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Acknowledgement

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first Australians and recognises that they have a unique relationship with the land and water.

Council also recognises that we are situated on the traditional lands of the Bunurong / Boonwurrung, members of the Kulin Nation who have lived here for thousands of years. We offer our respect to their elders past and present and through them, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Message from the Mayor and Councillors

On behalf of Council, we are pleased to present the Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2016 – 2021.

Council’s vision is for Bass Coast to “be recognised as a unique place of environmental significance where our quality of life and sense of community is balanced by sustainable and sensitive development, population and economic growth”.

One of Council’s key objectives to achieving this vision is that “our economy is supported by diverse, local and innovative businesses and employment”.

This Strategy will guide Council’s work over the next five years to facilitate business growth and economic investment in Bass Coast. The Strategy is our blueprint for how Council will work with our community, industry, small business and government partners to drive sustainable economic development.

The Strategy and Action Plan will focus on five key strategic areas:

- Growing our Businesses
- Sustainable Economy
- Visit Bass Coast
- Economic Diversity
- Farming for our Future

The Strategy recognises Council’s ongoing commitment to provide high quality services, programs and events for businesses and the community.

The natural environment underpins the Bass Coast economy and is a key driver for tourism and agriculture and Council clearly understands that the natural environment forms the basis of the local economy.

This Strategy aims to create a more connected business community and make Bass Coast a leader in business sustainability and growth. Council looks forward to continuing to engage and partner with businesses and industry as we further develop a sustainable and vibrant local economy.

Bass Coast Shire is open for business.

Mayor and Councillors
Bass Coast Shire Council
Purpose of this Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy provides a framework to promote and facilitate sustainable economic development in Bass Coast. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Strategy outlines:

- what Bass Coast Shire Council aims to achieve in economic development over the next 5 years
- the role Bass Coast Shire Council, in partnership with business and other levels of Government, will play in delivering the objectives of this strategy

At a practical operational level the Strategy will:

- deliver the community and Council’s vision and objectives in relation to economic development
- provide direction for Council to identify and prioritise activity across the municipality
- provide clear, practical and achievable actions; and
- communicate with stakeholder agencies, businesses and the community.
**Economic Snapshot**

| **Location** | Bass Coast is located 90 minutes from Melbourne. |
| **Local Government** | Bass Coast Shire Council  
PO Box 118, WONTHAGGI VIC 3995  
Bass Coast Shire remains one of the fastest growing LGAs in Victoria.  
Population (ABS release March 2014) 31,623 |
| **Shire Area** | 865 Sq Kms  
Shire Coastline - 177kms |
| **Ethnicity** | Australian citizens 88.5%  
Overseas born 11% |
| **Climate** | Average Yearly Rainfall 861 mm  
Average Daily Temperature range  
Summer 14° to 22°  
Winter 10° to 14° |
| **Households** | Estimated population 2021 (id consulting) 35,558  
Estimated population in 2026 (id consulting) 38.646  
Estimated population in 2031 (id consulting) 42,254  
Private dwellings in 2016 (id consulting) 26,130  
Average household size – persons (Census 2011) 2.21  
Single person households (Census 2011) 28.7%  
Annual average population growth rate 2013 - 2014 (ABS) 2.1%  
Median Age 46 years  
20 – 69 years old 61.7%  
70 years old+ 23.7%  
Labour force (Small Area Labour Markets - June Quarter 2015) 15,323  
Volunteers 7814 |
| **Industry Structure** | Primary (agriculture & mining) 9.10%  
Secondary (manufacturing) 17.7%  
Tertiary (construction, retail, transport, government, finance & health) 40.5%  
Services (accommodation, restaurants, personal services) 32.7%  
REMPLAN data |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Structure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; professionals</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, administrative and sales</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales workers</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community and Personal Service Workers</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians, trades, machine operators and drivers</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (REPLAN SALM September 2015)</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Income of less than $600/wk (Census 2011)</td>
<td>49.98%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Income of more than $600 and less than $1000/wk (Census 2011)</td>
<td>18.19%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest employment sectors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Construction, Health &amp; Community, Retail, Tourism and agriculture</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bass Coast Health (700+ staff)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bass Coast Shire Council (400+ staff)</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillip Island Nature Parks (200+ staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RACV Inverloch Resort (80 staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverwater Resort (80 staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tabro Meats (240+ staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit (90+ staff and contractors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coldon Homes (90 staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Department</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supermarket/Department stores</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated annual industry value</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism (Tourism Research Australia TRA 2013)</td>
<td>$385m</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development applications (residential &amp; commercial) REMPLAN 2013-14</td>
<td>$129.3m</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating revenue Phillip Island Nature Parks (Annual Report 2014-15)</td>
<td>$22.35m</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing (REPLAN ABS June 2014)</td>
<td>$123.6m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors through Visitor Information Centre network in 2013-14</td>
<td>240,607</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International visitors to Bass Coast spend (TRA 2013)</td>
<td>$9.7m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic visitors to Bass Coast spend (TRA 2013)</td>
<td>$375.3m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and domestic visitors to Bass Coast (TRA 2014)</td>
<td>2.25m</td>
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<tr>
<th>Annual building activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New dwellings 2014-15</td>
<td>$122.5m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residential 2014-15</td>
<td>$16.2m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Applications 2014-15</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Permits (Victorian Building Authority 2015)</td>
<td>1125</td>
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Strategic Policy Context
The strategic context for the Bass Coast Economic Development Strategy is influenced by State and Commonwealth Government policies and legislation. The most important of these are outlined below.

Regional Development Australia (RDA)
Regional Development Australia is a partnership between the Australian, state and territory and local governments to support the growth and development of Australia’s regions.

The RDA committees work to:

- support informed regional planning
- consult and engage with the community on economic, social and environmental issues, solutions and priorities
- liaise with governments and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development
- contribute to business growth plans and investment strategies, environmental solutions and social inclusion strategies in their region
- promote increased awareness of Australian Government programmes in their RDA region.

The Victorian Local Government Act 1989
The primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.

In seeking to achieve its primary objective, a Council must have regard to the following facilitating objectives:

a) to promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district;

b) to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and services are provided in accordance with the Best Value Principles to best meet the needs of the local community;

c) to improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community;

d) to promote appropriate business and employment opportunities;

e) to ensure that services and facilities provided by the Council are accessible and equitable;

f) to ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges;

g) to ensure transparency and accountability in Council decision making.

The scale and pace of global change requires a new approach from Government – both to secure new investment and jobs, and to ease the impact. This Review recommends a new approach to regional development, one that is able to meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities of the early 21st century.

It recommends 48 policy reforms – spanning transport and planning, industry and innovation policy, trade and investment, education and skills, and regulation reform.

Plan Melbourne 2014
Plan Melbourne is the Victorian Government’s Metropolitan Planning Strategy to guide Melbourne’s growth and development to 2050. The Strategy is driven by seven themes:

1. Jobs and investment
2. Housing choice and affordability
3. A more connected Melbourne
4. Liveable communities
5. Environment and water
6. A state of cities

Plan Melbourne has identified Wonthaggi as a regional growth centre. Regional Growth Plans will be developed to provide a 20-30 year land use strategy to guide growth and development in regional areas. These Plans provide a tool for the Victorian Government to work with regional councils to unlock their growth potential.
**Gippsland Regional Plan (GRP) 2015 - 2020**

The GRP identified key priorities which will have the highest order impact on the region’s ability to harness opportunities and address major challenges with respect to improving liveability, productivity and sustainability. One of the key areas is economic prosperity.

**The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan 2014**
- establishes a framework for strategic land use and settlement planning that can sustainably accommodate growth
- identifies important economic, environmental, social and cultural resources to be protected, maintained or developed
- provides direction for accommodating growth and change including residential, employment, industrial, commercial, agriculture and other rural activities
- shows which areas of land can accommodate growth and which are to be preserved
- identifies opportunities for supporting regional level infrastructure, providing an essential contribution to long-term sustainability.

**Bass Coast Shire Council**

Bass Coast Shire Council undertakes research to inform its economic development strategy including:

**Development Options for Bass Coast Shire 2005 - 30:**
Council commissioned National Institute of Economic and Industry Research to undertake research and provide advice. The report concluded that there was a need to develop intervention strategies to establish global knowledge industries. In order to attract workers to these industries Bass Coast should:
- develop quality education (Secondary, TAFE, University)
- develop specialist health sector
- maximise cafes, restaurants and recreation services – improve existing quality
- enhance transport and travel times from Eastern Melbourne incl. Car Ferry
- improve telecommunications to near Melbourne standard.

**Bass Coast Economic Outlook 2012 – 2017:**
Further research was commissioned in 2012. The report identified the strategic opportunities for the Shire lay in:
- creating better economic linkages with Melbourne
- achieving higher worker productivity through education and training
- capital investment in transport and tourism infrastructure.

**Bass Coast Shire Council Municipal Strategic Statement 2012**
The Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) outlines the key strategic planning, land use, and development objectives of the municipality. It provides a strategic basis for the application of planning zones, overlays, and particular provisions. Objectives are categorised under five themes:
- Settlement
- Land use
- Environmental
- Landscape and built form
- Infrastructure

Consistent with Plan Melbourne and the Regional Growth Plan, the MSS identifies Wonthaggi as a regional centre. The MSS provides a settlement hierarchy for other settlements within the municipality.

**Local Structure Plans**
Council is proactive in providing clear direction to investors with respect to development sites, settlement boundaries and planning zones. Council is progressively developing activity centres plans to inform land use, planning and the future operation of key centres within the municipality. In general, the key directions for our activity centres, as identified in the structure plans prepared, can be summarised as follows:
- encourage greater business mix and diversity;
- build on existing strengths to enhance market positioning; and
- prioritise and improve pedestrian and cycling access within activity centres.

Bass Coast Shire Council has developed a Rural Land Use Strategy which recognises the important role agriculture plays within the region.
Bass Coast Shire Council Strategic Hierarchy

Bass Coast Shire Council seeks its direction from the community vision. Bass Coast 2030 includes aspirational statements under the following four themes:

In 2030, Bass Coast is a showcase. It is recognised as:

- A celebration of natural assets
- A window on the history of Victoria
- A village in a technology world and
- A food bowl for Victoria.

From these aspirations Council’s vision, as stated in the Council Plan 2013–17, for its community is that:

“Bass Coast Shire will be recognised as a unique place of environmental significance where our quality of life and sense of community is balanced by sustainable and sensitive development, population and economic growth.”
Vision for the future

Bass Coast of the future will be a community driven by innovation and entrepreneurship. Creative use of technology will help drive business growth and improve the quality of life for the community. Council is committed to realising this future and ensuring that Bass Coast is an investment friendly environment where partnerships and collaborations are fundamental to future development.

Council envisages an economic future where:

1. Economic vibrancy facilitates the attraction of sustainable new business and supports existing business growth
2. Community wellbeing through quality of life is achieved by the provision of facilities and services to support prosperity
3. Visitors are welcomed and the community benefits from their presence
4. Environmental sustainability is well planned and included in all infrastructure development and service delivery.

Bass Coast is one of Australia’s most desirable regional locations for lifestyle, work, unique experiences and investment. It is recognised for its vibrant welcoming communities, stunning and unique natural environment and diverse economy.

Bass Coast is also renowned for its iconic tourism attractions and world class, international events.

Economic development is about building resilient economies to support sustainable communities that can be identified through their:

- economic viability
- environmental responsibility
- social equity and
- cultural vitality.

Economic development strengthens the local economy, generating increased wealth and overall living standards, by growing business activity and creating jobs and revenues for the local community.
Strategic relationships

Council has strong strategic relationships with all levels of government and peak industry bodies in order to promote Bass Coast and encourage development and investment in the Shire.

Within Council, the Sustainable Development and Growth Division is the primary resource allocated to the strategy’s implementation and is charged with progressing the majority of its actions.

Other key divisions involved in implementing of the Strategy are Infrastructure, Governance and Organisation Development and Healthy Communities.
**Economic context in Bass Coast in 2016**

Bass Coast has demonstrated consistent growth over the past decade and, as the region grows, so do the opportunities to invest. The benefits of doing business in Bass Coast are well known as demonstrated by the influx of major retail chains and franchises in recent years. This has led to strong residential growth and an increase in employment opportunities.

Located approximately 90 minutes south east of Melbourne, Bass Coast offers:

- a unique affordable lifestyle in beautiful natural surrounds
- opportunities to work and invest in one of Victoria’s fastest growing regional municipalities
- quality services, transport networks, expanding communications and infrastructure
- city opportunities with a relaxed coastal lifestyle.

Bass Coast has a population of 31,010 (estimated resident population as at 30 June 2013.) and encompasses a total land area of about 860 square kilometres (almost 90% of which is agricultural land), including extensive coastal areas. The Shire has experienced strong residential and business growth over the past decade. In recent years population growth in Bass Coast has been among the fastest of all regional municipalities. The labour force has also grown strongly over the past decade and unemployment has fallen from 8.4% in 2005 to 5.7% (March quarter) in 2015.


**Business and Working Population**

- Labour force of 15,323 (SALM June 2015) workers
- Major employment industries are construction, tourism, health care and social assistance, retail, education and training, manufacturing and agribusiness
- 2689 registered businesses within Bass Coast Shire, 89% of which employ less than 4 workers
- GRP $1.645billion


- Annual visitation 3.4m to Bass Coast
- Overnight visitation 69% of annual visitation
- Direct value to the economy $655m (TSA 13/14)
- 3100 (TSA 13/14) workers directly employed in tourism
- Attractions, events and festivals key visitor attractors

See Appendices for additional statistical information about:

1. Population Forecast
2. Gross Regional Product
3. Employment by Industry
4. Financial Output by Industry
5. Unemployment rate
Key industry sectors

Tourism

Tourism is a major local industry with its natural environment providing a strategic advantage for Bass Coast. Its diverse components include sporting, leisure and environmental activities, attractions, hospitality, accommodation, events and retail. Tourism contributes a direct value of $655m (TSA 13/14) to the local economy and 3100 (TSA 13/14) jobs.

Over time Bass Coast Shire Council has worked to increase the number of events in non-peak and shoulder periods as a way of growing the tourism sector all year round. The Social and Economic Value of Events Report completed in 2011 estimates the total financial impact of events which Council supported in 2010/11 at more than $130m annually.

Health care and social assistance

The Health Care sector has experienced the fastest growth of any sector in the last five years across Victoria. Given the aging population in Bass Coast, it is an industry that will continue to grow. It currently contributes more than $132m into the local economy and employs 1,250 people.

Agriculture

Bass Coast’s temperate climate and rainfall patterns make it a natural choice for food production, wineries, dairy and agriculture - a dominant industry sector in this region. Opportunities exist for value-adding and diversification as well as expansion into innovative horticulture and crop production. Climate change projections indicate that this area will be a key food production area for Victoria. Niche markets can be cultivated to meet the growing demand for speciality food products.

Retail

Retail continues to be a major employer with a range of large franchises establishing themselves in Bass Coast over the past decade. The retail sector has grown significantly in the past decade, particularly in Wonthaggi, which is now a major regional commercial centre. It was acknowledged in Plan Melbourne, as one of seven Victorian regional Centres able to forge greater economic and social links with Melbourne. Across the Shire the sector employs more than 1,300 people and contributes $131m to the local economy and offers many opportunities for innovation, creativity and growth.
Education and training

Sustained population growth has had a follow on effect of increasing student numbers right across the spectrum, from preschool services, through primary and secondary into post compulsory training and adult learning. Council has taken a lead role in the development of a Bass Coast Education Plan. The Plan is designed to equip the community with the necessary skills and knowledge to compete on a global stage. Council is also advocating strongly for the construction of the Bass Coast Education precinct – a state of the art, life-long learning facility. The sector employs more than 654 people, and contributes $65m to the local economy.

Construction

The construction industry has grown steadily throughout the last decade supported by strong residential growth and an increasing number of larger commercial developments. The number of new investment and business expansion applications indicate confidence for investing in Bass Coast.

Manufacturing

Whilst not renowned as a major manufacturing area, there are a number of small scale manufacturing operations contributing $355mil to the local economy annually, and employing 650 people in the Shire. With emerging technologies and improving internet capability there are huge opportunities for Bass Coast to increase its manufacturing output.
Investment and Growth Drivers

Bass Coast Shire benefits from a range of excellent growth drivers which will support economic growth into the future. These drivers will underpin a resilient, sustainable and diverse economy. There is a range of private and public investment projects underway indicating confidence and enthusiasm for investing in Bass Coast.

Lifestyle opportunities set Bass Coast apart from other regional areas, providing all the advantages of a modern community whilst retaining a rural feel. Whether it is an early morning bike ride enjoying beautiful coastline views or a surf after work, Bass Coast offers the opportunity of enjoying the benefits of living in an internationally renowned tourism destination.

Council will work to implement policies to attract and encourage new investments that complement the natural environmental values of the region. It will also support existing businesses to grow into new markets and products.

### Natural Environment
- quality of life living in a spectacular natural environment
- opportunities in environmental and nature based tourism
- increased connection with nature
- promotion of healthy lifestyle activities
- opportunities to further leverage the National Surfing Reserve
- opportunities to attract and develop environmentally sustainable businesses

### Unrealised potential of Visitor Economy
- visitor numbers are likely to increase by 2.2% per annum to 2035
- opportunities to increase shoulder and low season visitation
- mix of domestic and international visitors
- major events and festivals
- increasing popularity of nature based tourism
- conversion of day trip to overnight visitation

### Proximity to key markets and consumers
- massive and expanding market on door step
- improving road infrastructure - freight and transport
- improving public transport access to and within the Shire
- export opportunities

### Land supply and structure planning
- provides clear direction for investors
- local planning policies to manage growth, sustainability, the environment, and neighbourhood character
- clear plans to guide and manage future growth
- structure planning to define town boundaries and development opportunities

### Health services
- future upgrade of Wonthaggi hospital to sub regional status
- broad range of allied health providers
- technologically based medical advances
- sport and recreation
- aged care provision

### Infrastructure
- services - natural gas (mainland Bass Coast), broadband, water
- key development sites available
- freight/passenger accessibility
- roads, drainage, paths and parks

### Education and training
- prospective Bass Coast Education Precinct
- commitment to lifelong learning through implementation of Bass Coast Education Plan
- close collaboration with education providers, industry and academic institutions
- commitment to the establishment of global knowledge industries
Future Direction

By 2030 Council envisages an expanded, diverse and productive business sector, comprising clean, sustainable and innovative enterprises. Bass Coast will be recognised as a unique place of environmental significance where our quality of life and sense of community is balanced by sustainable and sensitive development, population and economic growth. For Bass Coast this means:

- maximising the visitor economy
- clear land use policies
- managing population growth effectively
- harnessing links with Melbourne and
- developing new and emerging industries.

1. The ‘Visitor Economy’

Tourism is recognised as a key economic driver of the Bass Coast economy. The dynamic nature of the industry has enabled it to generate innovative responses to changing markets, such as eco and event tourism. Council will continue to promote the region as a year-round tourism and events destination. It is a major employer and contributor to Bass Coast’s economic productivity. Regular research, innovation and review of promotional strategies and close links with key strategic tourism organisations and government bodies are critical to maintaining Bass Coast as a popular destination. Enhancement and expansion of tourist and transport infrastructure is also vital, as is the preservation and enhancement of our environmental attributes as a key driver for tourism.

2. Land use policies

Bass Coast boasts a proud agricultural history and farming continues to be a strong component of the local economy. With development comes pressure to fragment agricultural land, which comprises 90% of the Shire. Tourism, industrial and residential growth, services and infrastructure all require additional land to expand. Bass Coast has the potential to diversify its agricultural output, taking advantage of high quality soils and innovations in technology and smart and sustainable farming practices. Other innovations such as agri- and eco-tourism are also emerging.

Policies and regulations relating to land use will have important ramifications for future directions in agriculture and tourism and events.
Agriculture will remain a significant economic driver in the Bass Coast economy and Council has instituted sound land use planning to ensure retention of good quality agricultural land. Council also recognises the need to work with farmers to support the shift to more environmentally sustainable farming practices and to consider innovations that will add value, such as intensive cropping and agri-tourism.

3. Population growth

The continued growth of Bass Coast Shire in general and Wonthaggi in particular forms part of the State government’s Plan Melbourne, which looks forward to 2050. Bass Coast Shire has a clear vision for its future and has been very active in planning defined town boundaries through well-defined structure plans.

Residential growth will be in line with Council’s Municipal Strategic Statement and Planning Scheme. It sketches out the development of enhanced education and cultural precincts, a robust and diversified local economy, providing services to the dispersed townships along the coast and in the hinterland.

This continuing growth will demand expanded services and infrastructure, which will generate increased employment. The demographic structure of the population, particularly in terms of age, will affect not only the type of services needed but also economic productivity. An ageing population may need services focussed on a narrow range of industries such as aged and health care and social services. Young families will also require an increasing range of specific services.

Bass Coast Shire Council is a peri urban Council that will play an important and strategic role. This role is multi-faceted and will include accommodating some of Melbourne’s expected growth (estimated to grow to 5 million by 2030), playing a key role as a tourism and recreation destination and providing food for the growing population of Victoria.

4. Economic links with Melbourne

A Bass Coast economy better integrated with Melbourne’s economy will facilitate greater investment in the region. This will be true not only for the tourism industry but also for industries which export product out of the Shire, either to parts of Melbourne or through Melbourne as an international port. This has ramifications for supply chain systems, transport infrastructure and encouraging migration into the Shire of knowledge workers. Reducing travel times and increasing telecommunication connectivity through the National Broadband Network are critical infrastructure developments in attracting knowledge industries and their workers in particular.

5. New and emerging industries

Council is committed to support the development of:

- **Natural environment**

  Changes in climate also present new opportunities within Bass Coast such as expansion of the renewable energy market, improved business practices (agriculture, ecotourism, and waste), sustainable transport and buildings. Federal and State government funding opportunities will enable mitigation, adaptation and education projects. The natural environment underpins the Bass Coast economy and is a key driver for tourism and agriculture. Council clearly understands that the natural environment forms the basis of the local economy.
Technology and Knowledge industries

Advances in information and communications technology are changing the nature of many jobs in Australia, enabling both new types of work and new working arrangements to emerge. Online work offers a chance to create a more productive and flexible workforce with potential for people living in cities to move to regions, and also for people in regions to work for employers in other cities or regions without having to leave home.

An online workforce can deliver better productivity and work-life balance. It also offers opportunities to diversify and grow many regional businesses, and could also attract new residents from the capital cities to enjoy the regional lifestyle. Technology offers potential for regional residents and businesses to have new or easier access to national and international markets for goods, services and employment.

Knowledge-based work can potentially be undertaken in any place with sufficient connectivity, equipment and workforce capability. This unties many jobs from a single site of production, which means work can be delivered from a home-based office, a mobile work site, a call-centre, a tele-centre or digital hub, or a remote operations centre.

The arrival of high speed broadband is enabling new, entrepreneurial enterprises to establish in Bass Coast. There are many metropolitan holiday home owners for whom it is becoming possible to relocate their business operations to Bass Coast, bringing new skills, resources and prosperity to the region. Council has worked hard to raise the level of broadband engagement across the community and business sector, resulting in a greater business efficiency and improved quality of life. Council has also advocated strongly for improved broadband infrastructure recognising the vital role it plays in regional prosperity and quality of life.
• **Education and training sector**
  Council recognises that education is proven to have a direct and powerful impact on the social and economic prosperity of Bass Coast Shire. It is not surprising that education is closely related to global knowledge work, innovation, higher levels of employment and economic productivity and prosperity.

  Council has revised its Education Plan to reflect the changing demands of education; for young people in schools and for lifelong learning opportunities for mature-aged workers and small businesses to ensure they have the skills necessary to be productive knowledge workers in the 21st century. Council continues to advocate for the construction of the Bass Coast Education Precinct.

• **Arts, culture, creative and social industries**
  People with arts related skills are critical to the industries of the new economy which Bass Coast is pursuing. Such people are attracted to an area by opportunities for creative work and good quality of life amenities, including arts and cultural activities. The sector is a strong contributor to an integrated economy. Council’s Arts and Culture Plan identifies ways in which Council can support the expansion of its existing, vibrant creative arts and cultural community. The Plan details a vision of an enhanced cultural precinct, which will be a significant attraction to those looking for a change in their work arrangements and lifestyle.
What is Council’s role in economic development?

The vision for economic development, one of five key objectives in the Council Plan 2013 – 17, is “Our economy is supported by diverse, local and innovative businesses and employment.”

The work involved in delivering on this objective is directed by five Council Plan strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growing our Businesses</td>
<td>Facilitate activities that support and promote businesses to become commercially resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Economy</td>
<td>Facilitate the attraction of business and industry with sustainable principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Bass Coast</td>
<td>Promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourist and events destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Diversity</td>
<td>Encourage the diversity of small business that supports the culture of Bass Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming for our Future</td>
<td>Protect productive farmland and support rural business sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many external (global) factors influence a local economy such as Bass Coast and these are often beyond the capacity of Council to change. However Council can, in some instances, implement responses which adapt to changing conditions or mitigate their effect.

Most importantly, Council can make a strong contribution to the creation of an environment that:

- **at a strategic level**, attracts and encourages the kind of business activities that will drive the local economy, and
- **at an operational level**, supports existing businesses to be innovative and sustainable.
Putting the Strategies into Action (as per Council Plan 2015 - 2020)

The strategies and actions form the basis of the Economic Development Action Plan (attached).

**Growing our Businesses**
Facilitate activities that support and promote businesses to become commercially resilient

A resilient economy has businesses from a variety of industry sectors, which are able to adapt to changing environments, are alert to new opportunities and respond to challenges. Businesses will be innovative and financially and structurally stable. They contribute to the Bass Coast community and are an integral part of community life.

Over 2600 businesses operate in Bass Coast Shire. Assisting these businesses to maintain their competitiveness and to grow or diversify their operations is a key strategy within the Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy. The strategic indicator to demonstrate progress is “Increased support for businesses leading to more people employed” and a measure is “percentage increase in labour market growth”.

Working in partnership with other levels of Government, industry and business associations, Bass Coast Shire Council will work to:

- maximise local business participation in Small Business Mentoring Service
- facilitate local business access to the Victorian Small Business Bus
- build more effective links between education providers and industry to increase job readiness
- advocate to all levels of Government in relation to policy development, infrastructure and services
- promote the adoption of e-commerce
- showcase business achievements through Awards
- revitalise key business districts
- develop a ‘Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast’
- develop an Economic Development Assistance Policy which will articulate the support Council can offer new businesses seeking to establish in Bass Coast.
A sustainable economy comprises businesses that are financially and structurally sound through developing sustainable business models. This will include being environmentally sustainable in response to the challenges of climate change, and being resilient and adaptable in the face of new markets and changes to external economic environments.

Attracting new businesses to establish or relocate to Bass Coast Shire is a key business development activity. Council seeks to increase the number of new businesses with sustainable environmental and commercial practices. This strategic indicator is measured by a percentage increase in the number of new businesses.

There is a high level of alignment between this Economic Development Strategy and Council’s Natural Environment Strategy (NES) 2016 – 2026. The NES provides a framework and clear direction for Council and the community regarding sustainability of the natural environment over the next 10 years.

Bass Coast Shire Council will attract new businesses by:

- marketing the competitive strengths of the Shire
- undertaking a GAPS assessment of business/investment opportunities within the Shire
- developing and distributing ‘A Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast Shire” which highlights the types of development Council seeks to encourage
- facilitating forums with local developers to understand new and proposed investment and to share local expertise
- facilitating pre-application planning meetings with potential investors.
The Tourism industry offers diverse opportunities to experience Bass Coast’s exciting natural environment and its artistic and cultural heritage. It takes advantage of the region’s proximity to Melbourne to draw visitors to a range of events and natural attractions including the National Surfing Reserve; becoming an all-year tourist destination.

The Bass Coast economy is heavily dependent on the tourism sector. The promotion of the Shire as an all year, unique tourism and events destination is integral to ensure economic prosperity for the Shire. A strategic indicator of this strategy is increased visitor yield and attendance at events and is measured by the number of new events in off peak periods.

Bass Coast Shire Council will promote Bass Coast as an all year tourism destination by:

- developing a long term strategy for Phillip Island and San Remo that recognises the contribution of the natural environment to tourism and the significance of other locations across the Shire
- working collaboratively with event organisers to hold sustainable events and activities through education, training, streamlined processing of applications and joint promotion
- attracting new and off peak events and continuing to facilitate community events such as festivals and holiday celebrations
- promoting of Bass Coast Shire to domestic and international visitors as an all year round destination
- advocating for more extensive pathway infrastructure, viewing towers and recreational infrastructure including leisure centres to attract a wider variety of visitors year round
- strong partnerships with local businesses, regional tourism organisations and industry associations
- tourism industry development through two way communication, training and joint promotion
- demonstrating the value of tourism to local, State and national economies
- provision of accredited information centres and innovative visitor servicing
- advocating to Government for investment in key public assets.
A diverse economy supports resilience in the face of changing external environments. Economic diversity comprises businesses, large and small in a range of industries, which together support many different occupations. Businesses will have a culture of innovation and diversification. They will be supported by education and training services, which provide a skilled workforce for an expanded economy.

Small business plays a vital role in Bass Coast. Of the 2600 plus businesses registered in Bass Coast Shire, 89% are small businesses employing less than four employees. Small business plays a vital role within Bass Coast Shire.

The strategic indicator for a diverse economy is the appropriate mix of business that supports the culture of Bass Coast. The measure of success is a percentage increase in the number of businesses that support the culture of Bass Coast.

Bass Coast Shire Council will encourage the diversity of small business by:

- developing a “Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast”
- tracking and reporting on increases in small business
- working with traders groups and associations to understand local trends and small business opportunities
- promoting the benefits of establishing or relocating a small business to Bass Coast
- developing an Economic Development Assistance Policy which will articulate the support Council can offer new businesses seeking to establish in Bass Coast
- facilitating pre-application meetings with the planning team to provide upfront, timely advice to potential new businesses.
Strong rural sectors require the protection of productive farmland in the face of development and other demands. The rural economy will be based on sustainable practices that respond to the opportunities and challenges produced by the combined effects of

- climate change
- the need for increased food production by the escalating world population, and
- the growth of new markets in Australia and overseas.

Bass Coast has a strong agriculture sector with much of its 865 sq. kms being farm land. Agriculture will remain a significant driver in the Bass Coast Shire and contributes to the high standard of liveability and tourism. The strategic indicator for Council is productive farmland and the measure of this strategy is the adoption and implementation of the Rural Land Use Strategy. Bass Coast Shire Council will protect productive farmland and support rural business sustainability by:

- working with Regional Development Victoria by providing input into regional and state wide intensive agricultural policy
- developing an Intensive Agriculture Strategy for Bass Coast
- developing and promoting a Southern Gippsland Food Cluster
- promoting the Southern Gippsland Foodmap
- supporting the Rural Engagement Group to ensure that there is an open and productive relationship between Council and representatives of the agricultural sector
- supporting and promoting rural industry associations and events
- advocating to other levels of Government on farming issues
- encouraging the use of new technologies to stay at the forefront of farming practices
- providing investment facilitation expertise to agriculture enterprises seeking to establish in Bass Coast.
Resourcing the Strategy

The Economic Development and Tourism Team is part of the Sustainable Development and Growth Division. This Strategy will be predominantly driven by Economic Development and Tourism Team members with support from other departments within Council.

All actions listed in the annual Action Plan identify whether funding is through Council’s recurrent budget, new project funding or external grants/sponsorship.
Review

Progress of this Strategy will be reviewed and presented to Council, and the community, in an annual snapshot report to highlight the major achievements and activities against the strategic objectives.

A full review of this Strategy and development of a new strategy will commence in 2020 in time for a new strategy to be adopted in 2021.
Appendix 1: Population Growth

The 2015 population forecast for Bass Coast Shire is 32,402, and is forecast to grow to 45,257 by 2031.

Residential development forecasts assume the number of dwellings in Bass Coast Shire will increase by an average of 541 dwellings per annum to 35,164 in 2031.

The addition of dwellings to the housing stock is a major driver of population growth in an area, providing opportunities for households to relocate from other areas or new households to form locally (such as young people leaving the family home or separations/divorces).

Residential development can take various forms depending on the availability of land. These include new housing estates on greenfield sites, subdivision in existing residential neighbourhoods (often called infill development), conversion of industrial lands to residential lands, and densification of housing by building up.
Appendix 2: Gross Regional Product

**Definition:** This report presents nominal as well as real measures of GRP and provides great insights into how your economy is performing over time. The main difference between nominal and real values of GRP is that real values are adjusted for inflation, while nominal values are not.

GRP is the net measure of wealth generated by the region. GRP can be measured by using the incomes approach, where all incomes earned by individuals (wages and salaries), firms (gross operating surplus) and governments (taxes on products or services) are added. Alternatively an expenditure approach can be taken where all forms of final expenditure, including consumption by households, consumption by governments, additions or increases to assets (minus disposals) and exports (minus imports), are added. The expenditure approach does not include intermediate expenditure, as this would lead to double counting eg. the wheat and flour in a loaf of bread. These methodological approaches are the same as those used to calculate Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at a national level.

Appendix 3: Employment by Industry

It is estimated that 11,303 people work in Bass Coast. Bass Coast represents 12.65% of the 89,386 people working in Gippsland Region, 0.47% of the 2,421,985 people working in Victoria and 0.12% of the 9,824,444 people working in Australia.

**Definition:** The employment data presented above represents the number of people employed by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors in the defined regions. In this report the employment data is place of work data and represents total numbers of employees without any conversions to full-time equivalence. Retail jobs for instance represent typical employment profiles for that sector, i.e. some full time, some part time and some casual.

Tourism is an amalgam of activities across various industry sectors such as retail, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, cultural and recreational services. The tourism industry sector services the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism in Bass Coast contributes a direct value of $619m to the economy and accounts for 2,500 jobs.


NB. Data collected during peak Desalination Plant construction phase.
Appendix 4: Financial Output by Industry

The output generated by the Bass Coast economy is estimated at $3.649 billion. Bass Coast represents 13.64% of the $26.745 billion in output generated in Gippsland Region, 0.50% of the $722.677 billion in output generated in Victoria and 0.11% of the $3.178 trillion in output generated in Australia.

Definition: Output data represents the gross revenue generated by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.

Tourism is an amalgam of activities across various industry sectors such as retail, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, cultural and recreational services. The tourism industry sector services the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.


NB. Data collected during peak Desalination Plant construction phase.
Appendix 5: Unemployment rate

**Definition:** The Small Area Labour Markets (SALM) data has been compiled by Australian Government Department of Employment. SALM data incorporates three primary datasets:

1. Centrelink data on people in receipt of Newstart or Youth Allowance (Other), by postcode (not including people in receipt of the Community Development Employment Projects Participant Supplement)
2. ABS Labour Force Survey data at the ABS Labour Force Region level
3. ABS Census of Population and Housing labour force data at the Statistical Local Area level, Statistical Area 2 level and Local Government Area level.

The estimates presented have been smoothed by Department of Employment using a four-quarter average to minimise the variability inherent in the estimates at the Statistical Local Area level, Statistical Area 2 level and Local Government Area level.

**Source:** Department of Employment Small Area Labour Markets (SALM). (September Quarter 2015 was released in December 2015. December Quarter 2015 data will be available in March 2016.)
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Cat. 6291.0.55.001 (September Quarter 2015 was released in October 2015. December Quarter 2015 data will be available in January 2016)*
### Putting the Strategies into Action (as per Council Plan 2015 - 2020)

#### Strategy 1: Growing our Businesses

*Facilitate activities that support and promote businesses to become commercially resilient*

A resilient economy has businesses from a variety of industry sectors, which are able to adapt to changing environments, are alert to new opportunities and respond to challenges. Businesses will be innovative and financially and structurally stable. They contribute to the Bass Coast community and are an integral part of community life.

Over 2600 businesses operate in Bass Coast Shire. Assisting these businesses to maintain their competitiveness and to grow or diversify their operations is a key strategy within the Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage increase in labour market growth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate business mentoring and training to develop sustainable, innovative, social and creative enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build more effective links between education providers and industry to increase job readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocate to all levels of government on behalf of the Bass Coast community in relation to policy, infrastructure and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion and adoption of e-commerce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage reduction in the unemployment rate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deliver annual Business Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Revitalise key business districts in the Shire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote Bass Coast Shire as a region to establish sustainable businesses, especially those committed to conservation of the natural environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop an Economic Development Assistance Policy which will articulate the support Council can offer new businesses seeking to establish in Bass Coast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategy 2: Sustainable Economy

*Facilitate the attraction of businesses and industry with sustainable principles*

A sustainable economy comprises businesses that are financially and structurally sound through developing sustainable business models. This will include being environmentally sustainable in response to the challenges of climate change, and being resilient and adaptable in the face of new markets and changes in economic environments. Attracting new businesses to Bass Coast Shire is a key business development activity. Council seeks to increase the number of new businesses with sustainable environmental and commercial practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage increase in the number of new businesses with sustainable environmental and commercial practices:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote Bass Coast as a great place to do business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote sustainable principles to the business community and facilitate suitable training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage appropriate development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate regular Developers Forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate pre-application meetings with new businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate information sharing re waste and recycling, energy, water and biodiversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect businesses to financial support eg Sustainability Victoria grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 3: Visit Bass Coast

Promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourism and events destination

The Tourism industry offers diverse opportunities to experience Bass Coast’s exciting natural environment and its artistic and cultural heritage. It takes advantage of the region’s proximity to Melbourne to draw visitors to a range of events and natural attractions, including the National Surfing Reserve, becoming an all-year tourist destination. The Bass Coast economy is heavily dependent on the tourism sector. The promotion of the Shire as an all year, unique tourism and events destination is integral to ensure economic prosperity for the Shire.

Key activities

1. Number of new events in off peak periods:
   - Work collaboratively with event organisers to conduct sustainable events and activities
   - Assist in the promotion of events
   - Report regularly to Council
   - Identify opportunities for innovation in event types
   - Identify opportunities for expanded use of existing and new venues
   - Spread events across Bass Coast
   - Expand the spread of events being offered across the year
   - Advocate for infrastructure eg pathways networks to attract visitors.

2. Percentage increase in attendance at events:
   - Manage event permit process
   - Promotion via road side signage and Calendar of Events
   - Assist with preparation of operational and regulatory requirements for running events eg risk management plans
   - Provide information and training workshops for event organisers
   - Provide grants to facilitate events
   - Maximise economic benefit for Bass Coast while balancing the needs of the environment.
**Strategy 3: Visit Bass Coast (Cont.)**

*Promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourism and events destination*

The Tourism industry offers diverse opportunities to experience Bass Coast’s exciting natural environment and its artistic and cultural heritage. It takes advantage of the region’s proximity to Melbourne to draw visitors to a range of events and natural attractions, including the National Surfing Reserve, becoming an all-year tourist destination.

The Bass Coast economy is heavily dependent on the tourism sector. The promotion of the Shire as an all year, unique tourism and events destination is integral to ensure economic prosperity for the Shire.

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**Key activities**

3. **Number of rooms available and occupancy rates:**
   - Promote Bass Coast to domestic and international visitors as all year unique tourist and events destination
   - Engage with Industry on a local, regional, state and national level to share our knowledge and inspire visitation to our unique part of the world
   - Tourism industry development
   - Progress regional tourism initiatives with DPI and DGL to provide opportunities for local businesses
   - Develop and implement Phillip Island and San Remo Tourism Strategy 2035
   - Demonstrate the economic value of tourism and trends within the Shire
   - Identify number of rooms available in Bass Coast.

4. **Number of visitors to the Visitor Information Centres:**
   - Deliver quality visitor services and products that exceed customer expectations, providing opportunities to increase yield, visitor length of stay, expenditure and dispersal for Bass Coast.
   - Engage with domestic and international visitors to promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourist and events destination including digital media
   - Ensure the use of technology enhances services available to visitors
   - Manage income generating activities through increased accommodation bookings, ticket sales, retail items, display and other services
   - Ensure our VIC Network has an effective, engaged and dynamic workforce that maximises opportunities and delivers outstanding visitor services
   - Ensure our business operations are sustainably managed financially and environmentally
   - Determine appropriate service delivery model for visitor services.
### Strategy 4: Economic Diversity

_Encourage the diversity of small business that supports the culture of Bass Coast_

A diverse economy supports resilience in the face of changing external environments. Economic diversity comprises businesses, large and small in a range of industries, which together support many different occupations. Businesses will have a culture of innovation and diversification. They will be supported by education and training services, which provide a skilled workforce for an expanded economy.

Small business plays a vital role in Bass Coast. Of the 2600 plus businesses registered in Bass Coast Shire, 89% are small businesses employing less than four employees. Small business plays a vital role within Bass Coast Shire.

### Key activities

Percentage increase in the number of businesses that support the culture of Bass Coast:

- Develop policy, procedures and services to attract new businesses to the area which broaden the mixture of businesses operating in Bass Coast
- Track % increase in new businesses that support the culture of Bass Coast
- Develop a “Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast”.

...
### Strategy 5: Farming for our Future

*Protect productive farmland and support rural business sustainability*

Strong rural sectors require the protection of productive farmland in the face of development and other demands. The rural economy will be based on sustainable practices that respond to the opportunities and challenges produced by the combined effects of:

- climate change
- the need for increased food production by the escalating world population, and
- the growth of new markets in Australia and overseas.

Bass Coast has a strong agriculture sector with much of its 865 sq. kms being farm land. Agriculture will remain a significant driver in the Bass Coast Shire and contributes to the high standard of liveability and tourism.

### Key activities

Adoption and implementation of Rural Land Use Strategy:

- Promote and facilitate the expansion of businesses into new markets, new products and new areas of business eg value adding and diversification
- Support and promote relevant rural industry organisations and events
- Promote local produce and support business sustainability and growth
- Develop and promote a Southern Gippsland Food Futures Project
- Work with RDV to provide input into both the Victorian Intensive Ag Strategy and Gippsland Intensive Ag Strategy.