



# South Gippsland Conservation Society

## Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026

Adopted by Executive Committee - June 2021

### 1.0 Background

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#### 1.1 Who we are.

The South Gippsland Conservation Society (SGCS) has a long and proud history. We formed in 1976 and are now one of the longest running conservation organisations in Victoria.

SGCS has always operated across Southern Gippsland and predates the current Local Government boundaries. Our area takes in the coast and hinterland of most of the Bass Coast Shire (excluding Phillip Island) and into the nearby areas of the South Gippsland Shire. In recent years we have developed a strong presence in the Inverloch/ Wonthaggi area where many of our members reside.

We offer award winning education programs and activities, have a reputation for being strong advocates for the environment and competent project managers for environmental works.

#### 1.2 Our Partners

SGCS works with local, State and Federal government agencies and we enjoy good working relationships with our regional Department of Environment, Land, Water and Parks (DELWP), Parks Victoria, Coastcare and the Bass Coast Shire Council. These organisations provide grants for our works and offer support and assistance.

SGCS also works in partnership with other community groups. We have auspiced small community groups such as the Plastic Bag Free Bass Coast, Watershed, an on-ground project of the Friends of Harmers Haven/Harmers Haven Residents and Ratepayers and more recently the Bass Coast Climate Action Network and the Save Western Port Woodlands group.

We also network and work with a number of local groups which share our vision such as the Phillip Island Conservation Society, Landcare and local residents and ratepayers groups.

#### 1.3 The need to plan

The landscape and the space in which SGCS operates has changed significantly over the last 45 years. There are new and significant challenges facing the environment including the impacts of climate change, population growth and increasing tourism; and SGCS is now one of many organisations concerned about and acting to protect the environment.

In 2017, SGCS surveyed members to find out about their interests and priorities, what they thought was working well and what needed to change. Planning days in early 2019 and 2020 provided further opportunities for discussion about the issues and future for SGCS.

These exercises generated rich and valuable information about what was important to members and their concerns. Key concerns were about the sustainability of the organisation, and implications arising from the possible redevelopment of the current Bunurong Environment Centre site. Members also wanted SGCS to do more in response to the climate emergency. The planning also generated a lot of ideas to assist the organisation to move forward, but it was difficult to reconcile differences and get agreement to priorities. In response, SGCS applied and received a grant from Coastcare (part of DELWP) to employ a consultant to help focus its planning efforts.

Following the 2020 AGM, the new Committee of Management (Committee) was in a good position to commence strategic planning. Kate Paterson, from KEP Consulting Services, was contracted to support this work.

## 2.0 Strategic Planning

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Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that guide and shape what an organisation is, what it does and why it does it. Key to this process is the examination of the environment in which an organisation is working, with the responses to this knowledge shaping the way forward.

SGCS strategic planning involved five key stages.

### **Stage 1: Consolidation and analysis of existing planning work (from planning days and surveys) into a strategic framework (November 2020)**

- Initial strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Initial identification of planning themes.
- Committee discussion - identification of missing information, key questions and concerns.

### **Stage 2: Environmental analysis (November - December 2020)**

- Consultation with key stakeholders. Eleven interviews/ meetings were held (see Appendix 1 for a list). These explored the strengths, potential challenges and opportunities for SGCS.
- Survey of new members' interests and priorities.
- Preparation of a basic Political, Environmental, Social, Technology (PEST) analysis.
- Revised SWOT analysis incorporating information from stages 1 and 2 (see Table 1 for a summary).

### **Stage 3: Creating a draft plan (December 2020 – February 2021)**

Committee workshops and small group work to understand and respond to the environmental analysis, and identify key planning themes and future directions.

- Committee workshop 1: Understanding and prioritising the issues and opportunities. What does it mean for vision and mission?
- Committee workshop 2: Envisioning the future; refinement of vision and mission.

Following these workshops, a planning framework and key planning themes (Strategic goals) were identified and provided to the Committee for its consideration. Working in small groups, the Committee further developed relevant goals and objectives with reference to the emerging SGCS vision.

- Committee workshop 3: Confirmation of key directions, issues and opportunities check, suitability of actions.

#### **Stage 4: Membership consideration**

Consultation workshop with members.

- What do members like about the plan?
- What actions are needed to get people involved?
- Are there any issues which have not been addressed? What do we need to do to address these issues?

#### **Stage 5: Completion of plan**

- Adjust and amend in response to member feedback
- Complete “how do we know if we have achieved this” and timeframe.
- Adopt plan and start implementing!

**Table 1: Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Internal	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work well with and respected by Government agencies</li> <li>• Facilitate significant resources into the local area</li> <li>• Capable and competent land and project managers</li> <li>• Credible, respected and authoritative in local area; strong identity with Inverloch and parts of Bass Coast</li> <li>• Advocacy work for the environment</li> <li>• “go to” organisation when community support needed; access to people and resources.</li> <li>• Newsletter is a good source of information/ is valued</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for people to engage with nature</li> <li>• Provider of quality community education (significant provider of Summer by the Sea, Dinosaur Program)</li> <li>• BEC as a place for people to learn about SGCS, provide education and for people and organisations to meet.</li> <li>• Independent revenue (shop and education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhoc approach to partnerships and auspicing; possible benefits not being leveraged.</li> <li>• Skill deficits - expertise in education and project management is tied to individuals.</li> <li>• Lack of strategic focus (what is the purpose of the organisation?)</li> <li>• Some disconnect between SGCS activities and members’ interests/ core purpose.</li> <li>• Many long time and experienced members are ready to hand over responsibility; new members not stepping up to take on organisational roles or work of the organisation.</li> <li>• Membership is older (not attracting many younger people)</li> <li>• Systems and structure have not kept up with increased administration and accountability requirements.</li> <li>• Lack of activity and engagement with South Gippsland Shire council and area.</li> <li>• Ensuring timely communication about activities.</li> <li>• Shop’s profits are decreasing.</li> <li>• Minimal interest in business focus to build revenue/ income.</li> </ul>
External	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tap into ongoing strong support from Government agencies for community organisations as partners in caring for the environment.</li> <li>• Maximise impact through collaborating or partnering with like-minded groups in the area for projects, to elevate the community voice and identify gaps and issues (potential for a leadership role).</li> <li>• Continue to strengthen links with existing government partners – Bass Coast Shire Council, ParksVic, Coastcare.</li> <li>• New administration at South Gippsland Shire (opportunities to influence).</li> <li>• Better representation/ involvement in issues affecting Southern Gippsland area (not just Inverloch and surrounds)</li> <li>• Population growth/ high number of healthy retirees moving into the area = potential members.</li> <li>• Improve use of social media/ non-traditional methods to connect people with activities.</li> <li>• Tap into members’ interests (climate change, adaptation and mitigation; connecting with like-minded others).</li> <li>• Learn from traditional owners</li> <li>• Focus education/ information on sustainable living.</li> <li>• Increase independent revenue: shop, education, use DGR status to maximise opportunities for donations/ philanthropic funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty about the BEC and what space SGCS will have in the future for its activities, including the shop and education (and therefore revenue).</li> <li>• Competing demand for SGCS time and resources: eg: growing population/tourism is putting demand on development (construction is largest industry in Bass Coast); YB Marine Park and Dinosaur trail.</li> <li>• Competition for funds and resources – eg: from land care groups.</li> <li>• Volunteers are more likely to participate in areas and issues that directly affect them (and therefore difficulties in attracting resources to areas of high need but low population)</li> <li>• Availability of eco-products elsewhere means shop produce is becoming less relevant.</li> <li>• Lack of resources to meet increasing accountability/ safety/insurance requirements re grants, working with schools etc.</li> </ul>

## 3.0 Understanding the Plan

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### 3.1 Vision and mission

This vision and mission developed through an iterative process with Committee members responding to questions about how to describe the organisation, the reasons it exists, what it does, what it values, what makes it unique, where it operates and its aspirations.

Getting to this statement involved reflecting on where the organisation had come from, what members and other stakeholders had identified as important and where it wanted to go.

#### Vision

People and organisations working together to protect and nurture the natural environment across Southern Gippsland

#### Mission

- Inspire (to act and to care)
- Connect (with like-minded others and the environment)
- Act (to protect and nurture)

#### Strategies

**Foster** a sense of wonder and care for the natural environment.

**Invest in activities** which rebuild and protect the environment.

**Advocate** for planning decisions that protect, care and restore ecosystems, and climate action.

**Support, collaborate and partner** with those that share our vision.

**Develop and implement strategies** to ensure the future of the SGCS.

### 3.2 Framework

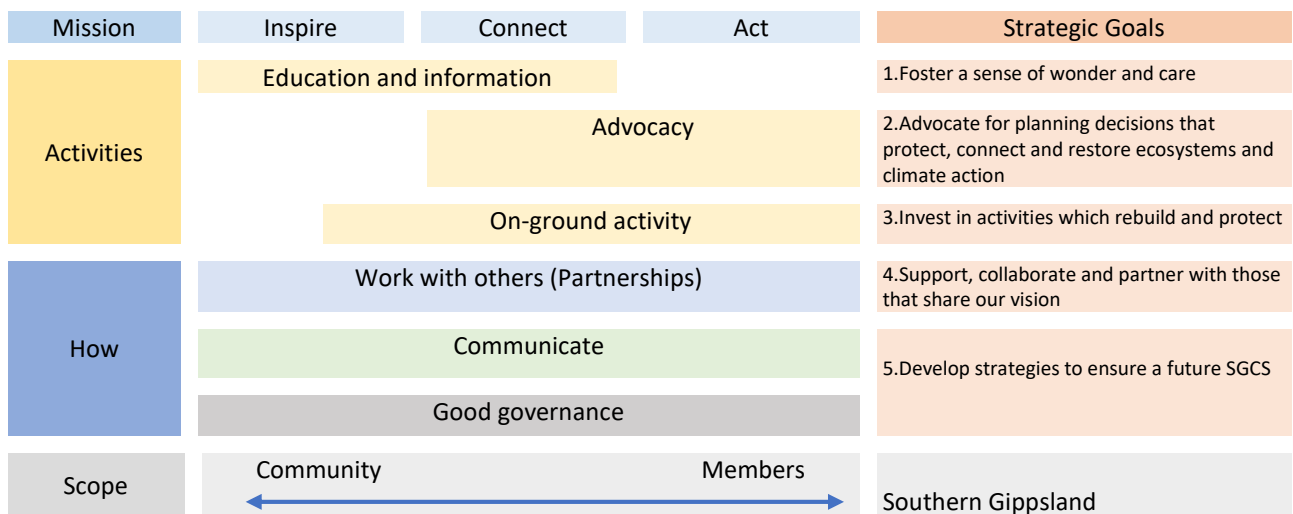
The plan is built around a framework based on the mission, strategic goals and three key activity areas of education and information, advocacy, and on-ground activity (See Figure 1).

Communication, partnerships and good governance are identified as key enablers and sit across multiple strategies.

Some things to note about the plan include that it:

- Encompasses a renewed focus on engaging members, who are at the centre of the organisation, while continuing to look outward to the broader community, recognizing that SGCS can use its knowledge, expertise and passion to inspire others to also nurture and protect the natural world.
- Recognises SGCS's current concentration of activity in the Inverloch/Wonthaggi area but confirms that it will support activity outside this area if there is local interest and capacity to participate and lead new actions. For example, this might include auspicing or mentoring groups in the South Gippsland Shire.

**Figure 1: The Strategic Plan Framework**



With rejuvenation of the organisation a key part of this plan, key directions are to:

- Professionalise and re-organise to better identify and adapt to both funding and community led action, opportunities and issues as they arise.
- Spread responsibility of SGCS operations across the organisation, with new structures to engage and involve both members and the community.
- Appropriately resource activities operating out of the Bunurong Environment Centre.
- Maximise impact through partnering and coordinating with others.
- Focus on communication to connect and inform, including expanded use of online platforms.
- Expand and focus the educational effort in two priority areas - building understanding of the local natural environment and sustainability.

One issue that this plan does not address is the name of the organisation. The planning process identified many different views about the name, with concerns that South Gippsland is often interpreted as South Gippsland Shire and that the word “conservation” was old fashioned and turned young people away. However, these views were far from unanimously shared and it was noted that the name ‘South Gippsland Conservation Society’ is associated with a high-quality organisation with a good reputation.

Deciding to pursue a new name and what that new name should be is not the business of a Strategic Plan. The plan sets out a significant workload for the organisation over the next five years, with time and effort to be prioritised towards activities which support its operations and long-term sustainability. However, it is important to note that the lack of an action to commit to this work does not mean that a name review cannot or will not happen in the future.

## Strategic Goal 1: Foster a sense of wonder and care for the natural environment

This outward facing strategy recognises that connecting and encouraging people to participate in the natural world is a pathway to action at both personal and systemic levels to protect and conserve the environment. Its core activities are education and information provision.

The SGCS education program is largely focussed on the wider community, including tourists. It provides revenue and is highly valued by funding partners. SGCS is the largest provider of Summer by the Sea in the area and the Bass Coast Shire Council also acknowledges the important role SGCS plays in providing information about the local area.

Over the next five years, the SGCS education and information program will have two priorities:

- Outside exploration activities which connect people with the natural environment, teach the importance of biodiversity and conservation, and foster an appreciation of nature's wonder.
- Sustainability and responding to climate issues, encouraging members to make changes to how they live through provision of information via workshops, special events and use of online resources.

Growing and developing the program will depend on capacity to generate revenue, demand, external funding opportunities and successful expansion of the pool of educators. High demand education programs which are less aligned with the priority areas, such as dinosaur discovery, may have the potential to generate higher income and can be a source of revenue for the broader program (see Strategy 5).

A new communication strategy, building on the success of the newsletter and developing a stronger online presence will provide a solid foundation for improving access to education, information about the Southern Gippsland environment and connecting people to advocacy and on ground activities.

The actions under this Strategy also recognise the importance of a physical presence for the SGCS in which people can be inspired, be informed and connect around the natural environment. The Bunurong Environment Centre (BEC) has introduced many people to SGCS and its activities.

Strategic Goal 1: Foster a sense of wonder and care for the natural environment						
Objectives/Actions	How will we know we have achieved this?	Timeframe (by June)				
		22	23	24	25	26
<b>Objective 1.1 Expand and improve access to education programs with a focus on connecting people with the natural environment, expanding awareness of climate change and promoting sustainable living.</b>						
1.1.1 Explore cost recovery options and/or grants for an expanded education program.	Education programs are self funded.	✓	✓	✓		
1.1.2 Remain a key provider of Summer by the Sea in the Inverloch/Wonthaggi area with a focus on delivery of experiences in and about the local natural environment for all age groups.	Summer by the Sea funding received every year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	New education programs designed and delivered under this platform					
1.1.3 Build an on-line presence to deliver education and information about the environment, sustainable living, and climate change including recordings of guest speakers	Education program available on website			✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 1.2 Expand our pool of educators and employ professionals to create programs as needed.</b>						
1.2.1 Expand pool of educators through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partnerships with like-minded organisations or individuals (including local Aboriginal communities)</li> <li>identifying members with relevant skills</li> <li>advertising through newsletter/social media</li> </ul>	Increased number of educators available to deliver content. At least 2 educators identified for most activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 1.3 Ensure timely and responsive communication about local environmental issues, SGCS and partner activities and opportunities to make a difference.</b>						
1.3.1 Develop a comprehensive communication strategy.	Strategy is inclusive of existing and new forms of communication and is being implemented by communication subcommittee	✓				
1.3.2 Maintain the fortnightly newsletter and identify opportunities to expand content, including from partners, so that it is the “go to” place for information on the Southern Gippsland environment. Identify, communicate, and promote to our members and the broader community existing activities such as established citizen science opportunities and environmental actions (eg: Clean Up Australia Day).	Newsletter readership has expanded		✓			
1.3.3 Expand our online presence and use of social and other media.	Increased “hits” to the website and facebook			✓		
1.3.4 Build connections with local media and online news sites– i.e. regular column in local paper and Bass Coast Post.	SGCS features monthly in local papers		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 1.4 Maintain a well-managed physical presence in the Bass Coast Shire to promote connection to and understanding of the environment, and sustainable living in the community and to provide a meeting space for environment groups.</b>						
1.4.1 As part of the BEC redevelopment seek: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a multi-purpose space for meetings, workshops, information displays and retail opportunities.</li> </ul>	SGSC rep in Council discussions	✓	✓	✓		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and construction which ensures a carbon neutral footprint and efficient use of all resources.</li> </ul>						
1.4.2 Develop an interim plan (possibly up to 5 years prior to redevelopment) to enhance the current building (inside and out).	Plan developed and implemented.	✓				
1.4.3 Explore options and opportunities for expanding physical presence (including pop up opportunities, markets etc) including for when the BEC is being redeveloped.	Options presented to Committee		✓	✓		
<b>Objective 1.5 Explore opportunities for SGCS in the operations of the proposed Bass Coast Sustainability Centre.</b>						
1.5.1 Ensure representation on decision-making bodies.	SGCS representative in Council discussions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.5.2 Maintain regular liaison with Bass Coast Shire Council.	SGCS meeting with Council at least 4 times a year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.5.3 If appropriate, seek funding for presence in Bass Coast Sustainability Centre.	If appropriate, funding application made		✓	✓		
<b>Objective 1.6 Re-focus our retail offering to books and resources which inform and educate about the environment and sustainable living.</b>						
1.6.1 Review sales data and interest in SGCS books and resource.	Analysis of sales provided to Committee.	✓				
1.6.2 Identify opportunities for alternative retail space (see also 1.4.3).	Options presented to Committee		✓			
1.6.3 Develop a plan for the revision and reprinting of SGCS publications.	Plan developed and implemented			✓		
<b>Objective 1.7 Identify and act on opportunities to promote and support community engagement with publicly owned land.</b>						
1.7.1 Seek grants for signage in public reserves which inform about vegetation, fauna and other environmental issues.	Grants made as appropriate			✓	✓	✓

## Strategy 2: Advocate for planning decisions that protect, care and restore ecosystems, and climate action.

SGCS members strongly support and value the advocacy work undertaken by SGCS, including its work in responding to development around the townships.

SGCS will continue to advocate for planning decisions that protect, connect and restore ecosystems. For advocacy around planning matters, the proposed working group structure (see Strategy 5) will allow for local actions and activities to be identified. Project coordinators will take a lead responsibility for coordinating volunteer effort, while working group members can assist with planning and strategy. The Executive (through the Chair and the Working Group Advocacy Chair) will need to maintain and develop links to people and organisations with the skills and interests in supporting the SGCS advocacy work.

SGCS will also support advocacy to address the urgent need to decarbonise and draw down greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the need for climate adaptation and mitigation. We intend to continue to support and work closely with the Bass Coast Climate Action Network to progress this priority.

Over the next five years, SGCS will draw in the skills and enthusiasm of our members to ensure we build capacity and capability to participate and contribute to policy, planning and program directions from local, State and Federal Government. SGCS will prioritise its efforts to local and regional plans and partner or coordinate with other local organisations to maximise impact for effort.

<b>Strategy 2: Advocate for planning decisions that protect, care and restore ecosystems, and climate action.</b>						
<b>Objectives/Actions</b>	<b>How will we know we have achieved this?</b>	<b>Timeframe (by June)</b>				
		22	23	24	25	26
<b>Objective 2.1 Support and develop advocacy capability within SGCS and its partners.</b>						
2.1.1 Use the record of members' skills (action 5.2.4) to identify SGCS member expertise to assist in strategy development and planning disputes (eg: to act as expert witnesses in VCAT hearings) (internal expertise)	Relevant members contacted/ recruited for action by advocacy working group.	✓				
2.1.2 Identify supportive organisations and potential partners, establish relationships and identify opportunities for joint advocacy work. For example: Bunurong Land Council , Bass Coast Climate Action Networ(BCCAN), Landcare, Save Western Port Woodlands etc. (External expertise)	Advocacy working group has identified key contacts and delegated responsibility for maintaining relationship with relevant organisations		✓			
2.1.3 Prepare formal submissions on behalf of SGCS and create resources such as templates to multiply the impact of members and other groups.	Other organisations/ people are using SGCS templates to make submissions			✓		
2.1.4 Run community information sessions to provide insight into planning laws and processes related to protection of the environment (eg: protection of vegetation), and the knowledge, skills and resources required to make objections.	Annual community information sessions are a standard feature of SGCS operations				✓	
2.1.5 Explore options and opportunities to improve resources available to the community to fund representation at planning panels/VCAT.	Advocacy working group has prepared plan for increasing resources			✓		
<b>Objective 2.2 Monitor development applications and mobilise support as required.</b>						
2.2.1 Monitor relevant planning proposals and provide a timely alert for members and other allied groups.	Clear process in place for sharing information to partners/ community linked to Communication Strategy	✓	✓	✓		

2.2.2 Provide member expertise or funds for local communities/groups for specialist work such as expert witnesses and preparation of planning objections.	Budget includes funding for specialist work; Advocacy working group has established criteria for expenditure			✓		
2.2.4 Monitor and inform members of important state and national campaigns (i.e. Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) review), cross referencing material prepared by other environmental groups such as Environment Victoria or Australian Conservation Foundation.	Newsletter/ website includes section on “other” campaigns	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 2.3 Proactively advocate to government, including to participate in government consultation processes, giving priority to local and regional issues.</b>						
2.3.1. Keep a timetable of policy/planning processes such as inquiries, policy development and strategic plans (e.g. Coast Care Strategy or EPBC Review).	Annual time table of key planning events developed and updated every six months	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2.3.2. Collect qualitative and quantitative data about what is happening in the local environment to feed into the planning processes.	Process to collect data is established and implemented (project leaders have been identified)				✓	
2.3.3 Work with “smaller” groups or organisations to support them to have a voice in these processes.	Joint submissions or other actions developed with small groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3.4 Work with Bass Coast Climate Action Network(BCCAN) to coordinate member involvement in climate emergency advocacy.	SGCS members are aware of and are active in BCCAN activities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 2.4 Inform our key partners (eg: Council, Parks Victoria) of issues and concerns affecting the wellbeing of our local natural environment.</b>						
2.4.1 Provide mechanisms for members to pro-actively identify and report issues and concerns affecting public lands and the environment.	SGCS has a process for members to report issues	✓				

## Strategy 3: Invest in activities which rebuild and protect the environment

SGCS works to improve publicly owned land.

The SGCS membership identifies on-ground activities as one the highest priorities for the organisation; and what they like most about being a member are local efforts to protect the environment. New members also identify that a key reason for joining SGCS is to support conservation work.

SGCS recognises that its on-ground activities are important response to the climate emergency, including to support adaptation and mitigate the effects of a warming environment.

SGCS partners, and particularly Parks Victoria, value the close working relationship and the quality of work undertaken by the organisation and it is recognised that SGCS successfully bring conservations resources into the area.

In recent times most of SGCS's on-ground work has centred on Inverloch. However, in 2019 SGCS signed a license agreement with the Victorian Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (DELWP) to restore a parcel of land in Carney's Rd, Wonthaggi. This major project was kick started with a Victorian Government 'Pick My Project' grant. This strategy confirms an ongoing commitment to continue and expand on-ground activity to other sites in the Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires in close collaboration with land managers, but recognises that capacity to do this depends on local interest. Over the next five years, SGCS will also have opportunities to shape and contribute to the Yallock Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park - a major project in this region.

This plan identifies a need to focus on maintaining and building partnerships around shared priorities and outcomes to maximise effort and maintaining and building a relevant skills base, including in areas of project and environmental management (see Strategy 5).

<b>Strategy 3: Invest in activities which rebuild and protect the environment.</b>						
<b>Objectives/ Actions</b>	<b>How will we know we have achieved this?</b>	<b>Timeframe(By June)</b>				
		22	23	24	25	26
<b>Objective 3.1 Develop a 'project bank' of new on-ground projects and a plan to implement them.</b>						
3.1.1 Meet at least once/year with local land managers and other stakeholders to identify priority areas and develop shared outcomes for on-ground works.	Meetings held.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.1.2 Develop a plan to fund and implement expansion of SGCS project sites beyond Inverloch/Wonthaggi areas.	Plan developed.			✓		
<b>Objective 3.2 Increase engagement by SGCS members and the wider community in on ground project work.</b>						
3.2.1 Implement an annual working bee calendar and promote to all SGCS members and friends.	Screw Creek, Ayr Creek, Thompson Estate	✓				

	Carneys Rd and one more site		✓			
	At least one additional site/year			✓	✓	✓
3.2.2 Develop small working groups (of at least 2 people) to take responsibility for working bees and other work at a site working under the oversight of the SGCS Projects Committee.	Working groups formed.	✓				
3.2.3 Apply to DEWLP community volunteer grants to employ a Project Officer to expand the number of sites with volunteer friends' groups.	Funding achieved by Dec 2022.	✓	✓			
3.2.4 Organise field days which provide an opportunity to view and discuss the natural values of the sites we are working on and plans for protection. Promote to SGCS, wider community and land managers.	1 field day (2021), 2 in 2022 and 4/year thereafter.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2.5 Make working bee calendar available on website, and use online and social media to advertise upcoming events in a timely manner.	Working bee on website (at least six months in advance)	✓				
<b>Objective 3.3 Ensure SGCS on-ground work is appropriately resourced and managed.</b>						
3.3.1 Refresh the works trailer (with working bee tools and safety gear) and make available to all working groups/friends of groups including other local on-ground groups.	Trailer complete. Email all local groups to tell them about trailer.	✓				
3.3.2 Develop a kit of materials on safety procedures and land management instructions to support the work of working groups/friends of groups.	Kit prepared and given to site leaders.	✓				
3.3.3 Develop an annual budget to support regular on-ground activity (separate to major project funding). Funds to be allocated from shop/education profits.	Annual budgets prepared.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.3.4 Prepare a dossier and map of SGCS completed projects to assist in gaining grant applications and presenting to land managers. (put on website)	Document prepared and used in grant applications and land manager briefings.	✓				

#### Strategy 4: Support, collaborate and partner with those that share our vision

This strategy is about maximising impact through working with others. It explicitly recognises that there are now many government and non-government organisations, community groups and individuals who are invested in the protection of the environment. SGCS is well placed to partner, collaborate, and support individuals, organisations and groups – allowing it to focus on what it does best while also expanding reach and impact.

Over the next five years, SGCS will tap into the broader network of like-minded organisations. This includes supporting their activities (and vice versa) and seeking opportunities to share experience, knowledge and information. Importantly, SGCS will seek stronger links with local Aboriginal communities and the Aboriginal Land Councils to ensure that SGCS activities respect and are informed by indigenous history and cultural connections.

SGCS will also formalise its partnerships and strengthen its relationships with the organisations it already auspices, such as the Bass Coast Climate Action Network, and continue to maintain and develop its relationships with Government organisations, and particularly those organisations that have supported it in the past with general support and funding.

<b>Strategy 4: Support, collaborate and partner with those that share our vision.</b>						
<b>Objectives/Actions</b>	<b>How will we know we have achieved this?</b>	<b>Timeframe(By June)</b>				
		22	23	24	25	26
<b>Objective 4.1 To actively network with local like-minded organisations and Councils to identify opportunities to cross promote each other's activities and identify partnering opportunities.</b>						
4.1.1 Develop a list of key stakeholders and a plan to keep in contact with them.	Plan created and in action.	✓				
4.1.2 Be active in creating and/or supporting opportunities to share information, promote partnering opportunities between environment groups and council officers. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Bass Coast Council to re-establish the quarterly environment working group.</li> <li>SGCS taking the lead in organising an annual 'State of Shire' symposium/get together to facilitate information sharing, discussion of key issues in environment and discuss future plans.</li> </ul>	At least one meeting held in 2021 and quarterly thereafter.	✓				
	Inaugural meeting held in 2022.		✓			
4.1.3 Explore opportunities to partner with the Energy Innovation Co-operative.	Partnership working group is meeting regularly with Energy Innovation Co-operative		✓			
<b>Objective 4.2 To mentor (and where appropriate provide auspice support) smaller or non-incorporated/ emerging organisations across Southern Gippsland.</b>						
4.2.1 Review MoU for organisations needing auspice support. In particular, ensure co-badging, appropriate risk management and regular reporting.	Standard MoU has been reviewed	✓				
4.2.2 Meet with Bass Coast Climate Action Network to discuss how SGCS can better support/work alongside this auspiced group.	Partnership working group has established regular meeting schedule with BCCAN and action plan	✓				

Objective 4.3 To improve cultural awareness within SGCS and build a relationship with local indigenous communities.						
4.3.1 Seek to develop a relationship with local indigenous communities for SGCS to learn about traditional land care practices. This may include exploring opportunities through the Bunurong Land Council and DELWP (Coastcare, Parks Vic) or the Catchment Management Authority to meet and partner with the local indigenous community.	SGCS has formal links with the local indigenous community that are mutually beneficial			✓	✓	✓

## Strategy 5: Develop and implement strategies to ensure the future of the SGCS

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In order to achieve its vision the organisation itself needs to be robust and sustainable. It needs new and engaging projects and activities, access to funds, good governance and most importantly, people willing to take responsibility for, and contribute to, the workings of the organisation. It also needs to be an organisation that provides opportunities, space and know-how through which individuals, groups and organisations can and will contribute to nurturing and protecting the environment.

Over 2021 the current Executive committee will restructure the way the organisation functions with new working groups enabling people and groups to work autonomously but with clear lines of accountability (figure 2). This structure should also allow SGCS to better identify and adapt to both funding and community led action opportunities and issues as they arise.

In addition, SGCS will move away from volunteers undertaking the day-to-day management of operating the Bunurong Environment Centre. It will invest in new staff/staff roles to improve the management and promotion of the Centre and its activities, with an aim of also increasing revenue.

**Figure 2: Broad outline of new SGCS organisational structure**

Role	President and Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer	Committee member	Committee member	Committee member	Committee member
Working group (chaired by SGCS Exec C'ttee member)	Partnerships Working Group Communications Working Group			Centre Management Working Group (Premises, shop, educ delivery)	On-ground Working Grp (Projects)	Activities/Events/ Education working group	Advocacy working Group
Working group role	Identify, establish and maintain partnerships Work with auspice groups Grant applications Communications (newsletter, social media, website, maybe media releases to newspaper and tv)			Manage facilities (rent agreements, useage, supplies etc)  NB: Business Manager will be ex officio on this working group	Identify priorities/ options Develop annual plan Grant applications Oversee activity Support local on-ground groups looking after specific areas (e.g Screw Ck, Carney's Rd)	Identify priorities and options for community education Grant applications and Summer by the Sea Oversee activity	Respond to (support others to respond to) inappropriate development applications Write submissions Identify priorities Participate in consultation processes/policy development Oversee activity
Additional responsibilities of Executive Committee member	Chair Executive Meetings Monitoring and oversight of Strategic Plan Approve grant applications	Governance monitoring and oversight, policy and procedures.  Memberships/ membership officer	Financial management				
New management position/s	Oversee management and delivery of key business activities, BEC and staff						

The Strategy also focuses on member engagement. It is hoped that SGCS members will be highly engaged. Welcome packs and improved communication mechanisms will assist people to know what they can and are needed to do, while the organisational structure will mentor involvement and support people to engage at a level and in an activity that responds to their interests and capacity (figure 3).



**Figure 3: Tiered level of engagement and involvement**

Participation Level	Pathway	Mentoring approach
0	Interest in what SGCS is doing – potential member	Ensure people get information and encouragement to join.
1	Participate in on--ground activities, attend other SGCS activities. Volunteer in shop.	Encouraged to be part of the working group.
2	Become a member of working group or take on a specific role (eg: help with newsletter, grant writing, project management)	Executive Committee member/ experienced working group member provide support and advice to others as necessary
3	Executive Committee	

<b>Strategy 5: Develop and implement strategies to ensure the future of the SGCS.</b>						
Objectives/Actions	How will we know we have achieved this?	Timeframe (By June)				
		22	23	24	25	26
<b>Objective 5.1: Ensure adequate funds are available/sourced to support our activities.</b>						
5.1.1 Establish base financial factors such as annual operating costs, a nest egg amount, funds available for co-funding projects/activities and manager role.	Development of funding 'model' document	✓				
5.1.2 Develop annual work plans and budgets.	Work plans and budgets		✓	✓	✓	✓
5.1.3 Ensure that all grant applications include an appropriate administration component (where this is accepted by the grant body).	All grant applications include this component	✓				
5.1.4 Review fee schedule for education programs to ensure balance between maximising income and promoting access including a plan to increase fees for dinosaur-related activities.	New fee schedule in place	✓				
5.1.5 Promote business activities with aim of increasing profits (Shop, Dinosaurs and other revenue raising education activities).	Increase in profits.		✓			
5.1.6 Develop a 'bank of ideas' for projects/activities which require additional funding.	Shared bank of ideas in skeleton form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.1.7 Establish a list of potential funding sources and increase grant/funding applications.	Database/list		✓			
5.1.8 Explore opportunities to increase involvement and donations from philanthropic organisations and individuals that share SGCS's vision.	Campaign developed and in place to facilitate donations	✓	✓			

<b>Objective 5.2 Increase the number of people involved in the running, and contributing to the operations, of the organisation.</b>						
5.2.1 Employ staff to work with the Centre Working Group to manage the BEC and oversee the management, delivery and promotion of centre activities.	Person/s commenced in role.	✓				
5.2.2 Establish new management structure based around working groups and an Executive Committee (see Fig 2 above).	Strat Plan adopted. Changes made to Rules.		✓			
5.2.3 Create “job descriptions” for each role on the Executive Committee and each Working Group, including responsibilities, skills and knowledge, attributes and reporting requirements.	Documented	✓				
5.2.4 Establish and maintain a database of member skills, knowledge, interests and engagement levels.	Improve current database and ensure accuracy.		✓			
5.2.5 Develop and document clear pathways to support member engagement at different levels, including mentoring arrangements which provide opportunities for members to benefit and learn through experience.	Engagement pathway developed and available on website	✓				
5.2.6 Working groups are responsible for planning succession in their group. Full Executive Committee is responsible for planning succession to other roles (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer).	No surprises at AGM!	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2.7 Update website to reflect new structure and activities.	Website updated	✓				
5.2.8 Develop an annual calendar of events which provide opportunities for members to connect, which are relevant to their interests and which also build knowledge and skills to contribute to the work of the SGCS.	Annual calendar developed and available on website from the preceding September	✓				
<b>Objective 5.3 Increase new membership and community engagement with SGSC</b>						
5.3.1 Develop a Membership Officer role responsible for engaging with members and linking members to working groups/individuals to increase the number of people involved at levels 2 and 3 (Fig 2 above). Contact new members by phone as well as email.	Role defined and operational	✓				
5.3.2 Apply for funding for an action research project which identifies avenues for involvement of young people in SGCS, including a youth engagement officer.	Project completed			✓		
5.3.3 Embed in all activities (films, speakers, excursions, working bees) promotion of the Society and encouragement for greater involvement. This might include a “we need you!” postcard, feedback forms, leader speech.	Guidelines and proforma templates developed		✓			
5.3.4 Develop information for new members. Include a video on the Society to put on the website and link for new members – telling short story about what the Society is doing – (sort of induction) – review content annually!!	Video on website			✓		
5.3.4 Organise a regular speaker/film/excursion program for members and friends.	Activity scheduled developed and implemented	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Objective 5.4 Ensure good governance					
5.4.1 Assign the job or monitoring/reporting on governance compliance to a member of the Executive Committee	Role is filled and reporting at least annually to Committee and on website	✓			
5.4.2 Executive committee to do annual governance audit and undertake remedial actions where necessary.	Annual governance audit undertaken by March each year		✓	✓	✓
5.4.3 Source governance training for Executive Committee members to undertake	New executive members are enrolled in training as appropriate (to be discussed at first meeting after AGM)		✓		
5.4.4 Review progress on implementation of Strategic Plan (by Exec Committee) quarterly	Minutes identify and report on review discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.4.5 Audit SGCS's information collection and storage practices to ensure they meet appropriate privacy and security requirements.	Audit undertaken		✓		

#### Appendix 1: Organisations/ groups consulted

- Auspiced groups (eg: Friends of Harmer's Haven, Bass Coast Climate Action Network, Plastic Bag Free Bass Coast)
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Bass Coast Land Council
- Coastcare/ DELWP
- Energy Innovation Co-op
- Parks Victoria
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- Long term active members of SGCS