

Council to Convene Community Clusters

Council voted yesterday to commence establishing community clusters across South Gippsland. It is anticipated that formalised clusters of communities could be of significant value to both local communities and Council. Such clusters could:

- Help small communities in particular to undertake larger and more complex initiatives than could be undertaken by their individual communities.
- Access a higher level of external and local grant funds and provide support across the locality in times of difficulty or crisis.
- Create effective avenues for communities to partner with and advise Council on local matters/priorities including resource allocation.
- Provide an avenue for other agencies with work that involves a number of communities e.g. water authorities, VicRoads - to readily easily access representatives a number of communities with a common interest.
- Support a group of communities to collaborate on prioritising works that can be included in an external grant.

Council endorsed convening an Eastern Districts cluster that includes: Port Franklin, Mt Best, Toora, Agnes, Welshpool, Hedley and Port Welshpool. It will also trial a cluster that includes Fish Creek, Foster, Sandy Point and Yanakie. In addition to these clusters, Council will host ten community forums across the rest of South Gippsland for each of the next two years. These forums will enable smaller communities to provide direct advice to Council on local priorities and to discuss opportunities for collaboration between communities.

South Gippsland Shire Mayor, Cr Don Hill was enthusiastic about the new community groups.

“A cluster model works in other shires by giving more decision making and choice to the local community over the level and or the type of local services provided by their councils. By engaging with the community in this manner ideas can be generated from the community rather than imposed from above by Council.”

Anyone seeking further information about the clusters and community forums can call Council's Community Strengthening Coordinator, Ned Dennis, on 5662 9200.

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