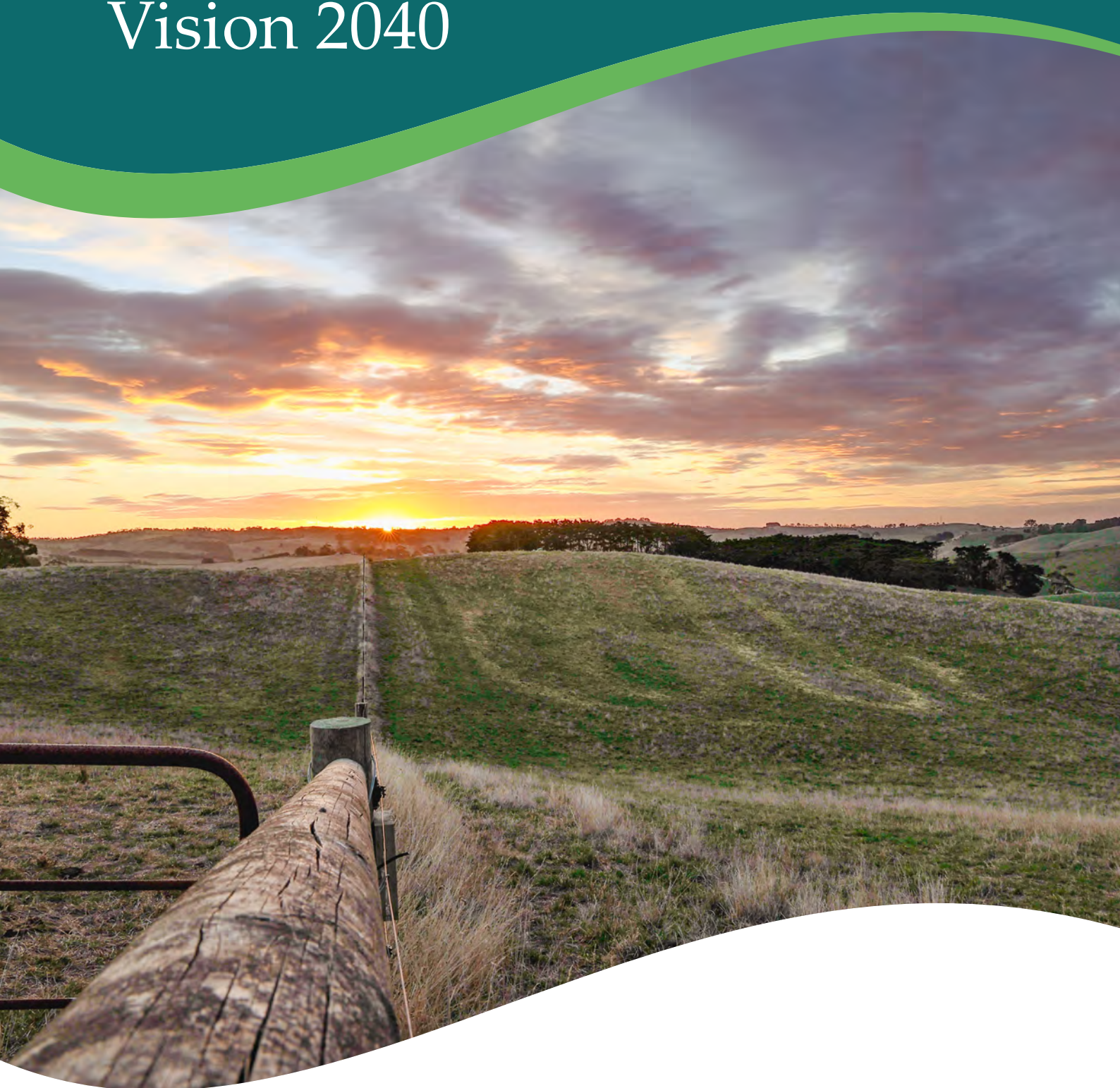


SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

South Gippsland Community Vision 2040



Reviewed 2025



South Gippsland
Shire Council

Acknowledgements

Our Traditional Custodians

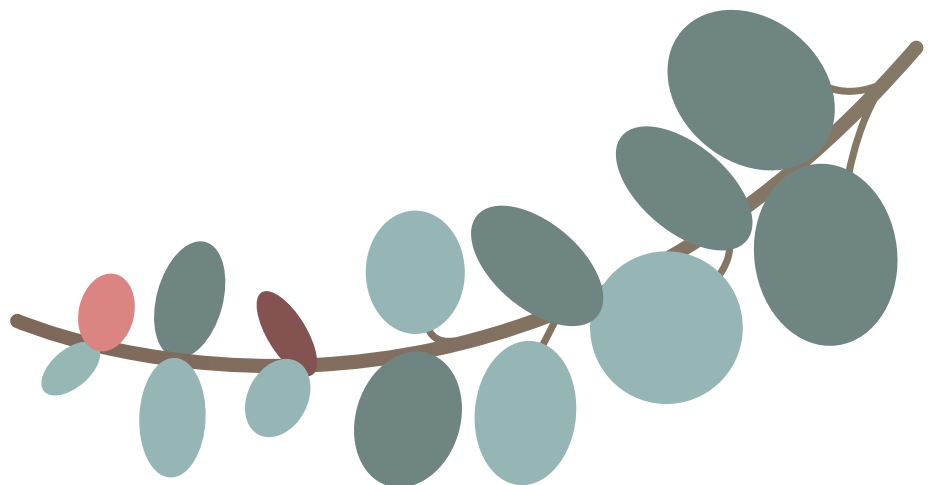
We acknowledge the Bunurong and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Our Community Panel

We acknowledge the commitment, creativity and hard work of the 29 panel members who volunteered to be part of the Community Panel. Panel members were randomly selected community members who nominated to help develop the South Gippsland Community Vision 2040 in 2021. Panel members worked together respectfully to create the Vision over three days, and brought their integrity, enthusiasm and passion for South Gippsland to the process, to create a Vision they can be proud of.

Our Community

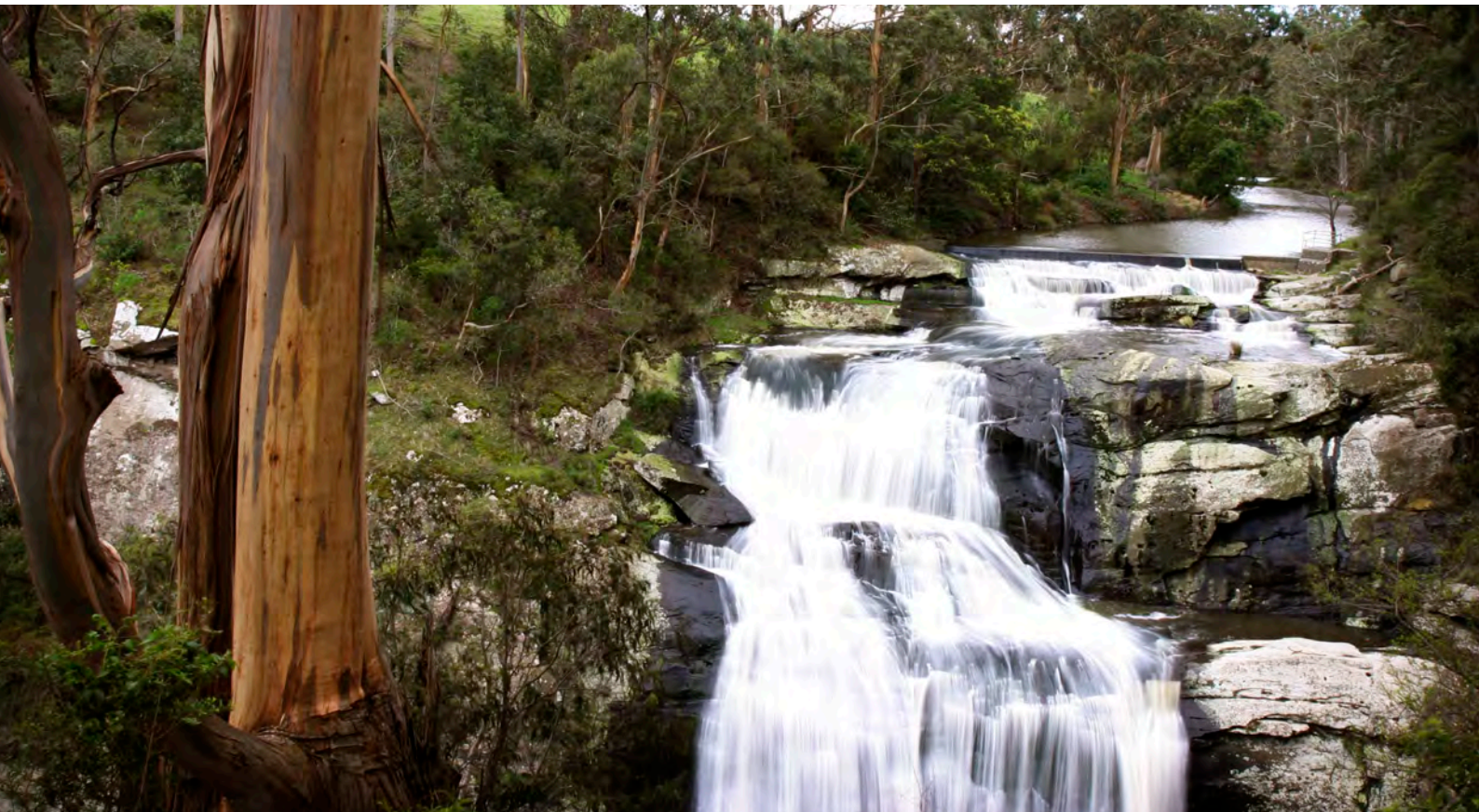
We acknowledge the contributions of the many community members who participated in the development of the Community Vision, both in 2021 and in the review in 2025. The community shared their views and aspirations on their vision for South Gippsland in a range of engagement activities. From attending a pop-up, filling in a survey, or discussing the Vision with your community groups, family or friends, to providing feedback on the draft Vision, we thank you for your important input into the development of the Vision.



eucalyptus, (genus Eucalyptus)

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Message from our Mayor and Councillors



Welcome to South Gippsland's long-term Community Vision 2040.

The Vision was originally created in 2021 after months of engagement and deliberation led by our community. It was then reviewed in 2025 alongside other key Council plans and strategies to ensure the aspirations and priorities of our Shire for 2040 are still resonating.

Plans with a duration as long as the Community Vision can be challenging, as they look beyond what just one Councillor group can do. However, they also provide structure to all groups that follow, meaning that Council can continue to work on the projects that we know matter.

South Gippsland is a proud and mighty region with plenty to offer. Since the initial creation of this document, we've been faced with new energy opportunities such as offshore wind and solar and more. All of these things may not be covered in the Community Vision, but this document provides us with the key to understand how our community may feel about these developments, and what they expect from us.

However, I want to stress that this document is for more than just Council. The Vision is something that we need to achieve together by forming strong partnerships and agreed understandings. We all need to partner together. This cannot just be done by Council.

As promised back in 2022, we put this Vision out for engagement once more and heard that the Vision is still fit-for-purpose, so the document has remained unchanged. I think it is important for this 'pulse-check' approach to continue to ensure community expectations are captured appropriately.

I would like to thank those who participated both in the initial engagement and in 2025, the Community Panel and the Council staff who supported both Councillor groups to undertake this work. This document is a testament to your dedication and love for South Gippsland.

Councillor John Schelling – Mayor

Map of South Gippsland Contributors

These pins represent the towns where the people of South Gippsland had their say on this Community Vision from December 2021 to May 2022.

Our 2025 engagement encompassed the whole Shire to ensure people from all corners could provide their feedback.



Introduction

What is a Community Vision?

A Community Vision is an important document that describes the community's aspirations for the future of the municipality, and helps to guide decision making. Development of a Vision asks the community to imagine an inclusive, prosperous and vibrant future, as well as mapping out the aspirations and priorities that will help us get there.

Why Do We Need a Community Vision?

A Community Vision helps Council's understand their community's key priorities, and helps ensure the community priorities represent the entire Shire. It is a legislative requirement of the *Local Government Act 2020* that every Council in Victoria develops a Community Vision for at least the next 10 years.

What is a Community Vision Used For?

A Community Vision helps to guide key activities over the next 10 years and beyond. Community Vision's are developed by the community and inform the work of Council, inspire community partners, and advocate to Federal and State Governments for change. The Community Vision will help to inform the Council Plan, Financial Plan, Asset Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

How is a Community Vision Formed?

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Vision must be developed using deliberative engagement practices. Deliberation means careful consideration or discussion in order to come to a decision. In the development of the Community Vision, community members were randomly selected from across the Shire to form a Community Panel, which deliberated on feedback from the community to form the draft Community Vision.



Preface from the Community Panel 2022

We as the Panel present this Community Vision as a map for the future, providing guidelines to build a stronger community.

This document is our contribution to the community we belong to. We want the community to feel optimistic, hopeful, inspired and empowered when they read this document.

This Vision belongs to the community. To see this Vision statement become a reality, Council will need to work alongside community partners, businesses and other levels of government and make sure decisions are made with reference to this Community Vision.

It is important to us that the community supports the Vision. We want to see it made available on different platforms in simple language so everyone can access and understand it. We don't want this document to become a time capsule. We want a community-led review of the Vision each Council term to make sure Council activities align with the Community Vision, ensuring future strategies and plans make reference to it in all their activities.

This Vision has been driven and created by the community for the community.

We want to be actively involved in the decisions of Council and encourage Council to continue to be involved with the community at this level of engagement in future projects.





Our Vision Statement

“South Gippsland: celebrating our First Peoples, diverse populations, culture, heritage, environment, agriculture and industries. We support and empower positive change through education and action.

We sustainably adapt to protect and enhance our unique natural environment, towns and villages through community-led planning and initiatives.

We’re an inclusive community, a place where people come to visit and want to stay.”

Our Vision Priorities

The following five priorities have been developed by the Panel and represent what our community members most value about our community. Underneath each priority is a set of community outcomes for 2040 that will help us to bring about each priority. These have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation in this project.



**A Healthy, Connected
and Engaged
Community**



**Sustainability and
Climate Change**



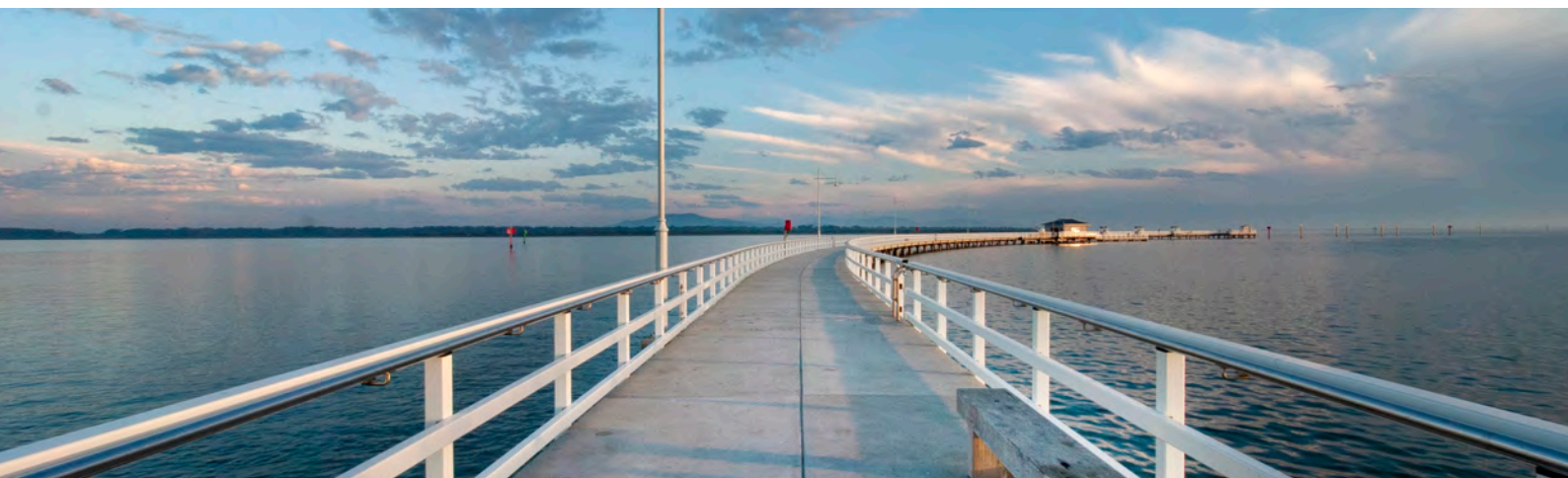
Shaping our Future



**Enhanced Natural
Environment and
Cultural Heritage**



**A Destination to Live,
Visit and Enjoy**





Priority: A Healthy, Connected and Engaged Community

South Gippsland enriches the lives of all community members through cultural events, sport and recreation. Active and healthy lifestyles are encouraged and promoted with programs, services and facilities that are accessible for everyone. Our communities are alert and informed, with a strong volunteering culture. We proactively support each other and we value neighbourhood awareness. Everyone is given a place at the table.

The following 2040 Community Outcomes for A Healthy, Connected and Engaged Community have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation on this project.



2040 Community Outcomes

1. Our community is engaged, informed and there are opportunities for all.
2. Our health services and professionals are well-supported, with physical and mental health services being accessible to all.
3. Our community has equal access to healthy lifestyle opportunities, social supports and health prevention initiatives.
4. Our community shows care and respect towards every member, listening and looking out for the safety, wellbeing and equality of all.
5. Our community has a strong sense of unity and cooperation, and there are social supports in place for our vulnerable.
6. Our community embraces diversity and accessibility, and is welcoming of newcomers.
7. Our neighbourhoods offer affordable housing options and we advocate for housing access for all.
8. Our volunteers are supported and applauded, with succession planning to ensure the longevity of our community groups.
9. Our activities promote a sense of belonging and fun, and we have plenty to do for all people regardless of age and ability.



Priority: Sustainability and Climate Change

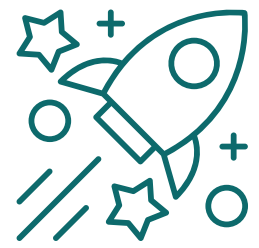
South Gippsland leads by example in sustainability by implementing and promoting positive actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change through strong environmentally progressive education, strategies and actions.

The following 2040 Community Outcomes for Sustainability and Climate Change have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation on this project.



2040 Community Outcomes

1. Our community is resilient and ready to face future environmental challenges.
2. Our farmland is a leading food bowl of Victoria; our high quality produce is sustainably grown and creates food security.
3. Our agricultural industries use regenerative land management practices to ensure the long-term viability of our land.
4. Our natural resources are used sustainably with a long-term timeframe in mind.
5. Our industries are innovative, diverse and sustainable, and bring clear benefits to our community.
6. To become carbon positive, our community has reduced its carbon footprint through a range of practices including clean energy choices and sustainable technology infrastructure.
7. Our economy has robust waste reduction and diversion practices.
8. We support our community to become resilient and better prepared for climatic and extreme weather events.



Priority: Shaping Our Future

South Gippsland has flexible, practical and sustainable planning that includes and supports all elements of our community and environment. Our infrastructure, facilities and services are viable and well-planned, supporting our wellbeing.

The following 2040 Community Outcomes for Shaping Our Future have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation on this project.



2040 Community Outcomes

1. Our population and housing growth is sustainable, well-planned and is supported by appropriate infrastructure.
2. Our unique lifestyle is maintained through planning schemes that promote sensitive development and allotment of spaces for affordable housing, along with preserving and increasing native vegetation.
3. Our open spaces, multi-purpose 'hubs' and creative spaces encourage our community to congregate and connect.
4. Our economic development makes sustainable use of existing and local resources.
5. Our transport systems and roads have been carefully planned, are safe and well-maintained and have appropriate speed limits to minimise injury to our people and wildlife.
6. Our well-planned and connected walking and cycling tracks and convenient public transport options get us where we need to go.
7. Our decision making is transparent and we welcome participation, collaboration and consultation in decisions that affect the community.
8. We preserve and acknowledge our unique and diverse cultural heritage of people and place with reconciliation in mind.



Priority: Enhanced Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage

South Gippsland respects, protects and enhances our unique natural assets and cultural heritage, which are integral considerations to all our planning. We encourage our community to engage in activities connecting them with our environment, and our Indigenous and cultural heritage.

The following 2040 Community Outcomes for Enhanced Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation on this project.



2040 Community Outcomes

- 1.** Our care for our natural environment and waterways encourages generational connections to the natural world around us.
- 2.** The story of our Indigenous heritage is owned and led by our First Peoples, and is proudly embraced across South Gippsland.
- 3.** Our native bushland is protected and strengthened through initiatives such as rate relief for bush areas, covenants and a Shire-wide approach to revegetation.
- 4.** Our community is educated and informed about weed and pest management.
- 5.** Our coastal landscapes are sustainably developed and protected.
- 6.** Our wildlife connectivity is encouraged through extensive tree canopies, healthy waterways and habitat corridors.
- 7.** Our historic buildings and features are enhanced and protected, adding to our unique character.



Priority: A Destination to Live, Visit and Enjoy

South Gippsland: a diverse, productive and connected region for all, with a welcoming and proud community. We actively promote our lifestyle and the wonder of our natural environment. A place full of experiences, opportunities and adventures.

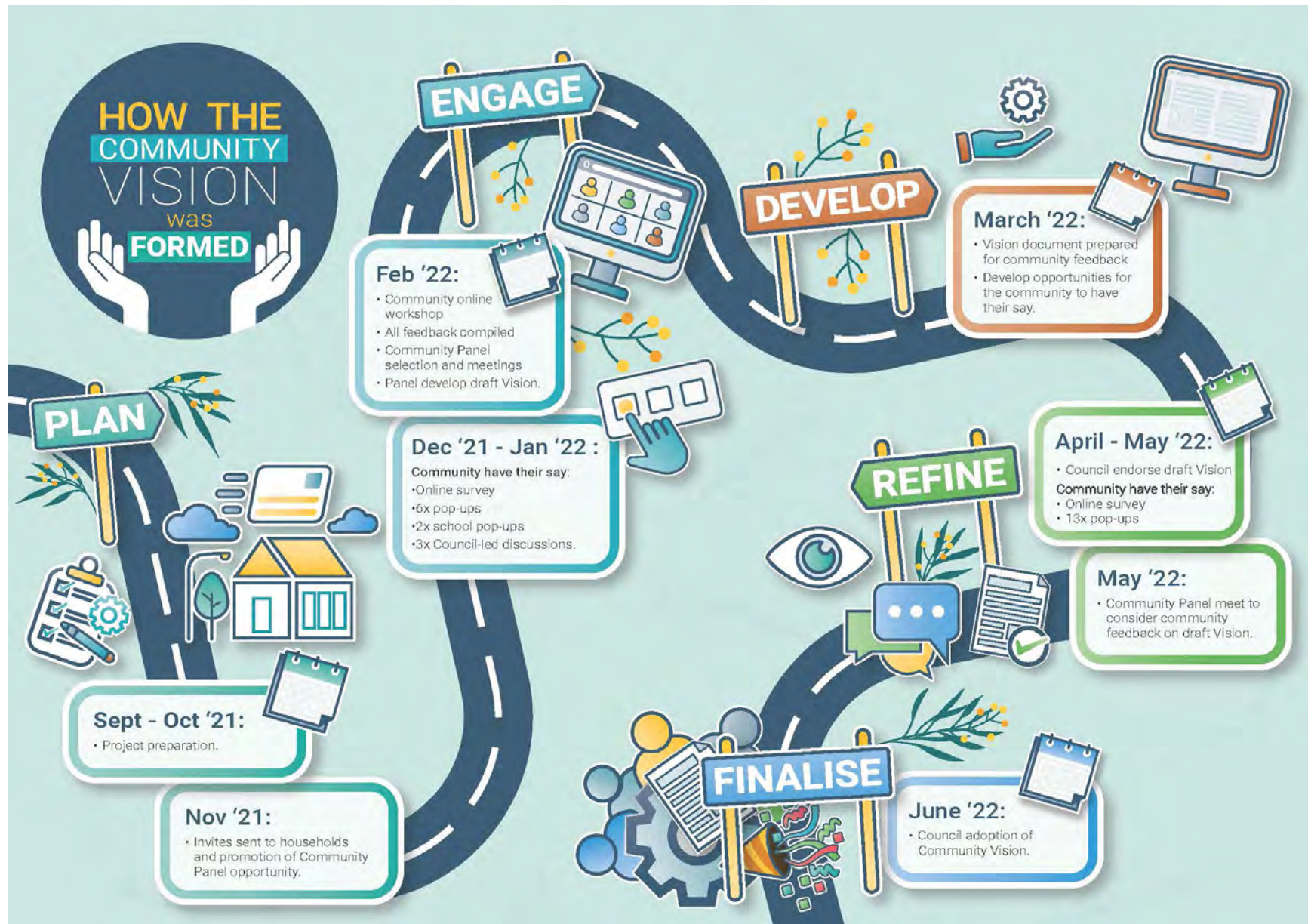
The following 2040 Community Outcomes for A Destination to Live, Visit and Enjoy have been developed from the community priorities that arose during wider community consultation on this project.



2040 Community Outcomes

1. Our public spaces, facilities and amenities are multipurpose and support community connection.
2. Our thriving businesses are adding to the uniqueness of our towns and adapting to changing conditions.
3. Our education opportunities attract and retain skills in our community.
4. Our diverse local economy and industry is strong, with jobs for youth, connected to education pathways locally and a reason for young people to want to stay.
5. Our vibrant arts scene welcomes, connects and inspires.
6. Our community is digitally connected through reliable internet and mobile phone coverage, and is supported to access technology.
7. Our ecotourism is sought after and encourages an appreciation of our natural features.
8. Our town centres are vibrant and lively places that are friendly, inclusive, clean and safe.

How the Community Vision was Formed



Community Engagement

2021

Between December 2021 and May 2022, South Gippsland Shire Council engaged with community members across the Shire about what they would like South Gippsland to look, feel and be like in 2040.

The project, Shaping South Gippsland, asked community members to share their priorities and aspirations for South Gippsland, and what the biggest opportunities and concerns were for the future. It asked how we could be happy and healthy in 2040, and how we could better prepare for future economic, environmental and social challenges.

During December and January 928 community members contributed 2,939 comments and ideas to the project through a variety of engagement activities.

Six community pop-ups, two school pop-ups and three Council-led discussions were held at locations across the Shire, along with a community survey and an online community discussion. The feedback collected at these activities informed the work of the Community Panel in developing the draft Community Vision.

The draft Community Vision was released to the community for feedback. This gave the opportunity to reflect on the draft Vision during April and May 2022.

Information about the community engagement journey to create the Community Vision can be found at yoursay.southgippsland.vic.gov.au



Who We Heard From

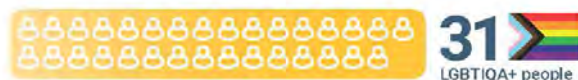
Who

We

Heard

From

Hard to reach groups



Gender



Language



Engagement



Connection

40%
I live here

28%
I own a property here

15%
I work or study here

7%
I'm visiting - I live outside the Shire

6%
I own or operate a business here

3%
Other
1% Prefer not to say

Age brackets



Quotes from our Community – 2021

A vibrant inclusive bustling community with improved infrastructure, employment, business, educational and tourism opportunities.

A thriving shire that can embrace diversity in both people and business.

Community spirit, convenient access to most facilities, vibrant and thriving agricultural industry.

Green and well-protected landscapes.

Invest in great schools so that we are educated and strive for healthy lifestyles.

Plenty of job opportunities for our youth.

A warm welcoming community that puts the environment and its members first.

The advantage of growth, but manage it.

That there continues to be groups of people who hold decision makers accountable.

A rural shire with a strong and versatile economy.

That the huge body of volunteers continue with their good work in all facets of the community.

Finding a balance between development and rural life.

To seize the opportunities in a transition to a zero carbon economy.

Development of schools, especially accessing disability schools.

To provide abundant affordable housing throughout the Shire for those that want/need to stay.

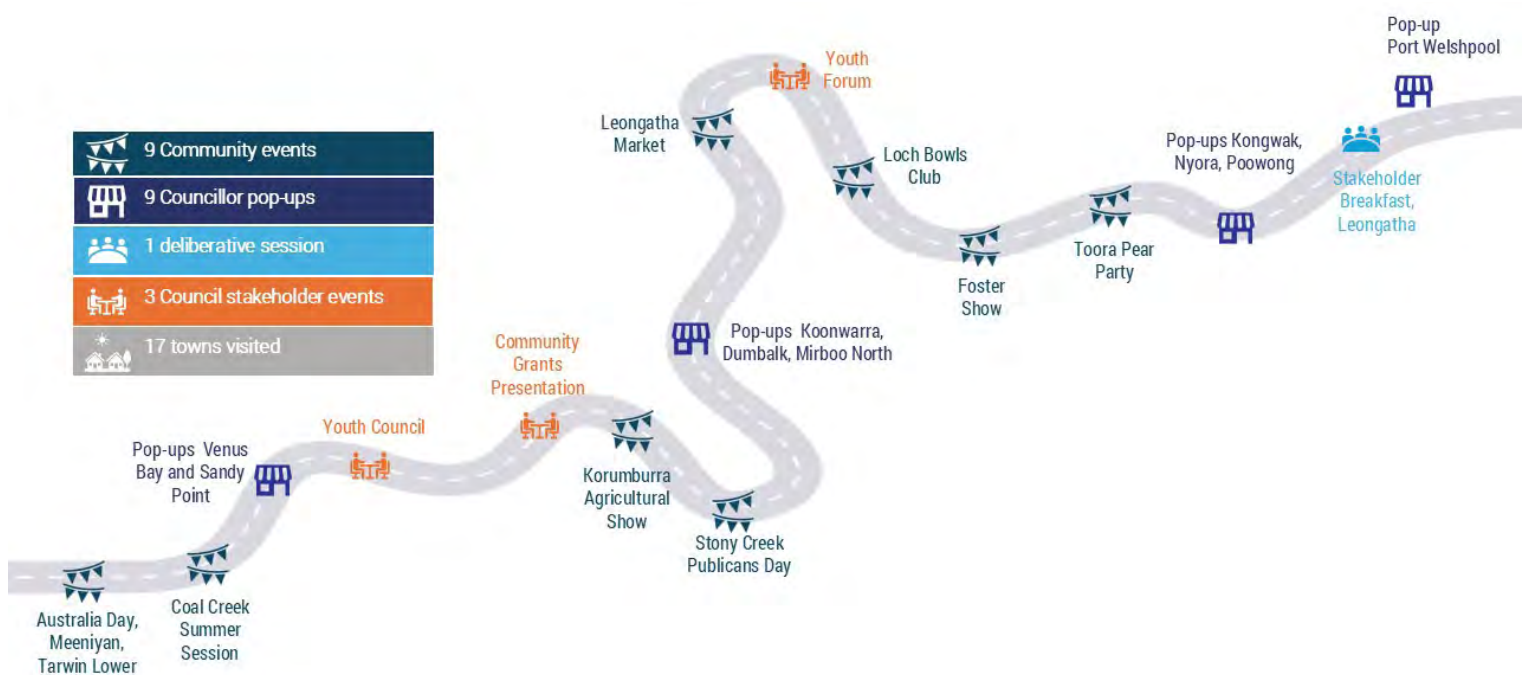
2025 Review

Throughout January and February 2025, South Gippsland Shire Council sought feedback from the community once more to ensure the Community Vision was still relevant.

During this time, Council held 22 engagement events:

- Nine event pop-ups;
- Nine Councillor pop-ups;
- Three stakeholder events; and
- One Stakeholder Deliberative Engagement Breakfast.

This enabled Council to visit 17 townships across our region and hear from more than 680 people to help inform the development of the Integrated Planning suite, which includes the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Budget, Long Term Financial Plan, Revenue and Rating Plan, Asset Management Plan and the Community Vision. There was also a focus on hearing from young people, with 30 young people providing feedback via a Youth Forum.



Who We Heard From

Connection

80%	I live here
6%	I own a property here
2%	I work or study here
2%	I live outside the Shire
6%	Other
7%	Prefer Not to Say

Gender

52%	Female
41%	Male
6%	Prefer not to Say
1%	Other

Top Six Age Brackets

23%	65 - 74 years
20%	55 - 64 years
17%	45 - 54 years
13%	34 and under
11%	35 - 44 years
9%	75 + years

Quotes from our Community – 2025

We must keep the idea of ensure inclusion and ensure that all people are supported and welcomed.

We need to see more action on affordable housing options and housing access for all.

Very much in favour of the focus on volunteers, activities, health services and engagement. The focus on diversity, welcoming of newcomers, and affordable housing is less important.

While its imperative our farmers are recognised for the integral work they do, council needs to ensure any changes are supported and farmers are not financially disadvantaged.

A strong connected and caring community is critical to the success of the beautiful part of the world that South Gippsland is. This is one of the main reasons that we love living here.

Primary production should remain a strong focus.

Well-planned and connected walking and cycling tracks and convenient public transport options would be nice.

I do think we need to be better prepared in South Gippsland Shire when we have another bad storm event. We need to be able to have power restored much more quickly than it has been in the past, I know that we are relying on SP Ausnet for power services.

Look at the smaller towns not just the big ones.

Preserving and increasing native vegetation is very important.

Shires involvement maintaining weed control is good and needs to continue.

I want younger people to have a stronger voice.

I think the Community Vision is great. I'd like to see more action taken to make the Vision a reality.

Newcomers to rural properties need to be informed about weed control.

As an original participant of the 2040 Community Vision it is pleasing to note that most of the values in the original Vision are still applicable.

It's [the Vision] is great overall. A few things that could be emphasised less, and a few things that could have greater focus. Largely a strong vision.

We live in a beautiful part of the world with lovely communities. The Community Vision is excellent but needs to keep evolving.

How the Vision Fits with our other Plans

The Community Vision 2040 will become a key part of Council's Planning Framework. It will be used to inform future plans and strategies, and will guide the work of Council. It gives Council a clear understanding of what the community values, and what the community's long-term vision and priorities are for South Gippsland.

The Vision will inform the development of documents such as the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan. By ensuring alignment and consistency between these strategic documents, Council can work effectively towards achieving the community's vision.

The Vision will be shared with community partners, industry and business stakeholders, and other government agencies, to share knowledge to achieve the needs and aspirations of the South Gippsland community.



Closing Panel Remarks

This Vision has been driven and created by the community for the community and should be a benchmark for all.

The Panel considered background information and broader community views alongside the different opinions on the Panel, which actively guided outcomes.

We want to see Council and the community working together in a strong partnership to achieve this Vision and for this Vision to be in all aspects of Council's work, to drive greater satisfaction in the community.

We want to be actively involved in the decisions of Council and encourage Council to continue to be involved with the community at this level of engagement with future panels made up of new people.

Community Panel Members

- Annie Pearce.
- Bruce Beatson.
- Catherine McGlead.
- Craig Panagiris.
- Craig Privett.
- David Thompson.
- Don Hill.
- Edward Dennis.
- Elizabeth Lambert.
- Gareth King.
- Jill Ritchie.
- Joan Turner.
- Josie Roberts.
- Katherine Murray.
- Lisa Poynton.
- Lyn Berends.
- Mark Avery.
- Neile Adams.
- Rebecca Watson.
- Rhonda Lester.
- Robert Liley.
- Sandra Panagiris.
- Sue Fleming.
- Terry Waycott.
- Terry Kelly.



Conclusion

Our Commitment

The Community Vision 2040 captures the future aspirations of our whole community. Council is committed to shaping South Gippsland by working in partnership with the community, businesses, groups, service providers, industries and other levels of government to bring this shared Vision to life.

Council will advocate to State and Federal Governments to secure essential funding for projects and influence decision-making to support our community. An important part of a strong community is involving them in decisions that affect and interest them. Council will continue to be inclusive to incorporate different views, experiences and expertise.

The Vision will be reviewed with the Council Plan in its four-year cycle to ensure it continues to reflect our community. We will ask our Councillors how they would like to engage the community as part of that review to continuously improve our Shire, together.

Monitoring Progress

Achievement of our Community Vision will be incorporated into actions within the Council Plan and other strategic documents integrated into this process. Implementation of Council's responsibilities and commitments from the Council Plan will be reported on a quarterly and annual basis through our Quarterly Performance Report and Annual Report. The work Council undertakes, planning for the future and decision-making will be guided by the community's aspirations articulated through the Vision.

Reporting Responsibilities

Council has many statutory responsibilities and powers that drive the way it functions and make decisions. Council will be transparent with accountable leadership to guide the implementation of these responsibilities and build community confidence.

In the years ahead, Council will be placing a greater emphasis on integrated strategic planning for greater alignment with the Vision. Moving towards 2040, Council will innovate and be responsive to community needs, including being adaptive in how we engage and interact with the community.

Our Invitation

This Vision was created by you, from your valuable feedback, and shaped by a community representative Panel. Its achievement sits with many levels of government, and everyone who is located within, or works with our community. We invite you to have conversations with us, and each other, as we deliver the goals from this document. We invite you to use this Vision in your own plans, applications for funding, or advocacy for our Shire. We invite you to join the journey to 2040.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

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South Gippsland
Shire Council