

## **Mr. Jody O’Kane**

Coordinator Business Development, Economic Sustainability, Latrobe City Council

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Born outside Belfast in Northern Ireland Jody made his way to Australia as a backpacker in the late nineties and decided to make Australia his home. Jody has held a very eclectic mix since of positions throughout his career in both the trade and business fields, having worked all over the world for companies such as Olympus, Daewoo, Compaq and MCI WorldCom.

The first local government position he gained was when he joined Latrobe City as a Senior Economic Development Officer in April 2006 and since July 2008 he has been in the position of Coordinator Business Development, having acted as Manager Economic Development for the first six months of 2008.

After the horrific 2009 bushfires in Gippsland Jody was Acting Manager Community Capacity Building from March 2009 until June 2010 and he then returned to his substantive role in Economic Development.

He has lived in Gippsland for six years, residing in Boolarra with his wife and three children.

Jody has an honours degree in Business and Management with European languages, a Higher National Diploma in Business Studies and various other diplomas in industrial and frontline Studies, project management, mentoring, coaching and he has been a successful participant in Latrobe City’s Accelerated Development Program.

He has a keen interest in all sports and spending time with his young family.

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Establishing the Gippsland Logistics Precinct**

This paper discusses the fact that Latrobe City Council has had a significant long term interest and involvement in facilitating an open access intermodal freight terminal to meet the needs of the Gippsland region in Victoria. The development of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct (GLP) will establish a centre for the efficient and cost effective movement of freight to and from the region.

A key strategic action of Council’s is to “Promote and support the development of existing and new industry, and infrastructure to enhance the social and economic well-being of the Valley”. The development of the GLP is a key priority under this action.

In 2002, Latrobe City Council acquired a 64 hectare site three kilometres east of the Morwell CBD, adjacent to the existing Hazelwood Siding, formerly operated as the Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT). The site was purchased for the strategic purpose of developing a logistics precinct to service the Latrobe Valley and the Gippsland region.

In November 2006, the Victorian Government announced a \$133.8 million buy back from the private sector of the regional rail network lease to facilitate maintenance on regional lines and to progress major rail projects.

In April 2008, the Victorian Government indicated in-principle support for Council to lead an Expression of Interest process for the reactivation of the Hazelwood Siding formerly the GIFT. The Minister also sought clarification of arrangements including proposed leasing of the site to Council.

The facilitation of open access rail freight by Latrobe City Council has been on-going for over eight years. With Victorian Government support for progressing the development of the GLP, the project is

now advancing. It is proposed to undertake an extensive Expression of Interest and marketing process within the next twelve months with the objective of securing a private sector operator / developer for the Gippsland Logistics Precinct.

Stakeholders in the negotiation process include V-Line, VicTrack and the Victorian Government's Department of Transport.