



\$2M COVID-19 Support Package Proposed for South Gippsland

Council has proposed a \$2M COVID-19 support package for South Gippsland. The package includes the introduction of a COVID-19 Hardship Policy to support residents having trouble making rate repayments, the option of interest-free rate deferrals for local businesses and an expanded grants program that will allow for more grant recipients and the introduction of a new business grants stream. The support package is included in the 2020/21 Council budget which is currently open for community consideration until 28 May.

South Gippsland Shire's Chair Administrator, Ms Julie Eisenbise is pleased that the support package is a key feature of the 2020/21 budget.

"The COVID-19 Support Package will provide support for our community and stimulus for our local economy both during and after the COVID-19 event. We are conscious that many people in our community are doing it tough right now and we would like to provide support where we can.

"The support package has been designed to help residents and businesses as well as community groups that are an essential part of South Gippsland. We have identified a number of actions that we believe will help to benefit local residents but we expect that the package will also evolve as the impacts of the pandemic are determined," said Ms Eisenbise.

Other package features include subsidised flu shots, waiving of some business permit fees and the development of a community outreach program in partnership with key agencies to provide community support.

"The COVID-19 Support Package will be delivered by a dedicated project management team in consultation with key stakeholder groups including the Municipal Emergency Management Committee (MEMPC) and the Business Emergency Leadership Group (BELG) to ensure the actions are best placed to deliver real outcomes for South Gippsland. We are conscious we need to look not only at what is happening now in our community but that we are planning for what happens in the months ahead.

"We are experiencing challenging times but are confident that solid support measures and our impressive community spirit will see South Gippsland come through this period of uncertainty and head toward a strong recovery," said Ms Eisenbise.