

FUTURE OF ORBOST & DISTRICT PROJECT



Media Release – 24th September 2024

Future of Orbost & District Project and East Gippsland Shire Council Formalise Partnership Agreement

The Future of Orbost & District (FoOD) Project's Governance Group Chair, Liz Mitchell, and East Gippsland Shire Council Chief Executive Officer, Fiona Weigall, have officially signed a partnership agreement, confirming a unified commitment to work collaboratively. The agreement is built on the principles of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, and aims to support the overarching purpose of the FoOD Project.

Both Ms Mitchell and Ms Weigall emphasised that the partnership provides a strong framework for aligning priorities to strengthen Orbost & District's economy, with a focus on achieving integrated social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Ms Mitchell highlighted that the agreement reflects a commitment to genuine, place-based development where both government and the community share decision-making responsibilities.

"We are delighted to welcome EGSC representatives to our Innovation Working Groups and the Governance Group. This collaboration fosters shared understandings and aligns priorities, which will help us move forward together," she said.

Ms Weigall reinforced that Council is committed to identifying and supporting both existing and emerging industries in Orbost and District, with the aim of generating employment and promoting long-term economic stability.

"Economic development and the growth and retention of business is of importance to Council and our communities," Ms Weigall said.

"Through this strengthened collaboration, we can better align our individual and collective priorities to deliver the best outcomes for the community."

The Future of Orbost & District project responds to the challenges posed by the end of native timber harvesting in Victoria's state forests, focusing on transitioning the local economy. Its goal is to build on Orbost and District's existing strengths and leverage opportunities for positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. The project receives support from the Victorian Government's Forestry Transition Program's Community Stream until 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.

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<photos supplied>



Liz Mitchell, Chair – FoOD Project and Fiona Weigall, CEO – East Gippsland Shire Council