

# Destination **GIPPSLAND**

## Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry - Consumer Survey

The survey focuses on the following questions: please see our answers.

### How are businesses and consumers impacted by a lack of mobile coverage?

#### Background

Gippsland covers a major part of the eastern state of Victoria, encompassing a land area of close to 41,600km<sup>2</sup>. The region extends from its western end adjoining metropolitan Melbourne's south-eastern boundary to Cape Howe the most easterly point of Victoria. In the north, much of its northern boundary is defined by Victoria's high country and the adjacent NSW border. The southern boundary encompasses 700km of spectacular coastline and includes the most southern point of the Australian mainland, Wilsons Promontory.

The Gippsland Tourism Region of which Destination Gippsland services as the Regional Tourism Board includes the local government areas (LGAs) of Bass Coast Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, South Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire.

Destination Gippsland as part of its Destination Management Plan February 2022 references two Strategic areas in relation to mobile infrastructure and connectivity.

#### Strategic area 8 Strategic Priorities

Place making and enabling infrastructure investment.

Invest in place-making and basic enabling infrastructure (roads, digital, sewerage, etc.) to support the visitor economy.

#### Strategic area 9 Infrastructure Priorities.

Digital: Continue to develop digital infrastructure across the region to deliver what visitors need and assist with resident and emergency management requirements. IT issues such as black spots and Wi-Fi availability need to be improved.

The above provides the context for business and consumers in Gippsland. It is a large land mass with a variety of geography. The lack of mobile coverage has the following impacts.

#### Impact on Businesses:

A lack of mobile coverage can have significant impacts on both businesses and consumers both local and visitors to the region. It can lead to decreased productivity, reduced customer reach, increased costs, limited access to information and services, the impacts on the quality of life, the inability to connect during peak times and the opportunities to work remotely.

These cumulative effects all lead to a negative economic outcome for the region if the service is not reliable.

- Businesses who do not have access to reliable mobile coverage, may not be able to communicate effectively with employees, suppliers, or customers. This can lead to delays in operations, decreased productivity, and even lost business opportunities and hampers their ability to utilise digital offerings to create efficient and effective business practices.
- Businesses rely on mobile technology to reach customers; a lack of mobile coverage can limit their ability to connect with potential customers. This can lead to a decrease in sales and revenue.
- Businesses rely on mobile technology to conduct a variety of transactions with customers from initial contact, booking either by phone or online. A lack of mobile coverage can make it difficult or even impossible to process payments, which can have a significant impact on revenue.
- Businesses who do not have access to reliable mobile coverage may be required to invest in expensive equipment or infrastructure to ensure that they can still operate. This can increase costs and reduce profits.

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## Impact on Consumers:

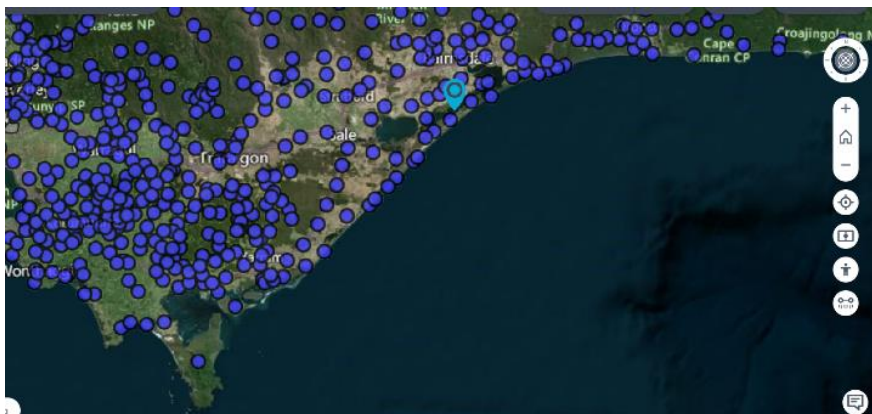
- Visitors and consumers are relying on mobile coverage to access information, such as local visitor information, news, weather updates, and directions. A lack of mobile coverage can make it difficult to access this information, which can be frustrating and potentially dangerous when there are emergency situations.
- Visitors and consumers use mobile devices to communicate with friends, family, and colleagues. A lack of mobile coverage can limit their ability to make calls or send messages, which can be particularly problematic in emergencies. It also impacts on their ability to share information and knowledge about the place they are visiting whether that is providing reviews, uploading photos or sharing stories in real time.
- Visitors and local consumers rely on mobile technology to access services such as banking, healthcare, education, tourism information and emergency broadcasts. A lack of mobile coverage can make it difficult or impossible to access these services, given the size of Gippsland this can be particularly limiting as most of the area is rural or remote.
- Mobile devices are often used for entertainment, such as streaming music and videos. A lack of mobile coverage can limit consumers' ability to access these services, which can be frustrating and can impact on the quality of life.
- At peak times the quality of the experience of the region can be impacted by the lack of mobile connectivity due to the increased number of visitors to popular holiday destinations across the region.
- With changes to the way consumers are working the opportunity to work from home across the region can be limited by the quality-of-service coverage.

## Would you support the provision of mobile roaming during emergencies?

If it solves the connectivity issues, however if there is a huge cost imposition that would need consideration on how visitors and consumers were charged for that service. As we know in emergencies or crisis events the aftermath with lack of income and access to support can be difficult and you would not want that to be a reason that people did not use it.

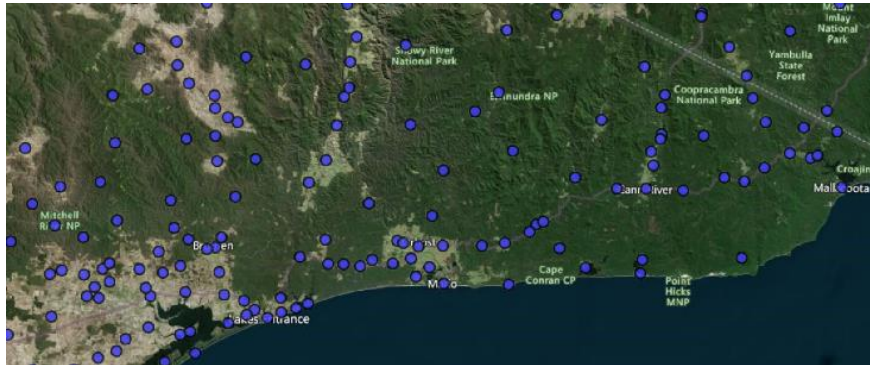
## Where can mobile coverage be improved?

There are significant areas of Gippsland that can be improved, some in towns, some in rural and remote areas. The maps below are the community reported blackspots in Gippsland taken from the <https://nationalmap.gov.au/> some of the north-western parts of the map below are not Gippsland.



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There is a significant portion of East Gippsland in the High Country which is not covered.



Destination Gippsland is the Regional Tourism Board and the peak tourism organisation for the region in eastern Victoria. The organisation was established in 2008 with the support of Visit Victoria, Parks Victoria and the six Local Government Councils of Gippsland. Destination Gippsland along with the six Gippsland councils is a member of One Gippsland.

We are a not-for-profit public company governed by a skills-based board supported by staff and industry networks. Our role is to inspire, influence and lead positive tourism outcomes through partnerships across Gippsland.

If you require further information about our organisation or this submission, please contact me on

██████████ or ██████████

Yours Sincerely

████████████████████

Janine Hayes  
Industry Development Manager