 to form East Gippsland Shire Council.

To mark the Sesquicentenary Councillors toured an exhibition at the East Gippsland Historical Society followed by a civic reception in the Council Chambers.

### **Refugee welcome zone**

East Gippsland Shire Council received recognition of its status as a Refugee Welcome Zone. The declaration was signed and presented by East Gippsland Asylum Seekers Support Group chairman Bob Hindle. Members of the group were in the gallery to watch the milestone.

The declaration states it is 'a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into our community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in our community'.



*150-year anniversary civic reception in the Council Chambers*








*Cr Ben Buckley receiving a service medal from Cr Joe Rettino for 25 years' service*



*Cr Natalie O'Connell being presented with acknowledgement of East Gippsland being a Refugee Welcome Zone*

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2016-17 RESULT	2019-20 RESULT	TREND
VAGO assessment of Council's Financial Sustainability Indicators deemed high risk	1	0*	 <i>*Result is from 2018-19.</i>
Proportion of people who rated Council's performance as Very Good or Good for community satisfaction with Council decisions	29%	40%	
Number of Council Meetings held	16	15	
Councillor attendance at Council meetings	94.44%	92.59%	
The number of Council decisions made closed to the public	39	6	

# RESPONSIVE SERVICES

## MAJOR PROJECTS

### Developed a Cross Cultural Awareness video



Council developed an online presentation of Cross Cultural Awareness that serves to give staff, volunteers and Councillors an overview of the history and culture

of the region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. The presentation consists of Aunty Dr Doris Paton doing the Welcome to Country, providing an overview of the local Aboriginal history, background to the local languages and details of local reconciliation initiatives. The second part of the video has Gratten Mullett Snr discuss the importance of Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) as the Native Title holders of the land. The last part is Rob Hudson from the Krowathunkooloong Keeping Place discussing the local history and significance of the history to the local community.

The project received highly commended awards at the HART Awards and Wurreker Awards in 2018.



Footage from the Cross Cultural Awareness video

### Communication Access Program

The Communication Access Program continues to operate through Customer Service Centres and Recreation Centres, providing tools for customers with special needs to be able to communicate with staff. An online presentation/training package was also developed in conjunction with Scope Australia. The presentation is designed for customer service staff and is used to assist with improving communication with people with a disability.



Council receiving the Communication Access Accreditation in 2016

## Opening of Bairnsdale Business Centre



*Office space of the Bairnsdale Business Centre*

Council purchased and redeveloped the three-story building at 32 Pyke Street that is now known as Council's Business Centre. The project was opened in 2017 with a total cost of approximately \$2.3 million (including office furniture, large-scale generator and sealed rear car parking).

Council also purchased the former police station and watch house on the corner of Nicholson and Pyke streets. Both buildings were previously owned by Victoria Police. The former watch house is leased to Noweyung Ltd which currently operates 'Cells Café', a cafe and hospitality training social enterprise.



The Business Centre houses over 60 Council officers. The building is configured so customers can make direct contact with staff from Council's frontline services such as statutory planning, building, community laws and environmental health.

## Traineeship Programs








*Students who have finished or currently undertaking a School Based Traineeship*

Council has offered traineeship programs across a range of services. These traineeships have been offered to Aboriginal students and another opportunity was offered in partnership with the East Gippsland Specialist School. As part of the program the trainees complete a Certificate level course, spending one day a week working with Council and the rest of the week at school.

These traineeships were offered to Aboriginal students across East Gippsland. During the Council term three students graduated from their School Based Traineeships, two working in Parks and Gardens (One in garden maintenance and one in caravan park grounds) and one in Library Services. There is a fourth trainee currently undertaking a traineeship in Parks and Gardens.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2016-17 RESULT	2019-20 RESULT	TREND
The number of digital transactions for payment	98,579*	140,483	 <i>*Result is from 2017-18.</i>
Phone calls received through the call centre	60,917	72,345	
Facebook followers	0	5,856	
Community Satisfaction with Customer Service	61	70	
Workforce turnover rate	15.28%	9.8%	

# CONTACT US

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Facebook: [eastgippyshire](https://www.facebook.com/eastgippyshire)

Twitter [@egsc](https://twitter.com/egsc)

## In person

Bairnsdale: 34 Pyke Street or 273 Main Street

Lakes Entrance: 18 Mechanics Street

Mallacoota: 70 Maurice Avenue

Omeo: 179 Day Avenue

Orbost: 1 Ruskin Street

Paynesville: 55 The Esplanade

## Outreach Centres

Bendoc Outreach Centre: 18 Dowling Street

Buchan Neighbourhood House: 6 Centre Road

Cann River Community Centre: Princes Highway

