

The Surf Coast Shire:

A Prosperous Place

Our Economic Story 2021

The companion document to:
**Economic Development
Strategy 2021 - 2031**
Growing a Prosperous Economy



Pictured is local business Loose Ink Design
Photo by Leslie Carvitt Photography
[Read their story and more on Inspired by Surf Coast](#)





The Surf Coast is in a
phase of transition.

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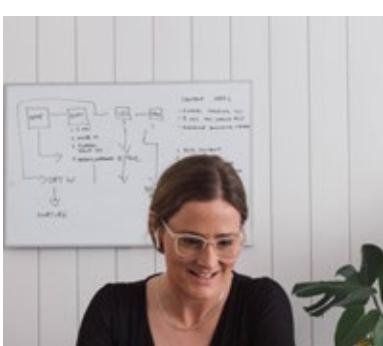
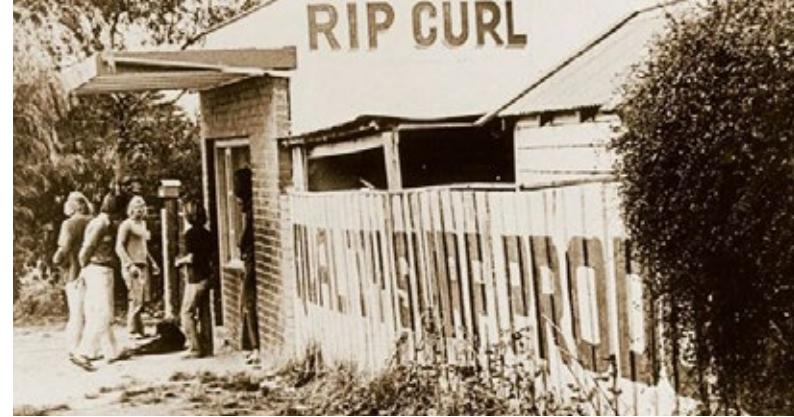
MARINE PARADE, LORNE



Introduction:

The Surf Coast Shire:

A Prosperous Place tells the economic story of the Surf Coast.



The Surf Coast is in a phase of transition. Advances in technology, improvements to infrastructure, emerging industries and a growing population has generated significant change over the past 10 -15 years. With new ways of working and as an accessible coastal region it has a strong attraction for permanent residents, holiday homeowners and tourists.

Introduction |



A \$2.7 billion regional economy has developed based on: migration from major cities such as Melbourne, continuing population growth; the surf industry; the visitor economy; agribusiness and coastal and hinterland housing developments and lifestyle.

The Surf Coast is also very much a small business economy enjoying the many advantages that come from living near a large regional city – Geelong; and accessibility to Melbourne.

The region has a history of creativity and innovation. Originally this has been associated with the surf industry and now continues with new industries emerging and a next generation of entrepreneurs moving in.

This includes an increasing number of people involved in creative industries such as photography, music, art and fashion and in creative services such as graphic design, architecture and product design.

This document explores: how places, people and business link together in the Surf Coast Shire to help improve our quality of life.

- How is the Surf Coast evolving?
- What are our current skills and competitive advantages?
- What do we have now and what opportunities do we see?

This information provides a platform from which to plan how we can grow our economy for future generations.

It informs the Surf Coast Shire Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031 and has involved a detailed investigation of places, industries and communities and extensive consultation with local stakeholders and businesses.

We have created two documents to explore the ECONOMY WE HAVE now and shape the ECONOMY WE NEED in future.

- The Surf Coast Shire: A Prosperous Place - Our Economic Story
- Economic Development Strategy 2021 – 2031 – Growing a Prosperous Economy

They can both be used to inform the Surf Coast Shire Council Plan, future local and regional strategies.

The document, Surf Coast Visitor Insights, explores the visitor economy in more detail and is available on the Council website.



\$2.698 billion
economy built off
innovation and curiosity

What is prosperity?

Prosperity is more than just material wealth. The word contains a sense of optimism, sustainability and takes a long-term view.

A prosperous place is one that offers a good quality of life.

It is common when talking about the economy and business success to use business success to use growth in GDP in jobs as the only measures of success. This narrow focus on growth at any cost doesn't reflect a contemporary view of economic development. There are many ways to measure economic success of a sustainable and connected economic eco-system.

In fact, 56% of people choose to run businesses on the Surf Coast because of lifestyle. Therefore, business attraction, growth and success on the Surf Coast is connected to our quality of life. How can businesses continue to thrive as we enhance our quality of life?

While there are many indicators that the Surf Coast Shire is a prosperous region, there are also areas of disadvantage, challenges and opportunity.

If we consider how our businesses, people and places can ALL thrive when faced with challenges or opportunities, that will create prosperous places and guide us towards the economy we need.

56%
of people choose
to run businesses
on the Surf Coast
because of lifestyle.

Our quality of life is a combination of People and Place.

Over 90% of **BUSINESSES** on the Surf Coast are small businesses. The Surf Coast has a history of innovative people earning enough to enjoy a quality of life not available in other areas.

Prosperous **PEOPLE** live in a safe, healthy and connected community where their skills are recognised and there is an opportunity for local work and further education.

Thriving **PLACES** have a healthy and diverse natural environment that is protected and enjoyed by locals and visitors. Our town centres and public spaces express our unique character and local culture.





01.

The Economy We Have

The Surf Coast is a major lifestyle and visitor destination that is among the fastest growing regional municipalities in Victoria and has undergone significant change over the past 15 years.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, a \$2.69 billion regional economy with 9,293 local jobs¹ had been developed based on: the surf industry; tourism; population growth; a strong innovation and enterprise culture; the many advantages that come from living near a large regional city – Geelong; and accessibility to Melbourne.

The Surf Coast is largely a small business economy, with only a few larger employers such as Rip Curl, Barwon Health and the Surf Coast Shire Council. Small businesses have been growing, driven strongly by home-based, creatives and entrepreneurs.

\$2.69 billion

regional economy

9,293

local jobs



The **major sectors** of our economy in terms of output are: construction; tourism; surfing (clothing manufacture), agriculture, professional (white collar) and health.

As our population grows, **professional services and health related industries are growing**. These are the fastest growing sectors in the region.

The Surf Coast has several non-traditional but very strong sectors unique to the Surf Coast including **creative industries** and **home-based businesses** and is recognised by the Regional Australia Institute as one of Australia's regional innovation hotspots.²

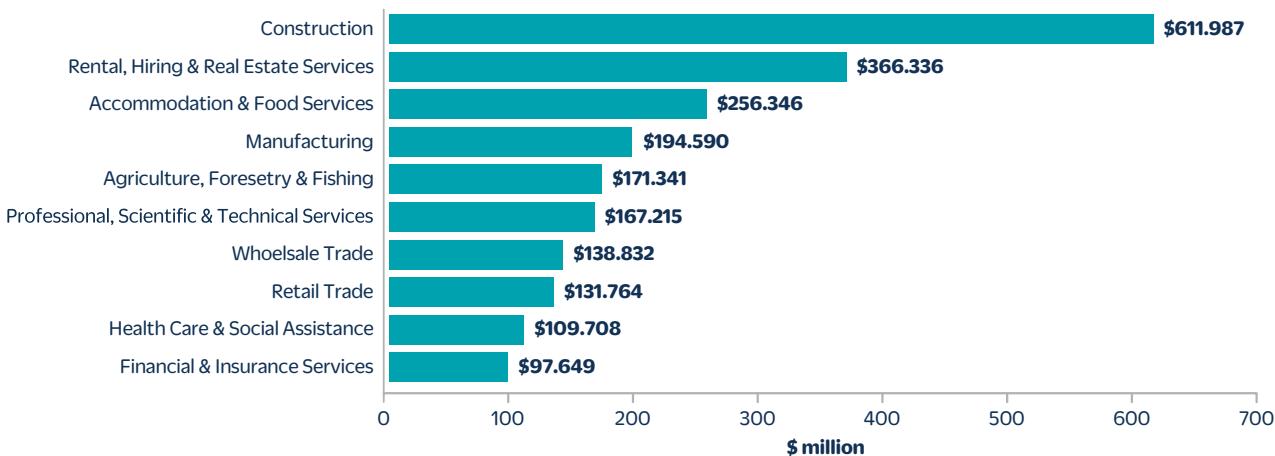
The number of businesses has grown over time. Much of this growth is in Torquay and in small business.

¹ RemPlan, 2019 Release 2.

² Regional Australia Institute, [In]Sight – Innovation in Regional Australia, Spreading the Ideas Boom, June 2016.

1.0 | The Economy We Have

Major Industry Sectors (Output \$m)



Nb. Tourism is not listed here as it is not a traditional industry sector, but an amalgam of several industry sectors.

Number of businesses 2012-2016



Number of employees per business

	June 2019	% growth from 2017
Non employing	2,286	4%
1-19	1,303	3%
20-199	55	-7%
200+	-	-
Total	3,644	4%

90%
of businesses in the Surf Coast are micro to small businesses that employ four people or less.

1.1 About the Surf Coast

The Surf Coast Shire is located in southwestern Victoria, 1 hour from Melbourne, 20 minutes south of Geelong and the official start of the iconic Great Ocean Road.

It is home to eleven distinct townships; Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Bellbrae, Deans Marsh, Fairhaven, Jan Juc, Lorne, Moriac, Freshwater Creek, Torquay and Winchelsea.

Each of these townships has a keen sense of community, a unique identity and a strong desire to protect and nurture the environment. There is also a significant rural population including farming and rural/residential communities.

Torquay is at the start of the Great Ocean Road and is the fastest growing location within the municipality, with

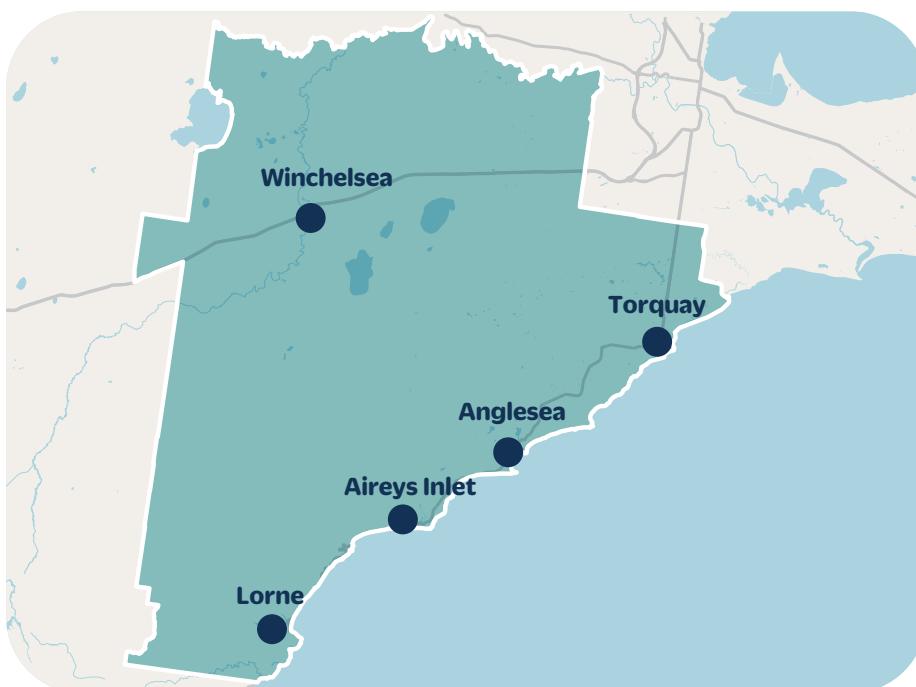
an average annual population growth of 4.35% per year.³ Torquay and Jan Juc continue to attract a large number of young families to the shire, given the coastal lifestyle and ease of commuting to Geelong and Melbourne. There are also a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs attracted to the area for the same reasons.

Winchelsea has been identified as a town that is also capable of supporting substantial residential growth and is the principal agricultural centre of the shire. Duplication of the Princes Highway together with access to good physical and community infrastructure support Winchelsea's position as our secondary growth centre within the shire.

Lorne, in the south-west of the shire, is bordered by the Great Ocean Road and the Great Otway National Park. Smaller coastal towns of Anglesea and Aireys Inlet offer magnificent seaside and bushland experiences. They are popular visitor destinations and their opportunity for growth is limited due to limited available land, national parks and high land values.

The hinterland villages of Deans Marsh and Moriac maintain strong links to the land, which consists of productive agriculture, rural land and tourist businesses. Rural landscapes in the hinterland are highly valued by the community and finding the most productive use of the land is an important element in its economic future.

³Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Census Data: 2011 & 2016.



The Surf Coast Shire Region

1.2 A Growing Region

The Surf Coast is recognised as a high growth area in terms of population and is forecast to grow from around 33,000 to 46,000 residents by 2036.

In the same period to 2036, Geelong will grow by 109,000 residents, Greater Western Melbourne by 414,000 residents and Melbourne city by 169,000 residents. Combined, this represents an additional 691,500 people.

Our tourism data shows that these locations are the major source of our tourism visitation. We know that there is an important relationship between the Surf Coast, Geelong and Melbourne for jobs.

Our proximity to Geelong and Melbourne provides us with both great opportunities and great challenges.

Geelong provides a market for some businesses (especially tradespeople), high level financial, professional and legal services, hospital and medical services, University & TAFE qualifications and high skill, full-time jobs. The availability of high skill jobs in Geelong has been a major driver of Torquay's ongoing population growth.

By 2026 the Surf Coast is forecast to grow by

13,780+

The greater Melbourne area is predicted to grow from **five million** to **eight million** people.





1.3 The Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had an unexpected and significant impact on the Surf Coast. In this section, we review the impact of Covid on the Surf Coast economy in terms of reliance on JobKeeper payments, employment, visitation, and expenditure.

JobKeeper

The JobKeeper payment is a federal funding program that provides a subsidy for businesses significantly affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep workers employed and receiving a wage even though the business may not have been able to operate at fully capacity – or at all.

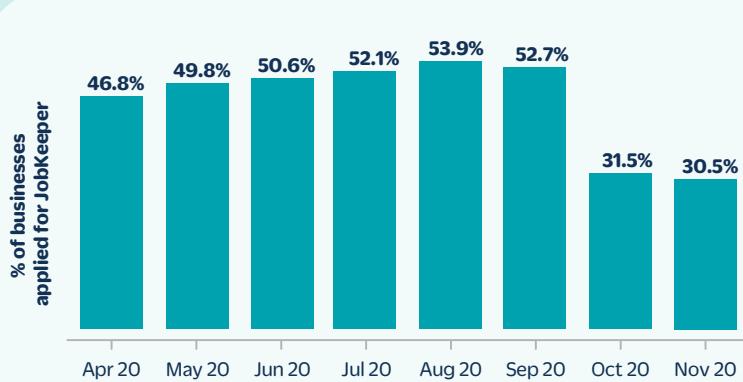
The graph shows the total percentage of Surf Coast businesses per month that had applied for JobKeeper payments.

On average, between April and November, 46% of all eligible Surf Coast businesses were reliant on JobKeeper payments.

The reliance on JobKeeper reduced in the Surf Coast in October and November when restrictions eased and regional and Melbourne visitation returned to Surf Coast.

The Surf Coast was the 18th (out of 534) local government area most reliant on JobKeeper in Australia.⁴

Surf Coast Reliance on JobKeeper



⁴REMLAN | COVID-19 Tools | REMPLAN, JobKeeper Hotspot Analysis And Map

Tourism Visitation

In the 2019/20 financial year, total tourism visitation to the Surf Coast Shire was down by 13% overall.

From June to December 2019, the Surf Coast was experiencing its highest levels of visitation ever. The first half of the financial year had 37% greater visitation than averaged visitation levels over the past six years.⁵

By contrast, January to June 2020 saw a 62% lower visitation level than the previous six years on average. The graph shows the

actual visitation per quarter in the 2019/20 financial year compared to the expected visitation in 2019/20.

Covid restrictions on tourism visitation and business operations has had a very significant impact on tourism, one of the Surf Coast's largest traditional sectors of the economy.

Jan - June 2020, visitation level was lower by

62%

as a result of Covid-19

Total Visitation to Surf Coast 19/20 compared to six year average



⁵ Tourism Research Australia, Visitors to the Surf Coast to Year End 2019/20 compared to a six year average.

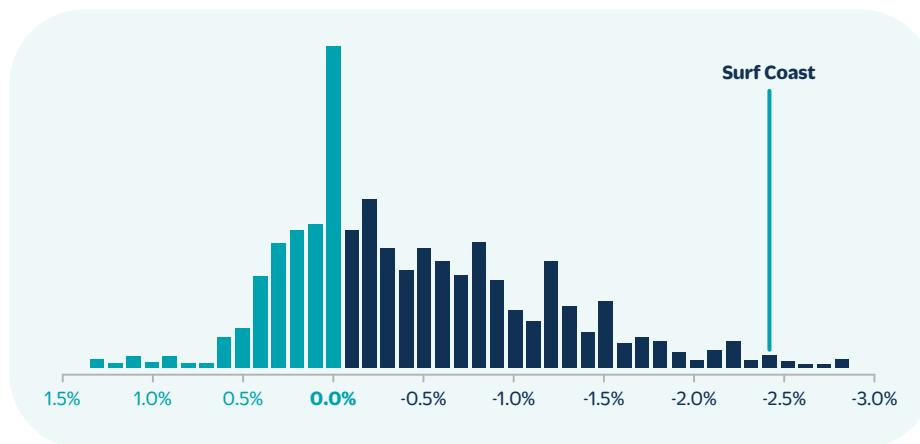
Employment

In December 2020, the Surf Coast had the second greatest reduction in median employment in Australia.

In the Surf Coast, prior to COVID-19 and the introduction of social lockdown measures to manage the pandemic, total employment across all local industry sectors was estimated at 9,293 jobs.

Across Australia, the Surf Coast had the 18th highest average median fall in employment of -3.5%. This is the 19th greatest impact nationally in the period April to December 2020. May and June recorded the highest falls of employment during the second lockdown of 4.3% and 4.2% respectively.⁶

Median fall in employment per month in Australia - December 2020



Unemployment Rate % - Surf Coast Sub-economies



Surf Coast had the 18th highest national average median fall in employment of **-3.5%**

In the three Surf Coast sub-economies, Winchelsea had the highest unemployment rate by percentage (2.6%) in December 2019. By September 2020, unemployment rose in Torquay and Lorne significantly to 2.4% and 2.6% respectively.

Early forecasts of COVID-19 impact was that unemployment might rise as high as 10% to 13%. The Surf Coast has, fortunately, not experienced this predicted level of impact.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Small Area Labour Market analysis by SA2 region, September 2020 quarter.

Expenditure

Direct expenditure within the Surf Coast actually increased in 2020 by \$34m to a total of \$517m.⁷

There were significant differences in the nature of the expenditure in 2020. For example, in April and September (Covid lockdown periods) saw \$21.6m less expenditure than in 2019.

Direct Expenditure Surf Coast

2019	\$483,000,748
2020	\$517,668,886
Difference	\$34,668,138

⁷ Spendmapp, January 2019 to December 2020

A study commissioned by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism found that up to **2,500 jobs** were lost on the Surf Coast as a result of Covid-19.

Difference in Expenditure by month Surf Coast 2019-2020





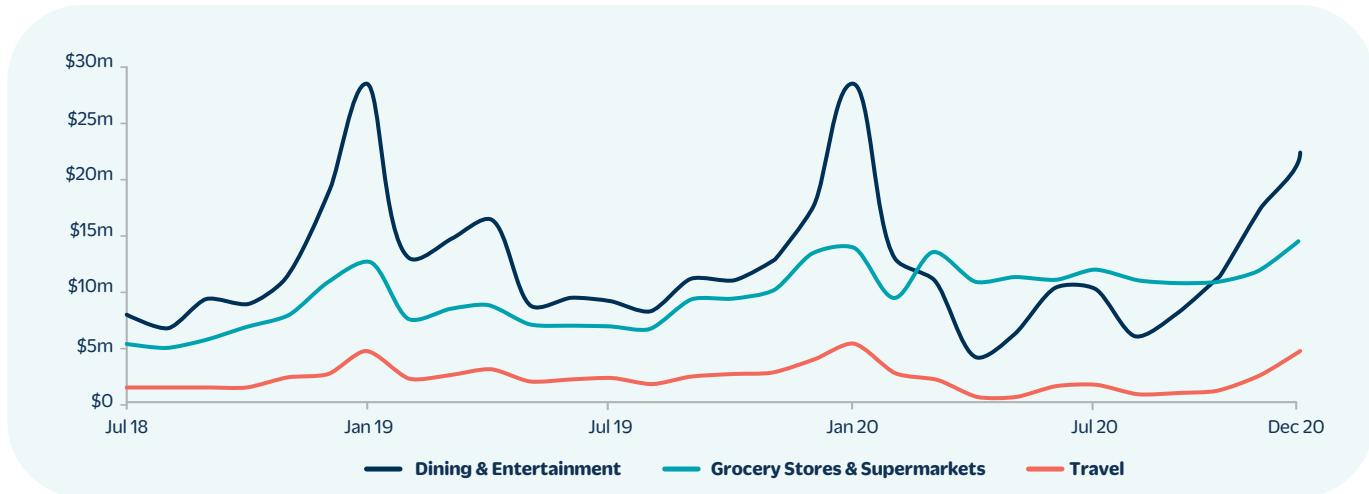
Expenditure in selected categories

The type of expenditure was very different to usual as well.

- As a tourism region, spending on dining and entertainment is usually the #1 category.
- Between March and October 2020, expenditure on groceries was greater (\$83.7m) than on dining and entertainment (\$61.26m).
- The average expenditure on travel per month in 2019 was \$2.4m in 2020, this figure dropped to \$1.75m on average per month. April and August 2020 saw the lowest expenditure of the past two years at only \$149k and \$374k respectively.

For the first recorded time, **spending on groceries was greater than dining** and entertainment on the Surf Coast as a result of Covid-19.

Card Transaction Totals - Surf Coast - selected categories



Escape Expenditure

There has been a significant reduction in escape expenditure, but this has not necessarily translated to increased spending in local businesses.

Tourism accounted for \$133m of total expenditure. Surf Coast residents spent \$229m outside the Surf Coast Shire and only \$4m with local businesses.

As the spread of the virus is contained and the social lockdown policies are gradually relaxed, it is anticipated that the negative impacts of the pandemic will lessen. The recovery from 2020 is likely to take 3-5 years for our small businesses.

Expenditure by Location – Surf Coast 2020

External Visitor Expenditure	\$133
External Escape Expenditure	\$229
Local Expenditure	\$4

⁷Spendmapp, January 2019 to December 2020

02.

Place

Understanding place can guide tailored economic strategies for the greatest benefit.

Thriving PLACES have a healthy and diverse natural environment that is valued and enjoyed by locals and visitors.

The natural environment, especially the beaches, trails and national parks, provide an active outdoor lifestyle that is a major attractor for both residents and visitors.

Our town centres and public spaces express our unique character and local culture.

Being able to access and feel connected to these places contribute to both physical and mental wellbeing.

In recognition of this, the Surf Coast community and businesses have strong social and environmental values – strong feelings about place. What should we encourage and what should we protect?

The aims, strategies and actions that respond to place respect the need to retain character, while adapting to changed circumstances. Responding directly to place invites improvement - and even transformation.

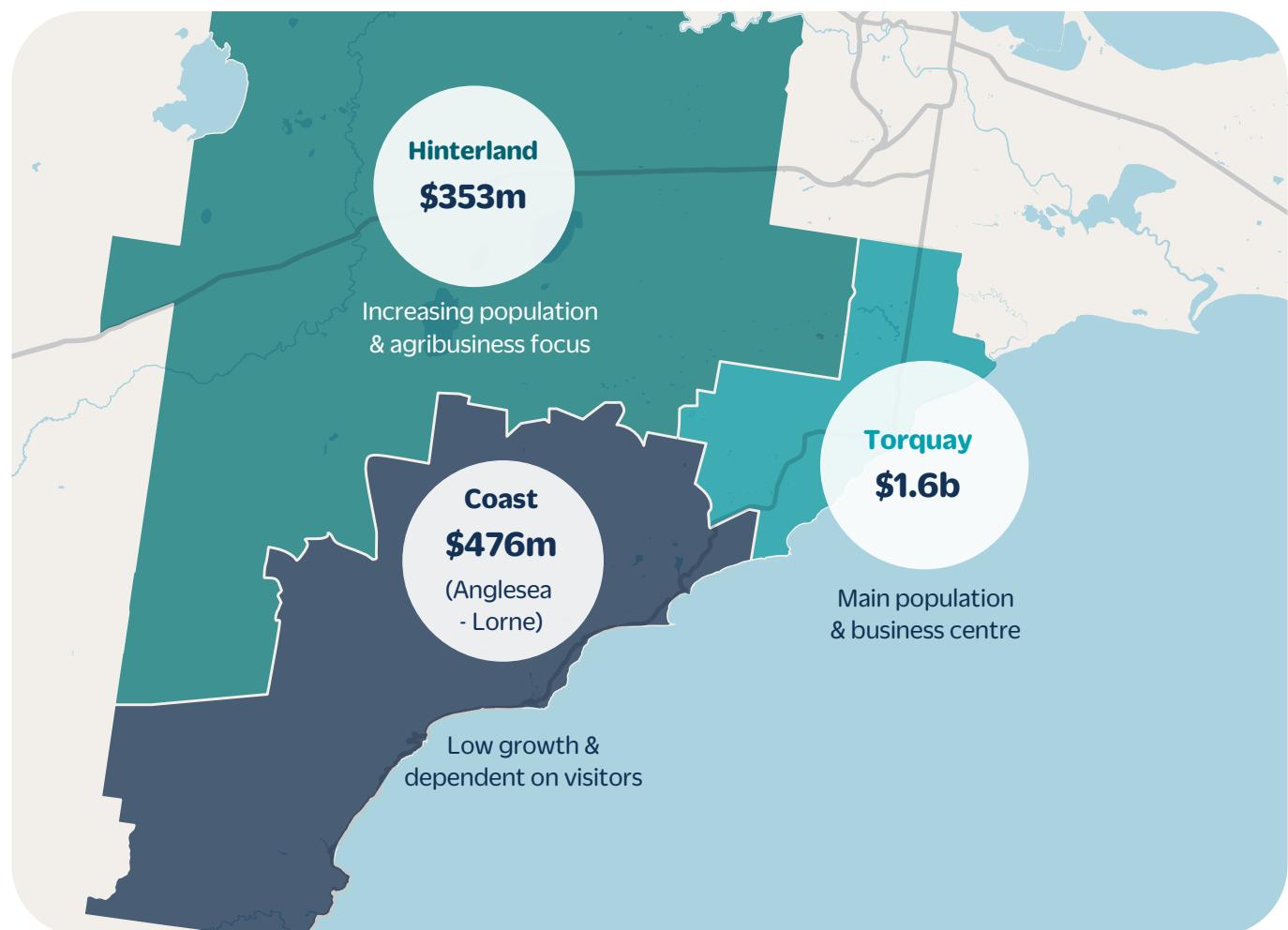
2.1 Three Distinct Local Economies

Understanding place is critical to achieving prosperity. Long term growth patterns over the last 20 years have seen the emergence of three distinct local economies that differ in scale, population size, industry mix, growth trends and outlook.

They are the Torquay, Coast and Hinterland sub-economies.

These economies are based on Statistical Area 2 (SA2) areas used by the ABS to define significant urban areas and tourist regions.

Within the Surf Coast economy there are 3 distinct sub economies



2.1 | Three Distinct Local Economies



Torquay Economy

Torquay started as a farming area popular for its rich sandy loam. Even in the early 1900's, the beach was a backdrop to many a seaside holiday. The area increased in popularity and land was subdivided into much smaller lots to cater for demand.

The birth of Quiksilver and Rip Curl in the late 1960's and their progression through to the global surfing brands they are today dominated Torquay's identity for many years. Fifty years later, Torquay has evolved to become much more than a surf town.

As the eastern anchor of the Surf Coast, enviable lifestyle options, coupled with a close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne, drove Torquay's population growth. Eighty-five per cent of all population growth in the Surf Coast takes place in Torquay, made possible by its ability to expand. There is concern Torquay's rapid growth will result in it losing its identity.

The growth of Torquay and greater Geelong sustains a construction industry that serves as a lifeblood throughout the year. Tourism, retail, health and education are also key industry sectors in the Surf Coast's largest economy, estimated to be \$1.6 billion and supporting over 5,300 jobs.

The surf industry, which cultivated many offshoots, has experienced turbulent times as global factors led to relocations and downsizing. It still provides a significant contribution to Torquay's economy and identity.

Torquay has become a thriving entrepreneurial hub. Since year 2000, over 4,000 additional homebased businesses have started and continue, driven by the inspiration the Surf Coast generates. Creatives, wellbeing, management and finance represent new 'unseen' sectors working from home. Co-working hubs have emerged servicing cottage industry. Many with a global reach.

Torquay does not provide jobs for all its workers. Residents with skills in finance, health, education, commerce and engineering are exported to Geelong and

Melbourne highlighting the benefits these major centres provide. Localising more of these jobs would bring greater prosperity.

As the start of the Great Ocean Road, Torquay's beaches (most notably, Bells Beach) and Surf City attract 1.38 million visitors each year. A side effect of its close proximity to Victoria's largest cities, is that day trip visitors dominate Torquay's visitor composition, placing pressure on infrastructure during the peak summer periods. Events such as the Rip Curl Pro and Race Torquay, showcase Torquay to the world, headlining an enviable events calendar and help deliver purposeful, higher yielding visitation in the off peak.

Looking forward, significant job creation will be required to maintain Torquay's prosperity as its population continues to grow and the digital economy continues to evolve. There is a need to improve internet reliability and speed to support the significant volume of home-based businesses. Continuity and purpose between Torquay's key commercial precincts is required to improve the overall experience.

Torquay At A Glance (2020)

\$1.6 billion economy

16,248 people

5,300 jobs

3.86%

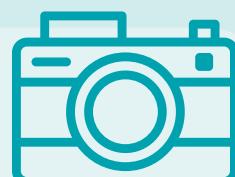
5 year average annual growth rate

Business



- Key sectors: Construction 14%. Tourism 13%. Retail 13%
- Employed residents 8,877
- Emerging: Creative, wellness, co-working, rapid rise home-based business
- Growing health and professional services sectors

Visitors



- 1.38 million visitors.
- International events
- West Melbourne's beach
- Day trips
- Start of Great Ocean Road

People



- Main population centre
- High house prices – median house price \$931k in Jan Juc
- Average House Hold Inc. \$1,767
- Fast population growth
- Growth concerns

Place



- Strong Melbourne and Geelong link
- Entrepreneurs seeking lifestyle
- Surf, Lifestyle and wellness

2.1 | Three Distinct Local Economies



Coast Economy

Bounded by the Otway National Park to the north and the Southern Ocean, the coast economy' extends from Anglesea to Aireys Inlet and Lorne. These townships have relatively smaller resident populations compared to Torquay.

The natural features of the coast and national park act as permanent township boundaries, limiting residential growth and housing supply. The population is forecast to grow to approximately 6,000 by 2036 (an increase of 488). Similarly, job growth has been constrained with Census data revealing 150 additional jobs (10% of all job growth) created between 2011 and 2016. Overall, the coast economy accommodates an estimated 1,919 jobs. Over 40% of these jobs are less than 25 hours per week - indicating underemployment challenges.

The coast's estimated \$476 million economy has experienced significant transition. Former intrusive industries of logging (Lorne) and mining (Anglesea) have given way to tourism as the dominant employer. Perhaps surprising is the significance of construction-based employment, sustained by the growth of Torquay and Armstrong Creek.

Retail and health care are also important employment sectors.

High median house prices (Anglesea \$983,000, Aireys Inlet \$1.1 million, Lorne \$1.5million), a high percentage of holiday homes (60% in Anglesea and 70% in Lorne) and a lack of long term rental supply, create recruitment challenges, especially in peak demand periods. Many workers are unable to afford to live locally, creating an inward bound commuter workforce.

Whilst studies have been done on improving housing affordability, the solutions were inconclusive due to a restrictive planning scheme, bushfire regulations and market demand.

Lorne in particular has a strong reliance on international workers during the summer. The unavailability of internationals COVID-19 exacerbated the local workforce challenges experienced by the coast economy.

The high proportion of non-permanent residents may also contribute to far fewer home-based businesses for the coast economy. Given the small footprint of commercial and industrial land home-based businesses could represent an important way to create more sustainable townships in the future. To achieve this, better internet reliability and speed is needed.

The Great Ocean Road is the primary connector for locals and also delivers 1.54 million visitors each year. Many more pass through on their way to the 12 Apostles. Nature-based product is a primary attractor. Overnight visitation is stronger than in Torquay, however day trip visitors are still the most prolific visitor type. Business conferencing is also important, particularly during the midweek and benefits from the close proximity to Melbourne and two airports.

Highly seasonal visitor patterns can cause road congestion, particularly in the peak Christmas – mid January period and Easter. Slowing travelers down to spend more is a key objective.

There is an identified gap between visitor expectations and the visitor experience. Many tourism businesses are also small businesses that need to invest in customer service and product improvements to meet expectation.

Major events play a vital stimulus role in the coast economy. The Surf Coast Century, Aireys Inlet Open Mic, Amy's Gran Fondo, Lorne Sculpture, Great Ocean Road Running Festival deliver thousands of high spending visitors during the off peak season. The Sound Doctor Presents series is emerging as a key event.



Significant accommodation infrastructure exists in the form of branded resorts, caravan parks, camps and motels, particularly in Anglesea and Lorne. In addition to housing visitors, they benefit many localised businesses that form part of their supply chain. Product that leverages these assets should be developed to increase overnight stays.

The Anglesea Proving Ground is a major car testing facility with global connections that is relatively unknown. There is an opportunity to make more of this facility.

Recent tourism developments such as the Great Ocean Road Chocolaterie and Live Wire Park have delivered new jobs and product. There is a need to create more year-round employment and product outcomes such as these.

The closure of the Anglesea Coal Mine in 2015 while resulting in significant job losses, offers the opportunity for a unique environmental, educational and tourism outcome. The Eden Project Anglesea is one concept that has emerged for the site in recent years. While it is still preliminary and not yet formally considered by governments or community, the project is an example of how the site could be transformed to deliver an internationally recognized environmental tourism concept that can slow down visitors, showcase the unique environment and its history, and create new jobs to offset the losses..

Coast At A Glance (2020)

\$476 million economy

 **5,530 people**

 **1,919 jobs**

 **1.25% 5 year average annual growth rate**

Business



- Key sectors: Tourism 22%. Construction 14%. Retail 13%. Health care 8.5%
- Employed residents 2,277
- Emerging: Educational tourism and arts
- Recruitment issues

Visitors



- 1.54 million visitors. Highly seasonal
- Potential Tourism Projects: Eden Project Anglesea, Point Grey Lorne
- Seasonal visitors
- Infrastructure and service improvement needs

People



- Small resident populations and limited growth
- Underemployment: 40% >25 hrs per week
- Very high house prices - median house price (Anglesea \$983,000, Aireys Inlet \$1.1 million, Lorne \$1.5 million)
- Limited rental availability
- Ave household income

Place



- High % holiday homes
- Low population growth
- Surrounded by national parks
- No room to expand residential and commercial land

2.1 | Three Distinct Local Economies



Hinterland Economy

The hinterland covers 60% of the Surf Coast including the townships of Winchelsea, Moriac and Deans Marsh and contributes an estimated \$353 million to the overall Surf Coast economy.

Winchelsea is the major township and growth area, with a current population of 2,300. The total population across the hinterland is almost 6,900. The Princes Hwy and Cape Otway Road provide the main road connection. The Melbourne to Warrnambool rail line also stops in Winchelsea 36 times each week (in each direction – six times per day on weekdays, three times per day weekends).

Housing is more affordable than the coastal areas. Larger land parcels and a median house price in the vicinity of \$500,000 has become an attractive proposition for those who seek a rural lifestyle.

The close proximity of to Geelong and Torquay results in many administration and education based workers regularly commuting to the larger centres for employment where facilities of Deakin University, Gordon TAFE, primary and secondary schools are located. The median household income is \$1,358.

Unlike the coast economy, most workers are employed full time.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing employment comprises roughly 16% (512) of the 3,218 hinterland jobs. Mixed farming and grazing are the dominant forms of

agricultural land use, accounting for 86% of agricultural lots in the hinterland by number and 77% by land area.

While smaller agricultural and livestock producers represent the majority of businesses, the hinterland has a number of significant agricultural ventures: Southern Grains (grain), Murnong Farming (wool, sheep meat, genetics, grains), Murdeduke Pastoral (beef), Otway Pork (pigs) Peel Ag (poultry), Hastings Farms (ostrich, emu, beef, genetics), FJ Battaglia & Sons (broad acre vegetable production) distribute their products nationally and globally. These larger operations are well suited to the northern and western regions of the hinterland due to larger property size, less variable topography, and lower level of urban encroachment.

Food and fibre is an important sector for the hinterland. Wineries and berry growers are becoming more prevalent as are niche branded meat producers such as Otway Prime, Mount Moriac Beef and Freshwater Creek Estate.

Other emerging operations include Geelong Region Olives, Surf Coast Strawberry Fields, Kinsfolk Farm, Yan Yan Gurt Lamb, Axios Foods, and Hot Chilli Mama.

Many of these producers have worked on developing local, shared-value driven supply chains to move away from cost-taking commodity markets.

There is an opportunity to support the increased development of value-add and value-differentiated supply chains. With the development of these supply chains, smaller scale producers can integrate agile and lean development strategies into their

product development, allowing them to create offerings directly responsive to customer demand, justifying a higher market price for product while ensuring a higher proportion of the proceeds are seen “behind the farm-gate”.

There is an increasing level of innovation and sophistication to farm based and supply chain operations. Long-term businesses such as Knuckey's Farm Machinery are leaders in the development of novel sowing and harvest machinery customised for unique and challenging conditions.

Compared to areas west of the Surf Coast, dairying operations are largely under-represented in the Surf Coast, with several remaining dairies situated in the Deans Marsh and Pennyroyal Valley region. This is in part related to suitability of country for production, and distance to dairy processing factories, making additional tanker pickups unviable for new entrants into the industry.

Construction is another important sector representing 19% of employment. Many of the ‘from home’ construction based businesses are located in the farming zone around the hinterland. Similar to the coast economy, Torquay and the Geelong growth areas of Armstrong Creek and Warralily provide year round residential construction activity.

In contrast to other areas, the hinterland attracts just 4% of total tourism visitation. Developing more product and creating inland visitor opportunities would support this region. The hinterland townships provide an excellent opportunity to capture visitors on their inland route to the 12 Apostles or Lorne.



Large parts of the hinterland are relatively unproductive. Increasing productivity and in turn the land area it comprises, represents a significant opportunity. Similar to national parks and the coast line, productive land can act as a buffer to townships such as Torquay.

Recycled water is seen as a key way to unlock this potential by transforming unproductive land into viable farming enterprises via key pipe infrastructure. The two main potential sources of recycled water for the hinterland are the reclamation plants at Winchelsea and Black Rock. Black Rock is Barwon Water's largest water reclamation plant (WRP). The WRP is located near Breamlea close to Torquay, with the Thompson Valley further to the west.

The Black Rock WRP produces both Class A and Class C recycled water and discharges up to 20,000 megalitres (or million litres) of recycled water into the ocean via an ocean outfall each year.

A major project concept known as CORA is also proposed at a location to the west of Moderwarre. Set on 550 acres, CORA is an elite sports and tourism facility is a \$350 project that is estimated to generate 1,000 construction jobs and 670 operational jobs. Should it be realised, CORA has the potential to influence population growth in Winchelsea and Moriac.

The Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy offers a pathway forward to create greater levels of prosperity in the hinterland.

The Hinterland At A Glance (2020)

\$353 million economy

 **12,273 people**

 **3,218 jobs**

 **1.4% 5 year average annual growth rate**

Business



- Key sectors: Agribusiness 39%, construction 19%. public administration and safety 9%, Education 8%
- Emerging: Niche and specialty food manufacturing
- Potential Transforming Project: CORA, Black Rock Water treatment plant upgrade

Visitors



- 128,000 visitors (only 4% of Surf Coast)

Place



People



- Employment: 53% >35 hrs per week
- Employed residents 2,812

- Affordable housing - median house price (Winchelsea \$500,000)
- Ave household income \$1,358
- Some areas of disadvantage



2.2 Place-based Planning

Place-based and fit-for-purpose planning will be important because different places, communities and activities have different needs and unique challenges.

Surf Coast Shire is a large municipality in terms of geographic area. It is characterised by urban, rural and coastal areas supporting our diverse communities.

While facilities and services are often considered individually, our many social infrastructure networks as a whole play a significant role in supporting Surf Coast Shire's economy, liveability and sustainability.

A current lack of integration across networks and planning portfolios can create disjointed social policy, infrastructure and economic investment, and the potential for poor outcomes across our different communities.

Precincts develop when businesses and public facilities cluster together and create an identity. Precincts are important for business operations and attracting customers. Public places, spaces and services in town centres should reflect the needs of people living within a particular place, rather than the efficient delivery of a region-wide program or activity.

DELIVERING PLACES, SPACES AND SERVICES

Council has adopted structure plans and urban design frameworks in all of our urban areas.

The content of structure plans vary but a structure plan will typically establish land use patterns and the early layout for development, supporting infrastructure, and other key features and constraints that influence how development is managed. They can also identify things like gaps in key services, and future requirements for infrastructure and community services.

A structure plan is generally comprised of maps or plans showing layouts and key features and these are accompanied by supporting text explaining the background to the issues to be addressed through the plan and how these issues might be managed.

The plans have traditionally had a strong focus on land-use planning and while the engagement and content of the plans are good. The implementation of the plans lack direction and focus and have often not connected with plans for social infrastructure in the same areas.

Social infrastructure is traditionally delivered in a fragmented way, with only limited co-ordination between different funding organisations and land managers. The ability to work collaboratively and in partnership with others is essential.

What is needed is greater resourcing at an early stage in the development of Council's structure plans, and for the development of a process to schedule, coordinate, monitor, and implement actions.

A key role for economic development within Council's is to connect and collaborate. Working with businesses and working through partnerships is the modus operandi for the contemporary economic development officer.

Adopting an organisation-wide 'planning for place' approach allows for practical outcomes through:

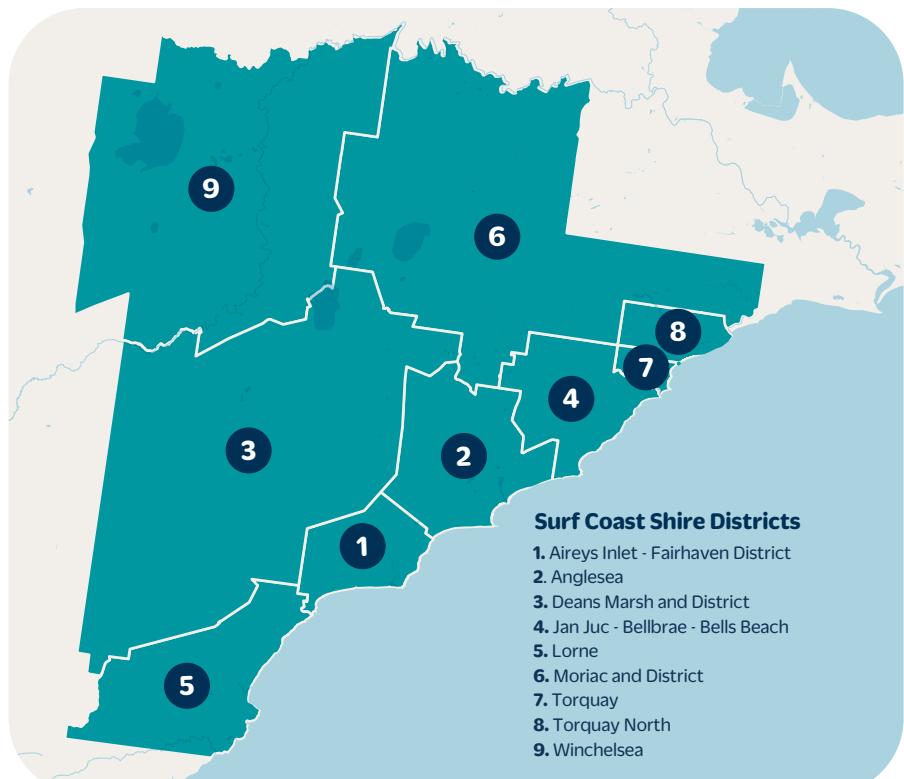
- Aligning planning, data and insights for informed decision making.
- Involving all key stakeholders including planners and implementers of the strategy.
- Gaining close on-the-ground knowledge of communities.
- Identifying and targeting clear priorities working towards the overall vision for an area in a logical and timely way.
- Tailoring service delivery and initiatives to specific needs and aspirations.
- Value managing investments and minimising the impact of resource constraints.

A place-based approach promotes municipality-wide solutions, but it is not a one-size-fits-all or linear approach. Council is currently developing its first ever municipality-wide, multidisciplinary and integrated, social infrastructure policy and plan. This will ensure we are providing access to places, spaces and services where and when people need them the most.

There are nine planning areas which will be the focus of place-based plans. These planning areas provide the architecture to enable integrated planning across all the areas of Council and support the idea of a 20minute neighbourhood.

"Traditionally local government works in silos and this needs to be addressed for sustainable economic development to occur. Place shaping or a place-based approach is much more appropriate for local economic development".⁸

Surf Coast Shire Districts



⁸ The Role of Local Government in Local and Regional Economic Development, University of Technology Sydney, Sept 2017.

2.2 | Place-based Planning

20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The 20minute neighbourhood concept is about creating a liveable city by giving people the ability to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20 minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip of their home.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is assisting local governments to improve accessibility and achieve 20 minute neighbourhoods.

To improve travel accessibility to places, spaces and services it will be important to consider the location of services, facilities, jobs, retail and other uses, in conjunction with new or improved footpath and cycle links and public transport routes.





2.3 Active Outdoor Lifestyle

The natural and curated open spaces of the Surf Coast provide an attractive and supportive destination for our creative and innovative business community.

From the multiple surf breaks, to the rolling Barrabool Hills, the fertile soils of the Otways foothills, to the vast plains of the Murdeduke region. Many residents of the Surf Coast have sought to create a role for themselves to be able to work where they love to live.

The landscapes and environment have provided the catalyst to inspire many a new business idea either 'out the back' surfing or clearing the mind on a trail run or ride.

While the natural environment has been a reason to attract businesses to operate in the region, it has also played a formative role in the business mix and values carried by businesses in the region.

Examples of businesses with a strong connection to the natural and curated outdoor spaces include:

- Surfing industry – clothing, boards, wetsuits, surf schools, innovations
- Ski, outdoor and adventure clothing
- Yoga, pilates, fitness studios, gymnasia, personal trainers
- Health foods

- Niche/artisan and value-driven agri-food products (eg organic, hyper-local, principled, and fermented foods)
- Nature-based, relaxation and retreat tourism
- Emerging car-free tourism offerings (eg bike tourism, horse riding tourism)
- Sports medicine and allied health professionals (physio, chiro, massage)

Many of these businesses rely on the attraction of tourism and the mainstay surfing industry, however are equally dependent upon the natural and curated outdoor spaces to thrive.

Key to promoting and protecting the natural and curated outdoor spaces is the interconnection of cycling and walking trails, providing access to natural beauty, while promoting car-free travel into and throughout these spaces.



Natural resources

- Beaches/coastline
- National parks
- Rivers and waterways
- Barrabool Hills
- Grassy volcanic plains country



Built/ designed resources

- Surf Coast Walk
- Public open space
- Foreshore reserves
- Bike trails
- Bushwalking trails
- Lake Modewarre

2.3 | Active Outdoor Lifestyle



Why are trails so important?

Many of the natural landscapes of the Surf Coast are incredibly fragile, and prone to weed incursion, erosion, and destruction of habitat and sensitive root systems due to foot and wheel traffic. Construction of formalised, fit-for-purpose trails supports community access to these natural environments, while reducing the impact of pedestrian and cyclist compaction on the surrounding areas.

The Barwon South West Regional Trails Master Plan (2009) and Growing Adventure Tourism in the Barwon South West Region – A Business Case (2015) stated the value of high quality nature trails as both stand-alone destinations, but also as value-add components key to extending visitor stay and visitor spend.

The two highest priorities for the Surf Coast in this plan are the Surf Coast Walk and the Anglesea Mountain Bike Network.

During the 2020 COVID pandemic lockdown periods, many in the community were reminded of the importance of extensive, interconnected trails due to the increased focus on hyper-local travel and exercise options. The development of many informal trails and mountain bike jumps however illustrates the need for improved management and development of fit-for-purpose trails for the local community we have today.

The 2009 Trails Master Plan has a vision to see the network of recreational trails in the South West Victorian coast, forests and hinterland will become recognised worldwide as offering social, environmental and economical benefits.

To realise this ambition, both the high priority trails and the interconnections between the trails network and other destinations must be prioritised. Trail design, a whole-of-life plan for trails and promotion are required to support the Surf Coast as an active outdoor destination.

Interconnection of trail networks to allow trail users to travel from township to township, or between key destination trails (such as the Anglesea MTB park, Forrest MTB trail network, Currawong Falls, St George Mountain trail, and the Surf Coast Walk) allows locals and visitors to reach their desired destination without having to drive, reducing congestion on roads and the climate-impacting emissions associated with car-dependent travel.

The numerous benefits to community, businesses and the environment create strong arguments for the ongoing improvement of existing trails and extension of the formalised trail network to connect key locations and townships.

Council have previously supported the formalisation and construction of trails connecting townships and environmental assets with the Surf Coast Walk and Lorne Walks and Waterfalls projects. These assets are now promoted with interactive maps.

Looking forward, the development of interactive mapping to connect coastal and hinterland regions for walkers, cyclists and other users e.g. horse riders and trail runners will further connect locals and visitors to the environmental assets in low-impact, sustainable ways.

As new road and rail infrastructure is developed, it will be worthwhile considering opportunities for alternative transport adjacent to this infrastructure. E.g. a bike commuting path from Torquay to Armstrong Creek, extending the Surf Coast Walk to Lorne, or a rail trail from Moriac to Waurn Ponds and off-road connections between Torquay and Anglesea.



2.4 Major & Community Events

The role of events

Events are often a celebration of a town's strengths and identity. Events bring people together. They play an integral role in creating a sense of place, bringing joy, pride, vibrancy and community connectedness in our townships. Events also provide a key platform in attracting visitors and sustaining local economies (particularly in the off peak periods). They create purposeful visitation resulting in higher levels of expenditure and length of stay, and often lead to repeat visitation at other times of the year.

With its spectacular coastline, surf breaks and extensive trail network, the Surf Coast region is particularly renowned for its surfing and ocean sports events, and adventure activities such as trail running and cycling. Music, arts and, increasingly, food and wine events are also a feature on the Surf Coast events calendar.

In this context, Surf Coast Shire is home to some of Australia's most iconic events including the Rip Curl Pro, Pier to Pub, Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race, Race Torquay, Amy's Great Ocean Road Gran Fondo, Surf Coast Century and Great Ocean Road Running Festival. With its enviable calendar of world-class events, the Surf Coast can lay claim to being Regional Victoria's premier events destination.

In addition to these major tourism events, the Surf Coast hosts over 100 vibrant, community-focused events each year. While not occupying a national status, events such as the Nightjar Festival, Nippers carnivals, sheepdog trials, markets, kite festivals and literary gatherings offer opportunities to celebrate the region's values and lifestyle at a fine grain level. Community events also provide a platform to showcase and celebrate the Surf Coast's extraordinary natural environment.

Events deliver purposeful visitation and longer stays

2.4 | Major & Community Events

Over
35,000
 people make the
 'pilgrimage' to
 Bells each year.



The reach of events

Many of the Surf Coast's most iconic events started from humble beginnings. Germinating from bets at a pub, passionate locals or a desire to bring people together, the strength and longevity behind these events is their connection to local culture, identity and celebration of place.

The Rip Curl Pro started as a result of a few passionate locals' desire to host a surfing competition. Today it is an internationally significant event generating millions in economic benefit. After almost 60 years, the Rip Curl Pro Bells Beach is synonymous with Torquay and Easter, and is central to the township's identity. The event's global audience provides an incredible platform to showcase the Surf Coast. Over 35,000 people make the 'pilgrimage' to Bells each year, however digital and TV channels broadcast the event to an off-site audience of 11 million worldwide.

Economic benefit of events

The economic benefit of events is particularly valuable for local businesses in the off-peak visitation period. Events such as the Surf Coast Century, Great Ocean Road Running Festival and Amy's Gran Fondo attract thousands of participants and spectators. These attendees fill accommodation, cafes and restaurants across weekends which were traditionally

very quiet. Independent reports value the direct economic benefit of Amy's Gran Fondo at \$13 million, with surveys revealing a regional impact that spans from Torquay to beyond Apollo Bay.

In total, events staged in the Surf Coast are estimated to attract 240,000 participants and spectators that expend approximately \$100 million each year. An estimated 100 million people view our major events via TV and digital platforms, capturing an audience beyond any marketing campaigns Council or regional tourism bodies could undertake.

Supporting the growth and sustainability of events

It is essential that suitable supporting infrastructure for events is developed and maintained. Removable road barriers, suitable trails and tracks, well placed water and power and flexible open space areas all play an important role in the attraction and staging of events.

Calendar management also forms an important part of ensuring the benefit of events for the host community are maximised. Surf Coast Shire Council recently launched its new event brand, website and supporting channels. These assets will enhance community communication and awareness of upcoming events.

Events held within the Surf Coast Shire have a distinctive environmental focus. Event organisers lead initiatives to reduce landfill, reduce use of plastics and "leave no trace". Council's recently revised event grants program has a strong focus in supporting events that demonstrate leadership in responsible environmental outcomes. The program recognises community, tourism, boutique creative and special focus events. Like infrastructure, the continuation of the event grants program is essential in ensuring events continue to generate purposeful visitation and social connection for the long-term.

Looking forward, the attraction of events and event organisers with strong environmental values and alignment to surfing, tracks and trails, cycling, the arts, food and community connection and integration must be a focus. It will also be important to secure additional national or international events which provide the opportunity to generate multi-night visitation, and/or showcase the region to a broad audience through broadcast and digital reach.

Annual Event Benefits

200+
community &
major events



240,000
spectators &
participants

Viewed
globally by
12M+
people



Generate over
\$100M
expenditure





2.5 Climate Change

In August 2019, the Council made a declaration of climate emergency. The declaration recognises that climate change is a real and significant threat and that more urgent action is needed globally and locally.

To inform this process, Council has developed region-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory to identify the greatest source of emissions.⁹

Increase in emissions

The Surf Coast's major source of emissions is electricity consumption (34%).

Businesses making the switch to buy renewable power or install solar panels can reduce emissions from both electricity and gas (third largest source).

The second largest source of emissions is on-road transportation (28%). We are highly reliant on cars for our own transport and for tourism.

Investment in pathways to reduce our reliance on cars and supporting electric vehicle charging stations would assist here.

Agriculture is identified as contributing 10% of the emissions from the Surf Coast Shire. Agricultural emissions come from a range of sources, including livestock, dams, manure, soils, and machinery. Some agricultural emissions can be reduced or offset through a range of practices such as reducing tillage of soils, improved fertiliser efficiency, carbon sequestration in soils, and improved livestock production efficiency.

Increasing support for local food production, through the development of local food distribution and processing hubs can help to reduce transport costs and emissions. This helps to develop circular economies of food and garden organic waste being processed. This waste which can be then reused on-farm mitigates emissions from landfill, as well as improving soil health and reducing dependence on imported mineral fertilisers.

Forecasting to 2030 indicates minimal change in overall emissions without further additional action.

As a region, the Surf Coast can seek to lead by example by setting targets for energy, emissions, water, waste, land use and biodiversity.

Council has adopted a Climate Emergency Response Short Term Action Plan 2020. More can be achieved beyond this plan through better engagement and collaboration with the business sector.

⁹ Surf Coast Shire Council, Climate Emergency Emissions Profile, www.environmentsurfcoast.com.au

Our three largest source of emissions:

1.



Electricity & Gas

46%

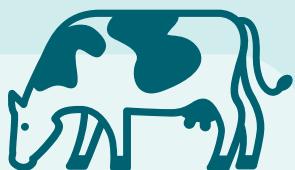
2.



Transport

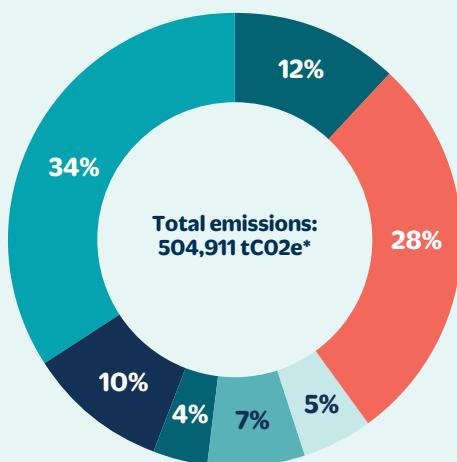
26.18%

3.



Agriculture

10%



**Surf Coast Region 2019
Community Emissions Profile
by sector and source (tCO2-e)**

Electricity	169,989
Transport	143,807
Gas	63,069
Agriculture	50,102
Waste & Wastewater	34,659
Other Fuels	23,556
Industrial Process	19,729

Barwon Climate Projections 2019



Maximum and minimum daily temperatures will continue to increase over this century (very high confidence).



By the 2030s, increases in daily maximum temperature of 0.8 to 1.5°C (since the 1990s) are expected.



Rainfall will continue to be very variable over time, but over the long term it is expected to continue to decline in winter and spring (medium to high confidence) and autumn (low to medium confidence), but with some chance of little change.



Extreme rainfall events are expected to become more intense on average through the century (high confidence) but remain very variable in space and time.



By the 2050s, the climate of Geelong could be more like the current climate of Shepparton, and Colac more like Wodonga.

Six steps for the planet

The opinion of 11,000 climate change scientists has been summarised into six areas in which people should take immediate steps to slow down the effects of a warming planet. The steps are:

1.

Energy:

Transition from fossil fuels to clean renewables.

2.

Short Lived Pollutants:

Swiftly cut methane, hydrofluorocarbons, soot and other pollutants.

3.

Nature:

Restrain massive land clearing and restore ecosystems.

4.

Food:

Eat mostly plants and less animal products. Reduce food waste.

5.

Economy:

Shift goals away from the growth of gross domestic product. Reduce reliance on fossil fuels and damaging environment.

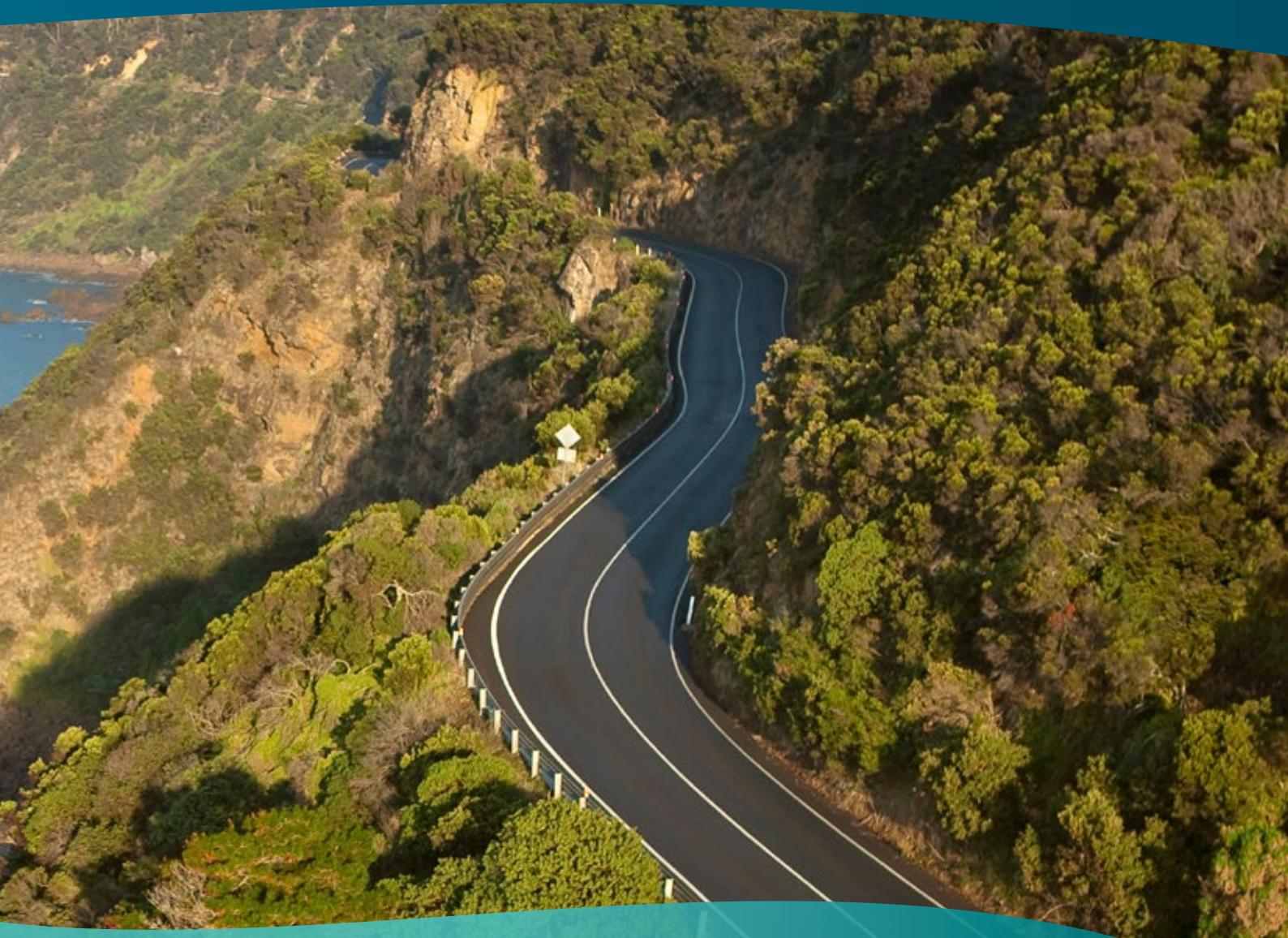
(See section 5: How do you measure prosperity)

6.

Population:

Stabilise global population using approaches that ensure social and economic justice.

(see Uni. of Sydney article: World scientists declare climate emergency – 6 November 2019).



As a region, the Surf Coast can seek to lead by example by setting targets for energy, emissions, water, waste, land use and biodiversity.

03.

People

Prosperous people live in a safe, healthy and connected community where their skills are recognised and there is an opportunity for work and further education.

As an accessible coastal region, the Surf Coast has experienced strong population growth and has a strong attraction for permanent residents, holiday home owners, business owners and visitors.

As a tourism destination, the Surf Coast draws many visitors that want to make the most of their stay.

The Surf Coast economy has several key features that influence employment and workforce skill requirements. Population is increasing, it has a large visitor economy and it is interconnected to a large regional city, Geelong and to Melbourne.

With a talent pool of highly skilled residents, there is great opportunity for further education given our proximity to Geelong and Melbourne. Are the skills reflecting the current demand of industry and future work?

In this section on people, we summarise the existing demography of the Surf Coast Shire and forecast changes. It especially focusses on the role of education, training and skills development as a means to develop a workforce that is prepared for the future.



3.1 A Growing Population

Between 2016 and 2036, the population for Surf Coast Shire is forecast to increase by 15,272 persons (50.16% growth), at an average annual change of 2.05%.

From 2016 to 2021 (present), the total population of the Surf Coast increased by 3,785 people to 34,230¹⁰. Over 70% of this growth was in Torquay. The Hinterland accounted for 21% of all growth, while the Coastal area represented the least growth (9%) and has an increasing dependence on a strong visitor economy.

This population growth pattern has meant that most of the business and jobs growth has been in Torquay, with limited growth in other areas.

The Surf Coast population increased by

3,785

from 2016 to 2021.

70%

of this growth was in Torquay.

Surf Coast Population Change 2016 - 2036



¹⁰ Surf Coast Shire | Population forecast (id.com.au)

3.1 | A Growing Population

Further growth is forecast

The population will continue to grow to nearly 46,000 by 2036, driven by the attraction of coastal lifestyle and available high skill jobs, particularly in Geelong.

In future, 76% of all growth in the Surf Coast will be in Torquay (8,701). The Hinterland is forecast to grow at a much faster rate (20%) than the Coast (4%). These areas will see population increases of 2,297 and 488 people respectively.

It should be noted that this growth is forecast based on the current approved and available land supply.

In the same period to 2036:

- Geelong will grow by 109,000 residents,
- Greater Western Melbourne by 414,000 residents and
- Melbourne (city) by 169,000 residents.
- The Greater Melbourne area is predicted to grow from 5 million to 8 million people.

The Surf Coast has a high percentage of population growth but Geelong and Melbourne is growing much larger in total to 2036.

Forecast Regional Population Change

169,000
Melbourne

109,000
Geelong

414,000
West Melbourne



Total new residents

691,500

Greater Melbourne area is predicted to grow from 5 million to:

8 million

3.2 High Skill & Qualification Levels

The development of skills is important for both new and existing businesses and especially for young people entering the workforce. The Surf Coast has a highly skilled population, with a high incidence of tertiary qualifications and trade qualifications.

Access to a large further education and training sector based in Geelong (Deakin University and Gordon TAFE) and Melbourne has meant that, **the Surf Coast has a higher level of professionally qualified residents than many other local government areas.**

The number of residents with qualifications has increased substantially over the 10-year period 2006-2016. For example, the number of people with a bachelor degree increased by over 2000 and persons with certificate qualifications increased by over 1400.¹¹

In 2016, 55.6% of Surf Coast residents had a qualification, compared with 46.4% for

Geelong; 42.0% rest of Victoria; and 49.8% for Greater Melbourne. The percentage of Surf Coast residents with a degree is similar to Melbourne.

In the rest of Victoria, only 23% had degrees or diplomas compared to 38.6% in Surf Coast.¹²

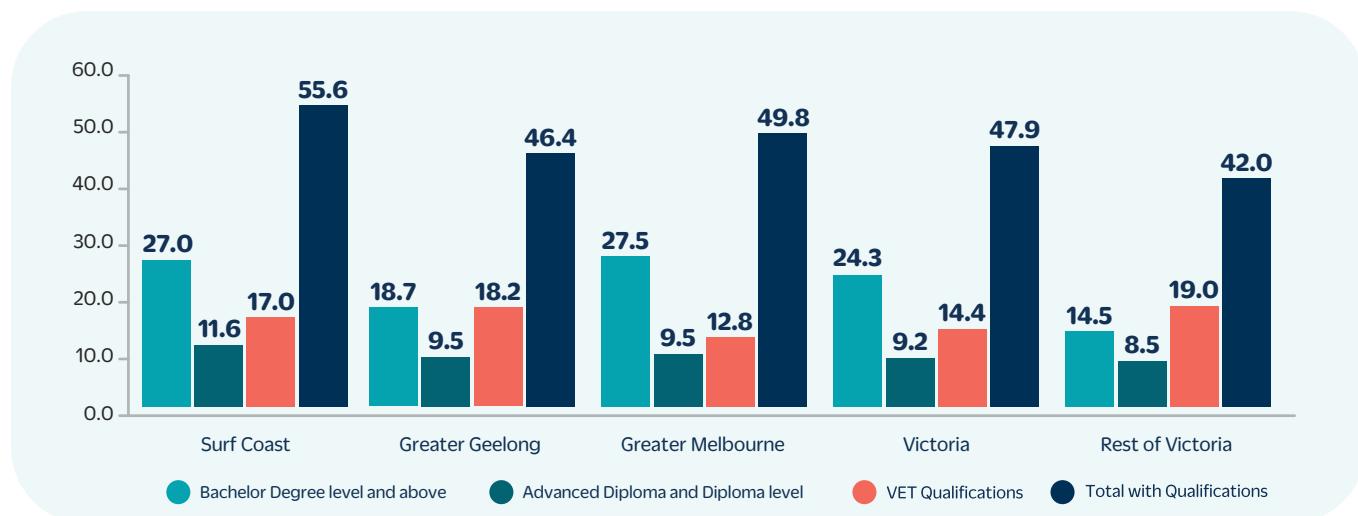
This large talent pool has provided high skill employees to Surf Coast businesses and been a foundation for entrepreneurship and emerging businesses.



Degree or Diploma

The Surf Coast has the highest level of qualifications per capita than Melbourne, Geelong or Victoria

Level of Qualifications in the Surf Coast compared to Victoria



¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Series 2016, Field of Study (Resident Population)

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, General Population Profile, Residents over 15 years of age.

3.2 | High Skill & Qualification Levels



Field of Qualifications

The current mix of skills and qualifications generally align with the “economy we have” now in the Surf Coast (building, tourism, service businesses, health, education).

Women are more likely to have health, education and society and culture qualifications.

Men are more likely to have engineering, architecture and building qualifications.

Most of the courses relevant to the Surf Coast industries are available through the Gordon Institute of TAFE and Deakin University. This is a key advantage for the Shire and its businesses.

**32%
work
full time**



Female skills area:
Health
Education
Social & Cultural
Mgmt & Commerce

**64%
work
full time**



Male skills area:
Engineering
Architecture
Building
Mgmt & Commerce

Surf Coast Workforce & Skills Issues

A Surf Coast Shire report: Skills & Emerging Industries Audit (2020) included consultation with education providers, businesses and an industry Skills Reference Group. It found the following issues:

Sector Issues

- **Tourism and Hospitality:** difficulties in recruiting and retaining chefs and skilled kitchen staff; problems with scaling up in peak seasons with casuals. This is attributed to a number of factors including: the transient nature of the workforce (moving to other positions); lack of rental accommodation in the Surf Coast; the sector not seen as a career option. Larger resorts have their own internal training systems as well as using TAFE.
- **Agribusiness:** difficulties in recruiting skilled and experienced farm workers.
- **Construction:** While construction and trades represent our strongest sector of the economy. Many are small businesses owners that would benefit from expanding their business-of-doing-business skills. It is important to maintain a strong connection between further education, apprenticeships and trades to support this sector.
- **Other Sectors:** some recruitment and retention issues (including professionals); and competition with Geelong for workers, where wage rates may be higher. Limited availability of rental accommodation affects the ability to recruit new employees.
- **Retail:** generally, no recruitment issues. A significant number of workers come from Geelong. The sector employs many young people in part-time positions, including students.

- **Education:** primary and secondary education has expanded with the increased population. Teachers are a mix of locals and Geelong residents.
- **Health and Social Assistance:** growth in health professionals, carers and aides and allied health as our population grows.

Small Business

- **Small Business:** the number of small businesses is increasing, including home based businesses (which continue to grow in number). Many of these owners lack business experience and skills, which affects viability and survival rates.
- **Customer Service:** there needs to be an upgrade in customer service skills across sectors, including hospitality and parts of retail.

Work and Skills

- **Changing nature of work:** Part-time/casual employment and under-employment are issues in the local economies. While some workers have preferences for part-time work and flexibility, others want more hours.
- **New skills:** broader enterprise skills are needed in the workforce, not just technical qualifications. These broader skills include: communication, project management, teamwork, digital literacy, and innovation. These skills increase business productivity, and for workers are transferable to other sectors (increasing their employability).

- **Entry level jobs:** major entry level jobs for young people tend to be part-time positions in retail or hospitality or apprenticeships (particularly in construction trades). Expansion of the health sector in Geelong has created opportunities for persons completing health courses.
- **Schools programs:** work experience and careers advice are important. Local businesses need to become more involved with schools' programs.
- **Education and training:** Surf Coast has access to high quality institutions, with a diverse range of courses and programs. However, programs are under-utilised by local businesses.

3.2 | High Skill & Qualification Levels

Future Skills in demand

The Surf Coast faces a number of challenges in maintain and expanding its skill base. This involves developing workforce and enterprise skills.

Improved business skills are needed for many of the current small businesses including: business development, management, marketing and digital technology.

The future workforce needs a mix of technical and 'soft' skills such as communication, empathy, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, emotional intelligence and other interpersonal skills.

This combination of employability skills and technical qualifications can provide career flexibility and enable individuals to move between industries and occupations.

These skills can be developed by encouraging networking and clusters of like-minded businesses to learn from each other.



Young People

A major issue in the Surf Coast is entry level jobs for young people.

With the larger population of young people in the Surf Coast, skills development, transitions from education to work and entry level jobs are becoming increasingly important.

The employment pattern of young persons in the Surf Coast is similar to the national pattern, with concentrations in retail, accommodation and food services and construction (young tradespersons and apprentices).

Three quarters of all employers require applicants to hold previous work experience. This limits opportunities for new entrants into the workforce. Youth unemployment is high (11.7%), and

underemployment is also high with 18.2% of young people wanting to work more hours.

There are concerns that not enough local full-time jobs are being generated and there is significant under-employment.

Entrepreneurial programs at a schools level can expose young people to business skills and the potential for starting their own business.

Securing jobs with skills pathways for young people is a major challenge for the Surf Coast.

3.3 Jobs

The Surf Coast economy is continuing to generate new jobs, however a high and increasing share are part-time jobs.

Top 10 Jobs by Industry Sector	Jobs	%
Construction	1,390.00	18.1%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,033.76	13.5%
Retail Trade	729.11	9.5%
Health Care & Social Assistance	634.53	8.3%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	540.93	7.1%
Education & Training	536.39	7.0%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	489.64	6.4%
Public Administration & Safety	370.17	4.8%
Wholesale Trade	346.63	4.5%
Manufacturing	329.24	4.3%
Sub-Total	6,400.40	83.5%

Source: REMPLAN Estimates November 2019

National Youth Unemployment

11.7%



All Unemployment

6.3%

Construction is the largest provider of jobs (18%), followed by accommodation and food services (13.5%) and retail (9.5%).

There are concerns that not enough local full-time jobs are being generated and there is significant under-employment.

Local area job trends

The total number of jobs in the Surf Coast grew to 8,600 from 2011 to 2016. Much of this growth was in Torquay, followed by the Hinterland. The Coast economy saw little growth.¹⁴

There is demand for different types of jobs in each of the Surf Coast sub-economies:

Torquay Economy (+1,123 jobs):

Much of the jobs growth can be attributed to population growth.

The growth in accommodation and food services reflects both growth in the visitor economy and the local population. The other jobs growth areas are linked to population growth. There has been a decline of 169 jobs in wholesale trade. This likely reflects the changes in the surf industry's warehousing and logistics locations.

Jobs growth	Torquay	Coast	Hinterland	Surf Coast
2011	4,225	1,769	1,162	7,156
2016	5,348	1,919	1,405	8,672
Change	+21%	+8%	+17%	+17%

Job Trends in the sub-economies

Area Job Trends	Growth	Decline
Torquay (+1,123)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accommodation & food services +201Education & Training +146Health +162Retail +118Professional services +91	Wholesale Trade -169
Coastal (+150)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accommodation & food services +76Admin services +50Arts & Recreation +44Health +32Professional services +28	Electricity -76
Hinterland (+243)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agriculture (47);Construction (22);Professional and technical services (23);education (20);health care and social assistance (26);accommodation and food services (16)	

¹⁴ Based on ABS Census 2016 & 2011 (SA2- Statistical Area Level 2), Working Population Profile (Latest local area jobs data)

Torquay Economy

+1,123
jobs 

Coast Economy

+150
jobs 

Hinterland Economy

+243
jobs 



Underemployment

While there has been strong growth in jobs from 2011 to 2016, an increasing trend is in part-time jobs.

While the Surf Coast does not have an unemployment issue, the prevalence of part time jobs suggests an under-employment issue.

Less than one third of jobs growth in the past five years has been in full time jobs. 45% of jobs were less than 25 hours.

Part time employment is highest in the retail trade, tourism, education and health sectors.

These areas employ the most female and young workers. Meaning their employment is typically less stable and lower paid.

New Jobs by Hours

1,518 jobs 2011-2016	
Full time 35+ hours	32%
25-34 hours	19%
Less than 25	45%





The Geelong Work Connection

Geelong provides great opportunity to the Surf Coast residents for jobs. The growth in high skill jobs in Geelong has been a major attractor for new residents moving to Torquay and is confirmed in the Journey to Work data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

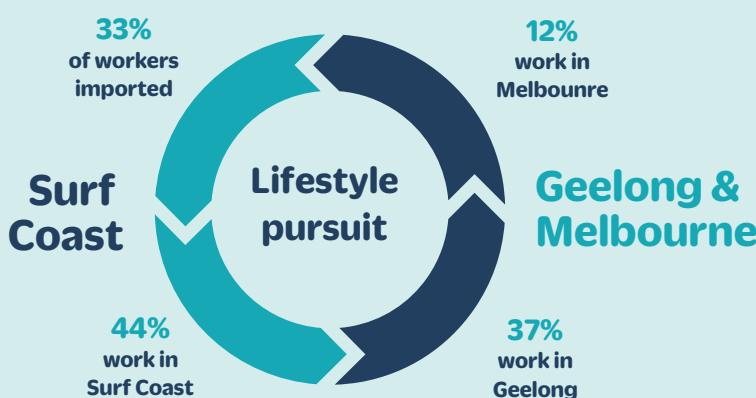
Approximately 44% of Surf Coast residents live and work locally, while 56% (mainly skilled workers) work outside of the Surf Coast in Geelong and Greater Melbourne. Many workers (33%) come from Geelong to the Surf Coast and tend to have lower paying jobs in accommodation, food services and education. Geelong is also a source of many workers in summer seasonal jobs.

44%
of Surf Coast residents live & work locally

56%
work outside of the Surf Coast in Geelong and Greater Melbourne

- Surf Coast residents have access to high paying trade and professional jobs in finance, legal, health and education jobs thanks to Geelong.
- Limited availability of affordable rentals in the Surf Coast has meant that it is difficult to find workers in lower paid service jobs.

Linkages to a growing Geelong region will continue to be important for the Surf Coast's development. Without this connection, the Surf Coast would not be as prosperous.



Future Job Requirements

The Surf Coast's close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne is also an important factor for job creation.

Job creation forms an essential part of the Surf Coast's prosperity and lifestyle. A diverse range of local jobs reduces the need to travel outside the region for work, sustains communities, attracts new families and provides more opportunities for young people to stay in their home towns.

As the population of Surf Coast continues to grow there is a need to increase the number of local jobs to ensure the lifestyle that people now enjoy does not diminish in future.

The chart identifies an additional 2,695 jobs will need to be created in the Surf Coast by 2036.

The estimates are based on the projected population of persons aged between 15-69 years. Other factors such as workforce participation rates, current levels of worker containment and levels of unemployment have been used to estimate additional job creation requirements each five-year period.

To create this amount of jobs would help to maintain the lifestyle that we currently enjoy and the ratio of jobs where people currently work. The ratio would need to be as follows:

- 1,816 of those new jobs would be for Surf Coast locals
- 879 for workers from Geelong or the surrounding region.
- 2,312 jobs will need to be available outside of the Surf Coast (Geelong or Melbourne) for Surf Coast residents.

If this ratio was not maintained, in future, more Surf Coast residents would need to travel outside the Surf Coast region for work, increasing our reliance on cars, carbon emissions and reducing our lifestyle. What is the right job to create in the right location to achieve the economy we need?

Jobs needed to match population growth in Surf Coast

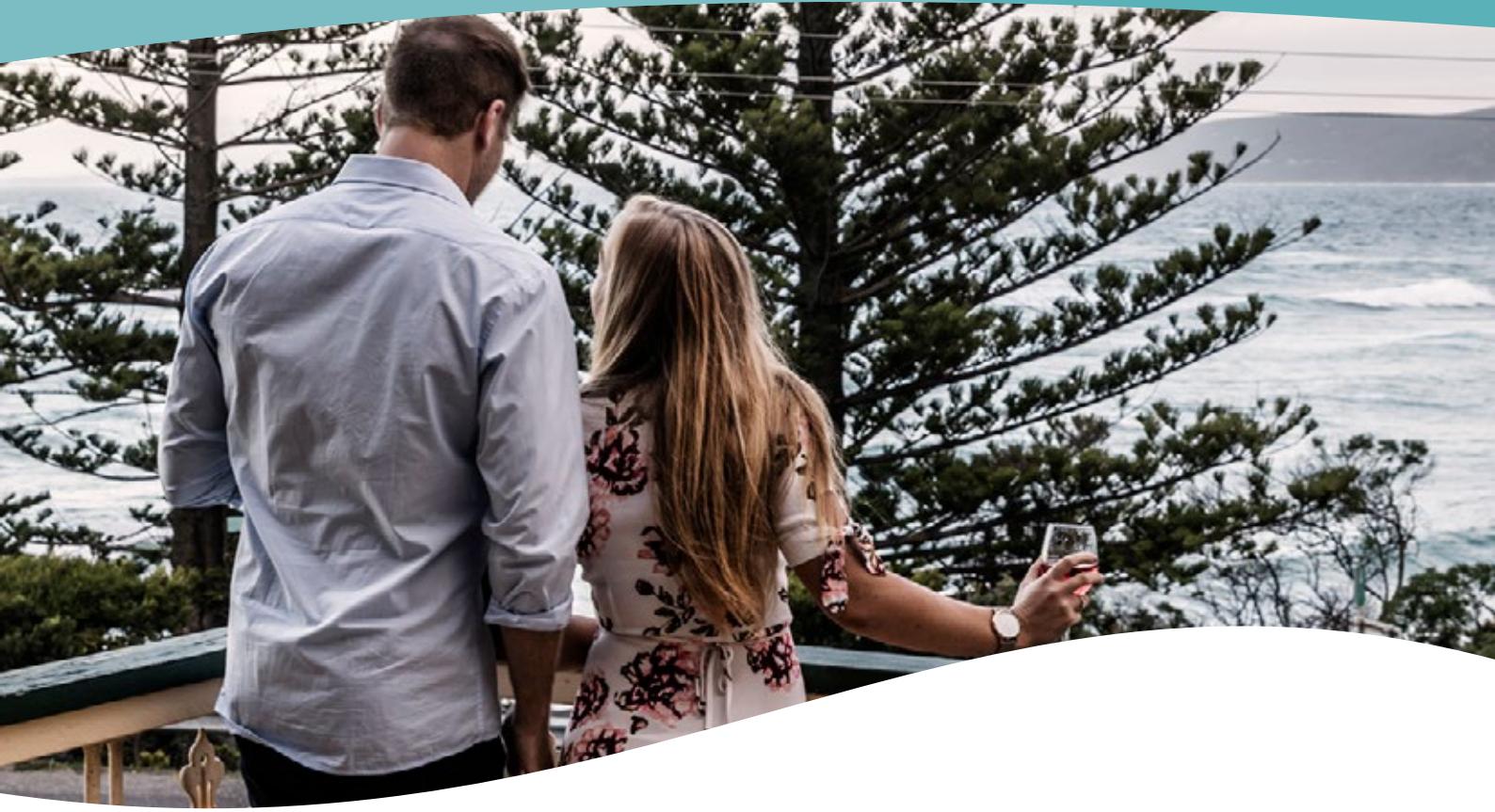
2016	2026	2036
8,693	9,956	11,339
jobs	+1,263	+1,383

This means that each year for the next 15 years, an average of **135 additional jobs**

must be created in the Surf Coast and 116 Surf Coast residents must be able to secure work elsewhere.

What is the right job to create in the right location to achieve the economy we need?

Understanding this question enables us to create and advocate for the best opportunities to focus on when considering job creation to achieve the economy we need.



3.4 Visitors and tourism

The Surf Coast is the official start of the Great Ocean Road. Its proximity to Melbourne, outdoor recreational opportunities, major events, and natural environment make it a major drawcard for visitors

In this section, we provide some insight into our visitors and the Surf Coast' role in visitor servicing.

Tourism is a people-based strategy – it is the movement of people through our region and the strategies that we employ to either improve their experience, encourage them to spend and stay or to support them.

Visitor servicing is about connecting people to places – sharing great, authentic experience of our region.

To truly appreciate the Surf Coast, these visitors want to connect with local people and experience our local way of life (if only for a short time.) Through this connection, we foster understanding; and through understanding comes respect. How can we provide meaningful connections and experiences to our visitors?

Visitor servicing is about connecting people to places – sharing great, authentic experience of our region.

Visitation Summary

In 2019, tourism attracted more than three million visitors for the first time ever. The growth in visitor numbers is greater than nights or expenditure. The Surf Coast accounts for 45% of visitation to the Great Ocean Road Region and 39% of all visitor nights.

A five year trend shows that visitor numbers, nights and expenditure is increasing. However, the length of stay has reduced from 2.8 nights to 2.4 nights per visitor.

If this trend continues, the Surf Coast is at risk of becoming a high volume, low yield tourism destination.

**In 2019, the Great Ocean Road region welcomed
7.038m visitors in total**

Total travel to the Surf Coast to year end December 2019

3.04m visitors
up by 20%



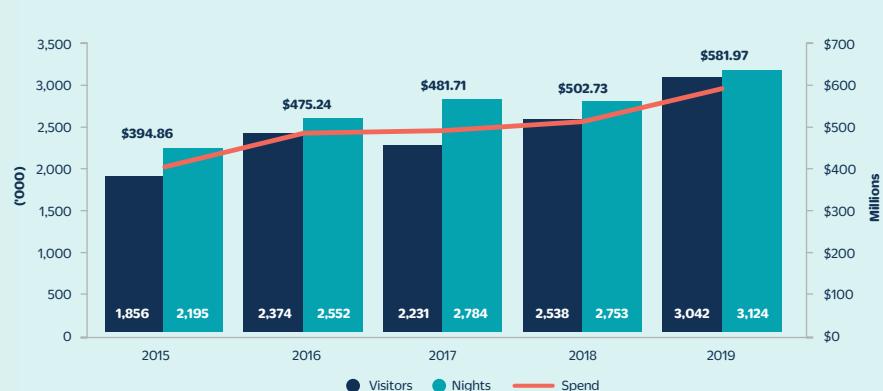
3.12m visitors nights
up by 13%



\$582m spend
up by 16%



Five Year Visitor Trend 2015



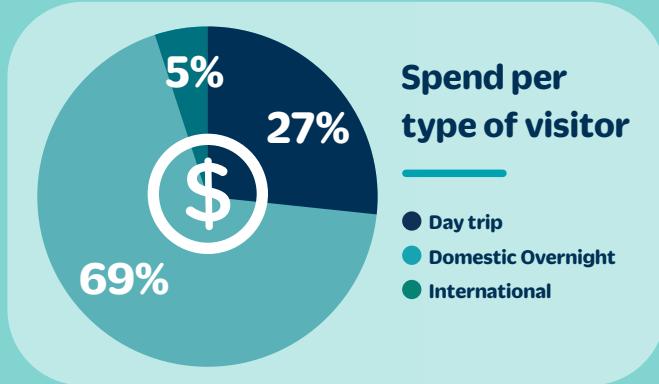
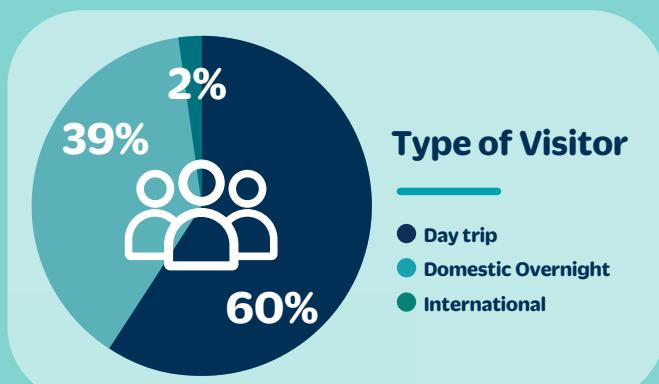
Visitor Type					
Domestic Day		Domestic Overnight		International	
1,813	24%	1,173	15%	56	8%
-	-	2,855	12%	269	33%
156	24%	400	12%	26	33%

3.4 | Visitors and Tourism

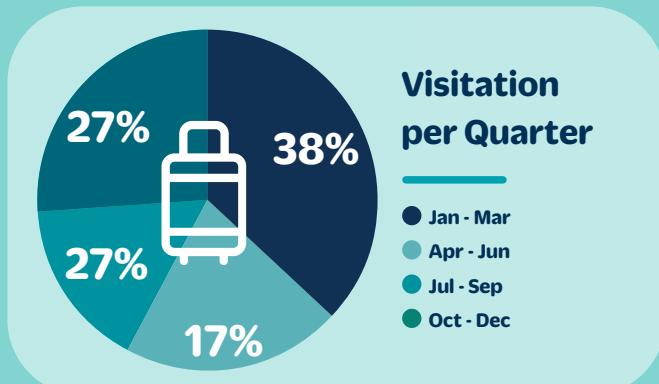
The western region of Melbourne is experiencing strong population growth and the Surf Coast is the closest place for day visits to the beach, towns and national park. Visitation is expected to increase.

A lack of paid attractions, tours, underinvestment in visitor infrastructure (tracks, trails, cycle routes, toilets, roads and lookouts) and a lack of diversity in quality accommodation to meet a growing demand is limiting tourism's potential to contribute positively to the Surf Coast economy.

As the official start of the Great Ocean Road, the Surf Coast gets the highest volumes of visitors with the least yield (spend or stay) in the region.



Most visitors come to the Surf Coast during spring and summer...

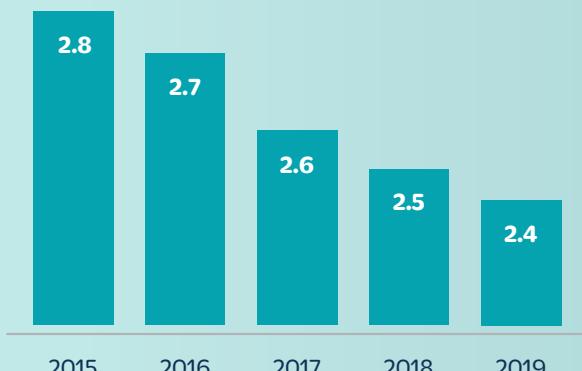


and predominantly from Melbourne or nearby areas. Access via the Geelong and Melbourne Ring Road makes visitation easy.

Day Trip	Melbourne (66%) Hoppers Crossing, Melbourne, Werribee, Hillside; Geelong & Bellarine (16%)
Overnight	Victoria (91%): Melbourne, Geelong & Bellarine, Mornington
International	UK (17%), Germany (10.5%), China (9.86%)

The western region of Melbourne is experiencing strong population growth and the Surf Coast is the closest place for day visits to the beach, towns and national park. Visitation is expected to increase.

Average length of stay (domestic overnight)





Visitor servicing is about connecting people to places – sharing great, authentic experience of our region.

International Day Visitors

Although the Great Ocean Road is a world renowned tourism destination, international visitation is low and dominated by international day trippers. These visitors differ greatly from the usual visitor profile in their overwhelming preference for single day coach tours.

The spend per visitor for the Surf Coast is very low. The impact of this type of visitation is road congestion and road damage, increased rubbish and overflowing toilet use for very little return. Allowing this type of visitation to continue or grow does not align with sustainable tourism values.

We need to prioritise niche tourism over mass tourism.

A strategy based on interests or niche tourism that encourages respect for a place can reduce the overall tourism impact. With a niche strategy, it's more likely that revenue will stay local. Investing in our events, adventure trails, nature-based experiences, arts and culture, active outdoor adventure and local operators will do more for tourism.

We need to advocate to the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority to severely restrict the number of day tour operators under a license system. Only those tour operators that meet a high level of eco-tourism credentials should be granted one of the few licenses.

Niche tourism strategies attract travellers with specific passions who seek out the unique assets of your destination. This includes supporting locally-owned and operated businesses, rather than the generic experiences often associated with mass tourism. Niche travellers are also willing to spend more on memorable experiences and travel outside of peak times.



There are three times more international day visitors than international overnight visitors to the Surf Coast.

Local impacts of tourism

In 2006, the Surf Coast Shire Council was the first local government area in Australia to research local perceptions on the impact of tourism. The top three most positive and negative impacts are below:

Surf Coast resident' perception on the positive and negative impacts of tourism



Visitor servicing is changing

The many visitors to the Surf Coast want to make the most of their stay and many value the support provided by the Surf Coast Visitor information centres and growing online services.

The visitor servicing landscape is changing. This transformation has been driven advances in technology and digital tools, creating major changes in the way visitors interact with all stages of the travel journey – from dreaming/considering, planning, booking, experiencing, advocacy and awareness.

While traditional forms of visitor information servicing (e.g. bricks and mortar visitor information centres, hard copy brochures and signage) have effectively only been able to primarily influence the booking and experiencing stages, the advent of new forms of visitor information servicing means destinations – with the right tools - are able to play a far more influential role.

Successful destinations put equal weight on all elements of the visitor experience from visitor servicing, to product development, to enhanced service standards, to destination marketing.

Successful destinations have already moved to a much stronger digital-based visitor servicing approach and have investigated ways to meet visitors where they are - via mobile visitor information centres, unmanned smart touch screens and roving ambassador programs, just to name some options. These destinations are proactively engaging with visitors and influencing their choices across many channels.

A balance between physical and digital visitor servicing must be struck to meet the new expectations of our visitors. Best practice research highlights that a model which integrates both the physical and digital aspects these appear to have the greatest impact.

There is often a false assumption that technology solutions for visitor services come at a lower cost than physical visitor information centres. This is not the case. The digital space is incredibly saturated and to stand out in the crowd, your physical presence must be of very high

quality. This means beautifully designed and responsive websites, regular updates to websites and social media, high-quality imagery and the integration of new technologies.

Underpinning this high-quality digital revolution must be the ability to provide visitors with personal, tailored and authentic information, which both increased the quality of the visitor experience and fosters trust both online and in-person.

A visitor information centre must be conveniently located, easy to park nearby and have opening hours which suit the visitor.

How can we change our relationship with tourism and continue to support the visitor economy?

The Surf Coast Visitor Centres assisted 225,000 people in 2019. This equates to 7.5% of total visitation.



3.5 Creative People & Public Art

Arts and cultural programming that actively engages with creators and place encourages community to come together. People gather around art in whatever form, it deepens community, both near and far.

For tens of thousands of years, the Traditional Owners of the region carried much of their connection to Country through artworks, ceremonies, dreaming stories and song. In the late-19th century, impressionists such as Arthur Streeton celebrated the landscapes of Lorne and the Barrabool Hills. Fast forward to the 21st century, and we have artist studios, creative clusters and galleries in many of the Surf Coast townships.

There has been limited opportunity for these creative characteristics express their creativity in public spaces. Through the Surf Coast annual art calendar competition, and Arts Trail, we see glimpses of the flair and talent that exists in our community.

We have incredible natural spaces that we can invest more in via active arts and cultural programming that give audiences access to wonderful one-off events throughout the Shire that connect them with the unique character of this land.

Choirs in natural amphitheaters and beneath the trees and on the sand. Poets and writers and young rappers exploring their space and sharing that communion with their audience. Cultural exchanges with fellow cultural producers in other parts of the State and embracing our indigenous past could all inspire new events, new businesses and experiences that sees visitors flooding in to say "I went!"

Supporting public exposure to more of our region's art will help to grow many creative people to recognise the potential to turn their passion into a career.

In other regions, art prizes can attract visitation to regional areas, e.g. The Alice Prize or The Beanie Festival. A major prize could encourage local initiatives to grow up around the knowledge that once every two years, there is a larger platform to display their talent.

Investing in these skill sets and creative approaches in public spaces will help our creative cluster to grow. More young people may see the creative industries to be a vocational path within their sites because they experience it around them.

Public art can play a key role in strengthening the identity of a town and promoting the aspects of the town that both visitors and locals love.





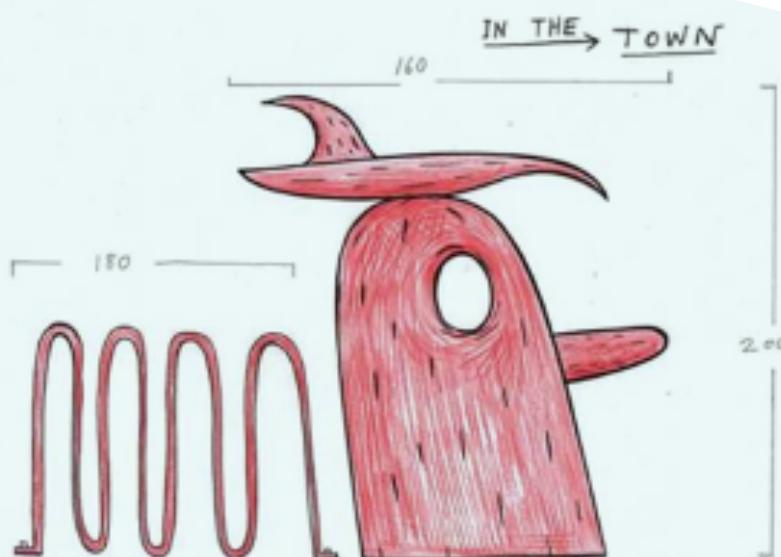
Councils in other areas use clever urban design and developer contributions to put together a vibrant, enriching public art program that goes beyond ephemeral to help make a place both natural and built that we feel proud of and good in.

In Victoria, four Local Government Areas (Melbourne, Port Phillip, Casey and Yarra) have adopted a 'Percent for Public Art Scheme' to allocate a percentage of developer contributions towards public art. The results can improve the character

and appreciation of the area, increase foot traffic for businesses and reduce graffiti and other vandalism.

Given our beautiful environment, creative people, lifestyle and innovation culture, we deserve public spaces that reflect our character and identity. (pictured)

The Surf Coast contains an amazing array of visual, musical and creative artists. Supporting creative expression can potentially support the creation of our next wave of entrepreneurs.



A bike rack in Torquay by artist, Jeff Raglus.

04.

Business

Understanding more about our businesses enables better understanding of how our economy functions and the best opportunities to improve our prosperity, jobs and lifestyle.

The Story of the Surf Coast is Evolving

The early appeal of promenading at the seaside and love of the ocean evolved into the formation of international surf brands, new sports and a whole way of life.

Construction and tourism have overtaken agriculture and emerged as our region's largest providers of local jobs and expenditure.

The internet has spawned opportunities for a new wave of innovators and home-based businesses keen to live and work in a place they love. There are also emerging industries that will demand a different skill set and support to any that we have now.

In this section, we look at the economy in more detail, the types of businesses we have in traditional sectors and the new sectors and businesses that are emerging in response to the challenges and opportunities that our region provides.

4.1 The Surf Coast Economy

The Surf Coast supports over 9,293 jobs which drive an economy currently worth nearly \$2.69 billion annually.

This figure represents output which is the total sales generated by businesses per sector in the Surf Coast¹⁵

Gross Regional Product 2014 - 2019



5-year Average Annual GRP Growth Rate



9,293

Surf Coast jobs

\$2.69 billion

worth annually

Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the net measure of wealth generated by the region and represents the total value of goods and services produced in a year.

GRP in the Surf Coast grew from \$979 million to \$1.3 billion in only five years.¹⁵

The Surf Coast had an average annual growth rate of 4.67%. Greater than many other regions in Victoria.¹⁶

¹⁵ Surf Coast Economy Profile | Summary | REMPLAN

¹⁶ Table & Chart - RDV Information Portal

4.1 | The Surf Coast Economy

Surf Coast Output and Jobs by Sector

Industry Sector	Output (\$M)	%	Jobs (FTE)	%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$256.35	9.50%	1,033.76	13.50%
Administrative & Support Services	\$95.99	3.60%	254.21	3.30%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$171.34	6.40%	540.93	7.10%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$39.97	1.50%	226.14	2.90%
Construction	\$611.89	22.80%	1,390.00	18.10%
Education & Training	\$79.05	2.90%	536.39	7.00%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$20.34	0.80%	20.61	0.30%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$97.65	3.60%	135.93	1.80%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$109.71	4.10%	634.53	8.30%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$33.27	1.20%	61.86	0.80%
Manufacturing	\$194.59	7.20%	329.24	4.30%
Mining	\$13.37	0.50%	21.66	0.30%
Other Services	\$45.19	1.70%	298.43	3.90%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$167.22	6.20%	489.64	6.40%
Public Administration & Safety	\$87.77	3.30%	370.17	4.80%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$366.34	13.60%	171.77	2.20%
Retail Trade	\$131.76	4.90%	729.11	9.50%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$28.78	1.10%	78.4	1.00%
Wholesale Trade	\$138.83	5.20%	346.63	4.50%
Total	\$2,689.39		7,669.41	

The table shows that construction, and tourism have overtaken agriculture and emerged as our region's largest providers of local jobs and economic output.¹⁷

Retail, health and agriculture remain an important source of jobs.

Construction

Construction is the largest sector in the Surf Coast across all three sub-economies. These businesses service the strong growth of Greater Geelong and Torquay and help to sustain our communities during the cooler months.

Based on industry output (\$611 million) construction is the Surf Coast's largest sector. For employment (1,390 jobs) it is the number one industry for jobs. Residential construction accounts for around 77% of total construction activity. The industry is driven by the level of residential development taking place in the Surf Coast as well as the larger Geelong and western Melbourne markets. Continued residential growth is forecast and this will maintain jobs in the sector for many years to come.

Allied Health

Health and community services is a key sector and employs over 790 people locally. Health services employment covers: Barwon Health; Great Ocean Road Health (Lorne Hospital); GP clinics; and allied health clinics. There are some allied health professionals who have home-based businesses. A large number of Surf Coast residents are also employed in the health sector in Geelong (e.g. Barwon Health, other hospitals, and specialists).

A combination of an ageing population and regional growth is increasing the demand for allied health, aged-care, and disability workers. This is reflected in an increasing demand for professionals and support workers including: nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dental assistants, personal care workers and allied health assistants. There is also demand for childcare workers and disability workers.

Agribusiness

Agribusiness is the fifth largest sector of the economy in terms of output and one in which there is great opportunity for the Surf Coast to benefit from.

Agribusiness an umbrella term used to describe businesses with a connection to agriculture and the agricultural supply chain. Agribusiness includes a broad range of food and fibre production, as well as a network of processing, logistics, and support services (fig 1)

In rural regions, few industries have the potential to impact the landscape and region we live in as much as the agribusiness sector.

In terms of land-mass, agriculture, and the associated agribusiness industry is by far the largest industry in the Surf Coast Shire, making up the majority of the land use in the rural hinterland (1,020 sq.km, 60% of the total Surf Coast Shire land mass).

What we produce

Livestock production businesses are the most numerous agribusiness sector in the Surf Coast, the vast majority of livestock businesses raise cattle, sheep or poultry. There are also a number of pork and specialty livestock businesses.

Broadacre cereal cropping businesses are more common in the north and west of the Shire, where land parcels are larger and topography less undulating, while vineyards, berry farming, floriculture, tree-crop and vegetable growers tend to be situated on smaller parcels of land with higher quality soils.

In part, due to the cost of production, but also reflective of the innovative approach throughout much of the broader Surf Coast business community, many of the horticultural producers in the Shire seek to market direct to end user.

¹⁷ REMPlan 2019 data source.



This is executed through farm-gate, farmers markets, or produce box arrangements and often strongly align with principle-driven production methods. This relationship with consumer demand and ideals allows producers to achieve higher farm-gate prices than those in the conventional, commodity-style fruit and vegetable production businesses.

The Rural Hinterland Futures Strategy, along with the Sustainable Agribusiness Strategy for the G21 Region have led to increased understanding of the role and drivers of agribusiness in the Surf Coast Hinterland. In working with industry, research bodies, and other State Government departments, Council is recognising and developing approaches to ensure productive, profitable and sustainable land use through agriculture and associated industries has a strong future in the region.

Key to ensuring ongoing stewardship of the land is the ongoing commercial viability of the land use. Rapidly rising land prices and lagging commodity prices means it is becoming far more important for agricultural producers and the agribusiness sector more broadly, to diversify, intensify, increase land-holdings, or attract off-farm income. Council has a role to play in this space to support agribusinesses in finding suitable and innovative ways to adapt their business.

Increasing agribusiness diversification and intensity

Diversification of farming practices can involve for example integrating a free-range poultry operation into an extensive grazing business. A second form of diversification is value-adding to primary products – examples include own-branding and value-aligned meat or producing sauces and pickles from farm-grown produce.

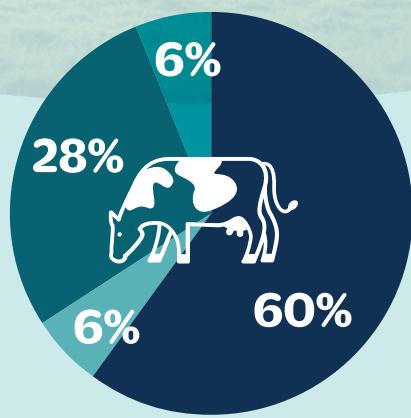
While getting more produce from a parcel of land is aligned with a range of environmental principles and both state and national agricultural priorities, the intensification of agricultural systems often challenges members of the community who value rural land for visual amenity alone.

As agricultural land is a finite resource, ensuring the region's capacity to produce food for a growing population requires intensification of production. Greater education is needed on agricultural processes with the broader community to lead to better understanding and acceptance of these practices.

Water availability and reliability

Water is currently a key limiting factor in the current productive capacity of farming land in the Shire.

Agribusiness sector type



Depending on the production system, incorporation of irrigation water has the capacity to increase production by over 2.7t dry matter per megalitre (DairyTas, 2007), or increase fruit yield by 200% in olive and stone fruit production.

As such, the availability of irrigation water would enable the smaller lots within much of the eastern region of the shire to produce sufficient volumes to support full-time employment for landholders and additional employees on many 40+ha parcels of land.

Council need to actively engage with Barwon Water and State Government to encourage the development of recycled water irrigation schemes, particularly associated with the Black Rock Water Treatment Plant. Community and landholder engagement is ongoing, however as irrigation schemes require considerable investment and future planning from industry and government organisations alike, ongoing engagement and pressure is required.

4.2 Our Fastest growing business sectors

The fastest growing sectors from 2015 to 2019 were in health, financial and professional services and construction.

Change in Number of Businesses by Industry 2015-2019



Health care and social assistance

31%



Financial and insurance services

27%



Professional, scientific and technical services

22%



Construction

17%

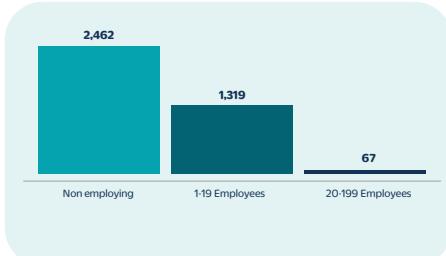
Future population growth in the Surf Coast, will increase demand for services, generate additional jobs and increase floor space occupied by businesses and other service providers. Much of this growth will be in Torquay.

The types of businesses that are stimulated the most by population growth include:

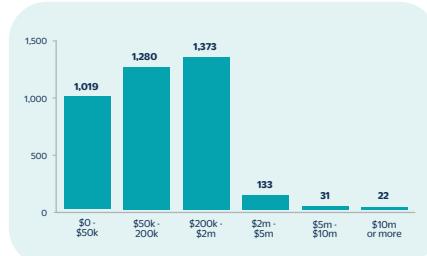
- **Business services** (accountants, lawyers, mortgage brokers, etc.)
- **Medical and allied health** (doctors, physios, dentists, osteos, psychologists, etc.)
- **Community services**
- There will be some additional demand for industrial land and retail and food services.

4.3 Supporting Small Businesses

Number of Employees



Business Turnover



Supporting Small Business Owners

In 2019, Small Business Victoria carried out a survey of 600 small businesses across Victoria.¹⁹

It found that the initial establishment phase was considered the most costly by small businesses:

- The sheer volume of regulation facing small businesses can be overwhelming.
- Businesses struggle to access quality information on the regulatory steps needed to open a new retail business. Many do not know what they need to do and there is no roadmap that brings together all the information in one place.
- Businesses face difficulties and significant delays in the approvals process to open a business.

38% of small business found Initial establishment the most difficult.

Two things that Local Government can do to assist small businesses in this phase is to:

1. Make it easier to discover what is needed to start and grow a business.
2. Reduce the time taken for approvals.

98%
of Surf Coast businesses employ

0 to 19 people.¹⁸

60%
of businesses earn less than

\$200,000

6/10
small businesses fail in the first 3 years

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, June 2020

¹⁹ Making it easier to do business in Victoria: Small Business Regulation Review, Small Business Victoria



The economic rationale we decide upon together is an opportunity to hold up a mirror which reflects back who we truly are as a community, our core values and our commitment to finding a better way.



4.4 Surfing's Evolution

The surf industry has been important in the development of the local economy centred on Torquay.

The growth of Rip Curl and Quiksilver (now part of Boardriders) and other surf businesses, created an industry that is now global in its reach.

It has attracted other Australian distributors of international brands and other outdoor and adventure businesses that share a common connection and values (e.g. Patagonia).

Torquay was an attractive location for businesses linked to surfing due to local competition, direct access to customers for feedback. The surf breaks were integral to strengthening local connections and inspiring new ideas.

Given their strong connection to the natural environment, many businesses have adopted strong social or environmental values. The business owners live locally but global issues matter.

While not a traditional sector, a 2014 study of the surfing industry indicated that the industry directly and indirectly supported around one quarter of the Shire's industry value added (\$217 million) and local jobs (2,034 jobs - direct and indirect).⁶

The industry has led in creative design and product innovation and provides high skill jobs in design, product management, manufacturing, finance, warehousing and logistics and retail.

The surf industry has served as an innovation hub with some surf employees moving out to set up their own businesses, using the skills and experience they gained.

Surfing continues to be a major driver of visitors to the Surf Coast. It also adds to the Surf Coast's reputation for offering a range of experiential tourism products and events, including the annual Rip Curl Pro

Bells Beach (which attracts an estimated 35,000 visitors).

The recent ownership changes of Rip Curl and Boardriders signal the next stage in the sector's evolution.

The surfing sector remains a key component of the Torquay economy, however the focus is expanding to lifestyle, fitness, health & wellbeing, led by a willing cohort of entrepreneurs inspired by the surf industry.

Emphasis of the legacy the surf industry has provided to emerging industries will maintain the connection between surfing heritage, new business and the Surf Coast.

4.5 Emerging Industries

The Surf Coast has a distinctly different economy from that of Geelong and the surrounding region. This is led by several non-traditional but very strong sectors unique to the Surf Coast including:

- Innovation
- Digital Nomads
- Home-Based Businesses
- Creative

Drivers of Emerging Industries

There are a number of factors underpinning the development of these emerging industries.

- **Innovation culture:** the Surf Coast has a history and culture of innovation and entrepreneurship from the surf industry. New entrepreneurs are moving in, motivated by lifestyle and a city escape to set up businesses. Existing businesses are developing new products and services.

- **High level skills and experience:** the Surf Coast has a highly skilled population (both university and trade qualifications). Some of the founders of new businesses have national and international experience gained from working in the surf industry or many years of corporate experience.

• **Small business starter:** the Surf Coast is a small business economy, with a history of new businesses being set up to service local and visitor markets or broader specialised markets. Self-employment is high, with tradespersons and specialist service businesses.

• **Common values:** Values are important to the Surf Coast community and these are also reflected in the values of businesses that have grown up in the area and in emerging industries. These values are: environment and lifestyle; sustainability; connectivity and working together; creativity and innovation; and local and global aspirations.

• **Access to markets:** the proximity to Geelong and Melbourne provides broader markets for businesses to access customers, greater than just the Surf Coast alone.

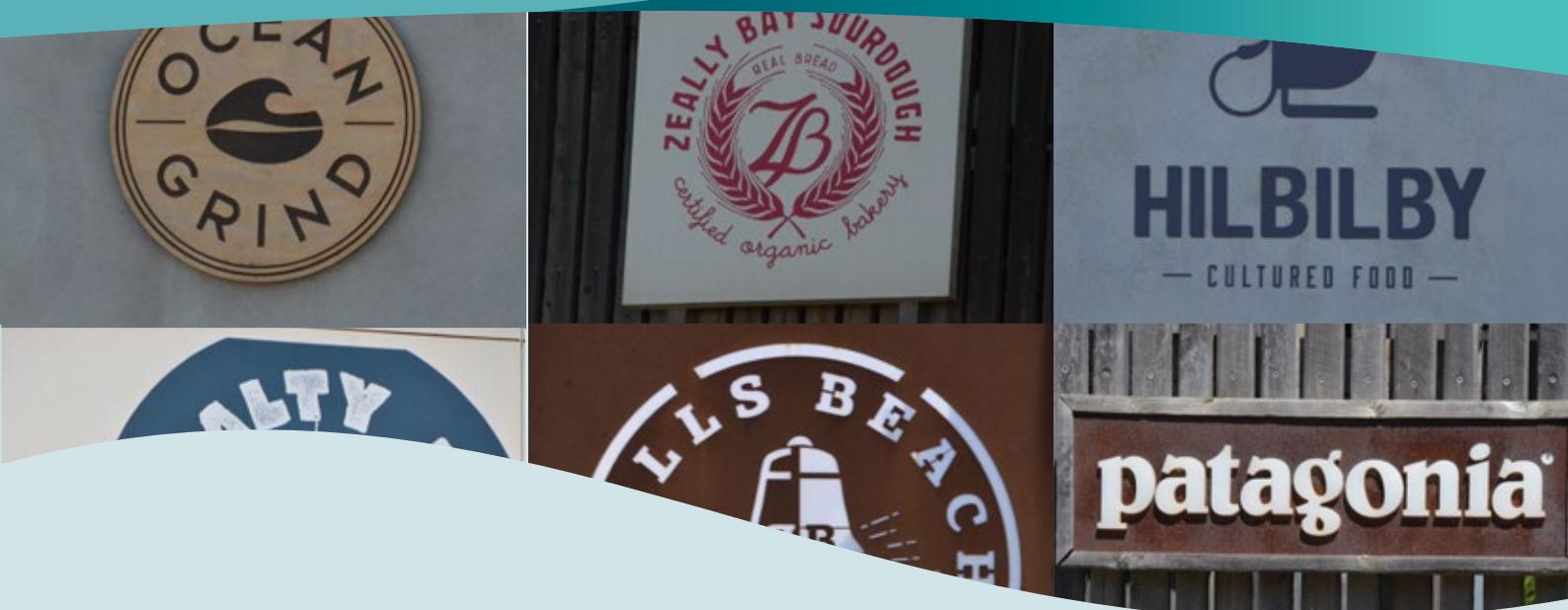
Self-employment is high, with tradespersons and specialist service businesses.

• **Technology and internet connection:** Digital technology now allows individual innovators to rapidly build globally dominant products and services from the comfort of their own home.

• **Clustering and networks:** Many great business ideas started over a chat during a surf session or over coffee. The strength of both formal and informal networks plays a huge role in supporting business growth.

• **Precincts:** a place for like-minded businesses to trade from can significantly improve the success of all businesses. Some emerging businesses are clustering in the Torquay Baines Crescent precinct, the hub for the surf industry. There is a lack of suitable land to further support small, innovative businesses.

²⁰ Innovation in Regional Australia: Spreading the Ideas Boom, Regional Australia Institute, 2016.



4.7 Emerging Businesses

Through innovation, there are new types of businesses emerging in response to demand from new markets. Emerging businesses cover a spectrum - these include:

- Craft breweries and distilleries;
- Health food products;
- Active outdoor products;
- Fashion;
- Skiing and outdoor wear;
- Custom furniture makers
- Wellness and fitness;
- Co-working spaces
- Adventure tourism activities;
- Agri-food products;
- Specialty food products – coffee, organics,
- Creative industries (including digital content producers).
- New agribusiness technologies.

There are a number of projects that could make a major difference to the local economies in the Surf Coast:

The Eden concept at Anglesea (not yet formally considered by government or community); and CORA – the Cape Otway Road Sporting Precinct in the Hinterland are two examples.

Initial information indicates the projects would: create significant new jobs (full time and part-time) in each location; develop year-round visitor markets; and address issues of seasonal and geographic concentration of visitors.

Projects of this scale and type have the potential to create new career pathways not presently available in the Surf Coast and support a large number of businesses in the local supply chain.

To maximise the benefits of any project like this requires a careful assessment of the benefits, impacts and identification of the physical and economic connections that will make our local communities more prosperous.

4.7 | Surf Coast: Top 10 for Innovation in Australia



4.6 Surf Coast: Top 10 for Innovation in Australia

The Surf Coast is growing its reputation as a centre for innovation, supported by a rich local business network with a high rate of trademark applications.

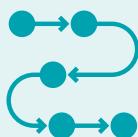
What does it mean to have an innovative culture?

Innovation usually occurs within one of four pillars:



PRODUCT INNOVATION

A good or service that is new or significantly improved.



PROCESS INNOVATION

A new or significantly improved production or delivery method such as equipment, technique or software.



MARKETING INNOVATION

A new product design, packaging placement, promotion or pricing.



ORGANISATIONAL INNOVATION

A new business practice, workplace organisation or external.

Innovation is the activity of creating or capturing value from doing something new.

Across regional Australia and across many sectors, there is an emergence of start-ups, business accelerators, co-working spaces and entrepreneurial hot spots with a common connection of innovation.

It is a key characteristic of many Surf Coast businesses. Most are pursuing or have ambitions for national and international markets.

This has led to the Surf Coast being identified by the Regional Australia Institute as one of the top 10 connected lifestyle regions for innovation in Australia.

Each of the connected lifestyle regions perform strongly across the board of indicators, especially in terms of knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) and trademark applications.

Closeness and linkages to cities is seen as a major advantage for these areas **but with a lifestyle and amenity no city can offer.**

Their proximity to major cities tends to concentrate strengths in these kinds of business services. Places like Palerang (NSW/ACT), Byron Bay (NSW), and Surf Coast (Vic) have these rich local business networks (KIBS), coupling this with innovation in existing businesses through a high rate of trademark applications (35).

A search of the IP Australia patents database indicates there were 36 patent applications over the last 25 years from Surf Coast businesses – all were surf businesses, with most being for wetsuits, surf accessories and sports performance data monitoring.

Why Does Innovation Matter?

As the Australian economy transitions away from a resource fuelled boom towards an economy shaped around knowledge and service products, our ability to compete internationally will depend largely on our collective capacity to innovate.

Top 10 Innovative Connected Lifestyle Areas

1. **Palerang NSW**
2. **Queenscliff VIC**
3. **Byron NSW**
4. **Yass Valley NSW**
5. **Wingecarribee NSW**
6. **Wandering WA**
7. **Kiama NSW**
8. **Surf Coast VIC**
9. **Toodyay WA**
10. **Boddington WA**



4.8 Creative Industries

Culture and creativity have long played a role in the economic success of the region. The development of the surf industry was inspired by the sport and culture of surfing and illustrates the role of creativity in entrepreneurship, design and manufacture.

Creative migrants are flowing from Melbourne into Geelong and the Surf Coast. The region is big enough to accommodate global and aspirational businesses yet small enough for an interconnected ecosystem.¹⁸ Proactive strategies are needed to realise future growth in creative industries.

There are a wealth of talented and creative people in the Surf Coast that support a vibrant arts and cultural community. Many creative skills within the Surf Coast area would be defined as craft and hobbies which may generate some income but are unlikely to be a full time pursuit.

The key drivers of the creative economy are creative people that use their skills and intellectual property in a more commercial setting for wealth and job creation. Examples of creative industries which are strong in the Surf Coast include:

- Advertising and marketing
- Architecture and product design
- Film, TV and radio
- Music and performing arts
- Publishing and web design
- Software and digital content including video game design
- Graphic design and visual arts

The Surf Coast has been identified as a top five creative industry hot spot in regional Australia.

A creative industry hot spot is a place where creative employment is a high proportion of local jobs and the Surf Coast is outperforming the national average in this area. Byron Bay has the highest proportion of creative jobs and is well known for its creative community. The Surf Coast is fourth in Australia.

A 2016 Queensland University of Technology study found that the Surf Coast Shire has high levels of specialist employment in Design²³. In 2016, 490 people earned their primary income in the creative industries, an average increase of 3.47% each year since 2011.

Further to this, it found the Surf Coast is striving for art to be seen in economic development terms; art should not be seen as simply an add-on but crucial as a place-making activity.

The Surf Coast has been identified as a top five creative industry hot spot in regional Australia.²²

All Creative Industry Segments

Area	LQ Score
1. Byron Bay, NSW	1.31
2. Hobart, TAS	1.09
3. Anangu Pitjantjatjara, SA	1.05
4. Surf Coast, VIC	1.05
5. Gold Coast, QLD	0.90

²² Whose town is the most creative?: Hot spots of creativity in regional Australia - Regional Australia Institute, 2016.

²³ Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis Geelong and Surf Coast, Queensland University of Technology, 2020.

Measuring Creative Industries

The major concentration of creatives is located in the Torquay economy and the Coast economy and the numbers have been increasing. The output of creative industries in the Surf Coast was estimated at \$30.3 million in 2018.²⁴

Table 3 Creative Industries Output Surf Coast, 2018 (estimates \$ million)

Creative Industries - Output 2018 (\$ million) Sectors	Torquay Economy	Coast Economy	Hinterland Economy	Surf Coast LGA
Heritage, Creative, Performing Arts	\$4.793	\$7.73	\$0.892	\$13.419
Internet Publishing, Broadcast, Web search.	\$0.000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.000
Library, Other Information Services	\$0.469	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.469
Motion Picture Sound Recording	\$5.254	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$6.305
Publishing (except Internet Music Publishing)	\$10.153	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10.153
Total Output	\$20.669	\$8.785	\$0.892	\$30.356

Examples of the strength of the Surf Coast Creative Industries:

- The Surf Coast Creatives have their own podcast!** The brainchild of Ben Hucker and Jess Mellington, they started the podcast after losing their jobs due to Covid-19 and were inspired by this research and their friends in business to share what is special on the Surf Coast. They're now onto their third season and going strong.
- Inspired by Surf Coast** is a website that was created by the Surf Coast Shire Council during Covid-19 lockdown. Initially it was created as a buy local campaign to connect residents in lock-down to local businesses that were still open. It has since expanded to tell the stories of more than 60 local businesses and what it is about the Surf Coast that inspires the business and the business owner.
- Geelong is recognised as Australia's first (and only) UNESCO International City of Design. It achieved this status in part thanks to the Surf Coast. The designation recognises the region's design history from the region's Aboriginal cultural heritage to its history in textiles and

wool production, automotive design and manufacturing to designs that have revolutionised surf culture. It also celebrates innovations currently being made across the region in world-class advanced manufacturing. The Geelong region joins an international network of 180 cities committed to the power of creativity and innovation in building sustainable cities.

- Ashmore Arts is a notable and innovative commercial hub for Surf Coast artists of all genres. It houses 28 active artists and crafts businesses, who collectively employ 12 people in various capacities. Ashmore Arts offers studio spaces in sheds, shipping containers and small workshop spaces and affords artists a conducive environment to work, display and create pieces for private and commercial clients. Ashmore Arts began in 2006 and has an approximate turnover of \$2,916,000, based on staff, truck movements and discussions with resident artists. Success stories include award-winning knife maker Metal Monkey Knives and stone tableware maker Takeawei Ceramics.
- Creative Events include: The Surf Coast Arts Trail, which has been running for

eight years, involved 67 venues and 201 artists across the Shire and generated \$77,000 worth of sales in 2018. The Lorne Sculpture Biennale Victoria's premier sculpture festival, is a free three-week event held every two years or so in which the Lorne foreshore is transformed by large sculptural works.

To support the creative industries sector recommendations include:

- Celebrate the cultural diversity in Geelong and the Surf Coast and amplify this through the creative industries.
- Support initiatives that encourage networking, collaboration and clusters of creative industries.
- Collaborate with Geelong to create focused creative industries strategic plans to harness its economic development opportunities.
- Raise awareness of creative migration and the importance of career development pathways for creative industries.
- Embed creativity and art within place-making activity.



4.8 Digital Nomads

An opportunity that Covid-19 provided is for many people to re-assess their work/life balance and capability for a high-level output of remote work.

This has created a whole new era of digital nomads or remote workers. Digital nomads are simply workers who are location independent. This means that they work borderlessly, without the constraints of being tied to a physical office or even to a time zone. There are almost five million digital nomads in the world with many millions more set to become digital nomads in the next few years.

"Find the best places in the world to live and, if it has an internet connection, you'll find digital nomads."

The COVID-19 pandemic has suddenly pushed knowledge workers' jobs out of the office and into the virtual world, rapidly fueling a movement that was happening anyway.

In many cases, there will be a gradual return to the office in 2021, however this may never be back to the usual fulltime routine in Geelong or Melbourne.

When COVID-19 restrictions eased in early 2021, fewer than a third of Melbourne's

office workers returned to their desks. Most of those reluctant to go back reporting they weren't ready to give up the flexibility afforded by working from home.²¹

More flexibility of work hours, reducing the commute time (sometimes to zero) and being better able to juggle work/life balance are positives that have come out of working from home. More employers are open to flexible work arrangements to support employees to continue to work in this way.

This presents an opportunity for the Surf Coast: We know that 56% of Surf Coast residents travel to Geelong or Melbourne for work. If half of those workers were able to continue working in the Surf Coast, their money spent on fuel, lunches, meetings, etc would be contained in the Surf Coast. This could generate an additional \$250 million in consumption effects for the local economy.

To fully realise the opportunity, the Surf Coast' local co-working spaces could play a part in reducing remote worker's feelings of loneliness and isolation by fostering local communities of remote workers who work in similar industries.

“

Find the best places in the world to live and, if it has an internet connection, you'll find digital nomads.

²¹ Coronavirus Victoria: City workers snub office return for greater flexibility at home (theage.com.au)

4.10 Home Based Businesses

A growing home-based business sector is adding to the dynamism of the Surf Coast and is the foundation for many new business start-ups.

Lifestyle, a highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce, new ways of working, close proximity to Geelong and Melbourne and advances on data speed and capability has resulted in a rapid expansion of home-based businesses on the Surf Coast.

Home based businesses are increasing - it is a major and fast-growing business segment. Currently, there are an estimated 8,428 home-based businesses (including independent tradespersons, who have their business registered at a home address) in the Surf Coast.

Home Based Business growth 2000 - 2020



GST registration gives an indication of the scale of the business, whether it is a full time business with an annual turnover >\$75K, or a part time operation or “side-hustle”, providing an additional revenue

stream for the business owner, or a start-up business which has emerged from the development of a creative interest.



Home Based Businesses with GST =

3,910

annual turnover \$75k+
more likely full time
business, may employ

Home Based Businesses without GST =

4,518

more likely a ‘side-hustle’, part time or
new business.

²² Whose town is the most creative?: Hot spots of creativity in regional Australia - Regional Australia Institute, 2016.

²³ Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis Geelong and Surf Coast, Queensland University of Technology, 2020.

²⁴ REMPlan

4.10 | Home Based Businesses

Businesses may operate from home for a range of reasons:

- too small a scale to justify a traditional bricks-and-mortar business space,
- an online business
- a consultative businesses which doesn't need a physical business location,
- by necessity as a suitable commercial location cannot be found in the region the business chooses to operate.
- a mobile service that doesn't need a fixed location (e.g. construction and trades)

Since the commencement of spatial data mapping in 2000, the Surf Coast has seen a dramatic rise in businesses registering their trading address at a residential home.

There are two main types of home based businesses that can be identified based on their turnover. If a business earns more than \$75,000, it has to be registered for GST. This level of income is a sign that this business is more intensive and more likely to be full time.

The businesses not registered for GST (of which there are many) are more likely to be a side-hustle to support the main income stream or represent a passion business that hasn't yet fully realised its potential.

Trends in home-based business on the Surf Coast

Torquay has seen an increase in home-based businesses of 312% since 2000. The Hinterland and the Coast saw rises of 214% and 149% respectively. Other overall trends – e.g. construction is the largest overall in hbb. Proportion of GST registered to non-registered businesses across all sectors has fallen since 2000

Non GST – the side hustle		Registered for GST – the serious HBB	
Largest sector	Largest sector	Most growth from 2000 to 2020	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (742) 2. Construction (642) 3. Administrative & Support Services (478) 4. Health Care & Social Assistance (365) 5. Other Services (365) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (1,110) 2. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (689) 3. Health Care & Social Assistance (275) 4. Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services (261) 5. Retail Trade (218) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (621 new businesses) 2. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (457 new businesses) 3. Health Care & Social Assistance (190 new businesses) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction (621 new businesses) 2. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (457 new businesses) 3. Health Care & Social Assistance (190 new businesses)

Torquay Map - Home Based Businesses by industry



²² Whose town is the most creative?: Hot spots of creativity in regional Australia - Regional Australia Institute, 2016.

²³ Australian Cultural and Creative Activity: A Population and Hotspot Analysis Geelong and Surf Coast, Queensland University of Technology, 2020.



Surf Coast Home Based Business



The turnover of the home-based businesses was estimated at \$172 million (2018) or 7.2% of the Surf Coast regional output.

If these businesses were treated collectively as an industry they would be in the top five industries, based on turnover.

The highest concentration of home-based businesses is in Torquay-Jan Juc, expanding from 406 in 2011 to xxx by 2020 (Scott to provide stat on growth)

The business start-ups and those with expansion plans are potential for local co-working spaces, three of which are now operating in Torquay (two in 2020) have developed (The Workers Hut, Happy Spaces, and at Workspace 365).

Working from home is projected to increase, with digital technologies enabling more people to work remotely and independently and the gig economy, which is changing the nature of work.

While many in this group will continue to work from home, some will transition to offices as their business grows, creating future demand for co-working and office space and also creating new jobs.



05.

How do you measure prosperity?

What happens when you only use growth as a measure of economic success?

The traditional economic measures of success are based on growth: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), jobs, development jobs & development.

They require an endless cycle of growth to be considered successful. If the economy were a business, would we expect continued growth?

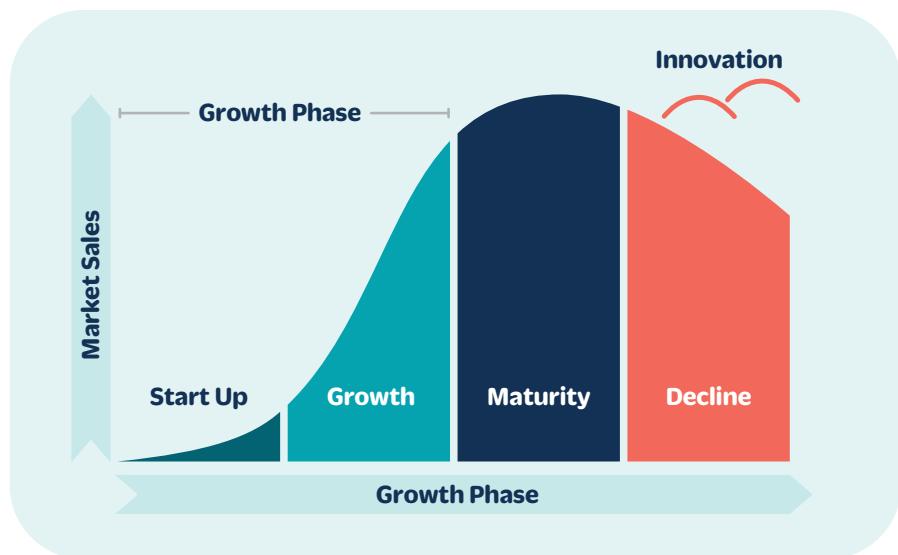
The answer is no. A business has a start-up and growth phases before reaching maturity. Over time, it can trade profitably before the market shifts and it needs to innovate either in a different market or with a different product or decline.

The Surf Coast has reached a level of economic maturity. Do we choose to innovate or decline?

Other measures of economic success

How would we measure quality of life to see our local economy thriving and thriving in a sustainable way and contributing positively to our way of life?

Business Life Cycle

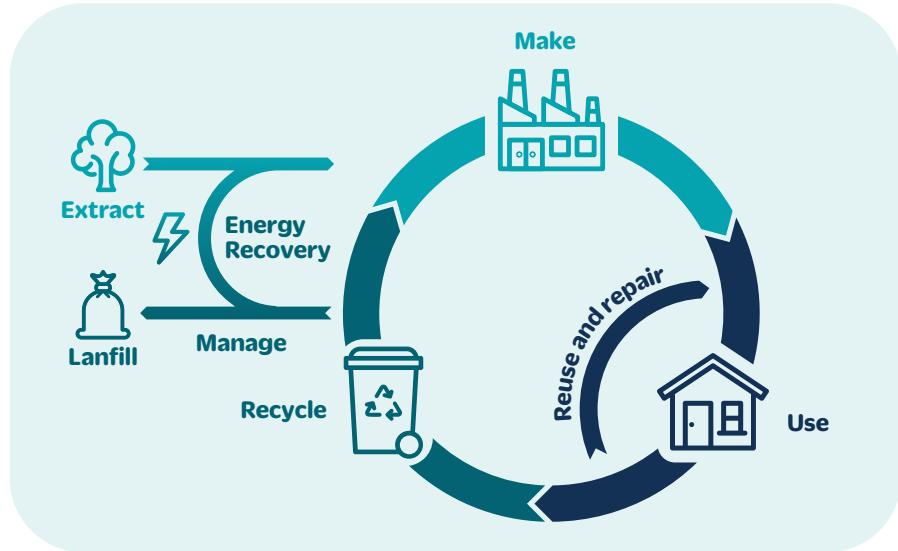


A circular economy?

The Victorian Government is developing a circular economy policy and action plan for Victoria. In a circular economy, people minimise waste and make the most of resources. Shifting to a more circular economy will grow the economy, increase jobs and reduce impacts on the environment.

This is a worthy goal but it doesn't fully consider the benefits of an economic ecosystem connected with people and place

Circular Economy



05. | How do you measure prosperity?

A doughnut economy?

Kate Raworth of Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute developed the idea of doughnut economics.

She proposes the key challenge for the 21st century is to **meet the needs of all within the means of the planet while making sure we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth's systems.**

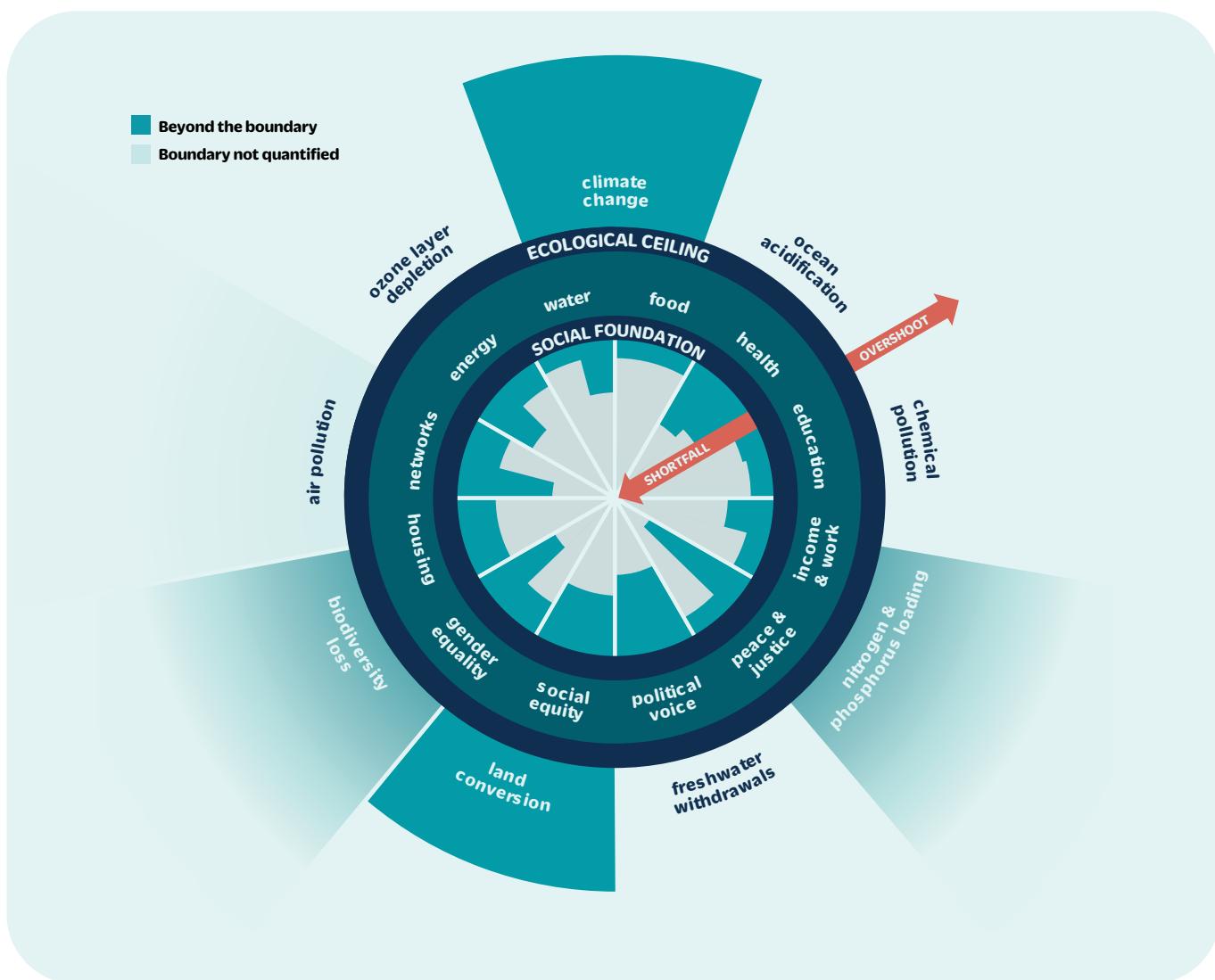
Her Ted Talk and You Tube videos can be found on <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>

An action in the Surf Coast Shire Economic Development Strategy 2021 -2031 is to establish a way to look at the success of our economy in a new light.

One that considers not just economic growth, but prosperity.

When we choose the right measurement of a sustainable economy, we can select our targets and track our progress towards those targets.

Doughnut Economy



5.1 Conclusion

We have the opportunity to write the blueprint for the next generation.

As a local government, as a region and as a global community, we have acknowledged we are now facing a climate emergency.

This recognition places us all in a unique position to take action in a time-sensitive, creative and progressive way. But what does our future look like when we place an economic lens over it?

How can we continue to thrive in a way that does not just make good business sense - but also makes sense for our people and the places we love to live in?

The economic rationale we decide upon together is an opportunity to hold up a mirror which reflects back who we truly are as a community, our core values and our commitment to finding a better way.

Our collective capacity for creative thinking, our appreciation for our natural surrounds, and our unique small business profile which makes up more than 50 per cent of our population, provides us with a legitimate business case for creating a better future. We, as citizens of the Surf Coast, regarded as one of the top five most creative places to live in the nation, have earned the right to become our own economic futurists.

We have the choice to continue going as we are now with our economy. It's got us this far and, on the whole, our lifestyle is pretty good.

But what if there is another way to approach our future? A more holistic approach to economics that still allows us all to prosper and leaves no-one behind? An approach that actually fits comfortably with who we are as a group and the values we hold?

What would happen if we stood still for a moment and took stock of all that we have here in this incredibly fortunate and prosperous part of the world we have created and have shown we are willing to stand together and protect?

Do the old rules still apply to us? Or can we re-write our economic future for the unique people and place that we are in today? One that takes a side step away from the mantra of merely jobs and growth and starts to ask ourselves: "What does prosperity mean to me and what would having enough look like?".

The Surf Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031 lays out the future state of our region's economics. This is a future that leads the way in the consideration of the concept of quality of life as an economic measure and value.

The strategy aims to outline the potential for re-defining what economics is. It steps out new examples of how we can harness it as a tool to predict, measure and benefit not just our financial future – but a future that brings all of our people along with us and sees our natural environment as an extension of ourselves.

