

Bass Coast Shire Council

Economic Development Strategy 2016 - 2021

Year One Action Plan Report

Summary

Bass Coast has demonstrated consistent growth over the past decade and, as the region grows, so do the opportunities to invest.

The benefits of doing business in Bass Coast are well known as demonstrated by the influx of major retail chains and franchises in recent years. This has led to strong residential growth and an increase in employment opportunities.

The Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2016-21 provides a framework for the delivery of economic activities across Bass Coast.

Council, through its Economic Development Strategy, makes a strong contribution to the creation of an environment that:

- at a strategic level, attracts and encourages the kind of business activities that will drive the local economy, and
- at an operational level, supports existing businesses to be innovative and sustainable.

Council has worked to implement policies to attract and encourage new investments that complement the natural environmental values of the region. It will also support existing businesses to grow into new markets and products.

This Year One Report provides an overview of the work done in relation to the Strategy for the 2016/17.

Key Achievements for 2016/17 include:

1. Completed the Economic Development Strategy 2016-2021. This was the first Economic Development Strategy to be adopted by Council in 19 years
2. Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 – Growing Tourism adopted by Council. This Strategy has a high stature with many key stakeholders and government agencies such as Destination Phillip Island, Regional Development Victoria and Phillip Island Nature Parks all referencing the Strategy for investment decisions, planning proposals and advocacy plans
3. \$200,000 of State Government funding secured and consultant appointed for the Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry Infrastructure Business Case Tender
4. Free Wi-Fi rollout to major town centres across the Shire to make our towns more attractive to visitors, locals and increase business activity
5. ‘A Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast’ booklet developed and in circulation
6. Successful delivery of the 2016 Bass Coast Business Awards with approximately 175 local businesses participating
7. Economic Development and Tourism staff visited over 270 businesses across the Shire with emphasis on introducing economic development to new and existing business operators
8. Southern Gippsland Food Futures Economic Analysis undertaken in a joint project with South Gippsland Shire Council
9. Development of Events Policy, re-establishing cruise ship visits to Phillip Island and attracting six new events to Bass Coast during off-peak season
10. Hosting ‘Developing Bass Coast’ forums quarterly to increase collaboration with Strategic and Statutory Planning in pre application meetings for potential developers and investors.
11. Delivery of business, events and tourism training workshops to over 200 businesses

Background

In April 2016, Council adopted the Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy 2016 – 20 21.

The Economic Development Strategy provides a framework to promote and facilitate sustainable economic development in Bass Coast. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Strategy outlines:

- what Bass Coast Shire Council aims to achieve in economic development over the next five years
- the role Bass Coast Shire Council, in partnership with business and other levels of Government, will play in delivering the objectives of this Strategy
- an Economic Development Year One Action Plan.

Strategic Basis

Bass Coast Shire Council seeks its direction from the community vision. Bass Coast 2030 includes aspirational statements under the following four themes:

In 2030, Bass Coast is a showcase. It is recognised as:

- A celebration of natural assets
- A window on the history of Victoria
- A village in a technology world and
- A food bowl for Victoria.

The Council Plan 2017 - 2021 has clearly stated objectives around Economic Development, specifically 'Expanding, attracting and retaining business and investment'.

It has a Strategic Indicator that seeks Council to Implement the Economic Development Strategy 2016-21 actions annually.

Putting the Strategies into Action

The following actions have been undertaken to progress the objectives of the Strategy:

Strategy 1: Growing our Businesses: *Facilitate activities that support and promote businesses to become commercially resilient*

A resilient economy has businesses from a variety of industry sectors, which are able to adapt to changing environments, are alert to new opportunities and respond to challenges. Businesses will be innovative and financially and structurally stable. They contribute to the Bass Coast community and are an integral part of community life.

Over 2,600 businesses operate in Bass Coast Shire. Assisting these businesses to maintain their competitiveness and to grow or diversify their operations is a key strategy within the Bass Coast Shire Council Economic Development Strategy.

Key activities

Percentage increase in labour market growth

1. Facilitate business mentoring and training to develop sustainable, innovative, social and creative enterprises
2. Build more effective links between education providers and industry to increase job readiness
3. Advocate to all levels of government on behalf of the Bass Coast community in relation to policy, infrastructure and services
4. Promotion and adoption of e-commerce.

Indications of Activity

Labour market has been stable over the 16/17 financial year; however, it has shown an increase from 14,938 in the December 2016 quarter to 15,342 in the March 2017 quarter.

- Over 160 operators have attended training, State Government Small Business bus, workshops and mentoring.
- Collaboration with Chisholm TAFE re-developing projects in partnership with the

Bass Coast community to attract funding from the Workforce Training Innovation Fund. Hospitality training developed and currently being run by Chisholm TAFE on Phillip Island, in collaboration with local businesses.

- Manager Economic Development and Tourism continues to sit on the Steering Committee of the Mornington Peninsula / Phillip Island Tourism Employment Plan.
- Regular meeting with Government representatives from Department Economic Development Jobs Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), AusIndustry and Business Victoria to advocate for Bass Coast issues, e.g. Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry, National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout and public transport.
- Business support and training provided to business operators to facilitate effective use of social media and e-commerce.

Key Activities

Percentage reduction in the unemployment rate

1. Deliver annual Bass Coast Business Awards
2. Revitalise key business districts in the Shire
3. Promote Bass Coast Shire as a region to establish sustainable businesses, especially those committed to conservation of the natural environment
4. Develop an Economic Development Assistance Policy which will articulate the support Council can offer new businesses seeking to establish in Bass Coast.

Indications of Activity

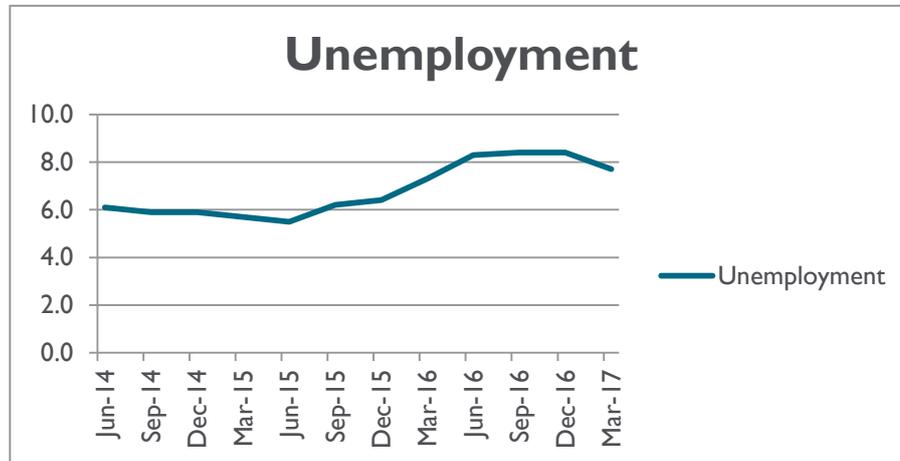
- Unemployment rate has dropped from 8.4% at 31 December 2016 to 7.7% at 31 March 2017.
- Annual Business Awards delivered on 19 August 2016. Thirty six entries were received in the Bass Coast Business Awards (judged awards). Over 780 votes were received for the people's Choice Awards with 152 different businesses receiving votes in the People's Choice Awards.
- Economic Development and Tourism (ED&T) officers have visited over 270 businesses in Grantville, Inverloch, Cowes, San Remo, Cape Woolamai, Newhaven

and Wonthaggi to understand and work with them to address business sustainability and resilience.

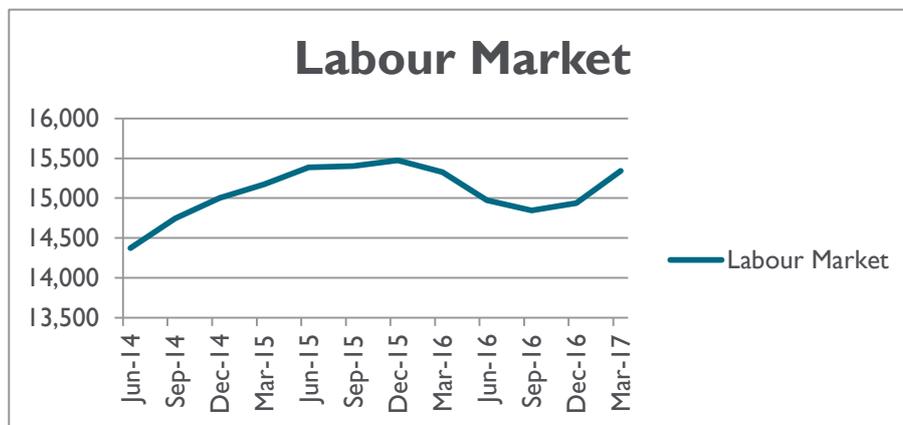
- When meeting with potential investors the environmental and conservation principles outlined in the Council Plan 2017-21, Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 – Growing Tourism, Natural Environment Strategy 2016-21 (NES) and Economic Development Strategy 2016-21 (EDS) are discussed and highlighted.
- Council's officers work with investors to progress their applications accordingly in collaboration with Council's Planning team. Officers also introduce potential investors to Sustainability Victoria (SV) for information and grant opportunities.
- Council has developed a 'Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast' as a support tool. Further consultation will be undertaken with Council and the business community to develop an Economic Development Assistance Policy.



Bass Coast unemployment rate June 2014 to March 2017



Bass Coast labour market June 2014 to March 2017



Department of Employment, Small Area labour Market data; as at 7 June 2017

<https://docs.employment.gov.au/documents/lga-data-tables-small-area-labour-markets-september-quarter-2015>

Strategy 2: Sustainable Economy: *Facilitate the attraction of businesses and industry with sustainable principles*

A sustainable economy comprises businesses that are financially and structurally sound through developing sustainable business models. This will include being environmentally sustainable in response to the challenges of climate change, and being resilient and adaptable in the face of new markets and changes in economic environments.

Attracting new businesses to Bass Coast Shire is a key business development activity. Council seeks to increase the number of new businesses with sustainable environmental and commercial practices.

Key Activities

Percentage increase in the number of new businesses with sustainable environmental and commercial practices:

1. Promote Bass Coast as a great place to do business
2. Promote sustainable principles to the business community and facilitate suitable training
3. Encourage appropriate development
4. Facilitate regular Developers Forums
5. Facilitate pre-application meetings with new businesses.
6. Facilitate information sharing re waste and recycling, energy, water and biodiversity
7. Connect businesses to financial support, e.g. Sustainability Victoria grants

Indications of Activity

- Increase in interest in energy and waste minimisation options
- Economic Development and Tourism (ED&T) officers introduce potential investors to Sustainability Victoria (SV) for information and grant opportunities. Council shares information from SV with businesses
- ED&T and Planning officers meet with new investors to discuss and encourage appropriate developments.

- Quarterly 'Developing Bass Coast' Forums are held across the Shire. The Forums are a great opportunity to network and build relationships with Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure officers and to extend their own business relationships.
- ED&T and planning officers meet with new investors to discuss and encourage appropriate developments.
- ED&T officers introduce potential investors to SV for information and grant opportunities. Council shares information from SV with businesses

Strategy 3: Visit Bass Coast: *Promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourism and events destination*

The Tourism industry offers diverse opportunities to experience Bass Coast's exciting natural environment and its artistic and cultural heritage. It takes advantage of the region's proximity to Melbourne to draw visitors to a range of events and natural attractions, including the National Surfing Reserve, becoming an all-year tourist destination.

The Bass Coast economy is heavily dependent on the tourism sector. The promotion of the Shire as an all year, unique tourism and events destination is integral to ensure economic prosperity for the Shire.

Key activities

Number of new events in off peak periods:

1. Work collaboratively with event organisers to conduct sustainable events/activities
2. Assist in the promotion of events
3. Report regularly to Council
4. Identify opportunities for innovation in event types
5. Identify opportunities for expanded use of existing and new venues
6. Spread events across Bass Coast and expand the spread of events being offered across the year

7. Advocate for infrastructure, e.g. pathways networks to attract visitors.

Indications of Activity

- There has been six new off peak events: Winter Sunshine Festival, Luminous Streets, Wonthaggi Laneways Festival, OMG Museum Conference, Australian National Junior Surfing Titles and Phillip Island Literary Festival
- Council participated as part of the Southern Gippsland Sustainability Festival. Economic Development and Tourism team also work with other event organisers to create more sustainable and resilient events. This focused on risk, waste, financial management and succession planning.
- Promoting events on Council's online Event Calendar, on social media, road side signage and Variable Message signs.
- Regular internal reports to Councillors via the Councillor Weekly Bulletin
- Identified the need for a better pathway connection from Rhyll jetty to the Rhyll township and free Wi-Fi in Rhyll so as to cater for cruise ship visits and improved lighting to assist with events at Erehwon Point.

Key activities

Percentage increase in attendance at events:

1. Manage event permit process
2. Promotion via road side signage and Calendar of Events
3. Assist with preparation of operational and regulatory requirements for running events, e.g. risk management plans
4. Provide information and training workshops for event organisers
5. Provide grants to facilitate events
6. Maximise economic benefit for Bass Coast while balancing the needs of the environment.

Indications of Activity

- There has been an overall increase in event attendance of six per cent across the financial year to 343,607 in 2106/17.
- There have been 81 event permits issued, which is an increase of 12.5% over the 72

permits issued in 2015/16.

- Staff support event organisers to produce effective marketing signage and online events listings.
- Events' team work with event organisers to complete operational and regulatory plans. They also run an annual events training workshop (September 2016) as well as presenting to service and community groups.
- An annual traffic management training course has also been run for volunteers.
- Community and seeding grants are made available to event organisers.
- Through the event permit process Council officers minimise the negative impact on the community and the environment.

Key activities

Number of rooms available and occupancy rates:

1. Promote Bass Coast to domestic and international visitors as all year unique tourist and events destination
2. Engage with Industry on a local, regional, state and national level to share our knowledge and inspire visitation to our unique part of the world
3. Tourism industry development
4. Progress regional tourism initiatives with Destination Phillip Island and Destination Gippsland to provide opportunities for local businesses
5. Develop and implement Phillip Island and San Remo Tourism Strategy 2035
6. Demonstrate the economic value of tourism and trends within the Shire
7. Identify number of rooms available in Bass Coast.

Indications of Activity

- Councils provide financial and in-kind support to Destination Phillip Island and Destination Gippsland to assist in the regional promotional activities.
- Collaboration included the development of the Business Events Guide and attendance at the Business Events Regional Showcase. Council financially supports numerous regional marketing campaigns.
- Council's Tourism team provides support at industry workshops, events and

promotions and represents Council at trade fairs, consumer shows and local events. This included welcoming cruise ships to Phillip Island, the Gippsland stand at Leisure Fest and Business Events Regional Showcase with Destination Gippsland.

- The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) network provides a range of initiatives to support and assist the local tourism industry. Examples include the delivery of BookEasy workshops to help online booking capacity and an annual Industry Familiarisation program so businesses can increase product knowledge and encourage cross promotion.
- Collaboration with Destination Phillip Island and Destination Gippsland to help deliver workshops and forums i.e. Gippsland Tourism Industry Leaders Forum
- Bass Coast proudly supports the on-going efforts of the Ken Hore Tourism Mentoring Program which provides a stepping stone into the Tourism Industry while instilling excellence in the field
- Council was awarded Bronze at the 2016 RACV Victorian Tourism Awards in the Local Government Award for Tourism category. The Bronze Winner is awarded to the third highest scoring entrant (above 75%) in their selected category.
- Council has a representative on the Destination Phillip Island Regional Tourism Board and the Coordinator Tourism is a member of the VIC Reference Group, Destination Phillip Island Industry Development and Marketing committee and Destination Gippsland Marketing Committee.
- Marketing publications promoting Bass Coast were developed this year and include the Bass Coast Regional Map and Bass Coast Walks and Trails brochure.
- The Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 was developed and adopted by Council in August 2016. Year one priority actions have been completed.

Key activities

Number of visitors to the Visitor Information Centres:

1. Deliver quality visitor services and products that exceed customer expectations, providing opportunities to increase yield, visitor length of stay, expenditure and dispersal for Bass Coast. Engage with domestic and international visitors to promote Bass Coast as an all year unique tourist and events destination including digital media
2. Ensure the use of technology enhances services available to visitors

3. Manage income generating activities through increased accommodation bookings, ticket sales, retail items, display and other services
4. Ensure our VIC Network has an effective, engaged and dynamic workforce that maximises opportunities and delivers outstanding visitor services
5. Ensure our business operations are sustainably managed financially and environmentally
6. Determine appropriate service delivery model for visitor services.

Indications of Activity

Many of our visitors' experiences start with their visit to one of the three accredited Visitor Information Centres (VICs) located across the Shire at Inverloch, Cowes and Newhaven.

Open seven days a week, passionate Council staff and volunteers with extensive local knowledge provide a warm and friendly welcome and help visitors make the most of their visit.

In 2016, Council's Visitor Information Centre (VIC) network was proud to be awarded Gold at the Victorian Tourism Awards in the highly contested Visitor Information Services category for the second year and be judged a Finalist at the Australian Tourism Awards.

Some of the Visitor Information Services key achievements also include:

- Visitor Services Review outcomes implemented with shared services at Cowes and Inverloch.
- Free booking service with over 125 accommodation options and 64 attraction ticket options
- Continued visitor information and booking service through the website – www.visitbasscoast.com.au.

Council's Tourism team is committed to ensuring extensive product and regional knowledge through on-going training and development by running eight familiarisation tours each year to experience products first hand.

Local Tourism Industry

- Council works in partnership with five local tourism and business associations (LTA)
- Provide support to tourism operators
- Provide booking facility and operator training
- Participate in LTA activities
- Encourage touring and dispersal within the region
- Conduct annual industry Familiarisations
- Host networking morning tea for local tourism operators
- Provide funding and support to produce LTA maps and member prospectus's
- Provide membership benefits for over 260 local tourism association members
- Staff attended four Industry Forums

Regional Tourism Associations

- Council financially supports and works cooperatively with two Regional Tourism Boards
- Destination Gippsland and Destination Phillip Island
- Council representation provided for Regional Tourism Boards and committees
- Regional brochures displayed in VICs
- Participate in regional cooperative marketing campaigns
- Provide itinerary support for media familiarisations
- Participate in regional VIC network meetings
- Council's Coordinator Tourism also represented Council on DGL Marketing Committee, Marketing and Industry Development Advisory Group, Council's Wayfinding Strategy working group, Ken Hore Tourism Mentoring program, MotoGP working group and lead the Steering Committee to develop the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.

- Bought in to regional cooperative marketing
- Provided imagery, content and support for marketing campaigns

Visitor Centres

- Provide Visitor Services
- Network and provide input into regional and state VIC outcomes
- Three accredited VIC's managed by Council
- Management of Tourism website
- Representative on state-wide VIC Reference Group
- Participate in Regional VIC Network

State Tourism Organisations

- Council provides support for state significant events and projects are delivered in partnership with Visit Victoria
- Visit Victoria representative was a member of the Steering Committee for the development of the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035
- Member of Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC)
- Represented Phillip Island on the VIC Reference group
- Provided support for MotoGP and World Superbike events

Neighbouring Councils

- Representation on regional Council tourism and economic development networks
- Work cooperatively on projects and marketing
- Council CEO and Mayor represent Bass Coast on the Gippsland Local Government Network
- Coordinator Tourism representative on Gippsland Tourism Network and Accessible

Gippsland working group

- Created Food Map in conjunction with South Gippsland Shire Council
- Promote Gippsland and Phillip Island in partnership with six Gippsland Councils at Leisure fest

Strategy 4: Economic Diversity *Encourage the diversity of small business that supports the culture of Bass Coast*

A diverse economy supports resilience in the face of changing external environments. Economic diversity comprises businesses, large and small in a range of industries, which together support many different occupations. Businesses will have a culture of innovation and diversification. They will be supported by education and training services, which provide a skilled workforce for an expanded economy.

Small business plays a vital role in Bass Coast. Of the 2600 plus businesses registered in Bass Coast Shire, 89% are small businesses employing less than four employees.

Key activities

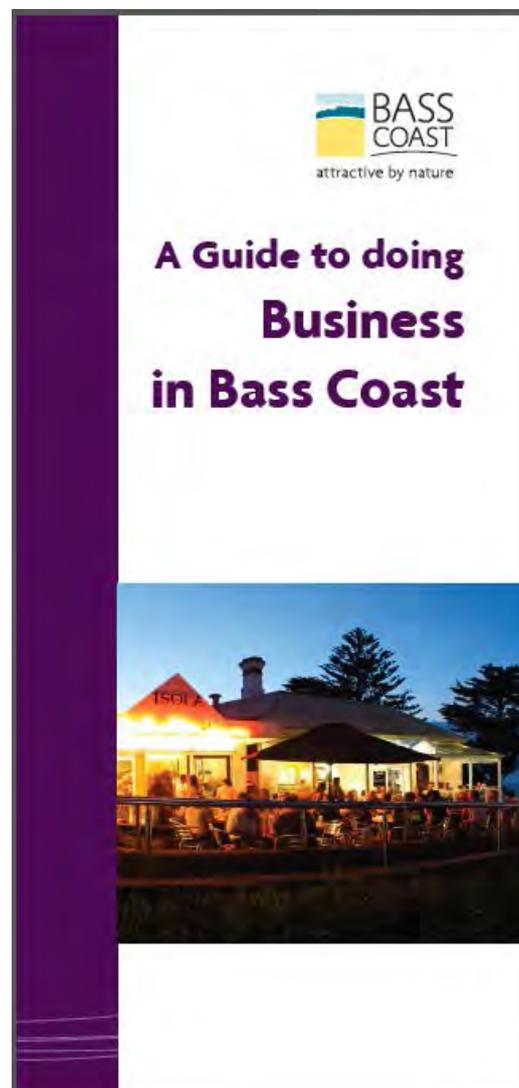
Percentage increase in the number of businesses that support the culture of Bass Coast:

1. Develop policy, procedures and services to attract new businesses to the area which broaden the mixture of businesses operating in Bass Coast
2. Track percentage increase in new businesses that support the culture of Bass Coast
3. Develop a “Guide to Doing Business in Bass Coast”.

Indications of Activity

- Invest in Bass Coast publications developed to promote the benefits of doing business in Bass Coast

- Cultural awareness training held to educate staff about how to work with Chinese investors
- Facilitated State Government and other training that encourages business expansion and diversification
- Presented at relevant Forums and conferences e.g. Australia China Agribusiness Innovation Summit
- 'Guide to doing Business in Bass Coast' developed and in circulation



Strategy 5: Farming for our Future: *Protect productive farmland and support rural business sustainability*

Strong rural sectors require the protection of productive farmland in the face of development and other demands. The rural economy will be based on sustainable practices that respond to the opportunities and challenges produced by the combined effects of:

- climate change
- the need for increased food production by the escalating world population, and
- the growth of new markets in Australia and overseas.

Bass Coast has a strong agriculture sector with much of its 865 sq. kms being farm land.

Agriculture will remain a significant driver in the Bass Coast Shire and contributes to the high standard of liveability and tourism.

Key activities

Adoption and implementation of Rural Land Use Strategy:

1. Promote and facilitate the expansion of businesses into new markets, new products and new areas of business e.g. value adding and diversification
2. Support and promote relevant rural industry organisations and events
3. Promote local produce and support business sustainability and growth
4. Develop and promote a Southern Gippsland Food Futures Project
5. Work with Regional Development Victoria to provide input into both the Victorian Intensive Agriculture Strategy and Gippsland Intensive Agriculture Strategy.

Actions Implemented

- C140 (Rural Land Use Strategy) adopted.
- Council partners with and supports Agribusiness Gippsland, Cows Create Careers

(GippsDairy) and facilitates the Rural Engagement Group

- Dairy industry support activities including Victorian Farmers Federation 'Over the Farm Gate' evening, Bass Coast Agricultural Show, Painting Daisy Schools Dairy Educational Project and sponsorship of 'Women In Agriculture' Forum
- Continued promotion and support of the local Foodmap initiative, appropriate forums and conferences e.g. Gippsland Trade Show and Dinner
- Provided input into the Victorian Intensive Agricultural Strategy and Gippsland Intensive Agricultural Strategy

COWS CREATE CAREERS - HOW THE PROJECT WORKS!



students about their career in the dairy industry and informs students about the education and training required for their career pathway.

THE FARMER ROLE

- Local dairy farmers loan two calves for a 3 week period and visit the school to teach students about looking after the calves and about their career in the dairy industry.
- Students in schools feed and monitor these calves for a 3 week period as part of a series of educational activities.
- Schools choose to manage the calves at their premises, or at a suitable location for students to enjoy a 'hands on' experience.

RESEARCHING THE INDUSTRY

- In teams of 4-5 students will prepare a mootube movie or PowerPoint presentation, research poster, newsletter and a thank you letter/report to the dairyfarmers and industry advocates who have been involved at their school.
- All schools who participate are provided with feed supplies from commercial sponsors at no cost.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- The students work is submitted to Cows Create Careers' assessment team. Results are provided to teachers at the conclusion of the project.
- Students will complete two evaluation forms, one which is completed at the beginning of the project and one at the end. The forms assess students' general knowledge of the dairy industry.
- A teacher evaluation form is completed and returned to project officers at the conclusion of the project in their school. This form asks for feedback about the benefits of the project and encourages any suggestions for improvement.

PRESENTATION & AWARDS CEREMONY AND LINKAGES TO INDUSTRY

- A Presentation & Awards Ceremony is organised for all students, teachers, industry advocates and farmers who participate (on a per region basis). Prizes and awards are on offer for the overall winning school and team in the region.
- The Presentation & Awards Ceremony provides students with a further introduction to the dairy industry by showcasing guest speakers from NCDE and other employment and training organisations. This creates 'first hand' linkages with these industry bodies and secondary schools students and teachers.

THE SCHOOL ROLE

- The project runs for approximately 6 weeks and is introduced into the school curriculum in either Science, Ag/Hort, IT/SOSE, Maths or English.
- The project has two sets of curriculum material available, Junior Years 7 & 8 and Senior Years 9, 10 & 11.

THE INDUSTRY ADVOCATE ROLE

- A dairy industry advocates introduces the project to students in school and assists both the students and teachers throughout the term of the project. The industry advocate explains to



create careers **FARM MODULE** **Dairy Australia**