



Buchan, Gelantipy & Districts Community Renewal Plan

2023 – 2028

Buchan • Buchan South • Gillingal • Murrindal
Timbarra • Gelantipy • Wulgulmerang • Butchers Ridge
Bete Belong North • Suggan Buggan • Black Mountain • W Tree



Acknowledgments

The Buchan, Gelantipy & Districts Renewal Association (BG&DRA) acknowledges the Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of the land that encompasses the area, and their enduring relationship with the country. The Traditional Custodians have cared and nurtured the area for tens of thousands of years. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the area, their Elders past and present.

The community members have contributed significantly to the development of this plan, completing the community survey, attending meetings and workshops. For many that involved travel and time commitments during an incredibly stressful period of time after the 2019/20 bushfires and through the Covid-19 pandemic. The commitment of the community to the process, despite facing external delays and frustrations, is a testament to their passion for the future of their communities.

Preparation

Between early 2020 and late 2022 the BG&DRA undertook broad community engagement through community meetings and a survey, to identify the vision, values and priorities of the communities. Warm Corners Consulting synthesised a draft version of this plan, which underwent further community engagement through a survey and community feedback sessions between December 2022 and March 2023.

This plan responds to that feedback process and presents the collated, agreed position of the community.

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Introduction



Telecom Hill, Buchan - looking north towards Gelantipy, Kate Hodge, December 2019

Our Story

Black Summer Fires: The impacts on our community

On the 21 November 2019 three lightning strikes across the Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts landscape sparked fires in the area. In the month following, fire moved around, impacting properties at W Tree and Butchers Ridge. Eight additional lightning strikes on 29 December 2019 saw more fires around Gelantipy, Wulgulmerang and Suggan Buggan. With weather conditions deteriorating across East Gippsland, resources were re-allocated away from the area and fire spread across the landscape.

“We left the area and kept up to date with the constant reporting.”

Community Conversation 2020

“My plan to fight the fire didn’t match what I was confronted with by this fire. Not what I had expected”

Community Conversation 2020

The Buchan Township Protection Plan was activated with work divided between CFA and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA); a crew of one strike team and one unit actively patrolled the area. Fire impacted the Buchan township from three directions on the night of 30 December. The crew prioritised key assets including the Telstra tower, Caves Reserve Visitor Centre, business precinct, Orbost Buchan Road, and township water supply. The community swung into the relief effort and the recreation reserve was activated for respite. The pavilion sheltered 150 community members (ranging in age from 6 weeks to 84 yrs), fire fighters and critical personnel while smoke was engulfing the town and fire was raging in the landscape on all sides of the township.

During the emergency, utilities ceased functioning due to the loss of power. This resulted in no flushing toilets at the assembly area (with water having to be bucketed out of the river), no air conditioning, a reticulated water supply, and telecommunications being completely cut off after generator fuel was consumed. Those seeking respite suffered food and fuel supply shortages.

The community, CFA and DEECA crew saved the school, churches, Telstra tower, pub, motel, hall, and recreation reserve. The Caves Reserve Visitor Centre was protected, but other crucial infrastructure perished. Fires continued to ravage Buchan South and Murrindal in early January, providing no rest for the exhausted responders. Farmers and firefighters rallied to protect local properties. Clean-up efforts finally commenced in late January 2020.

“Hit from 3 different directions”

Community Conversation 2020

Direct Black Summer Fire impacts in the Buchan District



Sadly, 2 people lost their lives



44 dwellings destroyed or deemed uninhabitable



2 dwellings damaged (but habitable)



3 dwellings destroyed in the town of Buchan



96 sheds destroyed, 1 damaged, and small stock losses



1000's of km of fencing destroyed around agricultural properties



Unquantifiable numbers of stockyards and machinery lost



Flames impacted community facilities including Canni Racecourse, Buchan Valley Golf Course and Wulgulmerang Sports Ground



Flames impacted tourism assets including Buchan Caves Reserve (guides' room, cave entries, heritage trees, walking tracks, campground), Snowy River National Park, and access roads



Impacts on tourism accommodation, what was available become residences for those locals who were displaced



Bushfire tool library donations, Kate Hodge, January 2020

Our Community's Voice: Buchan Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association

The Buchan Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association (BG&DRA) was established in direct response to the Black Summer Bushfires experienced in East Gippsland. We have a clear purpose of:

- Providing for and advocating on behalf of the needs of the community.
- Identifying and addressing any shortfalls arising from the bushfire event.
- Endeavouring to increase economic activity within the community.
- Creating a Community Renewal Plan that strives for the betterment of the community.

The Renewal Plan will be a dynamic document which will reflect our community's priorities as we recover from the devastating Black Summer bushfires.

The Renewal Plan has a number of uses:

- 1 To guide BG&DRA in its community led recovery and advocacy roles.
- 2 As a resource for community organisations seeking information to support repair and renewal activities and funding applications.
- 3 Identifying and prioritising the needs of Buchan Gelantipy and Districts and assisting in the recovery and rebuilding process.
- 4 To enable our external funding and service delivery partners – government and philanthropic organisations – to understand how to best meet our recovery needs.
- 5 Facilitating communication of information between community, government and agencies.
- 6 Advocating for individuals, families and community groups.

On 2 March 2020, the inaugural meeting of the Buchan Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association (BG&DRA) was held. BG&DRA is focused on getting their community back on its feet. Advocacy has been significant, and the committee has demanded a place-based focus be maintained: the local context, story and people must be heard.



Rapid Relief site, Buchan Recreation Reserve, Kate Hodge, January 2020

“We chose the term ‘Renewal’ in our name to show us striving for betterment. Recovery indicates that we will get to the point where we were before the fires, and we don’t want that. We want betterment for our community.”

Community Member, March 2020

Our Recovery Journey So Far 2020 – 2023

What we have achieved

12 funded facility
upgrades

16 community
meals

8 community
events including:

- Buchan Boxing Classes
- Buchan Community Christmas Celebration
- Community Feedback Session and Dinner
- Gelantipy & District Concert
- Gelantipy Community Wellness
- BG&DRA Community Fun Days and AGM

Project	Project Description	Current Status	Additional/ Key Partners
Upgrade Buchan Recreation Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete redevelopment of Buchan Rec Reserve. The completed development will include significantly improved facilities for community during and post emergency events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EGSC delivering the project on Community's behalf. Project Reference Group established Working on concept design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant funding shortfall still exists - \$3M
LER Round 1 Community facility upgrades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade 4 x community facilities across district including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wulgumerang Sports Ground Gelantipy Hall Buchan Rec Reserve Buchan Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in delivery. Project Plan now completed. Funding received April 2023. Contractors now engaged for most of the works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been cost escalations due to the delay in delivering the projects and the increased costs of trades and materials across the industry.
Develop a Play Space in Buchan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A space that connects the township to family. A space for children and young people to explore and feel safe. A space for local families first and foremost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group established. Multiple options for preferred location of play space. Back to the drawing board with Working Group and EGSC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been identified as a priority both in the Community Renewal Plan and the Tourism Opportunities Report. No funding has been secured for this project.
Wellbeing and Support Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconnect and coordinate mental health and psychosocial recovery services provided in the community. Buchan Bush Nursing is managing this project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position has now been filled, contract until 30 June 2024. 	
LER Round 2 Balley Hooley Canoe Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More accessible Canoe Launch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays due to flooding in the Snowy River and Cultural Heritage Survey. Survey expected to be completed September 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Victoria are managing this project.
Buchan Mainstreet and Linkages Project led by EGSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure service roads Optimising car parking Increasing visual appeal of the streetscape Landscaping and improved street furniture Shared path linking Buchan Caves campground and the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Flynn Memorial Reserve Plans for construction are progressing (EGSC) 	
Tourism Opportunities Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive tourism opportunities from a community level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination branding Redevelopment of the Buchan Butter Factory Children's playground: for local community use first (encourage a family market) Pump track: for local community use first (encourage a family market) 	

Project	Project Description	Current Status	Additional/ Key Partners
Reopening the Buchan Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool closed in 2019 as it no longer met modern health standards for water flow and quality. 2019/2020 Bushfires destroyed most of the campground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily reopened. Heavy rains in spring and early summer 2022/23, testing has found the flow and water quality is high enough to reopen the pool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Victoria
RV Dump Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RV Dump Point to encourage tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No location for dump point. Funding in question. 	
Buchan Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building, drainage and plumbing works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding received from DEECA to carry out much needed work on the Buchan Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA
Gelantipy Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New roof to be installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA



Reopening Buchan Swimming Pool, Kate Hodge, 2023

Our Community Vision & Values

Vision

Our district will be known for its vibrant, welcoming, inclusive and cohesive communities, flourishing nature-based tourism and agricultural industries, creative opportunities and sustainably managed natural environment

Values

Community

We are caring, supportive and generous with one-another, have fun together, are open-minded and hopeful

Liveability

Access to active, healthy and safe lifestyles, with valued and supported services that enable community wellbeing, diversity and connectivity

Sustainability

A sustainable, healthy and diverse natural environment that can be enjoyed, and a built environment that is sensitive to our catchments natural attributes

Productivity

A progressive community that encourages business, including nature-based tourism and agriculture, to thrive and develop sustainably

Community Profile

History

The word 'Buchan' was likely taken from an Aboriginal word 'Bukkan-mungie', to which various meanings have been ascribed. Interpretations include 'place of grass bag' and 'place of rocks with holes in them'.

First Nations people, the Gunaikurnai, have a connection to the area that stretches back tens of thousands of years. The Country of the Krauatungalung covers the area around Buchan and Buchan River, the Snowy River and up to Black Mountain. The Buchan Caves area was an important meeting place during seasonal migration.

These caves are some of the oldest caves bearing signs of historical habitation in the world. In 2021, a significant grindstone was found at Cloggs Cave near Buchan. Other discoveries include megafauna in local fossils and remnants of the bogong moths which demonstrate the role they played in the diet of previous generations of the Gunaikurnai people.

European settlement first entered the area in October 1838, with Buchan station being established in early 1839. Free selection occurred after 1868, and a township was proclaimed in 1873. Farming included cattle, sheep and crops. Wheat, oats, barley, maize, hops, arrowroot and beans were grown on the river flats. Dairying operations, initially for local consumption, commenced before 1900. This expanded into several cheese factories and a butter factory. Grazing increased as settlement spread and cattle sales began in 1901. The township grew as farming settlement intensified.

Several mines were opened as early as 1869 including silver, gold and lead, however, most struggled commercially. Some quarries operated in the early 1900s with the marble being used in buildings such as the Shrine of Remembrance and State Library in Melbourne, other buildings in Victoria and in London, England. Wattle bark stripping was an important industry and small spot mills worked in the surrounding bush. Following WWII, two large sawmills and several smaller mills operated in Buchan providing employment. The last mill ceased operation in 2017.

The first recorded exploration of the Buchan caves was made by Stewart Ryrie in 1840 however, the indigenous people of the area were the first to know of their existence. By the 1880s, several caves became tourist attractions. Frank Moon discovered the Fairy Cave in 1907 and was the local and government appointed caretaker. They were opened for public inspection in 1908. The Royal Cave was opened in 1912 and by 1917, six caves were open to the public. In the 1920s, camping facilities were developed in the Caves Reserve to accommodate tourists. They stayed in the local guesthouse, hotels or at the new campsite. The caves were closed during the war but reopened in 1946. Both the Fairy and Royal Cave remain open for viewing while many others have limited access to maintain their integrity.

The communities demonstrated strong human capital in 2014 when the Buchan Caves Hotel was destroyed by a building fire, devastating the town. The community crowdfunded \$600,000 to aid in rebuilding the pub, which then reopened in 2016.



Aerial view of Buchan, Kate Hodge, 2021

Location

The area incorporating Buchan, Gelantipy and districts is located in East Gippsland Shire, Victoria, where it makes up 10.8% of the Shire land area.

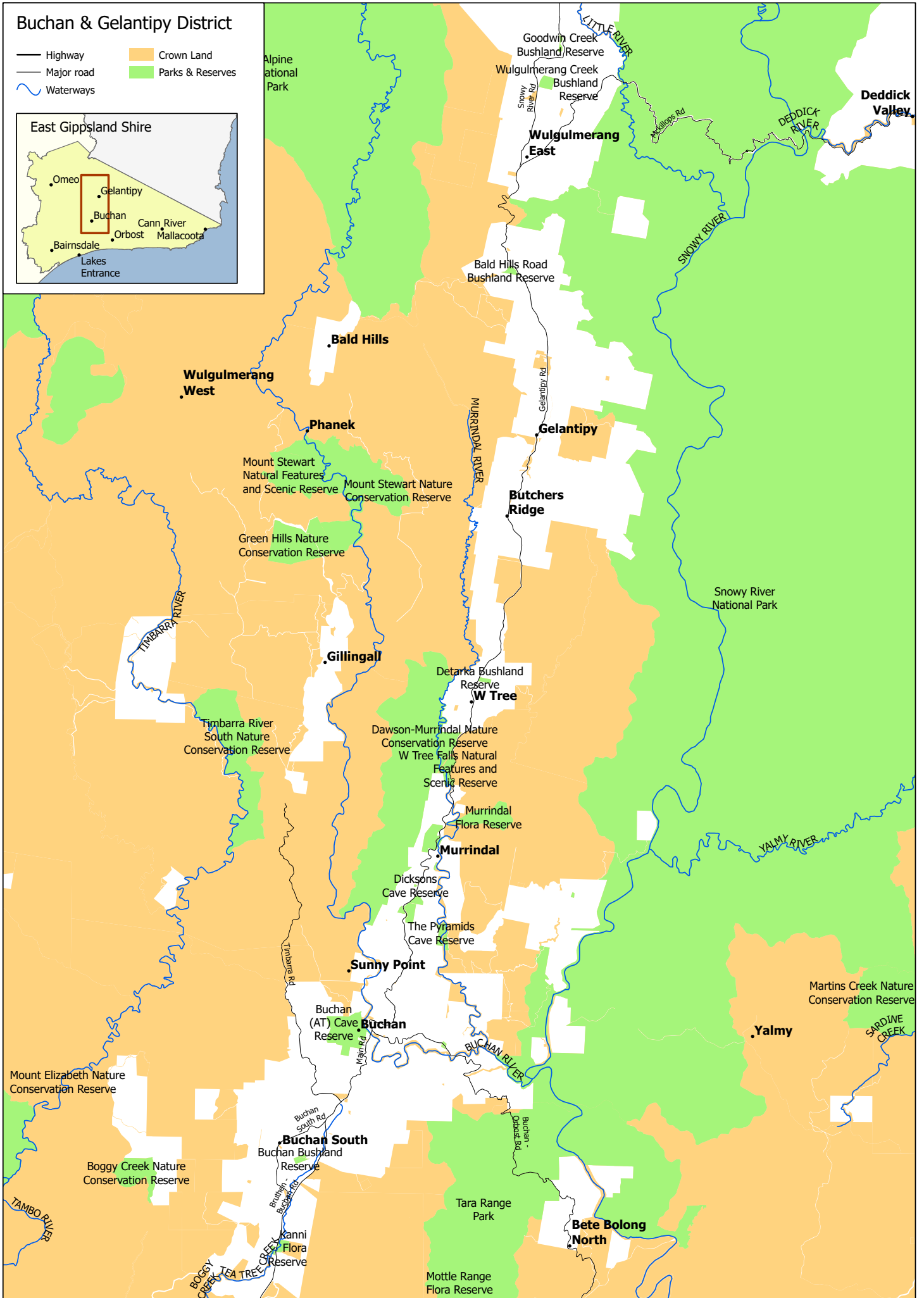
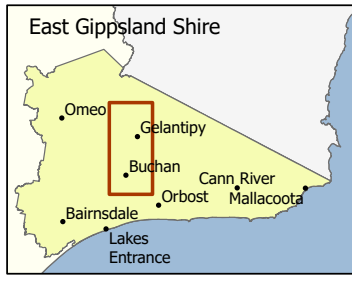
From Buchan it takes approximately 1hr to drive to East Gippsland's major service centre, Bairnsdale. The Bairnsdale to Buchan/Gelantipy bus takes approximately 2hrs between Bairnsdale and Buchan, the bus operates two days per week (Wednesday and Friday, with one service per day. The 81km between the northernmost locality, Suggan Buggan, and Buchan, takes approximately 1hr 10min to drive. The population has experienced approximately 1% decline per year between the 2016 and 2021 census, however post-Covid-19 pandemic trends change, as online/remote opportunities increase.



The Bluff Reserve, Buchan, Rohan Rogers, 2023

Buchan & Gelantipy District

-  Highway
-  Major road
-  Waterways
-  Crown Land
-  Parks & Reserves





Buchan Recreation Reserve, Kate Hodge, June 2012

Natural Environment and Landscape

The spectacular limestone-rich valleys and hills are home to the Snowy and Buchan Rivers and numerous waterfalls, gorges and historic bridges.

Buchan is well known for its spectacular underground caves. The Buchan Caves are in a reserve jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai and Parks Victoria as is the New Guinea Cave in the Snowy River National Park.

Land in the Buchan District

225,441 ha
(2,254km²)

Land area total

6ha

Council land area

180,640 ha

Crown land area

44,795 ha

Private land area

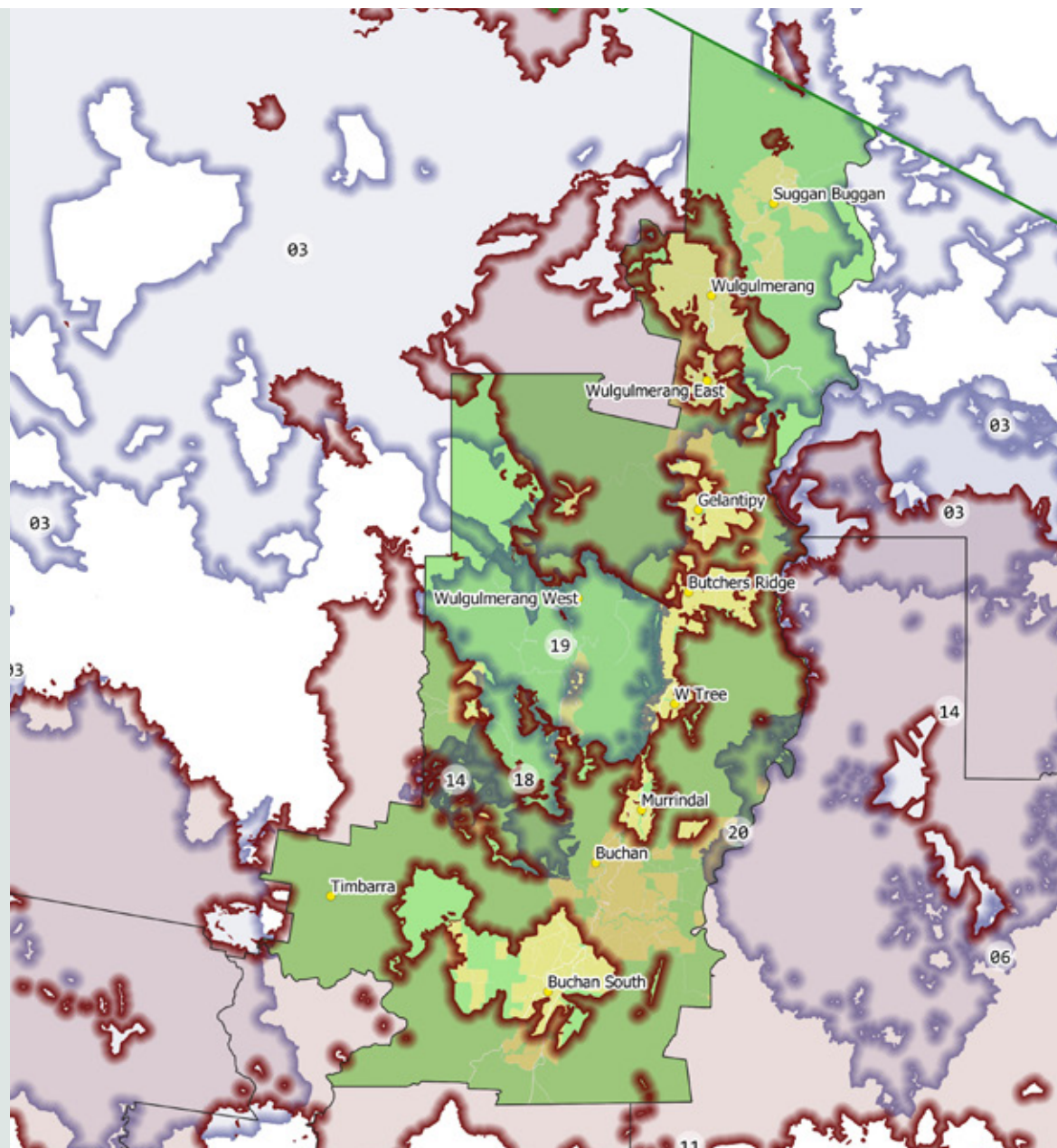
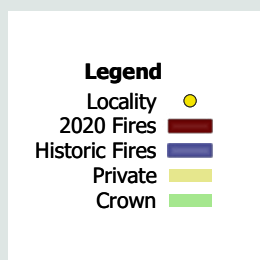
Natural disaster events and emergencies such as fire and flood are a regular occurrence in the area. In the years between 2003 and 2022, there has been fire, of varying intensity, volatility and consequence, in the landscape 16 of those years.

In 2003 and during the Black Summer Bushfires, the communities fended for themselves. Fire fighting appliances were spread across the whole of the eastern seaboard due to the scale of the fires and level of risk to workers.

Following the Black Summer Bushfires, building a system of individual preparedness was seen as essential by the communities. This must be supported and complemented at the community level with infrastructure that is reliable and capable of withstanding regular and severe bushfire events. With this being a normal part of life, communities must be able to recover independently and in their time. The ability to be self-reliant builds confidence, community capacity and true resilience.

Unfortunately, fire isn't the only natural disaster that the area experiences. Given the topography and water catchments, flooding is regularly experienced in and around the Buchan township. Flooding events have been magnified after significant vegetation and habitat loss in catchments and post bushfire events particularly 2003 and Black Summer, as 2003 was really the beginning of the understanding the major impacts of post fire effects this generation. The impacts of significant community infrastructure, the Caves Reserve and the Buchan Recreation Reserve, following natural disasters includes damage to buildings and other facilities, loss of participation in sporting events, volunteer fatigue, loss of /or interruption to employment and associated economic losses to local businesses. Community facility provision must allow for communities to flourish and connect and do what they do best – providing social opportunity and healthy participation rather than being a burden on their wellbeing and finances.

Fire Mapping of Buchan & District



Local Economy

Within the central township of Buchan, grocery, postal (including boxes and roadside delivery), meals, accommodation and fuel services are available. In 2022, the large supermarket chains in Bairnsdale commenced a delivery option to Buchan which made it easier for locals to access household basics. Larger niche accommodation businesses are emerging across the district. The top three industries of employment are Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Accommodation and Food. The Buchan Caves, run by Parks Victoria, are an important attraction and source of both direct and indirect employment for the district.



Willow Cafe Buchan, Yeates Media, February 2022



Buchan Valley Roadhouse, Yeates Media, September 2021

Local Population in the Buchan District

444

People live in the district

201

People live in Buchan

115

People live in Buchan surrounds, Timbarra & Bete Bolong North

55

People live in W Tree, Murrindal & Gillingal

27

People live in Gelantipy & Butchers Ridge

46

People live in Wulgulmerang, Wulgulmerang East & Suggan Buggan

Community Facilities

Community & Service Groups (December 2022)	Facility Management and/or Maintenance (Yes)	Facility
Buchan Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association		N/A
Buchan Business and Tourist Association		N/A
Buchan CFA	✓	Buchan CFA Shed
Buchan SES	✓	Buchan SES Shed
Gelantipy CFA	✓	Gelantipy CFA Shed
Buchan Recreation Reserve CoM Buchan Football and Netball Club Buchan Cricket Club Buchan Pony Club Buchan Tennis Club	✓	Buchan Recreation Reserve
Buchan Kindergarten Parents and Friends	✓	Buchan Kindergarten
Buchan Bush Nursing Centre	✓	Buchan Bush Nursing Assoc.
Gelantipy Bush Nursing Centre	✓	Gelantipy Bush Nursing Assoc.
Friends of Buchan Caves Reserve	✓	Buchan Caves Reserve
Buchan Landcare		N/A
Buchan Arts Council		N/A
W Tree Progress Association		N/A
Buchan and District Heritage Group	✓	Old Butter Factory
Buchan Neighbourhood House	✓	Buchan Neighbourhood House
Buchan Mechanics Hall	✓	Buchan Mechanics Hall
Buchan Primary School Parents Association	✓	Buchan Primary School
Gelantipy Progress Association		N/A
Gelantipy Hall	✓	Gelantipy Hall
Wulgulmerang Sports Ground	✓	Wulgulmerang Sports Ground
Buchan South Avenue of Honour	✓	Buchan South Avenue of Honour
Buchan Rodeo Committee	✓	Buchan Rodeo Grounds
Buchan Valley Golf Club	✓	Buchan Valley Golf Club
Buchan Gun Club	✓	Buchan Rifle Range
Buchan Cemetery Trust	✓	Buchan Cemetery
Buchan and Gelantipy Racing Club	✓	Canni Creek Racecourse
Religion/faith	✓ ✓	Anglican Church Catholic Church

Lack of investment/poor condition of facilities was the fourth most reported challenge in the community survey.

Facility	Importance	Condition		
		Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Excellent
Buchan Hall	90%	60%	45%	
Gelantipy Hall	70%	71%	24%	
Buchan Recreation Reserve	95%	52%	34%	10%
Wulgulmerang Sports Ground	71%	69%	35%	20%
Main Street Public Toilets	83%	75%	12%	10%
Main Street Playground	72%	42%	53%	
Walking Tracks in Buchan	91%	61%	30%	
Library Bus	74%	80%		20%
Buchan Valley Golf Course	65%	70%	20%	
Buchan Rodeo	75%	70%	22%	

+ Important and Very Important added together for brevity. Unimportant makes up the remaining percentage.

* Values lower than 10% not shown for brevity.



Buchan Golf Club, Yeates Media, March 2021

Services, Events & Attractions

All services rated highly for satisfaction in the community survey (over 70%), particularly bush nursing centres, Buchan CFA, Kindergarten/ Childcare and Police.

Accessing age appropriate services, healthcare and accessing opportunities for children/youth were two of the three most commonly cited reasons in the survey responses that people would leave the area.

District Based Services



Buchan Bush Nursing Centre



Gelantipy Bush Nursing Centre



Buchan Police Station



Buchan Primary School



Buchan Kindergarten



Buchan Post Office



Buchan Neighbourhood House including East Gippsland Shire Outreach

Visiting Services



Royal Flying Doctors Service



Department of Transport



Allied Health Services from Gippsland Lakes Complete Health

Places to Visit/Things to Do

- Buchan Caves Reserve, other caves
- Stockman's Camp
- Water adventure activities kayaking, canoeing, swimming, waterfall views, etc.
- Bush adventure activities hiking, camping, 4WD, etc.
- SIBA: Tibetan Buddhist Centre
- Karoonda Park: Residential, Events and School Camp Facility
- Snowy River National Park
- Snowy & Buchan Rivers
- Balley Hooley Campground
- Little River Gorge, Tulloch Ard Gorge, Basin Creek Falls
- Bataluk Trail

Annual & Sporting Events

- Buchan and Gelantipy Picnic Races - Buchan Cup
- Canni Creek Picnic Races
- Buchan Gymkana and Horse Trials (Easter Saturday)
- Buchan Rodeo (Easter Sunday)
- Buchan Flower Art 'n Craft Show,
- Photography Competition and Display (Melbourne Cup Weekend)
- Anzac Day and Remembrance Day activities
- Wulgulmerang Team Penning holds two events a year one in November (with a sports day following) and one in March
- History Walks
- Seasonal sports (cricket, football, tennis, golf)
- Participation in East Gippsland Winter Festival

Moving Forward

Our Priority Plan 2023–2025

In hearing what is important to our community across the whole district, we have condensed the priorities into what we think can be achieved. The following table on page 21–22 is our 2-year action plan. We have included what we think we, our community groups and individuals can achieve over the coming 2 years.

We have broken the priorities into 3 main categories:

What we can make happen:

These are actions that we (our community) take the lead on

What we partner in:

These are actions that we work on with partners such as government agencies, philanthropy and service providers

What we can advocate for:

These are actions that we will lobby for, to tell our story to and ensure our message is heard.

Each action will be scoped and delivered with community outcomes focusing on our district:

- Being healthy, resilient and connected
- Creating a thriving economy
- Having a healthy and sustainable environment

All ideas, priorities and projects important to our community have been captured in the IDEAS BANK on page 24. We can come back to them when an opportunity presents or when we have achieved Our Priority Plan 2023–2025. It is recommended to refer to the IDEAS BANK as it is rich with context and history so may be useful in delivering this Plan.

What we can make happen

	Status	Key Partners
 <p>1. Create a community play space A space where community can gather and connect which tells our story of recent times and includes the indigenous and pioneering past. *Identified Priority in Tourism Opportunity Report 2022</p>		Play space working group
 <p>2. Improved community facilities Determine greatest priorities for seeking funding for at least one upgrade per year Continue to support individual committees to improve facilities: refer to IDEAS BANK for list of priorities</p>	Ongoing	Facility CoM's
 <p>3. Implement priorities from Tourism Opportunity Report 2022 - 3.1 Work with lead organisations and stakeholders to create an action plan for destination branding and greater online presence</p>	Ongoing Action Plan 2023	BETA Event leaders CoM's Local Businesses
 <p>4. Create an ongoing event and activity calendar Establishing a variety of opportunities for social connection and wellbeing is highlighted by our community. The diversity and breadth of inclusions to be determined by need and energy of community and groups – refer to IDEAS BANK for ideas provided</p>	Ongoing	BGDRA

What we can partner in

	Status	Key Partners
 <p>5. Improved telecommunications Work with communications providers to ensure equal access to communications and mitigate issues where they exist, especially post emergency events. Assist individuals to explore personalised solutions for telecommunications - 5.1 Advocate for a mobile phone tower for W Tree</p>	Ongoing	Multiple Members of Parliament All levels of Government BGDRA
 <p>6. Implement priorities from Tourism Opportunity Report 2022 - 6.1 Create a RV Friendly destination by creating a choice of camping options and installing a RV dump point - 6.2 Advocate for upgrades to Balley Hooley Camping Area - 6.3 Introduce an eco-cabin design as boutique accommodation on private land - 6.4 Improvements to One Tree Hill lookout</p>	Ongoing	Facility CoM's Parks Victoria Local Businesses
 <p>7. Upgrade the Buchan Recreation Reserve Create a reserve that is fit for purpose as a sporting facility, community gathering place and vital community space before, during and after emergencies</p>	2025	Buchan Recreation Reserve CoM
 <p>8. Rebuild homes Where needed and appropriate advocate for those residents navigating the rebuild process</p>	Ongoing	BGDRA EGSC Bushfire Case Management Services (bunkers)
 <p>9. Improved health services Continue to value add to the service across our district and support where necessary and appropriate</p>	Ongoing	Health Services

		Status	Key Partners
	<p>10. Access to land for residential/ housing to support new community members</p> <p>Attract new community members through increased developable land, including re-zoning</p>	2023–2025	EGSC
	<p>11. Create local employment</p> <p>Encourage new and diverse offerings for meaningful work in our community including nature-based tourism experiences such as nature-based tourism experiences such as wild caving, 4WD tours and training, fishing and hunting tours</p> <p>*Identified Priority in Tourism Opportunity Report 2022</p>	Ongoing	BBTA Local businesses EGSC (Economic Development Team)
	<p>12. Develop a vibrant main street</p> <p>Utilise pending upgraded infrastructure to further enhance the appearance of the Buchan township</p> <p>Support shop owners to individually enhance and promote the retail offerings. Create intuitive and safe pedestrian links to main street and overflow parking considerations.</p> <p>- 12.1 Integration strategy for wider visitor precinct in Buchan main street</p>	2024	BBTA EGSC
	<p>13. Support a jointly managed environment</p> <p>Work with land managers and land holders to protect and enhance our local environment free from landscape level fires, weed and pest inundation and appropriate vegetation management</p>	Ongoing	Private landowners DEECA Parks Victoria
	<p>14. Establish our heritage story</p> <p>Create opportunities for story telling across the District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Indigenous Partners - Establish the Pioneering story 	2024	GLAWAC Parks Victoria Heritage Society Neighbourhood House Schools Jane Davidson Community Trust

What we can advocate for

		Status	Key Partners
	<p>15. Reopen Caves Reserve Swimming Pool</p> <p>Ensure the pool is opened and stays open for community and visitors into the future</p>	2023	Parks Victoria
	<p>16. Improved education opportunities & youth engagement outcomes</p> <p>Provide choice for our community to continue to learn in their way. Encourage education service providers to host educational options in our District in a variety of ways for many offerings</p>	Ongoing	Neighbourhood House GELLEN Department of Education
	<p>17. Farming and industry in our district</p> <p>Support our agricultural sector to prosper through diverse and sustainable farming</p>	Ongoing	Landcare Local Businesses BBTA Community members
	<p>18. Continued government support</p> <p>Utilise relationships established post fires to garner ongoing relationships with government for improved environmental, social and economic outcomes across our District.</p>	Ongoing	BGDRA EGSC

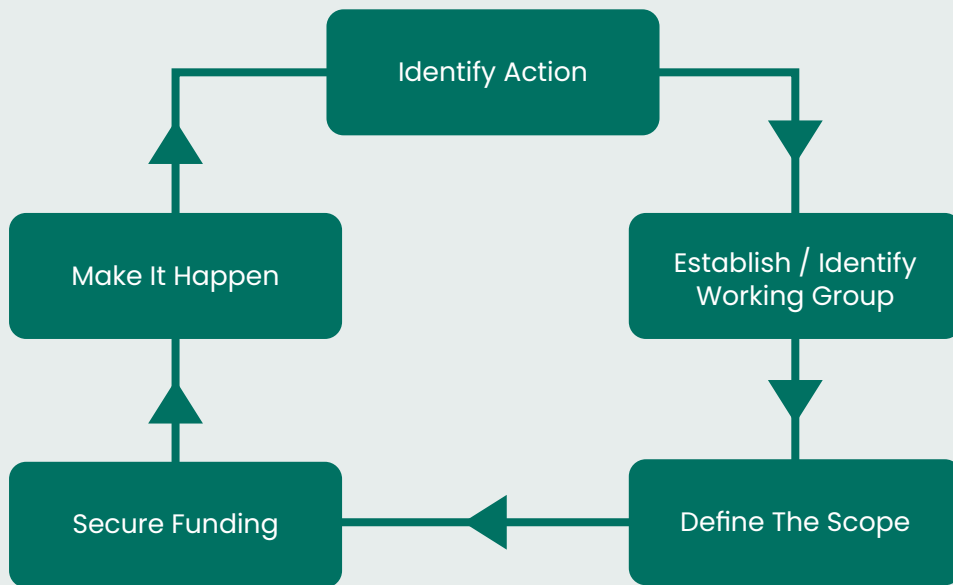
Roles & Responsibilities

Not all ideas can be delivered by the community. Many ideas need the support of agencies (i.e. government land managers) and service providers (i.e. health providers) and, identifying the roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders. Building relationships is crucial where:

- community can do it themselves;
- community and agencies partner together providing support, funding, resources or advocacy and
- agencies take the lead, keeping the community informed about the when and how.

Participating in stakeholder planning and consultation processes to ensure the priorities of the community are captured in budget and work planning processes is a key responsibility of the groups and individuals. This document and the Tourism Opportunity Plan, among any other current plans, should be referred to first by stakeholders seeking community input. The BG&DRA will work with stakeholders to streamline consultation processes where appropriate.

Where an action is picked up by a group of partners, or a lead partner, the process will be:



Ideas Bank

Things we still have to do

The following list outlines that there is plenty of work to do across our district. This is the place to store ideas until our priority plan is achieved and we are energized to refresh it. This list is generated

from community plans since 1996 up until recent surveying post the 2019–2020 Summer Bushfires. If the item appears in BOLD it means it has been identified more than once in those plans!



Community

- **Memorial to 100 years of Bush Nursing**
- **More volunteers including availability and succession plan**
- Community firewood project
- Increased membership in clubs and organisations



Environment

- **Buchan River foreshore plan**
- Explore friends of Buchan River group
- Junior Landcare
- Water security



Economy

- **Food growing opportunities**
- Ability to work from home
- Attracting families and young people back
- Events to attract tourists
- Improved branding and marketing
- Flexible accommodation for tourism



Community Safety

- Preparing community centres for post event staging areas at Wulgumerang, Buchan and Canni Creek. Providing strategic coverage across our catchment.
- Regularly update local incident management plan(s)
- **Response process: better two-way communication between locals and incident management team(s)**
- **Transport systems and roads; road widening works from Red Knob to Gelantipy Rd**
- **Water bores: W Tree, Wulgulmerang**
- **Flood mitigation works within the township**
- **More equipment for firefighting, for example fire truck**
- Access to landlines
- Regulations not being fit for purpose or place, for example CFA tank supply



Utilities

- **Road: maintain, upgrade, improve**
- **Drainage issues in Buchan**
- **Increase opening hours at Buchan Transfer station, promote tip shop**
- **Transport options within to and from the town, increased bus runs between W Tree and Bairnsdale**
- Consideration of large vehicles in main street Buchan
- Rubbish collection in Buchan
- Purchase community bus



Heritage and History

- New Guinea Cave
- Buchan Caves Reserve
- Megafauna
- John Flynn
- Charlie West
- Pioneering families



Facilities

- **Local war memorial**
- **Avenue of Honour irrigation**
- **Buchan cemetery: sealed pathways, map, fencing, entry, toilets, restoration works**
- **Build a fire station at W Tree**
- **Develop all access local footpath and cycling trail plan**
- **Vehicle access to Dekarta Reserve W Tree**
- Roof over netball court
- Indoor sports community centre
- Façade and drainage: Buchan Hall
- Masterplan of Bluff Reserve
- Upgrade racecourse facilities
- Upgrades at rodeo grounds: toilet block, camping
- Golf club upgrade, maintenance and repairs
- Butter Factory: history display/ visitor centre, maintenance
- Buchan Uniting Church: family history; heritage precinct
- Art Space
- New Buchan Bush Nursing Centre
- Independent living accommodation



Services, Activities & Events

- **After school care and sustainable day care**
- **Outreach arts coordinator; arts activities; craft club**
- Walking club
- Community meals
- Youth nights/ events, chainsaw, white card courses, TAFE
- Movie nights
- Table tennis
- Junior golf program
- Increased membership
- Home care; elderly services
- Mental health services
- Children's services
- Visiting GP

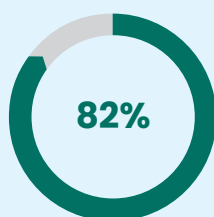
Our Opportunities and Challenges



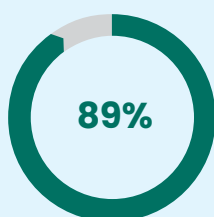
Buchan Foothills Winter Festival, Rohan Rogers, 2023

Healthy, Resilient & Connected Communities

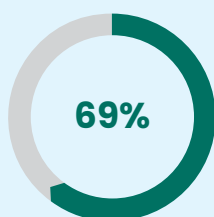
Opportunities:
The Community survey found...



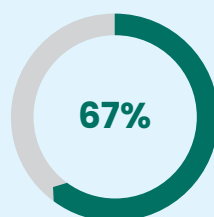
get a sense of belonging from living in the district



agreed that their community is a safe place to live



believe that the district has a defined identity



agree that the community is connected and inclusive, and everyone feels welcome



there is a high level of volunteerism in the district

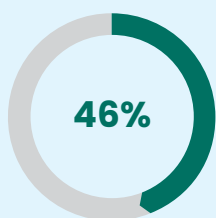
In 2016 census data showed a high level of volunteerism in the communities compared to the Shire average, although it was in sharp decline. It has decreased by a further 10 percentage points to 25% in 2021 (ABS), however remains above the Shire average of 19%.

A strategic approach to implementation of community projects is needed to ensure funding & community energy to implement priorities is secured and used well.

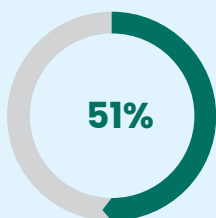
Community members reflected on their sense of community and social connectors and supports in the community survey:

Roughly equal numbers of respondents accessed education within the area as outside, this likely represents the younger children who can access kindergarten, childcare and primary school. Secondary students must travel, usually to Bairnsdale. TAFE and University enrolments are low and would be remote or require relocation (which may also be why they appear low, as they may be counted during census at another address while studying). The rise in online study opportunities may change this.

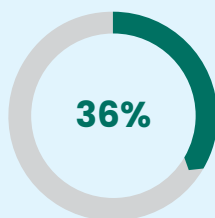
Challenges: The Community survey found...



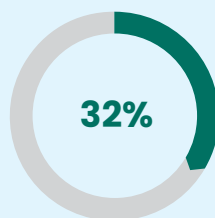
agreed that the health and wellbeing of the community is strong; meaning people are healthy and prosperous.
13% disagreed



agreed that they had access to a range of sports and recreational opportunities within the district



disagreed that they could access a range of arts and cultural activities within the district.



were satisfied that they could access a range of arts and cultural activities within the district.

951
SEIFA
Buchan & district

958
SEIFA
Gippsland average

977
SEIFA
Regional Victoria average

1010
SEIFA
Victoria average

The district is one of the State's most disadvantaged areas

Who we are ABS 2021

9.9%
Born overseas (East Gippsland 11.9%)

2.3%
Identify as Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (East Gippsland 3.2%)

31.7%
Have at least 1 long term health condition (East Gippsland 39.7%)

6.4%
Need Assistance (East Gippsland 7.7%)

Households

ABS 2021



214

Total Households

28

Couples with children

69

Couples without children

20

Lone parent families

70

Lone person households

3

Group houses

Dwellings

ABS 2021



260

Total Dwellings

207

Occupied

64

Unoccupied

55.6%

Owned Outright (East Gippsland 46.5%)

16.6%

Purchasing (East Gippsland 25.4%)

13.2%

Private Rentals

(No Social Housing Options - East Gippsland 15.4%)

77%

Happy with their housing situation

(Source: Community Survey)

The 2021 ABS Census data highlights some other demographic groups with particular needs:

- No census respondents were attending university, 1.6% were attending TAFE.
- Only 13.6% of residents hold a university qualification (a small increase since 2016), 22% hold a trade qualification. The census shows the number of residents who hold no qualification is reducing, to align with the East Gippsland average.
- The population is ageing, older cohorts increased while younger cohorts decreased between 2016 and 2021.
- Over 6% of residents reported needing help in their everyday lives due to disability, a small increase since 2016.
- Over 30% of residents reported having one or more long-term health condition
- The number of households with children has reduced over 5% since 2016.
- Almost one-third of people live alone.
- A high percentage were purchasing or owned outright, and housing satisfaction was high.
- In 2021, the ABS removed the question about internet access however in 2016 29.7% of residents reported they had no internet at home.

Thriving Economy

Opportunities:

The Buchan District Tourism Opportunity Plan (completed April 2022) identified there is room to grow the local tourism sector, provides a thorough assessment of opportunities and makes 5 recommendations:

1. Boutique Accommodation
2. Nature-Based Tourism Experiences
3. Family-Friendly Things to Do
4. Marketing, Promotions & Events
5. Infrastructure & Industry Support

More information can be found in the plan itself, which identifies 4 priority projects (Destination Branding, Redevelopment of the Butter Factory, Children's Playground, Pump Track).

According to the community survey:

- There is roughly equal utilisation of trades/labour within and outside the area, indicating there are a good range of local trades operating.
- A good number of residents have work within the districts.
- Nature-based tourism/Ecotourism and developing the economy was resoundingly the highest priority.

Parks Victoria is a significant employer, in peak times employing up to 37 people, mostly locals, with a baseline staff of around 24 people. Buchan Quarry has approximately 10 employees. The retail and hospitality sector is a significant employer.

There are a number of niche economic ventures in the area such as a school camp (12 employees), a Tibetan Buddhist Centre; organic fruit and vegetable production; an award winning garlic farm (ONTOS), food cooperatives (Murrindal and Sunrise) and the home of WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms).

Economy ABS 2021



40%
of households
are low-income
(4.3% are high income)

3.3%

of people are looking for work
(East Gippsland 4.4%)

13%

of 15-24 year olds are disengaged
from work & education
(East Gippsland 11.7%)

**Low Education Attainment
compared to East Gippsland
and Victorian averages**



213
Employed
(56% full-time, 31% part-time)

34.7%

Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

12.2%

Accommodation & Food

6.6%

Arts & Recreation

Challenges:

- Few local people grocery shop within Buchan, probably because the options are limited to staples and emergency items.
- The primary employment sector is agriculture (sheep and cattle). The economy was therefore impacted during years of sustained drought. The service industry including health, education, public administration and safety employs around 50 people, but some of these jobs are outside of the area.
- The last of the local timber mills closed in 2017 resulting in a reduction loss of local jobs and loss of families.
- According to the ABS (2021) 57.6% of people are in the workforce - of which 56% work full time. Only 3.6% of the population reported that they were looking for work, a small reduction since 2016.
- Restrictive local government regulation and difficulty progressing place-based problem solving is slowing progress of community recovery priorities.
- There is a lack of buildings to operate business from and the township of Buchan is not physically connected - i.e. the playground is at the opposite end of town to pram-friendly walking tracks, the kindergarten and other areas frequented by young families.

37%

of respondents stated that the key challenge the district has had over the past 10 years has been the lack of employment.

(Community Survey, 2020)



Buchan Caves Hotel, Yeates Media, January 2022



Buchan River, The Bluff Reserve, Kate Hodge, 2023

Healthy & Sustainable Environments

Opportunities:

- Residents have a significant connection to their natural environment. The community survey directly asked respondents what they valued most about living in the area. The greatest response (41%) was the environment (including the bush, fresh air, space, caves, beauty and farming). The benefits provided by the environment was identified as a key opportunity.
- Climate action, responsible resource use and sustainability were all mentioned by multiple survey respondents as key areas for improvement.
- The area is home to unique and diverse landscapes and ecosystems. 1806km² is Crown land designated as state forest, national park or similar nature reserve.
- The junction of the iconic Snowy and Buchan Rivers (Balley Hooley) is one of many natural attractions in the area (see p23 for full list). The many waterfalls and gorges are created by the limestone-rich valleys and hills. There are pristine wilderness areas including Alpine Ash and rain-shadow Cypress Pine woodlands.
- The Buchan Caves Reserve showcases the Buchan-Murrindal cave system which was carved 400 million years ago; hundreds of other caves spot the area.

Challenges:

- Vulnerable and endangered flora and fauna species include the Powerful Owl, Hooded Robin, Spot-tailed Quoll, Growling Grass Frog and Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby. Agencies are working with landholders in the northeast communities to reinstate critical koala habitat depleted during the bushfires.
- The Black Summer Fires had a significant impact on biodiversity. Stands of the endemic Limestone Blue Wattle species, also known as Buchan Blue Wattle, were destroyed by fire. While some are naturally regenerating, Parks Victoria and the Landcare group are initiating regeneration through planting and seeding, especially in the Buchan Caves Reserve. Another species, the Leafy Greenhood occurs in some of the most significant population numbers in Victoria.

Appendix 1

Outcomes & Priorities

This section presents the outcomes and priorities that were identified through the 2020 Community Survey.

A complete review of the past community plans and community engagement forums was undertaken to identify the history of ideas that have been raised repeatedly. This is represented against each idea with a coloured dot identifying the date of the plan or consultation activity in which the idea was raised.

- 2020** 2020 Community Conversations & Community Survey
- 2017** 2017-2021 Community Plan
- 2011** 2011-2016 Community Plan
- 2010** 2010 Community Consultation
- 1996** Planning & Development Strategy 1996
- P** Priority Project
- ▶** Short Term 1-2 Years
- ▶▶** Medium Term 3-6 Years
- ▶▶▶** Long Term 7+ Years

Outcome 1 – Healthy Resilient & Connected Communities

1.1 – Identify a location and develop a Play Space

What this means to community

- Nature play
- Pump Track
- Attractive to visitors
- Exercise Equipment
- Water play

1.2 – Undertake the Recreation Reserve Upgrade

The Reserve is a central and critical facility for sporting activities, social connection, events and service provision. It is the place of assembly during emergencies and relief activities. The facility does not meet the needs of the community, during emergencies.

1.3 – Review/Improve Community Facilities

Review and improve community facilities including:

- Buchan Hall
- Buchan Golf Club
- Rodeo Grounds
- Bluff Upgrade
- Race Club
- Consider indoor sport facility
- Complete Buchan Butter Factory renovations
- Buchan Uniting Church – purchase for family history centre, archiving of public documents, research family history, tourism opportunities

**Outcome 1 –
Healthy Resilient & Connected Communities**

What this means to community

1.4 - Reopen the Swimming Pool

The Buchan Caves Reserve Swimming Pool has temporarily reopened.
Opening dependant on water flows



1.5 - Build community spirit, engagement and cohesion

Have an ongoing program of events and activities focussed on building community cohesion, a shared sense of community identity, spirit and community engagement. Program should focus on reducing social isolation and increasing access to and participation in social activities. People struggle to prioritise and make time for their wellbeing when faced with financial, emotional and other stressors post-disaster.



1.6 - Advocate for communications improvements

Telecommunications failures during and after disaster events impedes community safety, response and relief activities. Improvements inclusive of high speed internet are needed across all localities. Includes communication systems within and between the communities, and outside the area.



1.7 - Rebuild homes post bushfire

The number of people who lost homes that have been able to rebuild is low, due to changed planning and building requirements. Much of this is experienced as red-tape, preventing our neighbours, family and friends from getting back into secure housing.



1.8 - Health Service improvements & upgrades

- A new Bush Nursing Centre in Buchan
- Weekend services, more access to mental health and allied health services (services for children), doctor
- Provision to age in place; services for elderly and disabled
- Construct independent living accommodation.



1.9 - Lift education attainment levels

- Develop youth opportunities:
- programs and camps,
 - youth engagement,
 - upskill young people



1.10 - Secure more government support, improve relationships for advocacy & action

- A feeling of being listened to by our government stakeholders.
- More support/advocacy from EGSC.
- Evidence of action from government stakeholders, recognition of our community priorities and action to support them, improved relationships including financial support/ grants.
- Improved relationship between Parks Victoria and community.



Outcome 2 – Thriving Economy

What this means to community

2.1 – Create local employment through tourism

Develop the tourism industry to increase local work and business opportunities and create economic growth. A strong economy and work opportunities will play a key role in attracting families and young people to stay and return to the area.
Tourism Opportunities Plan



2.2 – Develop a vibrant main street

- Cultivate a welcoming main street.
- Improve access to, from and within the town. For example: park, pub, motel, recreation reserve, street lighting, solar lights, extra swing bridge to enable circuit at night.
- Attract more cafe operators, good food, support more businesses to open



2.3 – Support & protect our agricultural industry into the future.

- Support farming options that facilitate farmers choosing to stay on the land.
- Support development of 'Boutiquey' agricultural produce.
- Increase industry (bush/forestry, sustainable farming, horticulture).



Outcome 3 – Healthy & sustainable environments

What this means to community

3.1 – Support & undertake environmental protection & regeneration projects

- Environmental protection and regeneration post fire.
- Weed and pest animal control.



3.2 – Improve joint fire management practices

- A joint community and agency cross tenure discussion/ working group focussed on land management to determine:
- a localised fuel management plan for roadsides, crown land
 - public land interface
 - the remnant vegetation on freehold land
 - roadside and broader landscape
 - strategic community approach
 - maintenance of crown land
 - taking advantage of existing breaks post Black Summer fire
 - roadside weeds and fuel load management and risk areas around town
 - more resources (human on Crown land)



3.3 – Continued support & development of activities that make the community self-sustaining

- Installation of renewables
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Climate Action



Key Terms

These terms are in bold the first time they are referred to. Come back to this page for a reminder of what the term represents.

ABS

Australian Bureau of Statistics

BBTA

Buchan Business & Tourism Association

BG&DRA

Buchan Gelantipy & Districts Renewal Association

Black Summer Bushfires

Bushfires that occurred across South Eastern Australia, the significant impact of which largely occurred between November 2019 and January 2020.

CFA

Country Fire Authority.

Community Survey:

Undertaken by the BG&DRA in 2020 70 surveys completed (15% of the population). The 2020 Community Survey asked respondents what they thought the key opportunities and challenges for the area were.

CoM:

Committee of Management

EGSC / Council

East Gippsland Shire Council

DEECA

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action

ERP

Official measure of population by the ABS based on the usual place of residence.

GLAWAC

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation

GELLEN Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network

Renewal Plan This document.

SEIFA Index

Socio Economic Indexes for Areas. Describes the relative level of socio-economic advantage or disadvantage in an area. Advantage is defined as "access to material and social resources and ability to participate in society: The lower number are more disadvantaged and higher numbers are less disadvantaged.

SES

State Emergency Service

TAFE

Technical and Further Education

This plan was prepared by the Buchan, Gelantipy and Districts Renewal Association.

For more information, to find a copy of the plan online or request a hardcopy visit:

buchandistrictsrenewal.com



Preparation of this plan was supported by East Gippsland Shire Council and jointly funded by Emergency Recovery Victoria and Commonwealth government under the Commonwealth-State Recovery Funding Arrangements.