

GIPPSLAND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT  
PART C

Tourism Business Opportunities  
Major Tourism Development/  
Investment Opportunities

# Prospectus

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## Executive Summary

*Building Sustainable Tourism in Gippsland* is an innovative joint project between the local tourism industry, State and Federal Government agencies and all six of the local government municipalities in Gippsland. The project received substantial funding from the Federal Government under its Sustainable Regions Program.

The project had three key components:

- Targeted research into the tourism industry in Gippsland and the potential for touring;
- Identification of tourism business development opportunities for major tourism development and investment;
- The development of a Touring Route for Gippsland.

Separate detailed reports are available for each of these components.

Through research and interviews conducted for this project, a number of tourism business opportunities have been identified. These opportunities have been identified through consultation with tourism business owners and through research into the business “gaps” that exist, regarding businesses to “import” services and goods from outside the region. In addition, a number of major tourism development and investment opportunities have been identified for Gippsland.

This prospectus has been prepared to provide a summary of the tourism business and industry development opportunities for Gippsland.

Most of the opportunities identified in this prospectus are relevant across Gippsland. Activities or developments that are specific to a location have been identified, where appropriate. Detailed investigation and/or feasibility analysis should be undertaken for any of the opportunities before proceeding to implementation or development.

If you are interested in obtaining further information for any of the opportunities contained in this prospectus, please contact Destination Gippsland or the appropriate Local Government Tourism Officer.

## BACKGROUND

This prospectus has been developed as part of the Building Sustainable Tourism in Gippsland Project. The six municipalities of Gippsland comprise Bass Coast Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, Baw Baw Shire, Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire. These municipalities together with Destination Gippsland Inc and Tourism Victoria attracted significant Federal Government funding under the Sustainable Regions Program for this project.

The aims of the project were to: -

- Establish sustainable tourism business networks throughout Gippsland;
- Identify new tourism business opportunities and potential region tourism developments in the region;
- Undertake Gippsland wide research into the tourism industry;
- Develop a world class touring route to highlight Gippsland's product strengths, focus co-operative promotion and marketing at the regional level and reinforce the Gippsland brand;
- Develop an infrastructure plan to support the tourism industry and to complement the touring route.

The Gippsland Sustainable Tourism Project commenced in February 2005. The project consisted of three components. An outline of the consultants responsible for each of these sub-projects and the outcomes of each are detailed below.

### Part A: Tourism Research

Part A was undertaken by consultants Urban Enterprise and consisted of primary and secondary research. The key objectives for the research component were to: -

- Provide meaningful and targeted data to enable the tourism industry in Gippsland to benchmark with other regions;
- Provide baseline data and a model for on-going research to monitor the performance of the tourism industry;
- Provide data that can assist in attracting capital investment from both the private sector as well as Government;
- Provide data that informs the other components of the Project, namely visitor expectations and needs, infrastructure gaps/requirements and touring route potential.

Part A produced the following research outputs:

- Value of tourism to the regional economy;
- Profile of visitors to the Gippsland region;

- Extent of touring and profile of touring visitors to the Gippsland region;
- Market segments visiting the region;
- Performance of the tourism business sector in Gippsland.

#### Part B: Business Development

Part B was undertaken by consultants Nexus Consulting and utilised an extensive consultation program with tourism businesses to identify the following:

- Identifying viable networks;
- Identifying business opportunities – including gaps in the value chain;
- Identifying business skill needs;
- Development of a prospectus.

#### Part C: Touring Route and Tourism Development Opportunities

Tourism Destination Management undertook part C of the Gippsland Sustainable Regions Project with support from Urban Enterprise. The outcomes included:

- Identification of tourism development potential and development of an investment prospectus;
- Concept for a world class touring route including an infrastructure plan;
- Touring route pilot project.

# STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## *In brief...*

*State Government policy strongly supports investment in tourism development in Provincial Victoria.*

*There is a Statewide approach to strengthening the Victorian tourism industry.*

*The vision for Gippsland Tourism:*

*“By 2010, tourism in Gippsland will be embraced by domestic and international travellers as an exceptional nature based destination. The region will offer diverse quality visitor experiences in a pristine and sustainable environment. Tourism will be a key industry sector noted for its broad community support and positive economic impact. Tourism will contribute to Gippsland’s strong sense of identity and help enrich the Victorian economy through innovation, cohesive partnerships and sustainable development”. (Tourism Victoria, Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007, 2006 Review)*

The State Government has made it a priority to turn Provincial Victoria into the best place to live, work, invest and raise a family.

The State Government strongly supports tourism development in Gippsland and recognises that “tourism is becoming a driving force for growth and renewal in many regional communities, with regional tourism increasing by 30% over the past five years and tourism-orientated events playing an increasingly important role in employment growth and economic development” (Moving Forward: Making Provincial Victoria the Best Place to Live, Work and Invest, Nov 2005).

To attract new investment and new business opportunities the State Government has invested in strategic regional industries. In Gippsland, facilitated investment has increased by \$1.7 billion between October 1999 and October 2005, generating 1,623 jobs. In particular, the strong growth of tourism across Provincial Victoria has been backed by substantial Government investment in marketing campaigns, sponsorship of key regional events and the renewal of major tourism infrastructure.

## **Statewide objectives for tourism development**

Statewide objectives for tourism development have been developed to provide a statewide approach to strengthening the tourism industry (Tourism Victoria Marketing and Tourism Development Strategy 2002-2006).

Tourism Victoria supports development of tourism products that:

- Meets the needs and expectations of priority markets and helps to disperse visitors geographically and seasonally;

- Promotes economic viability, environmental sustainability and community benefits in product and infrastructure development;
- Encourages visitor satisfaction through exceptional product and service delivery.

### **Regional objectives for tourism development**

The regional tourism strategy (Tourism Victoria, Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007) encourages the development of a strong and cohesive industry structure of Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) and Local Tourism Associations (LTAs) supported by local government and industry participation.

Tourism Victoria encourages and supports tourism products in Gippsland that are:

- Internationally ready;
- Backpacker focused (including suppliers to participate in cooperative marketing campaigns and undertake product development);
- Food and wine focused;
- Nature based focused;
- Enhance Gippsland as a key tourism destination;
- Raise awareness of Gippsland as a key tourism destination; and
- Maximise the tourism benefits from new and existing events. (

The Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004-2007 (Tourism Victoria, 2004) outlines Tourism Victoria's position in regard to the future development of food and wine product, nature based, arts, theatre and cultural heritage and accommodation. A summary has been provided below.

### **Food and Wine**

Tourism Victoria supports development in **Food and Wine** product that increases the quality of winery tourism experiences and provide diversity and accessibility to Victoria's wine regions. Food and Wine product should build on the natural synergy between food and wine experiences and achieve the consistent integration of food as part of the winery tourism experience. Importantly, food and wine product should be used to achieve a wider regional and seasonal dispersal of tourism and strengthen co-operative alliances between wineries and other local and regional tourism products and services.

## **Nature Based**

**Nature Based** tourism product should include accessible world-class natural attractions and activities such as walking, fishing and adventure. Tourism Victoria supports tourism product that increases environmental awareness, through promoting knowledge of the environment, potential impacts of tourism and ecologically sustainable practices. This could be achieved through iconic natural attractions and associated product.

## **Arts, Theatre and Cultural Heritage**

Tourism Victoria also supports new tourism product that enhances awareness of the richness of Victoria's **Arts, Theatre and Cultural Heritage**. Product development should be appropriate and competitive for target markets whilst improving professionalism and maintaining industry standards.

## **Accommodation**

The professionalism and standards of new **Accommodation** should be raised to world- class levels relative to market demands and should enhance the diversity and quality of product available. This includes internationally and business ready product.

## **State Government regional initiatives**

Region specific tourism initiatives identified by the State Government include:

- Keeping the Port of Lakes Entrance open and viable;
- Major upgrades to Gippsland's local ports;
- New bus connections between Cowes and Wonthaggi and new services in Inverloch, Cape Paterson and Leongatha; and
- Investment to develop the Great Victorian Coastal Walk from Mallacoota to Portland and upgrade facilities in coastal towns.

(Moving Forward: Making Provincial Victoria the Best Place to Live, Work and Invest, Nov 2005)

## The Gippsland Region

### *In brief...*

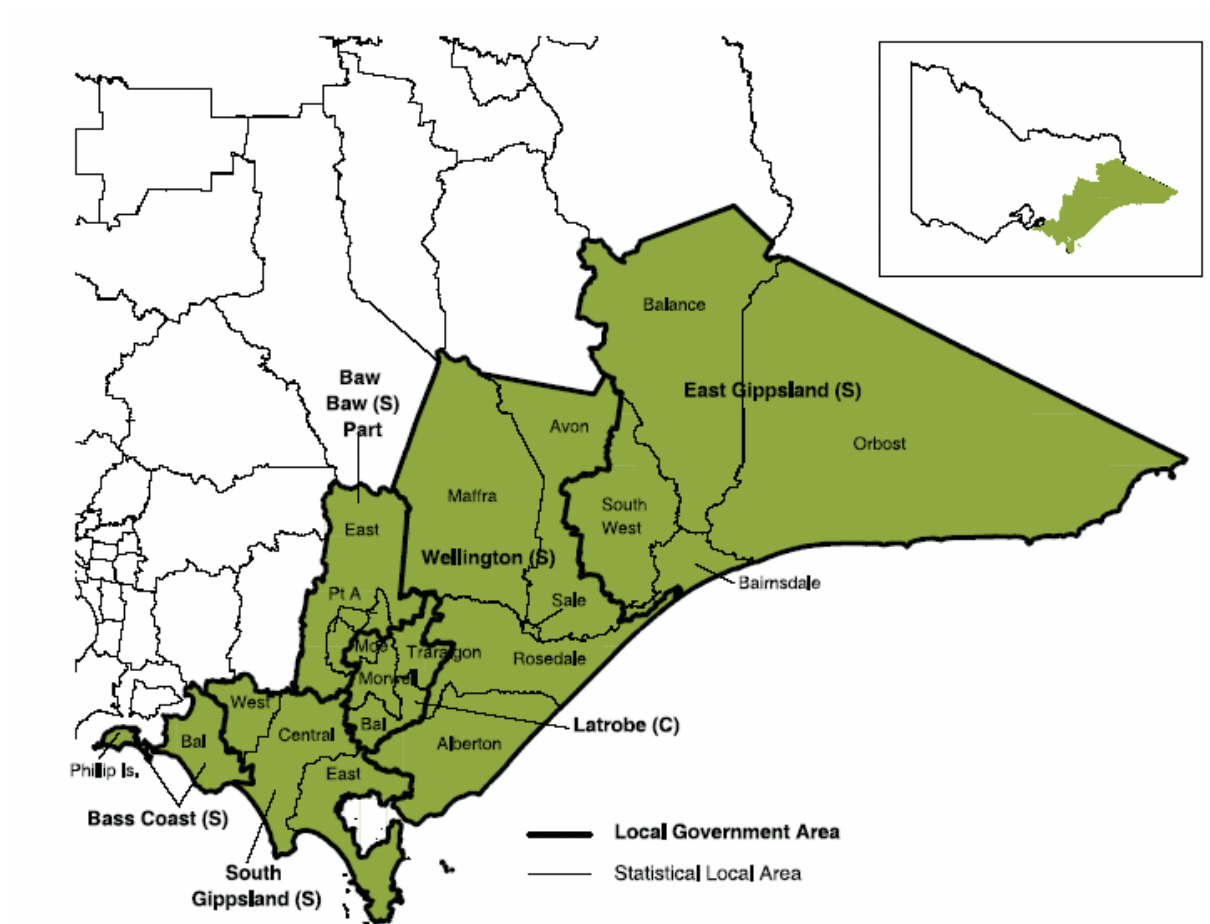
*Gippsland is located in eastern Victoria and covers an area of almost 40,000 sq kms, or 17% of the total area of the State.*

*The current population of Gippsland is 248,583 (2006).*

*It is estimated that Gippsland will grow by 8% over the next 15 years.*

*In recent years there has been an increase in the number of people employed in tourism related industries (including retail trade, accommodation, cafes and restaurants).*

## The Gippsland Region

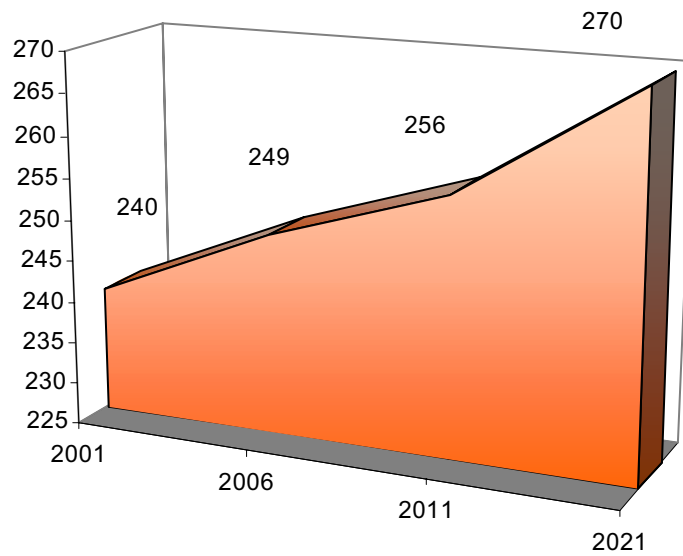


## Location and Physical Environment

Gippsland extends from the Great Dividing Range in the north, through rich and productive timber and agricultural grazing land, to the Bass Strait coastline in the south. It extends from the New South Wales border in the east to the eastern and south-eastern fringes of metropolitan Melbourne. The region comprises the municipalities of Bass Coast, Latrobe City, East Gippsland, South Gippsland, Wellington and Baw Baw.

## Population

The current population of Gippsland is estimated at 248, 583 persons (2006). It is estimated that Gippsland will continue to grow in the future to around 270,000 persons over the next 15 years.



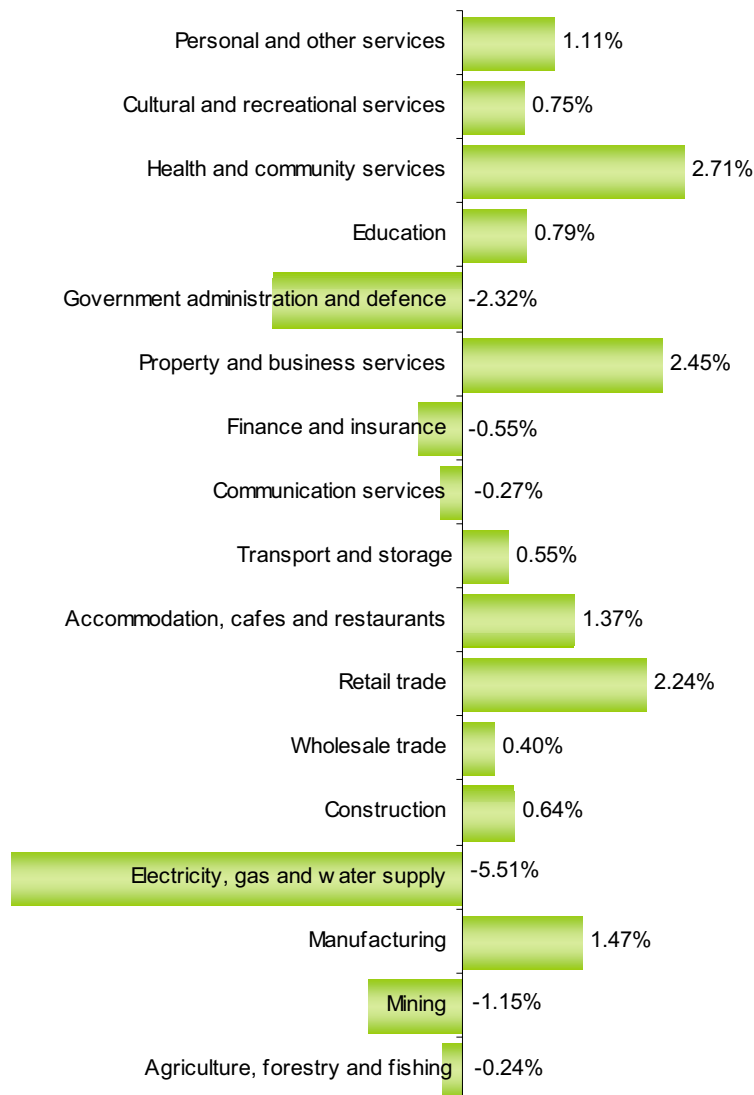
Source: Know Your Area, [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

## Employment

In comparison with the rest of Victoria, Gippsland has a high proportion of jobs within agriculture, forestry and fishing (+9%), electricity, gas and water supply (+2%), mining (+1%) industries. Gippsland also has a higher proportion of accommodation, cafes and restaurants (+1%), education (+1%) and personal and other services (+1%) compared to the state, whilst there is a significantly lower proportion of people working in the manufacturing (-5%) and wholesale trade (-2%) industries.

Between 1996 and 2001, there was an increase in the number of people employed in retail trade as well as accommodation, cafes and restaurants. While the number of people employed in mining and agriculture, forestry and fishing decreased.

### Change in Employment in Industry Divisions in Gippsland 1991-2001



Source: Compiled by Urban Enterprise from "Know your Area", [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

## **Climate<sup>1</sup>**

Gippsland has a diverse climate that varies greatly across the region; impacted by the geography, topography, altitude and proximity to the coast. In the north, the mountainous Great Dividing Range is generally characterised by mild summers and cool/cold winters, with some areas experiencing snow.

The plains and coastal areas are generally subject to mild temperatures experiencing a Mediterranean climate with maximum temperatures and minimum rainfall in summer.

## **Transport/access<sup>2</sup>**

The easiest way to get to Gippsland from Melbourne by car is to travel southeast along the Monash Freeway and then, depending on the destination, continue along the:

- M1 (Princes Freeway) through many of central Gippsland's cities and townships, including Warragul, Traralgon and Sale and on to Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost and Cann River. Turn-offs for Mt Baw Baw and the alpine area are near Drouin, Warragul and Moe.
- South Gippsland Highway along the coast through Korumburra, Leongatha and Foster, before joining the Princes Highway at Sale. This the most direct route to Wilson's Promontory.
- Bass Highway along the Western Port and Bass Strait coastline providing easy access to the coastal towns and Phillip Island.
- Strzelecki Highway beginning at Leongatha, linking the South Gippsland Highway to the Princes Highway and linking Leongatha with Morwell.

The region is also accessible by public transport from Melbourne via the V/Line train service, which operates every day as far as Bairnsdale, with connecting buses to Sydney via Lakes Entrance, Orbost and Cann River. Bus services from Dandenong also connect the major towns in the southeastern region of Gippsland, with Melbourne.

## **Utilities and services**

The Latrobe Valley in West Gippsland is the power generation centre of Victoria. The area contains four brown coal power stations, including the relatively new Loy Yang A and B stations, which generate a large proportion of the State's power and are now part of the national grid. The Gippsland Region annually produces around 90% of Victoria's electricity, 97% of Victoria's natural gas and 25% of the crude oil produced in Australia.

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1 For detailed weather information see the Bureau of Meteorology webpage: [www.bhom.gov.au](http://www.bhom.gov.au)

2 For more information see Tourism Victoria webpage: [www.visitvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.visitvictoria.vic.gov.au)

# The Gippsland Tourism Industry

## ***In brief...***

*Tourism is a significant driver of the Gippsland economy.*

*Employment and income has generally grown for the majority of tourism businesses in the region.*

*The majority of tourism businesses are optimistic about the future prospects for their business as well as the industry in the region overall.*

*The majority of tourers in the region prefer self-exploration rather than defined touring routes. "Discovery" is an important part of their touring experience and complements the tourism product strengths of Gippsland.*

*Melbourne and NSW are the key source markets for touring visitors to Gippsland but international visitors are also important.*

## **Economic Value of Tourism**

The Gippsland Region (including Bass Coast Shire) is estimated to attract more than 7 million visitors annually, with around 3 million overnight visitors.

Visitors to Gippsland spend an estimated \$1.28 billion in the region per annum.

Flow-on expenditure from visitors to Gippsland is estimated at over \$860 million per annum. Hence the total expenditure impact attributed to visitors to Gippsland is over \$2 billion.

There are more than 1,300 specialised tourism businesses in Gippsland that derive most of their income from tourists. Almost 2,000 other businesses in Gippsland also benefit from tourism, but to a lesser extent.

More than 12,300 people are estimated to be employed as a result of tourism in Gippsland.

## **The Tourism Industry**

There are more than 1,330 private sector tourism businesses in Gippsland. These businesses include accommodation, antiques/ galleries/ art and craft businesses, attractions, food product- farm gate, golf, restaurants, cafes and bars, tours and activities, wineries etc. Localities with the highest concentration of tourism businesses are Cowes (98), Bairnsdale (81), Sale (71), Traralgon (66) and Lakes Entrance (64).

It is estimated that almost 2,000 other businesses also derive a portion of their income (more than 10%) from tourism, albeit tourism is not their main source of business income. These businesses include supermarkets, specialised food retailing, department stores, real estate agents, motor vehicle retailing and other retail businesses.

### *Employment*

It is estimated that more than 12,300 persons are directly employed as a result of tourism in Gippsland, with specialised tourism businesses accounting for almost 9,500 jobs. This includes part-time and casual employment.

### **Performance of Tourism Businesses**

The majority of tourism businesses in Gippsland expect an increase in business income over the next year. The vast majority of businesses are aiming to increase custom and visitor yield. Over the next five years, two thirds of tourism businesses in Gippsland expect some growth in tourism and more than one quarter of tourism businesses expect high growth in tourism over the same period.

### **The Holiday Home Sector**

The holiday home sector is extremely important to tourism in the Gippsland region. There is an estimated 18,220 holiday homes in the Gippsland region, generating, more than 2 million overnight visits. This compares with 599 accommodation establishments, generating more than 1 million overnight visits.

### **Touring Potential**

A large proportion of visitors to Gippsland undertake some form of touring. Almost 40% of the respondents to the Visitor Survey indicated that they were touring.

Interestingly, separate research identified that tourism businesses considered that about 40% of their customers were touring.

The high propensity of visitors to tour the region suggests that additional resources should be directed to marketing initiatives, product development and infrastructure development that supports this activity.

### *Type of Touring*

The majority of visitors who are touring prefer self-exploration. This suggests that regional touring product should be oriented towards promoting experiences and destinations within Gippsland rather than promoting defined touring routes.

A high proportion of visitors however, indicated that they would like to have pre-planned itineraries for touring. This suggests that collateral relating to touring should include suggested itineraries for touring.

The majority of touring visitors in Gippsland favour using a touring drive with a duration of less than one day. This suggests that the local tourist drives have an important role to play in servicing the touring visitor. The development of spur tourist drives or hub and spoke touring routes linked to key destinations presents a key opportunity for Gippsland.

## **Visitor Profile**

### *Visitor Origin*

90% of domestic overnight visitors to the Gippsland tourism region are from within Victoria. The key interstate market is New South Wales (6% of domestic visitors).

50% of daytrip visitors to Gippsland tourism region are from Melbourne.

### *Purpose of Visit*

Most visitors to Gippsland are visiting for “holiday or leisure” purposes with around a third “visiting friends and relatives”.

### *Age of Visitors*

The three key age groups of overnight visitors that are attracted to Gippsland are those aged between 15 and 19 years, 30 and 39 years and those aged between 50 to 54 years.

People between the age 30 and 54 years are the predominant daytrip visitors to Gippsland.

### *Travel Party*

The predominant types of travel parties to Gippsland tourism region are adult couples and family groups (parents and children).

Over 40% of overnight visitors travelled in pairs.

### *Accommodation*

Over 40% of overnight visitors to the Gippsland tourism region stayed in paid accommodation. Just under half of the visitors stayed with friends or relatives.

The average length of stay for overnight visitors to Gippsland tourism region is 3.4 nights.

### *Lifecycle Group*

30% of visitors to Gippsland are older married persons.

Around a quarter of all daytrip visitors to Gippsland are parents with children under the age of 15.

### *Return Visitors*

Around 75% of all visitors to Gippsland have visited the region previously.

# Tourism Business Opportunities

This section of the prospectus lists tourism business opportunities that have been identified by tourism business owners and operators in Gippsland. The following list of product and service opportunities can be further investigated in consultation with the Local Government Tourism Officers, Economic Development Officers and Destination Gippsland Inc.

## 1. Management and Business Training for Owners and Managers

Business owners identified specific training and skill development requirements in the following areas:

- Marketing
- Government Funding
- Application of Internet and Email Technology
- E-Commerce
- Business Planning
- Quality Assurance
- Supply Chain Management
- Human Resource Management
- Succession Planning

Business owners would prefer this training to be conducted in short sessions (e.g. two hours/half day) and during the week. Sessions could be conducted in small groups or on a one-on-one basis.

Importantly, delivery of training programs needs to be undertaken locally, that is, within reasonable proximity to the businesses. Much of the current training for Gippsland tourism businesses currently occurs in Melbourne.

## 2. Customer Service Training for Staff

Business owners identified that there is an ongoing need for staff (and themselves) to maintain a customer service focus and to keep up to date with contemporary service delivery trends. This creates an opportunity for the development and delivery of industry specific training in customer service.

The key requirements for the delivery of this training are flexibility in delivery, practical application and accredited recognition of the training (for staff).

The scoping for a concept model has been developed based on the 'Aussie Host' program that operated in the mid '90s. This concept, known as 'Gippy Gold', incorporates training, accreditation and recognition (via bonuses/awards) for successful participation

Business owners would prefer delivery of training on their premises or in small groups locally.

### **3. Meeting and Conference Facilities in Selected Towns**

There are a number of localities in Gippsland that have been identified as having the potential for the establishment of meeting and/or conference facilities. These opportunities have been identified by the tourism business community as well as Local Government and are worthy of future investigation to feasibility stage for specific localities.

The identified localities are:

- Bairnsdale;
- Sale;
- Inverloch;
- Lakes Entrance;
- Warragul.

Information to assist in feasibility investigation can be obtained from Local Government Tourism Officers or Economic Development Managers.

### **4. Café, Food and Restaurant Facilities in Selected Towns**

The ability to enjoy a diverse and quality café or restaurant 'experience' in many localities in Gippsland is limited. Whilst the perception of quality is subjective, there is broad agreement that there are opportunities to increase the range of food establishments and the restaurant "offer" in many localities across Gippsland.

Key areas noted for feasibility investigation include:

- Phillip Island;
- Foster;
- Mallacoota;
- Yarram;
- Bairnsdale.

Information to assist in feasibility investigation (e.g. visitor numbers, profile of visitors) can be obtained from Local Government Tourism Officers or Economic Development Officers.

### **5. Quality Bed Linen and Manchester**

In most areas of Gippsland, accommodation establishments expressed the need for a greater range of bed linen and manchester, in quality, price and product. The most desired service would be a business that visited establishments and provided a 'door to door' service.

A notable exception to the above are Bed and Breakfast establishments. Many B&B operators try to differentiate their product from competitors by having particular attributes/themes, such as farm stay, heritage or 5 star quality. These businesses have very particular requirements and it may not be possible to provide suitable products, particularly given the small scale of the operations.

## **6. Packaging (i.e. Tourism Product) Services**

There are two types of packaging opportunities identified by tourism businesses in Gippsland. These include Local Product and Regional Product.

1. Local Product – There are few areas in Gippsland that have actively developed local tourism packages. In some areas the local tourism organisation or the Visitor Information Centre has developed a package for the local area. In a few instances, businesses have collaborated to develop a package.

A key reason cited for lack of local tourism product packaging is that business owners do not have the knowledge of the product or the time to research this. An independent party that could develop packages would overcome this issue and help tourism businesses to increase visitor yield locally.

There are opportunities to package local product and businesses in the following areas where tourism businesses have expressed an interest in participating:

- Phillip Island;
  - Foster;
  - Lakes Entrance/Metung;
  - Sale;
  - Yarram;
  - Warragul;
  - Latrobe Valley;
  - Leongatha.
2. Regional Tourism Product – All sub regions within Gippsland identified the opportunity to develop tourism packages that link the different sub regions and expose visitors to the diversity in the region and, hopefully, entice them to stay in Gippsland longer.

As with local tourism packaging, most business owners and local government tourism officers are 'time poor' and do not have the knowledge or capacity to develop regional packages. The opportunity exists for an independent party to develop Gippsland packages that will increase visitation and yield, across sub-regions and the region.

## **7. Marketing Services to Businesses and Organisations**

The level of marketing knowledge amongst tourism business owners varies enormously. Some business owners want access to marketing training so that they can be responsible for marketing their own business. However, there are also a number of business owners who would engage people with marketing expertise to undertake business marketing on their behalf.

Business owners require a marketing service that:

- Demonstrates value for money;

- Has good local knowledge;
- Understands local market requirements;
- Has a good understanding of the different forms of media.

## **8. Financial Services to Business Owners**

Many tourism business operators have expressed a desire for greater flexibility and diversity in relation to the provision of financial services. Consideration of proposals and the decision making process is currently removed and without the benefit of local knowledge.

Whilst the promotion of the strengths (and growth) of the tourism industry is the responsibility of Destination Gippsland Inc, local government and State Government agencies , there is an opportunity for a financial institution to develop a tourism industry package of services. This institution would need to have good local knowledge and be aware of industry trends and be responsive to industry issues.

## **9. Tour Operators**

The presence of tour companies touring Gippsland is very limited and there is scope to greatly increase this tourism product. Tour companies should aim to leverage off the natural attractions and have capacity to cater for tour bus groups for activities, meals and accommodation.

## **10. Secretarial and Bookkeeping Services**

A number of tourism business owners have expressed an interest in securing the services of a bookkeeper to maintain their financial records and attend to their reporting requirements (e.g. BAS).

Whilst initially small in number, a bookkeeper with tourism industry knowledge could expand the level of service to business owners across the region. Key requirements of business include competitive pricing and flexibility (e.g. ability to meet out of hours). This could suit a franchise operation, such as Jim's Bookkeepers

## **11. Relief Managers for Tourism Businesses**

Tourism business owners have indicated that the industry needs more relief managers. Many businesses now operate on 24/7 basis and small business owners are left with little leisure time. In addition, tourism businesses have increased in value, hence liability exposure has increased and owners are now reluctant to leave unskilled managers in charge of their businesses.

Opportunities exist for relief managers with industry experience. Specific areas where this opportunity was identified included:

- Lakes Entrance;
- Warragul.

## **12. Telecommunication Services**

The telecommunications infrastructure in many parts of Gippsland is sub standard and in some instances, non-existent. Given the increasing reliance on internet marketing and email transactions, it is important that businesses have access to good telecommunication services.

Another issue is the cost of the service provided. There is a wide variance in the price of services across Gippsland, which creates an opportunity for a service provider to develop a package for tourism business operators across the region. A package could be promoted to businesses in selected areas or across the whole region.

## **13. Sports tours (e.g. golf tours)**

Gippsland has many quality sporting and recreational activity venues. Each municipality has a range of facilities suitable for use by visitors. For example, the golf courses across the region are diverse and many are well known by visitors.

There is an opportunity to develop specialty packages to cater for specific interest groups (e.g. golf, fishing, tennis, motor cross). There are a number of specific events promoted by local government, but few tours.

Specific event information can be obtained from Destination Gippsland Inc or any of the local government Tourism Officers and Events Officers.

## **14. Gippsland Food and Produce Specialty Shops**

One of the greatest strengths of Gippsland is the quality and diversity of the food produced in the region. Apart from the producers' outlets (usually on farms), there are few specialty food and produce shops.

Business opportunities exist to develop specialty shops (either stand alone or in conjunction with other products) to promote and sell food and produce. Existing specialty shops in the region include the food shops in Yarragon, Warragul and Bairnsdale.

A list of Gippsland food and wine growers/manufacturers is available from Agribusiness Gippsland.

## Opportunities for Industry Professional Development

This section of the prospectus lists professional development opportunities that have been identified by tourism business owners and operators in Gippsland. However, these opportunities may not be attractive to the private sector and may be more suited to support by government agencies or local government, on a cost recovery basis.

These opportunities include:

### 1. **Networking Forums and Events – Local and Regional**

The ability for tourism business owners, industry representatives and government to meet and discuss the industry has been identified as a critical activity by the tourism industry. An opportunity exists to host and organise forums, functions or events on a cost recovery basis.

Specialist tourism industry forums could be convened and suitable themes, such as international marketing awards, or cross regional marketing.

### 2. **Leadership Programs for the Industry**

There are few tourism industry leaders in Gippsland and many suffer 'burnout' from expectations and responsibilities. For the industry as a whole to be successful and grow, strong leadership is required at many levels (e.g. region, sub regional and local).

A program should be implemented specifically targeting the development of industry leaders for the tourism industry.

### 3. **Booking Services (for Accommodation and Attractions)**

There is diversity in the size and activities of booking services across Gippsland. Most provide accommodation referral/booking services and a small number take bookings for activities/attractions.

Opportunities exist for the establishment of comprehensive booking services in Gippsland. There may be opportunities for collaboration between municipalities to establish services for a critical mass. There is also an opportunity to involve the private sector in these developments.

### 4. **Development of a 'Who's Who' Directory for the Industry**

There is no single resource that can provide contact information for tourism industry representatives and businesses in Gippsland. This representative information includes B&B's, wine groups, tourism organisations, food groups, Local Government contacts, and attraction/activity owners. This project has provided baseline information in this respect, but it need to be constantly kept up-to-date.

There is a need for the production of a Gippsland Tourism Directory, or a "Who's Who in Tourism in Gippsland". Such a directory will assist outside agencies, private sector companies (e.g. tour operators) and interested parties.

## **5. Investment Attraction Kits**

Investment in tourism infrastructure and attractions is required if Gippsland is to achieve tourism growth and remain a competitive region. Investors and developers need information to facilitate assessment of potential projects. Local and State Government and industry groups should play a key role in updating this information and making it available.

This prospectus should be used as the basis for developing investment attraction kits for the tourism industry at a local, sub-regional and regional level.

## **6. Telecommunication Plans**

For the tourism industry in Gippsland to remain competitive, business owners need to be able to access and use technology. Business owners are aware that consumer's research holiday destinations online and many enquiries and bookings are being conducted online.

An opportunity exists to develop a telecommunication plan for the tourism industry with a preferred supplier. This plan would look at the services that can be provided across Gippsland and the infrastructure requirements, to meet the needs of the tourism industry

## **7. Forum for Dialogue between Land Managers and Industry**

Given the vast areas of public land and areas of high conservation value in Gippsland, there is a need for greater dialogue between land managers and industry.

Key areas for discussion include:

- Promotion of nature and natural attractions;
- Areas for industry development; and
- Ways to meet visitor expectations (e.g. using areas of public land for tourism purposes whilst protecting flora and fauna)

## **8. Programs for Young People (e.g. Mentoring Program)**

There is a limited awareness of the career opportunities within the tourism industry amongst young people. The jobs most commonly seen by young people are the bartending or waiting jobs and most associate these jobs as 'fillers'. Industry needs to promote the availability of careers and potential rewards available in the tourism industry.

An opportunity exists to develop a specialty program to help young people with an interest in the industry. One suggestion is the development of a mentoring program for young people.

## **9. Tourism 'Ambassador' Program**

Successful tourism promotion programs have usually had someone with a profile as the 'Ambassador' for the tourism area (e.g. Daryl Sommers – Northern Territory). Gippsland needs to establish a group of key Ambassadors for the region.

The role of the Ambassadors would be to promote Gippsland outside the region in forums in which they operate (e.g. business groups). One or more of these people may also become the public face of tourism promotion campaigns.

#### **10. Public Infrastructure Development Plan for Tourism Areas**

Public infrastructure requirements for the tourism industry are closely aligned to investment in the region by the private sector. There is a need for the development of a comprehensive public infrastructure development plan setting out key public infrastructure requirements, which will support/enable developments.

This project identified infrastructure needed to support the tourism potential of the region and also identified public sector infrastructure investment that would facilitate private sector development and investment.

## Major Tourism Development Opportunities

The natural environment is a key strength of the region and the natural environment plays an important role in attracting visitors to the region. Future development in Gippsland has a unique opportunity to build on and enhance tourism destinations and increase the strength of Gippsland as a tourism region.

There is a considerable amount of both private and public investment occurring at present in improving coastal infrastructure and nature-based areas and there is an opportunity for new development to leverage off the new demand that will be created out of this investment.

Regional opportunities for tourism development include:

- Large scale conference facilities;
- 5 star accommodation establishments;
- Gourmet/ fine dining/ cafes (in towns);
- Food and wine stores (e.g. local produce delis);
- High quality eco-tourism accommodation;
- Backpacker accommodation;
- Tours and activities leveraging off the natural attractions;
- Operators of adventure tourism products;
- Privately operated transportation (taxis/ buses);
- Quality tourism retail outlets.

The opportunities to develop privately operated eco-tourism accommodation and tours and activities which leverage from natural attractions is closely aligned with the current priorities with Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. The public land managers are prepared to work with private businesses to identify and develop suitable sites adjoining public land for private development.

In particular, the Gippsland Lakes and Mallacoota have potential for private investment in appropriate tourism development. Tourism Victoria has identified these areas as having regional significance in developing Gippsland's tourism product.

Specific sub-regional opportunities include:

### **Baw Baw Shire**

- Large accommodation / conference facilities in Warragul area
- Backpacker/ budget accommodation
- Gourmet produce outlets.

### **Latrobe City**

- 5- star accommodation establishment
- Large scale convention facilities
- Facilities and tours at the Lakes (i.e. Lake Narracan and Hazelwood Pondage)
- Upgrade of the Gippsland Heritage Park
- Heritage trail – linked across Gippsland.

### **Bass Coast Shire**

- Large scale convention and conference facilities (for 300 persons or more)
- Quality tourism retail outlets
- Access to supplies- for a range of quality products (e.g. bedding/cutlery)
- Food and local produce stores (e.g. restaurants, cafes and locally supplied delis)
- Good quality branded accommodation establishments in the coastal towns.

### **South Gippsland Shire**

- Tours and activities leveraging off natural attractions, in particular at Wilson's Promontory and in coastal towns (i.e. Venus Bay, Waratah Bay, Port Welshpool)
- Cultural activities particularly if they are open on weekends and public holidays
- Backpacker accommodation
- Country Guest House or farmstay accommodation (in rural areas)
- 5 star and 4 star hotels or serviced apartments including accommodation catering for large groups and bus tours
- Conference centre/ facilities
- Art galleries and tourist retailing in major towns
- Public transport (bus services/ taxis) operated on a commercial basis
- Restaurants open on weekends and public holidays
- Tourism events, themed to the coastal attractions or food and wine.

### **Wellington Shire**

- Food and wine outlets
- Adventure tourism operators (e.g. kayaking/ canoes)

- 5 star accommodation establishment
- Tourism retailing and services supporting the Gippsland Lakes and 90 Mile Beach areas
- High quality conference centre
- Restaurants that offer a dining experience- local food and wine.

### **East Gippsland Shire**

- Increase mooring facilities on Gippsland Lakes
- Development of seafood experience including events and a retail outlet
- Wildlife and flora viewing experiences along the Sydney-Melbourne Coastal Drive
- Large scale conference and meeting facilities (conference packages including accommodation, tours, transport, entertainment and meeting services)
- Niche events focusing on natural attractions, e.g. Wilderness Bike Ride
- Tourism product associated with the East Gippsland Walks Strategy
- Commercial flights into East Gippsland to reduce travel time
- Tour product and packaging associated with the East Gippsland Rail Trail
- Food and Wine opportunities including restaurants and cafés (particularly a restaurant in Mallacoota)
- 4-star wilderness lodge
- All weather facilities- indoor/ kids activities
- Boating (charter and tours).

## **Industry Structure and Contact Details**

### **For information and enquiries about this prospectus:**

Mr Chris Buckingham, Chairman, Destination Gippsland Incorporated.

ph 5142 3333

### **Gippsland Shire Councils**

#### *Baw Baw*

Ms Gabrielle Vaughan, Tourism and Marketing Officer, ph 5624 2522

Mr Peter Kulich, Economic Development Officer, ph 5624 2523

#### *Latrobe City*

Ms Linda Brock, Tourism Co-ordinator, ph 1300 367 700

Ms Allison Jones, Manager Economic Development, ph 1300 367 700

#### *Bass Coast*

Mr Ken Hore, Tourism Manager, 5971 2211

Ms Stephanie Symes, Economic Development Officer, 5971 2211

#### *South Gippsland*

Mr Christian Stefani, Tourism Co-ordinator, ph 5662 9322

Mr Ken Frazer, Economic Development Officer, ph 56629277

#### *Wellington*

Mr Frank Norden, Tourism Development Officer, ph 1300 366 244

Mr Rob Ashworth, Economic Development Executive, ph 1300 366 244

#### *East Gippsland*

Mr Phil Rickards, Economic Development/ Tourism Co-ordinator, ph 51539500

Mr Brett Lynn, Manager Economic Development ph 51539500

## **Local Tourism Associations**

### **Baw Baw**

*Gippsland Gourmet Country Tourism Association, PO Box 897, WARRAGUL*

*Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association, info@starhotel.com.au*

*Yarragon and District Tourism Association Inc. PO Box 139, YARRAGON*

### **Latrobe City**

*"Destination Latrobe", Tourism Co-ordinator Latrobe City Council, PO Box 264 MORWELL ph 1300 367 700*

### **Bass Coast**

*Grantville and District Business and Tourism Association Inc. PO Box 40, GRANTVILLE Ph 5678 8110*

*Inverloch Tourism Association, PO Box 406, INVERLOCH Ph 5674 5661*

*Phillip Island Tourism Association, PO Box 100, COWES Ph 59522729*

*San Remo District Association of Traders and Tourism, 34 Boys Home Road, SAN REMO Ph 5956 7177*

*Wonthaggi Business Association, PO Box 565 WONTHAGGI Ph 5672 3343*

### **South Gippsland**

*Mirboo Country Development, PO Box 350, MIRBOO NORTH VIC Ph 56681340*

*Prom Coast Tourism Inc, PO Box 272, FOSTER Ph 56821072*

*Toora & District Community Progress PO Box 45, TOORA Ph 5686 2257*

## **Wellington**

*Rosedale Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Secretary, Post Office Box 9, ROSEDALE*

*Yarram and District Traders and Tourism, Vice President, P O Box 136, YARRAM 3971 Ph 5182 6223*

*Dargo High Country Tourism, Secretary, Kings Road DARGO Ph 5140 1251*

*Maffra Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, P.O. Box 161, MAFFRA Ph 5147 1344*

*Port Albert Progress Association, Treasurer, C/- Port Albert Seafoods, Wharf Street PORT ALBERT 3971, Ph 5183 2432*

*Stratford Business & Community Initiatives Group Secretary, P.O Box 172, STRATFORD Ph 5145 6588*

*Sale & District Tourism Association, President, 21 Turnbull Street, SALE, Ph: 5144 7210*

*Wellington Tourism Advisory Board, Chair, 88 Sarena Parade, ROBERTSONS BEACH Ph 5183 2302*

*Wellington Gippsland Tourism and Promotions Inc President, 117 Johnson Street, MAFFRA Ph 03 5147 1600*

*Ninety Mile Beach Tourism & Development Group Inc, Secretary, 3 Cranswick Crescent, SALE Ph 5144 4579*

## **East Gippsland**

*Bemm River Progress & Improvement Association, Inc, c/- Bemm River Post Office, BEMM RIVER Ph 5158-4216*

*Bendoc Progress & Improvement Association, PO Box 50 BENDOC Ph (02) 64581423 / (02) 64581402*

*Bonang Progress Association C/- Bonang Post Office BONANG Ph (02) 64580285*

*Bruthen & District Citizens Association c/- Bruthen Post Office, BRUTHEN Ph 5157-5732*

*Bruthen Business and Tourism Association, c/- Bruthen Post Office, BRUTHEN Ph 51575586 / 5157-5665*

*Buchan Business & tourism Association c/- Buchan Post Office, Buchan. Ph 51559421*

*Cann River Progress & Improvement Association c/- Cann River Post Office, CANN RIVER Ph 51586328*

*Gelantipy Progress Association c/- Gelantipy Post Office, GELANTIPY Ph 51550220*

*Lakes Entrance Business and Tourism Association, P.O. Box 486, LAKES ENTRANCE Ph 51554243*

*Mallacoota & District Business and Tourism Association, c/- Mallacoota Post Office, MALLACOOTA Ph 51580508*

*Metung Business and Tourism Association, c/- Metung Post Office, METUNG Ph 51562750*

*Twin-Rivers Business & Tourism Association, Inc. (TRBTA) P.O. Box 61, NICHOLSON Ph 51564146*

*Nowa Nowa Community Development Group, c/- Nowa Nowa Post Office, NOWA NOWA Ph 51557277*

*Nungurner Community Action Group c/- Metung Post Office, METUNG Ph 51563231*

*Omeo Business and Tourism Association, c/- Omeo Post Office, OMEO Ph 51591453*

*Orbost Chamber of Commerce and Industry, P.O. Box 558, ORBOST Ph 51541999*

*Paynesville Business & Tourism Association c/- Paynesville Post Office, PAYNESVILLE Ph 51566766*

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