

## 21 MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

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### 21.01 INTRODUCTION

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#### 21.01-1 Municipal profile

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South Gippsland Shire is a large rural municipality containing a population of around 30,000 people dispersed across 26 settlements and 41 localities. Leongatha is the largest town and the municipal centre. The municipality is largely bounded by the Strzelecki Ranges in the north and the coast in the south. The north-western area of the Shire is located approximately 100 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, and the south-west border is approximately 20 kilometres from Yarram. Primary industries, especially agriculture, combines with associated value-adding and food processing, as the Shire's main economic driver. The dairy industry is significant in this sector. Tourism is based on the natural and coastal environments (including Wilsons Promontory National Park, Corner Inlet, Shallow Inlet and Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Parks and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park), landscapes, and food and arts culture.

#### 21.01-2 Key issues and influences

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The key influences affecting the municipality are:

- Population growth associated with the proximity to Melbourne's south-east expansion, rural lifestyle retirees, seasonal tourism influxes and Victoria's population increase.
- The relatively abundant rainfall and quality soils suitable for commercial food production.
- Numerous dispersed settlements with unique character.
- Areas of local, state, national and international environmental significance.
- Areas of significant landscape value.
- Areas with identified environmental risks.
- Efficient provision of infrastructure, facilities and services for the current and future population.
- Presence of exploitable natural resources including sand, gravel, wind, timber and coal.

The key issues for South Gippsland Shire are:

#### Settlement

- The need to recognise that the network of smaller rural towns throughout the Shire provide a valid alternative to the large settlements, particularly where reticulated services are provided.
- The need to define settlement boundaries and identify the settlements that have capacity for growth.
- The need to plan for housing and facilities to cater for anticipated population growth in the north-west of the Shire closest to metropolitan Melbourne.
- The need to manage development and land use to ensure environmental and landscape values are maintained.

### **Environmental risks**

- The anticipated impacts of climate change on the natural environment, land uses, settlements and incidence of environmental risks.
- Pressures for development and subdivision along the coast and other environmentally sensitive areas (including potable water supply catchments and steep slopes), and the associated impacts on vegetation, soil stability and water quality.
- The incidence of landslip and erosion (particularly within the steep areas of the Strzelecki Ranges), flooding and drainage problems affecting certain areas of the Shire, and the potential risk of bushfire to population and property in certain areas.

### **Natural resource management**

- The need to preserve rural land for commercial scale agricultural production.
- The need to maintain water quality.
- The need to protect soils.
- The need to protect the region's biological diversity and to maintain and connect diverse habitats.

### **Built environment and heritage**

- Provision of design and siting guidance and control over development to protect settlement character, landscape and environmental values, to minimise environmental risks, and to increase sustainability.
- The need to protect the character and significance of sensitive coastal and hill landscapes, particularly landscapes of State or regional significance, where there is a high level of pressure for development.
- Support for retention and appropriate use and development of places of heritage significance and their environs in recognition of their contribution to the identity, culture and history of the municipality.

### **Housing**

- The need to manage rural living opportunities throughout the Shire without negative impacts on commercial agricultural production, landscape and environmental values, and efficient provision of infrastructure.
- The need to provide diversity and flexibility in housing types to accommodate a variety of household needs, including the ageing population, in locations accessible to facilities and services.
- The increasing pressure for housing development along the coast while retaining landscape and environmental values and minimising current and future environmental risks.

### **Economic development**

- The diversification of the agricultural industry through the development of more intensive farming and value-adding opportunities.
- The need to provide sufficient industrial land supply to accommodate and encourage existing and future industrial opportunities.
- Maintenance and consolidation of commercial areas in the core of towns.
- The changing roles and functions of small settlements and the need to encourage each settlement to develop and maintain its own identity to facilitate economic development.

- Enhancement of employment and educational opportunities.
- Increasing the contribution of tourism industry to the economy.
- The significance of maintaining environments supportive of nature-based and cultural tourism activities.
- The need for a large tourist accommodation facility in the municipality, preferably in the vicinity of Wilsons Promontory.

### Transport

- The need to improve and maintain existing roads in order to support the future needs of the community, promote economic growth and protect the environment.
- The need to improve public transport opportunities within and externally connecting to the municipality.
- The increase in number and size of heavy vehicles transporting throughout the municipality.
- The use of the deep-water port facilities at Barry Beach and the encouragement of associated major economic development opportunities.
- The need to upgrade sections of the South Gippsland Highway, Strzelecki Highway and Grand Ridge Road for future economic benefits to the Shire.

### Infrastructure

- The need to provide reticulated water, sewerage and drainage improvements to many of the smaller settlements to protect community health and environmental values, and to support population growth in the settlements identified for growth.
- The need to improve and maintain existing infrastructure in order to support the future needs of the community, promote economic growth and protect the environment.
- The need to accommodate large seasonal population fluctuations in some of the holiday settlements, which place different demands on infrastructure and services.
- The need to encourage the development of alternative energy sources.
- Application of a development contributions policy to guide infrastructure provision.

### Community Services

- Economic pressures that affect the viability of existing community services.
- The need to provide residents with access to services and facilities, including aged care, health, recreation and education, in an efficient and equitable manner.
- Catering for the needs of an ageing population.

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### Vision and strategic framework plan

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The South Gippsland Shire Council's vision in the Council Plan 2017-2021 is that *South Gippsland Shire will be a place where our quality of life and sense of community are balanced by sustainable and sensitive development, population and economic growth.*

Strategic objectives to be balanced in support of the vision include:

- To strengthen economic growth and prosperity through vibrant commercial districts, supporting manufacturing and value-adding to the region's diverse agricultural production and tourism.
- To improve built assets by renewing infrastructure and streetscapes in commercial precincts, advocating for sewerage infrastructure in settlements, investing in

community facilities, ensuring adequate land supply, and reviewing paths and trails connections.

- To value the natural environment by protecting natural resources, reducing the municipality's carbon footprint and planning for climate change.
- To build strong partnerships to improve responsiveness and delivery of projects and services, and to share cost-efficient delivery of facilities and services.
- To strengthen arts and culture including recognition of the unique character of the smaller towns and supporting the role of the sector in contributing to economic growth and tourism.
- To deliver equitable outcomes by planning for business, population growth and an ageing population.

The *South Gippsland Shire Council Framework Plan* (Figure 1) sets out the general pattern for land use and development to achieve the strategic vision for the municipality by providing an overview of land use and identifying locations where specific land use outcomes will be supported and promoted.

The major strategic directions identified in the *South Gippsland Shire Council Framework Plan* include:

- Identification of the major urban centres and towns in the Shire.
- Areas identified as having high quality soils for agriculture.
- Sensitive coastal areas.
- Public land and marine parks.
- Designated coal area.

Figure 1

