



EAST GIPPSLAND
ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY
2008–2013



Acknowledgements

The East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy comes as a result of hard work by individuals within Council and from external agencies as part of an extensive engagement and consultation process. In particular the Strategy draws on expertise of representatives of partner organisations who attended a series of workshops designed to compile resources and build information-sharing capacity. The development of this strategy would not have been achieved had these partnerships and linkages not been formed. For this we thank: the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (EGCMA), East Gippsland Water (EGW), Gippsland Ports, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), Landcare, Trust for Nature (TFN), Coastcare, Greening Australia, Parks Victoria, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Wellington Shire Council, Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group (GRWMG), Gippsland Coastal Board (GCB) and Gippsland Waste Services.

We would like to thank all those who served as members of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board including: Cr. Jane Rowe (Chair), Cr. Dale Fisher, Cr. Robert Nettleton, Russell Broomhall (EGCMA), Mike Timpano (DSE), David Willington (DSE), Andrew Brown, Dr. Patricia Fox, Brett Millington, Michael Oxer and Eric Sjerp. The Advisory Board gives a special thanks to Ian Try for facilitating the consultation workshops, Meredith Fletcher and Helen Martin for their invaluable advice.

We would also like to thank all those individuals and agencies that gave their time and expert advice to the development of the East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy. We enjoyed the experience and are grateful that you formed part of the process.

Victorian Local Sustainability Accord



This project was funded through the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund under the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord.

Published by the East Gippsland Shire Council 2008.



Our Vision

“That East Gippsland will retain its unique environment. We are all learning how we can tread a little more lightly in our environment. We want to make changes that will help us do our job in the best way we can. By doing this, Council aspires to help all East Gippslanders to live more sustainably.

Together we can make a difference”.



EAST GIPPSLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2008–2013

Our Vision

Executive Summary _____	1
1. The Strategy _____	3
2. Toward Environmental Sustainability _____	8
2.1. Land Use and Development _____	10
2.2. Biodiversity _____	14
2.3. Water Consumption and Quality _____	20
2.4. Energy and Greenhouse _____	24
2.5. Waste Management _____	28
2.6. Economic Development _____	30
3. Appendices _____	32

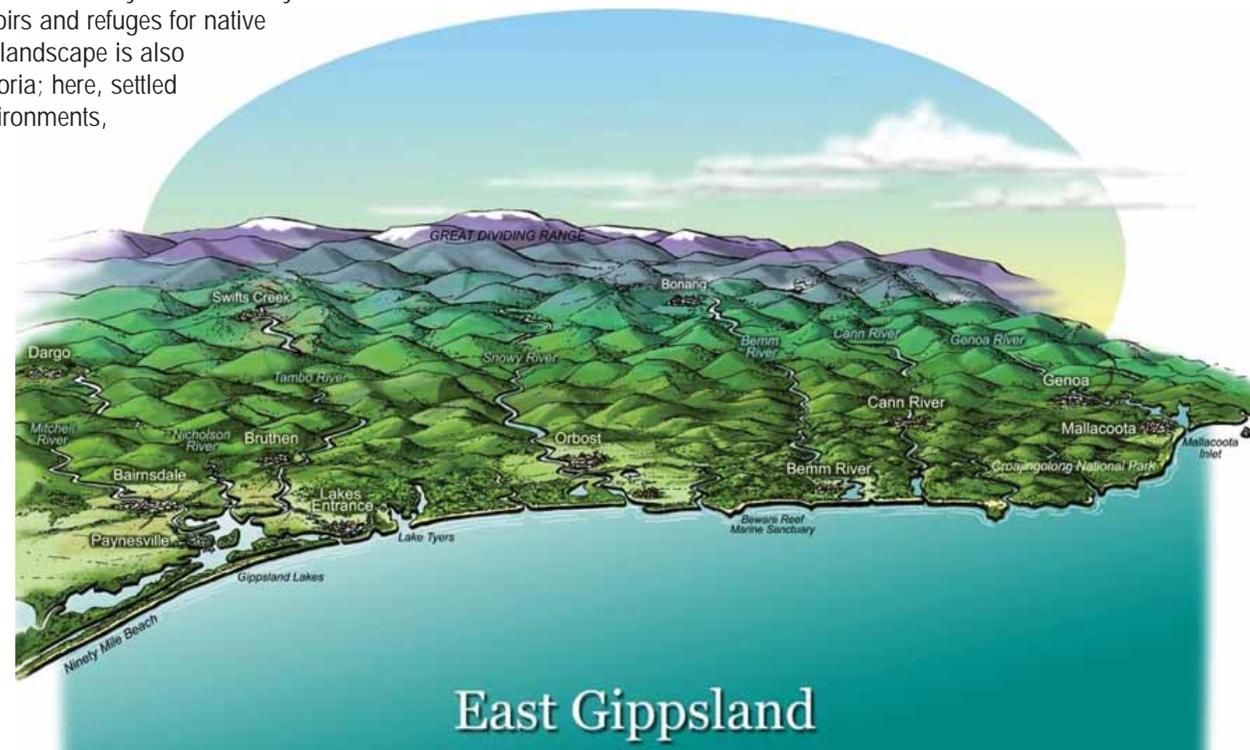
Executive Summary

Regional Profile

East Gippsland is a magnificent place to live, work and play. Our environment features an extensive coastline and lake and river systems with diverse landforms and distinct vegetation types. The region encompasses alpine and sub-alpine environments, forested hills, fertile river valleys, lakes and beaches and extensive Red Gum plains. The diversity of natural systems and abundance of biodiversity within East Gippsland have been recognised as unique.

The region features natural landscapes and their ecosystems that occur intact from alpine environments to the ocean. The extent and diversity of these ecosystems make East Gippsland one of the great reservoirs and refuges for native biodiversity in the country. The pattern of the landscape is also the opposite to that of most of the rest of Victoria; here, settled areas are islands within a sea of natural environments, rather than the other way around.

Tucked away in the far eastern corner of Victoria, this region offers a range of living and working environments from coastal locations to the high country, regional centres to isolated rural communities. The high level of environmental amenity of the places where people live and work in East Gippsland is a very important element of the attractiveness and liveability of the municipality. Our natural spaces attract a range of visitors to the area and has become a popular retirement destination for many people who have experienced the beauty and intrinsic natural value of the area.

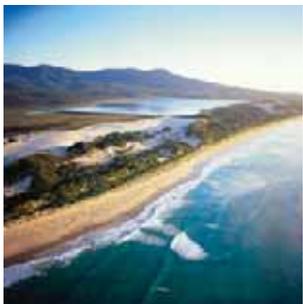


East Gippsland. Image design by Colin Suggett, courtesy of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

Snapshot

- The second largest municipality in Victoria (21,051 square kilometres) with almost 75% of land publicly owned.
- Small population base spread across 37 distinct communities, although undergoing rapid population growth in coastal areas.
- Encompasses seven National Parks including Errinundra and Croajingolong.
- Includes iconic places such as the Snowy River, Ninety Mile Beach, the high country and the Gippsland Lakes.
- Rich in cultural heritage and home to the second largest Indigenous population of local government areas in Victoria.
- Large areas of old growth forest, and home to many rare and threatened species and vegetation communities.
- Various natural resource-based industries including agriculture, fishing, forestry and tourism.
- First Shire in Gippsland to sign the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord.

“Council acknowledges the importance of reducing our impact on our environment and acknowledges its leadership role in building community awareness and responsibility for changing the way in which we utilise resources. East Gippsland is indeed a very special place that needs to be protected and rehabilitated. Without a healthy environment we have nothing”.



Today, our society is becoming more aware of its dependence on the environment and is developing a greater understanding of the impacts human activities are having on cultural and environmental values. The place we will be leaving for our children may be drastically different from the one we encounter today unless we give serious consideration to our rights, roles and responsibilities concerning environmental protection and repair.

As resource users and heavily reliant on the natural environment for its everyday operations, East Gippsland Shire Council accepts the obligation to maintain, protect, and enhance the region's natural environment for a more stable future. We can do this by using our resources more efficiently and by reducing our everyday impacts. As we progress along this path, Council wishes to encourage the people of East Gippsland to do the same.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the region and their enduring relationship with country. Council aspires to strengthen our partnerships with Indigenous peoples and groups and to facilitate their participation in management processes for land and natural resources. We recognise Australia's rich cultural heritage and aim to encourage integrated decision-making now and in the future.

The East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013 (the Strategy) presents a local government perspective on the issues to be confronted in working towards environmental sustainability in East Gippsland and will assist Council in responding to the community and to government initiatives in these areas. The Strategy has been developed through an extensive consultation process involving stakeholders, environmental and cultural groups, government agencies and community members, all of which have provided invaluable advice on the many issues identified within the Strategy.

The Strategy highlights Council's progress on major considerations for environmental sustainability - including biodiversity, water quality and consumption, greenhouse gas emission and waste generation, among others and identifies key actions to support our movement toward more sustainable operations.

Understanding that we all have a role to play in curbing our environmental impact is the first step to changing the way we conduct ourselves within our environment. Council has an important role in engaging and working with East Gippsland residents and visitors to build this awareness and to move toward environmental sustainability. East Gippsland Shire Council encourages our partners, industry, businesses, community groups and individuals to respond collectively by reducing our everyday impacts and to secure the future for the generations to come.



1. The Strategy

The Strategy outlines East Gippsland Shire's position on issues relating to the protection, preservation and enhancement of our environment. It consolidates the Shire's existing achievements, policies and plans about environmental sustainability.

The key objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Ensure Council makes the pursuit of environmental sustainability a priority when undertaking its operations and fulfilling its responsibilities,
- Ensure Council develops new, and strengthens existing, partnerships to effectively deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes,
- Ensure Council and the people of East Gippsland are informed on ways to better protect, enhance and enjoy our unique environment,
- Promote collective responsibility for environmental sustainability by engaging community and supporting change.

Definitions

The Strategy uses the following definitions:

- Environment – Natural and built.
- Sustainability – To ensure the protection and repair of ecological processes upon which our lifestyles depend for environmental, social and economic benefit – today and for the future.

Reflections

Today we realise that our wellbeing is inextricably linked to the health of our environment and recognise the need for a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability. Government, industry and community focus has changed and a range of government policies have promoted greater understanding of human-induced environmental impacts and acted to protect and conserve those environmental values that remain. Despite this cultural change in our relationship with the land, the health of our waterways, land and biodiversity continues to decline. Faced with the additional pressures of population growth, changes in patterns of consumption and potential impacts associated with climate change we seek new ways of understanding our environment and are becoming more unified in our approach to preserve our spaces of natural and cultural significance.

“We recognise that the way human activities have changed since European settlement has contributed to a decline in natural systems and landscape values in the region.

Over time, government, industry and the community have progressed from a relationship that impacts upon the environment to one that seeks to understand and manage the processes that threaten it”.

The Context of Change

The emergence of concern for environmental sustainability flows from an understanding that the demands of human activity and growth placed on the Earth's systems are far greater than that which the Earth can support. Various groups have known the widespread distribution of environmental stress indicators, caused by human activity, for a long time. In more recent times this awareness has extended to the broader community as the declining quality of air, water, natural resources and biodiversity has become more evident. Recognition, that human activity has caused significant global warming and of the potential consequences of the resulting climate change, has bolstered societal concerns.

In 1980 the World Conservation Strategy was developed and drew attention to the near limitless ability of human capacity to build and destroy. Subsequently this document called for global efforts to mitigate the destruction of Earth's ability to support life. In 1992 specific principles for sustainable development were established by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (the Earth Summit), held in Rio de Janeiro. The Earth Summit resulted in the development of Agenda 21 and outlined specific responsibility for local government to improve local environmental sustainability.

“In more recent times this awareness has extended to the broader community as the declining quality of air, water, natural resources and biodiversity has become more evident”.

The Victorian government subsequently developed a partnership initiative designed to strengthen the cooperative delivery of local and state sustainability objectives, through the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord (the Accord) 2005. East Gippsland Shire became a signatory to the Accord in 2007 and with the help of the state, has accepted the challenge to produce an environmental sustainability strategy for the East Gippsland Shire Council.

Notwithstanding legislative and political obligations for change, East Gippsland Shire Council accepts, broadly, the drivers of change as:

- Altered perceptions of, and relationship to, the environment,
- Recognition of our reliance on nature,
- Awareness of current and projected environmental impacts,
- Shared concern for the integrity of our environment,
- Widespread desire for a new land management ethic,
- Confidence that people can modify behaviour to preserve and enhance our environment.

Additionally East Gippsland Shire identified 'Environment' as one of the six strategic objectives within the East Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2006–2010. A priority outcome of the Plan is to...

‘Develop and implement an Environment Strategy’.

The Living Strategy

The Strategy is a living and evolving document that provides East Gippsland Shire with a framework to achieve development that is ecologically sustainable. The document is predominantly a directional strategy for the East Gippsland Shire Council and will result in the delivery of outcomes from the Council Plan and other relevant sustainability-related plans and policies.

The Strategy, developed in conformity with the principles of the Accord, draws on information provided by the community and key stakeholder groups such as the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). It aims to strengthen co-operative efforts between East Gippsland Shire Council, its partners, the people of East Gippsland and the Victorian government for the environmental sustainability of East Gippsland.

More specifically the Strategy aims to:

- Identify the key environmental issues facing the region of East Gippsland,
- Develop priority actions that address the identified issues,
- Celebrate the sustainability achievements of East Gippsland Shire Council,
- Collate existing plans and programs within Council,
- Identify gaps within Council that need attention,
- Identify partnerships to further improve sustainability outcomes within East Gippsland,
- Encourage local action on global issues,
- Ensure that land use and development that occurs as a result of Council's planning decisions causes minimal environmental impacts.

The Strategy in conjunction with the Accord aims to sustain our environment by committing to the following principles:

- Build a shared understanding,
- Establish shared local goals and priorities,
- Develop long-term strategic resource allocation and funding,
- Pursue alignment and cooperation in service delivery,
- Improve procedures for regular, effective evaluation and review.

The Strategy includes over 12 priority objectives and 71 key actions that are focused around the following themes:

1. Biodiversity – maintaining and restoring our natural assets,
2. Water, Energy and Waste – using our resources more effectively,
3. Land Use and Economic Development – reducing our everyday environmental impacts.

The Role of the Strategy

East Gippsland Shire Council is responsible for many activities that impact our environment, including waste and recycling services and construction and maintenance of infrastructure such as roads and bridges. It is also the responsible land manager for large areas of public land. In addition, Council administers the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and enforces state and local laws relating to land use planning and environmental protection. Land use decision-making by Council influences the way our communities develop and the way our environment is shaped. Council also plays a key leadership and advocacy role for the people of East Gippsland.

The Strategy will inform the preparation of the Council Plan and identify priorities for action and allocation of resources over the 5-year life of the Strategy (2008–2013). The Strategy provides a foundation for the development of Implementation Plans to integrate the activities of the different arms of Council with the Strategy.

The Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board

East Gippsland Shire established the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board and engaged in an intensive consultation process to assist in the development of the Strategy. The Advisory Board is comprised of local community members, stakeholders and government representatives. The Board met on a regular basis throughout the development of the Strategy and will play an important role in its delivery. The Advisory Board will monitor and review the Strategy through long-term engagement with key stakeholders and community groups and by monitoring the Key Environmental Indicators and measuring them against established benchmarks. This strategy also encourages alignment with the other Advisory Boards currently active within Council. It is anticipated that future joint meetings be held that bring together the Advisory Boards to work together in collaboration for the broader benefits of sustainable development.

Implementation

Cultural Evolution and Social Change

The Strategy identifies ways that East Gippsland Shire Council can help reduce resource consumption, protect land and biodiversity and make good decisions about land use and development. We hope that strong supportive partnerships and shared local goals will help us make these changes.

If we are to promote change in the community, Council must lead by example. To do this Council must ensure that its Officers are fully aware of environmental sustainability impacts, initiatives and technologies within their field of operation.

Throughout the Strategy Council has identified existing programs and plans addressing environmental sustainability issues. By building on these current initiatives and implementing the key actions identified in this strategy, Council will encourage and support all East Gippslanders to explore their personal and collective responsibility for environmental protection.

The predominant theme running through the Strategy is the need for strong supportive partnerships with the people of East Gippsland, businesses, industry, community groups, stakeholders and government. It is important for Council to form new and build on existing partnerships.

Students from the Lucknow Primary School. Photo Courtesy of Bairnsdale Urban Landcare Group.



Providing information to the local community about environmental sustainability issues is recognised as an important tool in 'developing a culture of sustainability' within the community. Effective dialogue and information sharing, not only connects the community with Council activities, but also helps everyone to understand what Council can and cannot do.

Council aspires to help all East Gippslanders to live more sustainably. To learn about ourselves and our connections to the environment Council aims to inform the people of East Gippsland about ways of seeing and ways of doing which strengthen our relationship with our environment and reduce our everyday environmental impacts. Council aims to develop a web-based information exchange program—a first port of call for information relating to environmental sustainability issues, innovation and problem solving technologies. This knowledge hub will help to connect existing networks and will act as a venue to profile local sustainability programs, activities and achievements.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Council's Sustainability Unit, with advice from the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board, is responsible for implementing the Strategy and ensuring that its actions are incorporated into the business plans of relevant Shire departments. The Sustainability Unit will also provide support and information to Council staff on the issues of environmental sustainability. Progress reports on the Strategy will be prepared by the Shire's Sustainability Unit and presented to the Advisory Board quarterly. To track the environmental outcomes of the Strategy the Sustainability Unit will develop Key Environmental Indicators (KEIs) that will help us monitor changes in environmental impacts and evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategy actions. It is essential that Council, on advice from the Advisory Board, regularly review its sustainability program by:

- Quarterly updates to the Advisory Board,
- Joint meetings with EGSC's other Advisory Boards,
- An annual review of Strategy Implementation Plan,
- A comprehensive review of the Strategy by 2012.



Opportunities and Challenges

East Gippsland Shire Council has identified the following key opportunities and challenges. These were considered while developing actions to achieve the Shire's overarching vision.

- To develop more sustainable communities.
- To model positive environmental change.
- To help everyone understand how we individually affect our environment.
- To provide support and incentives for local businesses, individuals or community groups to make environmentally beneficial changes.
- To provide a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and review process of the effectiveness of the Strategy and its associated programs and activities.

Community Consultation

A community consultation process allowed the community to provide further perspectives and/or identify alternate issues to be included in the Strategy.

“Throughout the Strategy Council has identified existing programs and plans addressing environmental sustainability issues”.

2. Toward Environmental Sustainability

Throughout the development of the Strategy, Council, stakeholder groups and community members registered various unsustainable practices occurring throughout East Gippsland. Keeping in mind what issues Council can act on, regulate and/or advocate for, the following issues have been prioritised for specific action by Council over the 5 year life of the Strategy.

This section, Toward Environmental Sustainability, explores the issues to be addressed in order to achieve environmental sustainability in East Gippsland. Various issues overlap and are not necessarily isolated within the categories listed here. For example water quality is a key issue for biodiversity, but is left for more detailed discussion within Section 2.3 Water consumption and quality.

Each issue provides priority objectives and key actions that deliver a practical approach for moving the Shire of East Gippsland and its people, toward environmental sustainability. The key actions allocate time (short-term: 1–2 years, medium-term: 2–3, and ongoing), Council's responsible unit and possible partners to improve success during implementation.



Land use and development



Biodiversity



Energy and greenhouse



Water consumption and quality



Waste management



Economic development

Key Issues	Priority Objectives
2.1 Land Use and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning for sustainable communities that are environmentally sustainable, that use resources wisely and that have minimal environmental impact. • Development that enhances and protects the environment in which we live.
2.2 Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce potential threats to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems by implementing protection initiatives in Council-managed areas and encouraging their adoption across the Shire. • Strategically enhance East Gippsland's high quality biodiversity. • Improve land stewardship and weed management across the Shire.
2.3 Water Consumption and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce water consumption Shire-wide. • Improve the quality of water in our waterways.
2.4 Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate efficient waste management practices. • Promote Shire-wide reductions in waste generation and adoption of reuse technology.
2.5 Energy and Greenhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions Shire-wide.
2.6 Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote environmentally sustainable industry practice. • Expand and support environmentally sustainable tourism and promote 'Nature-based Tourism' in East Gippsland.

2.1 Land Use and Development

Threats to Environmental Sustainability

The population of East Gippsland is growing. Some areas, particularly coastal locations, are experiencing increasing pressure to accommodate growth and provide improved supporting infrastructure and services. Population growth together with reducing average household sizes means that the rate of expansion of our urban areas has increased.

Our rural landscapes are also experiencing change. As urban areas expand and residents choose rural residential living environments, there is increasing pressure on land located on the rural/urban fringes of our townships. This has the potential to impact on important landscapes and sensitive environments.

Farming operations are becoming larger and the pressure of prolonged drought and/or more regular poor seasons means that some farming areas are experiencing changes in the structure of land ownership and the way that land is being used. New land use such as plantations are emerging.

East Gippsland Shire Council has a key role in guiding and regulating land use and development in the municipality. As well as higher level strategic planning for the growth and development of East Gippsland, the Shire also influences the way that individual developments occur through the assessment of applications for planning approvals.

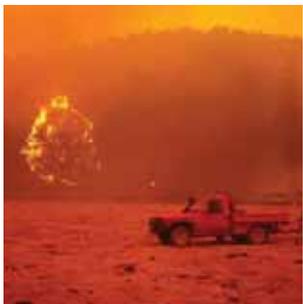
While the planning system within which the Shire operates is within a framework of statewide policy and approaches, there is a range of tools available to Council to ensure that relevant environmental considerations are incorporated into the decision-making process. These tools include planning scheme controls such as the Environmental Significance, Vegetation Protection and Erosion Management Overlays.

The way that Council infrastructure is developed and services provided also influences the amenity and quality of the environment of East Gippsland communities.

Planning for the sustainable development of our communities is one of the most significant ways that East Gippsland Shire can minimise the environmental impacts to, and protection and enhancement of, our environment. This includes ensuring that new development incorporates the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, but also means that we need to ensure that existing development uses available resources such as water and power more efficiently.

East Gippsland communities face significant challenges into the future as a result of climate change including:

- Increased bushfire risk,
- Sea level rise,
- More intense storms and floods,
- More frequent episodes of drought,
- Increased average temperatures leading to loss of biodiversity.



East Gippsland Shire Council has a key role in guiding and regulating land use and development in the municipality.



“East Gippsland Shire is committed to establishing strong supportive partnerships to achieve our common and complementary conservation and sustainability objectives”.

The state and commonwealth governments need to provide leadership and a consistent framework for decision making on land use and development, to allow local government to assist the people and townships of East Gippsland to respond effectively to the potential challenges of adapting to climate change.

Council will continue to:

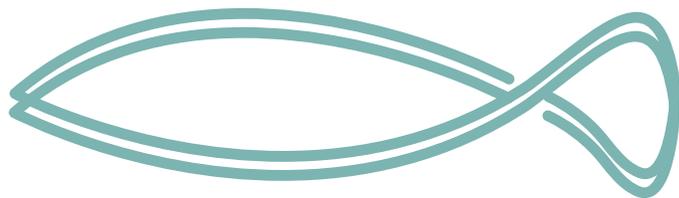
- Develop an environmentally sustainable Growth Management Strategy for Bairnsdale to address the issues relating to urban expansion and maximisation of existing infrastructure,
- Implement the Coastal Towns Urban Design Frameworks—ensuring that development in coastal areas is directed to locations where it can best be accommodated while minimising environmental impacts,
- Advocate for state-wide Planning Scheme tools to deal appropriately in climate change impacts upon the coast,
- Implement the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study (CSLAS), including significant elements that retain and enhance native vegetation and landscape protection.
- Ensure that the Planning Scheme uses available information in the most appropriate way to support the application of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles in planning decision-making.
- Work in conjunction with a range of stakeholders and community groups to manage erosion to reduce the impacts of land degradation on waterways.

What we want to achieve – objectives:

- Plan for communities that are environmentally sustainable, that use resources wisely and that minimise their environmental impact,
- Encourage developments to enhance and protect the environment in which we live,
- Reduce potential threats to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems values by implementing protection initiatives in Council-managed areas and encouraging their adoption across the Shire. Taking into account the potential impact on industry,
- Strategically enhance East Gippsland's outstanding biodiversity,
- Ensure that the various tools available in the Victorian Planning Provisions, and used in the East Gippsland Planning Scheme, enhance the application of available environmental information in decision-making processes,
- Ensure that the people of East Gippsland are prepared for and can adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.1-01	Audit the East Gippsland Planning Scheme (such as reviewing and removing ineffective actions) to determine the effectiveness of existing environmental sustainability policy and planning controls and develop a program for updating, enhancing and ensuring best-practice approaches to environmental impact assessment as part of the land use and development assessment process.	Medium-term	Planning, Sustainability	DSE, DPCD
2.1-02	Suggest Trust for Nature covenants as an option for landholders when discussing offset options during the land development process (when appropriate).	Medium-term	Planning, Sustainability	TFN
2.1-03	Develop and implement guidelines to support the preparation of specifications and assessment of tender proposals to ensure improved energy and resource efficiency in new Council buildings, and where possible improved energy and resource efficiency of existing Council-owned buildings, infrastructure and services.	Medium-term	Infrastructure, Planning, Building	SV, ICLEI
2.1-04	Develop a strategic framework and process for ensuring that development impacts on biodiversity are minimised and vegetation offsets achieve maximum environmental enhancement and repair for East Gippsland.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Planning, Infrastructure	DSE
2.1-05	Adopt Ecologically Sustainable Development principles which ensure nil or minimum environmental impacts from urban and industrial development. Maximise community and service infrastructure.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Planning	
2.1-06	Initiate the development of a regional strategy to extend our understanding of the implications of climate change for our environment and its potential socio-economic effects on our communities and to identify appropriate adaptive responses.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Planning	GCB, state government
2.1-07	Actively support/ attract developers that use ESD principles in their developments.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Planning, Economic Development	

Key Actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.



2.2 Biodiversity

Key Threats to Environmental Sustainability

Terrestrial and aquatic habitats support myriad species that form integral parts of a whole system—fundamental for the survival of all species including humans. Biodiversity or ‘biological diversity’ is the collective term for the genes, species and ecosystems around us. Habitat loss and the reduction of integrity within and connection between habitats are recognised as the most deleterious processes acting to reduce our biodiversity.

About 90 of Victoria’s 300 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) occur within East Gippsland. Our native vegetation communities support a large and healthy biodiversity compared to that of other regions within Australia. However, they also contain a large number of vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered species of flora and fauna including: 11 mammal, 45 bird and 3 reptile species. There is, in some quarters, a mistaken perception that because 85% of East Gippsland’s original native vegetation remains, little needs to be done. However, rarer EVCs, such as rainforests that are unique to East Gippsland, and the threatened EVCs that remain in agricultural areas need special protection, management and restoration.

Other important threats to the biodiversity in East Gippsland include invasive plant and animal species, altered fire regimes, extreme natural events, urban development, recreation and pollution. The limited resources available for effective management and compliance programs and some degree of uncertainty regarding the roles and responsibilities of land managers in East Gippsland also hamper attempts to protect our biodiversity.



Extreme Natural Events

Several harmful algal blooms have occurred in the Gippsland Lakes over the past 40 years often as a result of other natural events such as fire, drought and flood. Algae are potentially hazardous to our health and affect important ecological processes and reduce biodiversity. Extensive periods of drought followed by flooding results in siltation, erosion and loss of water quality and may lead to the further invasion of pest plant species following these events.

While naturally occurring and, in the case of fire, vital in maintaining ecosystem ecology, these events are a serious concern for environmental, social, cultural, aesthetic and economic values. The frequency and severity of fire regimes needs detailed investigation and management directives in order to achieve multiple beneficial outcomes, including the protection of lives and assets and to meet biodiversity needs.

Pest Animal and Plant Species

Various animals are threatened by the spread of exotic animal and plant species within East Gippsland. Foxes, feral cats, wild dogs and feral pigs pose a serious threat to various species of bird (e.g. Little Tern) and mammal species (e.g. Long-footed Potoroo). Control of pest animals within East Gippsland also benefits native predators (e.g. owls, snakes and the Spot-tailed Quoll) by reducing competition pressures.

Weed infestations such as African Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), Blackberry (*Rubus spp.*) and African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*), on private and Council managed land have negative impacts on agricultural production and significantly decrease the integrity of East Gippsland’s biodiversity. Infestations of certain pest plants provide habitat for pest animal species and reduce native vegetation essential to the survival of native animal species.

East Gippsland Shire Council manages and maintains areas of native vegetation with direction from Victoria’s Native Vegetation Management—A Framework for Action (the Framework). The Framework provides strategic direction for the management and protection of native vegetation throughout Victoria. Council also plays a broad, though often specific, role in the management, use and conservation of land and biodiversity throughout the Shire primarily by way of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme and implementation of planning controls.



Enhancement and protection of our unique environment is a top priority for Council. By partnering with natural resource management agencies, environmental groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), industry and community groups, Council aims to develop an integrated approach to natural resource management in an attempt to secure the region's biodiversity into the future.

Council will continue to:

- Build on the Coastal Towns Urban Design Frameworks, paying particular regard to the unique rainforest communities in these areas,
- Promote community understanding of, and involvement in, pest plant and animal management,
- Inform the public on the responsible ownership of domestic animals,
- Work with stakeholders, community groups and adjoining Shires to promote the effective management of weeds within the region.

What we want to achieve – objectives:

- Identify cultural heritage as a central goal when rethinking our approach to natural resource management,
- Ensure that 'net gain' is achieved in accordance with the Native Vegetation Framework for all in-house Council projects and for all Council approved projects,
- Ensure that Council's construction projects include appropriate measures to control erosion and sediment during works,
- Improve land stewardship including weed management across the Shire,
- Work with stakeholders to encourage and support further research into fire management focusing on maintaining the integrity of remnant vegetation,
- Work together with stakeholder groups to promote research efforts for understanding the environmental impacts of future harmful algal blooms within East Gippsland's waterways.

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.2-01	Provide plant identification and management training for relevant Council staff and contractors to increase awareness of indigenous species, pest plant species, sensitive habitat areas and protected species under state and federal legislation within the Shire.	Short-term	Sustainability, Contracts, Parks and Gardens, Infrastructure	SV, CMN, DSE, EGMA, PV, TFN, Landcare and other environment and community groups
2.2-02	Develop guidelines to ensure all new Council buildings are landscaped with indigenous plants sensitive to the surrounding environment.	Short-term	Sustainability, Parks and Gardens, Infrastructure	
2.2-03	Encourage the use of indigenous plants by individuals and businesses within the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide planting guides, and education programs for the community, local nurseries and landscapers. 	Short-term	Sustainability	DSE, PV and SV
2.2-04	Raise community awareness and involvement in natural resource management through provision of information programs and the establishment of demonstration gardens.	Short-term	Sustainability, Contracts, Parks and Gardens	NRM agencies and environment and community groups
2.2-05	Establish a native vegetation 'Landbank' ¹ for Council projects requiring vegetation offsets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of Shire owned and/or managed land for potential listing on Conservation Management Network site register. 	Short-term	Sustainability, Planning, Infrastructure	CMN
2.2-06	Review and update the Shire's current Roadside Management Plan. To include; greater control of roadside weeds; protection of remnant vegetation and re-vegetation of degraded areas.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Planning	CMN, GA and other NRM agencies and environmental groups
2.2-07	Identify cultural heritage and cultural diversity as central goals when rethinking our approach to natural resource management.	Short-term	Sustainability, Planning, Community	

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.2-08	Identify and implement methods for improving protection and management of native vegetation, cultural heritage and ecological processes on private land e.g. rate rebates, promotion of Bush Tender and Bush Broker. And investigate an incentive program for the protection of high priority vegetation communities on private land.	Short-term to Medium-term	Sustainability	NRM agencies
2.2-09	Investigate the use of alternative weed control methods that will minimise the use of chemicals especially in ecologically sensitive areas such as identified high-value ecological habitat or adjacent to waterways, the stormwater system or along roadsides.	Medium-term	Sustainability	NRM agencies, environmental groups
2.2-10	Work in partnership to advocate ecologically sensitive fire regimes—provide information and advice on appropriate fire regimes and assist landholders in ecological burning activity.	Medium-term	Sustainability	DSE, CMA's, CFA, PV, environmental groups, traditional owners
2.2-11	Undertake a detailed flora and fauna survey as well as an assessment of vegetation quality and habitat values against EVC benchmarks, on Council-managed land, to ascertain the current state of species and habitat. Set targets and implement a management plan to protect and enhance biodiversity on Council-managed land.	Ongoing	Sustainability, IT	NRM agencies, environmental groups, local community
2.2-12	Maintain Shire membership of Conservation Management Networks.	Ongoing	Sustainability	CMNs
2.2-13	Strengthen the partnership approach to environmental sustainability and open up new paths for active dialogue between natural resource management professionals, environmental groups, industry and community members—establish processes for working together, clarifying roles and changing attitudes for an effective interactive system of environmental management.	Ongoing	Sustainability	NRM agencies, environmental groups industry and community

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.2-14	Lobby state and federal government for funding and legislative support for greater compliance and education efforts regarding the protection of East Gippsland's biodiversity.	Ongoing	Sustainability	
2.2-15	Continue review process and improvement of Planning Scheme overlays and GIS data relevant to biodiversity enhancement and protection e.g. updating the ESO and VPO to recognise especially significant environments (such as those supporting threatened species) and significant areas of native vegetation.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Planning, IT	DSE, CMA's, PV GCB, Land Care
2.2-16	Develop guidelines for identification or classification of ecologically and culturally significant and/or sensitive areas including the signposting or classification of important communities, species and sites of ecological and cultural significance in East Gippsland under threat by human activity.	Ongoing	Sustainability	
2.2-17	Formalise the relationship between Council and traditional owners to develop a holistic land ethic and deliver improved natural resource management and protection of local biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and ensure that Aboriginal people of the region are included (beyond the requirements of statutory obligations and legislative responsibilities) in the decision-making process, concerning land management, enhancement and protection. • Partner with Indigenous groups in natural resource management activities e.g. ecological burning and pest plant and animal control. 	Ongoing	Sustainability, Community	DSE, CMA's environmental and community groups, Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council, GLaWAC, MAC
2.2-18	Ensure that native vegetation offsets for private landholders and Council operations are effectively monitored and enforced	Ongoing	Sustainability	NRM agencies, environmental groups, industry and community

¹Identified parcels of land that Council can manage for 'net gain' purposes, and consequently use these areas to provide offsets for development works should native vegetation be required to be removed.

Key Actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.

Council aims to develop an integrated approach to natural resource management.



2.3 Water Consumption and Quality

Threats to Environmental Sustainability

Water Consumption

In general East Gippsland's water is in good condition compared to other areas of Victoria and Australia. However to make certain that our resources remain in this enviable state we must ensure that use of our potable water is sustainable and we must manage threats to our water resources. Low rainfall, population growth, climate change, degrading river systems, pollution, fires, floods and unsustainable water use practices have all contributed to the trends recognised as degrading our water quality and quantity.

Annual water consumption in East Gippsland per household has decreased in recent years by 10.1%, according to East Gippsland Water's Water Plan 2008–2013. The 195kL per household annual consumption is lower than the statewide average. East Gippsland Water anticipates further reductions to 190kL by the completion of the Plan period.

East Gippsland Shire Council will continue to work with East Gippsland Water and relevant stakeholder groups to assist in achieving reduction targets by demonstrating leadership in its own operations. This will include auditing water consumption, monitoring high use areas, implementing information and awareness campaigns, investigating and implementing alternative water sources (e.g. water harvesting and reuse options) and introducing reuse technology.

Council will also promote the wise use of water across the Shire by planting drought tolerant, locally indigenous, vegetation at all new Council facilities and develop re-planting programs at existing Council facilities and public places. Council will provide information services to support the people of East Gippsland to implement change and reduce water consumption from their daily activities.



Water Quality

East Gippsland has a diverse range of aquatic environments, from estuaries and coastal waters to major heritage rivers and streams that support an abundance of biodiversity. We rely heavily on these major rivers for our agriculture, fishing industry, towns and recreation. Threats to the waterways of East Gippsland include:

- Flow regulation,
- Salinity,
- Degradation of riparian land and vegetation,
- Reduced oxygen and light availability,
- Habitat loss,
- Algal blooms,
- Increased sediment loads,
- Altered pH,
- Increased turbidity,
- Pollution,
- Pest animal and plant species,
- Wildfire.

Many natural land processes such as fire, flood, drought and erosion influence ecosystem health, but it is the increase in frequency and intensity of human activities that poses the greatest threat to aquatic ecosystems.

Activities within the municipality have a direct impact on the health of our aquatic environments. Run-off from urban areas, silt from unsealed roads, domestic wastewater discharges and pollutants from stormwater outlets enter the catchment and eventually the marine environment, affecting the resident plant and animal species.

East Gippsland Shire is responsible for the maintenance of local drains and gutters and must also ensure that onsite domestic wastewater systems are operating correctly. Approximately 6500 septic tanks exist throughout East Gippsland, built since the 1930s. The adequacy of these systems is highly variable. Leakage from outdated or poorly situated systems can allow untreated sewage to enter the stormwater system, impacting our health and our waterways. A particular concern for East Gippsland is the incomplete historical data for systems installed prior to 1990. This prevents effective Shire-wide monitoring.

It is important that Council makes environmental sustainability a key priority when undertaking its activities, to minimise adverse effects on aquatic environments.



Council will continue to:

- Work toward the water use reduction target of 10% by 2011 through implementing the broad goals and actions identified in the Shire's Sustainable Water Use Plan (SWUP) 2007,
- Implement water saving initiatives at Council facilities including the installation of dual flush toilets, flow control devices and rainwater tanks,
- Reduce watering gardens and lawns in public places and continue to plant water sensitive and ecologically appropriate plants at Council facilities,
- Work closely with stakeholder groups to promote the installation of water saving devices in proposed developments for the region,
- Enhance the environments adjoining the Gippsland Lakes to target sites that are sources of nutrients and sediments,
- Undertake works in managing, restoring and rehabilitating extensive areas of coastal Crown foreshore land across the municipality,
- Implement the East Gippsland Shire Council Stormwater Management Plan 2003,
- Implement the East Gippsland and Wellington Shire's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2006,
- Improve stormwater flows in the Eastern Creek drainage area, Kalimna Gully and Merrangabaur Hill areas in Lakes Entrance,
- Construct the nutrient stripping wetlands at the mouth of Eastern Creek, Lakes Entrance.

What we want to achieve – objectives:

- To improve water use efficiency, Shire-wide,
- To improve the quality of water in our waterways,
- Address public misconceptions about stormwater,
- Address inadequate infrastructure design,
- Encourage the inclusion of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles into design and construction of urban developments,
- Develop a database of domestic wastewater systems within East Gippsland,
- Implement compliance programs that encourage landowners to repair and maintain their domestic wastewater systems to meet state and local requirements.

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.3-01	Develop guidelines for reducing water consumption in new and existing Council buildings.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure	SV, ICLEI, EGW
2.3-02	Participate in the ICLEI Water Campaign.	Short-term	Sustainability	ICLEI
2.3-03	Undertake a pilot study for household water use - provide a small group of local homeowners a water use audit service and information and advice for reducing water consumption in the home.	Short-term	Sustainability, Community	SV, ICLEI, EGW
2.3-04	Review, update and implement the East Gippsland Stormwater Management Plan taking into account opportunities and innovation for stormwater reuse and quality improvements.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Health	EPA, DSE, EGW
2.3-05	Identify sources of wastewater pollution (e.g. boat and mobile home pump outs/dumping, WC-only septic tanks). Develop an action plan to address environmental impacts.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Health	GCB, Gippsland Ports, DSE, CMAs, EPA, EGW, community groups, individuals
2.3-06	Encourage retrofitting of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) systems into existing urban developments, and ensure, through planning approvals processes, that the design and built form of new developments give due regard to the principles of WSUD.	Short-term	Sustainability, Planning, Infrastructure	
2.3-07	Catalogue known domestic wastewater systems within the Shire and undertake a detailed survey of East Gippsland to identify old and unlisted systems.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Health	
2.3-08	Develop guidelines and/or provide a complimentary information service for effective domestic wastewater management.	Short-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Health	EPA
2.3-09	Investigate the feasibility of providing an incentive program for domestic wastewater system upgrades to meet current standards.	Short-term	Sustainability	EPA

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.3-10	Perform a water use audit on Council assets and implement alternate technologies (e.g. water saving technologies and alternate supply) to reduce potable water consumption.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Health	EGW, ICLEI, SV
2.3-11	Influence and promote the community's use of alternative supplies including recycling, grey-water reuse and water tanks to reduce potable water consumption.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Planning, Infrastructure, Health	SV, ICLEI, EPA, EGW
2.3-12	Identify funding opportunities to assist East Gippslanders to reduce water consumption within households, businesses and industries.	Medium-term	Sustainability	SV, ICLEI, EGW
2.3-13	Develop planning overlays to protect sensitive water supply catchment areas and ensure urban growth boundaries match water supply capacity.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Planning, Infrastructure	EGW EPA, DSE, CMAs,

Key Actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.

2.4 Energy and Greenhouse

Threats to Environmental Sustainability

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) trap heat in the atmosphere near the Earth's surface. Researchers believe that substantial increases in GHG emissions, caused by activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and land clearing will trap additional heat in the atmosphere and lead to dramatic global warming and alter the Earth's climate system.

Australia is one of the highest per capita producers of GHG in the world. The Kyoto Protocol was recently signed by the Australian government and forms a binding commitment for Australia to reduce its GHG emissions to 108% of 1990 levels by 2012.

The East Gippsland Shire will need to play an increasing role in responding to greenhouse and climate change challenges. Council activities and operations consume large amounts of energy and produce significant greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions.

The first step for Council is to perform a comprehensive energy and emissions audit of Council facilities and operations. On achieving a baseline measurement Council can set targets and begin implementing energy and emissions savings programs. Council will develop strategies that allow existing practices to be modified in response to variable environmental and climatic conditions. Council will provide the people of East Gippsland with information on the effects of climate change and on methods to reduce household energy consumption and GHG emissions.

East Gippsland Shire Council has identified the importance of reducing our community's dependence on liquid fossil fuels but is mindful of the transport constraints within East Gippsland including, the distance between settlements, the need to travel to larger urban centres and the socio-economic characteristics of the region. Despite these constraints, there are still measures we can all take to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Another effective and no-risk form of reducing GHG emissions comes by way of natural processes and includes the Earth's soils and vegetation. We may aid the process of natural CO₂ sequestration by planting appropriate vegetation. The promotion of East Gippsland's forests also provides opportunities to expand the region's tourism industry

Council will act to curb fossil fuel emissions by maximising the efficiency of the Council vehicle fleet, working to extend the availability of public transport in the Shire and by integrating walking and cycling programs Shire-wide.



**Council will continue to:**

- Partner with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI),
- Amend Council's vehicle policy and operate a range of fuel-efficient models and dual-fuel vehicles,
- Increase public transport opportunities within the Shire,
- Use alternative technologies on buildings and other Council assets,
- Promote walking and cycling in East Gippsland. And continue to develop the East Gippsland Trails Strategy.

What we want to achieve – objectives:

- To reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions by integrating more efficient technologies and relevant design principles into Council operations,
- Increase ICLEI membership to gain support in reducing energy consumption and reducing GHG emissions from Council activities and the community more broadly,
- Perform a comprehensive energy and GHG emissions audit of Council facilities and operations (i.e. fuel usage, waste generation, refrigerants and electricity consumption),
- Promote changes in the way the municipality as a whole consumes energy and inform the community on the implications of climate change for our environment,
- Investigate further use of alternative technologies on buildings and other Council assets,
- Encourage the community to reduce dependency on fossil fuels,
- Expand and integrate the local bicycle network.

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.4-01	Expand ICLEI membership to adopt a GHG emission reduction target for Council buildings and operations and advocate emission reduction initiatives to the community.	Short-term	Sustainability	ICLEI
2.4-02	Review and amend accordingly, the Shire's Car Vehicle Policy to include initiatives e.g. investigate the use of alternative fuels in the Council fleet.	Short-term	Sustainability, Transport, Infrastructure	MAV, Department of Transport, VicRoads
2.4-03	Examine the feasibility of requiring contractors to use alternative fuels in carrying out Council contracts.	Short-term	Contracts, Sustainability	Contractors, SV
2.4-04	Undertake a renewable energy capability assessment for Council buildings and profile local examples.	Short-term	Sustainability, Planning, Community, Infrastructure	
2.4-05	Review and upgrade the Shire's Bicycle Strategy and continue to develop the East Gippsland Trails Strategy.	Short-term	Sustainability, Tourism, Recreation, Transport	VicRoads, VBAC, EastGippBUG
2.4-06	Tap into existing technologies and designs and develop a web-based local sustainability hub (become a first port-of-call for advice on sustainability issues).	Short-term	Sustainability, IT	
2.4-07	Undertake a detailed review of energy and emission reduction practices by other agencies and Shires.	Short-term	Sustainability	ICLEI, SV
2.4-08	Profile local businesses, individuals or community groups who demonstrate achievement in environmental sustainability activities by means of awards for outstanding environmental achievement or innovation, and promote such examples to the community.	Short-term	Sustainability	Local businesses, individuals and community groups
2.4-09	Set transport emission reduction target at 50% for Council operations and suggest an aspiration target for the community at 50%.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure, Planning	ICLEI, SV
2.4-10	Undertake a comprehensive energy and emissions audit on Council operations and facilities and identify funding and partnership opportunities to achieve reduction targets.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure	

Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.4-11	Develop an environmental sustainability induction program for new employees and provide information and training to existing Council staff; implement practical initiatives to evaluate and review resource efficiency within Council operations.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Human Resources	
2.4-12	Investigate the opportunity to improve energy efficiency of Council's public lighting by replacing existing lights with low voltage fluorescent lamps as well as use of 'Green power'.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Infrastructure	ICLEI, SV, MAV
2.4-13	Identify funding to support Council in developing a plan to prioritise pedestrian and other modes of non-car transport in major towns.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Recreation, Transport	ICLEI, SV, Department of Transport
2.4-14	Undertake a pilot study to provide a household audit in identifying areas where energy and cost saving changes can be made in the home.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Community	ICLEI, SV
2.4-15	Provide incentives to local businesses that incorporate environmental sustainability initiatives.	Medium-term	Sustainability	Local businesses
2.4-16	Deliver information on green technologies and design to local community.	Ongoing	Sustainability	East Gippsland Community
2.4-17	Develop an Energy Use Plan for Council that includes a GHG emissions abatement target, and key action statements to deliver the objectives.	Ongoing	Sustainability	ICLEI, SV
2.4-18	Continue to review the public transport system including the development of a rural solution to the Travel Smart initiative.	Ongoing	Sustainability	Department of Transport

Key Actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.

2.5 Waste Management

Threats to Environmental Sustainability

Waste is a significant problem. Our landfills are a source of greenhouse gas emissions and, if managed inappropriately, a source of pollution for our waterways, soils and atmosphere. As our communities have expanded and consumption patterns changed, the amount of waste going to landfill has increased greatly. This has already prompted advances in waste management practices to curb the waste generation from corporate, industrial and domestic activities and to recapture our non-renewable resources.

Waste management practices in East Gippsland are based on the Gippsland Regional Waste Management Plan that encourages waste minimisation and recovery services, and seeks to reduce the environmental impact of waste.

As highlighted in the Plan, East Gippsland Shire Council has undertaken to reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill by introducing waste minimisation initiatives and resource recovery programs such as the green waste kerbside collection service. Council has been active in campaigning for litter prevention throughout the Shire and will continue to provide information services to East Gippslanders to encourage smart decision-making about what we buy and how it is packaged.

Considerable resources are dedicated to waste management services, infrastructure and logistics in East Gippsland. It is a priority for Council to develop a local waste management strategy for the Shire that reflects more appropriately East Gippsland's unique characteristics. For example, the wide geographic distribution of rural communities with relatively small population—a key concern when assessing the larger economic and environmental costs associated with transporting waste long distances to regional centres.



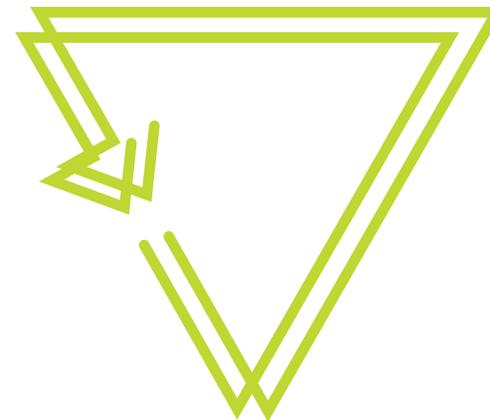
East Gippsland Shire is adopting waste management practices that are more sensitive to our environment and urges radical new ways of thinking to achieve significant changes in waste cycles for East Gippsland. Our most important role in the near future will be to encourage members of the community to accept individual responsibility for the waste that they generate.

Council will continue to:

- Implement waste minimisation initiatives and resource recovery programs such as mobile phone and printer/toner cartridge recycling, public place recycling at Mallacoota, Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale and the introduction of 120 litre garbage bins and the greenwaste kerbside collection service,
- Be 'Waste Wise' at corporate offices,
- Liaise with internal and external agencies and industry regarding waste reduction and disposal activities.

What we want to achieve – objectives:

- To develop a local Waste Management Strategy,
- To demonstrate efficient waste management practices and set reduction targets for in-house operations and facilities,
- To encourage adoption of waste minimisation, reuse and recycling throughout the East Gippsland community.



Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.5-01	Develop a Waste Management Strategy for Council and review Council's Waste Education Strategy, taking into account changing community attitudes, citizen involvement, lifestyle thinking and sustainable consumption.	Short-term	Waste, Community, Sustainability	GRWMG
2.5-02	Join Eco-buy or develop an alternative sustainable purchasing strategy.	Short-term	Waste, Sustainability, Purchasing	GRWMG, Eco-buy, SV
2.5-03	Increase resource efficiency in Council buildings, operations, activities and events to Resource Smart certification, including undertaking a waste audit.	Short-term	Waste, Sustainability	GRWMG, SV
2.5-04	Support 'Plastic Bag Free' shopping and 'Plastic Bag Free' communities.	Short-term	Waste, Sustainability, Community	GRWMG, SV, participating stores and communities
2.5-05	Investigate opportunities to introduce recycling in public places in major towns, taking advantage of external funding opportunities.	Medium-term	Waste	GRWMG, SV
2.5-06	Extend research into the area of organic waste management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the establishment of an organic waste processing facility for Bairnsdale, • Pilot a small town community organics re-processing activity, • Investigate a composting at home scheme. 	Medium-term	Waste, Sustainability, Community, Infrastructure, Planning	GRWMG, SV, EPA, MAV
2.5-07	Investigate the inclusion of small to medium enterprises (SME) in the kerbside collection of recyclables.	Medium-term	Waste, Sustainability, Community, Infrastructure	GRWMG, local business

The key actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.

2.6 Economic Development

Threats to Environmental Sustainability

Council recognises economic development as a key priority for the East Gippsland community and appreciates, in line with the World Conservation Strategy 1980, that ...

'...conservation is not the opposite of economic development'.

To achieve balance in the rational use and conservation of our natural resources we must prioritise the maintenance of ecological processes, preserve biodiversity and rethink the way we value our environment. This can be achieved at the same time as maximising sustainable economic development for East Gippsland. Council will encourage industry to minimise environmental impacts associated with their activities in East Gippsland and will promote the economic development of East Gippsland as environmentally sustainable.

'Nature-based Tourism'

East Gippsland is an outstanding destination for people interested in natural resources, cultural heritage and recreation. East Gippsland has magnificent old growth forests previously under-explored by the tourism industry, as well as other environmentally and culturally significant sites of potential interest to our visitors. The opportunity for tourism to include nature-based tourism and adventure-tourism is beneficial to the economic development of East Gippsland and can benefit environmental sustainability if correctly managed. Council will support the tourism industry to ensure that operators and visitors are aware of their environmental impacts when exploring East Gippsland.



What we want to achieve – objectives:

- Encourage and support environmentally sustainable industry practices,
- Encourage the planting of native vegetation as carbon sinks,
- Support the expansion of environmentally sustainable tourism and nature-based and adventure tourism operations in East Gippsland,
- Partner with the Shire's Economic Development Advisory Board to actively promote and attract environmentally sustainable businesses to East Gippsland and to pursue market opportunities that promote the image of environmental sustainability within East Gippsland,
- Partner with the Shire's Economic Development Advisory Board to prioritise environmentally sustainable economic development,
- Identify appropriate areas for timber plantations and aquaculture facilities within the Shire.



Action No.	Action	Time	Responsible Unit	Partners
2.6-01	Profile and promote local businesses that demonstrate achievement in environmentally sustainable activities.	Short-term	Sustainability, Economic Development	Local businesses, industry
2.6-02	Support existing business awards for outstanding environmental achievement or innovation, and promote such examples to the community.	Short-term	Sustainability, Economic Development	
2.6-03	Provide incentives to local businesses that incorporate initiatives that work towards environmental sustainability.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Economic Development	Local businesses, industry
2.6-04	Lobby government to encourage individuals and businesses to incorporate alternative technology to power their own homes and businesses.	Medium-term	Sustainability, Economic Development	SV, state government
2.6-05	Council will promote the availability of information about green technologies and design from state sources (Sustainability Victoria and the Environmental Protection Authority) and encourage industry to adopt best practice.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Economic Development	Local businesses, industry
2.6-06	Continue to promote bicycle/pedestrian tours in East Gippsland e.g. East Gippsland Rail Trail. Identify funding opportunities to expand bicycle/pedestrian paths and facilities to connect existing trails to areas of environmental and cultural significance.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Tourism, Recreation, Planning, Infrastructure, Purchasing	EGRT, environmental, cultural heritage and community groups
2.6-07	Ensure that nature-based tourism and heritage sites are adequately equipped with infrastructure, waste facilities and management services, including protective measures and controlled access for sensitive sites.	Ongoing	Sustainability, Tourism, Recreation, Planning, Infrastructure	PV, environmental, cultural heritage and community groups
2.6-08	Promote the expansion of nature-based tourism opportunities in East Gippsland—develop a database of local environmentally and culturally significant sites and identify the aspects unique to East Gippsland including rare and endangered plant and animal species (include classification and controlled access for sensitive sites).	Ongoing	Sustainability, Tourism, Economic Development	PV and environmental, cultural heritage and community groups

The key actions for East Gippsland listed above fall within Council's areas of influence, specifically what Council can advocate, act on and regulate.

3. Appendices

Acronyms

BUG	Bicycle User Group
CMA	Catchment Management Authority
CMN	Conservation Management Network
CSLAS	Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
EGCMA	East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
EGES	East Gippsland Environmental Sustainability
EGRT	East Gippsland Rail Trail
EGW	East Gippsland Water
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
GA	Greening Australia
GCB	Gippsland Coastal Board
GLaWAC	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
GRWMMG	Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group
GWS	Gippsland Waste Services
ICLEI	International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives
MAC	Moogji Aboriginal Council
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PV	Parks Victoria
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
SV	Sustainability Victoria
SWUP	Sustainable Water Use Plan
TFN	Trust for Nature
VBAC	Victorian Bicycle Advisory Council
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

A list of Council's existing plans and strategies that address environmental sustainability issues in East Gippsland. Council has also developed numerous site-specific plans/strategies that address natural resource management, and environmental sustainability issues not listed here.

Priority issue	Document name	Date
Sustainability	• EGSC Council Plan	2006–2010
	• East Gippsland Local Environmental Sustainability Priority Statement	2007
	• EGSC Five Year Arts & Culture Strategic Plan	2006/07–2010/11
Land Use and Development and Energy and Greenhouse	• East Gippsland Planning Scheme	1999–2008
	• East Gippsland Planning and Development Strategy 1997-2010	1997
	• Coastal Towns Design Frameworks	2008
	• Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study	2008
Biodiversity	• EGSC Roadside Management Plan	2003
Water Conservation and Quality	• EGSC Sustainable Water Use Plan	2007
	• EGSC Urban Stormwater Management Plan	2003
	• East Gippsland and Wellington Shire's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan	2006
Waste Management	• Gippsland Regional Waste Management Plan	2006
	• EGSC Kerbside Waste Collection Strategy	2007–2014
Economic Development	• East Gippsland Economic Development Strategic Plan	2006
	• East Gippsland Strategic Tourism Plan	2006–2011



References

ⁱThe World Conservation Strategy: living resource conservation for sustainable development, IUCN, UNEP, WWF, 1980, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ*Ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱKyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations, 1998.



“Understanding that we all have a role to play in curbing our environmental impact is the first step to changing the way we conduct ourselves within our environment”.



**Victorian Local
Sustainability Accord**



This project was funded through the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund under the Victorian Local Sustainability Accord.

For further information you can visit the Council website www.egipps.vic.gov.au or contact the Shire's Sustainability Unit on (03) 5153 9500.

Printed on recycled paper.