

# FUTURE OF ORBOST & DISTRICT PROJECT



**Media Release – 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

## **Future of Orbost & District Project – spotlight on exciting new business venture and event panellist**

The Future of Orbost & District (FoOD) project's Visitor Economy Innovation Working Group has welcomed a new member, someone who has recently returned to Marlo, calls East Gippsland home and is launching a contemporary, curated tourism venture.

Hannah Macalister-Bills, an East Gippslander of generations, has returned to Marlo after 15 years of living, working, and learning in Melbourne. Hannah has spent time establishing herself in a career that's varied from interior design to public relations and business development. A common theme, however, has been her ability to mentor businesses in understanding their goals, their purpose, and empower them to achieve and successfully grow. It is this, as well as her ability to curate experiences and elevated design, that Hannah is excited to bring back to the far east in the form of 'The Little Drift'.

'The Little Drift' is an innovative new business that will focus on boosting the visitor economy of East Gippsland, in particular, Marlo and Orbost.

The FoOD project hosted a forum in June that focussed on 'Thinking Big While Going Tiny', an introduction to tiny home and glamping accommodation in East Gippsland. Hannah's idea builds on this. The hero project of 'The Little Drift' will be the launch of high-end, style focussed accommodation adjacent to Dune-town by Sailors Grave brewery at Marlo Plains. Luxury dwellings in the form of tiny homes will be built by local modular builder, Built QA and owned, styled, and managed by 'The Little Drift'. Hannah has many other ideas in her business pipeline which will support further collaboration and innovation.

Ms Liz Mitchell, Chair of the FoOD project and member of the project's Visitor Economy Innovation Working Group says, 'The Little Drift' is an exciting initiative that aligns well with the key focus areas of the working group and the Orbost & District 'Local Development Strategy.' "Hannah brings further energy, passion, and fresh thinking to an already very active working group, and we always welcome entrepreneurs and others keen to pursue initiatives that can contribute to our district's positive future to connect and get involved."

Hannah, along with other inspiring locals, will be at the upcoming FoOD networking and information evening hosted at the Orbost Golf Club on Wednesday the 21st of August. For more information contact [project@orbostregion.com.au](mailto:project@orbostregion.com.au) or visit <https://orbostregion.com.au/future-economy/media-and-events>.

The Future of Orbost & District project is a response to the impacts of the end of native timber harvesting in Victoria's state forests, and the need to transition the local economy. The purpose of the project is to build on to Orbost and District's existing strengths and leverage opportunities for supporting positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. The Future of Orbost Project is

receiving support through the Victorian Government's Forestry Transition Program's Community Stream through to September 2025.

The Orbost and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry has an agreement with the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to deliver the Future of Orbost & District project, which is overseen by a community-led governance group.



<Photo Supplied -Hannah Macalister-Bills at Marlo Plains>

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