

Message from the Acting CEO



Last week we had to deal with the difficult situation of having our Councillors dismissed. Obviously, this is not something that many communities have had to deal with and it is certainly unprecedented in my time in local government. At the time of writing this message, I am still waiting to hear from Local Government Victoria as to what the next steps will be. I understand that an Interim Administrator will be appointed and that he or she will perform the role of the Council for the time being. Eventually a panel of three Administrators will take on that responsibility through to October 2021.

I am hopeful that the Ordinary Meeting of Council that is scheduled for Wednesday will proceed according to the agenda that has been published, but I understand that there's a lot of material for the Interim Administrator to get their head around. As soon as we know more about what's happening in terms of that Council Meeting we will post the information to Council's Facebook page and website.

While the last week was challenging, I'm not one to spend too long looking back and dissecting the past. I am optimistic about the future of the South Gippsland region and want this week to be the beginning of a much more positive view of Council. My colleagues are a remarkable group of resilient and professional people who are dedicated to providing good service to this community. It was heartening to hear them being praised for their efforts in Parliament last week. This is a testament to the leadership of Tim Tamlin, the CEO whose decade-long tenure concluded on Monday. He's left big shoes to fill.

I think it is an important part of my new role to champion the work that we do for the community. I doubt there is a Council organisation anywhere in Victoria that has been under as much scrutiny as ours over the past 12 months. I suggest that everyone should take time to read the reports of the Municipal Monitor and the Commission of Inquiry. That they have both given the organisation a clean bill of health is something from which I take quite some pride and should give the community confidence in our capability into the future.

Friday was an exciting milestone for the region. I had the pleasure to speak on behalf of Council for the official opening of the Port Welshpool Long Jetty. This was a project that was being talked about when I arrived at South Gippsland many years ago. To see it now complete is a credit to all the people who never gave up advocating for its return. I have been told that it is the most expensive piece of public infrastructure ever built in South Gippsland: it should be a beacon to tourists visiting our Shire for decades to come.

I am hopeful that the next few months will be a time for the community to rebuild its faith in Council. I can assure you of one thing – I will be doing my utmost to ensure that as an organisation that we acquit ourselves in a manner that earns your trust. The fractiousness of the Councillors is behind us, and I hope that there is some clear water ahead. My focus will be to work with and support the Administrators in their role, on the delivery of core services, and on a renewed focus on our priority projects. The future is bright.

Bryan Sword

Acting CEO