

Buchan and District

Into the Future

Report on the 2011 'Our Livelihood' forum

May 2011

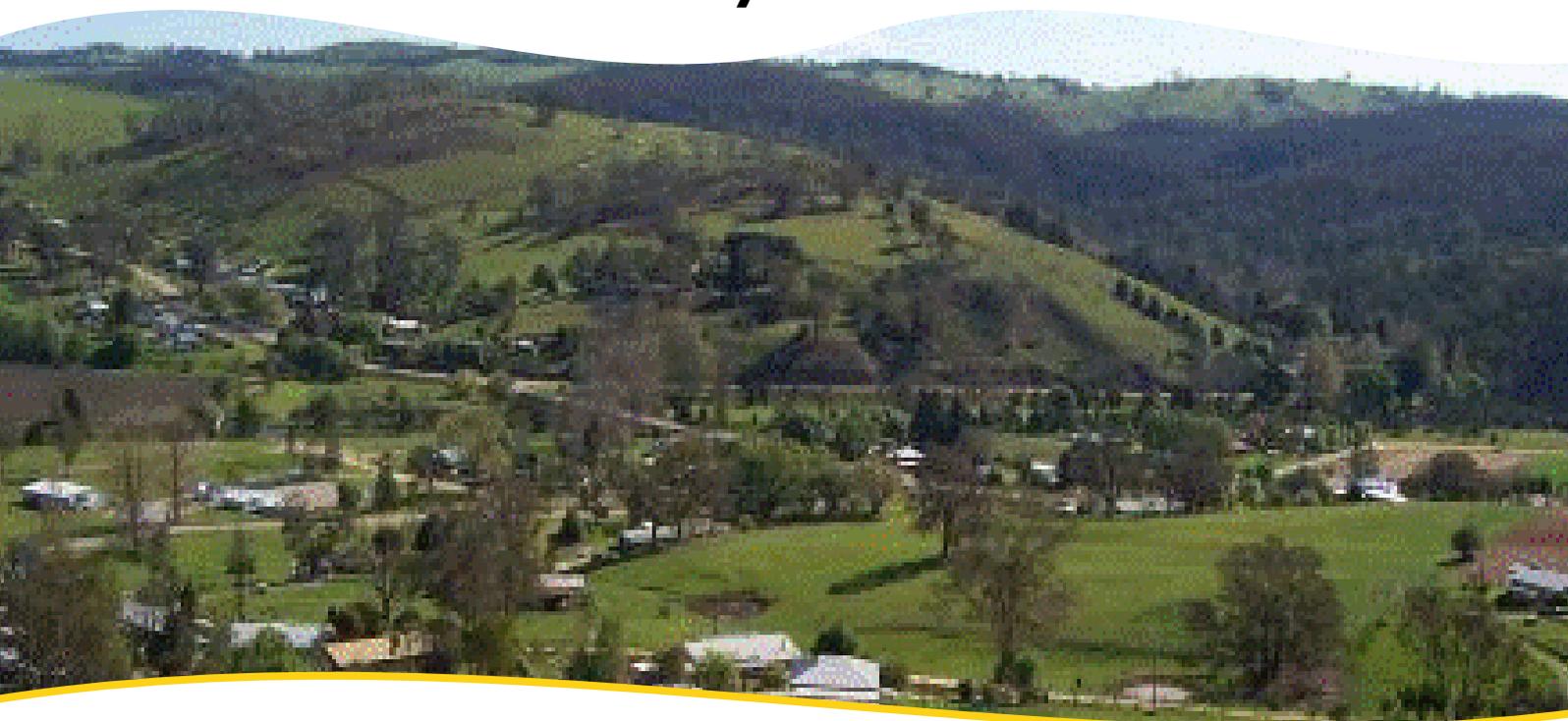


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Introduction



Our Place, Our Plan, Our Future

East Gippsland Shire Council is facilitating the development of community plans across the shire through its community planning program *OurPlace OurPlan OurFuture*.

OurPlace OurPlan OurFuture outlines the principles that will underpin the development of community plans in the shire and the key steps that will be taken in the process of developing and implementing community plans.

The resources the Shire is able to bring to the development of community plans includes funding the development of a Community Consultation Report to initiate the process that will identify priorities, strategies and actions for inclusion in the plan, funds to support local training and advice for communities, support for community engagement events and the production of the community plan.

The Shire will also access seeding funds on behalf of communities, to help 'kick start' local initiatives.

OurPlace OurPlan OurFuture is supported by the Victorian Government through the provision of a Victorian Community Support grant.

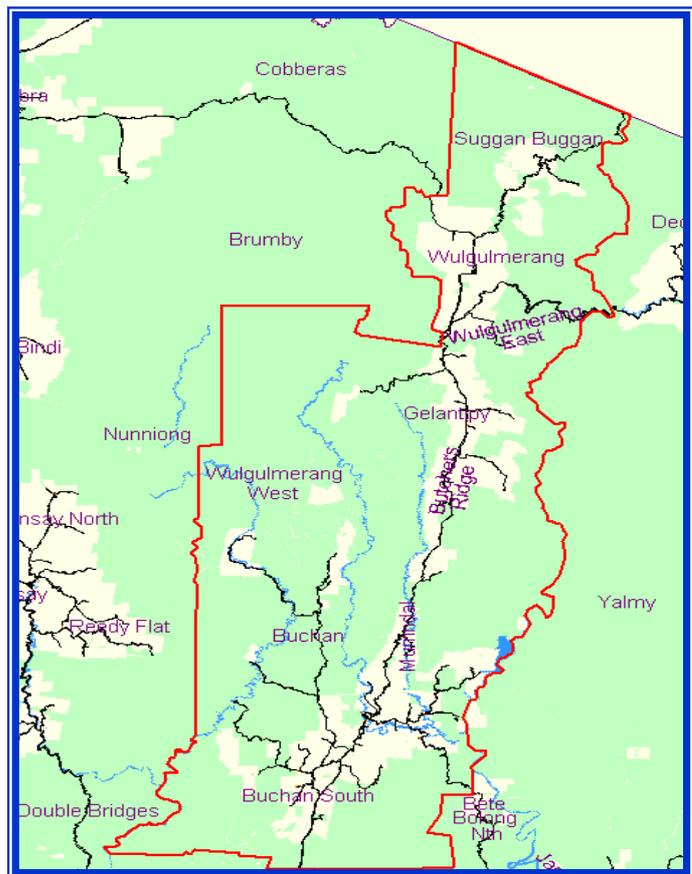
For more information on *OurPlace OurPlan OurFuture* visit the East Gippsland Shire Council website at www.egipps.vic.gov.au or telephone (03) 5153 9500.

Community Responses

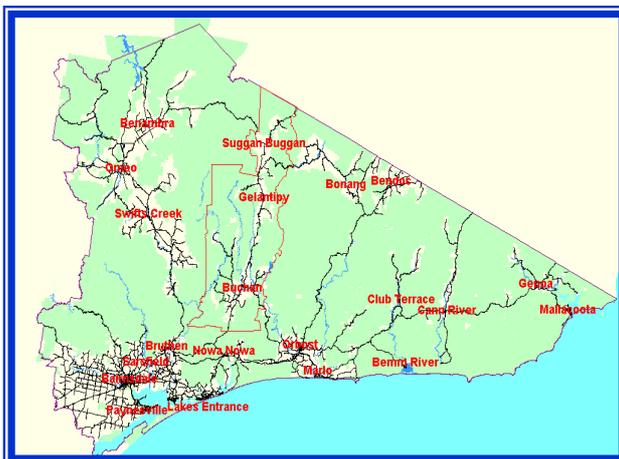
What you told us you want for the future of East Gippsland

In exploring the long term vision for the future of East Gippsland, you told us that:

- Supporting our communities, making them more cohesive and environmentally sustainable, and enabling people within them to live healthy, productive and fulfilling lives is important to you.
- A sustainable vision for the future of East Gippsland recognises that the environment underpins everything we seek to achieve for our community and its economy; and
- A vital, prosperous and sustainable economy for East Gippsland depends on recognising and maintaining the region's competitive advantages, including the quality of its environment, the diversity of its primary produce and the skills of its workforce.



Geographic area covered by the Buchan and district forum



East Gippsland Shire Council geographic area

What you told us about Buchan and district

These statements are taken from and informed by community forums held in the Buchan and district area in 2010/11 and from the Buchan and District Community Consultation Report. A copy of this report is available on the internet at www.buchan.vic.au/communityplan

The values that underpin community life in Buchan and district are:

- We live in a caring, friendly, supportive and safe community, with strong community spirit.
- We are supported by an active and diverse range of community groups, and activities.
- We have a strong linkage to the areas heritage and history.
- We have a range of community, health and education services to support our community at all ages and stages.
- We are surrounded by a natural environment of great beauty and diversity including the location of iconic tourist destinations.
- There are opportunities for participation in a range of sporting and recreation activities through our local sporting facilities.
- We have a business infrastructure which provides for both local and tourist needs.

The areas in which the community is doing well are:

- The community is family friendly and welcoming.
- People are innovative and resourceful, keen to see Buchan and district as a “destination”.
- There is a strong connection with the natural environment and there is opportunity for developing eco friendly tourism and wilderness experiences.
- An iconic natural feature-Buchan Caves draws visitors into the Buchan and district area.
- Visitors are keen to support the area –are loyal and enthusiastic.
- Accommodation has increased and improved.
- Local employment is being achieved, although still room for improvement.

'Our Livelihood' forum

Held at the Buchan Recreation Pavilion on Wednesday 16 March 2011.

Guest speakers

'Where the Caves are Headed',
Dale Calnin – Ranger in Charge Buchan Caves, Parks Victoria

'Farming – Future Trends'
Sue Webster – Executive Officer, Agribusiness Gippsland

'Is There a New Normal?'
Michael McCallum – Managing Partner, Global Foresight Network

Who was there



The 'Our Livelihood' forum attracted strong local interest

Approximately 50 people attended, aged from 5 years old to 80 plus.

They represented Buchan and district local Industry and businesses, WWOOF - Australia, Buchan Backpackers, farming, health and education services and community groups.

Other organisational stakeholders present included Outward Bound, the Department of Primary Industries, Victorian Farmers Federation, Country Fire Authority, Agribusiness Gippsland, Parks Victoria (Buchan Caves) and Gippsland Lakes Community Health.

East Gippsland Shire Council was represented by the Mayor, Councillors and staff.



Local students also attended the forum

Purpose of the 'Our Livelihood' forum

- To initiate a process to place information from the Community Consultation Report into a more strategic framework (community plan).
- To inform people about relevant agency roles and challenges in relation to the forum topic.
- To identify local responses to assumptions made in relation to the forum topic.
- To provide people with information about the processes and timelines for developing the community plan for Buchan and district.

Some of the noted achievements since the July 2010 Community Consultation Report are:

- Buchan South Avenue of Honour significant upgrade and installation of monument.
- Completion of the Buchan Streetscape project.
- Significant renovation of the Butter Factory.
- Buchan Bush Nursing Association has secured regular General Practitioner and podiatry care visiting hours.
- The 2010/2011 high tourist season has seen the largest number of visitors to Buchan Caves in over 10 years.

Strategic outcomes

The communities of Buchan and district have identified a range of areas that need to be addressed going into the future. These can be separated into strategic outcomes that are focussed on the longer term and questions of a more immediate service delivery nature.¹

Strategic Outcomes	Service Delivery
Increased employment opportunities for community.	Rezoning land for development within township and farming land within the district.
Safety in times of emergencies.	Improved infrastructure and financial support for Health Services.
Increased population base, attracting families to live within the district.	Improved support and funding for Educational Services.
New businesses attracted to the area.	Main road from Murrindal to Red Knob improved to address safety concerns.
The ageing population is provided with appropriate infrastructure, funding and skilled employees.	Soil erosion – tree planting projects.
Dealing with ever increasing fuel costs.	Communications upgrading TV, Radio, Mobile phone and Internet access.
Sustainable water availability and quality.	
The community has an understanding of the effects of Climate Change.	
Timber industry sustainability.	
Farming sustainability.	
Businesses are attracted to become active members of the BBTA.	
More volunteers are attracted to the various committees of management for succession planning and good governance.	

¹ For a complete list of contributions to discussions at the Buchan and District into the Future 'Our Livelihood' forum please refer to Appendix 1.

We have matched what the communities of Buchan and district generally see as contributors towards these strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcomes	Contributors
Increased employment opportunities for community.	There are opportunities to improve and increase residential and business development.
Safety in times of emergencies.	<p>Improved communications technology will make us safer and better informed.</p> <p>There will be a need for the continuation of planning for safety procedures to address a changing climate.</p> <p>The need for road maintenance will increase due to more tourist traffic.</p>
Increased population base, attracting families to live within the district.	<p>Improved community facilities and services will increase peoples' opportunity to be involved in social and economic aspects of community life.</p> <p>Our heritage and history will continue to be an important part of our identity.</p>
New businesses attracted to the area.	<p>Attracting new businesses to the area will improve the local economy.</p> <p>The natural environment will continue to be used to attract more tourists.</p> <p>Increased tourism will be generated through events and the natural environment.</p> <p>Packaging Buchan and district as a destination through partnerships with local operators will promote more tourism and business interest.</p> <p>Population growth and diversity in Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance will increase the number of tourists of broader ethnic backgrounds.</p>
The ageing population is provided with appropriate infrastructure, funding and skilled employees.	The population will continue to age gradually.
Dealing with ever increasing fuel costs.	<p>The cost of fuel & utilities will continue to rise.</p> <p>There will be benefits gained from more</p>

Strategic Outcomes	Contributors
	sustainable living and actions towards a more self sufficient community.
Sustainable water availability and quality.	Partnerships between State agencies and community groups to retain and protect the natural environment will increase.
The community has an understanding of the effects of Climate Change.	Rising sea levels will mean a push for tree-change over sea-change.
Timber industry sustainability	The natural environment will continue to be sustained and protected.
Farming sustainability.	Family farms will continue to decline in terms of their capacity to provide full employment.
Businesses are attracted to become active members of the BBTA.	Improved community facilities and services will increase peoples' opportunity to be involved in social and economic aspects of community life.
More volunteers are attracted to the various committees of management for succession planning and good governance.	Sports, arts and cultural organisations will continue to require new volunteers to manage them.

Appendices

Appendix I – Group Responses to Workshop Themes

Group responses to the question:

'What Factors Influence our local economy?'

- In the areas of Tourism, New Investment, Marketing, Small Business Growth, Industry Development and Innovation and Technology.

Groups at 6 tables explored this question under the following topics.

There were a number of points raised that related to more than one area.

Tourism

Areas where tourism is doing well in Buchan and district
Local employment is being achieved to some extent
Buchan Caves is a huge draw card which can be utilised by greater communication between town & caves Build on advertising of Caves (Parks Victoria)
'Outward Bound' staff and clients use the Bush Nursing service and bus, petrol in town and support the district where they can.
Accommodation has improved recently (log cabins, B+B)
There is a great deal of enthusiasm and loyalty of visitors who support Buchan and District
Natural environment – Snowy River, McKillops bridge
Buchan Bus N Freight is an asset to transport tourists, Wwoofers (Willing Workers on Organic Farms – Australia) etc
There is good signage & information about opportunities available
Publicity about other areas can be increased on existing promotion
Good winter climate
Good roads

Considerations or how can Buchan and district build on tourism opportunities
Market diversity, increase options for visitors
<p>Bus access is an issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are unable to park at an accommodation venue • Bus drivers not aware of Bus stop
The whole community could be adding value to the service of the caves and using the caves as pivot point (food, farm produce)
<p>Utilise the concept that it is a 'destination' not through traffic.</p> <p>Buchan and district packaged as a Destination would lead to sustainability of businesses if they hinged off each other</p> <p>Focus on a destination theme and advertise through radio and TV</p>
Infrastructure and roads cannot support greatly increased traffic
Challenge to keep tourists for a complete local experience, stay an extra night
Caves Brochure could include local facilities and services
Not on food & wine trail
Public liability costs are a disincentive to small business

New Investment

Areas where new investment is doing well in Buchan
WWOOFF (Australia) "Willing Workers on Organic Farms" started in W-Tree and consistently employs 5 people and attracts international visitors to the area.
Buchan Caves employs 8 full-time, 10 casual and 15 seasonal staff from Buchan and district. They also service local contractors.
New owners of businesses such as the Local Roadhouse have confidence in new business being attracted.
Unimin Ltd - Buchan Lime Quarry is a consistent employer with room for possible expansion.

Perceived challenges to attracting new investment
Roads and infrastructure cannot support greatly increased traffic Road not sealed through to Jindabyne (Barry Way) Coach drivers don't know bus stop is there
Seasonal tourism makes it hard for local business to survive Public liability insurance costs are a disincentive for small businesses Disconnection between people stopping caves and not stopping in town
Concerns of safety around fires
Ageing Population
Limited access to Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• access to mobile phone and internet coverage• satellite internet and digital TV• high speed broadband
Waste water infrastructure needs improving
At times, water supply may be an issue
Some resources and raw materials are not available locally
Lack of skilled workforce
Caves brochure doesn't include local facilities

Marketing

Areas key to marketing
Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buchan Caves are iconic with 60,000 visitors per annum. Broader Buchan and district can build on this• Opportunity to introduce people to wilderness•
Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local product
Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eucalypts• Purity of the environment
Family friendly town
Promote strong Aboriginal Heritage and Culture – cultural tourism
Mining and other successful industries can be marketed as illustrating diversity of the region and also indicate the possibilities for further investment
Existing Website has the potential to market to a larger audience but the message is incomplete.
Cross promotion with Buchan Caves and Main Street businesses

Challenges to marketing
Distance to travel
Existing perceptions of dangerous roads
No through traffic – how to attract people beyond Buchan township
Changing perception of Buchan Caves as a day trip.

Small Business Growth

Ideas to support Small Business growth
Link in with Outward Bound
Recognise Tourism market and build opportunities to capture and keep \$\$
Eco tourism resorts – high end 'Wilderness and Comfort'
Wilderness experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Toe in the water' opportunities• Bigger/higher end adventure•
Value adding to farms through tourism
Tourism with Education options around: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fossils• Rainforest• Culture•
Embrace e-business for niche markets and products. Such as, honey, fossils
Broad product range in one place (business centre)
Growing Community arts program
McKillops Bridge drive development

Considerations for Small Business Growth
Cost of developing accommodation, places to eat, venues etc
The distance and time it takes to get to Buchan
Cost of fuel will increase
Limited employment opportunities to supplement business
Limited communication access
Population is decreasing
Information and information centre not easy to find

Appendix II – ‘Our Livelihood’ forum Agenda

Buchan and District Into the Future ‘Our Livelihood’ Agenda



Buchan Recreation Pavilion
Wednesday 16 March 2011

BBQ	6.00 pm
Welcome Cr Dick Ellis, Mayor	6.45 pm
Forum Outline Louise Avery - Community Planning Coordinator, EGSC	6.50 pm
Where the Caves are Headed Dale Galnin – Ranger in Charge Buchan Caves, Parks Victoria	6.55 pm
Farming – Future Trends Sue Webster – Executive Officer, Agribusiness Gippsland	7.20 pm
Is There a New Normal? Michael McAllum – Managing Partner, Global Foresight Network	7.45 pm
Small Group Discussion Positive & negative influences on our livelihood	8.05 pm
Next Steps Louise Avery - Community Planning Coordinator, EGSC	8.45 pm
Close Cr Peter Neal	8.55 pm