

Gippsland Shire Council

Agrinews

March 2025



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- Assessing drench resistance in sheep - Webinar 17 March
- Calving essentials webinar series – Part 1/2 18 & 19 March
- Business of farming: Becoming a desired employer 24 March
- Free screening of the Just a Farmer movie in Buchan 30 March
- GippsDairy Muster 30 April

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- Unlocking the secrets of your soil - Join the TopSoils project
- Raising Spirits: Grants open to boost Victorian distilleries
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- Solar Victoria rebates, grants or loans
- Business Renewables Buying Group 2025
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- Landcare grants now open

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EVENTS

Assessing Drench Resistance in Sheep – Webinar

17 March

This 3-year project with the Bairnsdale BestWool/BestLamb group demonstrates best practice sheep worm management in East Gippsland.

As part of this project, several East Gippsland producers have undertaken Worm Egg Count Reduction Testing (WECRT), more commonly known as drench resistance testing, to identify the level of drench efficacy in their flocks. This webinar will give an overview of the results and outline why knowing the drench resistance status.



Ben Blomfield, Bairnsdale BestWool/BestLamb group co-ordinator and veterinary consultant from Melbourne University's MacKinnon Project will cover the following:

- Common worm species and their lifecycle
- Contributing factors to drench resistance
- Results of the resistance testing as part of this project
- Options to manage resistance
- Question and answer time.

Where: **Online**

When: **17 March**

Time: **7.00pm**

Register [HERE](#) before 5pm March 17

Calving Essentials Webinar Series – Part 1/2

18 & 19 March

New to calving? Wanting to learn more? Maybe you just need a quick refresher!

This two-part FREE webinar is perfect for you – hosted by the Stock Sense team and Dr Rob Bonnano.

Get ready for the calving season with a checklist covering everything you need to know.

Structured to cover 101 Essentials, Methods to preventing calving problems – a whole system approach, and a Q&A Session to conclude.

Where: **Online**

When: **18 March**

Time: **6.00pm**

The webinar series will be conducted via Zoom, with the link available [HERE](#)

Business of Farming: Becoming a Desired Employer

24 March

Are you looking to attract and retain skilled workers in agriculture?

Do you want to enhance your leadership and communication skills to build a strong, capable workforce?

Join us for Business of Farming: Becoming a Desired Employer, a free and insightful event led by Sally Murfet, an expert HR strategist in the agricultural sector.

You'll gain practical strategies to manage and retain top talent, plus enjoy a meal on us!

Where: **Gippsland Agricultural Centre, Bairnsdale Airport**

When: **24 March**

Time: **5.30 – 7.30pm**

💡 What You'll Gain:

- ✓ Proven strategies to attract and keep top talent
- ✓ Leadership & communication tools to strengthen your team
- ✓ A chance to connect with other primary producers

Reserve your spot now: <https://bit.ly/4hPNTkM> For more details call Chris at on 0487 291 197.

Free Screening of the Just a Farmer movie in Buchan

30 March

Last year the community around Benambra gathered to watch the Just A Farmer movie. It was a great event with families from around the district sharing some time together and getting to see this very powerful movie.

On March 30 at the Buchan Hall, you have the chance to enjoy the same movie, some food, fun and watch Just A Farmer with friends and family.

Where: **Buchan Hall**

When: **Sunday 30 March**

Time: **2:00pm**

For more details, [see the flyer below](#)

GippsDairy Muster

30 April

The GippsDairy Muster 2025 will showcase the latest trends, technologies, and practices in dairy farming. Hear insights from industry experts and local farmers on ways to enhance the future of your farm business using new and developing technologies.



The sessions being presented throughout the day are:

- Innovations in monitoring animal welfare and performance
- Utilising drones on farm
- PastureSmarts update
- Virtual herding

Registration: [GippsDairy Muster - Farming into the Future: Imagine, Inquire, Innovate](#)

Where: **Federation University Churchill campus**

When: **Wednesday 30 April**

Time: **9:30am – 2:15pm**

FUNDING & OPPORTUNITIES

Expressions of Interest - Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee

Are you passionate about agriculture, contribute to the rural sector or have an agribusiness and want to contribute to our active Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee?

The Committee provides a valuable forum through which Council can gain timely and informed insight into the issues and opportunities that are impacting on the agriculture sector.

Positions are for a term of two years with an option for a further two years. Meetings are held quarterly. Expressions of Interest are open until **24 March**.

Current positions on the committee will be vacated on 30 June 2025.

More details and the ASAC Charter are available on our website or by contacting Kaylene Wickham (Agribusiness Development Officer) on 5153 9500 or you can download this at [East Gippsland Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee Charter](#).

To apply please download the ASAC Expression of Interest form from Councils website: [Agricultural Assistance \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](#) and email an electronic copy to economic.development@egipps.vic.gov.au by no later than Monday 24 March 2025.

Rates support is here

We understand that times are challenging, and if you're having difficulty paying your rates, we provide support options like flexible, interest-free payment plans, deferrals, and rate waivers for those facing financial hardship.

Our Customer Service teams can assist with most questions about your payment options over the phone or at our service centres.

Our rates team will also be visiting towns in the shire mid-March, providing more opportunities for ratepayers to receive direct assistance.

Anglicare Victoria is also offering free, confidential financial counselling at the Corporate Centre, 273 Main Street, Bairnsdale, from 9:30 am – 12:00 pm on **17 March, 14 April, and 12 May**. If you would like to speak to a counsellor, please contact us on 5153 9500 to book a time.

More information is available on our [Rates and Valuations \(eastgippsland.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Unlocking the secrets of your soil - Join the Top Soils Project

We're excited to invite you to be part of the Top Soils Project to participate in a unique opportunity of a fully funded *free* soil testing program that can provide valuable insights into your paddock's soil health while contributing to region-wide research in soils across East Gippsland.

By participating, you'll receive:

Comprehensive soil testing at two depths (0-10 cm and 10-20 cm) across a paddock

Analysis of key soil indicators, including:

- Nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus (Colwell, Olsen, DGT-P), potassium, sulphur
- Trace elements including boron, manganese, copper, zinc, iron
- Organic carbon
- Soil pH (pH_w, pHCaCl₂), electrical conductivity
- Soil texture, phosphorus buffering index (PBI)
- CSIRO-backed soil carbon testing and advanced phosphorus analysis

A detailed report on your paddock's soil health

Access to expert guidance and networking with other producers

What we ask from you:

To participate, farmers will need to:

- ◆ Provide access to a paddock for soil sampling in 2025 and 2028
- ◆ Share details about paddock management (e.g., fertiliser use, grazing practices)
- ◆ Agree to share soil test results with project partners to support ongoing soil research

Soil testing will take place in Autumn 2025, with a follow-up in 2028 to track long-term trends.

Places are limited, so register your interest today!

CLICK LINK TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST: <https://bit.ly/3PTIOLY> To participate or learn more, contact: Natalie Jenkins by text/phone on 0436 462 559 or email at njenkins@sfs.org.au or scan the QR code



Raising Spirits: Grants Open to Boost Victorian Distilleries

The Distillery Door Program is a \$20 million package to support and enhance Victoria's distillery industry. Launched in the 2021–22 financial year, additional funding is now available through the program.

Grants of up to \$200,000 are available for tailored projects that help distillers to grow their business with new equipment, technology, or promotional projects.

The grants encourage investment in areas that will expand distilleries, create new opportunity and growth for the industry.

Delivery of the Program is under 4 streams:

- Skills development
- Boosting the visitor economy
- Infrastructure and safety and
- Export capability.

For more information visit [Distillery Door Program | Agriculture Victoria](#)

New Council biodiversity grants for landholders

Great news! Council is introducing new landholder grants to help enhance biodiversity on private properties in East Gippsland.

Landholders with properties over five hectares may be eligible for a vegetation management plan, designed to improve understanding and conservation of the local biodiversity within your boundaries.

With increasing threats from weeds, pests, extreme weather (including the impact of the Black Summer bushfires), and growing land use pressures, a collective effort is essential to safeguard biodiversity for future generations.

Keep an eye on Council's [biodiversity page](#) for information as it comes to hand.

Or [register your interest via email](#) and we'll let you know when the grant opens.

For more information: Kate Allen, Councils Natural Environment Coordinator

Solar Victoria rebates, grants or loans

Many small businesses, homeowners and renters are now eligible for rebates, grants or loans. Solar Victoria programs include:

- Solar panel (PV) rebate
- Solar battery loans
- Hot water rebates
- Solar for Apartments
- Solar rebates for community housing
- Solar for Business

There are four-year interest-free government loans if the upfront cost is still unaffordable. Make sure to do your homework and be wary of scams. Contact Solar Victoria for questions at <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/>

Business Renewables Buying Group 2025

Eligible East Gippsland businesses are invited to explore renewable energy purchasing through a free and collective power purchase agreement.

We've joined with councils across Victoria to assist businesses to purchase renewable energy, to save money and cut emissions.

Hosted by the [Business Renewables Buying Group](#) there is information on the advantages of collectively buying renewable electricity, rather than going to market individually.

Participants will gain insights into the Victorian energy market, learn about the benefits of long-term renewable energy contracts, and receive facilitation support to navigate the group procurement process.

If your business is ready to support the transition to renewable energy, don't miss this valuable opportunity!

Complete the [expression of interest form](#) to join.

More information: Rebecca Steenholdt, Economic Development Coordinator

Telstra Connected Community Grants

Close 20 March

Grants up to \$10,000 are available for not-for-profit community organisations in remote, rural and regional Australia to support their communities.

The program seeks to foster liveable, sustainable and resilient communities.

Round three is now open.

Applications close at 5.00 pm on **Thursday 20 March**.

For more information and other opportunities, visit the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal [here](#)

Wettenhall Trust Small Environmental Grants

Close 24 March

The Wettenhall Trust has opened the next round of its Small Environmental Grants Scheme, for applications between \$2,000 and \$15,000 to provide support for biodiversity projects.

Closes on Monday **24 March 2025** (for funding in May 2025).

There are four funding rounds every year. Projects must directly make positive changes to biodiversity conservation in Australia.

For more details, including eligibility and guidelines [visit the website](#).

Landcare Grants now open

Applications close 16 April

Through the 2025 Victorian Landcare Grants, \$3.55 million is available for Landcare and other environmental volunteer groups and networks that are working to protect and restore land and the environment.

Project Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for on-ground works and community education projects that protect or improve the natural environment, including native vegetation and wildlife, waterways and soils.

The grants are open to environmental volunteer groups, including Landcare groups and networks, Friends groups, Conservation Management Networks, Committees of Management, Coastcare groups and Aboriginal groups to support their important work in helping protect the health of our land, waterways and biodiversity.

Click on the link to apply online [Apply here](#)

[SURVEYS AND INPUT SOUGHT](#)

National Centre for Farmer Health: Rural Mental Health Trial



The National Centre For Famer Health is trialing a peer-guided mental health support program to farming community members experiencing low mood or depression.

Are you feeling overwhelmed, unusually frustrated or angry?

Are you struggling to make decisions, losing concentration or avoiding family and friends?

Are you feeling tired all the time, physically run down or stuck in a rut?

If so, you can connect for a conversation at [Find out more and register your interest here.](#)

East Gippsland Livestock Exchange Commercial Review



East Gippsland Livestock Exchange Commercial Review

Subscribe to get updates on Council's review of the management of the saleyards

[View Project](#)

Our purpose is to identify a strategic pathway for Council and determine the optimal business structure for managing the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange.

We are not considering selling the saleyards.

The review will assess saleyard operations at a local, regional, and national level, along with livestock movements, and provide detailed recommendations with all findings to be presented to Council for consideration before action can be taken.

Our focus continues to remain on what is best for the livestock industry, local vendors and buyers, and ratepayers.

The survey is now live and can be accesses via [the council YourSay web page.](#)

Have your say on Lakes Entrance water plan

Residents, businesses and visitors are being invited to share their views on how water should be managed in Lakes Entrance and surrounding areas. A new survey is now open, giving community members an opportunity to help shape future plans for water security, improved services and environmental sustainability.

Council, in partnership with East Gippsland Water, catchment-management authorities, and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), is developing an Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan for Lakes Entrance, Kalimna, Lake Tyers, Lake Bunga and Toorloo Arm. The plan will focus on improving water, wastewater and stormwater services to support long-term sustainability.



Future water needs for Lakes Entrance and surrounding areas

Council is working on a plan to better manage water for Lakes Entrance and surrounding areas

[View Project](#)

INFORMATION

Digging Deeper podcast

The Gippsland Drought Resilience plan has been activated in many ways. One of these being the recent launch of the **Digging Deeper podcast**. This podcast is made by a farmer for farmers. Designed to build an actively engaged audience of listeners in the good times that will trust the channel for relevant and timely information during times of drought and adversity in the region.

Digging Deeper – Ag Chats with AL

"Real farmers, real conversations, practical insights and inspiring stories. Join Al Micallef and special guests to help unlock your farm's production potential. Whether it's in relation to drought or economic shifts, this podcast is your go-to for developing resilience in agriculture. This podcast is made possible by the Future Drought Fund Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program co-funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments."

Check out podcasts at <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/digging-deeper-ag-chats-with-al/id1793665961>

The podcast is available on several platforms listed below with links so please have a listen if you haven't already. It's on the Gag website under [Podcast](#), [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Youtube](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)

Avian influenza detected at fourth property

Agriculture Victoria has confirmed bird flu on a fourth poultry farm in Euroa. This new detection is in close proximity to the 3 other infected properties.

Poultry and bird owners are reminded to keep sheds, yards, aviaries and equipment clean and to restrict contact with wild birds. They should ensure their footwear is clean and wash hands before and after handling birds or eggs. New birds should be quarantined before being integrated with existing ones.

Immediate notification from poultry owners if they notice their poultry are unwell is crucial. Community members must report suspect disease and sudden poultry death by calling the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

For more information visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/avianinfluenza

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/poultry-diseases/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

Spot and report these weeds

Have you been enjoying Victoria's beautiful outdoors this summer? You can help protect it by stopping three harmful weeds: [water hyacinth](#), [salvinia](#), and [alligator weed](#).

These state prohibited weeds kill fish and frogs, threaten native plants, block waterways, pipes and drains, and – in the case of alligator weed - even risk human health.

If you think you've seen one of these weeds, contact Agriculture Victoria for free removal available in Victoria.

- Call 136 186
- Email weed.spotters@agriculture.vic.gov.au



East Gippsland Community Directory

Are you running a local community organisation, support service, club or group?
Do you want to be found by more people online & to promote your events and services?

The East Gippsland Shire Council is excited to partner with My Community Directory to provide you with your free local Community Directory + Diary.

The East Gippsland Community Directory + Diary can help you to:

- List your services
- Advertise for volunteers
- Promote upcoming events
- Be found by more people online

All for free! To visit organisations already using the directory visit:

https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/Victoria/East_Gippsland

To create your groups listing visit: <https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/register>

Community Vision 2040

East Gippsland Shire Council has officially adopted an updated version of its Community Vision 2040. Following a comprehensive review shaped by community engagement, the new Community Vision 2040 expresses the aspirations, values and priorities of the community.

Council is required under legislation to maintain and adopt a Community Vision document, developed through deliberative engagement.

An extensive engagement program to review the Community Vision began in July 2024, reaching more than 2,500 community members.

For more information visit Council's website.

Community Vision 2040

Reviewed 2025



EVENT UPDATES

Red Meat Conference 18/2/25

Council Agriculture and Livestock Staff attend the Red Meat Conference on 18 February along with 310 farmers, industry representatives and presenters.

Throughout the day staff engaged individually with over 50 stock agents, farmers and business to promote the Livestock Exchange Operating Model survey and the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee vacancies.

There was a great vibe all day, with sessions very informative and questions presented to delve more deeply into subjects. Well done to the Gippsland Agriculture Group and the Steering Committee for another outstanding event this year.





Partnership in Ag Group

Every six months Agriculture focused services and agencies meet in Bairnsdale. These meetings are invaluable to the agricultural industry as it allows organisations to share what their current focus is, learn what other agencies are planning. This ensures events in the communities are delivered in a collaborative way to minimize disruption to farming families and enable maximum benefit on a single days. You may recognise some of these faces from your community.



Governor Meeting

Gippsland Agriculture Group met with the Governor and Ag representatives from the two shires to discuss options for developing an agriculture training hub in East Gippsland to inspire the next generation to pursue careers in agriculture without having to leave family and the region for three to four years.

The round table representatives included Food and Fibre Gippsland, TAFE, RMIT, One Gippsland, Wellington Shire Council, Gippsland Agriculture Group and the Mayors of the Wellington and East Gippsland Shires.



Ag Careers for Students in Secondary College

Gippsdairy and Council staff have commenced meeting with various education providers to encourage young people to engage in School Based Apprenticeship Training (SBAT) and pathways to increase uptake in Agriculture careers.

To increase numbers in the agriculture streams, there are differing programs to support engagement, one of these is Broadening Horizons, which coordinates student farm and business visits in the region which provide insight into career options and variety available today.

“Raising Aspirations in Careers and Education” a federally funded program, is also visiting the region. RACE provides a focus on the dairy industry and provide a great connection between students and farms via tours. Schools can also participate in the Cows Create Careers program which Council sponsor.

High Country Sales

Over 450 buyers, sellers and observers attended the High Country Sales last week. Well over \$7m changed hands as cattle were sold in Omeo, Benambra, Ensay and Hinnomunjie.

Council Agribusiness Development Officer and Commercial Business team who manage the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange were present, to engage with farmers and promote the Livestock Exchange review which is now open for comment, see article above for YourSay link to provide your feedback as well.

Buyers from as far as Dubbo noted that the quality of cattle from East Gippsland is of a very high standard, good to handle, fatten up well and are highly favoured by the industry. Prices were above last year with sellers we chatted to noting they were pleased with the results.



Orbost Show

Council's Ag and Livestock staff were on hand at the Orbost show last Monday promoting the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange [operation model review](#), the Expressions of Interest for upcoming vacant positions on the [Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee](#) and the new Agricultural Leadership Program that council was successful in receiving funding for.

There was also a Grown, Caught, Made Discovery Trail which 50 people registered their interest in by collecting the 'questions, shout out to the 19 people that completed the challenge, which took well over half an hour this year.

We did note that the community laws team were very busy with their 'pets' and the library provided a nice place for quieter times and games for the kids. The waste and sustainability worker was super busy as people were establishing exactly what can go in individual bins each week. Great display team!



Compiled for general information only. There are many more programs and projects being delivered in the region, contact your local agencies, production group or ag business to find out more.

If a friend would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, please email Kaylene Wickham Agribusiness Development Officer East Gippsland Shire Council at kaylenewi@egipps.vic.gov.au or call 5153 9450.



18 & 19 MAR 2025

6:00PM - 7:30PM

ZOOM LINK VIA QR

CALVING ESSENTIALS WEBINAR SERIES

HOSTED BY THE **STOCK SENSE TEAM** AND
DR ROB BONNANO

New to calving? Wanting to learn more? Maybe you just need a quick refresher!

This **FREE** webinar is perfect for you.

Get ready for the calving season with a checklist covering everything you need to know.



WEBINARS TO INCLUDE:

101 Essentials

Methods to preventing calving problems - a whole system approach

Q&A Session

MORE INFORMATION

1300 882 833

vff.org.au/stock-sense/

stocksense@vff.org.au




Register now



Webinar – Assessing Drench Resistance in Sheep.

Overview of recent testing in East Gippsland

 **Monday 17, March 2025 | 7pm**

 **Webinar**

Project background

This 3-year project with the Bairnsdale Bestwool/BestLamb group demonstrates best practice sheep worm management in East Gippsland.

As part of this project, several East Gippsland producers have undertaken Worm Egg Count Reduction Testing (WECRT), more commonly known as drench resistance testing, to identify the level of drench efficacy in their flocks.

This webinar will give an overview of the results and outline why knowing the drench resistance status of your flock is important management tool.

Presenter

Ben Blomfield, Bairnsdale BestWool/BestLamb group co-ordinator and veterinary consultant from Melbourne University's MacKinnon Project

Topics

This webinar will cover the following;

- Common worm species and their lifecycle
- Contributing factors to drench resistance
- Results of the resistance testing as part of this project
- Options to manage resistance
- Question and answer time.



This event is a part of an Enhanced Producer Demonstration Site (EPDS) project, co-funded by Meat & Livestock Australia and Agriculture Victoria, and run in conjunction with the Bairnsdale BestWool BestLamb Group.

For more information:

Keren Walker, Agriculture Victoria
0477 706 384
keren.walker@agriculture.vic.gov.au

Register here

RSVP by Monday March 17, 5pm

Agricultural Sector Advisory Committee

Expressions of Interest will open soon



Council will have seven positions vacant on the Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee



The primary role of the committee is to provide advice, guidance and recommendations to Council on matters that affect the agriculture sector



The Committee provides a valuable forum through which Council can gain timely and informed insight into the issues that are impacting the agriculture sector



Membership is for a period of two years from appointment, with an option to extend for a further two years

More information about this Committee can be found in the Charter
[Charter - East Gippsland Agriculture Sector Advisory Committee](#)



The Committee has sixteen members, comprising:

- Two Councillors, one of whom will be the [Mayor](#)
- Eleven industry members
- One representative from Agriculture Victoria, East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority, Food & Fibre Gippsland

Kaylene Wickham ■ *Agribusines Development Officer* ■ **P: 03 5153 9450**

BUSINESS OF FARMING

“Workplace Gold”

Be the farm that everyone wants to work on

Join us for an insightful session designed to help primary producers attract, manage and retain skilled workers in agriculture. Led by Sally Murfet, who knows her stuff as an experienced HR strategist and thought leader in the Agricultural sector, this event will provide practical tools and strategies to build a strong, capable workforce.



Becoming a desired employer

What sets great agricultural employers apart?



Attracting & retaining skilled workers

Proven strategies to build a loyal and capable team.



Leadership and Communication

Practical tools to ensure you and your business are prepared to employ and manage staff effectively.



BAIRNSDALE

Monday 24th March 5:30pm-7:30pm

Gippsland Agricultural Centre, Bairnsdale Airport

FLYNN

Tuesday 25th March 10:30am-12:30pm

Flynn Community Hall- Waddis Way, Flynn

LEONGATHA

Tuesday 25th March 5:30pm-7:30pm

Space 47 - 47 McCartin St, Leongatha

No cost & meal provided

REGISTER

PHONE CHRIS

0487 291 197

LINK: <https://bit.ly/4hPNTkM>

QR SCAN:



This event received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

VAM Paddock Productions Presents

JUST A FARMER



LEILA
McDOUGALL

JOEL
JACKSON

AND
ROBERT
TAYLOR

FREE EVENT

SUNDAY 30 MARCH 2025

BUCHAN HALL MAIN ROAD BUCHAN

MOVIE SCREENING 2PM

4:00 PM – LIVE MUSIC: LOCAL DUO

**5:30 PM – SAUSAGE SIZZLE: A DELICIOUS MEAL WITH
VEGETARIAN OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

**• CHILDREN/YOUTH ENTERTAINMENT: FUN GAMES, ARTS
AND CRAFTS**

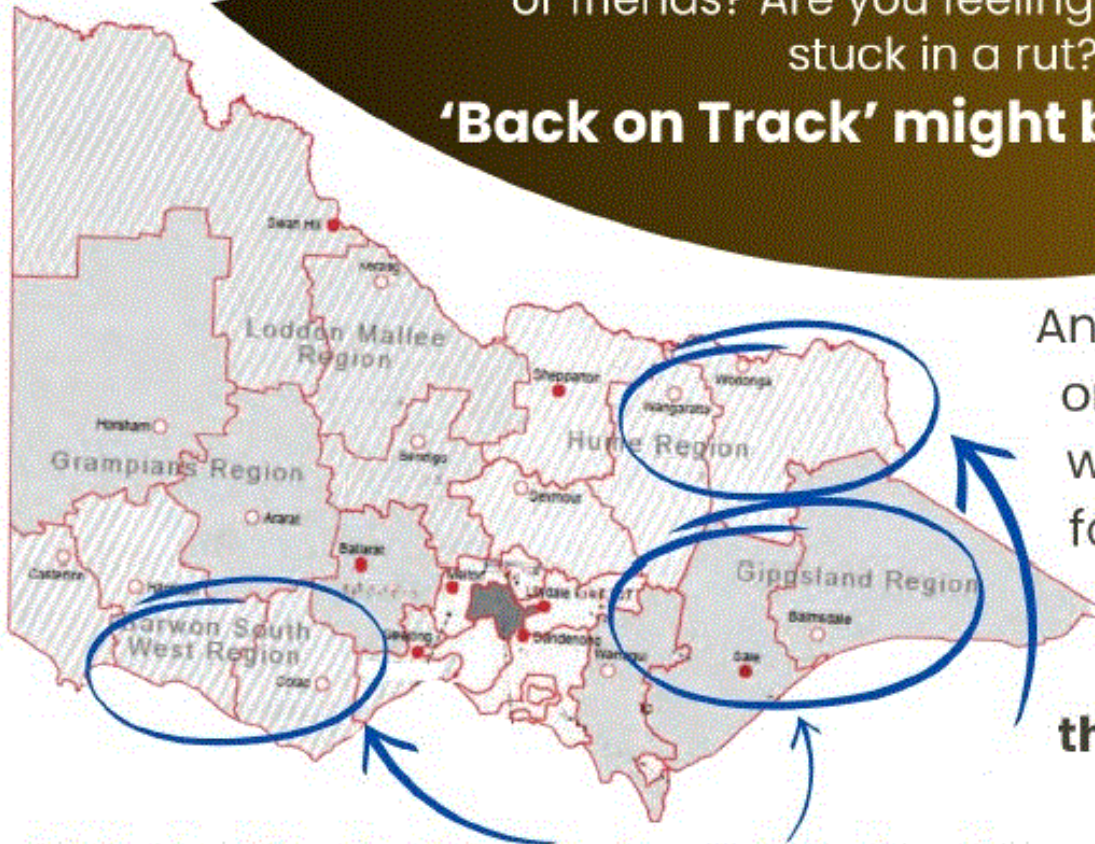




Back On Track

Are you feeling overwhelmed, lacking concentration, or avoiding tasks, family or friends? Are you feeling run down or stuck in a rut?

'Back on Track' might be for you!



An innovative 1-on-1 program with a Coach for 10-weekly sessions **running in these regions now**

We're looking for 40 members of the farming community to participate in a new peer-led mental health program trial!

Find out more!

T: 03 5551 8533

E: ncfh@wdhs.net

W: farmerhealth.org.au/back-on-track
or scan QR code to register your interest

CLOSING SOON

Don't hesitate to share this opportunity with others





TopSoils

Unlocking the secrets of your soil

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Join the Top Soils Project and take part in an innovative soil-testing initiative designed to deepen our understanding of soil conditions across the East Gippsland region. This exciting opportunity allows farmers to gain valuable insights into their paddock's soil health while contributing to a region-wide dataset that tracks long term changes, identifies trends, and helps drive advancements in soil science and sustainable farming practices.

What Is It?

The Top Soils Project is conducting a region-wide soil testing initiative designed to collect 200 soil samples across 100 farms in East Gippsland. Soil testing will occur in 2025 and will be repeated in 2028 to monitor changes over time.

Soil testing will be conducted at two depths: 0-10 cm and 10-20cm

Testing will include analyses of:

pH / Acidity: pHw, pH _{CaCl2} , EC:1	Cations
Phosphorus: Colwell, Olsen, DGT-P	Total Nitrogen (N)
Potassium: Colwell	Nitrate
Sulphur: KCl40	Boron
Phosphorus Buffering Index (PBI)	Manganese
Australian Texture Class	Copper
Aluminum	Zinc
MIR Calcium Carbonate	Iron
	Carbon

Why Is It Important?

This project empowers farmers with a detailed understanding of their soil conditions, enabling them to make informed management decisions. Additionally, it contributes to identifying regional soil trends and provides insights for improving East Gippsland's soil management strategies.

What's new?

The project collaborates with researchers to incorporate advanced soil testing methodologies:

Phosphorus Testing

A cutting-edge method for measuring phosphorus availability tailored to Australia's unique soil conditions. Unlike current tests that may overestimate available phosphorus, this new approach;

- Measures available phosphorus at more relevant chemical and physical Australian soil conditions.
- Can provide predictions for phosphorus application rates required to maximise yields in deficient soils.

Soil Carbon Testing

Leveraging CSIRO-recommended methodologies, this test examines soil quality indicators responding to changes in the rhizosphere caused by management practices and has shown positive correlations with soil microbial biomass, microbial nitrogen, mineralisable nitrogen and total carbohydrates.

By combining traditional and innovative techniques, this project provides unparalleled insights into soil health and productivity.

Benefits to Producers

Participating farmers will receive:

- **Expert Guidance:** One-on-one support from soil testing specialists.
- **Comprehensive Results:** Soil test results and a detailed report for your paddock.
- **Innovative Research:** Be part of cutting-edge research exploring advanced testing techniques and modelling.
- **Skill Sharing:** Networking opportunities with other producers and support from subject matter experts.

What We Need from You

Farmers participating in the program will be asked to:

1. Provide access to a paddock for soil sampling (in 2025 and again in 2028).
2. Assist in gathering information on paddock management, such as fertiliser applications and grazing practices.
3. Agree to share soil test data and site information with project partners, so that the information can be used in advancing soil testing methodologies with research partners and collated to examine region wide soil trends.

How to Express Interest

To participate or learn more, contact: Natalie Jenkins by text/phone on 0436 462 559 or email at njenkins@sfs.org.au or scan the QR code

The first round of soil testing will take place this Autumn 2025. As places are limited, this is an Expression of Interest process. All applicants will be informed of the outcome.

Be part of this exciting journey to improve soil health and productivity across East Gippsland!



The Top Soils Project is supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate Smart Agriculture Program



EAST GIPPSLAND
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY



Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water



East Gippsland Agribusiness Leadership Program

**New funding has
been secured**



Participants will be empowered to drive transformative change in their businesses, communities, and the broader agricultural landscape, gaining the knowledge and confidence to lead the future of farming in our thriving region.

Led by farm management consultant Chris Mirams and futurist Dr Gary Saliba, running from March through to May 2025, the program offers an opportunity to see firsthand how our communities are reimagining their farming approaches, fostering resilience, diversifying income streams, and building stronger collaborations.

This experience integrates learnings from the program into practice—from solving immediate farm challenges to developing long-term strategies that enhance profitability, sustainability, and community vitality.

Key Dates:

- **4 March EOI opens**
- **18 March Closes**
- **20 March Applicants will be advised if successful**
- **24 & 25 March Program commences**

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