

Message from the Administrator



This week I visited Foster to meet the Chamber of Commerce and to hear about their exciting plans to continue to make Foster thrive. I also attended the launch of Destination Gippsland's "Towards 2030" campaign in Korumburra. The plan to inspire a growth in tourism is designed to showcase the Shire for its natural beauty and for developing businesses.

Both of these meetings make me optimistic about what's ahead for South Gippsland. To illustrate the link between vital towns and tourism, it is worth looking at the independent financial data on the impact of the Great Southern Rail Trial.

The current section of the trail from Leongatha to Welshpool has brought an additional \$2.6 million dollars to towns along its length. That's an annual 6 per cent increase in spending by visitors from outside South Gippsland for local businesses.

Since the completion of the Black Spur section, both Meeniyan and Koonwarra have seen a 14 per cent increase in visitor spend. We anticipate that the Leongatha to Nyora section will have a similar impact to the west of the Shire.

Over the past ten weeks I have met close to 400 local residents as I build an understanding of people's hopes, concerns and aspirations. In addition to a significant number of individuals, I have also attended meetings of groups such as town Business Associations, Probus, Rotary and several meetings of Elderly Citizens. The more people I meet the more excited I am about working with members of the community to really set South Gippsland up for a bright future.

I am already noticing that some of the angst about the previous Council is dissipating and people are now more interested in talking about what's ahead than what happened over the last couple of years.

The perfect example of this was our visit to ViPlus dairy at Toora last week. It's hard to believe that the vibrant workplace we saw on Wednesday was in disrepair several years ago. It's no surprise that Toora feels like a place where good things are happening.

Julie Eisenbise
Administrator