

The background of the entire page is an abstract artwork. It features a dense pattern of diagonal lines in red and yellow, creating a textured, woven appearance. Overlaid on this pattern are thick, black, branching shapes that resemble stylized tree limbs or veins. The overall composition is dynamic and layered.

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY GIPPSLAND - SUMMARY

Building on the legacy

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect Gippsland Traditional Owners as the original custodians of the land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of Culture and traditional practices.

We also acknowledge the contribution made by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Gippsland, many of whom have lived in the region for many years and called it home. They have also made a significant contribution to land management, protection of the environment, caring for and promoting the health and wellbeing of Community, Aboriginal art, business, education and training and much more.

Art work

The artwork titled "Connecting to our Song lines" reflects the linkages that hold and connect us to Country. The dark lines are etched into the landscape and hold stories that stretch back in time and guided our ancestors as they travelled and moved across the land and waters.

The circles hold stories through the song lines that sit below the surface and link us to the past and provide us with a deep reservoir of ancient cultural knowledge systems that we can draw upon to influence and shape our collective and individual aspirations

The circles also depict gathering spaces where stories were shared and passed through the generations and ceremonial practices were carried out to reinforce our connections and responsibilities to care for Country and each other.

A legacy resides within the song lines and ask that when we sit on Country we must listen deeply, learn from each other, and heal together so we can build on the legacy of our ancestors and Elders.

Artwork gifted by Brian Stevens

Terminology

Throughout this strategy, Aboriginal is used to encompass both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Koori and Indigenous.

About the Strategy Purpose

“Economic development that is driven by our community is the key to self-determination, self-management and economic prosperity, owning our own businesses and determining our futures will lead to healing and healthy families and communities.”

Melissa.H Gunai

How Can You Get Involved?

- Seek nomination to become a member on the Governance Committee.
- Encourage and support youth to attend business information workshops.
- Attend training to kick start your business idea.

Vision

Aboriginal people throughout Gippsland will engage in opportunities to enable them to live prosperous lives and make a significant impact on the economic development of the region.

Opportunities for Economic Growth

The Strategy will assist and promote opportunities for the Aboriginal Community of all ages and throughout Gippsland to make a significant contribution to the economic development of the region, drawing on the vibrant cultural heritage and knowledge systems, encouraging the Community to establish connections, partnerships, and collaborate in developing shared enterprises.

The skills and knowledge of Aboriginal people living in Gippsland will add significant value to the economic growth of the region particularly through the growth of key industry sectors such as Caring for Country, cultural tourism, environmental management, food and hospitality, and arts and design.

Values

The Strategy has been developed based on the strengths of the Community and what is required to ensure its success. The following values have been adopted based on input from many community members and other stakeholders and interest groups and are as follow:

- Cultural knowledge and skills about caring for Country belong to and are the exclusive territory of Aboriginal people.
- Connecting to Country is an important contributor to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people and their ability to live prosperous lives.
- The importance of providing inclusive and culturally safe spaces is needed for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to heal the divides of the past and work together to achieve individual and collective business goals.
- Self-determination is a central component to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's ability to freely determining their political status and pursuing their economic, social and cultural development.
- Sharing skills and knowledge between Aboriginal people, organisations and Traditional Owner groups and non-Aboriginal people is critical to ensuring the benefits of economic growth across Gippsland are shared equitably.

Strategy at a Glance

VISION

Aboriginal people throughout Gippsland engage in opportunities that enable them to live prosperous lives and make a significant impact on the economic development of the region.

VALUES

Honouring our Culture & Ancestors

Connection to Country

Inclusive & Culturally Safe

Self-Determination

Sharing Skills and Knowledge

Caring for Country

Cultural Tourism

Unique Strengths

Arts & Design

Food & Hospitality

FOCUS AREAS

Getting on with Business

Relationships & Connections

Business Support

Business Innovation & Growth

GOALS

- › Establish the infrastructure and resources needed to implement the strategy
- › Raise the awareness of the Gippsland Aboriginal Community about opportunities in business & entrepreneurship
- › Increase the knowledge and interest of young people in business ownership
- › Build the profile of Aboriginal businesses – private and Community enterprises - to the broader business sector and Community in Gippsland

- › Strengthen the relationships between Aboriginal businesses and Community with non-Aboriginal businesses.
- › Facilitate greater coordination of government, industry bodies, philanthropy, business, Traditional Owner Corporations & Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation investment and initiatives in Aboriginal business/ economic development.
- › Establish partnerships and collaborations with existing organisations/ enterprises who provide a range of supports to build business capability and success particularly in the Indigenous business sector

- › Provide a range of inclusive and targeted training / information sessions on business ownership for Community members exploring options and pathways to business ownership
- › Provide and facilitate access to culturally appropriate and informed support such as business planning, mentoring/ coaching, networking, seed and capital funding relevant to all stages in the business life cycle to enable businesses to build skills and grow
- › Support TOC's & ACCOs in building their Community enterprise capability

- › Support businesses to expand markets using e-commerce and other technologically based platforms
- › Establish an Aboriginal Business Innovation Fund to support businesses start or scale up in areas identified as contributing to the economic growth of Gippsland
- › Invest in demonstration projects in caring for Country, cultural tourism and creative arts

OUTCOME

- › An activated Aboriginal economy.
- › Significant growth in the Aboriginal business sector in Gippsland.
- › Aboriginal men, women and young people contributing to economic development across Gippsland.
- › Coordinated and connected Aboriginal business funding and support.
- › Economic development collaborations between Aboriginal organisations and Traditional Owner Groups.
- › Partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses.
- › Strengthening existing and creating new enterprises & businesses.

Focus Area 1

Getting on with Business

For the strategy to succeed, it must secure resources (funding and people) to achieve the goals of the Gippsland Aboriginal Community and economic development activities included in the strategy.

A new and inclusive governance structure will be developed comprising of community members and business operators to oversee the rollout of the Strategy and will be supported by a dedicated Business Support Officer to implement the actions.

The goals that will enable the action to be realised are:

- Setting up the infrastructure and resources needed to implement the strategy, including a steering committee and Business Support Officer
- Raise the awareness of the Gippsland Aboriginal Community about potential opportunities in business and entrepreneurship
- Increase the knowledge and interest of young people exploring opportunities to business ownership and entrepreneurship
- Build and promote Aboriginal businesses – private and Community enterprises to mainstream businesses and Community in Gippsland

Do you have a deadly business idea but not sure if your idea can take off?

Ever thought about taking your knowledge about Aboriginal Culture and operating a small tourism business, GUESS WHAT, there is a big demand for Aboriginal Cultural knowledge.

Focus Area 2

Relationships and Connections

The need for long term investment and commitments from a wide range of stakeholders must be in place to support Community enterprise and businesses to assist with the efforts to increase employment and economic development opportunities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Gippsland.

The goals that will enable the action to be realised are:

- Improve the relationships between Aboriginal businesses and Community with non-Aboriginal businesses.
- Build greater coordination of government, industry bodies, philanthropy, business and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation investment and initiatives in Aboriginal business/ economic development.
- Improve understanding, knowledge and skills of non-Aboriginal businesses and organisations to work successfully with and support Aboriginal business

Call or email us and let's have a chat so we can help you take the first step to becoming your own boss.

If you've got an idea for a business, enrol in a pre-business training program to help plan out your idea.

Focus Area 3

Business Support

A range of support programs will be developed to help overcome the barriers that stop people from starting a business, particularly during the idea and start-up phase as this is where culturally appropriate and professional advice is hard to access, and community are reluctant to pursue mainstream business programs and other opportunities.

The Strategy has been designed to improve communication and engagement with existing and potential Aboriginal business owners, with the view to increase skills, knowledge, and confidence in decision making and risk management.

The goals that will enable the action to be realised are:

- Provide a range of training and information sessions on business ownership for Community members exploring pathways and options for business ownership
- Establish partnerships and collaborations with existing organisations and businesses who provide a range of supports to build business capability and success particularly in the Indigenous business sector
- Provide and facilitate access to culturally appropriate and informed support such as business planning, mentoring and coaching, networking, and start up and capital funding relevant to all stages in the business life cycle to help businesses to build skills and grow.
- Support ACCOs to build their community enterprise capability.

Focus Area 4

Business Innovation and Growth

New businesses have popped up with products specifically developed to address emerging demands from people, communities and businesses and were forced to conduct their operations online.

There will be many opportunities for Aboriginal people to explore new and innovative approaches to grow their hobbies and interests to conduct business in the online space.

It is expected this era of innovation will continue, because it can and will bring many opportunities for young people and particularly women who are likely to face barriers limiting their abilities to gain access to funds and/or dedicate the hours needed to operate a full-time physically based business.

The goals that will enable the action to be realised are:

- Support businesses to expand markets using e-commerce and other technologically based platforms
- Establish an Aboriginal Business Innovation Fund to support businesses start or scale up in areas identified as contributing to the economic growth of Gippsland
- Support Aboriginal businesses and ACCOs to explore joint venture opportunities to create innovative businesses, Community enterprises and unique culturally based consumer experience
- Invest in demonstration projects in caring for Country, cultural tourism, and creative arts

If you need help with your business, why not work with a mentor or coach, they can help you grow and scale your existing business.

Take the first step and reach out to the Business Development Officer and ask for some assistance and information to help you make a decision.

Do you love art and do it as a hobby, but deep down you've always wanted to take your love of art to another level but not sure how to go about it - give us a call and let's have a yarn.

Did you know there are a range of business programs available to help you grow your artist profile, protect intellectual property, and make money selling art.

GLaWAC Natural Resource Management (NRM)

The NRM is core pillar of business for GLaWAC and drives substantial financial growth for the organisation and provides training and employment to many Gunaikurnai people and other Aboriginal people.

Challenges and Objectives

The NRM team was formed in 2012, originally supplying firewood to Community. The original team had up to 10 employees, delivering between 8-12 loads of firewood per day.

The challenges presented to the organisation were:

- Expenditure often outweighed income
- Limited management expertise
- High staff turnover impacted on the program

The challenges prevented the NRM team from growing.

The GLaWAC went through an organisational restructure, resulting from special administration and a shift in business focus/function was recommended to ensure economic sustainability of the NRM.

The following recommendations were implemented to grow and sustain the operations of the NRM enterprise.

- Provide training opportunities to up- skill the team successfully secure future contracts
- Build partnerships with Parks Vic, Greening Australia and other major stakeholders
- Investment into the NRM infrastructure
- Develop a program to increase employment opportunities
- Submit tenders to secure more contracts

These focus areas, particularly partnerships will allow for greater work diversity and encourage employees to become more involved in different aspects of caring for and working on Country, and

successfully secure more contracts to grow the business of the NRM team.

Results

From 2012, the NRM team has grown from ten employees to sixteen in 2021, a total of fifteen staff are Gunaikurnai. The team have successfully secured and delivered major projects:

- Wetlands at Jones' Bay (planting out 120,000 plants)
- Sperm Whale Head (Erosion Control)
- Greenhills (Weed Control)
- Projects for Greening Australia (planting 40,000 plants per year)

The team currently operates multiple crews from Forestec and coordinate delivery of projects across Gippsland such as:

- Large scale planting
- Woody weed control
- Herbicide weed control
- Road-side and National Park site maintenance
- Riparian site maintenance
- Remote area site maintenance
- Fox baiting
- Tractor slashing and machine operations
- Landscape construction

Future Plans

GLaWAC plans to focus its efforts in the following areas of NRM:

- Expand tractor slashing contracts
- Expand landscape construction contracts
- Continue to provide key training opportunities for future growth
- Continue to grow NRM staff numbers

By MHJ, Hollie Johnson

“My passion is to share and showcase my learnings within the Arts and Creative Sector and extend this into a business involving Indigenous history, culture and language.”

Hollie Johnson



Hollie Johnson is a young entrepreneur with a passion for photography and jewellery making and operates a business called “by MHJ”.

Hollie has been working on her business for well over five years and aspires to excellence in photography and a desire to travel. Hollie recognises the valuable contribution of delivering workshops to schools and childcare centres about Indigenous history and Culture and teaching Gunai Kurnai language across Gippsland. Similarly, she understands the importance of sustainability and the need to nurture and cultivate her creative abilities to make jewellery if she is to achieve her goal of operating a business in Melbourne and support other fellow First Nations Creatives.

The vision for MHJ is to showcase the rich Culture and many aspects of First Nations People through photography and to preserve and educate others of the immense natural resources located in this Country through the making and showcasing of jewellery.

Hollie was prompted to develop a business after attending a school camp at Wilson Promontory where she then decided to study photography and concluded that there were not many Indigenous people operating in the space other than Indigenous photographers, Tracey Moffatt and Wayne Quilliam.

Hollie wanted people to see, understand and respect Indigenous Culture by what they could learn through her photography which set her on a path to develop skills and work alongside other like-minded people to showcase the amazing diversity of Indigenous Culture and people through the lens of a camera.

Hollie's message to other Aboriginal youth thinking of starting up a business:

“Do it, starting small and slowly building up are still wins and as long as you're progressing forward in your business you will get there in what you want to do and be. Ensure you surround yourself with the right people and you will learn who they are as you grow and learn yourself and there is support out there of people who are willing and wanting to help”.

Contact details: pbymhj@gmail.com

Dylan Dukakis



Dylan Dukakis has been in the electrical trade for over 10 years and knew he wanted to work in the industry when he was still at secondary school. In that time, he has worked on residential, commercial and industrial projects. He has travelled for work and has been exposed to many areas of his trade.

With a passion for quality work, Dylan now serves his local Community by providing Precision Point Electrical for their needs.

As a local electrical service to the Wellington Shire and Gippsland surrounds, Precision Point Electrical are available to provide a professional service for all residential and commercial needs as well as industrial maintenance.

Contact detail: www.precisionpointelectrical.com.au

“I decided to go and do my contractor’s license online and then COVID-19 kicked in, so I did it all online, I applied for my license, then started to work out how to set myself up in the business. On reflection, I would have liked more time to work through things but it’s all starting to pan out now.”

Dylan Dukakis

“There are big challenges in the beginning stage of setting up a business, and this is where I need help. There is a lot to learn about the business side of things for example, how to book clients and not overload your schedule to the point where you can’t deliver on time. I just love my work and what I want to do is provide a high quality, professional and reliable service and a fast response time.”

The Bush Café



The Bush Café, at GLaWAC's corporate headquarters in Kalimna West, is the latest initiative to promote Gunaikurnai Culture and Indigenous food as well as provide employment and education opportunities for Gunaikurnai people.

The Head Chef of the Bush Café is Kevin Murray is a proud Gunaikurnai man who has over 25 years' experience working in hospitality and completed his Chef's apprenticeship at the former Orbost and District Hospital and running his own successful café in Orbost. Under the guidance of Kevin, the Bush Café has designed an exciting menu that introduces people to the Indigenous flavours that the ancestors experienced in the past by bringing those flavours to modern tastes.

The Bush Café provides catering for in-house meetings and events held at GLaWAC and promotes these services to the broader Community to grow the Community enterprise while providing opportunities for Gunaikurnai people to have access to employment and on-the-job training in the hospitality sector.

"Everybody has to eat, and my ancestors had healthy diets and thrived by eating fresh meat and fish, cooked simply using Indigenous flavours from plants and spices such as Salt Bush, Mountain Pepper, Wattleseed and Bush Tomatoes."

Kevin

The corporate headquarters at Forestec, Kalimna West has two Boardrooms that can seat up to 20 and 15 people as well as an Auditorium that seats up to 80 people.

"Our passion is to bring Bush Tucker to the table and encourage people to try something different and eat healthy foods, while building a team that can work front of house with our customers as well as back of house in the kitchen learning how to run a commercial hospitality business."

The Bush Café is open Monday to Friday from 9.30 am – 3.00 pm for breakfast, morning and afternoon tea and lunch, offering fresh, local produce featuring bush tucker and Indigenous flavours. The cafe seats up to 40 people.

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Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) refers to all tangible and intangible aspects of Indigenous peoples' culture that is communally owned. ICIP includes but is not limited to traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expression (such as stories, designs and symbols), performances and cultural objects.

How to get involved and to learn more.



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Email: reception@glawac.com.au

Website: www.gunaikurnai.org/our-news/publications/