



Bega Valley Business Forum Regional Summit Report

September 2022



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of the Bega Valley Shire, the people of the Yuin nation, and show our respect to elders past, present and emerging.

Acknowledgement of Funding

This is a Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Although funding for this project has been provided by both the Australian and NSW governments, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views of either Government.



Australian Government



Table of contents

A word from the Chair of the Forum	3
1. Executive summary	4
1.1 Background	4
1.2 Our Vision.....	4
1.3 Our Objectives.....	4
1.4 Key Projects	4
1.5 How it will be delivered	4
2. Purpose	5
2.1 Geographical Scope	5
2.2 How we will use this Report	5
3. Regional Drivers for change	6
4. Our Priorities	7
4.1 Our Vision for the Bega Valley – what does the future look like?.....	7
4.2 Strategic Alignment.....	7
5. Our Future Investment	- 8 -
6. Evaluation and updating the projects	- 11 -

Figures

Figure 3-1 Our priorities	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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Tables

Table 2 Regional Project Plan.....	- 8 -
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A word from the Chair of the Forum

Businesses in the Bega Valley have faced some of the most challenging times over the past three years with fire, floods and a global pandemic requiring us to rally together to support our community through a recovery journey.

The Bega Valley Business Forum are extremely grateful to have received funding from the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements that made our strategic planning and a Regional Summit possible.

The Forum recognise that forward planning is crucial for us to be able to embrace a future full of opportunities for growth, diversification, and prosperity. The process of coming together to sit down and look at ways we can better collaborate, communicate and work together to revisit our vision, strengthen our strategic objectives and improve our governance has been an important one.

I would like to thank all that contributed, most importantly to those who gave up their time and actively participate in our regional summit. I'm looking forward to working together to grow our plans, achieve our goals and strengthen our commitment to supporting a thriving, sustainable and prosperous regional economy.



NS Ayling

Nigel Ayling

Chair

Bega Valley Business Forum

1. Executive summary

1.1 Background

The purpose of the Regional Summit was to engage members and stakeholders to contribute both ideas and information on how the agreed actions can be delivered, improve capacity of the chambers to work together under the Bega Valley Business Forum banner through shared understanding and agreed priorities and deliver a report that identifies some key projects for the forum to work on going forward.

1.2 Our Vision

The vision for BVBF is: **Leading business prosperity in the Bega Valley**

1.3 Our Objectives

1. To foster Economic Development and business prosperity in the Bega Valley.
2. To expand and diversify membership in co-operation with other stakeholders and organisations with similar business interests.
3. To collaborate by sharing innovation, entrepreneurial ideas, knowledge, expertise and resources, and develop productive business relationships.
4. To advocate and provide unified representation for our regional businesses
5. To provide assistance and advancement of business in the Region as the Board may determine from time to time.
6. To adopt contemporary governance and operational policies, practices and systems to position BVBF for the future
7. To attract diverse funding streams that are aligned with the purpose
8. To promote and support ethical and sustainable business practices by taking into consideration social and cultural impact, the environment and a circular economy

1.4 Key Projects

To address common challenges and achieve the future priorities, some Key Projects have been developed using the ideas and initiatives generated by the Regional Summit. (see Table 2 Key Projects)

1.5 How it will be delivered

The Bega Valley Business Forum will support the delivery of projects in partnership with the primary owner of the initiative. The Forum's support will be provided through facilitating discussions to activate opportunities, participating in advocacy efforts, contributing to plans, gathering inputs from our members and seconding funding requests. This report can be used to as useful guide to help direct the Forum's future efforts and should be revisited and be adapted to the challenges and opportunities that continue emerge.

2. Purpose

In September 2022, the Forum hosted a Regional Summit with the aim of bringing together members from each chamber and other key stakeholders to identify the big ideas that help address the key challenges that face the Bega Valley region. The summit helped to create a clear vision for the Bega Valley, identify the driver for a more resilient business community and help to strengthen the voice of the business community in our region.

The Summit generated (5) key projects that can continue to be developed to form targeted initiatives that help inform our decision making and actions over the next 10 years.

2.1 Geographical Scope

This report is focused on the Bega Valley Shire, and the benefits the proposed actions may bring to the region.

Therefore, the Bega Valley Shire Council Local Government Area (the Shire) is the area of influence for the Plan and its delivery.

2.2 How we will use this Report

We will use this Report to share our vision for the Bega Valley Business Forum to support the efforts of our members and other community and business groups in progressing initiatives, highlight related opportunities and to support funding applications.

The key projects complement the plans and strategies delivered by our partners at Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC), local businesses, as well as our local elected and industry representatives.



3. Regional Drivers for change

The following drivers for the Bega Valley region are guided by the Australian Government's The National Priority Foundations for Regional Growth 2020 (see references) they allow us to focus on the strengths, emerging investment opportunities and gaps in the Bega Valley.



The six drivers are:

1. **Connectivity and Infrastructure** incorporating digital connectivity, transport links, and freight and supply chain infrastructure.
2. **Human Capital and Skills** to provide skilled and adaptable workforces, regional universities and training, and schooling.
3. **Regional Employment and Business** to develop regional businesses and industry, local research and development and innovation, and strategic regional vision.
4. **Leadership and Collaboration** by investing in regional leadership, capable local government, and the Indigenous community.
5. **Amenity and Liveability** through providing services, facilities and liveability, and support for local priorities.
6. **Sustainable Natural Resources** to build future resilience, ensure sustainable foundations and provide economic opportunities and jobs.

4. Our Priorities

4.1 Our Vision for the Bega Valley – what does the future look like?

The vision for BVBF is: **Leading business prosperity in the Bega Valley**

Through discussing the issues and opportunities we established a set of strategic pillars that can guide the development of our key projects. Collectively these priorities form a vision for Bega Valley Business Forum.

The three Strategic Pillars are:

1. Economic prosperity

- Business development, innovation, engagement, advocacy and support
- Attract diverse membership
- Independence and recognition, the voice of business

2. Good Governance

- Contemporary governance and operational practices

3. Sustainable/Sustainability

- Diverse funding streams and sustainable business systems and practices

4.2 Strategic Alignment

These priorities help to support the delivery of the following Local, State and Federal strategies:

- ✓ 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW
- ✓ Regional Development Framework
- ✓ South East and Tablelands Regional Plan
- ✓ NSW State Infrastructure Strategy
- ✓ Far South Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy and Bushfire Addendum
- ✓ Regional Development Australia Far South Coast Transport Landscape and Connections Analysis
- ✓ NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan
- ✓ NSW Southern Regional Transport Plan
- ✓ South East and Tablelands Sport and Active Recreation Plan
- ✓ Canberra Region Joint Organisation Strategic Plan
- ✓ South Coast NSW Destination Management Plan
- ✓ NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy
- ✓ Bega Valley Shire Community Strategic Plan

5. Our Future Investment

The following projects were identified as part of the Regional Summit. They are presented by priority area with projected cost, lead organisation(s) and who benefits. While the Forum is not the lead agency for all of these projects, we will provide targeted support (subject to resources) and collaborate with other groups to ensure our collective vision for the future can be realised.

Table 1 Our Key Regional Projects

Priority Area	Project	Cost	Lead Organisation(s)	Who Benefits	Bega Valley Business Forum's role
Connectivity and Infrastructure	The Bega Valley Regional Trail Hub will connect our towns and villages to a sustainable, accessible, and diverse network of cycling, walking, and hiking trails.	\$250,000 for a regional trail connectivity plan that will progress the project.	Bega Valley Trail Alliance	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment The Environment Community Tourism People with a Disability Transport Infrastructure	Advocate for local, state, and federal investment. Participate in the co-design of funding applications. Provide letters of support for applications.
Human capital and skills	The Bega Valley Regional Country Education Precinct will be a collaboration between country universities, private training providers and state and federal government to improve	\$150,000 for the Business Case \$3.5 million for the facility	Bega Chamber of Commerce	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment Youth Universities and	Identify funding opportunities Provide letters of support for applications Participate in the co-design of funding applications.

Priority Area	Project	Cost	Lead Organisation(s)	Who Benefits	Bega Valley Business Forum's role
	training and education opportunities for people who want to live and work in our region.			tertiary education	Advocate for state and federal investment.
Leadership and collaboration	The Bega Valley Business Precinct will be a regional centre for business collaboration that will offer shared office space for networking, hot desking, conferences, and events leading to a stronger leadership capacity and business impact in the Bega Valley.	\$5 million for the purchase of the facility or business case to utilise it for this purpose.	Bega Valley Business Forum	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment	Identify funding opportunities Liaise with potential sponsors Work with Council to help secure rental space.
Regional employment and business	South Coast School of Excellence is a virtual tourism and hospitality centre which develops programs that help build a pipeline of new recruits, retain existing staff and support business owners to grow and lead.	Funded project (\$995,023) however additional funding required for an office in the Bega Valley & the establishment of a regional call centre.	Destination Southern	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment Tourism	Continue to work with Destination Southern to facilitate local opportunities. Include the South Coast School of Excellence in future funding bids for a home for the Bega Valley Business Precinct.

Priority Area	Project	Cost	Lead Organisation(s)	Who Benefits	Bega Valley Business Forum's role
		\$100,000 pa/annum			
Sustainable natural resources	Renewable Energy Powerhouse to be activated through a regional network of solar micro grids and community battery storage to improve our future resilience and reduce our carbon emissions and electricity costs for businesses and community.	\$1.06M for Feasibility and Engineering Study	Eden Recovery and Resilience Alliance	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment The Environment Community Emergency Services	Identify funding opportunities Provide letters of support for applications Participate in the co-design of funding applications. Advocate for state and federal investment.
Amenity & liveability	Bega Valley Affordable Housing Intervention will facilitate state government land acquisition for housing developments.	\$100,000 to identify a list feasible site(s) Further investment for housing developments	Bega Valley Shire Council & NSW State Government	Local Businesses Regional Economy Jobs and Employment Community	Advocate for local, state, and federal investment. Draw media attention to the impact of housing affordability on business and local economic growth.

6. Evaluation and updating the projects

The Regional Summit was an important event as we shape the future of business in the Bega Valley. The projects are to be reviewed annually and updated as projects are completed, and new opportunities emerge.



Attendees of the Regional Summit



From Left to Right. Anthony McMahon CEO BVSC Council, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick – Mayor BVSC, Mary Hoodless – Governance Consultant. Nigel Ayling - Chair Bega Valley Business Forum, Dr Michael Holland – Member for Bega, Rebecca Jones – Senior Consultant NGH