



media release

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Corporate Centre
PO Box 1618
Bairnsdale
Victoria 3875
5153 9500
feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au
www.egipps.vic.gov.au

ECONOMIC PLAN IS AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE SAYS DAN O'BRIEN

For immediate release – Thursday, 17 May 2007

The new East Gippsland Economic Development Strategic Plan was ambitious but also achievable, according to Dan O'Brien, CEO of Regional Development Victoria.

Speaking at the recent launch of the plan in Bairnsdale Mr O'Brien said it provided a balanced, strategic approach to the fundamental issues facing the region – issues of industry development, growth, infrastructure, and advocacy.

"It looks at the strength of the region's industries – agriculture, horticulture, food and wine, timber and forestry, fishing, manufacturing and tourism," he said.

"It looks at the business capabilities and capacity for growth – particularly in Bairnsdale, and also in other towns and it looks at strategies to increase awareness of the East Gippsland "brand" outside but also within the region."

Mr O'Brien said that all up it was an excellent plan that will help the region to better define itself and be able to engage with potential investors, existing businesses and all levels of government to capitalise on the many opportunities that exist here.

"But it is only a start – the hard work hasn't begun ... and the hard work is going to involve more than just Council officers – it is going to involve Councillors, business, community and governments – state and Federal to be all on the same page," he said.

Prepared by the East Gippsland Economic Development Advisory Board the new plan provides a long-term, strategic framework for economic development in East Gippsland.

It aims to attract investment in new and existing activities, to facilitate appropriate and sustainable development as well as plan and coordinate partnerships between those involved in economic development and the enhancement of East Gippsland's competitive capability.

Shire CEO Steve Kozlowski said the plan recognised a wide range of key stakeholders of which the East Gippsland Shire Council is but one.

“Within the plan’s vision the Shire provides leadership and services that support sustainable economic development along with a range of agencies, service providers and industry associations, businesses and the community,” he said.

“In order to achieve its aims it is essential that there is a wide engagement of all key stakeholders.”

Welcoming the audience of more than 80 people Mayor Cr Mendy Urie said the tyranny of distance was lessening with improved road access, the rail service, and hopefully, in the not too distant future, a regular air service.

“Add to this communications technology that enables people, particularly in the service industries, to work effectively at a distance from the capital cities,” she said.

“Then add the sound industrial base in our food growing and processing industries, the growing marine sector and the buoyant housing and industrial construction sector.

“Couple all this with natural assets that are growing our tourism industry as well as attracting people to the region to make their future.

“Our need is to capitalise on all these factors in a planned and strategic way so that we enjoy the rewards of a stronger economy coupled with the pleasures of a regional lifestyle.”

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Further information – Steve Kozlowski, 5153 9500