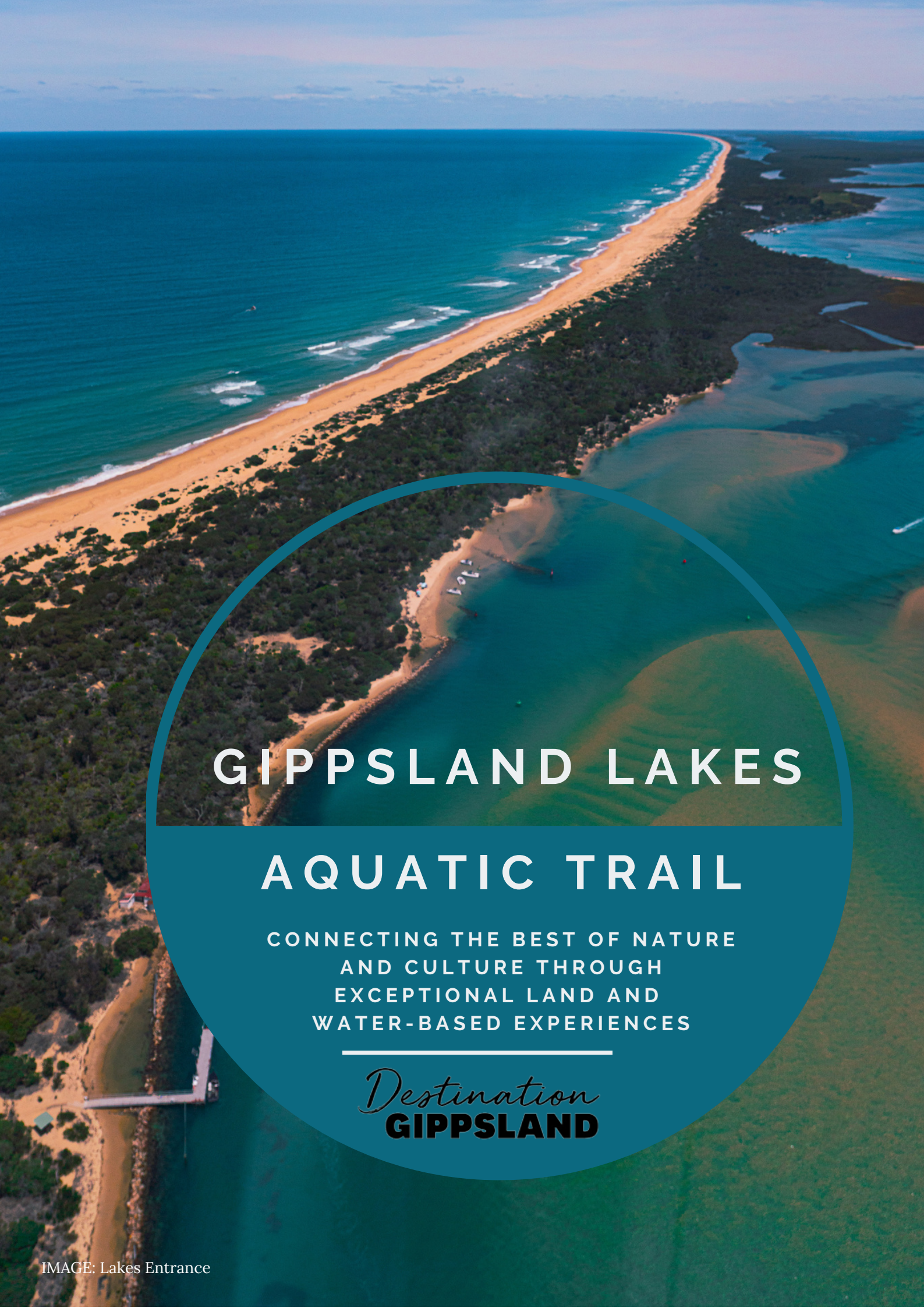




GIPPSLAND LAKES

AQUATIC TRAIL

CONNECTING THE BEST OF NATURE
AND CULTURE THROUGH
EXCEPTIONAL LAND AND
WATER-BASED EXPERIENCES

Destination
GIPPSLAND

GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL

THE CONCEPT

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail (GLAT) is an immersive nature-based experience that positions the Gippsland Lakes as Australia's premiere destination for aquatic environment adventures.

GLAT offers a combination of walking, cycling and water-based journeys that can be curated into 'choose your own' adventure itineraries and features prominent cultural storytelling of and by the local Gunaikurnai community.

Visitors choose their preferred level of engagement, challenge and means of exploration with the ability to undertake fully guided, partly or self-supported trip itineraries according to preference and ability.

The GLAT highlights the natural, historical and cultural features of the Gippsland Lakes, exploring water-based environments from land and on water using four 'foundation trail' itineraries as a basis for undertaking active and engaging journeys that cater to all levels and a myriad of outdoor recreation interests.

The suite of trails can be explored via short, full- and multi-day trips as suits visitor preferences and are freely accessible for local community use. The coordinated trail network will be showcased by a leading 'Signature Trail' experience with three supporting trail itineraries that deliver visitors meaningful interactions with nature and associated cultural highlights, particularly that of the Gunaikurnai people.

Accommodation options range from existing campsites and facilities en route, to off-trail commercial accommodations catering to all budgets, styles and preferences. It is proposed to establish two new eco-camp accommodations specifically catering to Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail experiences at Nyerimilang and Rotamah Island.

THIS UNIQUE AND EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH:



opportunities for visitors to engage with Gunaikurnai people to understand cultural stories and connect with country.



well planned, designed and sustainable infrastructure and effective governance.



a suite of trail elements enabling the visitor to curate their own experience, be guided or follow a range of pre-defined itineraries.



industry partnerships (including with the Gunaikurnai people) to deliver supported, interpreted and accommodated experiences.

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VISION

connecting the best
of nature and culture
through exceptional
land and water-
based experiences.

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THE COST

THE TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF DEVELOPING
THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL IS

\$11,982,360

The GLAT can be implemented in stages allowing operation prior to construction of the eco accommodations, with existing accommodation and camping sites already enabling multi-day visitation and engagement.



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DEMAND AND RETURN

It is predicted by Year 5 the trail network will host between 158,000 and 197,000 visitors. The development and connections will generate substantial positive economic benefits for the region, during the construction phase and in the operations phase.

 For a medium case scenario, **total spending increases** from \$38.5 million in year 1 to **\$55.7 million in year 10**.

 A **total of 41.7 FTE jobs** (33.6 direct jobs and 8.1 indirect/induced jobs) would be generated in the region **during the construction period**.

 The operation of the trails would generate a total of 153.7 direct full-time equivalent jobs in year 1, increasing to **222.4 direct FTE jobs in Year 10**.

The present value of total benefits (\$130.766 million) generated by the investment are 8.7 times the total costs of the project (\$15.00 million including \$3million in maintenance) over a 10-year period.

There will also be significant opportunities for the further development of Gunaikurnai cultural representation and community development.

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

The itineraries are designed to be flexible according to preferred activities, interests, trip lengths and abilities. All itineraries offer variations of walking, paddling, cycling and boat transfers exploring the diverse waterway, wetland, lake, riverside, beach and hinterland environments that make the Gippsland Lakes a highly unique and desirable destination for walkers, cyclists, paddlers, birdwatchers, cultural and heritage enthusiasts.

The map illustrates the Gippsland Aquatic Trail, a network of four distinct trails across the region. Trail 1, the Signature Aquatic Trail, is highlighted in red and runs from the coast near Paynesville towards the inland areas. Trail 2, the Sperm Whale Head, is shown in blue and follows the coastline from the south towards the north. Trail 3, the Lakes (Nowa Nowa), is marked with a red dashed line and covers a large area in the northeast. Trail 4, the Port of Sale - Latrobe River, is indicated by a purple dashed line in the southwest. The map also shows major towns, lakes, and reserves, providing a comprehensive overview of the trail network.

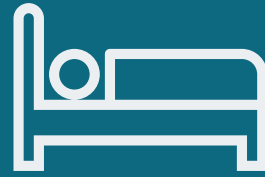
Gippsland Aquatic Trail
All Trails

GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL



VISITOR INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail will be supported by a strong suite of pre-trip information and on-trail interpretation, to ensure visitors are given a safe and high quality experience as they explore the unique attractions of the region.



FEATURE STAYS

Two new eco-accommodation offerings are proposed, located at Nyerimilng and Rotamah Island. These would complement the region's existing high level of accommodation capacity and variety, and integrate with new proposed tourism developments such as the Metung Hot Springs (Metung) and Nunduck Spa Resort (Seacombe).



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WHY THIS PROJECT, WHY NOW?

Gippsland is an emerging tourism region in Victoria with continued growth in investment and visitor numbers. The Gippsland community has **been severely impacted by both the impacts of COVID and the bushfires**, and this project would contribute significantly towards **local economic recovery**.

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail offers **an excellent opportunity to capitalise on the approximately 2.2 million of Australians participating in eco-tourism activities**. The global adventure tourism market - of which hiking, biking, aquatic and water-based tourism are a significant component¹ - is projected to reach \$1,626.7 billion in 2026, registering a compound annual growth rate of 13.3% from 2019 to 2026.

The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail will **leverage the existing natural assets of the region** and its existing attractions and infrastructure, while also creating a new active, cultural experience, **thereby tapping in to demand and creating follow-on positive economic, business, social and cultural outcomes** for the Gippsland community.

The Gunaikurnai and their story and culture will also be integral to the development of the Gippsland Aquatic Trail experiences, with a focus on **fostering increased cultural interpretation and other opportunities across training, employment and business development for the Gunaikurnai community**.

This will **also tap into a growing demand for cultural tourism attractions** and specifically those highlighting to First Nation heritage and culture. Daytrips including First Nations² arts and craft have recorded the fastest growing arts activity over the last two years. In 2018, over half a million overnight trips in Australia included First Nations arts and craft, an increase of 40% since 2014.

1. <https://www.alliedmarketresearch.com/adventure-tourism-market>

2. Domestic Arts Tourism - Connecting the Country 2020 - Australian Council for the Arts

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BENEFITS OF THE GIPPSLAND LAKES AQUATIC TRAIL



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(inbound tourism and regional promotion) – benefitting local businesses, training and employment



COMMUNITY AMENITY

access and use of trails



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

increased physical activity and facilitated interaction with nature



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

improved outcomes for environment based on upgrades



CULTURAL

Gunaikurnai involvement promoting employment



EDUCATION

across cultural, heritage, environmental, flora and fauna



ECONOMIC RECOVERY



improved outcomes following the impacts of COVID-19 and bushfire recovery

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CURRENT STATUS

Gippsland Lakes' unique aquatic environment and associated trails are variable in quality, disconnected and, where developed, promoted separately.

- Outdoor active tourism is a strategic priority for local government and tourism
- Landscapes and waterways are of significant attraction and value to tourism
- Gunaikurnai connection to country and associated story is strong
- Walking and cycling trails are often fragmented/disconnected and of variable quality and maintenance standard
- No single portal for outdoor active information
- Walking trails often fail to make best use of / connection to aquatic environment features
- No signature experience that significantly connects land to water
- Lack of cohesion between trail infrastructure / offerings to entice and guide further exploration
- Lack of commercial serviceability curating and supporting itineraries.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY

(WHERE WE WANT TO BE)

Gippsland Lakes is positioned as Victoria's premier aquatic environment and coastal adventure destination.

- Gippsland Lakes' Aquatic Trail umbrella brand focuses and connects collective suite of trail experiences
- Trail experiences and itineraries designed to leverage the connection between land and marine environments
- Multiple activity modes integrated across experience offerings - walk, paddle, cycle
- High quality servicing and facilitation of visitors across fully supported/high end through semi- and self-supported visitation experiences
- High quality, extensive pre-trip information and guidance matched to high quality on trail interpretation and wayfinding
- Collective aquatic trail offering services broad range of demand within outdoor active market - soft immersion through moderate and high challenge
- Variety and flexibility for user engagement from short and full day to multiday offerings including step on-step off
- Offering encourages dispersal across region
- Experience design serves to create opportunities for local businesses
- Supported by accessible and unique accommodation offerings.

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POSITIONING THE TRAIL

To be a world class experience, the Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail must be a distinctive experience that complements and showcases the landscape, environment and culture.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

This summary document is expanded upon with further concept, feasibility and implementation details available in the associated documents: Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail Feasibility Business Case, and the Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail Implementation Strategy.



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