



8 December 2017

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Gippsland Regional Partnership and in our 2017 Regional Assembly (and mini Assemblies) which took place in Leongatha on 24 July, Lakes Entrance on 3 August, and Sale on 16 August.

The 2017 Regional Assembly and the mini Assemblies were the Partnership's second major opportunity to consult with the Gippsland community. In total, 330 people attended this year's consultations, to have a say on what is most important to our region's future prosperity. I am delighted to say that every municipality was represented at these important community engagement sessions.

At the Sale Assembly, we were also joined by eight Government Ministers: the Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford, Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren; Health Minister Jill Hennessy; Special Minister of State Gavin Jennings; Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos, Minister for Water and Police Lisa Neville; Attorney General Martin Pakula and Minister for Training and Skills, and Corrections Gayle Tierney. Also present were Danielle Green, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Victoria, and local MP Harriet Shing.

To recap, the Partnership held its first Assembly in November 2016 in Moe, directly after the announcement of Hazelwood's imminent closure. From this, the key priorities raised were heavily weighted toward job creation and connectivity. The Gippsland Regional Partnership presented this information directly to Government and we were delighted with the response. The 2017/18 Budget announcements focused on outcomes pointed directly at local priorities and included:

- \$435m towards rail upgrades, creating 400 construction jobs
- A new GovHub in the Latrobe Valley, bringing 150 public sector jobs to the region, creating 100 construction jobs
- \$6.5m for the Morwell Tech School development
- \$400,000 to develop a Destination Management Plan.

With these outcomes in mind, the 2017 Assembly program gave us the chance to explore a number of challenges in detail. The focus this year was on seven key themes: New Jobs & Industry, Tourism & Visitor Economy, Energy & Resources, Food & Fibre, Family & Community Wellbeing (including health), Skills & Education, and Connectivity.

Each session was full of interesting discussions that helped us to better understand Gippsland's strengths and opportunities, generating many ideas for the Partnership to continue exploring, including:

- Strengthening our region's brand to capture the positive spirit and diversity of the region
- Improved educational outcomes supported by world class infrastructure and improved access
- More course offerings and curriculum that align with future jobs
- Technology enabled learning hubs supporting remote students and modern learning practices
- Improved regional transport and connectivity
- Developing and promoting high end tourism attractions
- Greater incentives for entrepreneurship and industry innovation
- Improving year 12 completion rates – strive for better than state average
- Improving health and employment outcomes for Indigenous Gippslanders.



Overwhelmingly three key areas filled the community conversation and they were skills and education, health and health infrastructure, and connectivity.

The community sees strengthened knowledge and skills as the most critical aspect in growing the region's future prosperity both economically and socially. Discussions that focused on Gippsland's sector strengths including Health, Tourism, Food and Fibre, Energy and Resources, all weaved and threaded their way back to the need for improved skills and education that link directly to industry needs.

For more information on the 2017 Assembly (and mini Assemblies), a graphical snapshot is attached.

### **Moving forward**

As a Partnership, our role has been to take the messages and learnings from our 2017 Assembly and mini Assemblies, distil them down into a handful of tangible messages from the Gippsland community, and to advocate for them through the Rural and Regional Ministerial Committee.

The Regional Partnership will also continue to strengthen its links with all three levels of government, as well as with business and community, to support our priorities.

### **Ongoing communication and consultation**

Though our 2017 Assembly is now behind us, the Partnership is committed to ongoing communication and consultation with our community and will continue to keep you informed of key announcements and progress on regional priorities.

With that in mind, our Engage web page ([www.engage.vic.gov.au/gippsland-region-partnership](http://www.engage.vic.gov.au/gippsland-region-partnership)) remains open for further comment from community members and we encourage your continuing feedback and ideas. You can also email us directly at [gippsland.partnership@rdv.vic.gov.au](mailto:gippsland.partnership@rdv.vic.gov.au) or leave a message on our Gippsland Regional Partnership Facebook page.

Thank you again for your interest in the work of the Regional Partnership. Your views are incredibly valuable and means our region is heard right at the heart of Government.

I look forward to keeping the conversation going. Please do have a happy and safe festive season, and stay in contact with us about our work.

Regards

Maree McPherson  
Chair  
Gippsland Regional Partnership