

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Regional Development



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EAST GIPPSLAND TOWNS TOAST FRESH LOOK FOR MAIN STREETS

The Allan Labor Government has delivered fresh streetscapes and town centre upgrades for two heritage-rich East Gippsland towns, providing a boost for local businesses and a better-connected community for locals.

Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes today announced the completion of upgrades at Buchan and Bruthen, made possible by more than \$3.8 million from the Australian and Victorian Government's *Local Economic Recovery Program*, which is jointly funded through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

The program was designed to support bushfire-affected communities across East Gippsland and the state's Northeast, and these projects specifically designed to encourage visitors to stay longer and explore more.

Residents, homes, businesses and services from both towns were impacted by the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires, and much of the renowned Buchan Caves Reserve was destroyed.

The Buchan upgrades supported around 20 jobs and included a redesign of the town's main road to make parking easier and safer, while creating a more welcoming and walkable town centre for locals and visitors.

New shared footpaths to the Buchan Caves campsite and links to the Buchan Recreation Reserve have been installed, making it easier for visitors to move between the popular tourist destinations and town.

In Bruthen, unsafe intersections have been removed to improve parking and provide safe crossing points, with new pedestrian footpaths installed to better connect popular venues and destinations within the town.

A yarning circle designed and installed by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) is featured at the Bruthen Gardens western entry, celebrating the rich Indigenous culture and care of the area.

Throughout Bruthen's town centre, new rock seating walls made from locally sourced Bruthen blue sandstone, as well as new street furniture and garden bed, have added a natural, aesthetically striking visual aspect to the town. The Bruthen toilet block was also upgraded for locals and visitors.

Retailers in Buchan and Bruthen also received individual grants to support shopfront upgrades, such as updated signage, fresh paintwork, awning and veranda repairs, and new lighting, windows and doors.

Economic development workshops and training were also delivered to businesses across both towns, providing access to professional services and sessions on increasing financial, marketing and digital capabilities.

The upgrades across both towns have been delivered by East Gippsland Shire Council and form part of the Government's more than \$47 billion investment in regional and rural towns in just over a decade – delivering the jobs, business growth and the infrastructure locals need. For more information, visit rdv.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

"Streetscape and town centre upgrades are more than just an uplift for regional and rural towns – they give a boost to local businesses, attract visitors and spending, and create vibrant spaces for the communities to connect."

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Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

“Buchan and Bruthen are great East Gippsland towns and these upgrades will encourage more people to discover why they are great places to live, visit, and explore.”

Quote attributable to Federal Senator for Victoria Raff Ciccone

“East Gippsland towns and those across Northeast Victoria and being supported by the Australian and Victorian Government’s commitment to help them rebuild after Black Summer.

Quote attributable to Mayor of East Gippsland Shire Council, Cr Jodie Ashworth

“This upgrade gives Buchan a main street that really works for the town. The improved parking, safer access and new shared paths make it easier for visitors to find their way around and enjoy what’s here.”