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(Photo of East Gippsland residents)

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Executive Summary

The East Gippsland social assessment report presents a descriptive 'snapshot' of the communities which may be affected by the planning and policy decisions to be made during the Regional Forest Agreement process.

The report provides a socio-demographic profile of the RFA area, an analysis of current community infrastructure and an outline of community attitudes and perceptions with regard to the use of forest resources.

The methodology employed in the social assessment in East Gippsland is based on social assessment theory and involved detailed scoping and profiling phases. A multi-method approach to data collection was adopted using survey, interview, participation observation and workshop techniques. Methodological and data triangulation was employed to strengthen the study design. Public involvement is an integral part of any social assessment process and thus the community was actively involved in the process of data collection.

A review of current studies in the East Gippsland area reveal that there have been a number of decisions which have significantly affected the communities in the region. Studies by the Land Conservation Council (LCC) in 1985 and the East Gippsland Shire in 1988 have provided opportunities for community comment. In 1995, communities were asked to participate in the development of the East Gippsland Forest Management Plan. These processes provide a detailed history of the region, considers issues relating to cultural values, forest protection, biodiversity and conservation and outline plans for the sustainable management of East Gippsland forests. They also emphasise the importance of developing recreation and tourism within the region. Communities have also been involved in a project undertaken by the Australian Heritage Commission in identifying national estate values. Despite these projects, little social assessment work has been conducted within the region to date.

Through the Forest Community Coordinator in Victoria, a range of stakeholders at a state, regional and local level have been involved in the social assessment process. Groups involved in forest activities such as logging, transport, apiary, seed collecting, tourism and other forest uses were surveyed. In addition, a random telephone survey was undertaken of the East Gippsland area to ensure that a wider community view was obtained.

Furthermore, a representative sample of case study communities was selected. These communities differed in terms of the diversity of the local economy, some communities such as Orbost and Cann River were seen as more dependent upon forest industries while others, such as Mallacoota, had a more diverse economic base. The case study areas selected represent the social and economic diversity of the East Gippsland region. Community workshops were conducted in each of these case study areas and representatives from a range of community sectors and local organisations were invited to attend.

The East Gippsland area, and more specifically the RFA region is characterised by relatively low population density. In the area of study, the population has risen steadily over the past ten years and a 1.4% growth rate is predicted by 2011. The qualitative data from community workshops strongly suggests that a large number of families with adolescent children are leaving the area to pursue a quality of education not available within rural centres. It is also evident that across all study areas there is a high proportion of families with no children, residing in townships and surrounding districts, as well as a high proportion of the population in later age categories. This finding is supported by the large proportion of retirees sampled in the random survey, especially in areas such as Mallacoota.

Within all case study areas the average household income is relatively low and people are largely vocationally qualified. The majority of individuals are employed as managers and administrators or labourers. In relation to employment, agriculture and forestry are the predominant industries compared to the rest of Victoria.

Within the region, themes of self-reliance and commitment are common. Individuals identify strongly with their communities and have a clear vision for their future. Employment for the youth of the community was perceived as a major priority. The increasing decline of young people in the area due to a lack of employment opportunities is resulting in an aging population in many townships. Furthermore, the restructuring and regionalisation of community infrastructure is also a major concern due to the limited services that currently exist in rural areas.

However despite these problems, the rural environment is seen to afford a quality of life which is unattainable in urban areas. Residents valued the safety of rural areas, the friendliness of the people and the beauty of the surrounding environment. Social cohesion within the communities was also very high. Communities were investing time and energy in exploring new economic development options, such as the development of an industrial park in the region, tourist attractions such as festivals and events and the possibility of value-added wood products. Within the area there is a clear vision for the development of tourism and related industries. A majority of respondents felt that forests should be reserved but not labelled as National Parks, thus allowing greater access for recreational use. Furthermore, it was outlined that there was a place within the region for both timber and tourist industries.

The results of the assessment suggest that the timber industry is very important to the economy of the area. Community respondents outlined that both tourism and forestry would be the main industries in the area in the next 20 years, and that a more diverse industry base was required for the region. Those communities which have greater dependence on the timber industry, such as Orbost and Cann River, were inclined to suggest that forestry was more important than those communities which are less dependent, such as Mallacoota.

When asked to indicate what would be the perceived effect on the community of a decrease in the activity of the forest industry it was apparent that the majority of people sampled believed such a decrease would affect the community as a whole, that is, there would be an increase in unemployment, economic loss, decline in population and social instability. A smaller percentage of people believed environmental benefit would be a consequence.

Five distinct belief systems were seen to exist within the community. Of these systems two were significantly different. These included a factor relating to the protection of flora and fauna and a factor relating to social issues. These factors differ across location. For example, people living in areas which are less dependent upon the timber industry were more concerned about the environment, while those living people in the areas that are more dependent on timber emphasised the social and economic consequences to their communities.

Of the tourist operators sampled there was also a recognition that communities were suffering from changes in forestry. While tourist operators used national parks, predominantly, for their activities, some state forest areas were also utilised. The main concern of this particular group was the visual impact of logging and it was suggested that tourist operators should be more involved in the development of forest management plans in the area.

A common theme across surveys of economic activities in the forest was the need to utilise the resource currently left on the forest floor. Overall, contractors, apiarists, firewood, seed collectors and other forest users believed that a properly managed resource, with the least possible impact on the environment, was necessary for future generations.

The experiences of an individual or a community shapes the way that events are perceived. In this way, what is important to a member of a community, or the community as a whole, may not be important to someone outside that community. In summary therefore, it is important to acknowledge and consider the values, social dynamics and beliefs of those immediately affected by events in order to minimise social disruption and to maximise the positive community potential within the outcome of the RFA for East Gippsland. It is evident from the social assessment in East Gippsland that the community wishes to have a voice in determining how future forest resources are used and managed.

This process has given communities and other stakeholders within the area a chance to present their views and opinions in an open and neutral forum. These views must be seriously considered if an optimal solution to the RFA is to be achieved.

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In accordance with the National Forest Policy Statement, the Commonwealth and all State and Territory governments have agreed to a process for completing Comprehensive Regional Assessments (CRAs) of forests leading to the negotiation of Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs).

The RFA for East Gippsland will be an agreement between the Victorian and the Commonwealth governments which covers aspects of forest resource allocation, conservation and management for East Gippsland. It will also meet the range of Victorian and Commonwealth forest related legislative responsibilities and obligations.

The RFA will provide for a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system; the long term ecologically sustainable management of forests; and the development of competitive and efficient forest industries.

Underpinning the RFA objectives will be a number of detailed assessments across all land tenures, including other uses of forested land such as water production, apiculture, tourism and mining etc. Two main streams of assessment will be conducted, namely a Social and Economic Assessment and an Environment and Heritage Assessment. Within these streams specific assessments will include:

- Biodiversity
- Old Growth
- Wilderness
- Endangered Species
- National Estate Values
- World Heritage Values
- Indigenous Heritage
- Social Values
- Economic Values and Industry development opportunities
- Ecological Sustainable Forest Management

A key part of the CRA is the involvement of the East Gippsland community. On behalf of the joint Victorian/Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement Steering Committee, the Social Assessment Unit, within the Department of Primary Industries and Energy, has conducted the East Gippsland social assessment. A key part of the methodology for this assessment has been the employment of a Forest Community Co-ordinator to maintain close regional and local links with stakeholders and ensure a satisfactory information flow between governments and communities. These links are vital in enabling informed and committed participation in the CRA and RFA process.

1.2 What is Social Assessment?

Social assessment is a tool to predict the future effects of policy decisions upon people, their physical and psychological health, well-being and welfare, their traditions, lifestyles, institutions and interpersonal relationships (D'Amore, 1978). Social assessment methodology is used to highlight value choices, increase public involvement and efficacy, and give more democratic direction to the decision making process.

Public involvement is an integral part of any social assessment process as it is essential that communities play a legitimate role in the decision making process. Those who may be affected by new policies have a right to know how they may be impacted and how decisions are made. In any social assessment there will be a variety of community groups with different concerns. These groups have local knowledge which can help decision makers predict impacts and

develop impact management plans. Good public involvement informs decision makers and ultimately leads to more effective decision making and greater acceptance of decisions by all parties.

The social assessment methodology which has been employed in the East Gippsland Comprehensive Regional Assessment draws upon the social assessment work of Craig (1990), Dale and Lane (1995), Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (1990) and Wildman and Baker (1985). The approach adopted recognises that social assessment is part of a value-laden decision making process and that there is a need to ensure that the methodology employed considers the historical view of development and impacts; methods of public participation; and methods of grounding social assessment in social contexts.

Furthermore, the cumulative nature of impacts should also be acknowledged. Attention should be paid to the interrelated effects of a number of changes in a region over a period of time, as the combined effects are likely to be greater than those considered separately. A community that has been psychologically buffeted by a succession of impacts, or has been relocated or reconstituted involuntarily, has different adaptive potential compared to one that has had a relatively undisturbed life (Carley and Bustelo, 1984).

Social assessment is not only a formal inquiry but must also empower communities to participate effectively in land use decision making. Recognition of the perspectives of the communities concerned is essential in any form of social assessment. It is the nature of human experience which turns an occurrence into an impact and ultimately shapes the way a community will respond. Impact analyses are likely to be inaccurate if they discount the impacted people's values, social dynamics, and beliefs about events. The people directly affected are in the best position to say how they actually experience events. In predicting the potential impacts of forthcoming policies, the people's own predictions, in the form of optimism and fears, are a significant component of people's behaviours and hence of impacts (Ross, 1990).

1.3 Report Overview

This report outlines the social assessment undertaken in the East Gippsland region as part of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment process. The report is comprised of a number of sections.

Section 1, *Introduction*, describes the background to the CRA/RFA process and the report overview.

Section 2, *Literature Review*, provides a review of a number of earlier studies which have been conducted in the East Gippsland region which incorporate social aspects. Although such work is limited it does provide a means of evaluating previous impacts experienced by the communities in the region.

Section 3, *Methodology*, outlines the methodology that has been employed in the social assessment process. As discussed above this methodology draws upon the work of Craig (1990), Dale and Lane (1994), Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (1990) and Wildman and Baker (1985). The data collection methods used throughout the assessment are also documented.

Section 4, *Regional Profile*, profiles the East Gippsland area. The history, population characteristics, employment, infrastructure, and other socio-demographic information is presented.

Section 5, *Issues from Key Stakeholders*, lists the stakeholders that have been involved in the social assessment and wider CRA processes. Issues from key participants are documented and discussed.

In Section 6, *Survey Results*, the results of all surveys undertaken within the social assessment process are presented. Results are separated according to the different groups sampled and both quantitative and qualitative data is recorded.

Section 7, *Community Profiles of Case Study Areas*, contains community profiles and workshop results for each case study area sampled and result summaries.

Section 8, *Conclusion*, attempts to synthesize the information presented in the report.

Literature Review

2.1 Reports

Since 1985 there have been a variety of reports published on forests within the East Gippsland region. These reports are listed in Appendix A of this report. Of these studies, only a very small number refer to social aspects.

Due to the limited number of social studies conducted within East Gippsland, an historical view of the work is presented, highlighting the studies which are most directly relevant to social assessment.

In August 1985, a socio-economic study was undertaken of East Gippsland as part of the Land Conservation Council's (LCC) Review of Public Land Use in the region. This study was commissioned to assess the possible socio-economic implications of changes in public land use in the area. The study area included the former Shire of Orbost, an area very similar to the East Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement region. Townships included in the study area were Orbost, Marlo, Bendoc, Club Terrace, Combiensbar, Cann River, Mallacoota, Buchan and Nowa Nowa.

The study reported that there were 22 sawmills in the area with employment in the timber industry totaling 636 people. A survey of businesses in towns within the area reported the dependence on the timber industry for flow on employment to be 43.7% in Orbost, 52.4% in Cann River, 100% in Bendoc and 0.6% in Mallacoota. Clearly business activity in Orbost, Cann River and Bendoc was strongly linked to the industry at that time.

While the report offers some good descriptive statistics and economic multiplier effects, it does not distribute aggregate impacts between local communities. It does however suggest that location of workers in the industry and dependence of local business on various industries are useful in predicting impacts on local communities.

In 1988, a report was undertaken to document prospects for the region as part of the East Gippsland Regional Economic Strategy Plan. The Shires of Avon, Bairnsdale, Maffra, Omeo, Orbost, Tambo and the town of Bairnsdale were included in the study area. In relation to employment it was documented that 5.8% of employment in the region was directly associated with forestry, logging, wood products and furniture. Other main industries included agriculture, fishing and tourism. The report outlined the strengths, constraints and strategies for various industries in the region. In relation to timber, the industry was seen to be of importance to the local economy and it was recommended that an integrated harvesting trial be introduced and that the industry should consider the development of value-added products. The report also outlined the need to promote and develop the area for tourism by developing local products, increasing accommodation in National Parks, increasing the scope of recreational activities in National Parks and ensure that such parks are well serviced. In addition, there was a vision for an up-market resort within the region.

1993 saw the development of a report on the statement of resources, uses and values within the East Gippsland Forest Management Area (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, January). Information about the townships of Nowa Nowa, Orbost, Cann River and Mallacoota were included in the report. The results of the social and economic profile concluded that there was a dominance of wood processing industries in the FMA, suggesting that timber was vital to the economic base of the area. Due to the relative lack of wealth in the area it was suggested that new industry opportunities, i.e. tourism, would need to be created before reducing employment in wood processing. It was outlined that a severe reduction in employment would cause significant hardship to residents in the townships outlined, who were already experiencing difficulties economically. Furthermore, it was argued that employment reductions within the timber industry would also increase disadvantage in relation to service access.

In December 1995, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources released its Forest Management Plan for the area included in East Gippsland RFA region. While the report contains little information in relation to social assessment, it does provide descriptive chapters on the history of the region, cultural values, forest protection, biodiversity, conservation and a number of chapters relating to forest management and production. The vision for the area is for sustainable management in East Gippsland forests. Future management is to be flexible and responsive to new information, proactive but maintain the stability of forest based industries in the area, ensure biodiversity protection, implement 'world's best practice' in the use of the public/state resource and respect sites of cultural significance by involving the Aboriginal community in resource management. In addition, the forest should be sustainably used for recreation and tourism.

In assisting with the development of the Strategy for East Gippsland, the Buchan Resource Centre held a community forum for the townships of Buchan, W Tree and the surrounding district. This forum was designed to elicit goals, issues and strategies for the area with regard to Transport and Communication, Tourism, Arts and Recreation and Community Needs. In regard to transport and communication, the community outlined the need for better mobile phone access and improved public transport to reduce social isolation. In relation to the management of natural resources it was suggested that it was important to maintain the natural environment due to tourism potential and that the limestone quarry at South Buchan should be developed. Furthermore, improved water quality, greater access to wilderness areas and an increase in the number of tourist attractions would benefit the district greatly. It was suggested that the towns and district maintain a heritage theme for new tourism sites. With regard to Arts and recreation, it was outlined that an extension to the Resource Centre would provide further opportunities for cultural development.

In May 1996, the East Gippsland Shire released an Issues Paper as part of the East Gippsland Planning and Development Strategy. Community forums were held in the townships of Bonang, Orbost, Mallacoota, Swift's Creek, Buchan, Dargo, Bairnsdale, Omeo, Lindenow and Goongerah. A number of major issues and assets of each area were obtained from each forum. In virtually all locations, the timber industry was listed as a major asset. Environmental issues such as water quality, fire control, control of pests and forest management were also outlined. In relation to the community, declining population was documented as a major issue for townships within the region.

The above studies illustrate that the East Gippsland community has a high degree of vision for the area. A consistent theme is the importance of some kind of timber industry for the local economy. Some townships within the region are more dependent than others on the industry directly, however it is also acknowledged that any reduction in employment within the region will consequently impact detrimentally on individuals and families and current community infrastructure. While the timber industry appears important, there is also a clear vision for the further development of other industries such as tourism.

2.2 Cumulative Impacts of Change

Changes in rural industries have resulted in a number of effects within rural towns Australia wide. In the absence of countervailing tendencies in employment in rural townships, there is a contraction of regional economic activity and a subsequent population loss. The social implications of the dynamics of decline are profound, and smaller rural settlements are particularly affected (Lawrence and Williams, 1990).

The deteriorating economic situation in agriculture has resulted in reduced farm incomes, declining farmland values, surges of unemployment in rural communities and numerous farm foreclosures. Themes of isolation, stress, inadequate facilities and services, self-help and protest are common. These themes not only impact on individuals, families and households but also on communities as a whole, as more and more people struggle to maintain their lifestyles in rural areas (Price and Dunlap, 1988).

The effects of changes in a number of industries within rural areas at different times can be detrimental. The combined effects of change are likely to be greater than those considered separately. A community that has been psychologically buffeted by a succession of impacts, or has been relocated or reconstituted involuntarily, has different adaptive potential compared to one that has had a relatively undisturbed life (Carley and Bustelo, 1984).

Therefore when assessing impacts or the effects of changes within rural townships it is also important to acknowledge the history of change of a particular community. There is evidence to suggest that a link exists between psychological well-being and social change and that during times of economic stress and life transition, mental ill-health is heightened (Catalano and Dooley, 1977; Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend, 1974; Holmes and Rahe, 1967). It has been outlined that economic stress as a result of unemployment leads to a greater dissatisfaction with self. This dissatisfaction is accentuated by changes in family roles, the unavailability of alternative employment and the level of unemployment in the local area (Cohn, 1978).

Changes in the timber industry, however, in those rural communities that depend upon it for employment, can not be considered as the sole cause of such problems. In addition, the changes to the timber industry have been brought about, in part, by changes within the industry itself due to market conditions and technological developments. However, any further loss of significance in those communities with greater reliance upon one particular industry, adds to the domino effect of community loss of well-being and services.

Methodology

3.1 Background

The social assessment methodology that has been employed in the East Gippsland Comprehensive Regional Assessment draws upon the social assessment work of Craig (1990), Dale and Lane (1994), Taylor, Bryan and Goodrich (1990) and Wildman and Baker (1985). The approach adopted recognises that social assessment is part of a value-laden decision making process and that there is a need to ensure that the methodology employed considers the historical view of development and impacts; methods of public participation; and methods of grounding social assessment in social contexts.

3.2 Research Design

The research design employed in the current social assessment is of a cross-sectional nature, whereby a sample of the population is selected and information is collected from this sample at one point in time. The focus of a cross-sectional design is one of description, which describes the characteristics of a population or the differences among two or more populations. Cross-sectional studies are also used to assess interrelationships among variables within a population. For the purpose of this assessment, the descriptive and predictive functions of this design are salient.

Furthermore an attempt has been made to strengthen the study design through methodological triangulation, that is, the use of different methodologies in the study to obtain data about the same phenomena. As a result, participant observation, survey, interview and workshop methods have been utilised in the present assessment.

3.3 Methodology

The methodology employed in the East Gippsland social assessment clearly involves three key phases:

3.3.1 Scoping Phase

This phase involved identifying all stakeholders in the CRA process. A networking approach was utilised to identify and make contact with stakeholders at state, regional and local levels. Networking is one of the most informal of all participation techniques, and involves moving amongst individuals and groups within the community and identifying issues of concern. The process begins with key stakeholders and then 'snowballs' throughout the wider community, a process commonly referred to as snowball sampling.

The scoping phase also involved a preliminary investigation to identify salient issues and focus the social assessment, to select key variables for social analysis, and make an initial description of likely areas of impact and boundaries for more focused study. The collection and interpretation of secondary data (descriptive, qualitative and quantitative) was important in this phase. Such data is very useful in producing demographic profiles, preparing historical backgrounds of areas under assessment, examining the state of the economy and assessing the availability of infrastructure and social services.

3.3.2 Sampling Phase

In this phase a number of case study areas were selected for detailed social assessment. Interviews and focus groups comprising key regional and local stakeholders were conducted to select case study areas. The purpose of this approach was to obtain consensus on the areas to be sampled by those involved in the process. It was also necessary to ensure that a representative range of communities was selected from within each case study area. The communities sampled differed in terms of the diversity of the local economy. Communities ranged from those with a high dependence on forestry (percentage of workforce employed in agriculture and forestry and manufacturing) to those with a more diverse economic base.

The areas sampled within the East Gippsland region and the percentage of workforce employed in agriculture and forestry and manufacturing are outlined in the table below:

Table 1

	District Profile
	Percentage of workforce employed in agriculture and forestry
	Percentage of workforce employed in Manufacturing
Buchan	37%
	10%
Mallacoota	13%
	10%
Bendoc/Bonang	48%
	15%
Orbost	17%
	13%
Cann River	21%
	19%
Nowa Nowa	9%
	13%

Source: ABS Census 1991

The case study areas selected through the sampling process, the RFA boundary and the ABS East Gippsland statistical boundary are illustrated in Map 1. The townships and adjoining districts included in the assessment were: Buchan, Bonang, Bendoc, Nowa Nowa, Newmerella, Gelantipy, Mallacoota, Genoa, Cann River, Marlo and Orbost.

3.3.3 Profiling Phase

The profiling phase involved assessing the current situation in each of the communities selected and obtaining baseline primary data where secondary data was not available. A community profile was developed for each area which provides baseline information on social demography, community infrastructure and social well-being data. In addition, individuals within the case study areas sampled were asked to consider visions for their communities. Communities were encouraged to think about possible community options in relation to the Regional Forest Agreement process.

The methods employed to obtain baseline information during the scoping, sampling and profiling phases of the assessment included both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

3.4 Data Collection Methods employed in the Social Assessment Process

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation refers to a form of inquiry in which researchers both systematically observe and participate in the day-to-day life of communities, organisations and groups. The maintenance of face-to-face relationships minimises social distance, allowing an intimate qualitative understanding of complex social phenomena and enables the researcher to understand the perspective of those involved in the process.

In participant observation, data collection and analysis go hand in hand. Those in the field examine notes they compile on a daily basis to identify themes and plans for further data

gathering. In addition, the observer's accounts of their own behaviour, thoughts and plans are an important information source.

One of the main concerns with this approach is that observers' data is subject to selective perception. However, this concern can be reduced by using a multi-method approach to obtain convergence of data.

Participant observation has been employed in a number of studies within a forestry context in North America, and is a particularly good technique to employ when the phenomenon under investigation is undergoing change.

3.4.2 The Cross-sectional Survey Method

Cross-sectional surveys involve approaching a sample of respondents once only. Such a method usually yields a good response rate and conclusions may be drawn quickly from the data obtained.

Throughout the assessment process a number of surveys were developed to sample relevant industry groups that use and value forests, as well as the wider community. Where the aim of the assessment is to develop insight into the research question, it is appropriate to sample groups of people who are most likely to be able to provide insights. This technique is referred to as 'theoretical sampling'.

Surveys of Forest Users

Surveys of the following industry groups were developed to ascertain the dependence of industries on the forest estate:

- Logging Contractors
- Transport Contractors
- Mill Employees
- Apiarists
- Firewood Operators
- Seed Collectors
- Tourist Operators
- Other Forest Users

Survey of the wider community

A random telephone survey was conducted in the East Gippsland region. The telephone survey is often chosen as a data collection method due to its lower cost, enhanced data quality, ease of administration, and reduced data retrieval time, which are difficulties often experienced in implementing other survey methods. The major advantages of such a survey are that interviews can be completed quickly, a greater number of people may be sampled, and response rates are usually high. Furthermore, the telephone survey allows a random sample of the population to present their views, resulting in a relatively accurate representation of the views of the general community.

Surveys have the potential to improve representation by obtaining the views and attitudes of people on a wide range of issues while providing a valid basis on which to test community views. In addition, the survey method also has the capability to incorporate the views of those individuals who may have no other possible form of representation and those groups who wish to have a say about the use of forests in the area.

Using postcode districts, population sizes were determined for these strata. Stratified random sampling was then used to draw samples from each strata to ensure that the final sample reflected, as accurately as possible, the same proportion of the population in each postcode area. Prefix information was determined for townships and the surrounding area and telephone numbers sampled randomly from the White Pages telephone directory.

The results of the surveys conducted in the East Gippsland Assessment can be found in Section 6 of this report.

3.4.3 Qualitative Methods

While the use of a more quantitative approach, such as the survey method, affords the collection of responses for a large number of people, facilitates comparison, statistical aggregation of data and generalisability, other approaches can also provide a wealth of detailed information.

Qualitative data provides a source of well-grounded descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts, and contributes a quality of 'undeniability'. The use of qualitative techniques enables the collection of data which possesses both depth and openness (Patton, 1990). Such methods are also more appropriate when the ascription of meaning or social values is the focus of the study, or when attempting to understand complex social systems.

For the purpose of this assessment, both interview and community workshop methods were employed.

3.4.4 Interviews and Community Workshops

The interview method affords the interviewer the freedom to explore, probe and ask questions freely on a specified number of topics and issues. The greatest strength of such an approach is that the interviewer is given the liberty to build a conversational style which in turn enables individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. An interview guide approach was undertaken with stakeholders at state, regional and local levels. These interviews are documented in Section 4 of this report.

Community workshops provide a good forum to generate a 'group product' such as lists of issues, conceptual alternatives, impacts, or mutually acceptable plans of action. Workshops are best used when there is a specific problem or issue which needs to be addressed or solved. Techniques which may be employed in the workshop process include: brainstorming, nominal group process and subgroups. Following the identification of issues, similar techniques can be used to weight or rank the issues and investigate ways in which such issues can be addressed.

The strengths of the workshop process include allowing maximum flow of information and allowing the exploration of solutions. To gain a better appreciation of how individuals viewed their communities, community workshops were conducted at a central location within each of the following case study areas: Buchan, Bendoc, Nowa Nowa, Cann River, Mallacoota and Orbost.

Through the Forest Community Coordinator, representatives from a range of sectors within the district were invited to attend the workshops. Those invited are listed in Table 2 below.

Workshops were either held in the morning, afternoon or evening depending upon the suitability of time for those invited and the workshops lasted approximately two hours. In the present assessment the workshop forum was used to address three key questions:

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

Workshop participants were divided into subgroups to address each of the questions outlined. Each group had a trained facilitator and scribe. The outcomes of each discussion were recorded on butcher's paper and then brought back to the group to be discussed in a plenary session.

Participants were required to complete an evaluation form on the completion of the workshop. It was agreed that the results obtained would be fed back to those involved through the Forest Community Coordinator.

Table 2

Industry
Apiarists
Contractors/Subcontractors
Mill workers
Mill Management
Union
Forest Agencies
Seed Collectors
Firewood Operators
Tourist Operators
Other Forest Users
Conservation
Local Environmental Groups
Community Infrastructure Sectors
Commerce/Finance
Education
Health
Religion
Housing
Recreation and Tourism
Transport
Communications
Emergency Services
Retail and Trade Services
Other local services/businesses
Shire
Indigenous Communities
Land Councils
Local residents
Landholders
Local farmers
Landcare

3.4.5 The Collection of Community Infrastructure and Social Indicator Data

Community Infrastructure

The methodological approach adopted in the collection of data in this section was based on a participatory methodology. Many of the issues which need to be addressed in relation to the social infrastructure which exists within case study areas can only be documented through direct consultation with the community. The term community, in this context, is used in a broad sense and includes not only residents in the surrounding district, but also existing service providers, local, state and commonwealth government authorities, local community groups, and other organisations and individuals having significant expertise or local knowledge of the social infrastructure of an area.

The participatory process provided information on the infrastructure which currently exists within the communities sampled. An action research model was employed to collect this localised data, whereby the community takes responsibility for the collection of data alongside the assessment team. This approach is often preferable to an external investigator entering a community and extracting information. The model affords the community ownership of their data and allows active participation in the assessment process. The information collected was then cross-validated using existing secondary data such as community service directories and local government community profiles.

In addition, the use of social infrastructure was assessed using the random telephone survey outlined above. This survey further extended the participatory approach to individuals within the peripheral community. This was critically important to ensure that other existing service

users had the opportunity to present their views. This survey was administered to 493 randomly selected households within the East Gippsland region and addressed questions on the location, use and adequacy of core community services.

Social Indicators

Social indicators are measures of community and social well-being e.g. crime rate, unemployment, and are measured at regular time intervals, enabling the determination of trends and fluctuations. Social indicators may also be descriptive measures of social conditions or analytic measures of social well-being with specific interrelationships. Social indicators are often used to monitor the impact of large-scale social change on the quality of life of residents.

In the present assessment census data and other community datasets were examined to identify key social indicator variables within East Gippsland and case study areas.

3.4.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected during the course of the social assessment was coded and then analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A variety of statistical analyses were performed. These included: Frequencies, Multiple Response Analysis, Crosstabulations, Correlation and t-tests.

Qualitative Data Analysis

There are a variety of analytic techniques which can be used to analyse qualitative information collected through interview methods or open-ended survey items. The techniques employed in this assessment to analyse qualitative data included content/theme analysis and analytic induction. These techniques are explained below.

Content/Theme Analysis

Content analysis is an analytical technique used to create a classification scheme for qualitative information which is designed to reduce the data to manageable proportions. Content analysis comprises both a mechanical and an interpretative component (Krippendorff, 1980). The mechanical aspect involves physically organising and subdividing the data into categories while the interpretative component involves determining which categories are meaningful in terms of the questions being asked. The mechanical and interpretative are inextricably linked in a cycling back and forth between the transcripts and the more conceptual process of developing coding schemes.

Qualitative content analysis, in particular, places a greater emphasis on meaning and attempts to provide a descriptive overview of the data. Quotations are used to illustrate particular themes or strands of meaning within the transcripts.

Analytic Induction

Induction is a logical model of reasoning where general principles or concepts are developed from specific observations. Within the social and the natural sciences there has been a neglect of principle or theory-generating approaches while emphasis has been placed on what are perceived as more rigorous deductive, hypothesis-testing approaches.

The process of social assessment requires that projections be made concerning future conditions, and there has been a lack of guiding theories and concepts to assist social assessors in meeting such a requirement. Therefore analytic induction provides a means of looking at available data for an area or community and formulating a conceptual model or framework to account for the data obtained. This model is continually modified until the researcher is able to account for all the data that is gathered.

Analytic induction is a powerful approach for organising a framework of assumptions and understanding about a community or area under analysis. It also provides a formal and systematic methodology for the analysis of both numeric and qualitative information.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

Researchers are never immune to the social forces they explore and thus the values, assumptions and world view of those involved in collecting data play an important role. Within the area of social assessment the requirements of reliability and validity of data collection methods are not absolute and depend largely upon the objectives of those working in the field. The reliability of qualitative methods is largely dependent upon the researcher's ability to record and interpret the data. If research procedures are well documented, the researcher's role is made transparent, and the relationship between the researcher and the community is outlined clearly, reliability of the method is enhanced.

The strength of qualitative methodologies such as the interview method and participant observation is in terms of data validity. Through the interview process detailed accounts of personal views and experience can be documented. Validity checks such as probing, cross-checking, repeated interviewing and method diversity can be employed to increase validity.

The term used when diverse methods are employed is triangulation. Triangulation can occur in regard to data, methods, theory and investigators (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 1990). Data triangulation involves the collection of the data from multiple sources over time and people. Methodological triangulation involves the use of more than one methodological strategy to collect data and can be within-method (one method employs multiple strategies) or across-method (use of dissimilar methods to study the same phenomenon) in nature. Triangulation is not only useful in terms of scaling, reliability and validity, but the use of multiple methods may uncover information that may otherwise have been neglected by single methods. Such an approach was adopted in the present assessment.

It is not numbers that make data valid, but rather the logical interpretation of data from different sources and different methods of analysis into a single interpretation of that data. The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data only serves to increase the validity of findings, providing a more comprehensive analysis of the substantive domain, and affords a greater quality of data overall (Coakes, 1995).

3.6 Expert Reference Group

A reference group of social assessment experts was formed to evaluate and validate the approaches adopted in the social assessment for East Gippsland. The panel of experts was used as a technical reference group to provide technical expertise relating to the methodology and approaches adopted by the Unit in the course of its work. Such an appraisal was invaluable in providing the scientific credibility to the work of the Social Assessment Unit. This group has met regularly with the Social Assessment Unit throughout the East Gippsland assessment process to verify the methods employed and monitor the social assessment.

Membership of the panel includes representatives from the scientific and academic sectors:

Dr Geoff Syme Ms Mary Lane
Senior Scientist Senior Lecturer in Community Development
Australian Centre for Water in Society Department of Social Work and Social
Division of Water Resources, CSIRO Policy
Floreat, Western Australia. University of Sydney
Sydney, NSW.

Dr Jacqui Tracey Dr Brian Bishop
Lecturer in Social Forestry Senior Lecturer
Department of Forestry School of Psychology
The Australian National University Curtin University of Technology
Canberra, ACT. Perth, Western Australia.

Regional Profile

Where possible this report utilises data from the CRA East Gippsland Study Area. The CRA East Gippsland Study Area has equivalent boundaries to the East Gippsland Forest Management Area and includes the townships of Orbost, Buchan, Bendoc, Cann River, Nowa Nowa and Mallacoota.

However, data for some topics within this report were only available for a larger area including the CRA East Gippsland Study Area. For those topics covered in Table 3 and Sections 4.6 and 4.7, the data used applies to the larger Local Government Area for East Gippsland (Shire) which encompasses the CRA East Gippsland Study Area as described above, as well as the additional areas covered by the former City and Shire of Bairnsdale and Shire of Omeo. Because of the different boundaries, data analysis for these two areas will differ slightly.

4.1 Social Demography

East Gippsland encompasses 12,681 square kilometres of land and comprises one-twentieth of the total geographic area of Victoria. The area ranges from the Alpine regions where extensive native hardwood forests grow, through to the lower lying grazing and horticultural areas and finally to the sands of The Ninety Mile Beach. Within this area there are over 400 square kilometres of sheltered waters, 280 kilometres of coastline and approximately 2 million hectares of native forest.

Approximately 75% of East Gippsland is National Park, State Forest, Coastal Park or other public land and water. Much of the economy of the region is dependent on resources such as timber and fish and on the region's wealth of natural attractions.

The lifestyle of residents and visitors is closely related to the quality of the natural environment and the richness of the region's recreational and landscape resources.

4.2 History

The history of East Gippsland, prior to European settlement has been poorly documented. What is known has been pieced together from the accounts of early explorers and archaeological evidence.

Aborigines have occupied East Gippsland for at least 18,000 years (LCC, 1985). Bone fragments and stone implements from Clogg's Cave in the Tara Creek catchment near Buchan have been dated at 17,000 years old.

The Aboriginal people of East Gippsland were known as the Gunnai or alternatively as the Kurnai. This broad grouping was made up of individual groups who shared common basic cultural and economic characteristics, spoke related languages and often shared the same initiation ceremonies (LCC, 1985). Most of East Gippsland was occupied by bands, approximately 50 individuals, belonging to the Krauatungalung tribe. This name persists today with slightly changed pronunciation - Croajingolong. Other main tribes were the Ngarigo, who occupied the northern third of the upper Snowy River valley, and the Bidawal, also referred to as the 'scrub-dwellers', who occupied land around the headwaters of the Cann, Bemm and Genoa Rivers (LCC, 1985; Feary, 1988).

The East Gippsland area was one of the first parts of the eastern Australian mainland to be sighted by Europeans. Captain James Cook, on his voyage of discovery along the east coast of Australia in 1770, first sighted and named Cape Everard which was later renamed Point Hicks. However, apart from coastal shipwrecks and explorers along the coast, there was little European activity up until 1838-1839, when country in the Buchan, Tubbut and Gelantipy areas was taken up by graziers moving south into Victoria from the Monaro tablelands of

southern New South Wales. The early European history of East Gippsland shows a more significant connection with New South Wales rather than with the rest of Victoria.

During the 1840s there was further expansion of grazing leases in the Bendoc and Mallacoota areas and in 1847 the Newmerella and Orbost runs were officially occupied. So began an era of extensive forest grazing with graziers manipulating land by regular patch burning to control the scrub and promote growth of palatable grasses.

The early to mid 1850s saw the discovery of gold in the Bendoc area, which initiated a minor rush and led to the development of a number of mines. By 1868 reef mines were operating on the upper Bendoc River and it was estimated that there was a population of 500 miners and squatters in the vicinity (O'Bryan, 1982). Due to the expansion of the mining industry a registrar was appointed in 1867.

1867-1870 saw the establishment of the forest industry with pit sawing of timber to supply local mines and building requirements and the stripping of wattle bark for supply to the leather tanning industry.

Grant's Land Act of 1869 allowed for the selection of land before survey leading to an influx of settlers to the Snowy River flats and the development of the township of Orbost. By 1890 the township had been proclaimed and a bridge constructed across the Snowy River and a telegraph office established. Sawmills began to develop in the area and the first batch of sawn timber was cut at Orbost in 1882.

The last years of the nineteenth century saw further agricultural and sawmilling development. During 1912 the construction of the railway extension to Orbost commenced, opening the way for the expansion of the timber industry. Simultaneously there was a realisation of the importance of conservation of flora and fauna in the region, and Mallacoota and Wangan Inlet National Parks were declared in 1909, followed by the addition of Alfred and Lind National Parks in 1925-1926.

The depressed economic conditions of the 1930s and the bushfires in 1939 were to have a major effect on the forests of East Gippsland. These fires destroyed thousands of hectares of forests, countless stock, houses, sawmills and all types of property. 'Sustenance camps' were set up across the state to provide unemployment relief. The 1939 fires heralded the beginning of a new era as new roads were developed and industry once again flourished.

The unique social features of East Gippsland - the small population, the low level of development and the high ratio of public to private land - are largely explained by its history. Isolation from the main population centres in Melbourne and Sydney, the poor access and the dense forests, ensured that settlements were comparatively small, and that initial production concentrated on two non-degradable commodities, beef and minerals. With increased access by road and rail, settlement and selection laws became well entrenched and the practice of clearing dense forest for conversion to farmland began. Agricultural settlement was largely confined to the better quality lands along the river valleys and the plateau areas, and although such areas provided good quality land East Gippsland in general was never closely settled. Large areas remain in public ownership and the timber industry, rather than agriculture, has been the major economic force in the area.

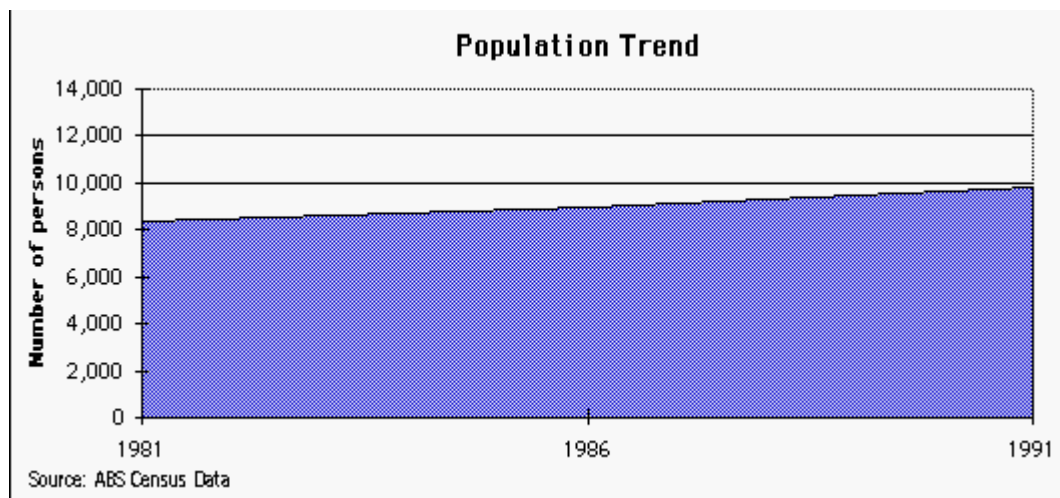
4.3 Population

The data used in this and proceeding sections has been drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing for 1991.

East Gippsland encompasses a large area with over 9,700 people. In 1991 there were 343 (3.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in East Gippsland. The population growth rate between 1986 and 1991 was 1.8% per annum. This trend is illustrated in the figure below. It is projected that East Gippsland will be the fastest growing area in the Gippsland

region with a projected increase of 15,000 people between 1991-2011. That is an annual growth rate of 1.4% (Department of Planning and Development, East Gippsland).

Figure 1



Compared to neighbouring municipalities and the Rural Victorian average of 15.3%, East Gippsland has an older population with 16.2% of people aged over 60. It is also projected that East Gippsland's population will continue to age at a considerable rate, with an estimated 27.8% of the population aged over 60 by the year 2011 (Department of Planning and Development).

More than half of the dwellings in East Gippsland are owned by those who occupy the dwelling, well above the Rural Victorian average of 45%. However 48% of households earn less than \$25,000 a year compared with a figure for Rural Victoria of 38%.

A lower proportion of East Gippsland residents hold graduate or postgraduate qualifications than the rural Victorian average. 5.6% of males and 5.4% of females hold such qualifications, compared to 6.1% and 5.9% respectively. A large percentage (male 70%, female 81%) hold no formal qualifications, while (male 3.6%, female 4.6%) have vocational qualifications. More than twice as many women as men in the Shire hold diploma level qualifications.

4.4 Employment

In 1991 there was a total of 4262 persons in the labour force in East Gippsland. This figure has increased slightly over the last ten years as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

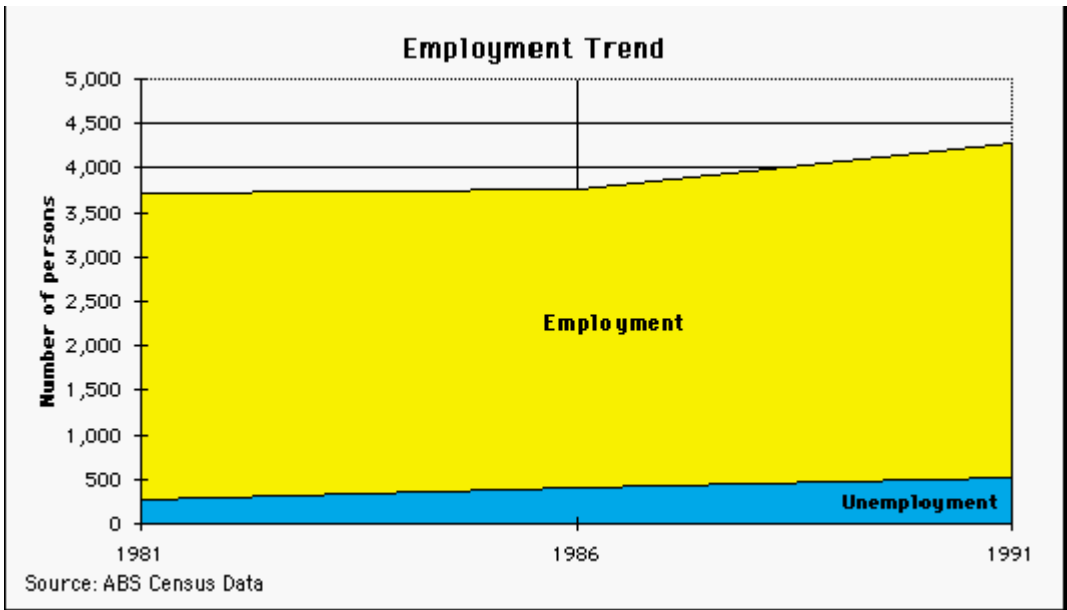
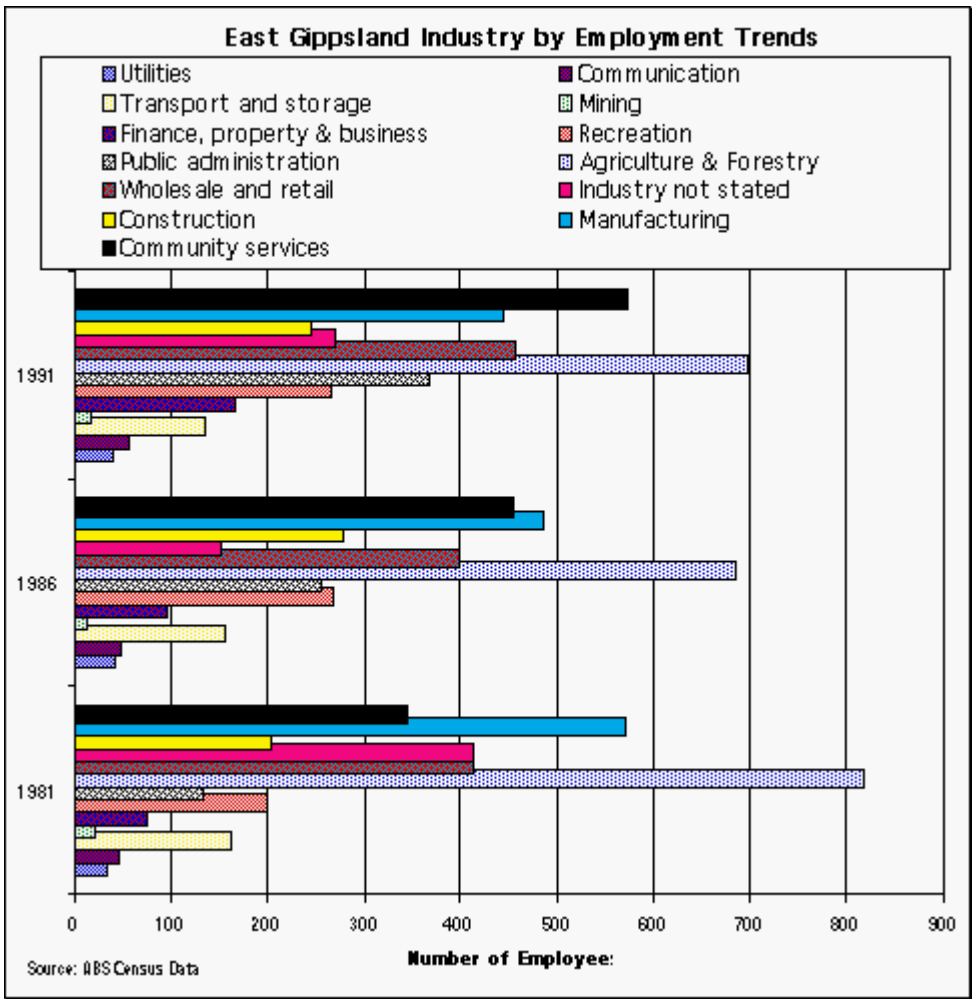


Figure 3 outlines the number of employees by industry in the East Gippsland area for the period 1981, 1986 and 1991.

Figure 3



The following employment data provides more recent employment figures by employment category for East Gippsland.

The economy of East Gippsland is heavily dependent on its natural resource base with the timber industry providing approximately 612 direct jobs; 364 in mills, 160 employed as contract harvesters and carters and a further 88 people employed in the public sector through planning and supervision(VAFI pers. comm. April 1996)(DNRE pers. comm. May 1996). Table 3 provides employment figures for the larger Local Government Area of East Gippsland and also encompasses those workers employed in timber manufacturing.

Table 3

Employment category	Number of employees	% of total employment for East Gippsland	% of total employment for Victoria
Agriculture, fishing and hunting	1143	6.00	1.08
Forestry and Logging	318	1.67	0.12
Mining	297	1.56	0.18
Manufacturing	980	5.14	15.90
Wood and Paper Products Manufacturing	655	3.44	0.94
Electricity, gas and water supply	129	0.68	0.98
Construction	885	4.65	4.96
Wholesale trade	785	4.12	6.67
Retail trade	3790	19.90	14.20
Accommodation	1259	6.61	4.66
Transport and storage	680	3.57	4.03
Communication services	163	0.86	2.15
Finance and insurance	493	2.59	4.92
Property and business services	1090	5.72	11.40
Government administration	819	4.30	4.07
Education	2121	11.13	7.48
Health and Community Services	2333	12.25	10.56
Cultural and recreational activities	458	2.40	2.62
Personal and other	651	3.42	3.08
Total	19049	100.00	100.00

Source: IRDB Business Profile 1995.

Table 4 below outlines the number of employees working in Commercial Forestry and Forest and Fire Management within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment throughout the East Gippsland area.

Other functions within the Department such as Catchment and Land Management, National Parks Service, Flora, Fauna and Fisheries etc. account for 63 additional jobs.

Table 4

Agency	Number of employees in Commercial Forestry	Commercial Forestry Forest and Fire Management
Bendoc	11	6
Buchan	0	0
Cann River	19	9
Deddick	0	0
Mallacoota	0	0
Nowa Nowa	20	0
Orbost (Office and Depot)	33	2
Total	83	17

Source: DNRE Office, Orbost

4.5 Aboriginal Population Profile

East Gippsland has a significant Aboriginal population. Census figures from 1991 show that there are 343 Aboriginal people living in East Gippsland, 3.5% of the population. This compares to the level of Aboriginal population in Victoria as a whole of 0.4%.

The Aboriginal workforce in East Gippsland is profiled in the tables below. Figure 4 on occupations shows that 35.3% of the Aboriginal workforce are labourers and related workers and 20.6% are tradespeople.

Figure 4

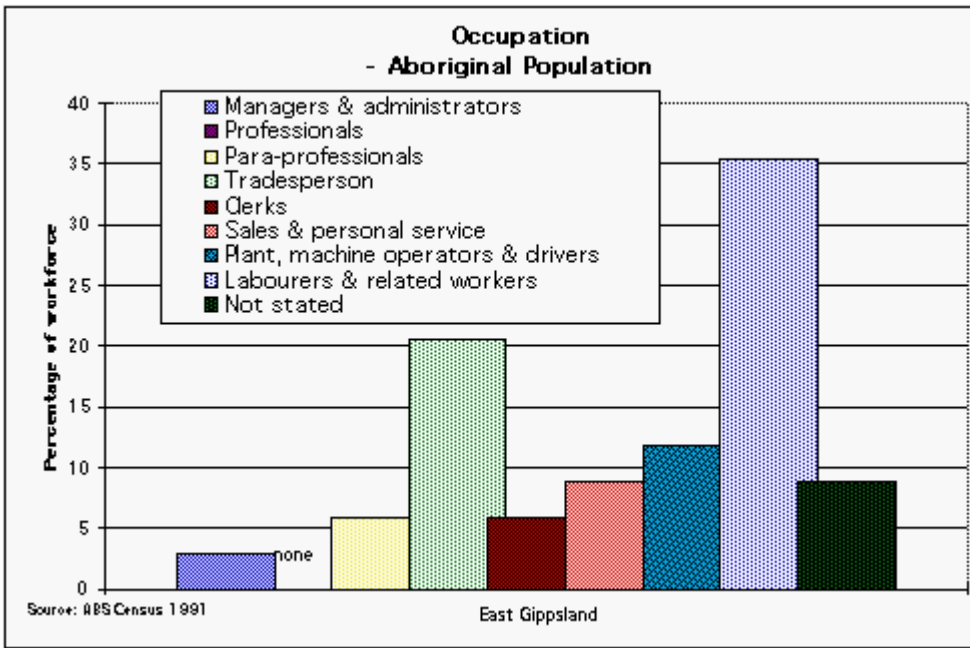
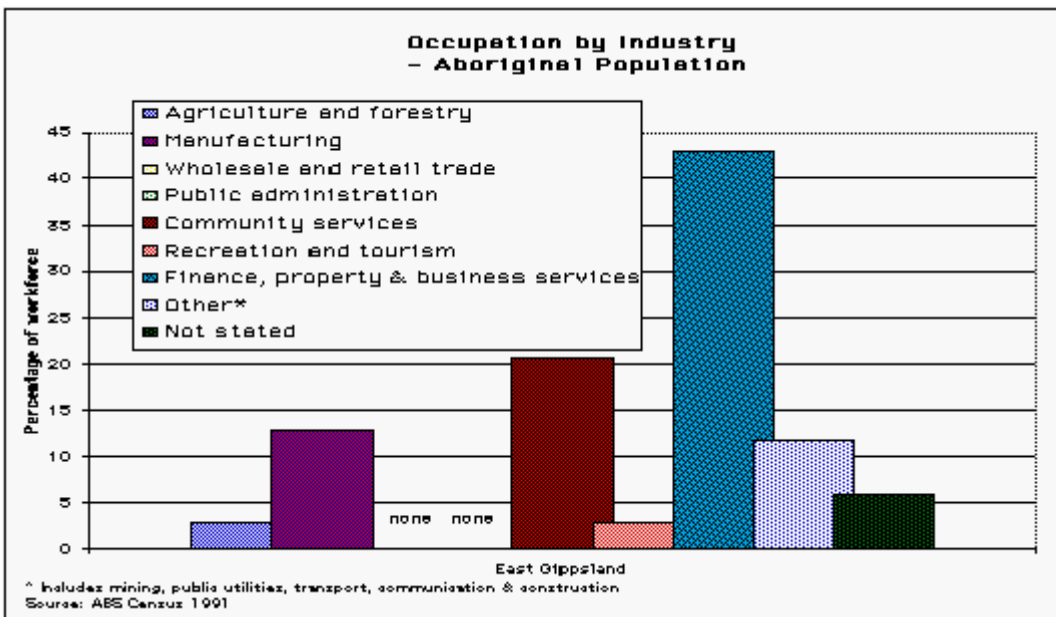


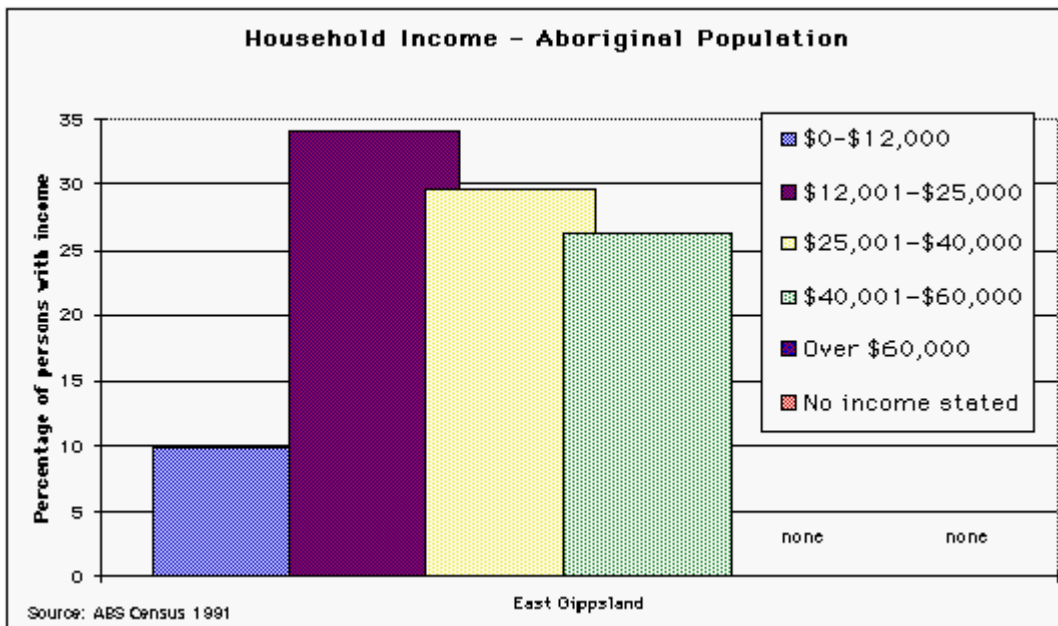
Figure 5 shows the participation of the Aboriginal workforce by industries. It shows that 43.1% of the Aboriginal workforce in East Gippsland work in the finance, property and business services area and 20.6% work in community services.

Figure 5



Figures on household income show that 44% of Aboriginal households have an annual income below \$25,000 as illustrated in Figure 6. This compares to the East Gippsland average of 48.4%.

Figure 6



Through consultation with the Administrator of Moogji Aboriginal Council it is anticipated that the 1996 ABS Census will reinforce these figures.

4.6 Community Infrastructure

4.6.1 Education

There are 39 school sites within the Local Government Area for East Gippsland which are comprised of primary, P-12 colleges and secondary schools.

The following table outlines the number of enrolments by Year in primary schools in the Orbost shire from 1987 to 1995.

Table 5

Year	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
1987	88	93	85	83	87	91	71	598
1988	89	83	91	78	78	83	83	585
1989	112	87	89	93	82	81	84	628
1990	86	118	84	93	95	83	85	644
1991	91	92	110	85	97	97	84	656
1992	98	89	100	105	92	96	96	676
1993	101	96	84	100	105	91	96	673
1994	107	93	96	85	99	101	92	673
1995	98	98	82	99	90	106	102	675

Source: Directorate of School Education, Victoria.

The following are the projections of enrolments for primary school children for 1996 to 2000.

Table 6

Year	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
1996	92	94	98	83	103	95	104	669
1997	95	86	90	92	86	108	93	650
1998	95	92	85	88	100	89	105	654
1999	83	92	88	84	94	104	89	634
2000	89	79	88	87	88	97	105	633

Source: Directorate of School Education, Victoria.

The student teacher ratios for Government Schools in Victoria for August 1995 were 18.4 for primary and 12.0 for secondary (Directorate of School Education, Victoria). These results only relate to students in full-time education. Primary and secondary figures include ungraded students from special schools who have been classified according to age.

The Directorate for Education, Victoria outlines that the minimum enrolment for primary schools will be 12 unless schools are in extremely isolated locations. In addition, designated non remote primary schools with an enrolment between 12 and 20 inclusive will not be staffed unless they become an annexe to a hub school or part of a multi site primary school.

4.6.2 Health

Table 7 below outlines the provision of health services within the Local Government Area for East Gippsland.

Table 7

Type of Service	Area	Agency
Public Hospitals	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
	Orbost	FEGH and SS
	Omeo	Omeo District Hospital
Community Health Centres	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
	Orbost	FEGH and SS
	Lakes Entrance	Lakes Entrance Community Health Centre
	Omeo	Omeo Community Health Centre
	Ensay	Ensay Community Health Centre
Bush Nursing Centres	Mallacoota	Mallacoota District Bush Nursing Centre
	Cann River	Cann Valley Bush Nursing Centre
	Gelantipy	Gelantipy District Bush Nursing Centre
	Buchan	Buchan Bush Nursing Centre
	Swifts Creek	Swifts Creek Bush Nursing Centre
Neighbourhood Houses	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Neighbourhood House
	Swifts Creek	Omeo Shire Neighbourhood House

	Benambra	Benambra Neighbourhood House
	Cann River	Cann River Neighbourhood House
	Orbost	Orbost Neighbourhood House
	Buchan	Buchan District Outreach Inc.
	Mallacoota	Mallacoota and District Health Service

Social Workers	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
	Orbost	FEGH & SS - Community Health
	Lakes Entrance	Lakes Entrance Community Health Centre
Sexual Assault Services	Bairnsdale	Kalparrin Outreach Service
	Orbost	FEGH & SS - Community Health
Emergency Accommodation	Omeo	Omeo Community Health Centre
	Orbost	Orbost Accommodation Service
	Lakes Entrance	Lakes Entrance Community Health Centre
	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
Women's Shelters	Bairnsdale	Willaneen Koori Women's Shelter
Family Counselling	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
	Mallacoota	Willaneen Koori Women's Shelter
Psychiatric Services	Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale Psychiatric Service
	Bairnsdale	Orbost Psychiatric Service - CHC
Protective Services	Bairnsdale	Health & Community Services

Source: Far East Gippsland Health and Support Service (FEGH & SS), Orbost, June 1996

4.6.3 Finance

The provision of banking services within the Local Government Area for East Gippsland is provided by the major banking organisations and credit unions. The existence of a bank or agency facility relies on the profitability of businesses within local townships (Personal Communication, Commonwealth Bank, June, 1996).

4.7 Recreation and Tourism

4.7.1 Tourist Accommodation

The following table outlines the total number of different types of tourist accommodation, employment provided and the takings from accommodation for the December 1995 quarter within the Local Government Area for East Gippsland.

Table 8

Type of Tourist Accommodation	Total Number of Establishments	Employment	Takings from accommodation (\$)
Holiday Flats, Units and Houses	546	128	1,028,000.00
Caravan Parks	85	249	1,968,000.00
Hotels, motels and guest houses	78	521	2,880,000.00

Source: Tourist Accommodation December Quarter 1995, ABS Catalogue 8635.2

The Local Government Area for East Gippsland is comprised of two statistical local areas. One of these areas, Orbost (S), covers most of the CRA East Gippsland Study Region. The following available statistics refer to this area specifically.

Table 9

Type of Tourist Accommodation	Total Number of Establishments	Employment	Takings from accommodation (\$)
Caravan Parks	12	28	254,000.00
Hotels, motels and guest houses	13	65	364,000.00

Source: Tourist Accommodation December Quarter 1995, ABS Catalogue 8635.2

4.7.2 Recreational Activities

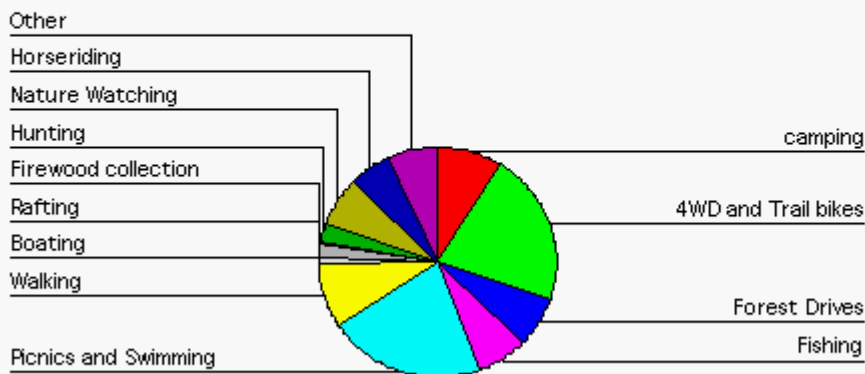
There are a mix of recreational activities undertaken in both State Forest areas and National Park areas throughout Victoria. In 1994/95 the total number of visitor days to National Parks was estimated at 11,225,000 and 3,535,000 to State Forests.

For State Forest areas in 1994/95 these activities are illustrated in the figure below (Recreational Use of Victoria's State Forest, Read Sturgess and Associates with Henshall Hansen Pollock Associates, 1995).

Within the Local Government Area for East Gippsland, the majority of recreational visits to State Forest are to specific sites and high usage occurs during long weekends, Easter and Summer holidays, due to the remoteness of the region from major population centres. It is estimated that the total number of recreational visitors to East Gippsland in 1994/95 was 140,000 visitor days/nights. The main activities included picnics, walks, nature observation, fishing and forest drives. The extent of recreational use in State Forest in Victoria is experiencing continuing growth despite the under servicing and under planning of visitor infrastructure. It is estimated that the growth in recreation in State Forest is likely to remain in the order of 3-5% per year. This would suggest 4.7 million visitors/year in State Forest within Victoria by the end of the decade.

Figure 7

Recreational Activities in State Forests



Source: Recreational Use of Victoria's State Forest.
Report prepared for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (1995)

Source: Recreational Use of Victoria's State Forest.

Report prepared for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (1995)

It is estimated that the total number of recreational visitors to National Parks in the Local Government Area for East Gippsland in 1994/95 was more than 230,000 visitor days/nights, or greater than 20% of Victorian National Park visits. One of the main activities in National parks is overnight camping, 15% of visitor days/nights were spent overnight camping in East Gippsland in 1994/95. Other major activities include picnics, walks, nature observation, rafting and forest drives. Activities allowed in State Forest but prohibited or restricted in National Parks are hunting, horse riding and firewood collection.

Issues From Key Participants

5.1 Invited participants

As part of the initial steps in the East Gippsland Comprehensive Regional Assessment process two stakeholder meetings were undertaken in Melbourne and Orbost in April 1996. The following stakeholders were invited to attend one of the workshops. The list of invitees was based on those stakeholders who had responded or participated in the Deferred Forest Assessment Process conducted in 1995.

Table 10 Invited Stakeholders - Melbourne Stakeholder Meeting

Invited Stakeholders - Melbourne Stakeholder Meeting	
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria	Victorian Chamber of Mines
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service	Timber Towns
Victorian Association of Forest Industries	Victorian Farmers Federation
Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union - Forestry Division	Victorian National Parks Association
Forest Protection Society	Wilderness Society
Australian Paper Mills	Friends of the Earth
Prospectors and Miners Association	Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Deer Association	Royal Australian Ornithologists Union
Australian Motorcycle Trail Riders Association	National Trust of Victoria
Australian Trail Horse Riders Association	Royal Historical Society of Victoria
Sporting Shooters Association of Australia	Environment Victoria
Catchment and Land Protection Council	Apiarist Society of Victoria
Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs	Land and Conservation Council
Field Naturalists Club of Victoria	Melbourne Water
Ski Touring Association of Victoria	Heritage Victoria, Dept. of Planning and Housing
Victorian Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs	Municipal Association of Victoria
Victorian Recreation Fisheries Advisory Council	Public Land Council
Victorian Tourism Operators Association	Country Women's Association
Bird Observers Clubs	

Stakeholders invited to the Orbost meeting are as follows:

Table 11

Invited Stakeholders - Orbost Stakeholder Meeting	
Concerned Residents of East Gippsland	Orbost Water Board
Friends of Errinundra National Park	Bairnsdale and District Field Naturalists Club
Friends of Mallacoota	Orbost and District Tourist Association
Orbost District Environment Group	Snowy River Tourist Association
Orbost Women's Awareness Group	Bairnsdale Aboriginal Corporation
East Gippsland Forest Protection Society	Far East Gippsland Aboriginal Corporation
East Gippsland Timber Towns	Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust
Orbost Historical Society	Moogji Aboriginal Land Council
Heritage Advisers Network	Far East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative
East Gippsland Shire	East Gippsland CFMEU
Orbost Chamber of Commerce	Carters and Loggers Association
East Gippsland Regional Development Organisation	Lower Bendoc Landcare Group
East Gippsland Victorian Farmers Federation	Jarrahmond Landcare Group
East Gippsland Catchment and Land Protection Board	Wanganabee Landcare Group
East Gippsland River Management Board	Cann Valley Land Care Group
Victorian Eastern Development Board	

The Forest Community Coordinator for Victoria has maintained continuity of contact with a range of stakeholders throughout the assessment process. It is important that the networks and links are kept open and receptive. Common to all stakeholders was the fundamental belief that they value the forests. At issue, is how best to value this resource for industry, recreation, environment and cultural heritage. A strong desire for a long term view and agreement has been expressed by all parties.

The method of participant observation was employed to collect information from stakeholders. The maintenance of face-to-face relationships minimises social distance allowing an intimate qualitative understanding of the perspectives of those involved in the process.

Throughout the consultation with stakeholders, a number of issues have been raised by particular groups. These issues are discussed in the sections below.

5.2 Stakeholder Issues

5.2.1 Conservation interests

It is the belief of many of the conservation groups consulted during the social assessment process that the issue of forest conservation and forest management should be dealt with at a national level. Many of the groups believed that it was totally inappropriate to determine forest use on a 'coupe by coupe' basis.

A number of the groups had serious concerns about the rules for National Parks and the rules for adjoining forest areas. They believed that the boundaries which currently exist between parks and logging areas allow abuse of the forest right up to these boundaries. It is seen that these boundaries are artificial as plants and animals do not adhere to socially constructed barriers and in many instances important ecological flora and fauna habitat is destroyed.

A concern was also raised in regard to waterways and water collection. Many conservation groups believed that forest harvesting was ruining water quality in many areas. There was also little support or trust in the scientific information produced by government departments.

Most groups wished to be seen as permanent conservationists/greens and not part of the Örent a crowd of greensÖ who arrive from other places to demonstrate. However, it was acknowledged that the support of non-residential environmental activists in saving the bush was important. It was also outlined that in pursuing their cause they have been frightened by those timber workers who have shown anger and have threatened them.

In relation to vision, many groups saw the future in the cropping of hemp due to its ability to produce a strong fibre board.

There was also a clear message from most of the groups consulted that they were unsure whether they wished to be a part of the social assessment and wider RFA process.

5.2.2 Other community groups

Members of the wider rural community consulted during the assessment process strongly supported the development of plantations and farm forestry. Many individuals viewed the second rotation of native timber as plantation timber. Many permanent landholders and people involved in Landcare believed that the future lay in the duality of forest use, that is, forest use for both production and preservation.

A number of farmers within the area were also seen to have either part-time or full-time mill jobs to supplement farm income. Other farmers believed that there was potential for grazing in forested areas and others saw the benefit in replanting trees on their land.

There was a strong feeling from residents that the current waste on the ground must be utilised urgently for reasons of lost value-adding and also the ability for regrowth to occur. Others were concerned about weed infestation by clearfelling and traffic use in and out of the forest.

In general it was acknowledged that new thinking was required and a new approach to forest management essential.

5.2.3 Timber industry groups

Industry groups believed that the conservation movement hampered opportunities for industry. They believed that it was impossible to satisfy this particular group . There is, however, increasing acknowledgement that not all conservationists have an extreme view.

One of the main concerns of this group is loss of employment and the effect this will have on individuals, families, households and ultimately communities. Rural towns are currently experiencing significant reductions in their populations and it is perceived that any further reduction would be extremely harmful. Unemployment results in reduced population and thus a loss of services and facilities within rural towns. Concern was also expressed about the destruction of equipment in the forest and threats to persons in the industry.

While it was acknowledged that the area had a lot of tourism potential, most people believed that such an industry could not support the region as a whole. There was concern raised that

many conservationists have a lifestyle in the area which may not necessarily depend upon the existence of a particular industry.

5.2.4 General comments

Many groups were tired of being involved in one study after another with little return or guarantee. There was a growing dissatisfaction with all governments who continually change the rules and state of play.

The above issues have been raised continually by stakeholders throughout the process. Those groups with a greater stake in the debate hold relatively firm views on how forests should be managed. Other community members are less aware of the meaning of forest management and forest preservation. It appears necessary to build a shared vision for the East Gippsland area which incorporates environment, industry, tourism and recreational interests.

Other environmental issues are also emerging from this debate. Water is very much becoming a focal issue with the availability and quality of water being key components for many industry and recreation development options for the region. Concerns were also expressed that water management issues flowing from forest management activities were being considered in isolation of other land use activities. What is clear from discussions, is the need to look at the management of natural resources in an integrated way.

It is also evident on the side of all parties that the RFA process must deliver on time to provide some sort of certainty for East Gippsland, but to also instill confidence in the RFA process around Australia.

Survey Results

Throughout the assessment process a number of surveys were developed to sample relevant industry groups and the wider community. The quantitative and qualitative results of these surveys are outlined below.

6.1 Forest Users

Surveys of forest users were developed to ascertain the dependence of industry groups on the forest estate. The following groups were sampled:

Logging and Transport Contractors Mill employees Tourist Operators Firewood Operators Seed Collectors Apiarists Other forest users (i.e. specialty timbers, craftwood, tree ferns, fence post contractors, graziers, gravel and rock extractors)

Lists of respondents were obtained through industry associations such as the Carters and Loggers Association for East Gippsland and the Gippsland Apiarists Association. Other users, such as seed collectors, firewood operators, gravel and rock extractors etc. were sampled through licence information held by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in Orbost. The list of tourist accommodation and tourist operations were accessed through Tourism Victoria. These lists were developed through personal communication with the respective associations and organisations in April to May 1996.

6.1.1 Contractors Survey

A total of 26 logging and transport contractors were contacted within the East Gippsland CRA region and asked to complete a survey. This list was based on those contractors which are registered members with the Carters and Loggers Association for East Gippsland. The survey asked for demographic information about the respondents and more detailed information on their contracting business. A total of 31% responded and the following results were obtained.

Quantitative Data

The respondents surveyed were all male with an average age of 44 years. Most were married (75%), and their partners or spouses were also employed (62.5%). Contractors resided in various townships spread throughout East Gippsland and had lived in the area approximately 24 years on average. Most had families with an average of 3 children.

In relation to education, 37.5% of contractors had reached Year 12 level and a further 37.5% had vocational qualifications. 37.5% of the contractors sampled had not worked in any other industry.

The majority of contractors surveyed currently were paying off a mortgage (87.5%). Of those sampled 75% were paying 50% or less of their household income toward outstanding loans.

In relation to contract activity, 25% of the businesses sampled participated only in logging activities and a further 25% in transport. The remainder of the sample participated in both logging and transport activities, with the transport activity involving the transport of resource from the forest to the mill. The number of full-time employees employed by the contractors ranged from 1 to 21 with an average of 6, part-time employees ranged from 0 to 2, while family employees ranged from 0 to 4.

The following Table 12 summarizes the average annual operating costs, business income, business debt, expenditure on fixed assets and total capital invested of the businesses sampled.

Table 12

Average Operating Costs	\$ 276,598.00
Business Receipts	\$ 444,429.00
Business Debt	\$ 154,167.00
Expenditure on Fixed Assets (94-95)	\$ 146,017.00
Total Capital Invested	\$ 705,714.00

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

On average the annual average volume of logs harvested by harvesting contractors was 24,214.29 tonnes. The annual average volume of logs transported by carters totaled on average 26,200 tonnes, with an average of 12,750 tonnes of product transported. Contractors on average were prepared to travel 65 kilometres to access resource from their home base. All the contractors sampled obtained their resource from Public Native Forest within the East Gippsland region and believed the timber industry to be very important to the economy of the area.

Qualitative Data

Quality of Life

When asked what they liked most about living in the area, a variety of responses were obtained. The environment was frequently mentioned, the beauty of the beach and the mountains. Respondents also mentioned the environment as a good place to bring up children due to the supportive nature of the community, the fresh air and the relaxed way of life. The following quote clearly illustrates the responses obtained:

It's home and we are a third generation East Gippsland family. It is a great place to live, nice friendly people. Close to the mountains for outdoor activities. We have no wish to live anywhere else....

It was also suggested that certain townships were becoming unviable for youth and as a result children were having to move away for employment.

Impacts of the past and current Forest Policy on Individuals, Families and the Community

When asked about the impacts of the forest policy on the respondents themselves, the majority felt that they were experiencing severe mental stress caused by constant uncertainty. It was outlined that they were having to work for little or no pay, they were losing employees and having to operate old worn out equipment due to their financial situations. As one contractor stated:

My employees are struggling for financial survival, some have ceased employment due to poor returns. It is very difficult to remain viable if it continues to decline. Our business and all we have worked for 23 years will ultimately be lost and we are tied into logging financially and must continue to survive.

In relation to the impacts on families, stress and uncertainty were common themes. Respondents felt their children were particularly affected:

A lot of financial and mental stress is being placed on the family unit. Especially because the job keeps me away from home for weeks on end. Makes the children's lives very disruptive because we (the parents) are under so much stress, and find spending quality time with the kids difficult.

With regard to the impacts on the community as a whole, respondents openly reported their observations:

Atmosphere of gloom and doom. People moving from the area.

It is a timber town and if forestry suffers so does the town and district. Prime real estate in the main street is empty, local businesses are closing down. In general every area, recreational, business etc... is suffering.

It is very quiet and no-one has any spare money to buy the basic things over and above the general bread and milk etc.. People tend to go without more or it appears a lot have turned to the pokies.

It is very important we keep the forestry going in East Gippsland, otherwise the towns will die out, schools and hospitals will close.....Small towns are losing residents as they move on looking for permanent or reliable jobs. The youth of these areas must leave home for work. The social life of these towns slowly dies. Community functions cease. Small business battles to exist, sporting bodies lapse without sufficient interest and depression and lack of hope affects many.

Comments on the Forest Use Debate

When asked to express comments on the forest use debate, the majority of respondents sampled expressed the need for stability and access to guaranteed resource.

Respondents believed that people needed to be better educated about good forest practices, believing that Forest management plans were a positive step in the right direction. It was also outlined that good management of the resource would ensure viability, renewability and environmentally sound practices.

It was strongly expressed that the forest harvesting sector should utilise all the product, including the waste on the forest floor:

The export chip cap is ridiculous and should be overturned.

Too many decisions are made by academics without practical knowledge. If we (farmers) ran our farms the way forestry manages the bush there would be few viable farmers left. I think the forest authority should stop wasting their resources i.e. burning timber left after logs are harvested. Much of this timber could be pulped and this should be compulsory in all coupes, thereby creating more jobs and also earning export dollars.

I do not understand why there is forest being mown down close to Orbost, mainly for pulp, when there is hundreds of thousands of tonnes of residual being left after logging operations, only 15 -20 km away.

The residue from logging coupes should be utilised from all areas.

In conclusion, the contractors sampled believed that a properly managed resource, with the least possible impact on the environment, was necessary for future generations. However it was outlined that an immediate short term solution was needed to allow East Gippsland to utilise the volume of waste on the forest floor and keep the forest sector and local communities viable until more long term decisions could be made. As one contractor stated:

I think the forest industry in general and the department in particular should again have a look at managing its resources and stopping the waste of forest material.....If the timber industry closes so will many small towns die and become shabby neglected places for depressed government welfare recipients. We forest workers wish to be proud, employed and independent people with some security of homes and schools etc.. for our families.

6.1.2 Mill Employees Survey

There are 22 Sawmills located in East Gippsland. The number of mills in each township are listed in the Table 13.

Table 13

Township	Number of Mills
Nowa Nowa	3
Buchan	2
Newmerella	2
Waygara	1
Bendoc	2
Club Terrace	2
Cann River	5
Orbost	3
Genoa	1
Noorinbee	1

Source: CRA Economic Assessment, East Gippsland Mill Survey (1996).

A total of 364 people are currently directly employed within these mills in East Gippsland, this total comprises 342 full-time employees, 15 part-time employees and 7 casual employees. These figures fluctuate subject to resource availability (CRA East Gippsland Mill Survey, 1996). A survey of mill employees was unable to be collected within the timeframe for the assessment in East Gippsland.

6.1.3 Mill Workers Profile

Due to the inability to collect primary data from mill employees within East Gippsland, the following profile has been developed from available secondary data.

In 1985 a survey of mill workers was conducted as part of the Socio-Economic Study of East Gippsland commissioned by the Land Conservation Council. This survey, although dated, provides some indication of the working patterns of East Gippsland timber workers. 184 mill workers completed questionnaires collected from 14 mills within the East Gippsland area, a response rate of 74% was obtained.

Mobility

The Land Conservation Council Report found that over 60% of forest workers had been in their present occupation less than 10 years. Only 15% had held the same occupation for 20 years or more. 62.9% of respondents had lived in the same town or area for at least a decade. In relation to home ownership 38% of respondents owned or were buying their own home, significantly below the Victorian State average. Younger workers were more inclined to move between occupations with the same employer as they obtained new skills. Older workers were more likely to move between employers, having already attained a high skill level.

Place of Residence in Relation to Place of Work

The Table 14 illustrates the relationship between place of work and place of residence of mill workers in East Gippsland.

Table 14

Location of Mills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Orbost	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nowa Nowa	4	37	15	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Club Terrace	8	0	0	0	13	3	-	-	-	-
Cann River	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-
Bendoc	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	11	-	-
Buchan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Combienbar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

Source: Land Conservation Council Report, 1985

**Number relate to specific township: 1-Orbost, 2-Nowa Nowa, 3-Lakes Entrance, 4-Bairnsdale, 5-Club Terrace, 6-Cann River, 7-Bendoc, 8-Delegate, 9-Buchan, 10-Combienbar*

Population

A profile of employment in forest and timber industries is included in Section 4.4.

Age

The average age of forest workers is around 35-40 years. The average age has been rising over the last twenty years.

Residential Status

The majority of forest workers live in the same area in which they are employed. Over 30% own or are buying a house. Approximately 50% live in rented accommodation which is a very high figure when compared to the Victorian average of 23% of persons living in rental accommodation (ABS Census 1991). This unusually high figure can largely be attributed to employees choosing to live in company houses. The high proportion of rental occupancy would also explain the low number of persons owning or buying houses.

More than 65% of people have lived in their present town or area for the last 5 years which is similar to the Victorian average of 68%.

Employment Status

The East Gippsland forest industry workforce is comprised of approximately 50% of workers who are in skilled mill hand positions, about 10% work in administration/managerial positions and less than 5% are skilled bush workers. Approximately one third of the total workforce is unskilled. Consistent with other industries such as mining, utilities and construction, women comprise less than 10% of the workforce which is significantly less than the 25% representation of women in the national workforce across all sectors.

Income

A very high proportion (greater than 90%) of forest workers are employed full time. For the majority of employees forest industry employment is their only source of income.

Education & Training

More than 80% of forest workers have not attained formal qualifications beyond secondary school. However the figure for vocational qualifications is not dissimilar to the Victorian average. The majority of workplace education and training takes place on-the-job leading to a highly specialised industry specific workforce.

Occupational Health and Safety

Forest industries pose a higher risk of physical injury to workers at the workplace than most other industries. Felling, hauling and transporting of logs and the resulting sawing and processing activities are potentially dangerous. Across the industry in general, the majority of workplace accidents in forest industries occur through over exertion and physical stress causing sprains and strains. Open wounds caused by chain and mills saws and falling debris are a major injury in harvesting and milling sectors, as well as digital and limb loss.

Summary

Forest workers in East Gippsland comprise a relatively stable work force. In line with other similar industries, forest workers are predominantly male and rely heavily upon forest employment as their sole source of income. Forest workers typically possess highly specialised, industry specific skills that have been gained mainly through on the job training. Forest workers are also exposed to a more hazardous workplace environment than most other occupations.

6.1.4 Tourist Operators Survey

Quantitative Data

A total of 19 tourist operators (32%) were sampled within East Gippsland from an approximate total of 60 (accommodation, tourist shops and galleries, tour operators).

A total of 12 male and 7 female tourist operators responded to the survey, 78% of the sample were aged above 50 years.

58% of the sample were married and had an average of 1 child. Of those who were married most partners or spouses were employed (63%). Respondents had lived in the East Gippsland area for approximately 15 years on average.

In relation to education, 21% of respondents had attained a degree or diploma, 42% had reached Year 10 level with 16% obtaining vocational qualifications. 53% of the sample were paying off a mortgage.

In relation to tourist operations, the number of full-time employees ranged from 0 to 3, part-time employees from 0 to 9 and the number of family

employees from 1 to 8. The following table illustrates the types of tourist activities.

Table 15

Type of Tourist Activity	Percentage sampled from each category
Outdoor Activity Tours	16%
Craft Galleries	5%
Tourist Accommodation	79%

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

68% of the tourist operators sampled were located in the Mallacoota, Buchan and Cann River areas.

The following Table 16 summarizes the average annual operating costs, business income, business debt, expenditure on fixed assets and total capital invested of the businesses sampled.

Table 16

Average Operating Costs	\$ 28,033.00
Business Receipts	\$ 39,585.00
Business Debt	\$ 18,214.00
Expenditure on Fixed Assets (94-95)	\$ 110.00
Total Capital Invested	\$134,216.00

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

When asked for the estimate of income dependent upon forest/forest products, responses ranged from 10 to 100%, with an average of 70%.

Tourist operators indicated that on average, within their business, they used 38% of state or public forest for their tourist activities, 48% of national park and 5% of private forest. Number of visitors ranged from 25 to 5316, with an average visitation rate of 1179.75. 68% of respondents believed the timber industry to be very important to the local economy of the area, 21% important and 10.5% somewhat important.

Qualitative Data

Quality of Life

The tourist operators sampled believed that the environment and quality of life within the region were the things they most liked about the area. The friendliness of local people and privacy and safety were also mentioned.

Impacts of the past and current Forest Policy on Individual, Families and the Community

The majority of tourist operators sampled felt that the current forest policy had had very little impact on them personally. There was agreement that as long as existing National Parks were not affected, logging practices could continue in specified State Forest areas.

In relation to their families, three of those sampled had family members who worked in the timber industry and had been impacted by mill closures and reduced employment.

There was also the recognition that the communities were suffering from changes in forestry:

There has been a very big downturn in local prosperity.

The area has lost a lot of confidence - people are finding it hard to sell businesses and real estate. Towns cannot expand any more so we need the timber industry to keep the town alive...

Everything is for sale...Some timber jobs have been lost locally - so things have been devastated...

These changes were also seen to affect tourism:

Very divisive - threatens the livelihood of loggers and ourselves

Some people have lost employment and current practices will affect tourism in the long term.

NSW decisions have had a big impact. Woodchip quota has had a negative impact. Everyone is concerned at the economy. Tourism won't take up all of the slack.

A lot of jobs will be lost... We will end up with ghost towns...

Other respondents were concerned about issues of water quality and the social division that was occurring in the community as a result:

Forestry in NSW, more particularly, is affecting the waterways. Town water supply must not be logged. Genoa Peak lookout is a major attraction and the visual impact of logging should be considered.

Causes considerable heated debates. Divides the community.

Comments on the Forest Use Debate

When asked to express their comments on the forest use debate the majority of respondents believed there was a place for the logging of native forest:

I grew up with logging. I think that the timber industry is essential and people are misinformed about woodchips and logging. People are very aware these days of how to properly manage forests.

I think there should be more woodchips not waste which would lead to more jobs.

Forests are a crop and no different to any other farming just takes a bit longer...

Everything in moderation - I can't see that they are doing much harm. What they cut down, grows back - I would rather see proper logging in Australia than buying clearfelled rainforests from overseas.

If used properly, renewable resource - I've been here 15 years and have seen regrowth - slash and burn doesn't work. Timber industry is an essential industry.

Some operators believed there was need to increase plantations on public and private land:

Our first choice for timber is plantation. If it must be native it should allow for tourism...

We are adequately serviced by parks and reserves. We need to retain old growth but we also need the timber industry. Need to establish plantations further west and encourage more farmers to establish plantations.

More effort put into agriforestry. Timber workers could be better employed growing trees and weeding and managing forests...

While others felt this was detrimental:

Shouldn't push down native forest to establish pine plantations...

Hate pine plantations.

The concern with current forest practices was concerned with clearfelling of forest areas. Operators sampled believed that clearfelling practices severely impacted on tourism:

Devastating if they clearfell along the tourist roads.

Don't like clearfelling, creates an eyesore.

Don't want clearfelling on tourist roads, particularly around Buchan/Gelantipy. Don't want to stop logging but need to go to selective and integrated logging and don't burn clearfell waste - can't walk through dead logs after clearfelling. Should replant cut species.

The majority of respondents also believed that people needed to be better educated about forestry, and that tourist operators should be consulted about forest management plans:

Quite a few people do not have the correct facts - they think more goes to chip than does...Better unbiased education in schools.

Relevant authorities put too much importance on a minority view. Need to educate...City people interfering in regional areas.

Towns like Cann River may die. Forest industry can regrow itself, renewable resource. State agency working well to keep it under control. People in park went on a tour, changed their view of the debate.

I think that they (timber industry) do not have enough consultation with tourism operators...

Get the bureaucrats from Melbourne and Canberra to visit and find out what the debate is really about.

There was also a strong view that forests should be Reserves not National Parks to allow greater access for recreational use. Others expressed concern about the locking up of more forest for National Parks, where current Parks were not maintained adequately.

There was also a clear view that people did not like to see wastage of resource on the forest floor, and that something needed to be done to ensure that this residue was used wisely.

In summary, the view of those tourist operators sampled was that there is a place for both the timber and tourist industries. As one operator stated:

All people in far East Gippsland appreciate the environment, so we need to use the assets, but in a sustainable way. People still need to be able to earn a living. The services will suffer as numbers drop. Tourism is also important for the local area.

6.1.5 Other Forest Users Survey

A total of 76 forest users were contacted and asked to complete a forest use survey. The following table illustrates the percentage sampled from each group.

Table 17

Alternative Forest Users	Percentage Sampled
Apiarists	52%
Seed Collectors	50%
Firewood Collectors	33%
Other	60%

6.1.5.1 Apiarists

The apiarists who responded to the survey were all male with an average age of 57 years. 83% of the sample were married and had an average of 3 children. Of those who were married

most partners or spouses were employed (67%). Respondents had lived in the East Gippsland area for approximately 37 years on average.

In relation to education, 58% of respondents had attained Year 10 level with 25% obtaining vocational qualifications. All respondents had worked in another industry, these included shipping, hospitality, forestry, farming, manufacturing and trades such as building and plumbing. 75% of the sample were not paying off any mortgage and (58%) no loans at all.

In relation to beekeeping activities, the respondents surveyed operated family businesses with no full-time employees, only one operator employed a part-time employee and on average one family member was employed.

The following Table 18 summarizes the average annual operating costs, business income, business debt, expenditure on fixed assets and total capital invested of the businesses sampled.

Table 18

Average Operating Costs	\$ 7,855.00
Business Receipts	\$ 15,438.00
Business Debt	\$ 1,670.00
Expenditure on Fixed Assets (94-95)	\$ 2,404.00
Total Capital Invested	\$168,500.00

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

When asked for the estimate of income dependent upon forest/forest products, responses ranged from 0 to 100%, with an average of 69%. Respondents were prepared to travel anywhere from 20km to 200km to access the forest resource. On average, respondents used 79% of Public or State Native Forest within the East Gippsland region and 7% of private forest areas. 92% of respondents believed the timber industry to be very important to the local economy of the area, 8% considered it to be important.

6.1.5.2 Seed Collectors

The seed collectors who responded to the survey were male with an average age of 43 years. 60% of the sample were married and had an average of 2 children. Of those who were married most partners or spouses were employed (60%). Respondents had lived in the East Gippsland area for approximately 25 years on average.

In relation to education, 20% of respondents had attained Year 12 level with 40% obtaining vocational qualifications. 80% of respondents had worked in another industry, these included hospitality, forestry and the automotive industry. 80% of the sample were not paying off any mortgage.

In relation to seed collecting activities, the respondents surveyed operated the business themselves with no full-time or part-time employees.

The following Table 19 summarizes the average annual operating costs, business income, business debt, expenditure on fixed assets and total capital invested of the businesses sampled.

Table 19

Average Operating Costs	\$ 4,600.00
Business Receipts	\$ 19,200.00
Business Debt	\$ 0
Expenditure on Fixed Assets (94-95)	\$ 2,001.80
Total Capital Invested	\$ 20,000.00

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

When asked for the estimate of income dependent upon forest/forest products, responses ranged from 30 to 100%, with an average of 78%. Respondents were prepared to travel anywhere from 80km to 200km to access the forest resource. On average respondents used 97.5% of public or state native forest, 2% of private forest and 0% of plantations. In relation to the importance of the timber industry to the local economy, 60% believed it to be very important, 20% important and 20% somewhat important.

6.1.5.3 Firewood Collectors

The firewood collectors who responded to the survey were male with an average age of 44 years. 67% of the sample were married and had an average of 3 children. Of those who were married 50% of partners or spouses were not employed. Respondents had lived in the East Gippsland area for approximately 13 years on average.

In relation to education, 67% of respondents had attained Year 10 level with 33% obtaining Year 12. All respondents had worked in another industry, these included forestry, building, power, retail, but predominantly agriculture (33%). 83% of the sample were paying off a mortgage.

In relation to firewood collecting activities, the respondents surveyed operated the business themselves with no part-time employees, and only operator employed a person full-time.

The following Table 20 summarizes the average annual operating costs, business income, business debt, expenditure on fixed assets and total capital invested of the businesses sampled.

Table 20

Average Operating Costs	\$ 7,785.00
Business Receipts	\$12,338.00
Business Debt	\$ 6,885.00
Expenditure on Fixed Assets (94-95)	\$ 4,986.00
Total Capital Invested	\$15,583.00

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

When asked for the estimate of income dependent upon forest/forest products, responses ranged from 10 to 100%, with an average of 34%. Respondents were prepared to travel anywhere from 20km to 50km to access the forest resource. On average respondents used 92% of public or state native forest and 8% of private forest for their operation. In relation to the importance of the timber industry to the local economy, all respondents believed the industry to be very important.

6.1.5.4 Additional Forest Users

Responses were also received from a number of other forest users. These included:

- Graziers/Landholders
- Specialty timber operations
- Fencing Contractors
- Gravel and Rock Extractors

In relation to estimate of income dependent upon forest/forest products and the importance of the timber industry the following data was obtained.

Table 21:

Forest Use	Average Estimate of Dependence on Forest/Forest Products	Importance of the timber industry to the economy of the area
Graziers/Landholders	72.5%	Very important
Specialty Timber	100%	Very important
Fencing	75%	Very important
Gravel and Rock Extractors	70%	Very important

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit.

Qualitative Data for Other Forest Uses

Quality of Life

As with the other survey responses to this question, individuals sampled valued the country lifestyle, natural environment and the friendliness of local people. Country living was seen to provide a sense of freedom, relaxation, privacy and safety unable to be achieved in larger more urbanised centres. As one respondent outlined:

I like the quiet area and feel that it is a good place to bring up our kids. I have always lived here.

Impacts of the past and current Forest Policy on Individuals, Families and the Community

There were a number of impacts identified due to the current forest policy. Respondents felt that a degree of uncertainty existed within the community due to employment reduction in the timber industry and that this was causing an over-reliance on social security and a decline in local community infrastructure. In addition it was expressed that too much timber was being removed from the local area to be processed elsewhere with little or no benefit from this coming back to the local community.

Our community is depressed with relatively high unemployment. An area with the assets we have as far as tourist potential and timber products should not be struggling like we are. More has to be put back into the community considering the resource that is taken out.

A large percentage of the people in the East Gippsland area are on the dole or the pension and cannot find employment and thus have little money to spend.

People are finding it hard to get work. The industry has reduced over the last 10 years. Small towns have closed. Schools have closed. Our area is dying.

Fewer people in a community leads to a smaller range of goods available in local shops and smaller school class sizes, sporting groups etc..

No forests - no logs - no mills - no work - no jobs - no money. If it is cutback too much there will be no towns ...

We are a political football....In the last 10 years there has been all sorts of studies here with no real outcomes. Why?

Furthermore, apiarists felt a major impact was the restricted access to bee sites and as a result they had to travel further to use the resource. They also felt that honey was going to waste in National Parks. Resource access was also raised by other forest users:

..we are very angry as we live in the area and cannot get access to the resources - blackwood and burls are tendered to outsiders...

Seed collectors expressed the view that seed was plentiful but that more funds should be made available to ensure that replanting in logging coupes was undertaken. Others expressed their uncertainty in relation to the seed picking industry in State Forests.

With regard to all forest users surveyed there was a general theme of stress and reduced income, and a lack of alternative employment opportunities for themselves and their children in the area.

Comments on the Forest Use Debate

There was an overall opinion that the forest resource should be better utilised and that residue should not go to waste on the forest floor.

More competition is required so that there is better utilisation of timber/forest resources...Industry needs security of resource to promote investment in the industry.

There must be a balance between conservation and harvesting from native forest. Having worked several seasons seed picking I am always astonished at the large amount of wood left on the forest floor in every coupe, only to be burnt or rot.

As far as I am concerned in the future all new coupes opened up for logging should be totally utilised...rather than uselessly burning thousands of cubic metres per year.

A number of respondents also outlined the need for value-adding within the East Gippsland area:

Keep the chips in Australia - make paper here.

For East Gippsland to survive we must have some sort of woodchip or pulp industry...we have to compete against other parts of the state which have a pulp industry.

It was also suggested that the government should attempt to educate the public in regard to forest practices and that a viable forest industry should be retained:

Sections of the media have handled the forest debate very poorly. The timber resource is one of the few renewable resources available in a world of excessive consumerism and depletion of many non-renewable resources. Timber is a god given resource to be used and not abused...

Based on the above data, a number of maps have been developed to illustrate the number of surveyed forest users in each forest block (Map 2), the township of residence of each surveyed forest user (Map 3), the perceived economic importance of the forest to each user (Map 4),

and the main economic activity undertaken in forest blocks within the East Gippsland region (Map 5).

6.2 Community Survey

A random telephone survey was conducted of the East Gippsland region by independent consultants, Environment and Behaviour Consultants. Using postcode districts, population sizes were determined for these strata. Stratified random sampling was then used to draw samples from each strata to ensure that the final sample reflected, as accurately as possible, the same proportion of the population in each postcode area. Prefix information was determined for townships and the surrounding area and telephone numbers sampled randomly from the White Pages.

A total of 493 households were sampled. Questions asked of respondents related to occupation, use of services, social wellbeing, issues of concern and demographic information.

6.2.1 Population

Of those sampled, 52% were male and 48% female. The average age of respondents was 49 years. People had lived in the area on average for 22 years and wished to remain in the area. The majority of respondents had moved to the area from elsewhere (74.2%), mainly from Melbourne (35.6%), New South Wales (9.9%) and to a lesser extent the ACT (3%), South Australia (2.8%) and Bairnsdale (2.8%). Only 25.8% of those sampled had always lived in the area.

Respondents resided in numerous townships and areas across the region, predominantly the closest local townships outlined included Orbost (27.8%), Lakes Entrance (13.1%) and Mallacoota (12.4%). A smaller proportion of respondents were drawn from Buchan (6.1%), Marlo (6.1%), Newmerella (5.5%), Cann River (4.7%), Lake Tyers Beach (3.7%) and Bendoc (2%).

Of those sampled, 64.6% were married or living in a defacto relationship and 39.5% had children. Most of those sampled owned their own home (61.2%) with 19% paying off a mortgage and 19.8% renting.

6.2.2 Employment

In relation to employment, 37.2% of single people sampled were in full-time employment. Of the 62.8% not employed full-time, 27.4% were currently looking for work.

Of those respondents who were married or living in a defacto relationship, 16.4% were in full-time employment, and 18.9% of their partners or spouses were looking for work. 14.1% of respondents were not employed but their partners or spouses were employed, 20.5% of these respondents were currently looking for work. 32.6% of those sampled were both in full-time employment. For those couples where neither partner was in full-time employment, 15.6% were currently looking for work and 84.4% not. This latter figure illustrates the large number of retirees sampled (26.4%) in the survey.

The respondents currently in full-time employment worked in a number of the main towns within the region, namely, Orbost (32.7%), Lakes Entrance (9.8%), Cann River (8%), Buchan (7.6%), Mallacoota (7%), Bairnsdale (4.6%) and Nowa Nowa (3.4%). Of these respondents 12.7% worked at sawmills in the area, 3.2% were logging and transport contractors and 7.5% were employed in forest agencies. 2.4% worked in other related timber industries. 22.5% of those sampled were employed in community service areas including health, education, banking and communications. Retail industries employed 10.8% of respondents, the transport industry employed 2.8% and 1.6% were employed in accommodation services. 26.6% of respondents described themselves as self-employed and 6.4% of respondents were involved in other business activities.

28.8% of respondents had other family members who were employed in businesses which depended on the timber industry and overall, 41.8% of respondents believed their place of work to be very dependent on forest industries, 24.5% somewhat dependent and 33.6% not dependent at all. Dependence of place of work on forest industry was seen to differ significantly by location as illustrated in Map 6. Cann River (Mean=1.27) and Orbost (Mean=1.50) were seen to be more dependent than Lakes Entrance (Mean=2.58) and Mallacoota (Mean=2.58), a lower mean indicates more dependence.

In addition it was apparent that the perceived dependency on forest industries differed across occupational group. The following crosstabulation illustrates perceived dependence on forest industries across occupational group, using the ABS occupational classifications.

Table 22

Occupation	Very Dependent (%)	Somewhat Dependent (%)	Not Dependent (%)	Percentage (%)
Managers and Administrators	22.6	26.2	51.2	26.7
Professionals	31.9	36.2	31.9	14.9
Para Professionals	61.1	16.7	22.2	5.7
Tradespersons	51.2	29.3	19.5	13.0
Clerks	48.3	20.7	31.0	9.2
Salespersons and Personal Serviceworkers	25.0	25.0	50.0	2.5
Plant and Machine Operators and Drivers	71.4	14.3	14.2	11.1
Labourers and Related Worker	56.6	9.4	34.0	16.8
Total	43.5	22.9	33.6	100.0

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

It appears that Plant and Machine Operators and Drivers, Para Professional, Labourers and Related Workers and Tradespersons perceive dependence on forest industries to be much higher than Managers and Administrator, Salespersons and Personal Service Workers, Professionals and Clerks. This suggests that generally lower paid occupations perceive that they are more dependent on forest based industries.

6.2.3 Community Infrastructure

In relation to community infrastructure 65.2% of respondents believed that the current facilities in the area were sufficient to take care of most people's needs, 29.5% disagreed with this statement and 5.3% offered no opinion.

When asked about the use of services and facilities in the community, 33.7% said they would usually go to Orbost to do their main household shopping, 30.2% Lakes Entrance, 13.6% Bairnsdale, 13.6% Mallacoota and 2.1% Cann River. Orbost was also the main place accessed for doctors (43%) with others using doctors in Lakes Entrance (20.2%), Mallacoota (13.6%), Bairnsdale (12%), Delegate (2.7%) and Cann River (2.7%). In relation to hospitals, it appears that Orbost residents use the hospital in Orbost (45.4%), Lakes Entrance and Buchan residents use the hospital in Bairnsdale (33%), and Mallacoota residents use the hospitals in Bega (6%)

and Pambula (2.7%). Hospitals in Sale (2.5%), Delegate (2.3%) and Melbourne (2.1%) were also accessed. Lastly with regard to communications the post offices in Orbost (37.3%), Lakes Entrance (18.7%) and Mallacoota (12.6%) were most commonly used, followed by Buchan (6.3%), Cann River (6.3%) and Marlo (3.1%).

With regard to childcare services, 17.5% of respondents used child care facilities, particularly playgroups (24.2%), family daycare (24.2%), kindergarten (13.3%), out of school care (11.1%) and childcare (8.9%). These services were mainly used in Orbost (62.5%) and Cann River (12.5%). The following table outlines the location where particular types of childcare are accessed.

Table 23

Type of Care	Orbost	Cann River	Bairnsdale	Lakes Entrance	Malla-coota	Club Terrace	Buchan	Bendoc
Playgroups	9	2	2	1	1	1	0	0
Occasional child care	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family daycare	7	4	2	0	1	0	1	0
Kindergarten	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Out of hours school care	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Welfare nurse	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Child care	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mobile pre-school	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Nursing Mothers	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

Table 24

Township	Primary School	High School	Pre-school	Home schooling
Orbost	181	76	25	0
Cann River	17	9	2	0
Bairnsdale	10	28	0	0
Marlo	33	11	0	0
Newmerella	31	16	5	0
Nowa Nowa	0	1	0	0
Lakes Entrance	49	28	1	0

Mallacoota	33	22	5	0
Gelantipy	9	0	0	0
Buchan	23	2	5	9
Noorinbee	5	0	0	0
Genoa	0	1	0	1
Goongerah	4	1	0	1
Merella	4	0	0	0
Melbourne	1	2	0	0
Sale	0	1	0	0
Ballarat	1	0	0	0
Bombala	1	1	0	0
Delegate	3	1	4	0
Swan Ridge	5	4	0	0

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

Table 24 illustrates the number of children attending primary school, high school, preschool and home schooling in each of the townships outlined.

Of those respondents with school age children, the main type of school attended was primary (57.6%), high school (30.8%) and pre-school (6.6%), 1.3% of children also participated in home schooling or schooling by correspondence. The main towns in which children attended school included Orbost (38.2%), Lakes Entrance (11%), Mallacoota (10%), Bairnsdale (6.6%), Newmerella (6.3%), Buchan (5.6%) and Marlo (5.6%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate what additional services they felt were needed in the area. The responses obtained included those in Table 25.

Table 25

Additional Services Required	Frequency of Response
Need to upgrade public transport	15.5%
Better health services	9.6%
Entertainment facilities for youth	9.3%
Hospitals close by	6.9%
More shops	5.2%
Cinema	4.2%
Better education/schooling	3.7%
Full-time general practitioner	3.4%
Swimming pool	3.4%

More banks	3.4%
More sports facilities	2.5%

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

6.2.4 Community Attitudes/Perceptions

Social Well-being

In relation to social well-being respondents were asked a number of questions relating to whether they would wish to move from the area and how they felt about the community in which they lived. In relation to moving, 73.7% of respondents disagreed that if they could make money somewhere else they'd be happy to move, 12.3% agreed with this statement and 14% had no opinion. Furthermore, when asked if they often thought about moving away from the area, 72.2% disagreed, 25.4% agreed and 2.4% had no opinion on the item.

When asked if they felt as if they belonged to their community, 88% agreed, only 7.8% disagreed and 4.3% had no opinion.

Forest and Other Industries

Throughout the survey, respondents were required to answer a number of questions relating to forest industry and the importance of this industry to the local area.

Respondents were first asked whether any changes had occurred in forestry operations within their area in the last two years. 68% believed that changes had occurred while 31.8% said no changes had resulted. People living in Club Terrace, Marlo and Nowa Nowa were more inclined to agree that changes had occurred in forestry operations within their area in the last two years.

Of those who believed changes had taken place, the following changes were reported:

Table 26

Change	Frequency of Response
Unemployment/Job Loss	28.4%
Mill Closure/cutback	16.8%
Restricted use of timber resources	15.8%
Economic downturn/Businesses closing	12.4%
Population Decrease/People leaving the area	9.1%
Environmental damage	3.5%
Uncertainty/Instability	2%

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

Respondents were then asked to indicate what they perceived would be the effect on the community of an increase and a decrease in the activity of the forest industry in their area.

In relation to a decrease in forest activity, 81.5% of respondents said that if there was a decrease in the activity of the forest industry that the community would be effected. The following responses were obtained:

Table 27

Effect	Frequency of Response
Job loss/Unemployment	38.7%
Businesses close/economic loss/town declines	22.8%
People leaving/Less population	21.9%
Social instability	4.8%
Environmental Benefit	4.6%
Reduced Services	4.3%

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

When asked about an increase in forest activity, 81.6% of respondents said that if there was an increase in forest activity that this would effect the community in the following ways:

Table 28

Effect	Frequency of Response
More jobs/less unemployment	37.3%
Boost local economy/business	20.2%
Population increase	14.8%
Negative impact on the environment	8.1%
Positive outlook for the community	7.1%
Negative effect on community lifestyle	5.8%
More facilities and services	3.0%

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

Overall, when asked whether forest industry was important to the area, the majority of respondents agreed with this statement (83.1%), 14.9% disagreed and 2% had no opinion on the item. Differences in perceived importance of the forest industry were evident across location. People living in the areas of Orbost and Bendoc were more likely to view the industry as important to the area (see Map 7). However, when asked whether they would move somewhere else if forest industries didn't exist in the area, 63% responded that they would not move, 28.9% said that they would have to live elsewhere and 8.1% had no opinion. People in Orbost and Cann River were more likely to say they would have to move elsewhere.

Respondents were also asked to comment on how much forest they themselves would set aside for use by the forest industry. Responses ranged from 0% to 100% with an average of 42%. 60 respondents preferred to answer the question qualitatively in suggesting that current levels be maintained (71.2%), that more forest should be used than at present (15.3%), that the minimum amount of forest be used to be sustainable (5.1%) and that over 50% should be set aside (3.4%).

Respondents were also asked to provide their views on what they believed would be the main industry in the area in the next 20 years. Tourism (43.3%) was seen to be the main industry followed by Forestry (27.8%), Agriculture (18.3%), Fishing (8.7%) and Mining (6.2%). 81.5%

of respondents also said that they would like to see new industries develop within these industry categories. 30% of respondents felt there was a need for a mixture of industries.

Issues of Concern

Respondents were given a list of different concerns and asked to indicate whether they felt each concern was an important or unimportant issue in their area using a 3-point Likert scale. Table 29 gives the mean rating scores for each concern in order of importance.

It is evident from Table 29 below that the quality of water, the scenic quality of the landscape and unemployment in the area were the top three issues that the sample considered to be of major concern. The availability of places for outdoor recreation, the protection of endangered animals and plants and maintaining the existence of the forest industry were also key issues.

The issues in Table 29 were analysed using Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation and five belief systems were found to exist within the community. These included an environmental factor relating to the protection of flora and fauna, comprised of concerns 7 and 8, an environmental factor relating to the preservation of natural resources, comprising concerns 1, 5, 6 and 9. The third factor related to physical community infrastructure (concerns 14,15,16,17), the fourth was a social concern factor (concerns 4,10,11,12,13) and the final factor related to recreation and heritage values (concerns 2 and 3). Composite mean scores for factors 1 and 4 were seen to be significant across census collector districts (refer to Map 8).

Table 29

No.	Issue of concern	Mean rating
9	Quality of Water in rivers and streams	1.084
1	Scenic Quality of the Landscape	1.094
12	Unemployment in the area	1.118
3	Availability of places for outdoor recreation	1.206
8	Protection of endangered native animals	1.217
4	Keeping forest industry in the area	1.229
6	Protection of native plants	1.231
7	Protection of natural forest areas	1.287
2	Preserving historic buildings and places	1.327
10	Loss of sense of community	1.359
5	Amount of wilderness	1.380
17	Need for better transport services	1.466
13	People leaving the area	1.504
11	Need to reduce crime	1.566
14	Need for better education services	1.926
15	Need for more variety of shops	1.978
16	Need for better health services	2.043

Source: Survey data, Social Assessment Unit

* Lower mean rating indicates issue of more importance

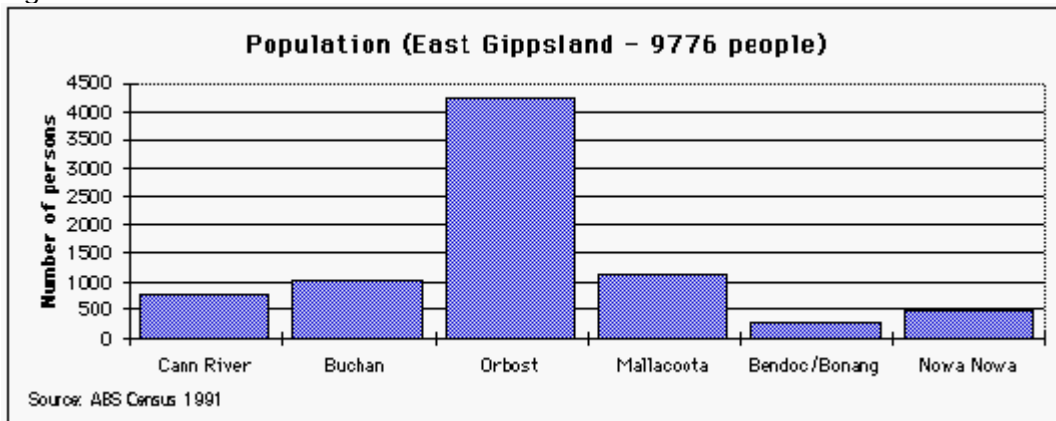
Community Profiles of Case Study Areas, Bendoc, Buchan

This section outlines key socio-demographic statistics for the case study areas includes as part of the social assessment for the East Gippsland RFA region. These case study areas include the major township and the surrounding districts.

7.1 Population

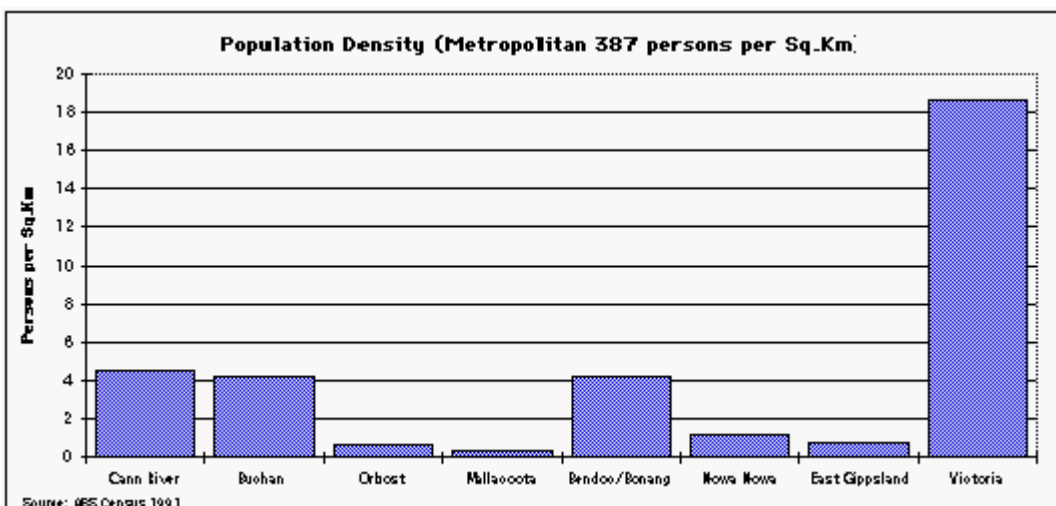
Orbost and its surrounding district has the largest population of the case study areas with 4,224 people, contributing 43% to the East Gippsland population. At the other end of the scale, Bendoc/Bonang has 288 people, 3% of the total population in East Gippsland. The population growth rate of the case study areas has been stable in the past ten years. (Figure 8 : Population by Case Study Areas)

Figure 8



Like many rural areas East Gippsland and the associated case study areas exhibit low population density when compared to Victoria as a whole. Population density is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9

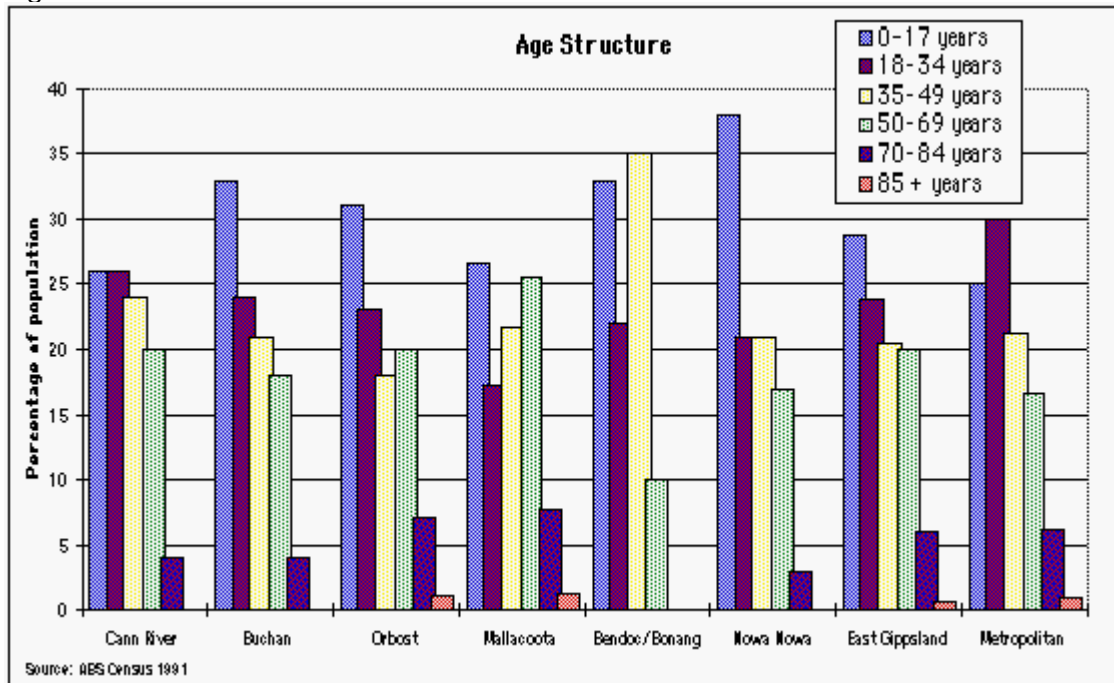


More than 95% of households in Buchan own one or more motor vehicles. This level of ownership is greater than any of the other case studies or the regional average.

The case study areas have a young population with a large proportion of residents in the 0-17 year old age groups. The greater population in the 18-34 year age group in Metropolitan

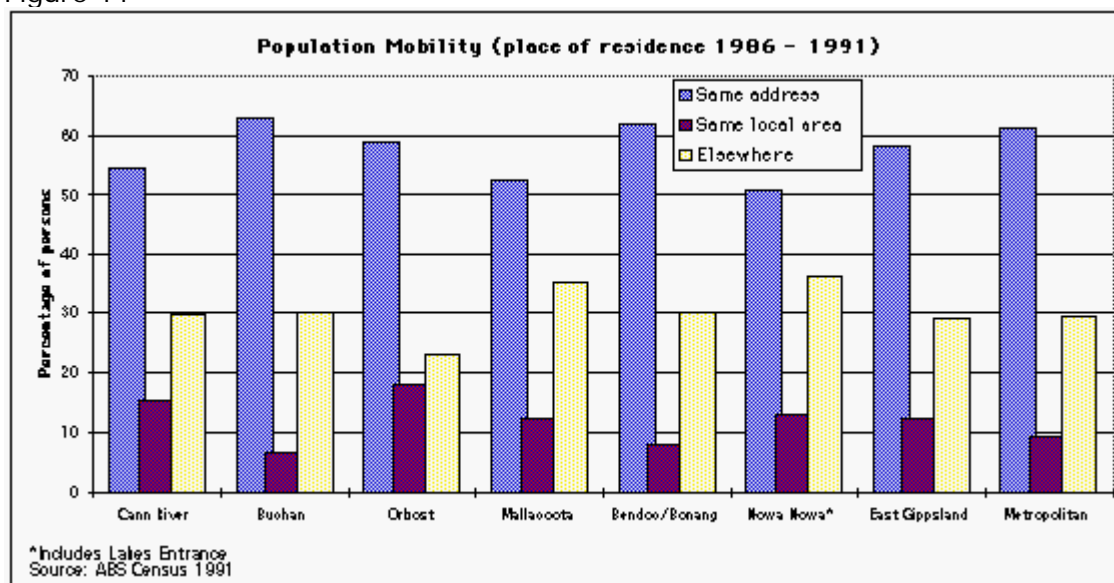
Victoria confirms the trend of net migration of school leavers from rural to Metropolitan Victoria. As a popular place to retire, Mallacoota has a particularly high population in the 50-69 year old age group. Except for the larger population centre of Orbost, most case study areas have no persons over the age of 85 years living within the community. The majority of people living in the case study areas are Australian born (84-87%). The age structure of each case study area is illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10



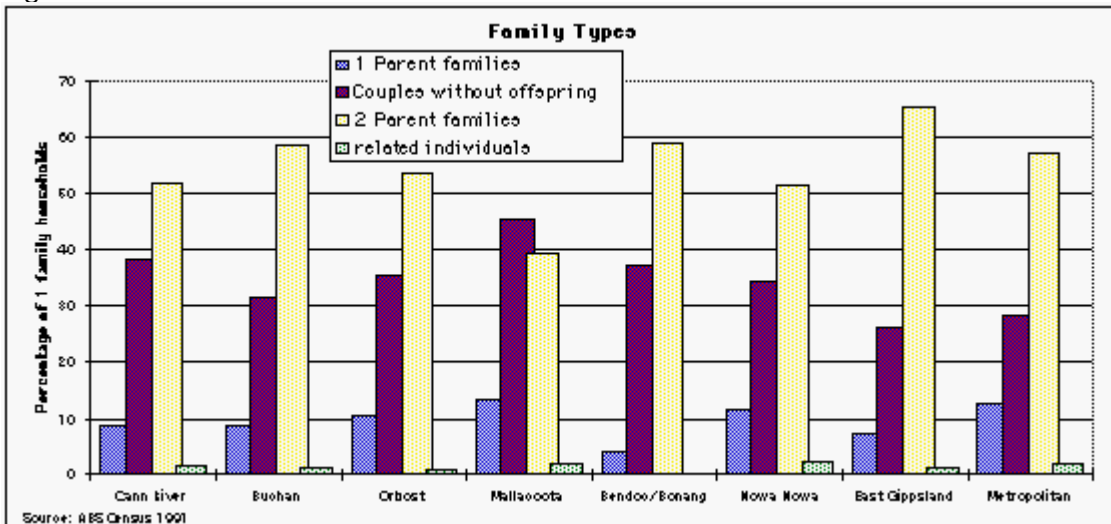
Population mobility for the case studies is relatively stable and is similar to that of East Gippsland as a whole and Metropolitan Victoria. (Figure 11.)

Figure 11



Two parent families are predominant for most of the case study areas while couples without children also comprise a significant proportion of the population. Mallacoota is the exception to the overall profile with a majority of couples without children. (Figure 12.)

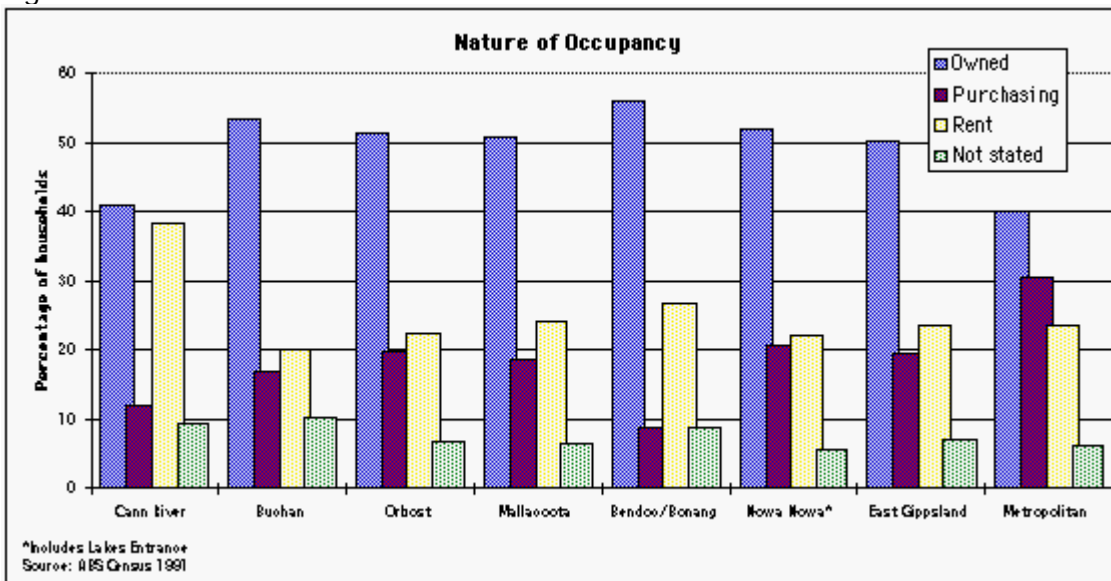
Figure 12



The majority of dwellings for the case study areas are owner occupied which is a higher rate than that of Metropolitan areas. One of the more isolated case study areas of Bendoc/Bonang has the highest level of home ownership in the region at 56%.

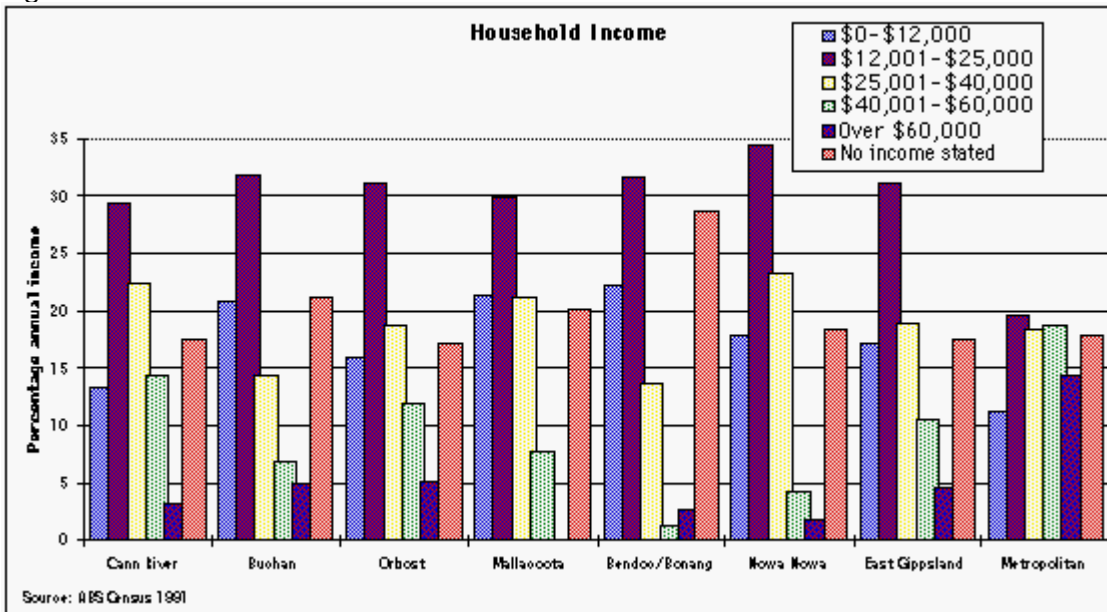
Rental accommodation represents over a third of occupancy in the Cann River area. The percentage of rental occupancy in Cann River is significantly higher than the regional average of 24%. (Figure 13.)

Figure 13



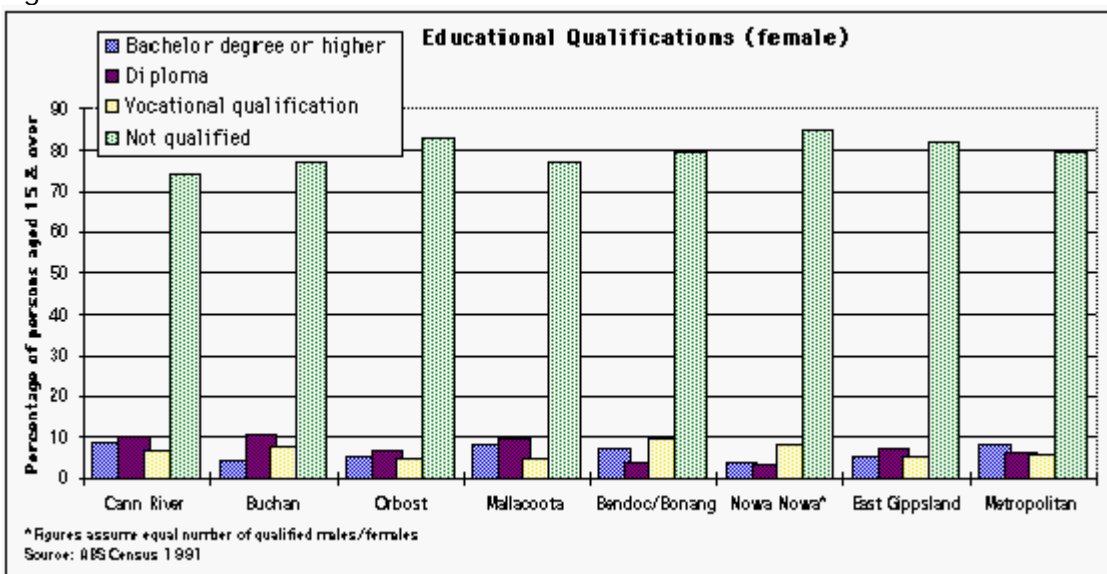
The case study areas have a lower household income compared to the region. Nowa Nowa and Bendoc/Bonang are some of the lowest household income areas. No individual in Bendoc/Bonang earns more than \$50,000 per annum and only 2.9% of individuals earn over \$40,000. (Figure 14.)

Figure 14



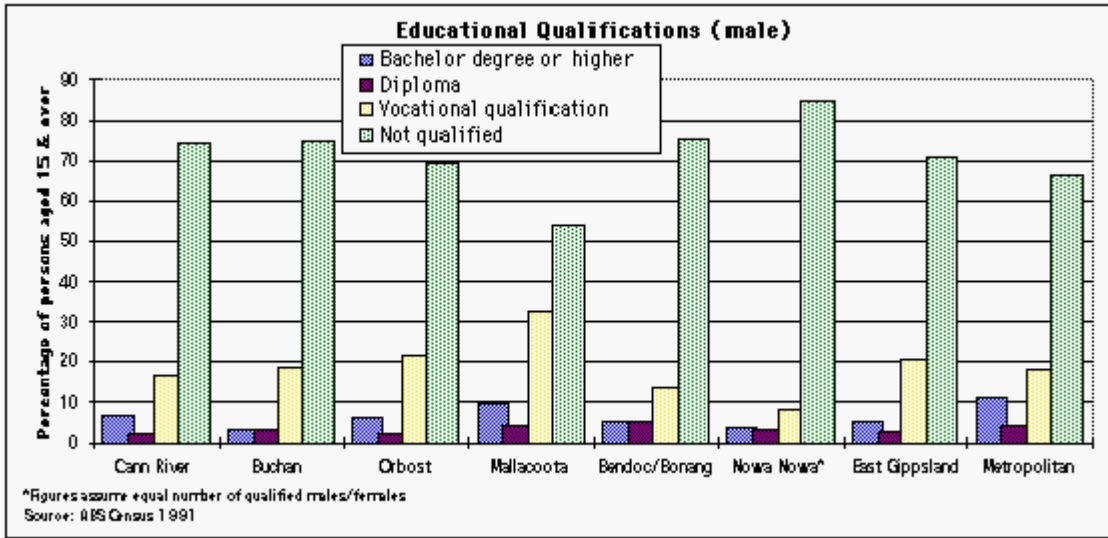
The level of educational qualifications of women in the case study areas is similar to that of the region in general. Nowa Nowa has the lowest level of qualifications for the region, especially at a diploma level. (Figure 15.)

Figure 15



The level of educational qualifications of men in the case study areas is lower than the region. The exception is Mallacoota which has a high proportion of retirees, some of which have possibly come from Metropolitan Victoria, where the level of qualifications are greater. (Figure 16.)

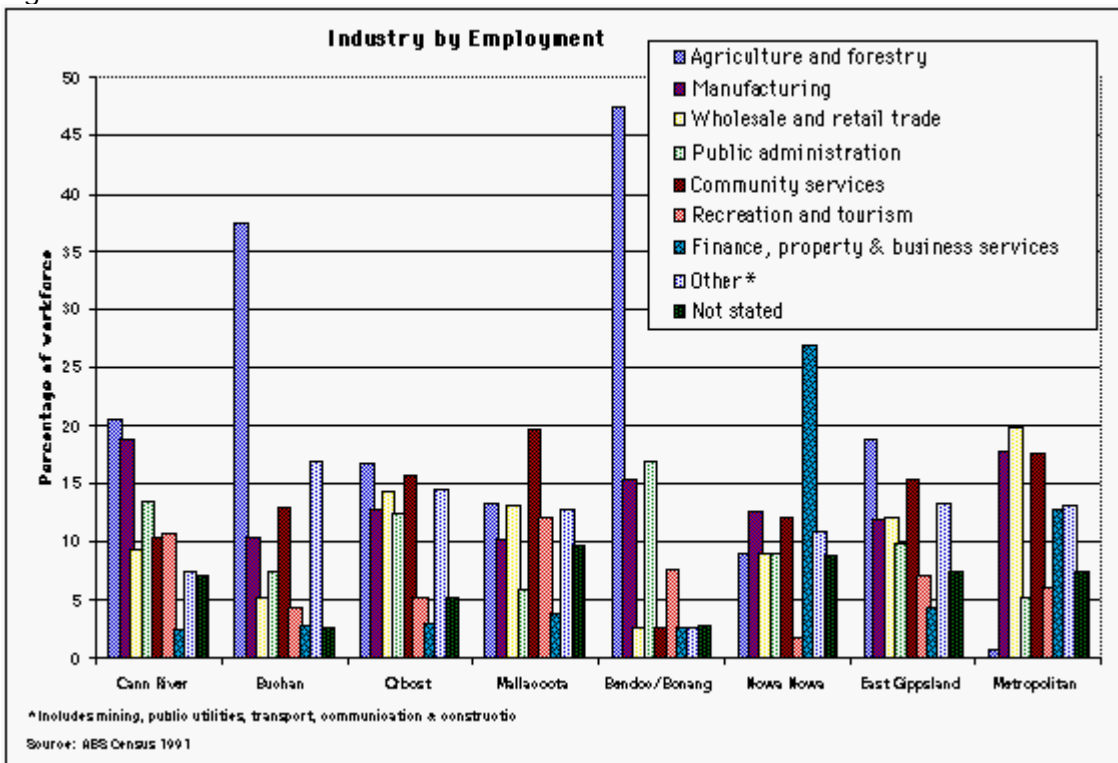
Figure 16



7.1.2 Employment

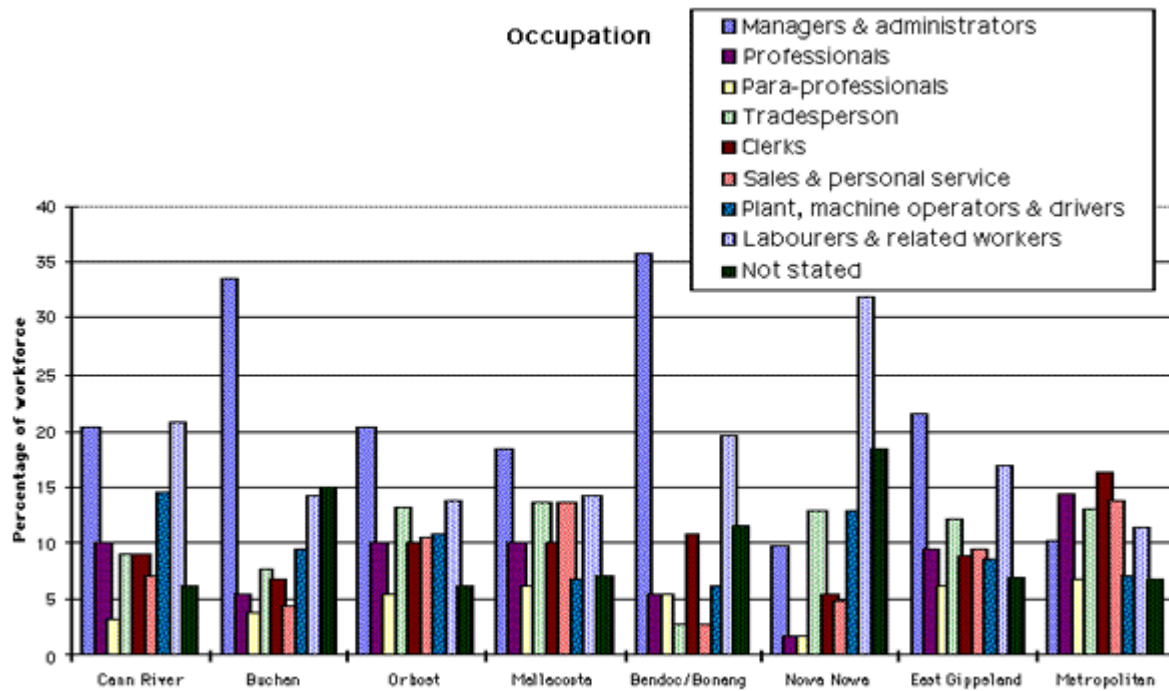
Agriculture and forestry are the major industries in the East Gippsland region, particularly in the case study areas of Buchan (38%) and Bendoc/Bonang (48%). 42% of people in Bendoc/Bonang work from home. Nowa Nowa's main industry is finance, property and business services, while the majority of people in Mallacoota work in the community service areas. Manufacturing and Wholesale and Retail Trade are the other major industries in the region, illustrated in Figure 17.

Figure 17



Managers/Administrators and Labourers are the major occupations across the case study areas. Although 27% of the workforce in Nowa Nowa work in the Finance, Property and business services industry, the majority, 33% of workers are in labouring related occupations as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18



Source: ABS Census 1991

Overall, it is apparent that the case study areas selected within the East Gippsland area are representative of other rural communities within Victoria. Typically the areas selected have relatively young populations with a high attrition rate to larger population centres and lower household and individual incomes than the East Gippsland average. In relation to employment, agriculture and forestry are the predominant industries compared to the rest of Victoria.

7.2 Bendoc Case Study Area

The townships of Bendoc, Bonang and Tubbut are located approximately 120 kilometres from Orbost, via the Bonang Road on the southern edge of the Monaro tableland. Bendoc remained relatively isolated from the rest of the region up to the late 1920s due to the lack of road access from the south, and has therefore relied quite heavily on its connections with New South Wales. The district has two sawmills. Social interaction gravitates around the Memorial Hall, the General Store, Hotel and within community organisations.

7.2.1 History

The original settlement of the Bendoc/Bonang area dates back to the 1850s, where the area was once part of the 'Monaro Run' owned by Messrs. Boyd and Jackson. These properties were originally serviced by bullock drays, but by the mid 1900s, Bonang boasted a cemetery, a store, a post office, telephone exchange and a school.

In 1854 traces of gold were found in the area and the town of Bendoc began to grow. Chinese diggers were active and were responsible for the majority of the alluvial gold found in the area. Reefs were located in the area and new sites continued to be found through to the mid 1920s and beyond.

The name Bonang is intricately linked to the history of East Gippsland. Located on the Bonang River and surrounded by Mounts Bowen, Coolanbablon and Tingaringy (1500 metres), Bonang's history is linked to places such as Orbost, Delegate and Bendoc.

The area has been the focus for the timber industry over the years, with many foresters receiving their first assignments in and around the Bendoc area. The area also has tourist potential with panoramic views which span an area from Bombala, down the coast to Eden and

on past the Mallacoota Inlet. In addition it has close proximity to the tall wet forest of the Errinundra, and the Alpine National Park

7.2.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Primary/Secondary Schools

There are no formal educational facilities located in the Bendoc/Bonang area. Children within these two townships travel by bus to Bombala in NSW to attend secondary school. A total of 32 students go to school by bus. For primary age children, schools are located in Tubbut, Delegate and Goongerah. The closeness of the border poses a difficulty with the provision of State services such as education and health.

Tertiary Learning Centres

Within the community hall an increasing number of courses and learning opportunities are being created with the recent commencement of a course on computing.

Childcare and Development Services

Children can attend a playgroup in Delegate. Casual daycare is provided by two people within the community on an independent basis, this service is utilised by 4 to 5 children. There is also a preschool at Delegate and a mobile preschool to Tubbut.

Health Services

General Practitioners

The local population travels largely to Delegate to consult a general practitioner.

Dentists and Dental Clinics

Dental services are available in Cooma or Bega. A dentist runs a clinic in Bombala for one day every month.

Specialist Health Services

A district nurse visits the area fortnightly and a maternal nurse visits monthly. Pregnant women in the district travel to the Maternity Ward in Cooma to give birth. In addition, there is a SIDS support group in Bombala. A mammogram bus is organised on a needs basis by local people.

Mental Health/Counselling Services

Counselling for domestic violence and drug and alcohol dependency is available from traveling counsellors who visit on a needs basis.

Services for the Elderly

Bombala and Delegate hospitals provide services for the Bendoc/Bonang area. In addition, meals on wheels is provided from Delegate.

Social Support and Cultural Services

There is an isolated women's group in Tubbut.

Recreation

There are tennis court facilities at Tubbut and Bendoc. In relation to recreational activities, local people use the State Forest and National Park areas for horseriding and fishing. Within the Bendoc community there is a major issue concerning access of local people to National Parks to pursue traditional recreational activities such as horseriding.

Commercial Facilities

There are approximately 8 local businesses in the area. These include, the Bendoc Store, the Bonang Store, Bendoc Hotel, the Post Office Agency located at the Bendoc Hotel, Bonang Rural Services, CD and DC Cameron Earthmoving and the Delegate River Tavern. In relation to trade, there is a registered builder in Bendoc, however local people within the area often

practice trade services on an unofficial basis. There are also two sawmills located in the district.

Communication Services

Post offices

There is a Post Office Sub-Agency located at the Hotel in Bendoc. A contractor provides a mail delivery service 3 days a week. There is also a Post Office at Bonang.

Community noticeboards

Bendoc has 3 notice boards at the local Hotel, Bendoc Hall and at the local store. Community meetings and other major events are advertised on these boards.

Community newsletters and newspapers

The Bendoc Wheel and the Tubbut Tattler are both produced and distributed locally. In addition, there are two larger regional newspapers distributed in the area, The Snowy River Mail produced in Orbost and the Bombala Times. Both are weekly newspapers.

Transport

A school bus travels daily to Delegate, this service is only available to students.

Emergency Services

There is one police officer based in Bendoc who is responsible for a 100 square kilometre area. In addition there are Volunteer Fire Brigade Units at Bendoc, Bonang and Delegate. There is an SES Unit in Bendoc which is a fully qualified road accident group.

Voluntary Groups and Services

There are number of voluntary community groups and services which exist within the area. These groups are outlined in the table below:

Table 30

Name of Group	Location
Progress Association	Bendoc
Tubbut Hall Committee	Tubbut
Bonang Hall Committee	Bonang
Delegate River Hall Committee	Delegate
Tubbut School Council	Tubbut
Lower Bendoc Landcare	Bendoc
Deddick Landcare Group	Deddick
Bonang Landcare	Bonang
Snowy River Wild	Bendoc, Bonang, Tubbut, Delegate River
Red Cross	Bendoc
Horse Riding Clubs	Bendoc
High Country Horseriders	Bendoc

7.2.3 Community Workshops

A community workshop was conducted at the Bendoc Hall on Tuesday 14th May from 4-6pm. A total of 16 people attended this workshop. The following Questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is outlined below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 31

Date	Event	What was the impact and how did the community respond?
1981	Declaration of Snowy River National Park	Various community submissions
1983	Fires (Ash Wednesday)	Contribution of timber industry and emergency services providing machinery on standby
1984	Forest Protests. Conservationists blockaded the logging coupes. Workers blockaded the Conservationists	Community rallied - day of protest, all timber towns pulled together Community division accentuated
1986	Timber Industry Strategy	Industry contracted Forest set aside Code of practice developed for timber workers First permits issued in Bendoc
1987	Loss of Primary School Fuel supply closed.	Teacher was reliable, however with the loss of the teacher the school closed - "Once lost you can't get it back". Tourists unable to get fuel
1990s	\$10M Federal Government Grant for the whole of the East Gippsland region Depressed wool prices Increase in alternative communities	Employment Town thrived over 3 years Development of plan/strategy 20 farms affected, 17 now rely on off-farm income
1992	L24 Planning Permits and Clearing Permits required by State law	
1994	Loss of Local Shire Council	Community was against this but couldn't stop it. Loss of shire representative. Local Contractor employed to do shire work The Snowy River organisation was formed to put forward a holistic regional view
1995	Downgrade of Bonang Highway to the Regional Road 3,000 acres of pine planted. Forestry issues debate.	Community joined the timber industry blockade in Canberra.
1996	Problems when some National Estate was made available for logging	Community feels there are two sets of rules. Damage to property in a supermarket would get punished, but

		damage to property in the forest and threats to persons in the industry earn a reprimand.
	Closure of National Bank at Delegate	Services withdrawn slowly and constantly.

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

Tubbut

- It's a good community but there are underlying stresses
- The community has been knocked so often
- You can't sell land
- We value our independence
- We want a definite answer about what will happen

Bendoc

- The community is much stronger than eight years ago but it is very factionalised. However the events and range of new people and issues means the community is more galvanised e.g. there was some perception we would have to go and get our mail at the post office, but the mail bus continues to do the mail run
- Got a broader awareness of the bigger issues and learnt there is a structure to get information out/in.
- Battling the government in justifying services to a small community. Government says not enough population to get the services
- The reasons we stay are: employment, nice place to live, ride horses and forest trails, way of life, people, chose to come, beautiful area, close to Canberra, great place to learn forestry and fire matters, after 12 years in Melbourne sheer quality of life, people care and look after each other, this is the Kakadu of the south.
- There are about 5 or 6 families that have been farming for four generations

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

Tubbut

- Deregulation stops development. This has the potential to become a viable region in relation to agriculture, tourism and timber
- We need government help to increase farm size to make them viable. Victorian government regulations require 3,000 DSE for assistance to wool producers.
- Profits from the timber industry need to be retained within the local community not within the head offices in larger centres.
- Water catchment laws went through the Victorian Parliament and no-one knew about it
- Forest grazing increases management through fire and vermin control
- Need to bring back families to the area, increase jobs for young people
- Its a good lifestyle for young people
- Reinstate the rail services to Bombala.

Bendoc

- Possibility of an open cut goldmine in a few years, this is an old gold mining area
- Improved roads - postal delivery contractor has lost 2 vehicles in 3 years
- Bridges: Bendoc bridge is a single lane bridge, needs two lanes
- Most mill workers in Bendoc live in Delegate
- More recognition that Bendoc is on the map

- \$5 - 6M worth of timber goes out and not much comes back in relation to added services or share of profits
- Stability of resource is the answer and the infrastructure to support it
- We would like a value-adding industry.
- Need a firm commitment from government to look after small communities
- The establishment of plantations leads to absentee landlords, which contributes to the decline in the rural population. However some employment is created.

7.3 Buchan Case Study Area

Buchan is a small historic town located north of the Princess Highway. Approximately 30 kilometres from Nowa Nowa, it is strategically located for access to the Snowy River and the Alpine areas of both Victoria and New South Wales. The Buchan area has two sawmills. The township of Gelantipy is also located in the surrounding district.

7.3.1 History

The first inhabitants of Buchan were the Krauatungalung clan of the Kurnai (Gunai) tribe of Aborigines. Krauat - meaning 'cast' and Galung - meaning 'of' or 'belonging'. The township of Buchan was proclaimed in May 1873. The site of the original township, which forms part of the present township was located south of the Buchan River.

7.3.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Kindergarten

A kindergarten operates in Buchan with a total of enrolment of approximately 10 children.

Primary schools

Buchan has one primary school with 50 students. Approximately four of these students are from families whose income depends upon the timber industry. The student teacher ratio is 20:1.

In the neighbouring township of Gelantipy there is also a primary school with a total of 7.6 students, two of which are from families whose income depends upon the timber industry. There is only one teacher employed at the primary school.

Tertiary Learning Centres

There is a community centre called the Buchan Resource Centre which provides educational, counselling and other vocational education courses. The centre has 250 students located in Buchan and districts. The centre offers units in professional writing, chainsaw operation, computing, farm chemicals, small business and textiles. This centre conducts classes in both Buchan and Gelantipy. A youth access program is also provided.

Child Care and Development Services

Playgroups

There are two playgroups operating in the area. The Buchan group meets weekly and the Gelantipy group meets fortnightly. Twelve children in total use these services.

Family Day Care Scheme

Family Day Care operates in Buchan with 10 children enrolled.

Toy Libraries

The community has recently organised a Toy Library which opened on Wednesday 15th May 1996.

Health Services

General Practitioner/Dentists and Dental Clinics

Dental services are available at the primary school once every two years. There is no general practitioner in Buchan.

Community and Specialist Health Services

A community Bush Nursing Centre operates in Buchan and services a total of 2500 visits per year. This service employs a sole nurse practitioner who provides general health care and is on call 24 hours per day.

Specialist health services provided at the Bush Nursing Centre include: Podiatry (once every two months), Women's clinic outreach service (quarterly), Chiropractic therapy (once a month), a speech therapist is on call and the Bush nurse provides health education. There is also a bush nurse service in Gelantipy.

Mental Health/Counselling Services

Counselling services are available from the Buchan Resource Centre. The Victorian Farmers Federation also provides a visiting counselling service.

Services for the Elderly

Aged daycare is available within the community through Buchan ADASS, with 8-10 clients.

Respite care is also available through Home and Community Care funding, currently one family in the area uses this service.

Recreation

Parks and Reserves

There are a number of parks and reserve within the area which service recreational pursuits such as walking, camping, birdwatching etc. These include:

Table 32

Facility/Area	Frequency of Use by Tourists	Frequency of Use by Local Residents	Value of Area
Buchan Caves Reserve	Daily	Daily	Environment/Education/Aesthetic
Little River Falls Reserve	Daily	Weekly	Environment/Education/Aesthetic
Snow River National Park	Daily	Weekly	Environment/Education/Aesthetic
Alpine National Park	Daily	Weekly	Environment/Education/Aesthetic

Source: Community Information

Recreation Centres/Facilities

Within Buchan there are various facilities. These include two tennis courts, a rodeo venue, two football grounds, netball courts, a golf course and a race course.

Housing

There is one new house currently under construction in the Buchan township, and 17 houses on the market which are currently rented. Three houses owned by the local timber mill are currently unoccupied.

Communication Services

Post offices

The Buchan post office provides mail deliveries 5 days/week and employs 2 people. It also provides banking services and bill payments for shire rates, Telstra and electricity. A total of 3200 transactions per month are conducted using this service. The Gelantipy post office provides deliveries on 3 days/week.

Community noticeboards

There are three community noticeboards in Buchan, the main noticeboard is located at the Buchan Post Office with other noticeboards at the Resource Centre and the General Store.

Community newsletters/newspapers

The Bairnsdale Advertiser is distributed locally and the Resource Centre distributes a community newsletter periodically.

Commercial Facilities

Local Businesses (Retail and Trade)

The following list outlines the retail and trade services currently operating in the area:

Table 33

Retail and Trade Services	Number of employees
General Store	2
Craft and Gift Store	2
Hotel	2 full-time; 6 part-time
Restaurant	1 full-time; 5 part-time
Petrol Station	3 full-time; 2 part-time
Post Office (Banking facility)	2 full-time
Motor Vehicle Repairs	2 full-time; 2 part-time
Caves Tourist Park and Kiosk	14 full-time; 16 part-time
Plumber	1 full-time
2 Electricians	2 full-time
3 Registered Builders	3 full-time

Transport

A school bus travels to and from the local school each day for the immediate Buchan area. A further service operates to Bairnsdale for secondary students. One resident in Buchan is employed by this service and one in Bruthen. The community is lobbying for a bus service between Lakes Entrance and Buchan.

Emergency Services

There is a SES branch and two Country Fire Authority units in the Buchan area. Access to an ambulance service is provided from Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance with a minimum emergency travelling period of 30 minutes.

Voluntary Community Groups and Services

Various community groups exist in the Buchan area. These include those below

Table 34

Group	Other relevant information
Pony Club	Holds an annual rodeo which is a popular tourist event.
Tennis Club	This club has had a decline in recent times.
Buchan Cavemen Football Club	Play in the Omeo League
Karate Club	High involvement of women.
Golf Club	Nine hole golf course with sand greens
Netball Club	
Ladies Craft Group	Members meet once a week
Racing Club	100 year history -Holds an annual picnic meeting
Buchan Progress Association	
Buchan Tourist Association	
Buchan Red Cross	
Buchan Victorian Farmer's Federation	
Buchan Landcare Group	
Isolated Children and Parent's Association	

7.3.3 Community Workshops

A workshop was conducted in Buchan at the Buchan Caves Reserve Centre, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, on Tuesday 14th May from 10am to 12 noon. A total of 18 people attended this workshop. The following Questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is outlined below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 35

Date	Event	What was the impact and how did the community respond?
1980 - 1996	Increase in tourism from low to high, at one time only camping facilities were available now there are approximately 232 tourist beds.	Making people look at tourism and how they can utilize the opportunity Tensions with logging trucks on tourist roads and logging compartments visible from tourism routes.
1980	Generational stability of families has gone	Many of the established families in the area left to live elsewhere
1982	Severe drought affecting farming	
1983/1987	Football Premierships	Brought the community together
1983	Fire north of town burnt 24,000 hectares	Better roads between Buchan and Bairnsdale would make it attractive for

	Deterioration in roads with the quarry traffic, 45 tonne loads over 20-30 K. Fuel tax doesn't go into roads which would support the increase in tourist traffic. The main road has continuous funding problems	people to live in Buchan and work in Bairnsdale.
1986	Buchan Resource Centre opened	TAFE established in Buchan Increased quality of life Improved educational opportunities Brings people together Strengthens networks
1989	Local mill threatened with closure	Three contractors formed a company and bought the mill and a 15 year licence
1989	More absentee landowners	Permanent people mean more services
1989	Lack of stability of work	Transient population
1992	Train services were reduced -closest stop now in Bairnsdale	Strong objection Sense of powerlessness - people gave up
1993	Reduction in output of Limestone Quarry	
1994	Local Shire of Tambo became part of the East Gippsland shire. Downscaling of government agencies and the subsequent impact on schools	A community meeting was held. The town drafted a 20 year plan and put it to Commissioners. There was a high participation rate at these meetings (about 18 people). It is now an aging community
1995	Buchan South Mill closed, Hedley Clemms timbers moved to Nowa Nowa	
1995	Poor television reception	The town decided to raise the money and build a repeater station. Snowy River Group formed
1995	Cave Rescue	SES activated to rescue a visitor
	Decline of local population, significant in decline of school numbers over past three years	Butchers shop and South Buchan public school closed
1996	Cattle price slump	
1996	Victorian seminar on Karate	Local people have promoted this event which will bring tourists to the town (estimated 60-80 people)

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

- When things are required in the town, local people help themselves rather than wait for outside assistance. Local people depend upon each other and support each other
- It is a diminishing community, many young people are leaving - it's a real loss.
- Community services are outsourced
- The community only gets together over single issues, rather than mixing socially. There is a diminished community feeling
- Tourist Association meets and nearly 80% of operators attend e.g. deals with issues such as road signs.

- There are strong community networks, people are dependable through necessity
- There is a belief in sustainability
- Football used to involve the whole town, teams would travel to Omeo. but now people have to work more and can't afford the travel costs.
- Buchan would be nothing without timber.
- Very strong as a community
- Positive lifestyle with less hassles, independence, good environment to raise children
- High community pride
- Strong sporting culture
- Change in community fabric - new people arrive who do not become actively involved in the community.
- Community is spiraling down as people leave and are not replaced

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

Jobs /Industry

- We need jobs for the kids, many young people leave the area to find work
- Fewer NRE regulations i.e. unemployed people should be able to get firewood permits to supplement their income.
- Develop the local quarry

Services

- We need a community bus for the elderly and a weekly public transport service to a major centre
- We need to retain the primary school at Gelantipy
- Oval development for recreation
- New SES rooms above the floodline
- There is no mobile phone service, poor television and radio reception

Timber

- A sustainable timber industry that does not visibly impact on the views that the tourists come for
- A licence should be granted for the 800,000 tonnes of residual logs
- Industry requires resource security to allow it to invest in value-adding e.g. a pulp mill

Agriculture

- Retain the high country grazing
- The Diesel fuel rebate needs to be retained as primary industries are important to the town

Tourism

- More marked walking tracks
- Need to develop a program to keep tourists in town through developing small businesses such as craft shops, museums, coffee shops.
- A variety of accommodation should be provided
- Need to integrate tourism and the timber industry e.g. timber mill tours

7.4 Cann River Case Study Area

Cann River is a small town located on the Princess Highway just east of the Orbost township. There are five sawmills in the Cann River district, a further two at Club Terrace, which is approximately 24 kilometres from the Cann River township, and one mill at Noorinbee, 6km away.

7.4.1 History

The township was first settled in 1834 by the Alexander family who raised cattle in the area and who later moved to the Genoa settlement. At this time new settlers began arriving in the Cann River Area. Settlers such as Morgan, Walker, Filmer and Broome (family names still found in the region today) established properties and developed agricultural interests. Community infrastructure began to develop with the establishment of a postal service, a local store and the first school, built in 1903. In 1907 the road was opened and the hotel built, while in 1909 the community inherited a church and public hall. With the extension of the telephone line from Orbost to Cann River in 1912, the community developed considerably.

7.4.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Primary/Secondary Schools

There is one school located in Cann River, which is a joint primary and secondary school. There is also a further primary school located in Noorinbee. With regard to the P-12 college in Cann River there are 45 students, 23 of whom are from families dependent on forest industries. With 3 teachers the student/teacher ratio equals 15:1. The college offers a number of specialist programs including culture and art, sporting and leisure, careers/work experience, educational enhancement and religious activities.

The primary school in Noorinbee has 14 students and one teacher, with a student/teacher ratio of 14:1.

Tertiary Learning Centres

A TAFE outreach service operates from Cann River offering information referrals and enrolment at the Bairnsdale TAFE campus.

Child Care and Development Services

There is one occasional childcare centre available for half a day once a week. Family day care can be organised through Bairnsdale in emergency circumstances.

Health Service

s General Practitioners

A general practitioner visits Cann River one day per week.

Specialist Health Services

The following specialist services are available in Cann River through the Bush Nursing Centre. These services include: Physiotherapy (twice a month), Podiatry (every two months), Speech Therapy (every two months), Chiropractic therapy (once a week), Social Worker (twice a month). A gentle aerobics group meets twice a week.

Community Health Services

The Cann Valley Bush Nursing Centre has approximately 600 clients with 300-400 contacts per month. It provides a service for pathology specimen collection, volunteer transport, clinic and home nursing, palliative care, equipment hire, fortnightly day care, respite care, counselling,

podiatry, speech therapy, physiotherapy and chiropractic care. The centre operates from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergencies.

Mental Health/Counselling Services

Cann River has access to a social worker who visits the area two days per month. This is a new service which currently caters to six clients within the area. The social worker deals with issues such as stress and unemployment. Religious counselling services are also available through the Minister of Combined and Cooperating Churches.

Services for the Elderly

Home and Community Care operate a service through the Bush Nursing Centre and includes home help, meals on wheels and home maintenance. This service has 10 clients. There are six public housing flats in Cann River for aged pensioners.

Recreation

Parks and Reserves

There are a number of parks and reserves within the area which service recreational pursuits such as walking, horseriding etc. These include:

Table 36

Facility/Area	Frequency of use by tourists	Frequency of use by local residents	Value of Area
Drummer Rainforest Walk	Daily	Monthly	Environment / Aesthetic / Education
Croajingolong National Park	Daily	Monthly	Environment / Family Tradition Aesthetic / Recreation
Coopracambra National Park	Monthly	20 per year	Environment / Aesthetic Wilderness Experience
Lind National Park	Weekly	Monthly	Environment / Aesthetic / Education
Alfred National Park	Weekly	6 visits/year	Environment / Aesthetic Conservation
McKenzie Rainforest Walk	Weekly	Monthly	Environment / Aesthetic / Education

Recreation Centres/Facilities

There are various sporting and recreation facilities within the area. Within Cann River there is a multipurpose tennis/netball court, a football and cricket oval and a community hall which hosts carpet bowls. The community in Cann River are working on establishing a Golf course on a volunteer basis.

In Noorinbee there is a tennis court, a pony club and a community hall which hosts line dancing.

Commercial Facilities

Local Businesses (Retail and Trade)

The following list outlines the main retail and trade services currently operating in the Cann River area.

Table 37

Retail and Trade Services

Cann Valley Motel
Hop-Inn Motor Inn
Cann River Motel
Cann River Supermarket
Cann River Meats
Mobil Roadhouse
Cann River Hotel
Cann River Caravan Park
Andy's Cafe
Cann River Post Office
Cann Valley Engineering
Caltex Quickbite
Downes Transport
Lob's Roadrunner
Pelican Point Cafe
Tamboon Inlet Service Station
Haslam's Electrical

Housing

There are currently 8 houses under construction in Cann River and 12 houses on the market. Currently there are no residential rental vacancies in the area.

Communication Services

Post offices

The Cann River postal service delivers approximately 4,500 letter per week and covers the areas of Cann River, Noorinbee and up to Bombala. It employs two people on a full-time basis and also offers banking services and agency payments for Telstra and Eastern Power. The frequency of use of this service is high due to the isolated nature of Cann River. The post office also operates as a local information centre.

Community Noticeboards

There are large community noticeboards at the post office and the supermarket which are used regularly for public notices. There are smaller noticeboards at the Tourist park and in the local hotel.

Community Newsletters and Newspapers

A fortnightly newsletter is produced at the Cann River P-12 College called the Jinga. This newsletter evolved from a school newsletter to a more formal community newsletter.

Transport

Two school buses run from Club Terrace and Chandlers Creek to the school in Cann River. A separate service runs once a month to Bairnsdale for a shopping trip and is funded under the Home and Community Care Program. This service is free and is tailored to the elderly in the community. The college minibus is available for school activities.

Local people also have access to Melbourne and Sydney through various buslines. The Melbourne to Sydney buses stop at Cann River and contribute directly to the employment of one person at the local service station.

Emergency Services

There are 2 Police Officers employed in Cann River. A State Emergency Services Unit in Cann River with 15-20 people involved on a voluntary basis. In addition, there is a Cann Valley Country Fire Authority Unit with approximately 20 people involved, and an Ambulance Committee and Volunteer Group involving 6 people.

Voluntary Community Groups and Services

There are 45 functioning community groups within Cann River. These include:

Table 38

Voluntary Community Groups and Services	
Cann River Facilities and Recreational Committee	Cann River Badminton Club
Cann River Football Club	Cann River Bush Nursing Centre Committee
Cann River Golf Club	Cann River Carpet Bowls
Cann River Hall Committee	Cann River Cemetery Trust
Cann River Historical Society	Cann River Co-operative Churches
Cann River Improvement Trust	Noorinbee Co-operative Churches
Can River Mechanics Institute	Cann River Community Centre
Cann River Motorcycle Association	Cann River Emergency Services
Cann River Neighbourhood House	Cann River Fishing Competition Committee
Cann River Netball Club	Cann River Football Club Ladies Association
Cann River Occasional Care	Cann River SES
Cann River Pony Club	Cann River Senior Citizens
Cann River Parent Auxilliary	Cann River Soccer Club
Cann River Progress Association	Cann River Social Issues Network
Cann River R.S.L.	Cann River Tennis Club
Cann River R.S.L. Community Centre	Cann River Tourist Association
Cann River Recreation Association	Cann River Vietnam Veterans Association
Noorinbee Tennis Club	Can Valley and District Carpet Bowls
Women's Support Group	Cann Valley Community Playgroup
Cann River Ambulance Committee	Cann Valley Fire Brigade Committee
Cann River Anglican Church	Cann Valley Guild
Cann River Angling Club	Cann Valley Land Care Group
Cann River Art and Craft Co-operative	

7.4.3 Community Workshops

A community workshop was conducted at the Cann River Community Centre on Wednesday 15th May from 4-6pm. A total number of 13 people attended this workshop. The following Questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is shown below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 39

Date	Event	What was the impact and how did the community respond?
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1981-3	Bushfires. 1983 was the biggest when the entire district burnt .	The community all worked together, everyone was involved at some level. Food was prepared, contractors trucks were used/quick response.
1986	Combienbar Mill closed, and the dairy stopped picking up milk from the region. Trouble with dairy industry as well as timber. Beef in slump. Farmers getting older.	
1987	Bemm River School closed Club Terrace school closed (used to be a 2 teacher school)	Club Terrace is almost a ghost town c although some people are attracted by cheap housing.
1989-1990	Formation of Progress Association.	Playground equipment, drains etc. provided.
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privatisation of State services • Cuts to schools and health care • Quality of provision declined • Schools closed • CNR restructure • Shire Office closed • Road maintenance reduced • Decline in families due to reduced services 	The need to make a competitive decision about which school should close caused conflict between communities. The numbers of people dropped from 25 to 5 in education support groups. The future of community schools depended on the lobbying ability of the community Club Terrace became a ghost town
1986-96	Timber industry has centralised.	Pessimism over the future of the industry. There has been a direct loss of families due to restructuring and an indirect loss as people move out for education reasons.
1993	Establishment of Cann River Community Housing to provide housing for the elderly.	This was a community initiative to set up six units for pensioners and to gain funding through the State government there has also been an increase in medical services with these units. Spin offs for the community - active community centre and provision of tertiary education facilities through joint funding between the Shire, TAFE and Neighbourhood House.
1994	Lobby groups formed to help establish health services.	Spin off was development of Community Centre, ability to get TAFE outreach and provide youth services.

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

- There is safety, people trust each other and look after the kids. People are ready to help. Friendly, close-knit community where people are ready to assist in a crisis.
- Many groups are active in the community. People come to meetings over issues, For example the ambulance service was in decline and a public meeting was called and the crisis was averted because 8 - 10 people volunteered. Fire fighting organisation also shows the strengths of the local networks.
- Its a beautiful peaceful place to live with natural attractions in that it is close to the beach and the snowfields and the bush.
- It has had a good shire representation in the past although we are unsure of future arrangements.

- Young people still feel connected to the community but there are not enough young people here, for example, there are few competitive sporting teams which is a loss for the youth. Young people don't suffer alienation, they can develop a sense of community.
- We look after each other not just across families but across the community.
- It's a good place for young children but once they reach high school there are problems, there are not enough cultural facilities for teenagers.
- There is a narrow agenda for young people concerning acceptability on identity, a lack of social and cultural diversity as acceptable.
- There are very few employment opportunities for young women and there is a strong male ethos in the community.
- Free of stresses and strains of city living.

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

- Adequate work opportunities for young people
- We need population growth, and it should be based on the timber industry.
- We need further development to reach a critical population mass
- Need to end the uncertainty of the timber industry because the community depends heavily on the timber industry. To do this we also need security of market and a vision about capturing markets. Value adding should be further pursued, some moves in last 3 - 4 years with great investment. The long term market for hardwood is good with secure markets and value adding. Wood chipping will always be a part of the industry.
- Some years ago there was a proposal for a pulp mill with a lot of public debate but it didn't eventuate..
- East Gippsland has always operated under colonialism - the state extracts the resources and gives little return.
- We need a more diversified economy which includes both timber and tourism. Cann River has resisted tourism as an idea and there is scepticism that tourism is seen as a magic wand. Tourism will aid employment but timber is a base. We need to encourage longer stays here.
- There is debate about whether Lake Tamboon should have more open access to the public. There is also tourism opportunities for other attractions such as Point Hicks Lighthouse.
- All the infrastructure needs to be improved to encourage tourism. Grow to self-sustainability, including resource certainty and access to international markets.
- Need to develop cultural diversity and be more responsive to tourism, including improvements to tourist infrastructure e.g. make the Lake accessible.
- Need to encourage tourists to stay longer to stay in town longer, not just a 'tank and tummy' town.

7.5 Mallacoota Case Study Area

Mallacoota is situated in the eastern corner of East Gippsland. Boasting a beautiful coastline, rocky inlets, peaceful lakes and rivers, remote beaches and the Croajingolong National Park, it is one of the most popular tourism destinations in the region and also has an important abalone industry. There are no sawmills in Mallacoota, but there is one mill in Genoa, 22 kilometres away.

7.5.1 History

Mallacoota Inlet lies 27km from the first point in Australia sighted by Captain James Cook on 20 April 1770. The district around Mallacoota Inlet was documented in Cook's log.

In the early 1830's settlers were attracted south from New South Wales by the open forests of the area which provided protected grazing for cattle. At about the same time, the famous Ben Boyd established a whaling operation out of Two Fold Bay. Fishing became an important industry with a few minor setbacks. In 1917 Chin Sling's application for a commercial abalone

licence was refused, but by 1964 the industry was well established and a co-operative formed in 1967.

7.5.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Kindergarten

There is a kindergarten which operates two groups, one for 3 days/week and one for 2 days/week. The total enrolment is 19 children, with approximately 2 children from families dependent on forest industries.

Primary/Secondary schools

Mallacoota has a primary/secondary school with 230 children enrolled, and 22 teachers. 8 of the children enrolled are from families who are dependent on forest industries. The student to teacher ratio is 25:1 at the primary school level and 16:1 at the secondary level.

A campus of the Methodist Ladies College (Melbourne) in the local region is used for school camps. Approximately 80 students come down to the region for 8 weeks a year.

Technical and Further Education

There is a Shire Outreach Centre for East Gippsland TAFE in Mallacoota. The Centre offers studies in visual arts and small business management. The total enrolment for these courses is 29 students. In addition the centre offers short courses in chainsaw operations, occupational health and safety, tractor operation and front-end loader operation. Approximately 100 students are involved in these courses. There is also a TeleCentre which provides community access and training to computers and communications equipment.

Health Services

General Practitioners

There are two local resident doctors in Mallacoota.

Dentists and Dental Clinics

There is one visiting dentist.

Community Health Services

Within Mallacoota the Community House offers counselling services as well as emergency housing. Counselling services are also available from local churches. There is a Bush Nursing Centre as well as the Miva Miva Centre which offer health related services.

Services for the Elderly

Aged care services are available at the Miva Miva Centre in the Mallacoota township.

Recreational Reserves/Facilities

Mallacoota has a range of recreational facilities which include tennis courts, a football oval, a soccer ground and a golf course. The close proximity of the Croajingolong National Park, the coastline and Mallacoota Inlet also provide significant opportunity for a range of recreational pursuits including surfing, fishing, boating, sailing and bushwalking.

Commercial Facilities

Local Businesses (Retail and Trade) Below is a list of the retail and trade services in Mallacoota.

Table 40

Retail and Trade Services	
Adams Panel Beating	Mallacoota Butchers

AMP Insurance	Mallacoota Cleaning Services
Anstruther Holdings	Mallacoota Concrete
Becker Kevin Firewood	Mallacoota Home Builders
Bell David Electrical Engineer	Mallacoota House Boats
Bennet Builder	Mallacoota Medical Centre
Ellis and Co Accountants	Mallacoota Newsagency
Boarding Kennels and Cattery	Mallacoota Outboards
Bowling Club	Mallacoota Plumbing
Bucklands Jetty Boat Hire	Mallacoota Welding
Casement Fishing	Mallacoota Nursery
John Daniels Pharmacy	Mobil Coota Fuel
Croajingolong Ego Centre	Moving Pictures
Cockburn G and S Builder	Naomi's Deli
Abalone Co-operative	Newmham Hairdresser
Coles Graphics/Screen printing	Painter
Cut Above Hairdresser	Pickets Craft and Giftware
Design and Drafting	Ponderosa Plumbing
E.G. River Management Board	Post Office
Fellows Plumber	RACV
Foodtown	Rankin's Takeaway
Golf and Country Club	Rankin Hire Cruises
Gray Plumbing	Riteway Supermarket
Hank's Taxi Trucks and Removals	Sarton Ceramics
Information Booking Travel	Shaw Electrician
Jolly Electrics	Shell Service Station
Journey Beyond Eco Adventures	Souter Real Estate
Kiln Craft Ceramics	South Eastern Hardware
King and Health Real Estate	Stieger Jeweller/Leatherwork
Leach Canvas Repairs	Triple Civil Engineer
Lindsay the Carter	Watt's Cooking
Mallacoota Air Service	Westpac
Mallacoota Automotive	Window Cleaning Service
Mallacoota Bait and Tackle	Word Processing and Dicta-typing
Mallacoota Bakery	Foreshore Caravan Park

Housing

There are 8 houses under construction in Mallacoota. A large proportion of the houses in the area are on the market or available for rent. Mallacoota is a popular holiday destination and therefore many houses in the township are only occupied in the holiday periods.

There is public housing owned by the Directorate of School Education, National Parks and the Police Department. Community housing is also available in Mallacoota with the 'Kids Under Cover' program providing emergency housing for homeless youth.

Communication Services

Post offices

There is a privately operated Post Office in Mallacoota, which does not deliver mail but acts as a pick-up point for mail. The Post Office employs 3 people. A postal service for outlying areas operates from the General Store in Genoa.

Community Noticeboards

There is a community noticeboard at the Post Office that is widely used by the community.

Community Newsletters/radio

The Mallacoota Mouth Newsletter is distributed at the Post Office at a cost of 40 cents and is a popular source of community information. There is also a community radio station based in Mallacoota, 3MGB Radio. The station transmits 7 days a week and has programs on current events, science and community news.

Transport

There are no public transport services to Mallacoota. A school bus runs a daily return service from Genoa, employing one local person. The Miva Miva Centre operates a fortnightly bus for a shopping trip to Eden, this service is funded under the Home and Community Care program. There is a further bus service for people attending water aerobics in Merimbula.

The airfield at Mallacoota does not have any scheduled services but does operate joy rides and a chartered service. Other transport is available through the private charter of the school and Miva Miva buses. There is also a courier and taxi truck service in the township.

Emergency Services

There is an SES which conducts monthly meetings. The Country Fire Authority has 16 members. The community operates an Ambulance Service on a semi-voluntary basis. This service is used very regularly due to Mallacoota's aging population. There are 8-10 people involved in the Ambulance Service, these people are organised into two teams who are on call in alternate weeks. In the case of severe emergencies an air ambulance service is available.

A coastal watch is conducted in the area by two volunteers who reside within the community on a 24 hour basis. There is also one police officer located in Mallacoota who covers the area between Cann River and the NSW border.

Professional Services

There are a range of professional services available in Mallacoota with an accountancy firm operating full time and employing 3 people. A second accountancy firm visits on a monthly basis as does a Solicitor from a Bairnsdale law firm. There are 3 real estate agents, a Commonwealth banking service available through the Post Office and a Westpac Bank branch that employs 3 people. There are also two architects.

Voluntary Community Groups and Services

There are a variety of community groups and services within the Mallacoota area. These are outlined in the table below:

Table 41

Voluntary Community Groups and Services	
Book Club	Country Fire Authority
Friends of Mallacoota Incorporated	Community House
Mallacoota Artist's Collective	Gun Club
Mallacoota Arts Council Incorporated	Hall Committee
Mallacoota Lions Club	Historical Society
Mallacoota Inlet Business Association	R.S.L.
Mallacoota Community Association Incorporated	R.S.L. Ladies Auxiliary
3 MGB FM Radio	Sailing Club
Miva Miva Bush Nursing Centre	Senior Citizens
Ambulance Auxiliary	Soccer Club
Anglican and Uniting Church	St Peters Ladies Guild
Angling Club	TeleCentre
Anti-Nuclear Group	Writer's Group
Assemblies of God	Youth and Sports Club
Board Riders Club	RSL

7.5.3 Community Workshops

A community workshop was conducted in the Mallacoota Mudbrick Hall on Wednesday 15th May from 10am to 12 noon. A total of 11 community members attended this workshop. The following Questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is outlined below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 42

Date	Event	Impact and Community Response
1983	Bushfire	SES fed about 300 people from all over the shire. It was the biggest emergency with makeshift facilities . Everyone came to help and the community hall served as the evacuation centre. The community realised that there were few facilities to deal with such emergencies as the town was completely isolated.
1990	Local boating accident where three lives were lost, one person was saved.	Everyone pitched in for the search. It was a real shock for the town.
1995	The Gabo Lighthouse was automated.	This was generally accepted. Lighthouse staff left the town.

1994-5	The bar at the entrance to the Lake was closed for 15 months.	Impact on tourism and fishing as fewer people came to holiday. There were lots of community meetings to lobby for safe ocean access. Some people were opposed to it on the grounds of access/environment/economic factors and tourism.
1994	Shire amalgamation. The East Gippsland Shire is now based at Lakes Entrance	Lack of representation. Roads are not as well maintained. Loss of local jobs. Community organised mass meetings to put forward their point of view.
1994	Loss of Water Board	Loss of local jobs, loss of decision making and representation, \$300 rise in water rates. Longer trip for people to visit the central office.

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

- We have a lot of community meetings where few people come, but whenever there is an emergency or major happens, everyone pitches in.
- There are a lot of new younger people, and we wish they would become involved.
- There are three sorts of people who come here: those that come to live here, those who come to hide, and those who come to die.
- There is less voluntary participation within the community.
- Everyone knows your business which can be both positive and negative.
- With the withdrawal of government funding, services have to choose between winding it down or keeping it going using voluntary labour.
- More user pays policies, for example power. Since the SEC was privatised and Eastern Energy have taken responsibility, the area under the power lines has not been cleared.
- People are friendly, its quiet and beautiful. It has all the best things and the worst things of a small town.
- It's hard for young people, especially those with young families, to stay here because of the lack of employment.
- There is a strong emphasis in the community on the arts and cultural heritage and so there is a strong community education of children in those areas.
- There is a feeling of safety with no need to lock your house all the time. People watch out for each other.
- The prosperity of Mallacoota depends on the prosperity of the whole of East Gippsland and the Eden area. If there are effects on the timber industry in Cann River and Orbost, it will flow through to Mallacoota. When Harris Daishowa lost 16%, nine jobs went. Six of these were in Mallacoota. There was a feelings of anger, a further loss, and a feeling that the town wasn't being catered for properly.
- Our economy is 15% timber, 50% abalone and the rest tourism (mainly based on fishing).
- Negative impacts in the timber industry are felt primarily in Cann River and Orbost. However there are flow on effects to Mallacoota because important services and infrastructure may be lost.

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

- An increase in population from 1200 (current population) to 2000 people.
- A growth in the 38th Parallel Performing Arts Festival and a growth in the local arts industries.
- A pick up in the timber industry through changes in government attitudes.
- Long term economically viable area. Need a balanced demographic mix, not just a place to retire to.
- Increased use of accommodation and fully utilised tourist accommodation in the low season.
- Better use of the great natural environment.
- Improved aquaculture

- Work for young people through local industry. Possible light industry outsourcing e.g. components manufacture for electronic communication
- Apex for Sydney/Melbourne/Canberra if the transport systems were appropriate
- Concern at the increased cost of communication if Telstra is privatised.
- Don't see a great possibility for growth because of the physical constraints of the surrounding environment.
- Need to address the silting problem in the Lake.

7.6 Nowa Nowa Case Study Area

Nowa Nowa is a small town located on the Princes Highway just east of Lakes Entrance. There are 3 sawmills in the Nowa Nowa district. The Lake Tyers community is also located in the area.

7.6.1 History

Nowa Nowa is an Aboriginal term meaning 'Ömingling waters', and is situated where the Boggy Creek meets the fourteen mile salt arm of Lake Tyers.

Thomas Stirling was the first settler to the area in 1869, selecting two hundred and ninety acres about five miles down Lake Arm, and made camp on the banks of Boggy Creek. The rough track that linked Orbost with Cunninghame passed his place and he later built a hotel which was used by travellers.

The railway line was extended to Nowa Nowa in 1914 and a large number of construction workers were employed on the job. The famous trestle bridge was also constructed on the line west of Nowa Nowa and is the largest wooden trestle bridge in the southern hemisphere.

The railway brought considerable prosperity to Nowa Nowa in the 1920's. Timber was the main industry and many sawmills were established in the area. Tram tracks were used extensively to transport logs to landing sites for loading on to barges or horse and bullock wagons.

A busy township developed at Nowa Nowa with a store, bakery and a butcher's shop. Mill workers lived in huts and cabins and a boarding house was established.

The first school was conducted in a room at the old building opposite the hotel in 1912. The State school opened in 1916 and lessons were held in the railway station until the building was completed.

With strikes in the timber industry and a slump in the building trade, many mill workers were dismissed. Some found work cutting sleepers, while others were employed by the Forest Commission to clean up the forest and ringbark trees.

A non-official post office first opened in 1900 at the hotel, but was destroyed by fire in 1940. When M. Veldon became post master the post office was moved to the general store.

Nowa Nowa was also known for quartz mining. Mine shafts around the district showed the early interest in mining which proved to be unsuccessful. Iron ore also exists in the area, however the cost to extract the ore is too high to justify mining.

7.6.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Kindergarten

Nowa Nowa has a Save the Children Fund Kindergarten for children aged 3-5 years, which operates four mornings a week. There are two part-time employees and 16 children are currently enrolled.

Primary schools

There is one primary school located in Nowa Nowa. This school has 24 students, 2 teachers and 3 teacher's aides with a student/teacher ratio of 11.5:1. At this primary school there is a high proportion of Aboriginal students.

Secondary Schools

Secondary school services are situated at Lakes Entrance (1 1/2 hours travel) or at private college in Bairnsdale. There is no Victorian Certificate of Education offered in Lakes Entrance.

Health Services

There is a visiting doctor every Monday and second Wednesday. There are no dentists located in Nowa Nowa. An Aboriginal health dentist visits the school on a needs basis. Social welfare services are available by appointment.

A community health centre exists in Nowa Nowa. Services offered include clinical nursing, district nursing, community health programs and a doctor visits one morning a fortnight. Specialist services are available monthly or by appointment.

A number of health related self-help groups which run in the area. These include, a weight control group and a health and fitness club which has formed and purchased gym equipment for general community use.

At the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust there is a community nurse and an Aboriginal Health Worker, and a doctor one day per week.

Services for the Elderly

Aged daycare is provided once a week through the Shire as well as Meals on Wheels.

Youth Services

There are a number of youth sporting programs within the area which include badminton, football, tennis, fishing and horseriding.

Recreation

Recreation Centres/Facilities

Nowa Nowa has an oval which is used by the pony club. Carpet bowls is held in the community hall every Sunday. There is a tennis court, which is used for social occasions. There is also a health and fitness hall with gym equipment.

Other recreational activities include hunting, fishing and badminton. A local fun-run is organised every Easter which attracts people from the wider district.

Commercial Facilities

Local Businesses (Retail and Trade)

The retail and trade services in Nowa Nowa are listed below:

Table 43

Retail and Trade Services	Number of people employed
General Store	3
Hotel/Motel	2 Full-time plus casuals
Garage	2
Nursery	2
AG Lime	2
Nelson	3
Snowy River Blinds	2
Mingling Waters Craft Gallery and Cafe	3

Nowa Nowa Caravan Park	2
Farmer's Cafe and Craft	1
John Goold Flower Farm	3

Communication Services

Post offices

There is a post office agency at the General Store which delivers mail 5 days/week. Three people are employed in this service. The post office agency also acts as an agency for the Commonwealth Bank and allows payment of standard accounts.

Community Noticeboards

Community noticeboards are located at the Health Centre, the Cafe, the General Store and the Hotel. The General Store noticeboard is the most widely used.

Community Newsletters/Newspapers

Nowa Nowa has a weekly community/school newsletter called the Nowa Notes. The Nowa Nowa Community Health Centre also distributes a monthly newsletter.

Transport

A school bus goes to Lakes Entrance for secondary students and from the Lake Tyers community to the Nowa Nowa primary school. This service employs one full-time and one casual driver. A school bus also goes to Bairnsdale. Private schools run their own bus services. Sawmills provide transport for all mill workers, to and from work.

Emergency Services

There is one Country Fire Authority Unit. The local SES Unit has two volunteer members. The nearest police officers are located at Lakes Entrance.

Housing

There are two new houses under construction within Nowa Nowa and one house on the open market. Most of the residents of Nowa Nowa are owner occupiers. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment owns one home in town, and there is one house owned by the Directorate of School Education which is currently privately rented. There are vacant properties available for rent.

Voluntary Community Group and Services

There is a variety of voluntary community groups and services within the Nowa Nowa area. These include:

Table 44

Name of Group	Number of people involved
Nowa Nowa Progress Association	5
Nowa Nowa Hall Committee	9
Nowa Nowa Red Cross	14
Country Women's Association	9
Recreation Reserve Committee	4
Fitness Club	2
Angling Club	12

Lake Tyers Football/Netball Club	15
Tennis Club	11
Indoor Bowls Club	10
Line Dancing Group	14
Pony Club	6
Junior Badminton	20
Lakes Care	4
Wairewa Hall Committee	

7.6.3 Community Workshops

A community workshop was conducted at the Nowa Nowa Community Hall on Thursday 16th May from 10am to 12 noon. A total of 17 people attended this workshop. The following questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is outlined below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 45

Date	Event	What was the impact and how did the community respond?
1984	Bushfire	The bushfire surrounded the town and passed through very quickly. The forest agency came with water tanks and contractors donated their machinery. The community pulled together.
1987	Railway closed	This had a major impact on the town as the sleeper cutters were put out of work. A major line contract was rumoured but it fell through. Some people left the town. Every person that leaves puts more pressure on the local businesses.
1989-1990	Amalgamation of Councils and rationalisation of Shire administration	Loss of local jobs, for example, the cafe suffered as it had traditionally supplied lunch for the workers. Loss of representation and personal contact. Services removed from the Shire. You used to be able to walk up to the elected person's house and talk about something. Now there's no local knowledge and it makes it difficult to communicate.
1990	Inaugural Annual Fun Run	Community organised event. The comment was made to a local person, Glad Kingston, "You've got a mountain out there going to waste". Recognised the potential in the area. Started by the Hall Committee with sponsorship from local businesses and mills. Improved coordination by local groups.
1990	Local hotel closed	Impacted on tourists. People who had been coming to the same place for years moved on to a place where more facilities were available. This meant that there was less money coming into town and the loss of formal meeting place.

1990	Privatisation of State services	Extra pressure on small business to competitively tender. This impacts on the community because nobody gets any work. For example, electricity and roads, larger regional companies get the larger contracts. Occasionally local people get a small sub-contracting part of the job. Without social security this town would be dead, however socially it is a downgrading factor. Even school cleaners are now bound by regional contractors. School maintenance budgets have all been cut. Limits work opportunity. Flow on effects - impact after impact.
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Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

- Its a beautiful place with a lot to offer including The Ninety Mile Beach and the forests and mountains. Many outsiders don't realise its potential
- Its safe on the streets and everyone knows everyone - nice people
- If children want to work in the bush or the mills, there's some opportunity. But there's nothing else in the way of employment unless you're a nurse or a teacher, however no general employment
- Its hard for a little town to compete with the larger towns on either side of us eg. in areas such as sport
- Everyone pitches in, for example, someone died recently and all the community raised money for the widow. Local businesses and mills donated materials for a school building project.
- Community pulls together to resolve community issues - progress association important in getting things done
- Media has done a lot of damage because they don't really know the issues

Question 3: What are your visions for your community?

- We need some industry here to employ our young people. For example, if the gas pipeline comes through we might have a chance to develop new industries. We would have to form a group to put in an application to manage the outlet. So it would have to be something pretty big like a mill or something.
- Future for children - ability to finish their education. This is currently restricted due to distance and access to schools.
- Need to develop mining opportunities, such as high grade iron ore.
- More initiatives are needed, such as a recent case where the town received a grant of \$75,000 last year and we put a walking track around the town. The construction employed eight people, the mills donated timber and the quarry donated the gravel.
- Timber: We need a guaranteed continuity of resource and we're not prepared to be used as a political football. There are a lot of visions for the timber including kilns, architrave's, lining board. For example lining board from Ash is worth \$5/metre.
- We should have a paper mill here to utilize the residue. There would be employment in the harvesting and the manufacture.
- Keep the rural appearance of Nowa Nowa and develop its theme of 'Lakes and Wilderness' for tourism.
- Develop a gourmet food market for bush tucker
- Maintaining access to the forests for apiarists
- To regain support of the community for the school
- To subsidise small businesses which contribute to the town

7.7 Orbost Case Study Area

Orbost is located just off the Princes Highway on the banks of the Snowy River. The township plays a primary role as a rural service centre for surrounding farms and logging areas, and is a gateway to the Wilderness Coast of Victoria. There are three sawmills located in the Orbost

district, a further two at Newmerella which is 4 km from Orbost and an additional sawmill at Waygara, 15km away.

7.7.1 History

From the mid 1800's until the railway line reached Orbost in 1915, the Snowy River was used to feed supplies into and out of far East Gippsland via a thriving shipping trade serving the east coast of Australia, from Sydney to Melbourne.

The first white settler on the eastern side of the Snowy River was Peter Imlay who settled near to where the township of Orbost now stands. In 1845, Archibald Macleod and his sons, Norman and John, took over the Orbost and Newmerella runs, and named 'Orbost' after a Macleod property on the Isle of Skye.

7.7.2 Community Infrastructure

Education

Primary/Secondary Schools

There are five primary schools located in and around the Orbost area. These include: Orbost Primary School, Orbost North Primary School, St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newmerella Primary School and Marlo Primary School. There is also a secondary college. There are approximately a further 100 students attending schools outside the Orbost area. The following table outlines the number of students for each school, the number of students from families dependent on forest industries and the student teacher ratios.

Table 46

School	No. of Students	No. of students from families dependent on forest industries	Student/Teacher Ratios
Orbost Primary	196	44	28:1
Orbost North	93	65	18:1
St. Josephs	58	20	20:1
Marlo	60	4	20:1
Newmerella	76	15	21:1
Orbost Secondary	303	121	20:1

Technical and Further Education

Orbost has a TAFE outreach service which services up to 100 people per year. Courses run by this service include hospitality, small business management, rural multiskills and wood design.

Orbost SkillShare is a labour market program which offers training within the community.

Orbost Noweyung Day Training Centre offers training for the integration of people with physical and intellectual disabilities within the community. East Gippsland Personnel also offers labour market programs and employment services for people with disabilities.

Child Care and Development Services

Playgroups

There is a playgroup at St. James Hall. There is also a family day care service for the area.

Health Services

General Practitioners

There are four doctors located within Orbost.

Dentists and Dental Clinics

There is one dentist in town who operates a practice two days per week.

Hospitals

There is one new hospital located in Orbost which opened in May 1996. The hospital has a 30 bed capacity - 15 nursing home beds and 15 acute care beds. There is no resident doctor located within the hospital. The hospital is serviced by the resident doctors in town. The hospital also employs 35 nurses including casuals.

Community Health Services

The old hospital in Orbost is currently being converted into a Community Health and Welfare Centre, under the auspices of Far East Gippsland Health and Support Services. This centre will offer district nurse services, maternal and child health, physiotherapy, Home and Community Care, daily aged daycare services, psychological services. Both a neighbourhood house service and toy library are also on site.

Orbost Community Health Centre also has a social worker, domestic violence referral service, community health nurse and a youth housing worker. The specialist services of a drug and alcohol counselor, dietician and an osteopath are also available at specified times. A chiropractor, podiatrist and physiotherapist also visit periodically. The Department of Social Security, the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Ministry of Housing are also provided as outreach services.

Moogji Aboriginal Council employs a health worker who conducts medical visits and administers flu vaccinations.

Disability Services

Kilmany Family Care provides services for people with disabilities.

Services for the Elderly

There are a number of services available for the elderly in Orbost. The Home Care service has approximately 140 clients and provides home help, home maintenance and meals on wheels.

A community volunteer network is in the process of being established to provide assistance to the aged in the Orbost community in the form of transport, assistance with grocery shopping and friendly visits. A Nursing home in the hospital provides short-term respite care and long-term residential care. The hospital also provides aged daycare daily.

Croajingolong Homes is a selfcare retirement village and Lochiel house is an aged hostel with approximately 20 residents.

Orbost Senior Citizens meet regularly during the week and participate in activities such as cards.

Recreation

Recreation Centres/Facilities

There is one swimming pool in Orbost. Tennis facilities are also available. There is a sports centre which has facilities for indoor basketball and volleyball. There are two football ovals on which cricket is also played during Summer. There is a golf course and a bowling green.

Libraries

Orbost has one library located in the Shire of East Gippsland Orbost Office.

Professional Services

There are a range of professional services available in Orbost. Legal services are provided by Mosley and Palmer Solicitors who employ 3 people. Warren, Graham and Murphy Barristers and Solicitors also offer insurance services and visit Orbost on two afternoons per week. Other insurance services are offered by the East Gippsland Insurance and Travel Centre which employs 2 people and Hydro Motors. Orbost Design and Drafting Pty. Ltd. also offer professional services.

There are 2 accountancy firms, Phillipson and Fletcher who employ 4 people in Orbost and the Armitage Downie Firm visit one day a week from Bairnsdale.

There are 3 real estate agents in Orbost, the Professionals, King and Heath and Dalgettys Real Estate.

There are 3 banks represented in Orbost. The Commonwealth Bank branch employs 3 people on a full-time basis and 3 people on a part-time basis. The National Bank branch employs 4 people on a full-time basis and 2 people part-time. The largest bank in Orbost is the Westpac Bank branch with 8 people full-time and 1 part-time.

Commercial Facilities

Local Businesses (Retail and Trade)

Table 47

Business	Number of people employed
Orbost Timber and Hardware	3
The Club Hotel	10
Orbost Chainsaws and Lawn (Thextons)	2
Dooley's Butcher	2 Ft ; 2 Pt
Normack's Metal	2 Ft; 1 Pt
Orbost Tyres Service	6
Murray Goulburn	7
Slab Hut	1 Ft; 1 casual
Kingfruit	3
F.B. Dicken	1
Rite-way Supermarket	11 Ft; 10 casual
Heyne Butchers	3 Ft; 2 casual
Orbost Shoes	2
Andrews Mensland	2
Waves Hairdressers	2 Ft; 2 Pt
Crowies Cruise Inn	2 Ft; 4 Pt
Toy Kingdom	1
Orbost Floor Coverings	2
Timber Town Takeaways	2 Ft; 2 Pt

Snowy River Mail	6
Wally's Bakery	5
Retravisision	3
Arcade Soap Shop	1
Orbost Civil and Civic	10 Ft; 5 Pt
Waratah Cafe	7
Roseanne's	2
Orbost Authorised Newsagency	5 Ft; 2 Pt
Orbost Camping World and Furniture	3 Ft; 2 Pt
Commonwealth Hotel	10
Orbost Antiques	1
Orbost Licensed Supermarket	4 Ft; 3 Pt
Country Road Motor Inn	2 Ft; 5 casual
Amcal Chemist	5 Ft; 2 Pt
Wagtales Cafe	1 Ft; 2 Pt
Orbost Bakery	2 Ft; 1 Pt
Snowy River Video	3
Sue Joiner Hairdresser	1
Orbost Plumbing	2
RE Smith Plumbing	3
Trewin Plumbing	2
Wilkinson Plumbing	2
Neil Martin Plumbing	1
Phil Harding Plumbing	2
Grenfell Electrical Contractor	2
Mekken Brothers Electrical	5
Orbost Electrical Services	2
Merlin Motor Mechanics	3
Orbost Auto Parts	1 Ft; 1 Pt
Hydro Motors	3
William Adams Machinery	1
Pioneer Concrete	3
Orbost Pizza Shop	2 Ft;
Snowy River Machinery	1

Angie's Hair Design	2 Ft; 1 casual
Steedies Concrete and Garden Supplies	1
Snowy River Vetinary Clinic	3 Ft; 2 Pt
Orbost Motor Lodge	2 Ft; 3 Pt
Orbost Club	4 Ft; 4 Pt
Beaurepaires	3
East Gippsland Computers	1 Ft; 1 Pt
Orbost Dairy and Ice Supply	4
Snowy River Transport	4 Ft;
Comet Express	2
Bill Lynn Agencies	2
Orbost Power Equipment	4 Ft; 1 Pt
Gillian's North End Nursery	2 Ft; +Pt
Art and Gemstone Gallery	2
Snowy River Crafts	1
Countryman Motor Inn	2 Ft; 6 Pt
Orbost Shell	3
Hocks Freight Orbost	2
Dooley's BP and Tyre Service	6 Ft; 2 Pt

Housing

There is one house under construction currently in Orbost, with many houses on the property market, the best estimate of these is approximately 100. Two years ago there were reports of waiting lists for residential properties however now there are a high number of vacancies and rental prices have been considerably reduced.

Communication Services

Post offices

Orbost has one post office which has a total of 740 post boxes and 600 deliveries per week. 6 people are directly employed in the post office with a further 2 working on a contract basis. There is a risk that the post office could be downgraded to a licensed agency if further rationalisation occurs within Australia Post. Comet Express Agents are also located in Orbost.

Community Noticeboards

There are no formal noticeboards in Orbost. Notices are traditionally displayed in shop windows along the main street.

Community Newsletters/Newspapers

An organisation called the 'Concerned Residents of East Gippsland' distribute a newsletter on a quarterly basis. Local schools also distribute newsletters periodically. The Snowy River Mail is a weekly newspaper for Orbost and District. The Bairnsdale News is distributed weekly, free of charge.

Transport

The Orbost aerodrome does not have any regularly scheduled services but is available for charter flights. The Orbost taxi service has two taxis which average 30 fares per day. This service employs one person full-time and one person on a casual basis, and usually travels to centres such as Cann River and Bega, but is available for trips as far as Melbourne.

Snowy River bus lines runs a weekly service to Bairnsdale. The V-line bus travels through Orbost and is available for trips to Melbourne and Sydney. The closest train service available is in Sale. Buses can be chartered from Trevor Perry. The Moogji Aboriginal Community has a community bus.

Numerous timber mills operate daily bus services from Orbost. These include the Smith Brothers Mill and the Monier Mill which run daily return buses to Brodribb. The TJ Andrews Company run return buses to Newmerella, Nowa Nowa and Lakes Entrance. Bonang Timber run a daily return service bus to Waygara. The Cuthbertson and Richards Company run a bus to its Club Terrace Mill and Heather's run a bus to Cann River.

Emergency Services

There is an SES branch in Orbost with approximately 30 members. The Country Fire Authority has approximately 20 volunteers. There are 7 uniform police and 5 traffic police based in Orbost, these cover the Orbost area. Marlo also has a boat rescue unit.

Voluntary Community Groups and Services

Orbost has an array of political, sporting, service, social and general interest groups. These groups include:

Table 48

Voluntary Community Groups and Services	
Political	Service
Australian Labour Party	Apex Club
National Party	Chamber of Commerce
Sporting	Country Fire Authority
Affiliated Sporting Bodies of Orbost	Lions Club
Orbost Aerobics	R.A.C.V.
Orbost and District Badminton Association	Rotary Club
Orbost and District Junior Cricket	RSPCA
Orbost Ballroom Dancing	State Emergency Service
Orbost Basketball Association	Youth
Orbost Bowling Club	Orbost Girl Guides, Brownie
Orbost Community Sports Board of Management	Guides and Ranger Guides
Orbost Cricket Club	Orbost Secondary College Band
Orbost Field and Game Association	Orbost Scouts and Cubs
Orbost Fishing Club	
Orbost Football Club	

Orbost Golf Club
Orbost Little Athletics Club
Orbost Pistol Club
Orbost Pony Club
Orbost Recreational and Development Scheme for People with Disabilities
Orbost Swimming Club
Orbost Tai Jutsu Club
Orbost Tennis Club
Orbost Volleyball Association Inc.
Orbost Women's Hockey Association
Orbost Women's Netball Association
Snowy River Boat Club
Snowy Rovers Football Club
Other
Forest Protection Society
Ballroom Dancing
Orbost Garden Club
Orbost Historical Society
Orbost Theatre Group
Orbost Tourist Association
Woodworkers of Orbost and District Inc.

Community Workshops

A community workshop was conducted at the Conference room in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in Orbost on Thursday 16th May from 6-8pm. A total of 20 people attended. The following Questions were presented to workshop participants and the raw data obtained is outlined below.

Question 1: What have been the significant events in your community since 1980 and how has the community managed these events?

Table 49

Date	Event	What was the impact and how did the community respond?
1970-80	Watties factory closed. The region had been a major vegetable growing area Loss of competitive market when the train service closed.	

1982	Wood Utilisation Plan	Proposal for a pulp mill in the region - this did not eventuate Government compensation in the form of a new and expanded NRE office in Orbost Felt that this solution was a 'one-off-fix' with no benefit to the community
1986-87	Victorian Timber Industry Strategy	Value added utilisation plan which included pulp. The community went to Melbourne and met with the Prime Minister. There was a trade off where 200 people were employed, mostly in relation to National Estate. The money ran out about four years ago and the jobs are gone. One off fixes do nothing for the community, long term projects are required.
1990	Bridge blockade	Town blocked the new bridge which bypasses Orbost.
1989-1990	Increase in staff to 173 at DCNR	
1991	Disastrous hail storm	\$17M in insurance flowed into the region to replace roofing, car damage which brought additional tradespersons to the town. At the time of the hailstorm people pulled together to get tarpaulins etc. It stimulated the economy for about three years just when timber was winding down. Orbost is back at those crossroads now.
1993	Water Board and construction crews left town	Cumulative impact felt including S.E.C. closure.
1993-4	Significant decrease in Population decline DCNR staff to 40 people now, and other government services. Major reduction in educational services	
1994	Shires office closed, loss of jobs, services and representation	Community jumped up and down but in the end had to put up with the consequences. To date there has been little reward for putting up with the changes.
January 1995	Canberra Forest Blockade	Town had public meetings initiated by the chamber of commerce and most of the town went to Canberra to demonstrate. Word from the Blockade had been that they were having no success, the town closed and they felt they assisted with the outcome. The community provided food to the blockade, school students went on strike. This was felt to be the best community effort ever in Orbost and probably the biggest ever mobilization of rural people.
1995-6	Closure of Kindergarten	

Question 2: How do you feel about the community in which you live?

- It is relatively safe although there are problems with domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

- It is a very friendly town to live in, people help each other out - tremendous.
- No employment opportunities for young people who are forced to leave town to find work.
- It has a lot of natural beauty with the bush, sea and sun and an easy pace. Lots of people are related.
- There is a high long term teacher residency - 75% of teachers here in 1992 are still here. The Head Teacher has many requests from teachers who would like to move to Orbost, especially those who would like to teach outdoor subjects. Head teacher also reports 100% retention rate in Years 7 - 10, with some leaving at Year 11. Comments on the kids - some older students have never been to Melbourne on their own. There are some students who come from very difficult socio-economic situations.
- East Gippsland has been affected fairly severely, it does not have the political strength. Changes in government interferes with forests because of the changes in policy.
- There is a lot of enthusiasm in that people are not content to let things die, people are on the lookout for new industries
- It's a small community so you know everyone's comings and goings. For example funerals affect everyone.
- Apart from the timber industry, there's not a lot of diversity in employment and that affects jobs for young people. Work opportunities are diminishing and families move away.
- Current timber employees are not sure whether they should stay in the area, whether they can still pay off a mortgage.
- A lot of infrastructure supporting the timber industry is not going to be here when there is a crisis, for example in a bushfire. There will be less support from the community . there will also be fewer people with local knowledge, for example, staff at DNRE turn over quickly, and with downsizing, experienced district foresters are the first to go. They take technical expertise with them. With new personnel, they think they know everything and make you feel like you know nothing, they are competent but have no local or practical knowledge and don't stay in town long.
- We had a \$2M pulp mill feasibility study, pressured by a State election. The proposal was well supported at a local level. However politics influenced events and the project didn't get going.
- Strong sporting culture and strong sporting clubs in the town.
- People are inclined to be negative and don't appreciate what they have.

Question 3: What are the visions for your community?

- Looking for diversification of economic base to provide employment for youth.
- Establish an industrial estate with electricity from residual wood
- Farming needs a greater return on capital. There is no future for cropping in the area since the freight is increasingly a problem.
- Major projects proposed for the area have fallen through due to environmental or economic reasons. For example the Very Fast Train was seen as a real opportunity to increase tourism as well as freight. The community has a feeling that there are a number of government policies which have been pursued in the past and failed. The VFT gave us a vision of a major tourist link for the whole region. We need to develop world class tourist infrastructure. The national parks won't let them build world class motels.
- For the timber industry to achieve stable resource through the RFA process there has to be some decision on what is to be preserved and what is available for production in the long term if the industry is to attract investment. Long term security absolutely needed for investment. Sawmills that are planning kiln dried would like joint venture projects such as particle boards processing. There is not enough water for the pulpmill, it's not going to happen.
- We need some success in the export markets, for example, processing industries. At the moment in East Gippsland the sawlog residue is not being picked up for woodchip. We should have an instant solution if we could start exporting chips through Harris-Daishowa at Eden. If the current amount available, 800,000 tonnes were sold, there would be a spin off for the town. The new employees would live and work in the town and there would, with the increase in royalties, become more viable. The community would not need any more

handouts. Even 100-200,000 tonnes would increase our viability instead we have to work in low quality coupes which is ridiculous.

- Deep sea port at Eden - study has produced The South East Seaboard deep sea Port draft document. Some have a vision of a port at Conran with direct access to Bass Strait.
- Thinnings are not a high priority on the export license quotas yet they are the future of sawlogs. Currently a thinnings operator is only earning \$80 per day, compared to an integrated logging contractor who can earn \$200-250 per day. This sort of return is necessary to cover capital.
- Re plantations: the reality is that the coupes in this area are plantations, however because trees are not planted in straight lines they are not considered as such. In ten years time, with the increased improvement in technology, there will be less damage to the understory.
- An auction system to set a market price for sawlogs rather than putting a product on the market and taking the price we're given
- We need a population base at Orbost of 5000 - 6000 people.
- A cardboard plant at Cann river would benefit the whole region
- The airport could be extended for greater use.
- Gas pipeline development
- Government money required to increase tourism

Conclusions

The purpose of this report has been to provide a descriptive account of current social aspects in the East Gippsland area, that is the socio-demographic profile of the area, an analysis of current infrastructure and an outline of community attitudes and perceptions with regard to the use of the forest resource.

This section summarizes the data collected in previous sections of this report, identifying the salient themes which have emerged throughout the social assessment process.

8.1 Socio-demographic structure of case study areas

In the area of study, the population has risen steadily over the past ten years and a 1.4% growth rate is predicted for the year 2011. The qualitative data from community workshops strongly suggests that a large number of families with adolescent children are leaving the area to pursue a quality of education not available within rural centres. In most instances school age children are required to travel to regional centres to access educational facilities. This population loss appears to be offset by an increasing numbers of retirees coming to live in the region, especially in places such as Mallacoota and Marlo.

The population density across East Gippsland is approximately one person per square kilometre, compared to a Victorian average of 18 persons per square kilometre. It is evident across all case study areas that there is a high proportion of families with no children, residing in townships and surrounding districts, as well as a high proportion of the population in later age categories. This finding is supported by the large proportion of retirees sampled in the random telephone survey, especially in areas such as Mallacoota. In 1991, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in East Gippsland was 3.5%, compared to the proportion in Victoria as a whole of 0.4%.

Within all case study areas the average household income is relatively low. People have largely obtained vocational qualifications. The majority of individuals are employed as managers/administrators or labourers. In relation to employment, agriculture and forestry are the predominant industries, compared to the rest of Victoria. Employment in community services is relatively high.

8.2 Community Infrastructure

Community infrastructure differs widely between the district centre of Orbost and the surrounding townships. In relation to primary school education, Buchan district has two primary schools, Nowa Nowa has one and Orbost and district has five. Cann River and Mallacoota have joint primary/secondary schools and Orbost has a stand alone secondary school. Bendoc has neither primary nor secondary school. Cann River, Buchan, Bendoc, Mallacoota and Orbost also have TAFE outreach or Adult Education services.

In relation to health, most of the areas have a Bush Nursing or Community Health Centre, except for Bendoc. Mallacoota and Orbost are the only centres that have permanent general practitioners. In all other cases specialists visit periodically or local people travel to access these services. Aged care is provided in all areas, but more extensively in Orbost. Orbost is the only township in the region that has a main hospital.

There are police officers stationed in Orbost, Mallacoota, Cann River and Bendoc, Buchan is serviced by the Orbost police station.

In relation to retail and trade services, the five townships, other than Orbost have similar facilities. All townships have post offices or post office agencies. Communication is through

local newsletters and the Snowy River Mail, Bairnsdale Advertiser and the Bombala Times are the major local newspapers.

The larger population centres of Lakes Entrance and Orbost are most widely used for household shopping, health services and post offices. The regional centre of Bairnsdale is also used for these services.

Orbost and Cann River are located on major highways, and residents are able to use regularly scheduled buses, to destinations as far as state and interstate capital cities. Other case study areas have school bus services, however there are recently imposed restrictions which limit use by other fare paying passengers. The lack of public transport is particularly felt in Buchan, Bendoc and Mallacoota.

All townships offer reasonably good recreational facilities and voluntary participation in community groups and organisations is very high.

Concern was consistently expressed about Local Government Amalgamation. The loss of Councillor representation, Shire offices and staff, has left residents in small rural areas with a sense of isolation and lack of voice.

In all the case study areas sampled, residents have experienced an erosion of community infrastructure in the last decade and as a result the communities are very protective of the services that remain. They are prepared to lobby for increases in future service provision. They considered that services needed in the area include; public transport, better health services and entertainment for the youth in the community.

8.3 Social Well-being

There is a clear indication that people have a strong commitment to the East Gippsland region. There is a high degree of home ownership. A large number of people sampled in the community survey outlined that they had moved to the area by choice.

The quality of life afforded by living in a rural area was clearly a major factor mentioned by most of the groups sampled. The beauty of the environment, the supportive nature of the community and the safety aspect for children were commonly mentioned.

Within the region, some of the communities and surrounding districts identify strongly with a particular aspect of the economy. For example, Orbost and Cann River strongly identify themselves as timber towns. Mallacoota and Buchan focus on the tourist attractions of their area, namely the Buchan Caves, Snowy River National Park, the Alpine National park, the Croajingolong National Park and the coast. Both Nowa Nowa and Bendoc have strong identifications with both tourism and the timber industry.

8.4 Industry

There was a range of perceptions obtaining on the importance of the timber industry to the region. For example, the township and district of Mallacoota is perceived as less dependent on the timber industry than the townships of Cann River and Orbost.

When the broader community was asked, via the telephone survey, to consider effects on the community of changes in the timber industry, the responses obtained were relatively consistent. An increase in forest and timber activity was seen to lead to more employment, a boost to the economy of the area, an increase in population and a more positive outlook overall. Other effects included a perceived negative impact on the environment, and the changing nature of community due to an influx of new people. Potential improvement to community facilities and services was seen as advantageous.

A decrease in timber production was generally perceived to provide the opposite; increased unemployment, economic downturn, a decrease in population as people leave the area, social instability and reduced services. Again, environmental benefit was also perceived to be an effect of a decrease in the timber industry.

Impacts of changes in the timber industry, to date, included unemployment, mill closure, restricted use of resource, economic downturn, population decline in some townships, and uncertainty. Environmental damage was an additional concern. Areas such as Club Terrace, Marlo and Nowa Nowa were more inclined to specify that these impacts had been significant in their communities.

Overall, 83.1% of those sampled in the community survey believed the timber industry was important to the local area. This sentiment was also expressed by those directly employed in forest activities such as logging and transport, apiary and tourism within the region.

Forest workers in East Gippsland comprise a relatively stable work force. In line with other similar industries, forest workers are predominantly male and rely heavily upon forest employment as their sole source of income. Forest workers typically possess highly specialised, industry specific skills that have been gained mainly through on the job training. Forest workers are also exposed to a more hazardous workplace environment than most other occupations.

Within the area there is a clear vision for the development of tourism and related industries. A majority of respondents felt that forests should be protected but not labelled as National Parks, thus allowing access for a greater range of recreational uses. It was evident that residents recognised and valued the beauty of the surrounding environment.

Community respondents suggested that both tourism and forestry would be the main industries in the area in the next 20 years. It was also apparent that many believed a more diverse industry base was required for the region.

8.5 Recreation/Conservation

East Gippsland is identified as a significant conservation area with many values worthy of protection. Across the East Gippsland region, most residents see the need for a balance between environmental and social values. That is, those interviewed expressed an interest in both the conservation and community values of the area. Residents frequently indicated their enjoyment of the recognised tourist attractions, including the major national parks, and recreational pursuits. It was also outlined that in recognising the landscape and scenic value of the region, greater attention should be paid to the visual impact of extraction of a range of resources for industry.

8.6 Summary

Five distinct belief systems within the community were identified as being intricately linked to forests of the region:

- protection of native animals and plants
- preservation of natural resources
- physical community infrastructure
- social concern in regard to unemployment, increased crime, loss of a sense of community and a decline in population in some townships
- recreational places and cultural heritage

The experiences of an individual or a community shapes the way that events are perceived. In this way, what is important to a member of a community, or the community as a whole, may not be important to someone outside that community. In summary therefore, it is important to acknowledge and consider the values, social dynamics and beliefs of those immediately

affected by events in order to minimise social disruption and to maximise the positive community potential within the outcome of the RFA for East Gippsland.

It is evident from the social assessment in East Gippsland that the community wishes to have a voice in determining how future forest resources are used and managed. This process has given communities and other stakeholders within the area a chance to present their views and opinions in an open and neutral forum. These views must be seriously considered if an optimal solution to the RFA is to be achieved.

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