

Federal Funding Confirmed for Bair Street

Council is now in a position to commence work on the \$5.4M Leongatha Business Precinct Development (Bair Street) project after the Federal Government announced that it would provide half the funding for the works through its Building Better Regions Fund. Council has also applied for \$1.5M from the State Government's Fixing Country Roads program for the project.

The project takes advantage of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route, which has seen heavy vehicles diverted from the Bair Street. Now that it is no longer part of the South Gippsland Highway, the Bair Street precinct can undergo beautification works to create an improved atmosphere to support existing businesses and to attract new businesses to South Gippsland's largest town. The works will contribute to improving the economic sustainability of Leongatha, particularly its retail sector.

Given that the works will reduce the number of lanes of traffic from four to two, the project will also improve pedestrian safety and provide space for upgraded amenities including footpaths, landscaping and street furniture. The project will also include the reconfiguration of smaller feeder streets – such as Lyon Street, Gollers Lane, Lardner Place – which will encourage connectivity throughout the business precinct. The project will deliver on the Leongatha Streetscape Master Plan which was undertaken by Council in consultation with the community in 2015.

Making the announcement, Member for McMillan, Russell Broadbent said the project would include beautification works creating an improved atmosphere, support existing traders as well as help attract new businesses to Leongatha. "Today's announcement continues our commitment to unlocking the economic potential of regional communities and ensuring our towns like Leongatha continue to thrive. I am pleased to be able to deliver funding for a project that will help support local businesses, attract people into town to shop and enjoy the beautified open space in the Leongatha CBD. The Leongatha Business Association is to be commended for their dedication to the town and its ongoing prosperity," said Mr Broadbent.

Mayor of South Gippsland Shire Council, Cr Don Hill was pleased to acknowledge the support. "This project is just the first of several major initiatives Council is currently working on to improve the amenity of Leongatha for local business groups, residents and visitors. To progress this particular project from shovel-ready to construction stage inside a year is amazing and a credit to the work of my fellow Councillors and the officers. The completion of these works will see a much improved area of the town and significantly higher experience for those visiting and working in the area. Council appreciates the financial assistance given by the Federal Government for this project," said Cr Hill.

Council will soon advertise the tender for the Bair Street project. It is expected that work will commence after winter this year.

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