CONTENTS

Executive Summary 4
Introduction to the Data 6
East Gippsland - Community Profile 8
Indicators of Child Wellbeing:

Developing Well
Children are developing well as they start school
Children are visiting a Maternal and Child Health Nurse
Parents are attending parent education and/or support programs
Babies are fully breastfed

Safe and Secure
Children are feeling safe at home
Children are feeling stable and secure
Children and young people are safe from injury and harm

Happy and Healthy
Children are physically active
Children are eating well
Children have good oral health
Children and young people are emotionally well
Children and young people with a disability requiring assistance
Substance misuse - families and young people
Families are able to access services

Engaged, Learning and Achieving
Families support their children's learning
Children attend kindergarten
Children attend and enjoy school
Children and young people are achieving at school
Young people complete their secondary schooling
Young people have successful transitions from secondary school
Young people are in employment

Active Citizens
Young people are actively helping their communities in East Gippsland
Children and young people are engaged in decision making in their communities
Children and young people are actively engaged in sporting, youth and community groups

Next Steps
Notes on the Data
References
The content of this report is based on extensive consultation with community members, agencies, schools and health providers across East Gippsland. Good Beginnings Australia acknowledges the input and enthusiasm of the community in telling the story of East Gippsland's children and young people.

The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report has been funded by The Ian Potter Foundation, The R E Ross Trust and Gandel Philanthropy.

The report was researched and produced by the Good Beginnings Australia Project Team: Jodie White (Victorian State Manager), Cate Newcomen (Site Coordinator - East Gippsland Site), and Linda Wilkinson (Project Facilitator).

Good Beginnings is a national charity building better outcomes for children in vulnerable communities through effective early intervention and practical parenting programs.

Good Beginnings Australia acknowledges the ongoing support and contribution of Uniting Care Gippsland through the Commonwealth Government funded initiative, Communities for Children and, more broadly, through their commitment to working collaboratively to achieve outcomes for children and families in East Gippsland.

The Bendigo Child Friendly City Leadership Group has provided professional guidance and The State of Bendigo’s Children report (2011) has been a valuable resource in the development of this report.

A copy of this report is also available at www.goodbeginnings.org.au

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968

This report is for information purposes only. It has been provided on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessments of the matters discussed. All representations, statements and information should be verified and independent advice obtained before acting on any information contained in or in connection with this report.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, Good Beginnings will not accept any liability for any loss or damage which may be incurred by any person acting in reliance upon the information.

Photo credits: All images are provided courtesy of local families and services.

With sincere thanks to
the funding partners:
Children and young people are the future generation, the adults of tomorrow and, importantly, individuals in their own right. The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report seeks to put in place a strategy and plan for the whole community that shows what our priorities are and how our energy should be spent to create the best outcomes for the future adults of our region. One of the strengths of this report is its focus on outcomes and use of data, making it available and accessible for all. For this reason it is my great pleasure to write the welcome remarks.

The experience in East Gippsland is one to be celebrated. It represents a connected group of stakeholders who recognize that the sum of their parts is greater than any one individual. Good Beginnings has worked closely with all stakeholders to achieve a shared agenda for the four communities in East Gippsland: the Bairnsdale region, the Lakes Entrance region, the High Country and the Far East. This process takes time. The 60 stakeholders across four regions took part in 10 forums to decide on the indicators to be measured. The time taken allowed for the moments of debate and consideration that are extremely important for the long term success of the project.

The concept of the State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report is simple: if we know where the needs are we can better plan, pool funding and implement best practice. Establishing shared goals avoids unnecessary competition for limited resources.

The data indicators chosen by stakeholders give a clear picture of what we need to keep doing and where we need to do more. These indicators align with the national outcomes framework for children and young people, known as the NEST, that is being developed for communities across Australia. This report brings the local priorities within a national framework. The work involved to achieve this should be recognised and celebrated.

It is heartening to see from these results where children are doing well in health, learning and participation indicators. Improving trends relating to readiness for school and then completion are also great to see. However, the emotional wellbeing of children remains a concern, with trends of increasing exposure to family violence and substance misuse at home.

The approach taken in East Gippsland provides a model of community ownership and collaboration – working towards better outcomes for the children and young people of East Gippsland, who are the future of our community.

Jayne Meyer Tucker  
Chief Executive Officer  
Good Beginnings Australia
Growing up in East Gippsland is a unique experience. The extensive coastline, the lakes and wilderness offer a beautiful and distinctive environment in which children and families can grow and explore. As well as these experiences, children and young people need access to a range of opportunities to enable them to reach their full potential. This includes access to the right services at the right times.

The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report provides a framework that not only measures how our children are faring now, but will allow us to track changes into the future. It uses data to tell the local story of wellbeing. By focusing on five areas (or domains) of wellbeing we are able to paint the picture of the children of East Gippsland.

The report has been developed through a range of consultations across the region. Community members, educators, staff from agencies who work with children, youth and families and young people themselves shared their experiences of what it is like to be a child or young person in East Gippsland. From this information, a range of indicators linked to the wellbeing of children, young people and their families were selected. These indicators measure how East Gippsland’s children and young people are faring compared with the Victorian average and regional Victoria, where possible.

The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report is a tool for future planning. It provides an opportunity to learn from where the region is doing well and the areas where we know further attention is required.
Data was gathered for each of the four main regions in East Gippsland: Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, the High Country and the Far East.

**DOING WELL**

**Compared to the Victorian State average:**

✔ Almost all children visit a Maternal and Child Health nurse at 4 weeks, 12 months and 3.5 years of age
✔ Maternal and Child Health visits for Aboriginal children at 3.5 years are better than most areas
✔ Almost all children of pre-school age attend kindergarten
✔ Children in East Gippsland have above average competencies in literacy at Year 7 and numeracy at Years 5, 7 and 9
✔ East Gippsland has lower rates of unemployment for 15-29 year olds
✔ Young people are more actively volunteering in their community

**IMPROVING**

While still below the state average, these indicators show improving trends:

✔ Less children are considered developmentally vulnerable when they reach their first year of school
✔ Babies fully breastfed at 3 months of age
✔ Higher Year 12 completion rates

**OUR CHALLENGES**

**Compared to the Victorian average:**

✗ The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is lower
✗ The incidents of family violence and child protection report substantiation rates are increasing
✗ Substance misuse amongst families and young people is increasing
✗ Breast feeding rates at 6 months of age are decreasing significantly.
✗ Rates of children and young people with disabilities who require assistance have also increased

**DATA GAPS**

The report highlights where data could not be sourced or was unavailable at a Local Government Area (LGA) level by stating there is a ‘data gap’. There were multiple ‘data gaps’ found. For example: data was not available for adolescent oral health, adolescent mental health, substance usage (under 18 year olds), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kindergarten participation rates, participation in sporting and community groups and decision making in the community.

Good Beginnings, in partnership with services in the region, is committed to monitoring progress and advocating for any data gaps to be filled. This report will be reproduced in three years time to measure progress and to ensure that the wellbeing of children and young people in East Gippsland remains a priority.
INTRODUCTION TO THE DATA

Improving the health and wellbeing of children requires a continuous and coordinated effort across the community. An essential part of this process is the collection of accurate data to get a true picture of how well children are doing and to track their progress over time. This report presents a snapshot of the State of East Gippsland’s children and young people from birth to 24 years in 2013. The data provided here is the foundation for ongoing work in this region. By regularly updating the data it will be possible to map the journey that our children are making as they grow from birth, through childhood and adolescence and into young adulthood.

This report identifies 5 priority areas (or domains) to be measured. These domains, taken from the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities framework, replicate those used in the State of Bendigo’s Children’s report (2011). This allows for some comparison between the regions. Additionally, the priority areas are consistent with the overarching national outcomes framework for the health and wellbeing of Australian children and young people that is currently being developed (referred to as The NEST). The NEST will provide a national overview of programs and policies, identifying critical gaps and strategies to bridge them.

The 5 priority areas addressed in The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report which parallel the national framework are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEST (national framework)</th>
<th>The State of East Gippsland’s Children and Youth Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Engaged, learning and achieving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loved and Safe</td>
<td>Safe and secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating</td>
<td>Active citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Basics</td>
<td>Developing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>Happy and healthy and active citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on The Nest, visit www.aracy.org.au/projects/the-nest
The consultation process for the report involved more than 60 key stakeholders and community members participating in 10 workshops across regional, rural and remote regions of East Gippsland. Participants were asked to identify how they wanted to present this ‘snapshot in time’. The data presented in this report represents the most commonly recurring ideas and themes.

These broad themes were distilled into 24 key indicators with measurable data that represent the State of East Gippsland’s children and youth in 2013. Where available, comparable data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families has been included. The quotes, case studies, questions and comments throughout the report illustrate the richness of the stories behind the data.

The project team selected data that met the following criteria:

1. Data that is readily available and can be publicly sourced
2. Data that is updated on a regular basis using the same parameters
3. Trend data that is available, or will become available
4. Data that is available to Local Government Area (LGA) level or smaller

The report compares the data from East Gippsland with the State of Victoria as a whole where it is available and applicable. It shows that East Gippsland’s children are doing better than the Victorian state average in maternal and child health and dental visits, attending kindergarten, and literacy and numeracy in Year 7. East Gippsland has lower youth unemployment rates and higher volunteering rates than the Victorian average. While there is room for improvement there are also positive trends showing that more babies are being breastfed at 3 months, children are more developmentally ready for school and more young people are completing Year 12.

However, the data shows lower breastfeeding rates at 6 months and higher rates of exposure to family violence and substance misuse. This places the physical and emotional wellbeing of our children at risk.

The project team intends to re-visit the children of East Gippsland at regular intervals in the future to see what is happening for children in East Gippsland over a period of time. In future years, the progress of our children and young people can be measured against the health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people across Australia through The NEST.

24 key indicators representing the State of East Gippsland’s Children & Youth in 2013
The Landscape

The East Gippsland Shire is located in the eastern corner of Victoria, up to 550 kilometres from Melbourne. It covers 21,051 square kilometres and is the second largest municipality in the State, after the Mildura Rural City Council, which is just over 22,000 square kilometres.

The main towns of the Shire are Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Paynesville, Omeo and Mallacoota. Bairnsdale has the largest population and is also the regional retail and service centre.

The geography of the area is varied and complex with large areas of national park and state forest, an extensive coastline, multiple lakes systems and productive farmland. The network of mountains, rivers and lakes makes travelling between regions within East Gippsland challenging.

Transport is an ongoing issue for families and children seeking to access services, education and employment (Gippsland Women’s Health, 2013). While some improvement to transport access has occurred over the last few years, particularly since a regular bus service from Orbost to Bairnsdale was introduced in 2012, those in other remote areas have limited or no access to public transport.

Distance between major towns in kilometres:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Cann River</th>
<th>Lakes Entrance</th>
<th>Omeo</th>
<th>Orbost</th>
<th>Swifts Creek</th>
<th>Mallacoota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cann River</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Entrance</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeo</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swifts Creek</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallacoota</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Population

In 2011, there were 42,196 people residing in East Gippsland, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making up 3.2% (or 1,350) of the population. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the region is more than double the regional Victorian average of 1.5%.

Children and adolescents aged between 0-14 years made up 27% of the total East Gippsland population in 2011. The proportion of children in this age group was significantly higher in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, comprising 57% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2031</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>2447</td>
<td>2535</td>
<td>2582</td>
<td>2592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-14</td>
<td>5462</td>
<td>5912</td>
<td>6225</td>
<td>6476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>4550</td>
<td>4263</td>
<td>4638</td>
<td>5116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>4392</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>4364</td>
<td>4207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>7798</td>
<td>8264</td>
<td>8919</td>
<td>9653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>6917</td>
<td>7111</td>
<td>7152</td>
<td>7377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>7875</td>
<td>8347</td>
<td>8956</td>
<td>9348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-84</td>
<td>6746</td>
<td>8604</td>
<td>10160</td>
<td>11489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>1606</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47581</td>
<td>51149</td>
<td>54958</td>
<td>58808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population centres:

The major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population centres in East Gippsland include: Orbost, Bairnsdale, Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust/Nowa Nowa.

Projected population:

While there is an expected increase in the population size of young people (aged 0 to 24 years) in East Gippsland over the next 20 years, the most significant increases are projected to be in the older population (those aged 70 to 84 years). East Gippsland's total population is projected to grow at a rate of 1.7% over the next 20 years, which is higher than the projected Victorian rate of 1.5% over the same period.

These projected trends in the demographic profile of the region will require the development of services and policies to meet the changing needs of our population.
Socio-Economics

East Gippsland has a relatively high level of social disadvantage. When income level, education, occupation and living conditions are considered, the region ranks amongst the most disadvantaged municipalities in the state. Particular population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, single parent families, people with a disability and people from non-English speaking backgrounds, have the greatest risk of social disadvantage.

One available measure of social disadvantage is the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). This is used to map the relative disadvantage and advantage across geographic areas accounting for factors such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The level of disadvantage of an area is indicated by an index number - the lower the number the higher the level of disadvantage.

The municipality of East Gippsland has an Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage score of 958, a ranking of 17 in the level of disadvantage among the municipalities of Victoria. Victoria as a whole has a score of 1009 and regional Victoria’s score is 977. This places East Gippsland among the most disadvantaged 21% of municipalities in the state.

Within the East Gippsland region the level of social disadvantage varies across different areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost and district</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Entrance and district</td>
<td>931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Far East of the shire (not including Mallacoota)</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural north (including Omeo, Swifts Creek and Benambra)</td>
<td>967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallacoota District</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metung, Nungurner and District</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural west of the shire</td>
<td>1007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wy Yung, Lucknow and East Bairnsdale</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruthen and District</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: ABS Census 2011 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA))

The median household income per week in East Gippsland is $798, compared with $1216 for Victoria as a whole. The median individual income per week in East Gippsland is $368 for Aboriginal and Torres Islander people and $422 for the general population.

(Source: ABS Census 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Profile, East Gippsland)

The unemployment rate in East Gippsland in 2011 was 5.5%, compared with the average for regional Victorian Average of 5.2%. This shows a decrease in unemployment since 2006 when the rate was 6.2% for East Gippsland and 5.7% for Regional Victoria. The unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011 in East Gippsland was 16.3%, higher than the Victorian average for ATSI communities which was 12.9%. However, this was lower than the unemployment rate in 2006, which was 25.4% for East Gippsland and 15.2% for Victoria.

(Source: ABS Census 2011 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Profile East Gippsland; East Gippsland Shire Council 2013)

Families

One-parent families are more likely to experience financial stress and to be unemployed than two-parent households. The number of one-parent families in Australia has almost doubled since 1976, when they made up 6.5 per cent of the total compared to 10.6 per cent in 2011 (AIFS, 2011; AIHW, 2011).

In East Gippsland in 2011, 9.5% of households are one-parent families and 29% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households are one-parent families. This rate is predicted to increase over the next 20 years. The rate of one-parent house holds in Victoria in 2011 was 10.5%.

(Source: ABS Census 2011, State Suburb Collection; East Gippsland Shire Council, 2013)

Educational Attainment

Education level is an important indicator of future economic and social success. Achieving Year 12 is an essential step on the path to post-secondary qualifications as well as improving job and other life opportunities.

People who have attained Year 12 or equivalent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Victoria</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indigenous people who have attained Year 11 or12 (or equivalent):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Victoria</td>
<td>Data Gap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: ABS Census 2011, State Suburb Collection; East Gippsland Shire Council, 2013)
INDICATORS OF CHILD WELLBEING

5 DOMAINS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Well</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe and Secure</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy and Healthy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged, Learning and Achieving</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Citizens</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The value of opportunities for developing well should not be underestimated. For the healthy development of children, positive human interaction is critical. Parents singing with and talking to their children from the time they are born, being read to and having time for play and being social with other children - these opportunities are the foundation for children developing well.

Rachel Bell, Manager - UnitingCare Gippsland

1. Children are developing well as they start school

The early years from 0-6 are critical in a child's development. Starting out in a healthy, safe and loving environment increases a child's chances of success throughout their life. One way of measuring how a child is developing is the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI): this index assesses children during their first year of school. Using a teacher-completed checklist, the AEDI measures physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge.

The proportion of children in East Gippsland considered to be 'vulnerable' (i.e. developmentally vulnerable in two or more areas of development as listed below) is 13.6%. While this is an improvement from 17.3% in 2009, it remains higher than the Victorian rate of 9.5% and the Australian rate of 10.8%. The proportion of children who are considered 'at risk' of vulnerability is 23.3%, an improvement from 28% in 2009. The state percentage is 19.5% and the Australian average rate is 22%.

Proportion of children in East Gippsland who are ‘developmentally vulnerable’ in the following areas of development (domains):

East Gippsland’s children have shown an improvement across all AEDI areas of development since 2009, according to the 2012 AEDI data, although these rates of vulnerability remain higher than the state average across all areas. The figures below show each area of development in 2009 and 2012 and the rates of children who are considered vulnerable in that area. This data is not available specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Development</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical health and wellbeing</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>VICTORIA 7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social competence</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>VICTORIA 8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional maturity</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>VICTORIA 7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Cognitive Skills</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>VICTORIA 6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills and general knowledge</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>VICTORIA 8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: AEDI, East Gippsland Community Profile 2009; 2012)
2. Children are visiting a Maternal and Child Health Nurse

Maternal and child health nursing (MCHN) services monitor the development and wellbeing of children and support parents over the first five years of a child’s life. In East Gippsland, two MCHN teams (from different agencies) service regional and rural, remote areas of East Gippsland offering specialist programs to meet the needs of vulnerable and isolated families. The effectiveness of these services is demonstrated in the increase in Maternal and Child Health Nurse visits in East Gippsland: now higher than the Victorian state average.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children having their 4 month old assessment 2011-12</th>
<th>VICTORIA 96%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has improved from 76% in 2005-6.</td>
<td>98% EG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children having their 12 month assessment 2011-12</th>
<th>VICTORIA 82%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has improved from 62% in 2005-6.</td>
<td>85% EG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children having their 3.5 year assessment 2011-12</th>
<th>VICTORIA 64%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has improved from 64% in 2005-6.</td>
<td>87% EG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

The lack of data for 2005-6 means it is not possible to determine a trend for this group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children having their 4 month assessment 2011-12: 74%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children having their 3.5 year assessment 2011-12: 142%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The rate above 100% may be due to the mobility of the Aboriginal population, with an increase of new families moving into the area.

(Source: DEECD, Maternal Child Health Annual Report 2011-12)

---

3. Parents are attending parent education and/or support programs

Although a number of education and support groups are held for parents and carers across East Gippsland, there is no data available at an LGA level to measure the outcomes of these programs. Anglicare Victoria’s Parentzone and Good Beginnings’ Incredible Years Parenting programs are examples of programs that run regularly in rural and remote East Gippsland. These programs aim to improve family relationships and developmental outcomes for children through education, activities, support, advice and referrals to parents in groups and individual consultations. Outcomes data from these, and similar services, is measured and available at a program level, however not collectively at an LGA level.

---

4. Babies are fully breastfed

Breastfeeding has been shown to protect children against a range of childhood conditions and diseases. The World Health Organisation recommends that infants are exclusively breastfed until the age of 6 months.

(Source: DEECD, Maternal Child Health Annual Report 2011; 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Babies are being fully breastfed 2011-12</th>
<th>VICTORIA 54%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At 3 months</td>
<td>50% EG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend: These rates show a steady improvement up 5% from 45% in 2005-6. The rates for Victoria however have declined 5% since 2005-6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At 6 months</th>
<th>VICTORIA 37%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trend: These rates have declined from 34% in 2005-6. There has also been a decline in the Victorian rates since 2005-6.</td>
<td>15% EG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DEECD, Maternal Child Health Annual Report 2011; 2013)
SAFE AND SECURE

It is imperative that all children and young people experience physical, emotional and economic safety and security if they are to enjoy positive developmental outcomes and quality of life now, and in their futures. Agencies and the community must stand together and work towards changing attitudes and ensuring children’s safety is paramount in all our minds. This needs to be a key priority for our community in East Gippsland.

*Kathy Dickinson, Area Manager - Child Protection, Department of Human Services - Outer Gippsland*

5. Children are feeling safe at home

More than one in three Australian women have been subjected to violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime and approximately one in four children and young people have witnessed family violence (Victims Support Agency, Victorian Family Violence Database, 2012).

The LGA data on the incidence of family violence is collected from police reports. The following graph shows the respective trends of these reports for East Gippsland, regional Victoria and Victoria as whole over a five year period. The measure used is the number of recorded incidents per 100,000 people. The increase in family violence may reflect a change in reporting practices resulting in better detection, however the increase in incidents of family violence in East Gippsland and regional Victoria is significantly greater than in Victoria as a whole.


Number of family violence incident reports 2011-12

Trend: The data indicates that reports have increased from 2008-9 when there were 363 incidents.

Estimated number of children present at these family violence incidents 2011-12

In East Gippsland 39% of Family violence incidents that were reported to Police had at least 1 child present, this is a higher rate than the Victorian rate of 33%.

6. Children are feeling stable and secure

Housing security is important for children to feel stable and safe. Transience and homelessness are significant risk factors for children and contribute to parental stress (DEECD, Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland, 2010).

East Gippsland residents who remained in public housing

The public housing retention rate measures the number of households with children in public housing that have remained in public housing for 12 months following the initial allocation. This data shows the retention rate for 2007-8.

(Source: DEECD, Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland, 2010)

Proportion of East Gippsland residents who remained at the same address

Over the past 12 months 34,326 residents

Over the last 5 years 23,101 residents

(Source: ABS Census 2011)

7. Children and young people are safe from injury and harm

Number of adolescents who were victims of crime 2009-10

In East Gippsland in 2009-10, 124 young people aged between 10 and 17 years were victims of a reported crime, representing a rate of 2.61%. This is higher than the Victorian rate of 1.75% during the same period.

Trend: From 2005-6 to 2009-10 the rate of reported crime against a young person in East Gippsland has decreased slightly from 2.69%.
HAPPY AND HEALTHY

“Relationships that are stable, loving and fun are one of the most important things for growing happy, healthy children. As a parent, caregiver or professional working with children, spending quality time with each child will establish a strong foundation for their future health and happiness.”

Ailsa Carr, Executive Manager, Family Youth & Children’s Services – Gippsland Lakes Community Health

8. Children are physically active

Data is not currently available on children’s levels of physical activity at a LGA level. However, in the whole Gippsland region 70.4% of 5-12 year olds and 13.3% of 12-17 year old children do the recommended amount of physical activity everyday.

(Source: DEECD, Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey 2009)
9. Children are eating well

Children aged 4-12 years who eat the minimum recommended serves of fruit and vegetables every day.

This data is currently not available at LGA level. However, across the Gippsland region, only 35.4% of children are eating the recommended serves of fruit and/or vegetables each day and 7% of children do not eat any fruit or vegetables on a daily basis.

Children aged 1-12 years drinking one or more cups of sugary drink per day

In Gippsland 48% of children in this age group are having at least one sugary drink each day. This data is currently not available to LGA level.

(Source: DEECD, Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey, 2009)

10. Children have good oral health

This data is not collected at an East Gippsland LGA level across all age groups 0-24.

Despite this data gap, some age specific and regional data are available to measure children’s oral health. The Victorian Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted in 2009 collected child oral health data (DEECD, Victorian Health and Wellbeing Survey, 2009). The following data has been gathered through the School Entrant Health Questionnaire, completed by parents when their children start school. It therefore only predominantly represents children aged around five years entering their prep year.

Proportion of children reported to have visited a dentist in the past year

In East Gippsland a higher proportion of children have attended the dentist in the year prior to starting school than those in either regional Victoria or Victoria.

Number of children with parental concern regarding their oral health

More parents of children starting school in East Gippsland have expressed concern about their child’s oral health, including teeth and gums, than in regional Victoria or Victoria as a whole.

(Source: DEECD, School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2012)

Case study - Smiles 4 Miles program - Local Oral Health Initiative

The Smiles 4 Miles program is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria that works in partnership with community health services, local councils and primary care agencies to improve the oral health of preschool aged children. The East Gippsland Primary Care Partnership (EGPCP) has actively supported the program over the past 5 years working with 22 early learning organisations throughout East Gippsland.

Based around the themes of Eat Well (healthy eating), Drink Well (consumption of water) and Brush Well (good oral hygiene practices), the program involved a range of activities for parents, carers and early learning organisations. It provided resources, interactive activities, information sessions and capacity building activities.

The Smiles 4 Miles program has been integrated into the daily operations of a number of the organisations involved. Importantly, it has provided a model, including a resource pack and peer support system, that can be adopted by other groups and organisations. The effectiveness of the Smiles 4 Miles program will be measured through oral health data collected on children’s dental visits and number of cavities in the years to come.
11. Children and young people are emotionally well

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation as “a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community” (WHO, 2010). Being emotionally well contributes to children and young people developing well, participating fully in school and their social and community networks (DEECD, 2013).

Proportion of children in 2012 who are considered in the high risk category for significant behavioural and emotional problems across all of the ‘Strengths and Difficulties’ criteria

The data shows that children in East Gippsland are more likely to exhibit more significant behavioural and emotional problems than the Victorian state average.
(Source: DEECD, School Entrant Health Questionnaire, 2012)

12. Children and young people with a disability requiring assistance

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census data measures those with a profound or severe disability at an LGA level. People who require assistance with self-care, mobility and/or communication are considered to have profound or severe disability (ABS Census 2011). The rates of disability across age groups from 0-19 years old in East Gippsland are compared below with the Regional Victorian state averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Regional Victorian</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>East Gippsland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 0-4 years</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has increased from 1.0% in 2006.</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 5-9 years</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has increased from 2.9% in 2006.</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 10-19 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend: This rate has increased from 2.3% in 2006.</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Source: East Gippsland Shire Council, 2013)</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflection:
The significantly higher rates of disability in recent years raises questions about support systems for families and carers:
- How are families coping?
- What is the quality of life like for young people with disabilities in East Gippsland?
- What services are needed to meet this need?
- Are the services growing in line with demand?
13. Substance misuse - families and young people

**Adult alcohol consumption**

The Victorian population health survey in 2008 found that East Gippsland Shire residents aged 18 years and over reported a greater consumption of alcohol than the Gippsland and Victorian rates.


- **Victoria**: 45.2%
- **East Gippsland**: 55.7%

Proportion of persons 18 years + at long-term risk of alcohol-related harm – 2008.

- **Victoria**: 3.7%
- **East Gippsland**: 14.9%

Note: Short-term risk of alcohol-related harm is caused by occasional intake of excessive alcohol. Long-term risk of alcohol-related harm is caused by a pattern of consistent high level intake of alcohol on a daily basis. *(Source: DoH, Victorian Population Health Survey, 2008)*

This data show that East Gippsland has a significantly higher rate of long-term risk of alcohol-related harm – over four times the Victorian average. This highlights the need for innovative education and prevention programs around alcohol use in schools and the broader community.

**Consumption of alcohol and drugs by young people under 18 years old, in East Gippsland.**

Data is not available at LGA level.
14. Families are able to access services

Some families access services less than others and this can be due to socio-economic barriers such as cultural background, social marginalisation, economic disadvantage and poor health (Cortis, Katz, & Patulny, 2009). Despite the lack of local data, the East Gippsland Early Years Committee has sought to address this issue. The committee established a Service Access Working Group with seven local community services agencies led by the team at Communities for Children, Uniting Care Gippsland. They have developed a set of guidelines and strategies to assist agencies in the region to improve access to their services.

Case study - “The Little Green Frog Program”, Uniting Care Gippsland:

The ‘Little Green Frog Program’ is an example of local service providers effectively responding to the needs of families who have geographical and other barriers that prevent them from accessing services. Renee Grant, Coordinator - Little Green Frog Program, Uniting Care Gippsland describes it as:

“The ‘Little Green Frog’ provides information, resources, child care and support to vulnerable communities in rural and remote areas of East Gippsland. The ‘Little Green Frog’ resource vehicle and team visit places where parents meet or are establishing new programs. It provides information and access to services in isolated regions. It is flexible in every sense of the word as it moves and moulds around the ongoing and ever changing needs of the vulnerable families & communities in East Gippsland.

The program makes a difference by offering families a central place to go for assistance. It is an informal program in which staff build up trust and respectful relationships with families who may not access formal services and introduce them to new services as needed. Some of our outcomes for families over the past year have included an increase in rates of attendance at both MCHN 3 year old checks and supported playgroups in remote areas of East Gippsland.”
15. Families support their children’s learning

It has been shown that there is a direct causal effect between parents reading regularly to their children and improved educational outcomes (Kalb & van Ours, 2013).

**Parents reading to their children in East Gippsland**

This data is not collected regularly and is not available at LGA level. However, a survey conducted in 2009 found that in rural Victoria only 40% of families read to their children on most days; and 16% did not read to their children at all. This is a lower rate than metropolitan areas, where 65% of parents read to their children every day and 6% do not read to them at all.

16. Children attend kindergarten

Findings from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) support the notion that children aged 4-5 years who attend preschool or a pre-year program have, on average, higher overall development, as well as learning, cognitive and social-emotional outcomes than those children who do not. Children who do not attend preschool programs, however, are slightly better on average in terms of overall physical health scores (Gong, McNamara & Cassells, 2011).

Proportion of 4 year olds attending kindergarten 2012
Trend: The trend in East Gippsland is stable with 95% of children participating in kindergarten in 2009.
(Source: DEECD, VCAMS Indicators 2013)

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year olds attending kindergarten
Data is not currently available at an LGA level, however participation rates for Aboriginal children have increased significantly in ‘Rural Victoria’ from 62% in 2007 to 73% in 2010. This increase is also evident in the Victorian participation rates which increased from 59% in 2007 to 73% in 2010.

17. Children attend and enjoy school

The days children are absent from school in East Gippsland are generally higher than those for Victoria as a whole. School attendance improves in the higher levels following a peak in absenteeism in Years 8 and 9.

Average days absent in primary and secondary school – 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Gippsland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>18 days</td>
<td>15 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>16 days</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>17 days</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>16 days</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>19 days</td>
<td>16 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>23 days</td>
<td>20 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>24 days</td>
<td>23 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>21 days</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>16 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>13 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DEECD Outcome Indicators for Gippsland Children, 2011; Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland, 2010)
Children and young people feel connected to their school, East Gippsland and Victorian rates

“Connectedness with school is a key component of student wellbeing and together with student achievement are considered important outcomes of schooling” (DEECD, Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland Shire, 2010). Data is collected to measure school connectedness through the Student Attitude to School Survey. Data collected in 2010 indicates that for students in East Gippsland, connection to their school peaks in Year 5 (consistent with the Victorian rate), and remains moderately high throughout their school life. The following are the average measures of school connectedness for government schools in East Gippsland (on a score range of 0-5, where 5 was the highest level of connectedness and 0 was the least) in comparison to the Victorian rate for that year level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East Gippsland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DEECD, Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland Shire, 2010)

18. Children and young people are achieving at school

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN tests literacy and numeracy skills essential for every child to progress through school and life. The NAPLAN data provides a benchmarking measure to assess how children are progressing in these learning areas over time.

The 2012 NAPLAN results for reading and numeracy in East Gippsland schools show that students are performing well against the state average. Note: This data represents the outcomes from Government schools in East Gippsland.
Students are meeting national minimum standards in reading in Year 3

Students are meeting national minimum standards in reading in Year 5

Students are meeting national minimum standards in reading in Year 7

Students are meeting national minimum standards in reading in Year 9

Students are meeting national minimum standards in numeracy in Year 3

Students are meeting national minimum standards in numeracy in Year 5

Students are meeting national minimum standards in numeracy in Year 7

Students are meeting national minimum standards in numeracy in Year 9

(Source: DEECD, NAPLAN data 2012)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Educational standards, as measured by the NAPLAN, are lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than the state average and, in some areas, they are significantly lower. As Zane Ma Rhea, an Indigenous education academic explains, “NAPLAN is a blunt instrument for telling us why the gap exists, but it is doing a good job of saying where the gaps are. It provides clear evidence of the gaps in educational achievement and directs education systems to the parts where resources are needed” (Rhea, 2013). The Closing the Gap initiative aims to lift the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to the same level as the rest of the population. Note: This data represents the outcomes from Government schools in East Gippsland.
19. Young people complete their secondary schooling

Number of 19 year olds completing Year 12 (or equivalent) 2011
This data measures the proportion of 19 years olds who have attained Year 12 or equivalent (VCE, VCAL (Intermediate or Senior), Certificate II or above).

Trend: Rates have improved in East Gippsland from 57.7% in 2005, although they are still below the average for Victoria and for regional Victoria.
(Source: DEECD, Data collated from VCAA, ABS and Skills Victoria, 2009-12)

Proportion of students retained at secondary school to Year 12 level
Apparent retention is a measure of school based Year 12 completions based on the comparison of the number of Year 12 students with the number of Year 7 students recorded when each group enters secondary school. The data is collected at the February student school census each year.

Apparent retention from Year 7- Year 12 in 2011 for all students
Trend: Rates have improved in East Gippsland from 69.4% in 2004.
(Source: Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network, Environmental Scan 2013; DEECD data)

Apparent retention from Year 7 – Year 12 in 2011 for Aboriginal students
Trend: Rates have improved in East Gippsland from 69.4% in 2004.
Note: The data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is volatile and has varied widely over the last 8 years. The current rate of retention of 77.3% in East Gippsland is significantly higher than the rate for all Gippsland schools in 2011, which was 52% (for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students).
(Source: Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network, Environmental Scan 2013; DEECD data)

“The Victorian Virtual Learning Network has allowed me to study subjects, such as Specialist Maths and Physics, that I wouldn’t otherwise have been able to study in a remote school.”
(Year 12 student, Swifts Creek School)
20. Young people have successful transitions from secondary school

In 2012, 63% of East Gippsland’s students completing year 12 had a successful transition to further education or training compared with 76% for Victoria as a whole. University enrolments in East Gippsland, whilst increasing, are significantly lower (by 22%) than Victoria as a whole (DEECD, On Track data 2009-13). While East Gippsland’s deferment rate is higher than the state average, 60% of those who defer their university place eventually take it up, with rural students usually only deferring for one year (Polesel, O’Hanlon & Clarke, 2011).

The number of young people taking up apprenticeships and traineeships in East Gippsland has consistently been significantly higher than the average for Victoria as a whole over a number of years (DEECD, On Track data 2009-13).

### Year 12 completers destination data 2013 (2012 Year 12 students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East Gippsland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in University</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship/Traineeship</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred University place</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DEECD, On Track data 2009-13)

### Early school leavers destination data 2013 (2012 early leavers)

52.1% of early leavers have a successful transition to further education or training in East Gippsland, compared with 50.7% for Victoria as a whole. The high rate of young people in East Gippsland transitioning from school to jobs is a positive outcome in many ways. However, the rate for Year 12 completers going straight into employment is higher than the state average. This raises questions about the need to provide support and opportunities for students to pursue tertiary education, which could lead to stronger long-term outcomes for them individually and for the community generally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>East Gippsland</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled at TAFE</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship/Traineeship</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in employment, education or training (NILFET)</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Trend: The number of students looking for work has declined from 14.8% in 2009. (Source: DEECD, On Track data 2009-13)

21. Young people are in employment

In East Gippsland in 2011, 12.7% of young people aged 15-19 were not in employment, but were seeking work. This is significantly less than the proportion of young people across Victoria not in employment. For those aged 20-24 years the rate improves to 8.9%, but this is only marginally better than the average rate for this age group across Victoria.

### Unemployment rate of 15-19 year olds 2011

- **Victoria:** 16.4%
- **East Gippsland:** 12.7%

### Unemployment rate of 20-24 year olds

- **Victoria:** 8.9%
- **East Gippsland:** 9.6%

(Source: ABS Census 2011)
22. Young people are actively helping in their communities in East Gippsland

In East Gippsland 28% of the population reported that they volunteered in the community in 2011. Our young people aged 15-24 years old were slightly more likely to volunteer than their counterparts across Victoria.

Volunteering rates 15-19 year olds

Volunteering rates 20-24 year olds
(Source: ABS Census 2011)

“Council’s planning for the early years supports a child-friendly community, which recognises children’s capacity to act, mutually supported by and as equals with adults, to make choices to be heard within the community. We can all learn from their insights and be inspired by their unique understanding of the world around us.”

Cr Mark Reeves, Mayor - East Gippsland Shire Council

Australians are renowned for their generosity. The country is ranked in the top three nations in the World Giving Index 2011 that measures donations of money, volunteering time to an organisation and helping someone they didn’t know. Volunteering builds a strong and connected community and enables young people to actively engage with their communities. The 2010 National Volunteering Australia survey found that 38% of Australians volunteer. Volunteers reported that what they valued most about their experience was the difference they made to the community and the sense of purpose it gives them (Volunteering Australia, 2011).

“"We need to build up the identity of our kids so that they are acknowledged both as Aboriginal and full community members."”

(Aboriginal community member)
23. Children and young people are engaged in decision making in their communities

This data is not collected currently at an LGA level. Some efforts however, have been made locally to engage young people in decision making in the East Gippsland communities. Examples include the East Gippsland Shire Council survey of young people in 2010 to find out how they would like to be involved in decision making (EGSC Youth Strategy, 2010) and, in 2012, a pictorial survey was conducted with primary age children.

Case Study - Capturing Children’s Voices Through Photography: A Consultation Project with Children in East Gippsland.

During 2012, the Children’s Voices project was conducted across East Gippsland to better understand what is important to children and what they want from their communities. The project was a partnership between UnitingCare Gippsland, The Smith Family and East Gippsland Shire Council. It created an opportunity for children to have a say about the community they live in - what they like, what they would change and what they think children need in the future. Approximately 90 students of different ages from six local primary schools participated. The children were given disposable cameras and asked to take photos of their special places, people and activities. Their photographs were exhibited locally and published.

The project found that:

The children liked: the parks, public spaces, the natural environment, sport, pets and animals, and family and friends.

The things that children would like to change or improve: rubbish removal so that places were cleaner, renovation of buildings that are vacant and run-down, and repair of roads, schools, and jetties.

The children wished for: more parks, playgrounds with equipment for older children and places to hang out; a swimming pool, water park and bowling alley.

In regard to safety, children raised concerns about the need for footpaths, drainage, less violence and more pedestrian crossings.

24. Children and young people are actively engaged in sporting, youth and community groups

A survey of young people in East Gippsland in 2010 found that 64% were involved in sporting, youth or other organisations. (EGSC Youth Strategy, 2010) This data was from a small sample group and needs to be verified by a wider survey.
This report provides baseline data that will help service providers to work collaboratively, not only to improve services for children and young people in East Gippsland now, but also to inform future planning and service development. While not comprehensive, it provides a sound foundation on which to build and strengthen the outcomes for children and young people in our community.

Good Beginnings is committed to re-connecting with communities in East Gippsland to update the report and to monitor and review its progress. This will include publishing another State of East Gippsland’s Children & Youth Report in three years time to review changes in data indicators and measure the progress of our collaborative initiatives.

A number of important data gaps have been identified through this process. It is important for the validity of the reporting that these gaps, particularly at the local government level, are addressed. There are significant data gaps in the specific strengths and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The people of East Gippsland who participated in the process believe it is imperative that this data is collected to ensure proper evaluation and planning in the future. Where relevant and de-identified data is collected but not made public, Good Beginnings, and our community partners, will be advocating that this data is made accessible to the public.

Good Beginnings looks forward to establishing a partnership group that will work together to involve community stakeholders in the development of an action plan to address key gaps identified in this report. Priorities will be confirmed by re-connecting with community stakeholders through a further set of focus groups in early 2014. This plan will guide our collective efforts in addressing the areas of need, filling the gaps and monitoring progress towards the wellbeing of children and young people in East Gippsland.

FEEDBACK:
Your feedback about how we can improve the information and value of this report is welcome. Feedback and queries can be sent to Good Beginnings Australia via: victoria@goodbeginnings.org.au

The Team at Good Beginnings Australia

NEXT STEPS
NOTES ON THE DATA:

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a population measure of children's development as they enter school (completed by teachers). It focuses on early childhood development across the community measuring five areas of child development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge. The survey is conducted across Australia every 3 years and was last conducted in 2012. [http://www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The main data source collected by the ABS is the National Census of Housing and Population which includes population, ethnicity, housing, labour market and socio-economic data (SEIFA). The Census is conducted every 5 years, and was last conducted in August 2011. [http://www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census)

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). This Victorian department collects and publishes data on education and childhood development. These include:

1. School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ) is part of the Victorian Primary School Nurse Program. It surveys parents’ and carers’ observations about their child’s health and wellbeing. The questionnaire collects information on general health, speech, hearing, vision, behaviour, wellbeing, development and family stress. It is conducted annually assessing first year of school, new arrivals from overseas and those in their first year of English Language School. This data is available in limited release.

2. The On Track Survey is conducted with school leavers (both those who are exiting Year 12 and those who leave prior to completing Year 12) to identify their destinations on leaving school. The survey is conducted in March each year and interviews the student cohort who left school the previous year. This survey provides data on numbers enrolling in University, those who are enrolled in TAFE, those who are working, those in apprenticeships and traineeships and those who are looking for work. [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/ontrack.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/ontrack.aspx)

3. Community Profiles are collated by the Department and were published as a range of education and population data in 2010 for children and adolescents in Local Government Area community profiles. These profiles include school performance data such as attendance and student satisfaction as well as health and wellbeing and safety. It is not known when these publications will be updated. [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/reportdatacommunity.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/reportdatacommunity.aspx)


5. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) collects data from across government departments to track the progress of children and young people against key health, wellbeing and development outcomes. The data is being released in stages commencing in December 2013. [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamsindicators](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamsindicators)


The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assesses students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia for literacy and numeracy skills using a common assessment test. Since 2008, the annual survey provides data on the number of students who are achieving at or above the National Minimum Standard. [http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports.html](http://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports.html)

The Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey was first conducted in 2006 and again in 2009. 5000 telephone interviews were held with parents or carers of Victorian children aged from birth to 12 years. The survey is being repeated in 2013. [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/newdata.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/pages/newdata.aspx)

REFERENCES:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census of Population and Housing Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia 2011 Cat No: 2033.0.55.001

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 National Regional Profile 2007 - 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Profile East Gippsland

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 National Regional Profile: East Gippsland (S) Local Government Area


Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
http://www.aedi.org.au

Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) East Gippsland Community, Victoria 2009; 2012


Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2011, Family Facts and Figures: Australian Families, Canberra

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011 Families and Communities, Canberra


Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Adolescent Community Profile, East Gippsland, 2010

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Maternal Child Health Annual Report 2011-12

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Maternal Child Health Annual Report 2011-12


Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), School Entrant Health Questionnaire 2012

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Schools Performance Data 2010


Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Victorian Child Health and Wellbeing Survey 2009

Department of Health Victoria, Because Mental Health Matters - Mental Health Reform Strategy, Victorian Government, 2009
REFERENCES:

Department of Health Victoria, Victorian Population Health Survey 2008

Department of Human Services, Child Protection Services, Gippsland Region, 2013.

Department of Planning and Community Development 2012, Victoria in Future 2012

East Gippsland Shire Council 2013,

East Gippsland Shire Council. Youth Strategy, 2010

Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network, Environmental Scan, 2013

Gippsland Women’s Health Service, Gendered Health Indicators - East Gippsland Shire, 2013.


National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 2012.


Stebbing, M 2013 A snap shot of the health care needs of the population and the health service system in Gippsland: A desktop review of available data, Monash University & Gippsland Medicare Local

The State of Bendigo’s Children Report, March 2011
http://www.childfriendlycity.com.au/Files.axd?id=a933f130-0c16-47d0-a473-2062dfe69400

http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4533.0Chapter3352011

Volunteering Australia, National Survey of Volunteering Issues, 2011

Bairnsdale Skate Park and All Abilities Playground (Advance TAFE in distance)