

Autumn 2014



## Childcare... it's vital to our communities

**Childcare services at Mirboo North and Corner Inlet have been given a reprieve, thanks to a determined and cooperative partnership between the community and Council.**

UnitingCare Gippsland's announcement to withdraw their child care provision at St Andrew's Child Care Centre in Mirboo North and the Prom Coast Centre for Children in Foster at the end of February resulted in an urgent need for the community and Council to find alternate providers.

"A state-wide 'Expression of Interest' campaign resulted in Council endorsing the YMCA Ballarat as the preferred provider for Mirboo North's St Andrew's Child Care Centre," said Mrs Jan Martin, Director of Community Services.

"No submissions were received for the Prom Coast Centre for Children and work has commenced to establish a community based Committee of Management to manage the Centre," she said. "The response by the Corner Inlet community has been outstanding. It's a challenging road ahead and their commitment is amazing."

UnitingCare Gippsland has extended its withdrawal date to the end of April at both locations on the condition that any deficit incurred through the extension period be met. This extension has alleviated some pressure with the Mirboo North and District Community Foundation confirming it will underwrite the \$24,000 deficit anticipated at St Andrew's Child Care Centre. Council and Prom Coast Financial Services have each contributed \$12,000 to meet the expected deficit for Prom Coast Centre for Children.

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## Mayor's Message



We often bandy the word 'advocacy' around and I wonder if people are clear what that means in the context of Council's role. Advocacy is one of the foundation stones of Council, one that we take seriously and is incorporated into all of our decision making processes. We lobby for (and represent) your needs and rights and for the health and wellbeing of our communities and environment.

That's a simple statement but a big job. It involves lobbying for funding and action, changes to policies and laws, writing grant applications and meeting with politicians to state Council's case. Current priority 'advocacy' projects include our 'Repairing our Roads' Campaign and seeking funding for the Korumburra Integrated Children's Centre and the Leongatha Alternate Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route, to name just a few. Many issues we can't resolve locally and for some, Council does not necessarily have a position. We will advocate to other tiers of government and relevant authorities to represent your concerns and seek resolution on your behalf. We aren't always successful, but it's surprising how often a squeaky wheel gets oiled.

Powerful partnerships can deliver outstanding results when individuals and community groups work together with local, State and Federal Government. Council invites your ongoing involvement to help us build a better South Gippsland.

**Cr. James (Jim) Fawcett**

## Managing Emergencies

In recent years, Victorian communities have endured bushfires, floods and severe storms with devastating impacts. These events have served as reminders of the critical importance of effective emergency management. Councils have a long-established role providing support to emergency response agencies and coordinating relief and recovery support for the community. More information can be sourced from our Municipal Emergency Management Plan at [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

## Planning for the future

Over the past twelve months Council has been pleased to receive over 600 submissions from residents and ratepayers, packed with suggestions and valuable feedback on its many strategic planning projects which will shape the future of South Gippsland.

"These submissions are a direct reflection of Council's relationship with the community and we appreciate the thoughtful input into our strategic planning projects which included thirteen Planning Scheme Amendments, the Korumburra Town Centre Framework Plan, the Housing and Settlement Strategy, Leongatha Parking Study and the Leongatha Industrial Land Supply Study," commented Phil Stone, Council's Director of Development Services. "These studies and strategies are great advocacy tools for future applications and provide much more political "weight" when the community has a sense of ownership and involvement too."

They are particularly useful guides for investors and developers, government agencies, community organisations and businesses, as well as interested individuals.

In developing the Korumburra Town Centre Framework Plan, for example, Council engaged the community with workshops and information sessions over six months and identified more than 40 follow-on actions and responsibilities, including two Planning Scheme amendments. Other actions to follow include traffic calming measures, attracting a large supermarket to the town, streetscaping and improvements to signage and parking. The result is a blueprint of what the community would like – some projects will be driven by the community and others by Council. A Korumburra Roundtable group has recently been formed to work closely with Council on these projects.

"We are always happy to hear your ideas, whether through a formal submission or letter, or simply a phone call to chat about an idea," said Phil. "You feel the impacts of Council's decisions, so your opinions can help shape them."

# Business Support

Council recently conducted surveys with retailers and consumers to identify changing spending patterns in Leongatha. This is another example of issue specific community engagement. Council was one of seven Councils across the state to secure a \$20,000 State Government "StreetLife" grant to combat the general retail downturn.

"The global downturn has made consumers generally more cautious in their spending and online shopping has also bitten deftly into their disposable income," said Ken Fraser, Council's Economic Development Coordinator.

"Retailers cannot just demand local loyalty without delivering competitive benefits. While it is often hard to compete on price, local knowledge, awesome service, quick easy access and capitalisation of the latest technologies can go a long way to winning and retaining loyal customers. Travelling to another centre to save \$10 does not make sense when consumers consider the fuel cost and time factor."

"It is also important to review product lines to see if they are still relevant. We buy many items in different ways these days such as music. You might also make the best widgets in the world but if no one wants to buy them, you're in trouble!"

A working group involving retailers has now been formed to consider the survey results and develop a strategy to revitalise the sector. It is highly likely that the outcomes will also be of value to other towns facing similar challenges. The challenge now is to develop a responsive strategy to revitalise the retail sector. The redevelopment of Bair Street as a retail precinct with improved parking and amenities once the heavy vehicles are redirected away from the CBD will also benefit.

Council plays an important role in the business community, facilitating linkages, partnerships, training and funding to open up new growth and opportunities.

## Current projects include:

- After years of intensive lobbying, the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route has now been confirmed, designed by VicRoads and approved by Council. The next step for Council is to seek the \$5 million funding required to construct the route which will utilise Long Street.



*Cr. Jeanette Harding and developer John Anthony welcome the first ship to Port Anthony.*

- Port Anthony, near Port Welshpool, is now open for business. The port is an important addition to Gippsland's transport infrastructure which Council has supported for over ten years with funding requests, permit approvals, studies and linkages to key networks and political contacts. Congratulations go to Mr Anthony for his vision and tenacity to bring it to fruition.
- Multi-million dollar expansions at Burra Foods and Murray Goulburn are underway to meet the growing international demand for UHT products and infant formula.
- Construction is about to begin for the Leongatha ALDI store which is expected to be open for business by September.
- Prom Country Cheeses boutique agri-tourism facility near Kongwak is nearing completion.
- Council will again showcase South Gippsland as a place to live, work and invest at the Regional Victoria Living Expo in April.
- Council's advocacy for improvements to our telecommunication infrastructure is paying dividends, with the imminent NBN roll-out of faster speeds and efficiencies to 11 towns. Connection to 4G has also been welcomed.
- Council is urging V/Line to add a more accessible bus stop in the Leongatha town centre. Council has enlisted the Chamber of Commerce to support this advocacy issue.
- Business workshops that address resilience, online strategies and marketing will run again this year in partnership with Milpara House and Community College Gippsland.
- Council produces a regular electronic business newsletter that will keep businesses in touch with these opportunities. If you would like to receive this, please email Renae Littlejohn on [renae.littlejohn@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:renae.littlejohn@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)



# Repairing Our Roads Campaign

**Sharing the frustration of residents, visitors and businesses impacted by the condition of the road network, Council launched an advocacy campaign in November to highlight the critical road conditions and seek urgent funding to restore them to a safe and acceptable level.**

Council maintains approximately 1300 km of unsealed roads and 800 km of sealed roads, while VicRoads is responsible for the main highways and most arterial roads that link towns.

As well as radio interviews and media releases, an online survey was launched to gather feedback to clarify the direct impact the road conditions are having on users, both private and commercial. The survey asked users to identify problem roads, economic impacts, safety issues and to prioritise where they believe any additional road funding should be spent.

To further support the campaign, Council has sought direct impact statements from key manufacturing and transport businesses and industry associations in our community.

The survey attracted 846 responses and overwhelmingly 92.2% of respondents rated the condition of the sealed roads as unsatisfactory to poor.

## What happens next?

This information will be collated for Council to consider and to then present to our local member and Deputy Premier, Peter Ryan, to support the urgent funding requirements for South Gippsland.

Director of Engineering Services Anthony Seabrook confirmed that road crews are working to full capacity to take advantage of the dry conditions.

“Although the survey highlights the overwhelming majority of road issues are not Council’s responsibility, we will still spend \$7 million this financial year on routine road maintenance,” he said. “We will also have carried out road re-seals (\$1.7M) and preparation works (\$700K), gravel road re-sheets (\$1.1M) and a further \$500K for drainage cleaning.”

“One of our priorities is to improve our unsealed roads which make up 85% of customer road maintenance requests and was a popular response from the survey.”

Full results of the survey will be available soon at [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

## State Government Response to date

Deputy Premier and Member for Gippsland South Peter Ryan has already announced more than \$1 million will be spent rebuilding and upgrading sections of the Fish Creek-Foster Road as part of the Victorian Coalition Government’s \$170 million ‘Repair and Restore’ package.

The Government has also invested \$670,000 for restoration works on the Foster-Promontory Road, which began late last year. VicRoads had currently programmed more than \$6 million worth of immediate repair and restoration works in the South Gippsland region, including pavement strengthening works, rehabilitation and asphalt works, as well as road resurfacing works.

## Survey Snapshot

Below are some notes regarding the Open Questions.

### QUESTION 3:

The roads that require the most urgent attention were identified as these VicRoads managed roads:

South Gippsland Highway	430	Bass Highway	120
Meeniyan-Prom Road	120	Strzelecki Highway	43
Foster-Fish Creek Road	44	Foster-Prom Road	21
Korumburra-Warragul Road	11		

Ninety four Council managed roads were identified, with the most common being Walkerville-Fish Creek Road (5), Old Thorpdale Road (5), Waratah Bay Road (4) and Nippards Track (4).

### QUESTION 7:

The most common roads where damage was sustained were:

South Gippsland Highway	277	Bass Highway	63
Meeniyan-Prom Road	45	Strzelecki Highway	24

There were 39 responses to damage on Council managed roads. The most popular roads identified were Nippards Track (3) and Walkerville-Fish Creek Road (2).

## 1. Where should State Government funding be spent?

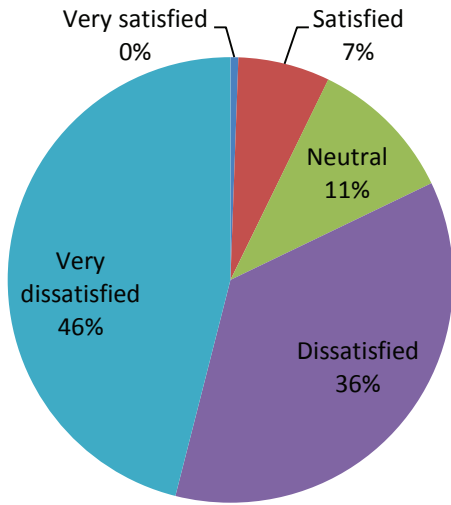
Your response in order of importance:

1. Potholes
2. Major patching
3. Reconstruction/rehabilitation of road
4. Roadside drainage clearing
5. Culvert cleaning/repair
6. Shoulder grading
7. Roadside slashing/mowing
8. Safety barriers
9. Vegetation removal/tree branch removal
10. Signage

# Survey Results

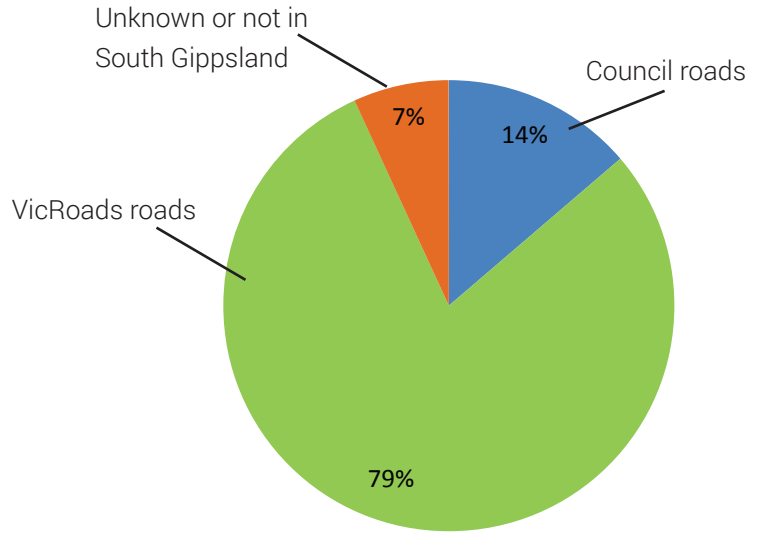
## 2. When road repairs are undertaken on South Gippsland roads, how satisfied are you with the quality of the repairs?

Answered: 706 Skipped: 140



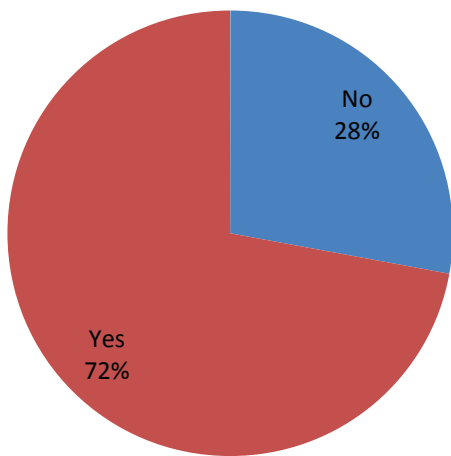
## 3. Which roads require the most urgent attention?

Open Question\* Answered: 623 Skipped: 223



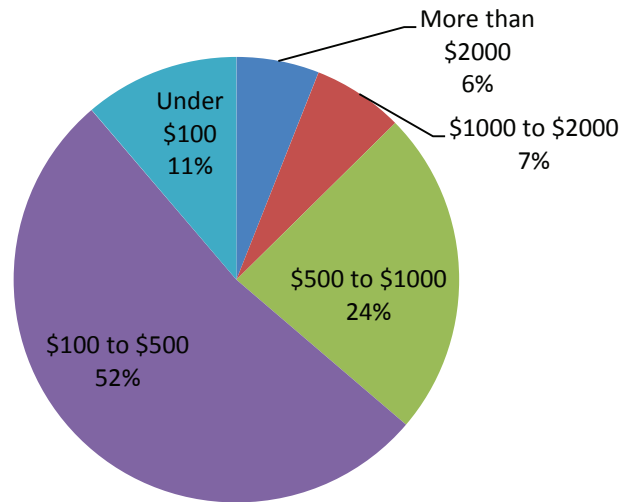
## 4. In the last two years have you sustained any damage to your vehicle that was directly caused by the road conditions?

Answered: 706 Skipped: 140



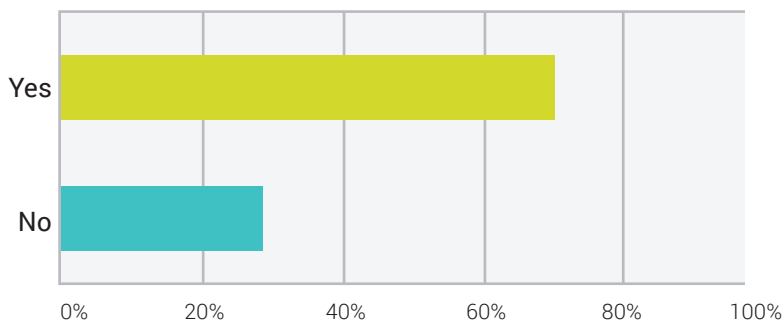
## 5. What was the cost of repairing the damage to your vehicle?

Answered: 516 Skipped: 330



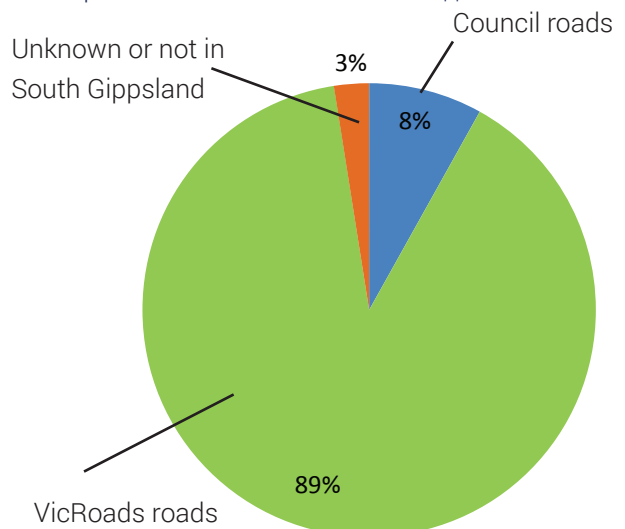
## 6. Have you experienced (or witnessed) a road safety incident/issue directly related to the road conditions?

Answered: 689 Skipped: 157



## 7. On which road was the damage sustained?

Open Question\* Answered: 474 Skipped: 372



# Recreation

Council has doubled the general maintenance funding to the volunteer committees that look after Council's twenty reserves for their communities, maintaining and improving grounds and buildings, roads, fencing and essential equipment. These committees do a great job to keep facilities in good order for the many formal sporting and recreation groups that use them and the informal and passive users.

The Minister for Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV), Hugh Delahunty, recently awarded \$282,000 to Council for four specific projects under SRV's Community Facility Funding Program as a direct result of Council's grant application.

**Korumburra:** The first was for \$74,000 to assist with the creation of a Training Centre of Excellence for elite athletes at the Recreation Centre - a great project that will help relieve the travel and displacement that promising local athletes often incur.

**Meeniyan:** The second was a \$93,000 grant to create a community play space for young people at the Meeniyan Recreation Reserve. This will include a new playground, an entry level skate rink and additional park furniture and signage that will also provide a pleasant rest area for families using the Rail Trail.

**Mirboo North:** Soccer and cricket players will benefit from the \$100,000 grant toward a major oval lighting project at Walter J Tuck Reserve that will allow evening practice and matches as the days get shorter. The benefits will flow on to emergency agencies that also use the lower oval as a staging area during crises.



**Shire-wide:** The fourth project will see the development of a South Gippsland Tennis Facilities Master Plan. The project officer will conduct an audit of all our courts, their condition and current usage. Relevant groups will be consulted to devise the Plan which will see a ten year prioritised and costed program of improvements to our tennis facilities that aligns us with Tennis Australia's strategy for Gippsland.

Council reallocated \$135,000 and resources in the last budget to support these applications and many community groups also contributed. It is a tangible investment, with these projects aligning with the Reserves' Master Plans completed last year.

**Sandy Point:** A Regional Growth Fund 'Putting Locals First' grant of \$133,000 will enable Council to install shade sails, a basketball half court, a connecting pathway, barbecue rotunda, car park kerbing and channelling, seating and landscaping at the Reserve. The Committee is contributing \$10,000 and Council will contribute \$34,500.

**Agnes Falls:** Council is working closely with Parks Victoria and the 'Friends of Agnes Falls' to redevelop the Agnes Falls Reserve. A new toilet, rotunda and picnic areas are being constructed and funding sought through Regional Development Victoria to build a cantilevered look-out, improve path surfaces, car park design and to add interpretive signage.

# Australia Day Celebrations



Thousands of South Gippslanders came out in force to celebrate Australia Day at the Awards Ceremony and the many local events. Venus Bay's Anne McIntyre was a popular recipient of the South Gippsland 2014 Citizen of the Year Award.

Anne has made an extraordinary contribution in her community through foster parenting (over 100 children!), the Community Emergency Response Team, the Angling Club and much more. Detailed profiles of Anne's achievements and all other nominees can be viewed on [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

Congratulations to all involved in the Leongatha Courthouse Centenary Celebration which was named South Gippsland 2014 Community Event of the Year. Youth Community Contribution Certificates (non competitive) were awarded to Ashley Heath (Leongatha), Eleanor McKenzie (Korumburra) and Sam Wilson (Meeniyan).

## Networking the Community

Council's Community Strengthening networking events are effective catalysts that support the Shire's many special interest groups, bringing volunteers together to share information, promote their work, find others to work with and to hear about developments in their areas of interest.

Council currently organises and facilitate quarterly or half yearly network meetings for

- South Gippsland Arts Network
- Town and District Associations' Network
- Recreation Reserve 'Committees of Management'
- Men's Sheds' Network
- Lower Tarwin Valley communities' Network
- Toora and Welshpool Districts' Network
- Community Halls Network being formed

"Most of these gatherings are held at night to suit people with daytime commitments," explained Ned Dennis, Council's Community Strengthening Manager. "The members also like to rotate the locations to get to know the various districts." For further information phone 5662 9200.

## Korumburra Integrated Children's Centre Update

The Korumburra Integrated Children's Centre is a priority project for Council and remains a major focus for advocacy for funding through the State and Federal Government. Council has committed \$2,045,000 to the project plus the land and the community has contributed \$100,000. State and Federal funding support of \$3.2 million is critical if the new Centre is to be constructed. A number of funding submissions have been made and are currently being considered by the government.

Korumburra Kindergarten and Birralee Childcare Centre will come together to form one service. The process of amalgamating the two services is complex and Council will provide support each step of the way. The new facility will operate under one governance structure that will form a board of management comprising parent, community, school and Council representatives.

The working group has engaged Community Child Care Victoria to assist in this process and a detailed action plan has been developed. Strong support from both Korumburra Primary School & St Joseph's Primary School will connect the new centre to the educational precinct enhancing many learning outcomes.

## Responsible Pet Ownership

Not managing your pets can be a costly affair, as three owners found out in the Korumburra Magistrate's Court recently, with fines and costs totalling \$3,200. Both incidents involved unrestrained unregistered dogs attacking dogs on leads in public places.

The cost is not only financial, it is also traumatic for both the owners and their dogs.

If you own a dog or cat, you must ensure your animal is registered, microchipped and wearing a valid Council registration tag. They must also be confined to your property and on a leash in public places.

Ignoring your responsibilities as a dog or cat owner can cost you time, trouble and money. For further information, phone 5662 9200.



## Camping on Vacant Private Allotments

Council has received several complaints from residents about people camping on private land. Vacant land owners and visitors to the Shire are reminded that camping on vacant private land is generally prohibited unless specific conditions relating to accommodation type, fire risk, sanitation and wastewater etc. are met.

A permit is required if the specific conditions are unable to be met. A reminder too that fires are not permitted in the open air during any declared fire danger period. Further information: 5662 9200.



Prom Country Visitor Information Centre volunteers undertaking training

## Where would we be without our volunteers?

Council is proud of its partnership with over 800 volunteers who help deliver its services through the L2P Driver Mentor Program, Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Coal Creek, Visitor Information Centres, Management Committees and Advisory Groups.

"Volunteers contribute their time and energy for a wide range of reasons from giving back, or wanting more for their community. Whatever the reason, the effect is a richer and stronger community and a connection for the volunteer," said Dana Hughes, Council's Volunteer Coordinator. "We are so appreciative of their support and there are, of course, many more who volunteer in the broader community. In fact, 29% of South Gippslanders volunteer in some way which is higher than the regional average."

To support volunteers in their roles, Council runs a free training program to build their skills and capacity, with topics including Web Page Development for Community Groups, CPR, Surviving and Thriving in a Committee and Safe Driving for Older Persons.

To seek more information on the training program go to [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/volunteering](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/volunteering) or contact Dana on 5662 9200 or [volunteer@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:volunteer@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

## Have feedback or a request?



South Gippsland Shire Council  
9 Smith Street (Private Bag 4)  
Leongatha 3953  
DX94026

Phone: 5662 9200  
Fax: 5662 3754  
[council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)  
[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au)

## Calendar of Events

Date	Event
<b>MARCH</b>	
Sat 15	Festival of Mirboo North
Fri 14 - 16	A Question of Honour (Coal Creek)
Sun 16	Pear Party Toora
Sun 30	Stony Creek Races
<b>APRIL</b>	
Fri 4 & Sat 5	CWA 60th Annual Exhibition
Fri 4 & Sat 5	Welshpool Autumn Flower Show
Sun 13	Sustainability Festival (Coal Creek)
Fri 18 - 21	Venus Bay Tour De Tarwin
Fri 18 - 21	Sandy Point Art Show
Sun 20	Coal Creek Easter Egg Hunt
<b>MAY</b>	
Thurs 1 - 31	Gippsland Arts Festival
Fri 9 - 13	Mirboo North Arty Gras & Art Show
Fri 16 - 25	Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival
<b>JUNE</b>	
Sat 7	Coal Creek Teddy Bears' Picnic
Sun 8	Loch Food & Wine Festival

For more events, go to [visitpromcountry.com.au/events](http://visitpromcountry.com.au/events)

Full details of these events, plus local markets and exhibitions are available on [visitpromcountry.com.au](http://visitpromcountry.com.au) (event organisers are invited to submit their events to this site). Alternatively, phone 1800 630 704 for details or download the 'Prom Country' app from the App Store or Google Play.



### Prom Country Visitor Information Centres

South Gippsland Highway, Korumburra (Coal Creek)  
Cnr McDonald & Main Streets, Foster (Stockyard Gallery)  
[infocentre@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:infocentre@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)  
1800 630 704 [visitpromcountry.com.au](http://visitpromcountry.com.au)

Leongatha Community & Visitor Information Centre  
McCartin Street, Leongatha (Memorial Hall)  
Ph 5662 2111

