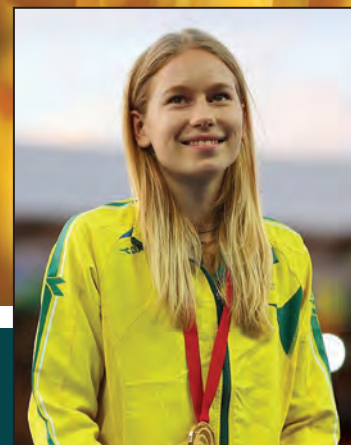


Spring 2014



It's a golden spring!

It's not only the spring blooms that are brightening up the shire after winter's gloom. Our very own Eleanor Patterson also lifted the hearts of the nation and South Gippslanders when she won gold in Glasgow.

We'll also claim some glory for the gold medal winning Diamonds netball team, which was coached by Leongatha's Lisa Alexander. Congratulations too for Stony Creek's Kaila Hutchinson (McKnight) for reaching the finals of the 1500m.

The other 'gold' is the work of Council's enthusiastic Parks and Gardens team that planted 21,000 daffodil and tulip bulbs and 6,600 seedlings in autumn. Fertilising, weeding and good rains did the rest for your enjoyment.

"Not only do these displays make our shire attractive, but along with the many

open gardens and flower festivals like the iconic Leongatha Daffodil Festival, they draw busloads of gardeners to the region to enjoy its beauty," commented the Mayor, Cr Jim Fawcett. "The vegetables in Foster's street plantings always draw favourable comment too!" The warmer weather of course starts the grass growing and the team's attention turns to mowing the 192 sites that it maintains – roughly equivalent to mowing about 40 MCGs on a regular basis!

Spring is a great time to stretch your legs on the various recreational trails around the shire. There's the six km jaunt from Tarwin Lower to Venus Bay, the Grand Ridge Rail Trail, the many walks at the Prom and of course the Great Southern Rail Trail, which is moving closer to delivering a continuous 65 km journey from Leongatha to Welshpool. Work is underway on

the Toora to Welshpool leg which is expected to be completed next year, and prospects are looking hopeful for funding to repair the three Black Spur bridges to link Koonwarra and Meeniyan.

Independent consultants held community forums in June to gather suggestions for improvements to the trail and ideas for the grant funded branding and marketing of the trail. A report is expected to go before Council by October to detail the findings.

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Mayor's Message



I'm extremely pleased that CEO Tim Tamlin has agreed to undertake a second five year term at Council. Tim achieved much in his first term and we look forward to building on the stable platform that he and the staff have established. You'll find Tim's thoughts and aspirations for the organisation in these pages.

This newsletter is sent in March and September each year to bring you news from Council. It is one of a number of ways we communicate with you, the most recent being the introduction of a Facebook presence. Times and technology change but your feedback tells us that you still gather most information about us from local newspapers, radio, meetings and the bush telegraph.

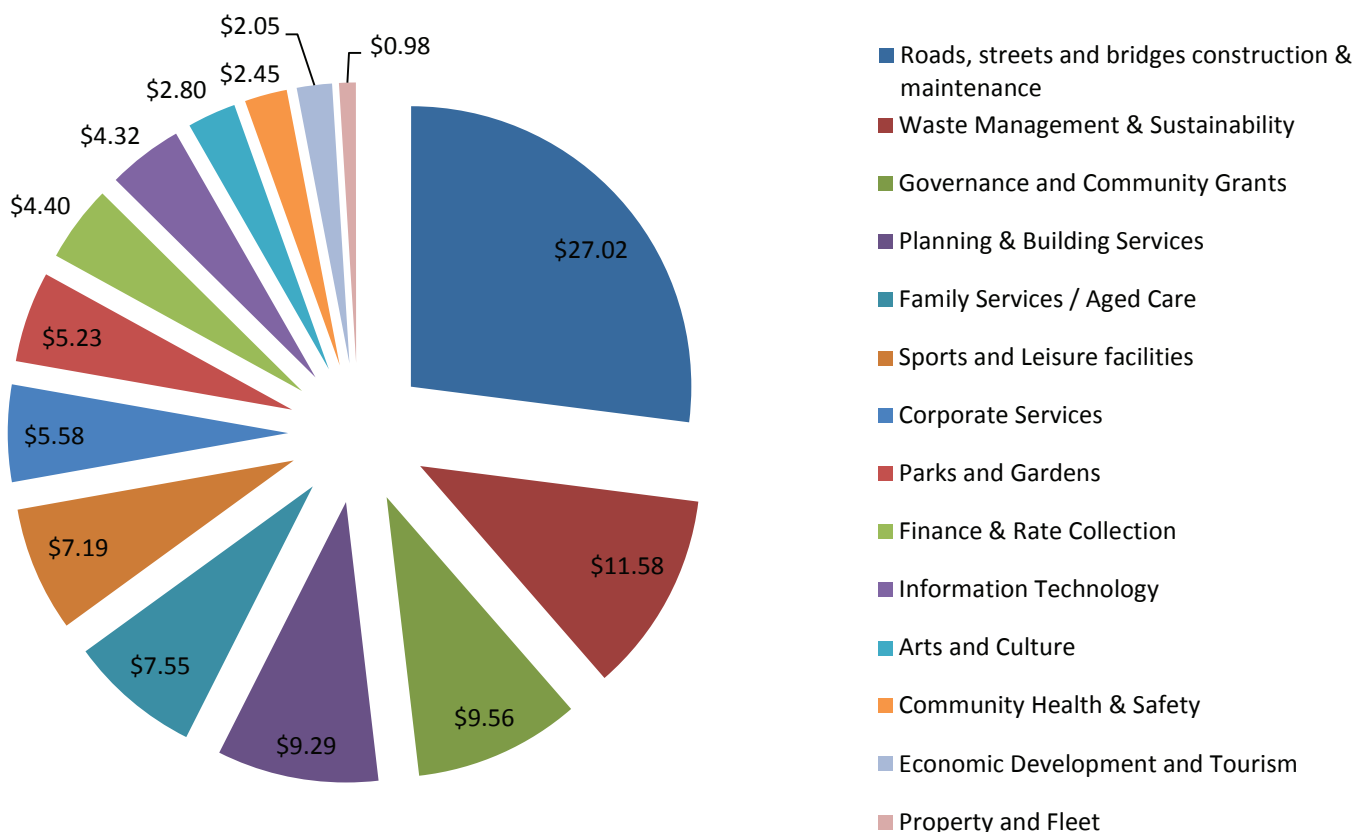
Plans are underway to upgrade our website by the end of the year and include features that will deliver the information you want easily and efficiently. While we welcome your calls and enquiries, the website can deliver most information at other times that may suit you best.

Whatever method works for you, keep in touch. We all share the common bond of wanting the best for South Gippsland.

Cr Jim Fawcett, Mayor

How \$100 in the budget is spent

This graph explains how your rates are spent by Council. One of the biggest concerns of our ratepayers is the state of our roads and in response we commit the largest percentage of our rates to our road construction and maintenance.



CEO reappointed for second term

The recent reappointment of CEO Tim Tamlin for a further five years brings an increased stability to Council. Since amalgamation and commissioners in 1994, seven CEOs came and went before Tim was appointed in 2009. It was a challenging period with what seemed perpetual restructures and uncertainty for staff, but the organisation is now better positioned thanks to senior management's continuing review to improve efficiencies and minimise risk.

During Tim's first five years, much has happened:

Community Supported

- Darlimurla fire and Prom flood recovery programs were implemented
- Childcare services at Mirboo North and Corner Inlet were maintained seamlessly when the former provider withdrew.

Sustainability Embraced

- A Sustainability Strategy was adopted and over 300 initiatives implemented
- Waste Management Strategy was adopted and management of the Koonwarra landfill was brought in-house, saving more than \$1m over ten years
- Installed 1300 energy efficient street lights across the shire.

Infrastructure Improved

- Secured funding for Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route
- Built Prom Coast Centre for Children
- Built Sandy Point Community Centre and developed it as a place of last resort (fire refuge)
- Built Great Southern Rail Trail extensions to Toora
- Implemented major road infrastructure repair program following storm damage

Services Expanded

- Introduced 'user pays' Hard Waste service and seasonal kerbside collections at Venus Bay and Walkerville.
- Green waste collections approved for 2015

Strategic Planning Implemented

- Finalised the Rural Land Use Strategy
- Farming Zone planning powers were returned to Council.
- Over 30 amendments to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme have been gazetted after consultation with the community. These will help to improve amenity, protect heritage and support future growth in the shire
- Rezoned land for a Prom Gateway Resort
- Created the Leongatha Business 4 Zone



"We are implementing computer efficiencies that have already doubled our capacity and will save us \$350,000 over the next three years," said Tim. "We are also exploring an opportunity to bring free Wi-Fi services to some of our towns. Our emergency services coordination has been migrated to cloud technology which will allow emergency teams to access vital information and updates in the field. We are looking at sharing resources with neighbouring councils which could cut costs significantly.

"Issues like the caravan parks on Crown land that had fallen behind in compliance under independent management are now being addressed. These may seem unrelated to the average family, but any liability incurred impacts rates, which is why we are being so fastidious in this area, our Budget and our long term financial planning. Our deficit now stands at \$3.35m in contrast to our borrowing ten years ago of \$13.7m, so it reaffirms that our financial modelling has been effective in restoring our corporate health.

"We will always be challenged to do more with less and I am committed, with my staff, to finding new efficiencies. South Gippsland is an extraordinary region with great potential and we want to strengthen our partnership with the community to be innovative and able to capitalise on new opportunities as they arise."

Priority Projects

Council this year lasered its focus to just three priority projects, with serious intent to progress them toward fruition. These are:

Korumburra Integrated Children's Centre

Several funding submissions are currently being considered by the State and Federal governments. Council is 'shovel ready' to build the new centre, with all architectural designs and costings complete.

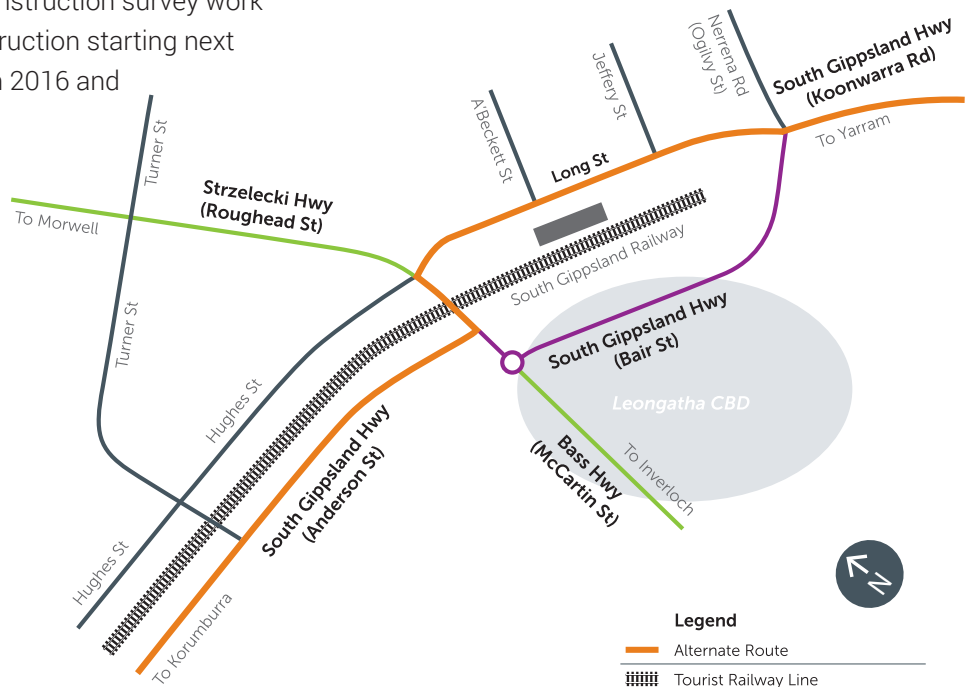
The next step towards a seamless early childhood service in Korumburra is the amalgamation of Korumburra Kindergarten and Birralee Childcare to form Karmai Community Children's Centre. This will bring professionals together to deliver education, care, health and support services as a 'virtual hub', operating from the two sites in preparation for the new centre to be built. The new centre will accommodate long day care and kindergarten programs, Maternal & Child Health and will also incorporate space for other services such as visiting specialist children's services.

FUNDING:

Asking for \$3.2m State & Commonwealth funding.
 Secured: Land 19a Mair Cr – donated by Council
 \$2.045m Council's financial commitment
 \$100,000 Pledged by existing childcare & kindergarten committees.

Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route

Funding (\$5.12m) was secured from State and Commonwealth Government in June, giving the go-ahead for this long awaited project. Preconstruction survey work has commenced, with actual construction starting next year. Works should be completed in 2016 and will include pedestrian lights at the Ogilvy Street intersection.



Corner Inlet Tourism Development Project

Five separate initiatives that will create major economic development in the Corner Inlet area. The project is expected to generate an economic output of \$66m over a three year construction phase and create an additional \$27m in regional economic flow on, including 245 full time jobs.

1. Rail Trail – Black Spur Missing Link

Stage 1

- Council - \$260,585
- RDV - \$500,000 sought
- Advancing Country Towns - \$290,000

Project Cost - \$1,050,585

Stage 2

- Council - \$301,559
- RDV - \$500,000 sought

Project Cost - \$801,559

2. Toora Dredging – Immediate works

Project cost: \$750k approx
 \$750,000 Shortfall

3. Port Welshpool Marina – awareness & future support

Project cost: Estimated \$5m
 Still in the preliminary design & economic viability stage

4. Agnes Fall Scenic Reserve development

Project cost: \$400k
 \$100,000 Council contribution
 \$300,000 Putting Locals First Program

5. Port Welshpool Long Jetty restoration

Project cost: \$11m approx
 \$5m Putting Locals First Program
 \$6m Shortfall

Our environmentally friendly initiatives

Sustainability Projects:

- A fortnightly green waste kerbside collection service will be introduced in July 2015, with charges comparing favourably to the alternative of disposal at transfer stations.
- A grant funded Agricultural Climate Resilience Officer has been employed to assist Council to adapt to climate change.
- All Council commercial and 6 cylinder vehicles are fueled by LPG or diesel – the only petrol vehicles are 4 cylinder.
- 1280 discarded mattresses were dismantled at the transfer stations last year to recover usable components and reduce waste to landfill.
- Council co-hosts the Sustainability Gippsland website to support residents and businesses to develop and promote environmentally friendly practices and solutions. (www.sustainabilitygippsland.com)
- Local food producers can list their products on the Southern Gippsland Food Map, a Council initiative to support local produce and direct buyers to the producers. (www.southerngippslandfoodmap.com.au)
- A 'user pays' hard waste collection is held annually.
- Green waste mulch can be obtained free of charge from selected transfer stations.
- Green street lighting installed across the shire, saving \$50,000 pa in energy costs and 400 tonnes pa in greenhouse gases.



Sustainable Businesses

Fill in this quick survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5GWBSMF> in order to get direct access to Gippslanders who are interested in sustainability. The basic details you provide through the survey will be added to the Sustainability Gippsland website for free.

Who deserves to be recognised?

Every community has dozens of great people who contribute relentlessly to their communities.

Isn't it about time that they were recognised for their efforts?

The South Gippsland Australia Day Awards are a simple, free way of letting them know how much they are appreciated.

Simply go to www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au and download the interactive nomination forms for:

- SG Citizen of the Year
- SG Community Event of the Year
- Youth Community Contribution

Alternatively, just call 5662 9200 and we'll forward the forms to you if that is easier.

Need some help? Call Australia Day Coordinator Jeannie Hicks on 5662 9221 and she'll set you on the path to providing your nominee with some much deserved recognition.



Technology

Council secures superfast digital speeds for business

Council has increased its internet speed from 4Mb to 50Mb per second, thanks to an innovative project with communications provider, Vertel.

Council's commitment provided the critical mass for the introduction of this microwave technology to the region. It has now opened opportunities for local businesses to gain access to the same technology and speeds and already several schools have taken advantage of the offer. It is anticipated that many other local organisations will seize the opportunity — now or when their current provider contracts expire.

"It's a global market place and it's imperative that South Gippsland strives to keep abreast of technology to meet the demands of both consumers and suppliers," said CEO Tim Tamlin.

NBN Rollout Update

Seven of the National Broadband Network (NBN) fixed wireless towers are now operational and residents are enjoying significantly improved internet speed and efficiency at Foster North-East, Toora, Welshpool, Yanakie, Foster North, Fish Creek and Kongwak.

Five other towers at Leongatha South, Koonwarra, Meeniyar, Dumbalk and Ruby are scheduled to be switched on in 2015. Approvals processes are underway for Korumburra (surrounds), Port Welshpool and Yanakie North, and preliminary planning has started to provide services to Loch, Nyora and Poowong.

Residents in known black spots who are reliant on satellite can expect improved speed next year when two new satellites will be launched to ease the load on the currently fully subscribed satellite service.

4G connections in Leongatha and Foster last December also improved efficiencies and eased space on the 3G network, a benefit appreciated in particular by holidaymakers during summer, who were used to metropolitan services.

Facebook



Council has officially launched its new Facebook page, providing another way for residents to hear about Council-related information, announcements and events.

You can find us at:
www.facebook.com/southgippslandshirecouncil

Volunteers get techno savvy

Finding the right way to get your message out to your community and to make it easy for potential members to join in is often a challenge. So a recent four day website training program hosted by Council and Community College Gippsland was so enthusiastically received by the fifteen community group representatives that they have formed a Digital Media Network and will meet monthly to support each other in the online journey.

In the 'hands-on' sessions they learnt how to create a web page, make it user friendly and improve traffic to their site, use social media and measure the effect of their efforts. Tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Analytics and more were explained, demystified and tamed.

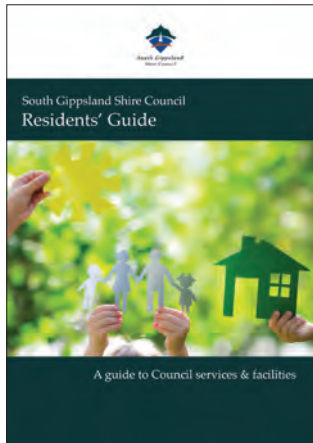
Volunteer Coordinator Dana Hughes said the course was just one of many being offered to skill up the many community volunteers to assist them in their work. Details of these can be found on www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au – volunteering or by calling 5662 9200

Taking our art to the world

The Digital Arts Project, which was launched in March, is a collection of 12 short videos that investigate the relationship between Tarwin Valley artists and their environment.

Developed in partnership with the Meeniyar Art Gallery and funded through the State Government's Advancing Country Towns project, it enables artists to promote their work at an international level. The digital films and images can be viewed at www.vimeo.com and www.tarwinvalley.com.au plus the Foster Visitor Information Centre, Coal Creek and Meeniyar Art Gallery.

What's new?



New Residents' Guide

A Residents' Guide is now available to assist both new and long term residents to find Council services and facilities.

Pick up a copy from our office or simply view it online at www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

Contacts for local community groups and organisations can be obtained from the Citizens' Advice Bureau in Michael Place Leongatha (Memorial Hall Complex).
Phone 5662 2111 or cab@dcsi.net.au

How would we handle a Foot & Mouth outbreak?

Council and DEPI recently convened an emergency management training exercise based on a hypothetical Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak which could have a devastating impact on the region. Ten key agencies and organisations participated in the scenario which depicted outbreaks in the Koonwarra, Korumburra North and Foster areas.

Participants were asked to consider what type of assistance they could provide around issues such as animal carcass disposal, decontamination procedures, psycho social impacts on the farming community and the impact of road closures. Organisations taking part included Police, SES, CFA, Education Dept, Parks Victoria, Red Cross, Lions Club and the Council of Churches.

Free workshops to better understand Mental Health

One in five adults and one in four young people live with mental health issues and almost half of the population will experience a mental disorder sometime in their lives.

To assist in raising awareness, Council, the CWA and Latrobe Regional Hospital combined forces to provide two Mental Health First Aid courses free to the community. The Korumburra course was tailored to youth specific health, with participants learning about adolescent development, signs and symptoms of mental health problems and how to get help. Both courses were fully booked with waiting lists.

The Leongatha course was aimed at adult mental health and focussed on how to assist a person experiencing a mental health crisis and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective.

Council has now secured further funding from the Department of Health to run another course. For further information or bookings, contact Lynn Missen on 5662 9260.



New playgrounds

Fish Creek, Sandy Point, Meeniyan and Allambie South youngsters now have sparkling new playgrounds to keep them entertained. The equipment was selected for its design and durability and installed for \$114,000 from the Playground Replacement Program budget.

Each year Council undertakes to replace a number of playgrounds that are in poor condition and have minimal play value for the community and visitors. The upgrade of Leongatha's McIndoe Park has been well used by young families, thanks to the collaborative effort of the Leongatha Lions Club, the community, Council and State Government funding.



The impact of storm damage

It has taken over 70,000 labour hours and \$11.6 million to repair the unprecedented weather damage to our roads network over the past three years. And that's just Council's part. VicRoads too would have significantly higher figures to report and with more work still to be done.

"Apart from our regular maintenance work, Council dealt with 152 landslides, 19 culvert washouts, 38 re-sheets and a further 212 damage locations," explained Engineering Services Director Anthony Seabrook. "Fortunately the cost of these works was covered by State and Federal Government under the Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Scheme which allowed us to employ some contractor support for our road crews.

"The landslides were our biggest headache, with sub-surface water pressures and high water tables destabilising the slides, so in most cases we had to wait for drier conditions before we could proceed," he said. "The crews used over 14,000 gabion wire baskets with steel anchors at their bases to prevent them sliding down the hill, as well as plastic grids to strengthen soil behind the baskets on larger slides."

The sites were then revegetated with a variety of trees to help reduce soil moisture and the water table while the roots bind the soil together and strengthen the banks. "You'll see that we have planted medium to smaller trees/shrubs on the slips, and bigger trees at the bottom for their ability to stabilise the base of the slip and absorb the accumulated moisture."

Some 86,000 tonnes of rock, 330 cubic metres of concrete, five kilometres of slotted drain and eight kilometres of steelwork were also used to complete the works.

With drenching rains in July/August, further damage demands attention and while our terrific road crews do their best, the major rehabilitation work cannot take place until the drier summer months, so please drive to the conditions.



Calendar of Events

Date	Event
SEPTEMBER	
Sat 20 & Sun 21	Loch Village Antique/Collectibles Fair
Wed 24 & Thu 25	South Gippsland Dairy Expo
Sun 28	Coal Creek Pirates Day
OCTOBER	
Sat 4	Coal Creek Literary Festival
Fri 10	Seniors Festival Concert
Fri 10 – Sun 12	Gippsland Singers Workshops
Sat 11	'Janet Iles' Centenary Celebrations
Fri 17 – Sun 19	Prom Country Art & Photography Show
Sat 25	Poowong Pickers Festival
Fri 31	Aus Day Awards nominations close
Fri 31	Halloween @ Coal Creek
NOVEMBER	
Sat 1	Buskers Festival
Sun 9	Café Culture Series - Toora
DECEMBER	
Sat 6 & Sat 27	Stony Creek Races
Fri 19	Carols at the Creek

For more events, go to visitpromcountry.com.au/events

Full details of these events, plus local markets and exhibitions are available on visitpromcountry.com.au (event organisers are invited to submit 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

1800 630 704 visitpromcountry.com.au

Leongatha Community & Visitor Information Centre

McCartin Street, Leongatha (Memorial Hall Complex)
Ph 5662 2111



Contact Us:

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

P: 5662 9200 | F: 5662 3754 | E: council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au | W: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

