East Gippsland Fires 2019-20
Economic Recovery Sub-plan

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT VICTORIA

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY VICTORIA

Table of Contents

Background to the disaster 4
- Introduction 4
- Impact snapshot 4
- Agriculture 4
- Small business 4
- Visitor economy 5
- Summary 5

Purpose of this sub-plan 6

Goals, activities and framework for recovery 7
- Municipal recovery goals 7
- Economic recovery goal 7
- Economic recovery environment 7
- Economic recovery outcomes 7
- Success indicators 7

Framework for recovery 8
- Community-led recovery 8
- Agencies / partners involved 8

Governance, leadership and delegations 9
- Recovery governance 9
- Roles and responsibilities of partners 9

The approach to economic recovery 10
- East Gippsland recovery context 10
- Economic strength 11
- Distribution of businesses 13
- Economic challenges 14
- East Gippsland Aboriginal economic environment 15

Economic impacts 16
- Business impacts 16
- Local economies 16
- Agriculture 17
- Aquaculture 18
- Wine industry 18
- Apiary industry 18
- Visitor economy 19

Economic consequences 20
- Economic impacts on Wellington Shire 20

Recovery priorities 21
- Priority activities 22

Key challenges and risks 23
- Risk to delivery of recovery projects and activities 23
- Risk to effective economic recovery 23

Reporting to the recovery committee and other agencies 24
- Linking to the community recovery committees 24

Consultation plan 25
- East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group 25
- East Gippsland Economic Recovery Workshop 25
- AgVic Regional Managers Forum 25
- Small Business Virtual Roundtable 25
- Success Indicators Workshop 25

Business, key sectors and industries 26

Communications plan 27

Action Plan 28
All Sectors 28
Aboriginal economic development 30
Business 31
Local economies/sectors 36
Agriculture 36
Aquaculture 38
Wine Industry 39
Forestry 39
Education 40
Visitor economy 41
Priority Projects 43
Regional Project Proposals (yet to be evaluated by Working Group) 52
Economic Recovery Working Group Terms of Reference 56
Purpose 56
Objectives 56
Membership 56
Reporting 56
Proceedings 56
Administration 56
Philanthropy 57

Background to the disaster

Mallacoota Abalone Co-operative destroyed

Introduction

The 2019/20 bushfires in East Gippsland were particularly challenging due to their extent, duration and substantial community impact. Bushfire impacts are significant for business, industry and regional supply chains, particularly since East Gippsland is already affected by drought. The economic impact of a disaster may be greater than the cost of the initial response and will affect the area for months, if not years.

Impact snapshot

Fires in East Gippsland started on 21 November 2019 with a total of over 1.1 million hectares burnt, representing 51 per cent of the total local government area or 11,000 km². The cost was extensive, with profound direct and indirect impacts, including the loss of human life and property, wildlife and livestock, damage to the natural environment and resources, livelihoods and consumer confidence, and to air quality and emissions.

An estimated 392 residential properties and 27 commercial properties were damaged or destroyed. 5,300 km² (or 68.3 per cent) of state forest and 483 km² (41 per cent) of nature reserve was burnt.

Agriculture

The fires affected 55,724 hectares (17 per cent) of total agricultural land. Fires predominately affected livestock grazing, burning 39,983 hectares (72 per cent of the total agricultural land burnt), followed by mixed farming (14,926 hectares) and dairy (734 hectares). Other losses include fodder, vegetable crops, plantation timber, outbuildings, fencing, sheds and irrigation infrastructure.

The aggregate economic impact (lost assets cost and production losses) in the agriculture sector is estimated to be around $131 million in 2020, climbing to around $158 million by 2022.[1]

Small business

Small Business Victoria business recovery advisers have engaged with more than 600 businesses in the East Gippsland and Wellington Shire local government areas, including 124 in Mallacoota and Gypsy Point, with 18 per cent reporting direct impact, such as property or outbuildings destroyed or beyond repair

Tourists leave East Gippsland

and loss of stock equipment and resources. 52 per cent reported indirect impact, including smoke damage, losses due to disruption to power, transport and water, and loss of trade and availability of workers. 46 per cent of businesses report they rely on the tourism industry and summer peak period to provide economic sustainability.

Visitor economy

There are estimated to be 685 tourism businesses in East Gippsland and most lost a significant portion of their annual revenue. Economic modelling estimates the loss of visitor expenditure for Gippsland at $170-180 million, which will grow substantially once multiplier effects on suppliers and employment losses are considered.[2]

Summary

The bushfires had a devastating impact on local economies across Gippsland. While businesses and resources were damaged or destroyed, businesses and local economies were also affected by state of disaster measures and supply-chain disruption.

The estimated impact of the bushfires and subsequent COVID-19 restrictions on East Gippsland in 2019/20 is significant (estimated 15-23 per cent plus reduction in economic output), with indirect impacts affecting adjacent Wellington Shire (estimated 2.5-5 per cent reduction in economic output).[3]

Many businesses continue to be indirectly impacted, facing a loss of income and reduced visitation expenditure. A reduction in revenue for some businesses of up to 95 per cent in January 2020 from reduced visitation and expenditure has been significant, with a reliance on the Christmas-New Year peak period for most of their annual revenue.

Lost income continues to impact businesses, staff, supply chains and community, resulting in instability, uncertainty and acute stress. These impacts amplify the ongoing challenges of drought, economic transition and other contributing factors.

Purpose of this sub-plan

Open for business: The Boatshed Lakes Entrance

The East Gippsland Economic Recovery Sub-plan articulates the impact and consequences of the 2019/20 bushfires to inform recovery priorities and to identify activities, projects and investment opportunities.

The sub-plan sets out the arrangements for coordinating and managing the planning and delivery of economic recovery activities across the fire-impacted region. It outlines the direction, guiding principles and actions that will drive inclusive and sustainable economic recovery.

The sub-plan supports a multi-agency approach with initiatives and operational activities to be implemented by a range of agencies, organisations and government departments.

This sub-plan has been prepared with reference to the East Gippsland Recovery Plan and should be read in conjunction with the other recovery working groups' sub-plans.

Goals, activities and framework for recovery

Municipal recovery goals

This sub-plan supports the municipal goals for recovery in East Gippsland to:

- Support our communities and environment to recover and stabilise after the recent events.
- Support a community-led future, enabling resilient communities that are stronger, safer more prosperous, healthier and more sustainable.
- Reduce the economic, environmental and social impact of future events and ensure our community is in a better position to thrive in the future.
- Ensure recovery activities are well coordinated to deliver the best outcome for impacted communities.

Economic recovery goal

The economic recovery goal is to build a business community and local economy that is stronger and more resilient than before the fires.

Economic recovery environment

The economic environment considers the direct and indirect impacts an event may have on business, primary producers and the broader economy.[4]

The immediate economic recovery goals for the recovery working group are to:

- Identify and consider the direct and indirect consequences of the East Gippsland bushfires 2019/20 on businesses, local industries and the tourism economy.
- Provide businesses affected directly or indirectly by the East Gippsland bushfires 2019/20 with the information, support and services they need to recover.
- Plan and coordinate economic and financial recovery in the impacted area.

Economic recovery outcomes

This sub-plan seeks to achieve the following short-term outcomes:

- To support the wellbeing of rural communities.
- To revitalise the economy of rural communities through reestablishment of agricultural enterprises.
- To attract customers back to communities.
- To reduce immediate and ongoing economic impacts to the community of restoration and rebuilding.
- To identify economic environment issues to include in medium and long-term recovery plans.[5]

Success indicators

This sub-plan seeks to achieve the following medium and longer-terms outcomes:

Business:

- Local small businesses and primary producers affected by the bushfires:
- Have resumed operations and performance has returned to normal levels.
- Are sustainable without additional financial support.
- Are confident to invest and grow.
- Are prepared for the next possible disaster.

Local economies:

- Local visitor numbers and tourism expenditure has returned to normal levels.
- Unemployment and underemployment in bushfire-affected regions have returned to normal levels.
- Local economies are resilient, can adapt during and quickly recover after economic shocks.
- Local industries are competitive and attract talent.
- Re-skilling and up-skilling opportunities are accessible for regions.
- Declining sectors are identified, and transition is supported.
- Start-ups and emerging sectors are supported and growing.
- Strategic and transformative infrastructure investments are made in the affected area.

Framework for recovery

Under state emergency management arrangements, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is responsible for the economic recovery environment.

The recovery from this event will use a community-led approach. East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria will partner to support communities to establish and lead their own recovery planning process.

The National Disaster Recovery Principles provide the over-arching context and approach for recovery in East Gippsland.

- Understand the context.
- Recognise complexity.
- Use community-led approaches.
- Coordinate all activities.
- Communicate effectively.
- Recognise and build capacity.

Bushfire Recovery Victoria has developed a recovery framework to guide medium to longer-term recovery. It provides community-focused bushfire recovery planning and locally led recovery outcomes.

This sub-plan aligns with these disaster recovery principles and supports the following long-term recovery outcomes for the economic environment:

- Victorian industry and businesses recover and are stronger.
- Victorians have access to employment opportunities.
- Victorian communities are resilient.
- Victoria's regional infrastructure is strategically developed.

Community-led recovery

East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria are working with fire-affected communities to support bushfire recovery efforts based on the needs and priorities identified by communities, through new community recovery committees and existing community groups as determined by the community. This will ensure projects, grants and support programs are the right fit for the community.

Agencies / partners involved

East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group members

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)

- Regional Development Victoria (RDV - Chair)
- Agriculture Victoria (AgVic)
- Forestry and Game
- Small Business Victoria (SBV)

Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV)

East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC)

Destination Gippsland (DG)

Committee for Gippsland (C4G)

Food and Fibre Gippsland (F&FG)

Federation University (Fed Uni)

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)

Bonaccord Freightlines.

Governance, leadership and delegations

Recovery governance

The East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group was established to coordinate recovery activities at a municipal level and as a reporting mechanism for local recovery efforts. The working group is chaired by the Acting Regional Director of Regional Development Victoria.

The East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group reports to the East Gippsland Recovery Committee, a committee co-chaired by Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria. This committee provides strategic oversight and leadership to support the coordination and planning of recovery activities, with a focus on supporting community-led recovery.

Members of the Economic Recovery Working Group represent small businesses, medium to large businesses, key sectors and industries, including agriculture and tourism.

The working group was convened on 7 February 2020 and met weekly in the first instance, then fortnightly. Members participated in an economic recovery workshop facilitated by Boston Consulting Group and Regional Development Victoria on 5 March. This workshop was attended by a broad group of industry representatives.

Working Group member responsibilities

The Economic Recovery Working Group - Terms of Reference (Appendix 3) outlines the responsibilities of the working group:

- To collate impact assessment information and consider the economic consequences.
- To develop and monitor an economic recovery sub-plan that reflects the economic consequences of the East Gippsland bushfires.
- To plan for and coordinate economic recovery activities aimed at addressing the short to long-term needs of affected communities, businesses and local economies.
- To make recommendations to the East Gippsland Recovery Committee regarding potential recovery activities to further build the resilience of the East Gippsland community.
- To monitor the implementation of economic recovery activities across affected communities to ensure that economic recovery needs are being effectively met.

Roles and responsibilities of partners

East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria

East Gippsland Shire Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria lead the East Gippsland Recovery Committee.

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions through Regional Development Victoria convenes and chairs the Economic Recovery Working Group, a sub-committee of the East Gippsland Recovery Committee.

The approach to economic recovery

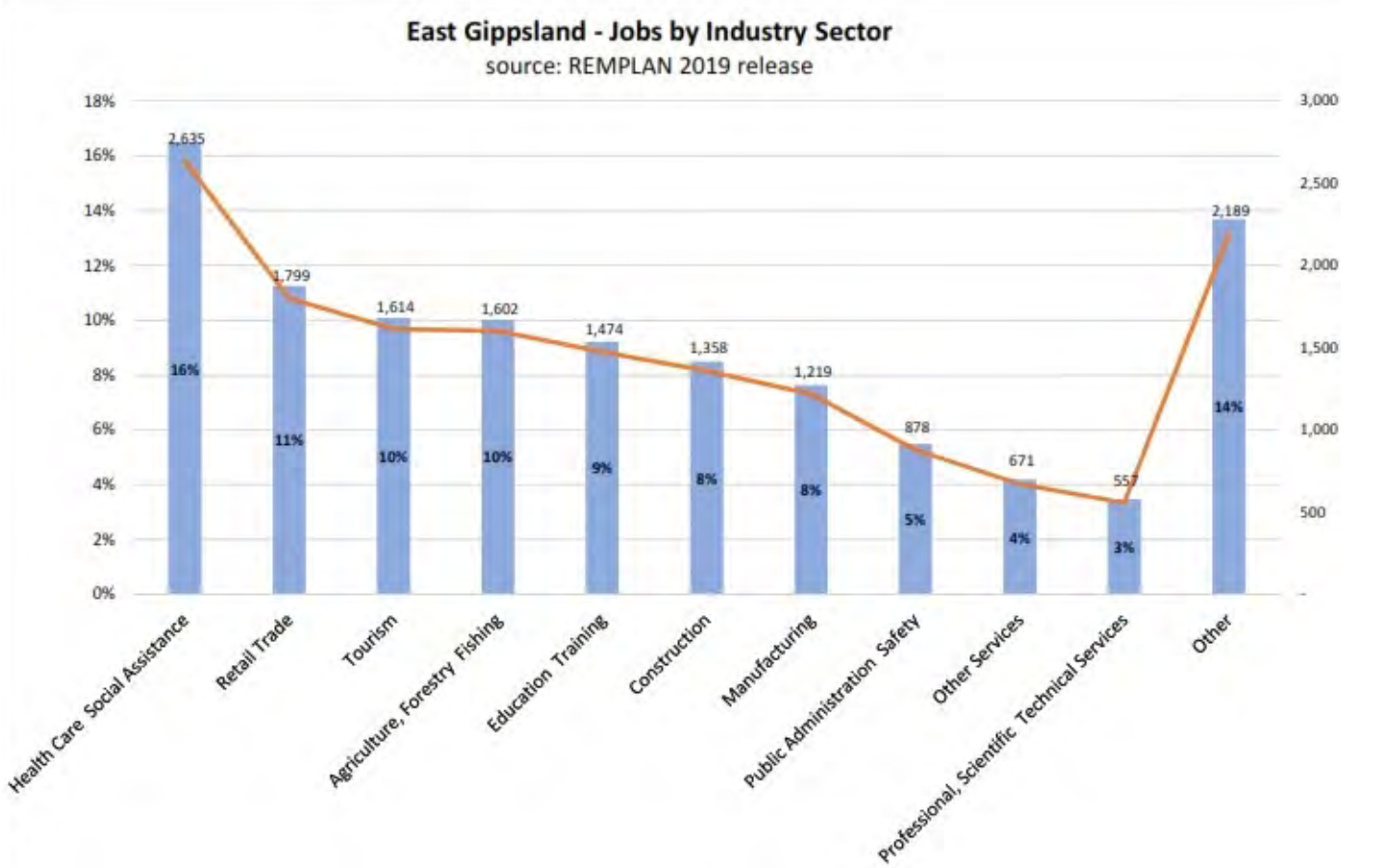
East Gippsland recovery context

East Gippsland Shire is a large local government area covering 20,940 km^2. Approximately 75 per cent of the shire is held in national and state reserves and 21 per cent being used for primary production[6]. East Gippsland Shire has a population of 45,040 people with 1,288 (2.9 per cent) being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Bairnsdale is the largest town with 17 per cent of the population. The population is unevenly distributed, with a concentration around the Gippsland Lakes in the south-west, and relatively sparsely settled elsewhere. The largest commercial centre is Bairnsdale, while the largest tourist centre is Lakes Entrance.

55.1 per cent of the population is of working age (15-64), and 16.4 per cent being aged under 15, and 28.5 per cent being over 65.

In February 2020, there were 4,405 businesses, with the dominant business type being construction (16 per cent). There are 15,996 local jobs and an unemployment rate in 2019 of 6.4 per cent.[7]

East Gippsland's gross value added (GVA) is $2.235 billion and its contribution to regional Victoria GVA is 2.53 per cent.



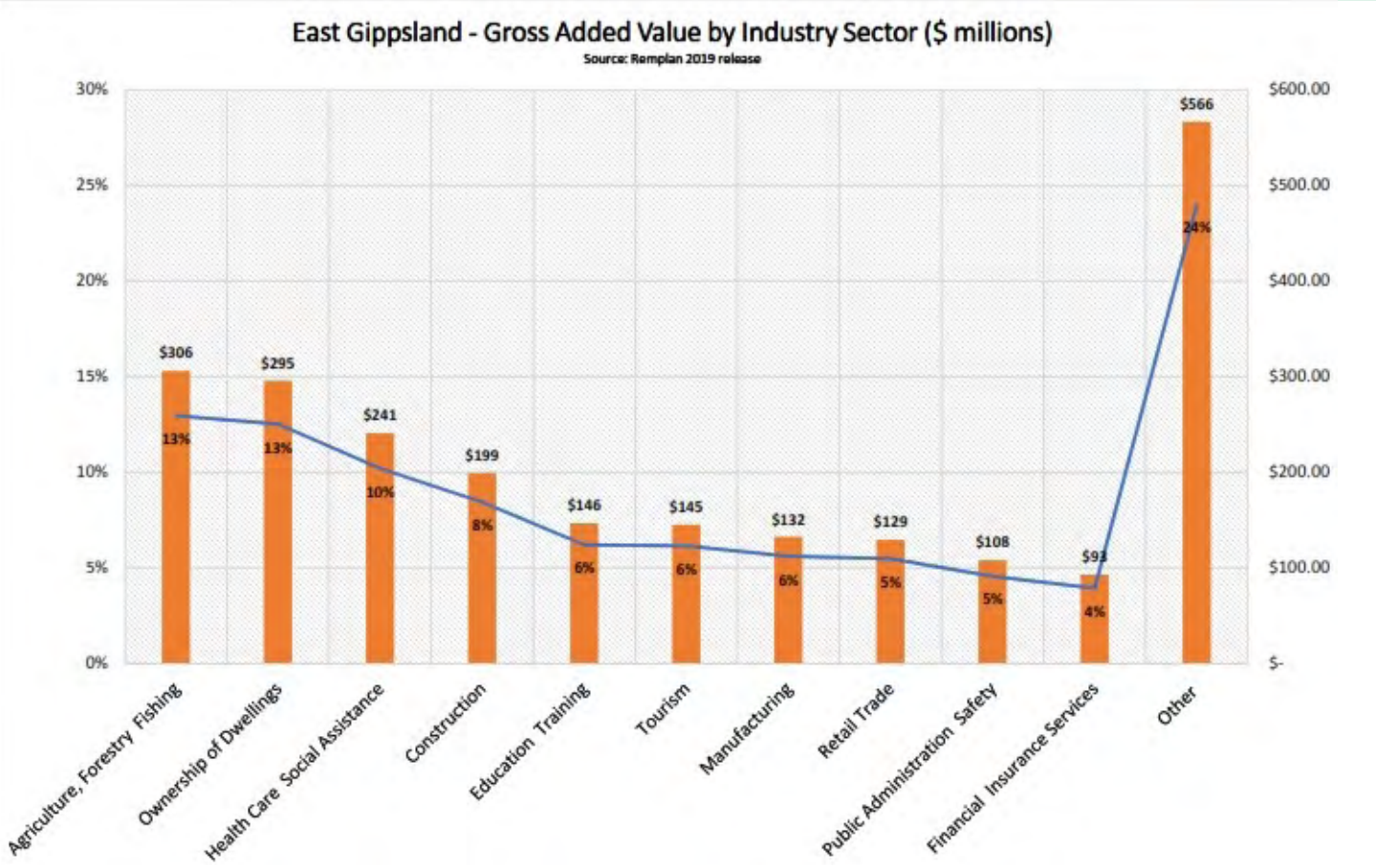
Economic strength

The East Gippsland economy supports an estimated 15,996 jobs, representing 15.65 per cent of the 105,677 people working in Gippsland. Bairnsdale has the greatest number of jobs.

Healthcare and social assistance is the largest employer in East Gippsland, making up 16 per cent of total employment, followed by retail trade, tourism and the agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Tourism supports an estimated 1600 jobs, around 10 per cent of total employment. Accommodation and food services provides 1138 jobs largely supported by tourists' expenditure.[8]

East Gippsland's economy is diverse, and its economic strengths are driven by agriculture, tourism and healthcare-related industries.



Business Snapshot[9]

98.5 per cent of all businesses (4341) in East Gippsland are small businesses, employing 0 - 19 people.

Number of small businesses	Number of businesses	Population	Median age	Median weekly household income
4,341 (98.5% of all businesses)	4,405	45,040	50	$935

Non-employing business	1-19 employees	Total small business	Medium business (20-199 employees)	Large business (200+ employee)	Total business
2,807 (64%)	1,534 (35%)	4,341	72	3	4,405

Distribution of businesses

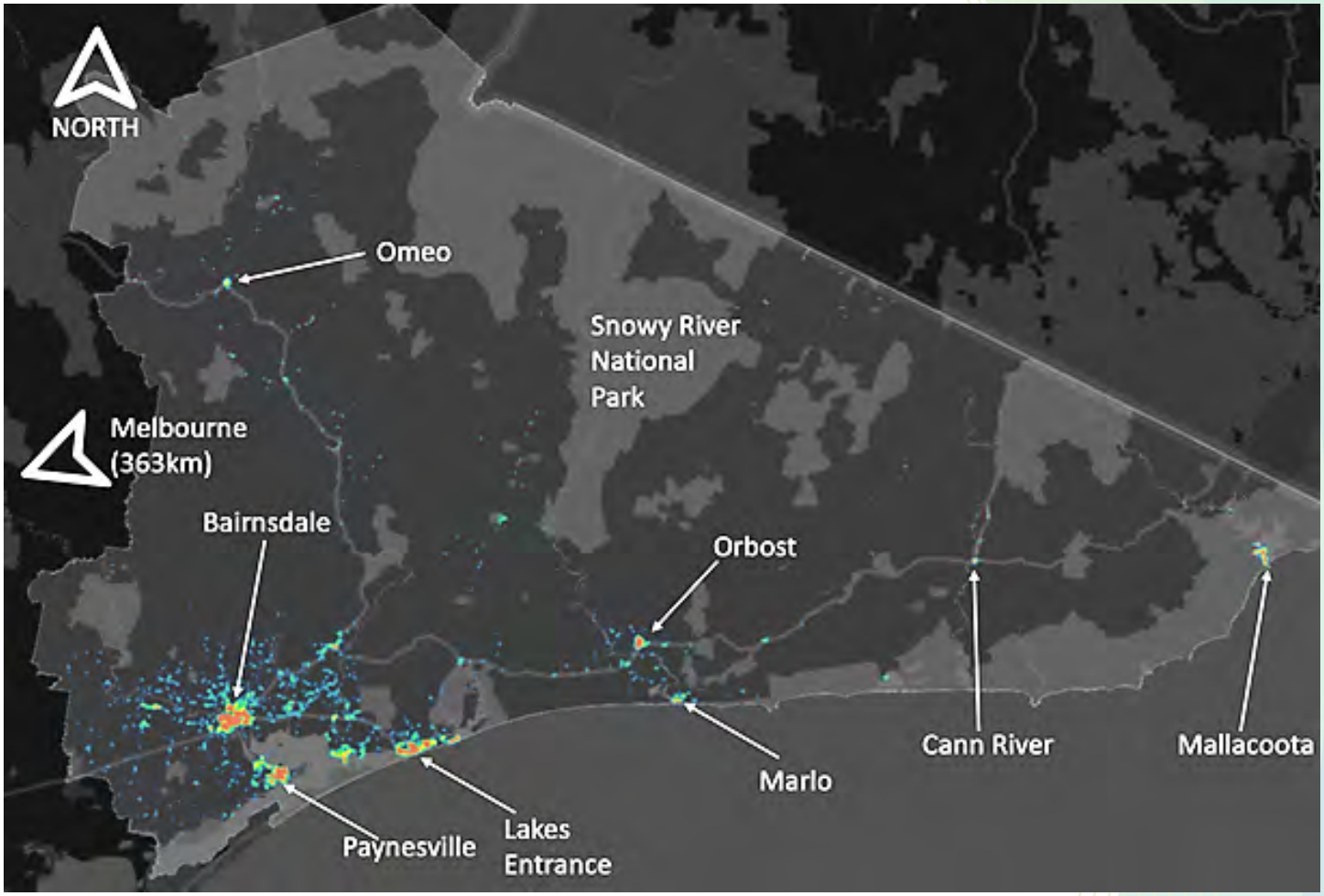


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of businesses (Source: Australian Business Register)

Summary of East Gippsland industry strengths

Healthcare and social assistance
• Is the largest employer in East Gippsland, and makes up 10 per cent of total gross value add to the region
Tourism and retail
• Provides 3,400 jobs, which grows significantly during peak season, representing 21 per cent of the workforce in East Gippsland
Agriculture
• Contributes the third largest gross value add • Provides more than 1,600 jobs

Economic challenges

East Gippsland is facing very significant economic challenges as the result of the combined impacts of drought, bushfires and COVID-19.

The estimated impact of the bushfires and subsequent COVID-19 restrictions on East Gippsland in 2019/20 is at least 15-23 per cent reduction in economic output, with indirect impacts affecting adjacent Wellington Shire estimated at 2.5-5 per cent reduction in economic output. The East Gippsland local government area is identified as being the most adversely impacted in the state.[10]

East Gippsland is continuing to experience drought, following below-average to lowest-on-record rainfall since late 2016.[11]

East Gippsland is identified as one of the more disadvantaged areas in Victoria in SEIFA Index (East Gippsland is at 20 out of 79 Victorian local government areas). The socio-economic disadvantage identified in towns such as Lakes Entrance, Cann River and Orbost provides an additional layer of complexity in supporting the recovery of the area's economy.

East Gippsland also is experiencing significant job losses as a result of COVID-19, reflecting the region's reliance on industries most adversely affected by COVID-19, including tourism.

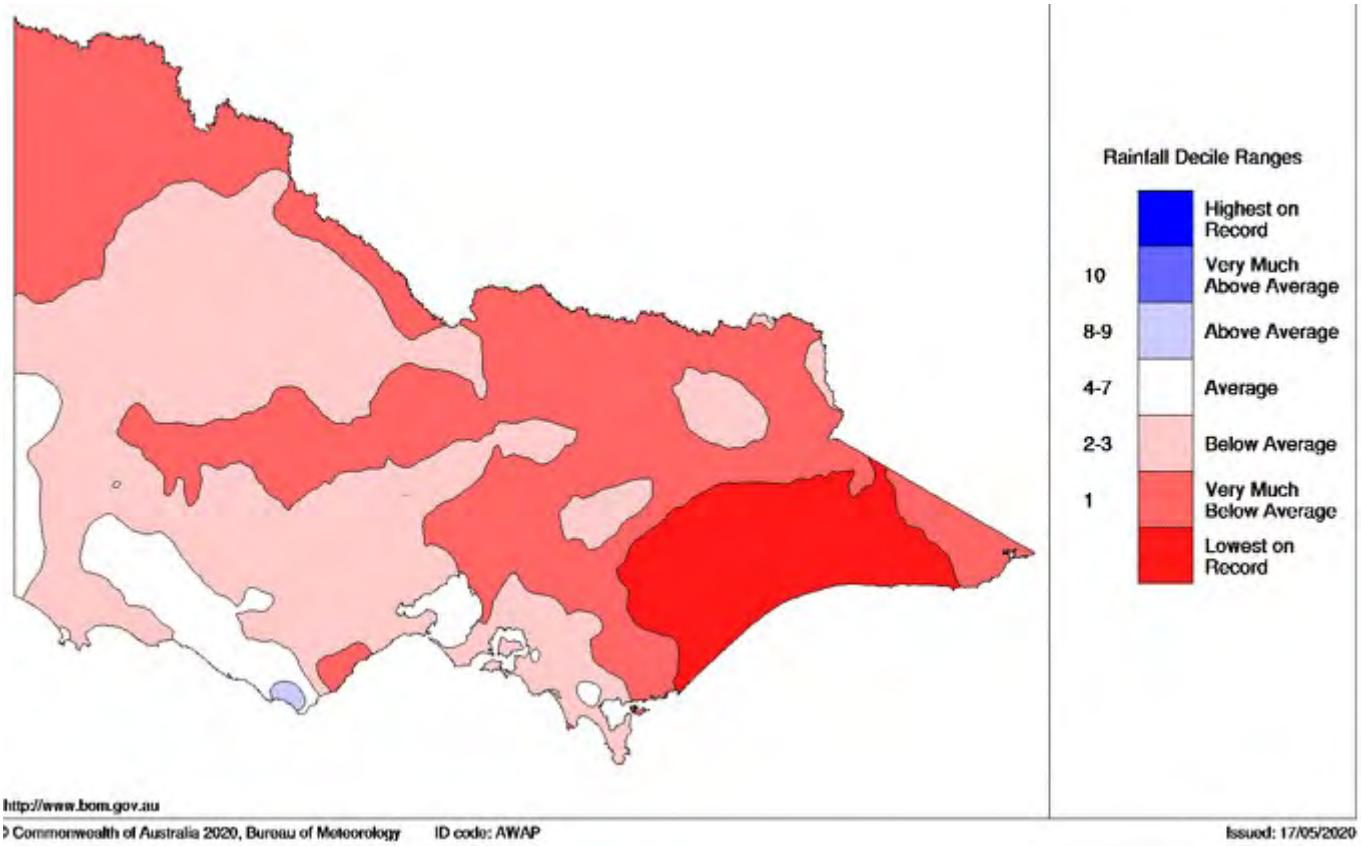


Figure 2. 36 monthly rainfall deciles Victoria December 2019

Art Krowathunkooloong.

East Gippsland Aboriginal economic environment[12]

In Victoria in 2011, there were 900 Aboriginal owner-managed enterprises, including self-employed people, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The size of East Gippsland Shire's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour force in 2016 was 378 people, of which 160 were employed part-time and 145 were full-time workers (including self-employment).

Analysis of the employment status (as a percentage of the labour force) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in East Gippsland Shire in 2016, compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Victoria, shows there was a lower proportion in employment, and a higher proportion unemployed (19.3 per cent, compared with 14 per cent in Victoria).[13]

The Victorian Government's Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-21 suggests Aboriginal enterprise is growing and diversifying beyond traditional sectors such as tourism, natural resource management and creative arts. Social and community enterprises undertake commercial activity that generates profit to support social needs, such as increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. The activity of land-based Aboriginal businesses (for-profit or community enterprise) includes primary production, natural resource management, ecosystem services and cultural tourism.

The East Gippsland Shire Council International Tourism Action Plan 2016-2018 identifies developing Aboriginal cultural events and activities in East Gippsland as a priority action.

The more recent Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan identifies that broadening and deepening the Aboriginal cultural experiences available to visitors will attract new markets (including international) and increase the number of repeat visitors to Gippsland.

Economic impacts

Business impacts

Small Business Victoria business recovery advisers engaged with 626 businesses between January and June 2020 in the East Gippsland and Wellington Shire local government areas, including 124 in Mallacoota and Gypsy Point[14]. Regional Development Victoria engaged with approximately 40 medium to large businesses by telephone and via email surveys.

18 per cent reported direct impact which includes property/outbuildings destroyed or beyond repair and loss of stock equipment and resources. 52 per cent reported indirect impact including smoke damage, losses due to disruption to power, transport and water and loss of trade and availability of workers. 46 per cent of businesses report they rely on the tourism industry and summer peak period to provide economic sustainability.

Focus	Impact summary
Business	• Damage to stock, premises, equipment and resources • Disruption to access to essential services including power, transport and water • Continuity issues and loss of trade caused by evacuation, community dislocation and worker availability • Reduction in trade (including 100 per cent cancellations for some accommodation and hospitality businesses) impacting on cashflow and business viability, compounded by COVID-19 restrictions • Damaged infrastructure, townships and attraction loss • Reduction in visitation caused by protracted smoke and pollutants

Local economies

The local economies critical to the East Gippsland economy suffered disproportionate impact, with agriculture, horticulture and the tourism sectors all significantly impacted.

Focus	Impact summary
Local economies	• Interruption and loss of market share, unavailability of workers and/or loss of skilled workforce • Loss of breeding stock, fences, fodder, pastures, sheds, machinery and equipment • Loss of sales and higher cost of transport due to road closures • Impact on production, processing and supply chain across food and fibre and manufacturing

Agriculture

The East Gippsland agricultural community has been severely impacted by an ongoing three-year drought, the worst on record, the bushfires, the worst in the region's history, and more recently the economic impacts of COVID-19.

The impact of the summer bushfires and persistent drought conditions has overlapped in many areas creating negative impacts on individuals and communities, and severely impacting their ability to recover. Agricultural businesses report problems with cash flow and many have significantly destocked their farms to manage the drought impacts. Many farms now rely on off-farm income due to the drought, which has precluded some from accessing farming assistance grants.

The East Gippsland fires started on 21 November and moved onto private land due to extreme weather in late December 2019. By mid-February, Agriculture Victoria had visited or made phone contact with 907 properties and confirmed nearly 1,500 livestock lost in East Gippsland and Wellington shires.

Agricultural impacts include losses of:

- Hay and silage (2,231 tonnes)
- Pasture (16,858 hectares)
- Vegetables (180 hectares) valued at approximately $5 million
- Horticulture crops-native flower farm and orchards (64 hectares)
- Beehives (219) valued at $130,000
- Softwood plantations (10)
- Primary residences (38), secondary residences (39)
- Wool sheds (12), dairy sheds (3), hay sheds (65)
- Machinery sheds (153)
- Irrigation pumps (28)

According to preliminary estimates, approximately 2,800 kilometres of fencing was burnt in the fires, with approximately half being external boundary fencing. Work is being done to update these figures. The cost of lost fencing is estimated at $31.3 million.[15]

Given the nature of the fire, around 70 per cent of burnt pasture will require complete or partial restoration. Agriculture Victoria estimates the main cost to future production will be from reduced livestock production in areas that have burnt pasture.

Re-establishing pastures is likely to take 18-36 months, depending on seasonal conditions and other factors (e.g. farm cashflow reserves).

The aggregate economic impact (lost assets cost and production losses) is estimated to be around $131 million in 2020, climbing to around $158 million by 2022.[16]

The estimated economic impact of $131 million is a conservative estimate of the vast economic impacts caused by these fires, considering the analysis:

- Is based on information collected from primary producers that Agriculture Victoria was able to reach.
- Excludes costs associated with damage to 38 primary residences (estimated at $19 million) (primary residences are excluded from the Disasters Recovery Funding Arrangements analysis).
- Does not include loss of water infrastructure, stockyards, tractors, farm vehicles and farm equipment, which are essential to re-establishing a viable farming enterprise after fire.
- Does not incorporate further impacts or losses on production or markets due to road closures, ongoing drought recovery, the financial state of drought-affected farmers impeding recovery.
- Excludes tourism or other direct market sales impacts.
- Does not include damage to plantation forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.
- Production losses to the apiary industry and an undetermined number of hives lost.

Issues identified include urgent personal health needs, urgent animal health needs and stock disposal, emergency fodder and water, loss of fencing, pasture loss and recovery, sediment in stock water supplies, soil erosion, pasture recovery and sediment run off into rivers.

Dairy

According to GippsDairy, approximately 30 dairy farms were affected in the direct fire zone with varying degrees of impact, with at least two losing major assets. Many farms had some degree of asset loss, including loss of young stock on turnout blocks. Indirect impacts on dairy farmers included power outages, road closures, loss of phone and internet access and limited access to road-based supplies and service providers.

There are 54 dairy farms in East Gippsland (4.5 per cent of the total in Gippsland) and 341 in Wellington (28 per cent of the dairy farms in Gippsland), creating significant employment opportunities. 21 per cent of the nation's milk production comes from Gippsland with around 1,987 million litres of milk produced annually (Source: Dairy Australia).

East Gippsland produced 53 million litres of milk in 2018/19 and Wellington Shire recorded 630 million litres during the same period. Fifteen factories source Gippsland milk, and dairy is the biggest agricultural contributor to the Gippsland economy, employing around 5,700 people on farms and in dairy manufacturing.

Vegetable production

Vegetable production in the Lindenow valley is of high value ($91.9 million per annum with significant value adding post farm gate[17]) with approximately 80 per cent of local fresh vegetable and salad crops being transported interstate, mostly to Sydney. The closure of the Princes Highway to Sydney immediately impacted the cost and timeliness of deliveries. Approximately 180 hectares of vegetable crops were directly impacted by fires with losses valued at around $5 million. The key loss was at Wairewa, and subsequent losses in vegetable production occurred when those who weren't burnt out had to 'turn in' their crops due to ash contamination.

Aquaculture

The Mallacoota-based Abalone Fishermen's Co-operative Limited (AFCOL) is an Australian premium wild abalone processor, canner, wholesaler and exporter of abalone products. The company is Mallacoota's largest private sector employer, with eight full-time and 40 casual workers and is vital to that part of the region's economy. On 31 December 2019, the AFCOL abalone processing factory was burnt to the ground, impacting on all aspects of production and resulting in job losses.

Wine industry

Five wineries in far East Gippsland have had compromised harvest yields due to smoke taint. Fruit from farms in West and South Gippsland tested for smoke taint by the Australian Wine Research Institute came back clear. The biggest negative impact on the wine industry is due to lack of tourists to the cellar door and a reduction in wine sales through local restaurants and pubs due to closures during the fires, and as a result of road closures.[18]

Apiary industry

Industry reports estimate that over 219 hives were lost across East Gippsland, with smoke affects and loss of floral resources being other significant issues. Longer term impacts will depend of a range of issues including forest regeneration, availability of alternate sites and ability for apiarists to recover damaged hives. Agriculture Victoria will support the industry to ensure a productive and disease-free recovery.

Transport

The transport industry is a vital part of the food and grocery supply logistics sector. There is anecdotal evidence of up to $100,000 in additional costs per week for some businesses as a result of road closures. This is due to transport companies having to detour over 1000 km to get produce to markets and having empty trucks returning, a situation that lasted until early February 2020.

Forestry

Forest product businesses experienced a reduced capacity to run their business due to power loss and road closures. The Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions, VicForests and the Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning are assessing the fire impacts on timber supply and environmental values and to guide and support salvage harvesting operations.

Paynesville.

Visitor economy

Employment, income and visitation impacts

Tourism is vital for East Gippsland, including the Gippsland Lakes, delivering significant economic and employment benefits. The region is highly reliant on tourism for the overall health of the economy. Lakes Entrance is in the top 10 most vulnerable regional towns in Australia due to its dependency on a singular economy – tourism.

In 2017-18, the Gippsland Lakes tourism sector generated $307 million in gross regional product (17.7 per cent of total in the region). Tourism, including retail trade, provides an estimated 3500 local jobs representing 20 per cent of the workforce in East Gippsland.[19]

Economic modelling estimates the loss of visitor expenditure for Gippsland at $170-180 million, which will grow substantially once multiplier effects on suppliers and employment losses are taken into consideration.[20]

An estimated 685 tourism businesses in East Gippsland have lost a significant portion of their annual revenue due to the fires and decreased visitation.[20]

Visitation was impacted by road closures including the Princes Highway from 30 December 2019 until early February 2020 (37 days), evacuation notices, Emergency Management Victoria 'Watch and Act' messaging, traditional and social media.

Residual smoke in the area had a prolonged effect on visitation.

Focus	Impact summary
Visitor economy	• Smoke damage to premises • Loss of current and future revenue and bookings • Reduced hospitality spending due to road closures and poor air quality • Cancellation of events; closure of parks and attractions • Negative media coverage and misinformation • Loss of accommodation and infrastructure.

Economic consequences

The economic consequences of the bushfires have been compounded by the loss of visitation and other impacts of the COVID-19 restrictions, coming only a few weeks after the bushfires were contained. Just as tourists were returning to support fire-affected communities, restrictions were imposed.

Focus	Consequence summary
Business	• Reduction in trade for individual businesses and primary producers • Significant impact on cashflow and business viability • Unavailability of workers and/or loss of skilled workforce • Financial performance declined for businesses and primary producers.
Local economies	• Reduction in business viability and confidence • Reduction in consumer confidence • Reputational damage to industries and the region • Export trade impact
Visitor economy	• Businesses not expected to reopen post COVID-19 restrictions • Reduction of visitor experience and amenity • Job losses and unpaid job entitlements result in downstream economic impacts • Reduction in consumer confidence.

Economic impacts on Wellington Shire

The key townships of Yarram, Rosedale, Stratford, Loch Sport, Dargo and Heyfield suffered immediate economic impacts from the East Gippsland fires including:

- Business loss of revenue due to drop in passing trade including tourists.
- Smoke kept people indoors, reducing trade.
- Cancellations of accommodation bookings and tourists leaving to go home (perception that "the whole of Gippsland is on fire").
- Significant impact on hospitality businesses.
- Tourism dependent businesses experienced large drop in trade.
- Confusion around road closures resulted in reduced visitation to the township of Dargo and surrounding region.
- Rural business experienced the combined effect of drought over multiple years and fires, compounding cash-flow issues.

Businesses in Wellington Shire employ East Gippsland residents and there are links between the visitor economies of the two shires.

Wellington Shire was involved in the response and relief effort, including setting up a relief centre, with the East Sale RAAF Base used as a staging area for the Australian Defence Force in January and February 2020. Wellington Shire (and other local government entities) provided staff and expertise to East Gippsland during the bushfires.

Bullant Brewery, Bruthen.

Recovery priorities

Focus	Recovery priorities
Business	• Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity • Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery • Ensure local people and business are utilised for recovery services • Support business and industry development • Support business confidence and resilience
Local economies	• Stimulation of local economy and supporting trade • Support for industry • Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth • Restoration of public confidence • Stimulus, reprioritisation, and investment fast-tracking • Enable strategic and transformative infrastructure investments • Long-term industry resilience and support for transition in declining sectors
Visitor economy	• See business section • Road and park facilities and re-openings • Creating opportunities to extend the visitor shoulder /off peak season • Maintaining high visitation during peak season • Increased yield for visitors and repeat visitation

Priority activities

Focus	Recovery priorities
Business	Support a community-led approach to recovery and ensure economic recovery is considered in community recovery planning processes. Support business and industry: • Provide access to business recovery advisors and services in the short to medium term including to: - undertake a business health check in order to plan for economic recovery or another outcome (being delivered) - engage in financial and risk management training. • Deliver a suite of industry development and capacity building programs including business mentors/coaches and digital health checks.
Local economies	Support business and industry: • Delivery of the Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Grant Program. Under development (Regional Development Victoria). Build industry leadership and capacity: • Leadership training and support to be delivered by Gippsland Community Leadership Program. $250,000 funding secured. • Develop and deliver an innovative Master of Business Administration program for the Gippsland region focusing on experiential learning. • Supporting solutions led pathways for far-east communities to access VET programs in NSW on free TAFE vouchers
Visitor economy	Support business and industry: • Delivery of the Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Grant Program. Under development (Regional Development Victoria). • Build industry leadership and capacity: • Leadership training and support to be delivered by Gippsland Community Leadership Program. $250,000 funding secured. • Develop and deliver an innovative Master of Business Administration program for the Gippsland region focusing on experiential learning. • Supporting solutions led pathways for far-east communities to access VET programs in NSW on free TAFE vouchers • Support priority tourism initiatives and strategic projects: • Buchan Caves Reserve Stage 2 ($2 million) - Replace fire-impacted cabins and wilderness retreats with cabins that meet contemporary standards and offer comfort in all seasons. • Cape Conran Stage 1 – ($5.3 million). Provide interim visitor offer, develop Landscape Master Plan, restore and commence upgrading essential services and key infrastructure to provide unique, high quality visitor experiences. • Paynesville Squatters Row Maritime Precinct project • Nowa Nowa Boggy Creek Wellbeing Trail Upgrade project • Metung Hot Springs and Day Spa • Develop a Gippsland Lakes Recreational Fishery Recovery Plan.
Aboriginal Economic Development	Support Aboriginal economic development: • Formalise a Centre of Excellence for a Managing Country Training Centre at Forestec that will involve all Traditional Owners and land management agencies. • Support the Aboriginal economic development work of GLaWAC and the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions to turn GLaWAC into a hub for Aboriginal business and economic development. • Support the development of Aboriginal cultural-based tourism products, especially those that leverage off their existing infrastructure, including joint managed national parks and Forestec.

Key challenges and risks

Risk to delivery of recovery projects and activities:

- Insufficient resources: money, time, skilled and experienced people to undertake the recovery projects and activities.
- Inconsistent coordination between Council, Bushfire Recovery Victoria, partner agencies and community.
- Community capacity to meet the identified needs from within the community.
- Exacerbated impacts through other disasters such as the pandemic COVID-19, drought, flood and landscape fire.
- Community members do not support the planned recovery actions as they conflict and/or do not align with their aspirations.
- Emergence of new economic considerations e.g. impacts of COVID-19.

Risk to effective economic recovery:

- Large number (an estimated 30-40 per cent) of small businesses may not reopen post COVID-19 restrictions due to the compounding impacts leading to high unemployment, debt stress and loss of skilled workers from East Gippsland.
- Risks will become evident over time and will be an ongoing consideration through the recovery process.
- Risk mitigations for the successful implementation of this plan include ensuring that recovery activities:
- Stimulate recovery.
- Are community driven/owned.
- Use existing channels and networks.
- Build resilience, not just replacing what is lost.
- Are consistent with existing plans (e.g. local government, regional partnership priorities).
- Are complementary to state and Commonwealth programs.

Reporting to the recovery committee and other agencies

Reporting to the East Gippsland Recovery Committee is through the Economic Recovery Working Group Chair, as a member.

Working group member agencies and organisations report on recovery activities progress-to-date directly to the working group through Regional Development Victoria.

Linking to the community recovery committees

Community recovery committees (CRCs) began to be set up in late May 2020 and this will continue to occur in a timeframe that suits each community's needs.

Council and Bushfire Recovery Victoria will support the development of the place-based community recovery plans with plans made available to the East Gippsland Recovery Committee. Community recovery plans are anticipated to be based on existing community plans, where these exist, updated to reflect the current situation.

Current and comprehensive community plans, containing local economic priorities, exist for:

- Cann Valley District, representing Buldah, Cann River, Chandlers Creek, Club Terrace, Combienbar, Noorinbee, Noorinbee Nth, Tamboon, Tonghi Creek and Wingan River.
- Errinundra to Snowy District, representing Bendoc, Bonang, Cabanandra, Deddick Valley, Delegate River, Dellicknora, Goongerah, Haydens Bog and Tubbut.
- Twin Rivers District, representing Nicholson, Johnsonville, Swan Reach, Tambo Upper and Bumberrah.

Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost and Mallacoota were not included in Council's community planning process.

Priority projects arising through the CRCs may be incorporated into the East Gippsland Recovery Plan or referred to the Economic Recovery Working Group as determined by the East Gippsland Recovery Committee.

The Economic Recovery Sub-plan contains immediate recovery initiatives that began before the development of the community recovery plans. Community input has been invaluable in developing and delivering these initiatives.

Longer term and regionally significant projects and initiatives may be validated with the CRCs where appropriate.

Consultation plan

East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group

The East Gippsland Economic Recovery Working Group was convened by Regional Development Victoria on 7 February 2020 and met weekly for four weeks then fortnightly. As of 18 June 2020, the working group has met formally on nine occasions, in person and via videoconference, and participated in other workshops and sessions.

East Gippsland Economic Recovery Workshop

Several forums were organised to assist the working group members to develop this sub-plan, including the East Gippsland Economic Recovery Workshop on 5 March 2020 in Bairnsdale. Facilitated by Boston Consulting Group, the workshop engaged key business and industry leaders, local government and government agencies. The purpose of this workshop was to assess impact and consequences, understand support and identify data and support gaps.

AgVic Regional Managers Forum

Regional Development Victoria met with key recovery staff on 29 April 2020, including the Agriculture Fire Recovery Manager and Regional Recovery Coordinator (Drought and Fire) for East Gippsland, along with the South East Ag Services teams with linkages into the animal health and welfare; dairy; meat and wool; irrigated agriculture; and plant, chemicals and invasive species teams, to understand the impacts, consequences and support available to the agriculture sector.

Small Business Virtual Roundtable

Regional Development Victoria as Chair, Economic Recovery Working Group convened a meeting of all agencies providing support and advice to small business in East Gippsland in response to the issue of lack of data sharing and inconsistency of advice being provided. Bushfire Recovery Victoria agreed to take up the issue of data sharing, with Small Business Victoria subsequently convening a regular catch up of agencies to ensure a consistent approach and to share learnings.

Success Indicators Workshop

The working group met on 26 May 2020 to develop a set of indicators to set a benchmark for economic recovery in East Gippsland. Subsequently a discussion paper was developed to support the working group. The success indicators feature on page 7 of this sub-plan.

Business, key sectors and industries

The interests of business, key sectors and industries are represented on the working group by agencies, local and state government, and representative organisations including Committee for Gippsland, Food and Fibre Gippsland, Destination Gippsland and Federation University.

Committee for Gippsland (C4G) is a membership-based organisation with a board of directors representing key businesses, industries and sectors in Gippsland. The board includes two East Gippsland based directors. C4G delivers the Gippsland Community Leadership Program. The CEO has engaged directly with East Gippsland business and community leaders and East Gippsland Marketing Inc. and provided intelligence and strategic thinking to the working group, including opportunities and challenges in East Gippsland.

Food and Fibre Gippsland (F&FG) is a membership-based organisation with a board of directors. F&FG represents the beef, lamb, dairy, cheese, wine, honey, smallgoods, fruit and vegetable and fibre (wool, hemp and mohair) industries including manufacturers and processors, an estimated $7 billion industry in Gippsland.21 They engage the sector through their directors, members and through direct engagement and delivery of programs.

Destination Gippsland (DG) is the regional tourism board and peak tourism organisation for Gippsland. Governed by a skills-based board of directors, the CEO and staff are highly engaged in the East Gippsland local government areas and have provided a staff member to work in bushfire recovery, bringing advice to assist with the development of this sub-plan. The 2019 Gippsland Destination Management Plan and 2020 East Gippsland Visitor Recovery Plan were developed after extensive community and industry consultation.

Other working group members represent the local economy and tourism sector (Council, through local business and tourism associations and the Economic Development Advisory Group); education and leadership (Federation University); transport and rural interests (Bonaccord Freightlines); Aboriginal economic development (Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation-GLaWAC); commerce and industry (Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry-VCCI); with the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions bringing knowledge, expertise and extensive stakeholder engagement and understanding of regional economic development priorities through:

- Regional Development Victoria (work directly with medium to large businesses, local government and regional leaders and is supported by a state-wide recovery team).
- Agriculture Victoria (work directly with burnt landholders who informed the agriculture recovery plan which builds on the existing drought recovery program).
- Small Business Victoria (work directly with affected businesses through business advisors).
- Forestry and Game.

Communications plan

Communication is being coordinated by Bushfire Recovery Victoria, through the Gippsland Recovery Communications Working Group. Membership of this group includes key economic recovery agencies and government departments.

Council is taking a lead role in providing information to small businesses through its website, social media and newsletters, supported by Small Business Victoria.

Small Business Victoria provides resources and information through its website and via a 1800-telephone number.

New community hubs will provide a one-stop shop for information.

Action Plan

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
What are we trying to achieve for the community?	What is the specific action or project	S, M, L Or Specific Date	Accountability		Secured Agency budget, Grant Application.	Critical to link to ommunity led aspirations.	Strategic support within each agency	Brief update on an exception basis.
All sectors								
Enable strategic and transformative infrastructure investments Provide stimulus, reprioritisation, and investment fast-tracking	Consider pipeline projects by understanding their value to the economy in the short, medium and long term. See Appendix 1. Priority Projects.	Short, medium, long term	DJPR		Various		Gippsland Regional Plan Regional Partnership priorities	See Appendix 1 Priority Projects.
Businesses and community members access the financial support they need to assist with economic recovery	Advocate for a one stop shop for all grant programs delivered by all agencies, i.e. a Grants Hub.	Ongoing	DJPR/BRV					Chair to provide advice to BRV on this issue.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Community led initiatives strengthen the local economy and build community capacity to respond to disasters	In partnership with local communities, develop and support activities for funding.	Medium	EGSC Wellington Shire Council	RDV	Under consideration			Projects being progressed through Stronger Regional Communities Program. • Boosting the Economy of East Gippsland after the bushfire-East Gippsland Marketing Inc • Rediscover Mallacoota Campaign- Mallacoota and District Business Tourism Assoc. • Lake Tyers Community Hall Kitchen Upgrade-Lake Tyers Beach Hall Committee • Crashendo! Bairnsdale: Everyday Music Changes Lives
Businesses work together on recovery and are coordinated. Support business confidence and resilience. Support business and industry development.	Deliver the Regional Industry Groups and Chambers of Commerce Grant Program (pending) to include grants: For local business networking events to bring businesses together to understand impacts and connect with support; For regional business networking events to bring regional businesses together to plan for recovery; To support the business and sports pledges, including maximising the impact of the Business and Sport for Bushfire Recovery Program, for local businesses that can provide value-add experiences for events.	Short to medium	RDV	Chambers of Commerce and Industry Sport and Recreation Victoria	Funded			Program under development: Business Events Program- Victorian Government Recovery Package RDV to deliver

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Stimulation of local economy and supporting trade Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery Ensure local people and business are utilised for recovery services	GROW Gippsland Program. Introduce non-Gippsland contractors to Gippsland businesses Support Gippsland businesses to access opportunities for bushfire clean-up and recovery Proposed: GROW proposes to expand to 2.0 EFT, and a dedicated procurement coach in order to reach and support more businesses, with a focus of building the capability of local suppliers to connect with and respond to opportunities. Work with Victorian Government agencies to align purchasing activities under a threshold of (for example) $50,000 to be directed to East Gippsland businesses, using Vendor Panel.	Ongoing	Latrobe Valley Authority/	East Gippsland Shire Council Wellington Shire Council Industry Capability Network (ICN) Skills and Jobs Centre JobActive Networks DET Grocon		Support local procurement, social procurement, and local/ inclusive employment for clean-up and rebuild for East Gippsland bushfire recovery activities.		GROW currently has a 0.2 EFT position based at EGSC to support GROW activities for bushfire recovery. GROW provides the following on their website: a dedicated bushfire recovery support page a pipeline of funded works and resources to assist buyers and suppliers and employers to implement local and social procurement; and inclusive employment. Key activities: connecting insurance companies with local suppliers. developing online training for suppliers working with EGSC on work packs for rebuilding has developed a regional procurement platform
Aboriginal economic development								
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Ensure business information, support and services addresses the needs of the Aboriginal community.	Short to medium	DJPR	Kinaway Indigenous Business Australia SBV				DJPR is developing a culturally appropriate Aboriginal Economic Development information sheet for distribution through local networks.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Support business confidence and resilience. The East Gippsland economy is strengthening by the development of Traditional Owner economic development projects.	Investigate formalising a Centre of Excellence for a Managing Country Training Centre at Forestec that will involve all Traditional Owners and Land Management Agencies.	Medium	GLaWAC DJPR					
	The Aboriginal community is strengthened through the development of Cultural-based tourism products.	Short to medium	GLaWAC	DJPR Parks Vic DG/Visit Vic IBA				
Business								
Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery Recovery activity is targeted, effective and evidence based	Ensure all business impact data is recorded and accessible to decision makers.	Ongoing	BRV	RDV RFCS EGSC		.		RDV convened meeting of stakeholders to discuss the issues. BRV, SBV and RDV will work together to develop solutions to the issue to enable a more streamlined approach. BRV to lead this project.
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Provision of Business Recovery advisers (Short and Medium) through Small Business Victoria business advisors. Liaise with the agencies including Rural Financial Counselling Service to understand issues arising through their business recovery work.	Until Jun 2021 Medium term	SBV, RFCS	EGSC	Funded			As at 1 June 2020 the Small Business Victoria - Business Recovery Advisers had engaged with 626 businesses in the East Gippsland and Wellington Shire LGAs, including 124 in Mallacoota and Gypsy Point There are three Rural Financial Counsellors working in East Gippsland, including with small businesses.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Provision of up-to-date info through Business Victoria website and social media channels (Short and Medium). EGSC, C4G, Destination Gippsland provide accurate advice through their networks and channels.	Jan 2020-ongoing	SBV, EGSC, C4G, Destination Gippsland		Funded			Ongoing EGSC newsletters, website, social media etc Destination Gippsland- weekly e newsletter, social media, etc.
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity	Small Business Bushfire Recovery Grants- Up to $50,000 for businesses with 1-19 employees. The recovery activity is to monitor take up and effectiveness.	Closes 31 Jul 2020	VCCI		Funded			As of 4 June 2020, 38 grants have been paid to East Gippsland businesses worth ~$986,000 12 applications are being processed.
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Small Business Bushfire Support Grant. Up to $10,000 grants to directly and indirectly impacted small businesses to assist with the costs of maintaining businesses, including-but not limited to-covering salaries, rents and utilities. As of 3 June 2020, businesses in Wellington Shire eligible	Short to medium	Rural Finance		Funded			As of 07 May 2020, 819 applications (455 in Gippsland), 623 approved (354 in Gippsland). EGSC is proactively calling businesses and providing "grant buddies" to ensure businesses are aware of the support packages available and assist people to apply.
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Concessional Loans of up to $500K for Primary Producers, small business and non-profit organisations (monitor take up and effectiveness).	Closes 31 July 2020	Rural Finance and VCCI		Funded			As of 07 May 2020, 52 applications (17 in East Gippsland Shire) Two approved (one from East Gippsland). 10 of the total applications are from primary producers. Serviceability of the loans is an issue for many applicants.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Support business confidence and resilience Stimulation of local economy and supporting trade	Bushfire and Sport for Bushfire Recovery Pledge Program.	18 Months – mid 2021	Business Events Victoria		Funded			Over 200 pledges of events over the next 18 months ** Between 40-60 events have been postponed until at least September 2020 or when COVID-19 restrictions
Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Tax Relief measures for business including 50 per cent concession on stamp duty for eligible properties.	Short to medium	State Revenue Office		Funded			Current
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity Support business confidence and resilience.	Payroll tax relief Regional employers only pay 25 per cent of metro rate backdated to 1 July 2019.	Short to medium	State Revenue Office		Funded			Current
Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Deliver suite of industry development and capacity building programs Provide business mentors/ coaches Website/digital health checks etc.	Short to medium	EGSC	RDV SBV				EGSC engaging with the 12 Business and Tourism Associations (BTAs) to understand their priority issues and suggested strategies. Input under assessment.
Support business and industry development	Provide training to small businesses around employment issues, including obligations under industrial relations laws Provide opportunities for small businesses to engage in financial and risk management training tailored to their needs.	Medium term	EGSC	SBV VCCI VFF RFCS				Consult with Community Recovery Committees and Business and Tourism Associations to better understand the community needs and appropriate methods of delivering training.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Community led recovery is supported including for economic recovery.	Ensure economic recovery is included in community recovery planning.	Medium term	EGSC	BRV				Community recovery planning is underway with the support of EGSC and BRV
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity	$10,000 Business Event/s Grant to East Gippsland Shire Council	Short term Acquittal by 30 June 2020	Funds have been issued to Council via SBV		Funded			Current- Earmarked for online training program - Crisis Management (Bushfire & COVID 19 business resilience – practical tips for low cost/no cost).
Support business and industry development Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Financial assistance is available to businesses to undertake a Business Health Check in order to plan for economic recovery. A professional business services advisor will work with the business to better understand their business capabilities, options and strategies for sustainability and growth, and develop a business plan (or review and update an existing business plan).	Medium term	SBV/RDV	EGSC	Funded			Funding to be considered for this program. Consider utilising the “Grow Your Business” Program methodology or “Back to Business” by AgVic Consider a voucher program to enable businesses to work with a trusted adviser to understand their business position, seek assistance with accessing support and to plan next steps, including exiting the business.
Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Development of 5-year overarching Economic Recovery Strategy, viewed through lens of Climate Change, nature-based assets and competitive advantage, rebound from pandemic.	Medium term	EGSC					EGSC to develop an Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and advocate for funding to implement key actions from plan.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Stimulation of local economy and supporting trade Support for industry Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Artisan market to showcase goods and services and entice visitors back to the region. Provides immediate cashflow through sales, along with longer term supply chain opportunities. The event will be promoted for growers, producers and artisan products to be held at The Timber Yard, Port Melbourne to support bushfire and COVID-19 impacted business	Short to medium term	Wellington Shire Council	RDV EGSC DG	Under consideration $80,000			Funding proposal under development for $80,000. Total project cost $120,000
Ensure local people and business are utilised for recovery services	Grocon to engage as many local contractors for the clean-up work as possible. Economic Recovery Committee to monitor and advocate for local contractor contribution to Grocon 2020 Clean-up Program.	Ongoing	RDV BRV	GROCON	Funded			As of 6 April 2020, across Victoria currently 51 per cent of contractors involved in the 2020 Grocon Clean-up Program are local. Barriers to local contractors' participation: Lack of appropriate qualifications- specifically Friable asbestos - class A asbestos removal licence (there are no licenced contractors east of Orbost) inadequate equipment eg heavy equipment not suitable for dealing with asbestos contaminated sites. Strategy: Grocon is hiring equipment and engaging local contractors to operate the equipment.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Local economies/sectors								
Agriculture								
Support for industry so that recovery of the agriculture sector is timely and coordinated.	Develop a Regional Agricultural Recovery Plan and provide Recovery Officers to assist farmers.	Current	DJPR- AgVic					Developed early in recovery and responding to issues as they arrive.
Primary Producers have the information, support and services they need to pursue their recovery.	AgVic have appointed key recovery staff including an Agriculture Fire Recovery Manager and Regional Recovery Coordinator (Drought and Fire) for East Gippsland. Expertise and support are provided through the South East Ag Services teams with linkages into the Animal Health and Welfare; Dairy; Meat and Wool; Irrigated Agriculture; and Plant, Chemicals and Invasive Species teams. Farmers are receiving financial, technical and psychosocial support through partnering with a range of organisations.	Current	DJPR- AgVic	DHHS Rural Finance Rural Financial Counselling Service EGSC	Funded			94 requests for agricultural support. Requests have been for: technical advice (39), feed planning (27), pasture advice (93), water quality (23), dam water quality (29), pest plant control (14), pest animal control (7) and on farm erosion (15). Landholders might have requested more than one issue. Referrals are an ongoing part of the recovery as farmers gain a clearer picture of overall impacts on farm pastures, water supplies and livestock. AgVic is providing referrals to RFCS as key agency for providing one-on-one financial planning assistance to farmers.
Support business confidence and resilience	AgVic continues to deliver its drought support program and services to landholders in East Gippsland and Wellington Shires. AgVic is providing referrals to RFCS as key agency for providing one-on-one financial planning assistance to farmers.	Current	DJPR- AgVic	Rural Finance Rural Financial Counselling Service, DHHS, EGSC, Wellington Shire Council	Funded			A drought support program and services have been in place for three and a half years and will continue during the drought recovery process.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Provide businesses with the information, support and services needed to pursue their recovery	Delivery of agriculture business support program through Meat and Livestock Australia "Back to Business" which provides three free one-on-one sessions with a local farm business consultant to assess their current situation, work through the key issues and opportunities and prioritise what actions to take.	Current	Meat and Livestock Aust AgVic		Funded			Current
Support for industry engagement with the farming community that is appropriate to their needs. Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Phone calls, farm visits, attendance at community drop in centres, field day events etc.	Current	DJPR- AgVic	Service Providers EGSC	Funded			A total of 366 interactions have occurred with farmers through 1:1 farm visit, phone calls, Australia Post mail outs, email and use of videoconferencing as connectivity and availability of technology allowed. An additional 27 interactions have been with service providers.
Provide business relief and support services to support business continuity	Emergency Bushfire Response in Primary Industry Grants. Grants of up to $75K per farm business.	Closes 31 July 2020	Rural Finance	AgVic	Funded			As of 07 May 2020- 324 applications (130 in Gippsland Shires) 273 approved 107 in Gippsland Shires) The recovery team has recognised that more than half of eligible farmers have not applied for grants and are working to ensure all farmers are aware of the grants and have support to apply. Some are falling between the cracks as off farm income (due the drought) is impacting on their ability to qualify for bushfire recovery grants.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Primary Producers receive help to pay for emergency transport costs.	Emergency Transport Support Program for Primary Producers. Payments of up to $15K per farm business.	Closes 31 July 2020	Rural Finance	AgVic	Funded			As of 07 May 2020- 67 applications (33 in Gippsland Shires) 52 approved (24 in Gippsland Shires).
	Concessional Loans of up to $500K for Primary Producers, small business and non-profit organisations.	Closes 31 July 2020	Rural Finance	AgVic	Funded			As of 07 May 2020, 17 applicants in East Gippsland Shire. One approved. Majority of applicants are small businesses.
Enable Strategic and transformative infrastructure investments Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Modernisation Phase 2 Newry and Stratford. The Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Phase 2 project is the final stage. The project will improve productivity and efficiency for irrigators, save water by reducing leakage and, and improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes by reducing nutrient run-off. This project will result in 20 per cent economic productivity gains and utilise a high proportion of local supply chain and materials, including specialised labour. The Macalister Irrigation District contributes up to $500 million to Victoria's economy each year.	Medium to Long	Southern Rural Water	State and Commonwealth Government and Co-op farmers	Funded			Commonwealth $31.3m, State $1.3m, SRW $20.9m Funding announcement (19/05/2020) $10.4million Building Works package
Aquaculture								
Enable Strategic and transformative infrastructure investments	AFCOL Australia Ltd (Mallacoota Abalone Cooperative) - $300,000 grant towards a $400,000 sprinkler system as part of the processing factory rebuilding project Support year-round visitor centre/abalone interpretive centre.	Current	RDV		Funded			On track

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Wine Industry								
Support for industry to make the best decisions for their business.	$2.5million package to assist with testing, research and technical advice- details.	Current	AgVic	Wine Industry Victoria	Funded			A technical support package to ensure that growers, winemakers and regional associations are supported to understand and respond to the impacts of smoke exposure on wine made in the current vintage.
Support for industry	Rebate of up to $1,200 to Victorian wine grape growers on samples submitted for smoke testing	1 Jan- 30 April 2020	Rural Finance		Funded			Ckosed 30 April 2020 1 application for rebate approved from East Gippsland LGA
Create opportunities to extend the visitor shoulder /off peak season Maintain high visitation during peak season Increase yield for visitors and repeat visitation	Develop a tourism experience development program to raise existing standard of visitor experience – benchmark is Margaret River, Barossa, Orange but extend to brewery and distillery also (See work by leading industry expert Robin Shaw, SA)	Medium term	EGSC DG other			Tourism economy is strengthened by developing a winery-based visitor experience.		To be developed.
Forestry								
Support long term industry resilience and support for transition in declining sectors	Undertake audit of Forestry Industry in East and Central Gippsland. Confirm volumes of fire impacted coupes to be salvaged consistent with supply commitments in the Victorian forestry Plan values and ongoing contracted volumes – business certainty. Provision of support services under the Victorian Forestry Plan.	Current	VicForest / DJPR	DJPR	Funded	Community receives appropriate support for structural reform and transition of local economies based on priorities identified through strong community engagement.		

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Consider and prioritise direct and indirect impact on Gippsland forestry industry.	Government to invest Research and Development funding to determine economic and social implications longer term on communities in Gippsland.	Current	DJPR	VicForests				
Support long term industry resilience and support for transition in declining sectors	All businesses, workers and communities will be supported to gradually transition out of native timber harvesting.				Funded			
Education								
Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth Support business confidence and resilience	Develop and deliver an innovative Master of Business Administration Program for the Gippsland region focussing on experiential learning (MBAEL). As part of broader strategy to increase local engagement with the University and demonstrate good corporate citizenship, the MBAEL will be delivered at low cost to the participants. The program will initially be delivered online, with blended learning available when the COVID-19 restrictions ease.	Under de-velopment	Federation University	Regional Development Australia Committee/ RDV				This project is under development. To include: Design and deliver in partnership with the RDA, industry led seminars to provide guidance on recovery strategies for business.
Support business and industry development Support business confidence and resilience	Explore initiatives that improve digital capability in the region. Support business and the regional economy through transition to digital platforms, online marketing and trading							

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Support local and regional confidence, sustainability and long-term resilience for investment and growth	Identify training and education needs to support the jobs of the future.							
Visitor economy								
Support business and industry development	Develop a Tourism Recovery Plan.	Current	Destination Gippsland					Complete
Create opportunities to extend the visitor shoulder /off peak season Maintain high visitation during peak season Increase yield for visitors and repeat visitation	"Let's Go to the Gippsland Lakes" marketing campaign (that results in increased retail spend).	Stage 1: Jan 2020- Feb 2020 Stage 2: to be completed by Jan 2021	Destination Gippsland					Stage 1 Complete Stage 2: $300K has been allocated to extend this campaign. Activities to include all East Gippsland and has been deferred until after COVID travel restrictions are lifted.
East Gippsland's economy is strengthening by supporting an increase in recreational fishing activity within the East Gippsland region.	Feasibility analysis of marine fish stocking facility in and around Gippsland Lakes. Develop a Gippsland Lakes Recreational Fishery Recovery Plan. Resumption of the Victorian Fishing Authority's Golden Tag Competition after COVID-19 restrictions lifted. Restocking of fish into fire impacted waterways when conditions can support fish and where stocking is identified as likely to help fish populations recover.	Immediate to 1 year	Victorian Fisheries Authority					Priority projects for Victorian Fishing Authority.

Recovery Goal	Recovery Activity	Timelines	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Funding Status	Link to CRC	Link to Lead Agency Policy/ Plan	Status Report
Restoration of public confidence. Creating opportunities to extend shoulder /off peak season. Maintaining high visitation during peak season. Increased yield for visitors and repeat visitation. Long term industry resilience.	Support Destination Gippsland to deliver a marketing and events acquisition program, directed at the domestic travel market, and promoting Omeo, Buchan, Mallacoota and the Gippsland Lakes as Open for Business.	12 months	Destination Gippsland	Visit Vic				Ready to deliver/ Funding required The $2million program will include: Television, radio, print and billboard promotions 10 high participation, multi day, off peak events Partnership marketing eg Airbnb Boosting social media content Tourism business training and professional development Town Destination Action Plans

Priority Projects

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Metung Hot Springs and day spa (private Sector project)	Metung	Co-investment in a new tourism experience for Metung providing year-round geothermal hot springs and day spa facility to attract high end visitors. The $40 million investment will generate 77 jobs in Stage 1, attracting 117,000 visitors by year 3. Developers have appointed architects, organised power connection, negotiated the water permit allocation with Council, and are completing an updated Master Plan which includes Kings Cove estate (parks and gardens, partnership with golf club, boardwalks).	Shovel Ready	C4G EGSC Destination Gippsland (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	DJPR Creative Sport and Visitor Economy, RRV (Rural and Regional Vic)	RDV, Mornington Peninsula Hot Springs	$10 million $5m State $5 million Commonwealth	$40 million
Bullock Island Masterplan Implementation (includes Bullock Is Bridge Renewal)	Lakes Entrance	Current Masterplan refresh - approximately $75,000 The revised Masterplan document, infrastructure upgrades to be delivered to include construction of public toilets facilities; upgrade of vehicle and pedestrian access and pathways; fishing platform; landscaping and aesthetic improvements. Total Project Cost $8.375M Victorian Government secured = $1.875M (Building Works Package – announced 18 May 2020) Commonwealth Government funds secured = $5M (includes approx. $3M island bridge replacement and associated works - announced 23 April 2020) Council funds secured = $1.5M	FUNDED $1.875 million funded Build-ing Works Package Funding announced 18/05/2020 (State) 23/04/2020 (Common-wealth)	EGSC Destination Gippsland (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	RRV, DJPR	Lakes Entrance Fisherman's Co-op Limited, DELWP, Gippsland Ports, RDV, GLaWAC, DoT	$1.875 million required Secured following Vic Government announcement on 18/05/2020 (Building Works Package)	$8.375 million

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Modernisation Phase 2 Newry and Stratford	Newry and Stratford	The Macalister Irrigation District (MID) Phase 2 project is the final stage. The project will improve productivity and efficiency for irrigators, save water by reducing leakage and, and improve the health of the Gippsland Lakes by reducing nutrient run-off. Expansion to Lowalong area is ready to proceed to business case. Water security and new irrigation opportunities created by this project has implications for expansion for East Gippsland Agri-food businesses seeking reliable water allocations and diversification of farming systems, building potential output and creating employment opportunities. This project will result in 20 per cent economic productivity gains and utilise a high proportion of local supply chain and materials, including specialised labour. The Macalister Irrigation District contributes up to $500 million to Victoria's economy each year.	FUNDED Funding announcement (19/05/2020) $10.4million Building Works package)	C4G	Water Agriculture	Southern Rural Water (SRW)	State and Commonwealth Government and Co-op farmers	Current commitment- C'wealth $31.3m, State $1.3m, SRW $20.9 Additional funding required $10.4m	$62.6 million
Buchan Caves Masterplan and Stage 1 works	Buchan	Stage 1 (Confirmed) - $2 million to rebuild the campground, develop a new masterplan and progress the first stage of works, including a new camp kitchen and other upgrades, through direct partnership with traditional owners.	FUNDED Bushfire Tourism and Business Fund announced 27/02/2020	Parks Victoria DG (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	Parks Victoria	GLaWAC	$2 million confirmed;	$2 million
Buchan Caves Stage 2 works	Buchan	Stage 2 ($2 million) - Replace fire impacted cabins and wilderness retreats with cabins that meet contemporary standards and offer comfort in all seasons.	Insurance will cover some works. Funding sought for the balance.	Parks Victoria DG (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	Parks Victoria	GLaWAC	Up to $2 million TBC	$2 million

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Nowa Nowa Boggy Creek Walking Trail Upgrade	Nowa Nowa	Reconstruction of an existing walking track, seating and interpretive signage, landscaping and associated promotional material to promote the nature-based assets on offer, to increase visitation to town.	FUNDED State Govt. Funding. 15 June 2020	RRV/ RDV	Tourism	RDV, DJPR and DELWP	RDV, Parks, DELWP, East Gippsland Shire Council, GLAWAC	$250,000	$250,000
Paynesville Squatters Row (Slip Road) Maritime Precinct – Masterplan and Stage 1 Works	Paynesville	Paynesville Foreshore Masterplan - plan will produce a final agreed concept plan, preliminary designs and costings for the development of the Paynesville maritime precinct (known as 'Squatters Row') to contribute to Paynesville's role as a boating precinct of State significance and deliver growth in the visitor economy. Stage 1 – implement the masterplan to improve the boating and visitor infrastructure that connects the Slip Road precinct to the CBD. Project includes foreshore engineering treatment to alleviate inundation (seawall), public access facilities including a boardwalk.	FUNDED (Masterplan) announced 27/02/2020 FUNDED (Stage 1) Building Works Fund- announced 18/05/2020	EGSC Gippsland Ports DG Board and DMP endorsed	Boating/ Tourism/ Community Development	EGSC	Gippsland Ports	$250,000 masterplan confirmed; $1.1 million Stage 1 infrastructure costs confirmed.	Approx. $1.25 million
Paynesville Squatters Row (Slip Road) Maritime Precinct – Stage 2 Works	Paynesville	Stage 2 Project includes: expansion of maritime services and integration with Gippsland Ports Boat Yard; recreational and boating facilities to boost capacity of the precinct; new and improved visitor attractions and amenities; and further landscaping.	Funding sought	EGSC Gippsland Ports DG Board and DMP endorsed	Boating/ Tourism/ Community Development	EGSC	Gippsland Ports	Stage 2 > unfunded	Approx. $3.9 million

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Bairnsdale South Industrial Estate Water Augmentation Project	Bairnsdale South		FUNDED Regional Infrastructure Fund Funding announcement 18 May 2020	EGSC, East Gippsland Water	Enabling infrastructure	EGSC, East Gippsland Water		$500,000	$2.3 million
Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail- Planning phase	East Gippsland Various	The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail experience takes in the coastline, estuaries, beaches, views, Aboriginal history and local produce of the region. Gippsland Coastal Park and the Lakes National Park are jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people. Feasibility study to include social business and revenue models, and the use of technology. Consultation to include the traditional owners, GLaWAC.	FUNDED LVA- Smart Specialisation- Visitor Economy	Destination Gippsland (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	Destination Gippsland,	EGSC, East Gippsland Marketing Inc. Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy, DJPR	$117,000 Feasibility study and investment prospectus	$122,000
Gippsland Comeback Event	Regional	Artisan market to showcase goods and services and entice visitors back to the region.	FUNDED Vic Govt 15 June 2020		Tourism, Agrifood	Wellington Shire	RDV	$50,000	$120,000
Wild Harvest Seafood Festival	Mallacoota	Large annual event in Mallacoota Event postponed until 9-11 April 2021	FUNDED Visit Vic March 2020		Tourism Community			$20,000	$50,000
Boosting the Local Economy in East Gippsland - Digital Media Ambassadors & Annual Touring Map	East Gippsland		Under consideration Vic Govt – Stronger Regional Communities Program (SRCP)	East Gippsland Marketing Inc.	Tourism			$41,250	$55,000
Lake Tyers Beach Road Hall Kitchen Renovation	Lake Tyers Beach	New commercial kitchen	Under consideration Vic Govt – (SRCP)		Community	Hall Committee		$50,000	$107,075

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Visit Mallacoota Campaign	Mallacoota	Visit Mallacoota Campaign	Under consideration Vic Govt – (SRCP)		Tourism	Mallacoota and District Business & Tourism Association		$50,000	$70,000
Crashendo! Bairnsdale: Everyday Music Changes Lives	Bairnsdale	Crashendo! Bairnsdale: Everyday Music Changes Lives	Under consideration Vic Govt – (SRCP)		Community			$50,000	$156,130
Cape Conran	Cape Conran	Stage 1 – ($5.3 million). Provide interim visitor offer, develop Landscape Master Plan, restore and commence upgrading essential services and key infrastructure to provide unique, high quality visitor experiences. Stage 2 – ($11.25 million) Deliver Landscape Master Plan, upgrade cabins, group lodge and activity centre and market attractive roofed accommodation alternative to Wilderness Retreats (e.g. Eco Pods).	Funding sought	Parks Victoria Destination Gippsland	Tourism	Parks Victoria	GLaWAC		
Raymond Island Koala Sanctuary	Paynesville	Significantly improve the visitor experience and viewing of koalas on Raymond Island. Interpretive signs, collateral, conservation and wildlife components on the island and in Paynesville.	Minimal planning required/close to shovel ready	DG (DMP and Board endorsed) EGSC	Tourism/ environment	PV/EGSC	DG	$350,000	$350,000

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Live and Work (anyway you like) in East Gippsland	East Gippsland	East Gippsland Marketing Campaign - encourage people to move to East Gippsland - working remotely is now considered more accessible and mainstream. Initially: visiting the 'live East Gippsland' website visiting the region to see what it has to offer Resulting in: increasing investment dollars in the region increasing residents in East Gippsland Media: Social media (paid and organic), print media. Video, photography, advertising (digital boards in Melbourne, media partnerships).	Ready to go	East Gippsland Marketing C4G	Tourism Population and economic growth	East Gippsland Marketing Inc.		$22,000	$36,000

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Coastal Wilderness Walk Croajingolong National Park	Cape Conran to Point Hicks	The development of an iconic experience-based trail on Victoria's Wilderness Coast, predominantly within Croajingolong National Park, offering full serviced 'glamping' or hut-based accommodation (partly off park), self-guided or fully supported options with tour operators. The proposal links with the destination hub proposed for Point Hicks and will include a master plan and business case; a business plan has been prepared. RDV, Parks and East Gippsland continue support this project which is the last of the 4 Walks to be developed from the 2014-24 Walk Victoria Strategy; this project is supported the Victorian Tourism Industry Council Infrastructure Victoria is considering the inclusion of the project in their priority nature-based tourism infrastructure strategy. An upgrade to the Point Hicks Rd is needed to support this project, estimated cost $10m.	Preliminary feasibility complete Detailed masterplan required	Destination Gippsland (DMP and Board endorsed) Regional Partnership Priority	Tourism	RRV, DJPR Parks Victoria	RDV, Destination Gippsland, East Gippsland Shire Council & GLaWAC	Masterplan $1 million Phase 1 Implementation future funding commitment sought.	$1 million Commit-ment to fund implementa-tion-Estimat-ed cost $7 million
Cann River Visitor Information and Interpretation Centre research and review	Cann River	A study to identify potential opportunities to increase the economic benefit to the town and flow on to the region. The study will seek to identify development opportunities for infrastructure that can assist Cann River to develop as a destination. East Gippsland Visitor Service review is about to begin and could incorporate this project.	Concept	EGSC Gippsland Regional Partnership Priority	Tourism	RRV, DJPR	East Gippsland Shire Council	$30,000	$30,000

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Omeo Adventure Hub	Omeo	Develop Omeo into a nationally recognised alpine and high-country adventure hub. Complete the mountain bike trail and connect the town to improved fishing, horse riding, rafting and walking adventure activities.	Mountain Bike Trail shovel ready. Other components require planning.	EGSC DG (DMP and Board endorsed)	Tourism	EGSC	PV DG	tbc	tbc
Orbost Social Enterprise, including Craft Malting Facility/Visitor experience	Orbost	Develop a community-owned tourism and industry hub in Orbost providing: a food hub and café, a beer garden, a distillery and craft malting facility, and potentially a biodigester, converting waste to energy. The community-owned craft malting facility will supply local, regional and national craft brewers, distillers and bakers with malt, the critical ingredient in beer and spirits. Creation of this attraction in Orbost aligns with Destination Gippsland's 'Tracks & Trails' strategy and proposals to refurbish the rail trail and other local cycling routes. There is early interest from two potential commercial anchor tenants.	Planning Some Business Case elements already underway Smart Specialisation project.	F&FG	Food and fibre, Visitor Economy New energy	RDV, RRV, DJPR	EGSC, Food & Fibre Gippsland, Sailor's Grave Brewing, Latrobe Valley Authority (Gippsland Smart Specialisation Project), Orbost Community, other interested parties.	F&FG to provide estimates	tbc

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Gippsland Provenance Trust Token	East Gippsland/ Gippsland	Development of an approved/ licensed brand for trust and recognition of Gippsland's produce to be stamped on or as a token applied to products. The brand would be used for the consumer retail market and the retailers/ restaurants wholesale markets. The design will connect visually with the Destination Gippsland developed "GIPPS xxx LAND", consolidating the visitor experience with post-visit purchasing. A pilot project East Gippsland Produce Naturally Good TM exists, and the current proposal was endorsed by stakeholders during a workshop in January 2020.	Under development	F&FG	Food and Fibre Visitor Economy	RDV/RRV DJPR		F&FG to provide estimates when available	tbc

Regional Project Proposals

(yet to be evaluated by Working Group)

Small to medium projects vs medium to large projects

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Duplication of the Princes Highway	Flynn & Kilmany sections	Highway duplication completion to occur has two outstanding sections	Shovel ready	C4G – East Gippsland members	All industry	Regional Roads Victoria	Commonwealth Government – funds already committed for these sections	$32 million	$164 million (for these two sections)
Dargo High Plains Road Upgrade and Seal	Dargo High Plains Road Upgrade and Seal (see map on accompany-ing presen-tation)	Improved connectivity in Gippsland between north and south. Important tourist 4WD route to Gippsland Poor formation of existing road and drainage- deteriorates rapidly in wet conditions. This project has been identified as a priority recovery project for Alpine Shire.	Shovel ready. Existing road upgrade, requires funding	Wellington and Alpine Shire	Tourism	Regional Roads Victoria	Alpine shire Council, Wellington Shire, DELWP		$20- 35 million to upgrade and seal road- Estimate to be refined with RRV to Build formation and improve drainage in priority sections, seal road

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Regional Rail Revival program	Traralgon to Bairnsdale	Infrastructure investment – improve freight capacity and passenger services/reliability/time into Melbourne. Passing sections – freight and passenger (Sale and B-dale) + extra passing loops and track to facilitate more trains. Stabling facilities – Sale. Upgrade signalling at Sale to facilitate additional services. Long distance trains (retire classic fleet 22). Review and update stations and facilities. Additional passenger services - Intermodal facility/precinct – b/dale.	Independent study completed in October 2016. Government used this study to inform its RRR program investment of $531m (Traralgon – Pakenham including the Avon Bridge).	GLGN – commissioned the study. Priority for C4G members in East Gippsland	Industry producing or manufacturing products for domestic and international markets.	Department of Transport (and Infrastructure) Minister Allan Minister Horne Freight Victoria	Commonwealth Government provided funds to RRR from the Port of Melbourne sale.	$530 million Intermodal facility – Requires $100,000 to undertake feasibility study	$530 million
Traralgon Bypass	Traralgon	Bypass the town of Traralgon improving access to market and safety. Improve accessibility to East Gippsland Mine stability continues to be a big concern. Government to consider an alternative route (if it can't move beyond the mine stability issue) – route could go North of Traralgon.	Government currently doing a technical study ($1.4m) findings were supposed to be made public last December.	C4G members – East Gippsland	Industry producing or manufacturing products for domestic and international markets.	RRV Department of Transport Department of Infrastructure	Commonwealth Government	TBC	TBC

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Tambo Bluff Great Glass Elevator, plus Walking and Bike Riding Trail	Tambo Bluff to Metung	The Great Glass Elevator provides all abilities access to the walking and bike trails that connect Tambo Bluff to Metung, providing over 10km of safe public paths. Would include 400 metres of 2m wide boardwalk, concrete paths, gravel paths, landscaping, revegetation works, seats, stairs and railings.	Concept drawings and preliminary estimates available	DG, EGSC, private operator	Tourism				Construction tower, foyers and bridge- $1.5million Pathways and land-scaping $1.2million

Project / Initiative	Location	Description	Status	Source	Industry	Agency	Partners	Funding Required	Total Project Cost
Business recovery training program	East Gippsland	A business recovery training program would enable innovation and digitisation training for businesses to be delivered across East Gippsland, both virtually and in person, specifically to support East Gippsland businesses with developing new service offerings and making the most of digital tools. There is a gap in training for existing businesses to support them with innovating and adapting their business offering to services that are going to be successful at this time. Many East Gippsland small businesses are heavily dependent on in-person services such as tourism which are negatively impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. East Gippsland also has some of the lowest digital ability scores in Victoria, according to the Australian Digital Inclusion Index, so skills training is critical to supporting businesses with innovation and learning to use digital tools. Allocating some funding to enable GippsTech to deliver some training and coaching services for East Gippsland businesses looking to innovate and adapt their business offerings would assist the business community to recover and would enable the development of more customised training specifically for business innovation and pivots.	Ready to proceed Has applied for funding in RDF Modest investment to support East Gippsland businesses to get the help they need to digitise and innovate their business.					$150,000	$150,000

Economic Recovery Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The aim of the Economic Recovery Working Group (the Economic Working Group) is to coordinate and manage the planning and delivery of economic recovery activities in response to the East Gippsland Bushfire 2019/2020.

The Working Group is a sub-committee of the overarching East Gippsland Bushfire Recovery Committee (the Recovery Committee).

Objectives

To provide individuals, business, local government and other stakeholders in the East Gippsland Shire affected by the East Gippsland Bushfire 2019/2020 with the information, support and services needed to pursue their economic recovery.

To plan and monitor a coordinated range of recovery supports across the economic environment consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery and the State Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan.

Membership

- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)
  - Regional Development Victoria (RDV - Chair)
  - Agriculture Victoria (AgVic)
  - Forestry & Game
  - Small Business Victoria (SBV)
- Bushfire Recovery Victoria (BRV)
- East Gippsland Shire Council (EGSC)
- Destination Gippsland (DG)
- Committee for Gippsland (C4G)
- Food and Fibre Gippsland (F&FG)
- Federation University (Fed Uni)
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)
- Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)
- Bonaccord Freightlines.

Responsibilities

The Working Group's functions are:

- To collate impact assessment information and consider the economic consequences;
- To develop and monitor an economic recovery sub-plan that reflects the economic consequences of the East Gippsland bushfires;
- To plan for, and coordinate, a range of economic recovery activities aimed at addressing the short to long term needs of affected communities, businesses and local economies;
- To make recommendations to the East Gippsland Bushfire Recovery Committee regarding potential recovery activities to further build the resilience of the East Gippsland community;
- To monitor the implementation of economic recovery activities across affected communities to ensure that economic recovery needs are being effectively met.

Reporting

The Economic Working Group will report to the East Gippsland Bushfire Recovery Committee as required.

Proceedings

Economic Working Group meetings will be held weekly (initially). The Economic Working Group may choose to vary this frequency based on need or changing circumstances.

The Chair of the Economic Working Group will schedule meeting dates and draft agendas with items sought from working group members.

Papers will be distributed to members before the meeting and confirmed minutes and agreed actions to be sent after the meeting.

The Economic Working Group will determine the requirement for specialists, subject matter experts, additional working groups, extraordinary meetings and additional member organisations where necessary.

Administration

The Economic Working Group secretariat will be provided by Regional Development Victoria.

Philanthropy

Agriculture Victoria would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following organisations who provided major grants and on-ground support for farm businesses:

- Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund
- Lions Need for Feed
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- BlazeAid
- Red Cross

Others who have contributed to support for farming families are:

- National Centre for Farmer Health
- CWA
- Farmers Voice
- ADRA - Adventist
- Neighbourhood House
- Farmers Voice
- High Country Patrol
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent de Paul
- The Rural Financial Counselling Service