

Mayor's Message



Rates notices were sent out last week and understandably many ratepayers have questions about what their rates are used for and how they are calculated. In short, rates fund services such as recreation reserves, lighting, road repairs, drainage, public toilets and waste services. They also support a variety of services that are provided by Council including maternal & child health, disability services, parks and sporting facilities, community facilities and local law enforcement. It's important to remember that rates are a tax – just like income tax and GST – not a fee for services used.

One question I am often asked is why are rates in South Gippsland more expensive than in Stonnington or Casey or Cardinia. The short answer to this is size and population. Stonnington City may have properties that are, on average, more expensive but they have two times our population and a much smaller area to maintain. Size is particularly important when it comes to roads and rubbish and for services such as waste disposal. Sometimes bigger just isn't better.

Rate charges vary depending on the value of each individual property as at 1 January. We are now required to perform property valuations on a yearly basis. If your property has increased in value since your last valuation then it is likely that this will be reflected in your rates notice. Sometimes infrastructure improvements in your area can also impact on your rates notice as they too will improve property value. For example the recent installation of reticulated sewerage services to the towns of Loch, Nyora and Poowong in the western end of the shire has resulted in higher property values for many residents. If you are interested in how rates are calculated I would encourage you to visit Council's website where you will find information that outlines the rating process.

In other news this week Councillors Edwards and Argento attended the Federation Business School Gippsland Business Awards. From all accounts the night was lovely for all involved. Joining them on the night were our local finalists who were celebrating being nominated.

The finalists from South Gippsland were:

- Prom Country Lodge, Foster: Accommodation
- Cottage Garden Threads, Mirboo North: Manufacturing/Export
- CPK McLaren MotorBody, Leongatha: Mechanical Trades and Construction
- Refuge Cove Cruises, Port Welshpool: Tourism Activities and Attractions
- Blue Tree Honey Farm, Dumbalk: Tourism Activities and Attractions

Unfortunately no South Gippsland business took out a major category this year but each and every finalist should consider themselves a winner with such a competitive pool of entrants.

Speaking of awards, this week the Gippsland Wine Awards are being celebrated at Lardner Park on Thursday 13 September. The event brings together wine makers and retailers to celebrate excellence in Gippsland wine making. With a number of amazing wineries across South Gippsland I'd like to wish our winemakers good luck for the competition!

Cr Lorraine Brunt
Mayor