

This week the Administrators have asked me to write a CEO Message in order to reflect on my time here at South Gippsland so far.

I have been really enjoying my time at South Gippsland Shire Council despite the unusual circumstances we have all found ourselves in. I have had the opportunity to meet most staff, quite a number of external stakeholders and many community members: while most of this has had to be online I have been made to feel very welcome.

Although it has certainly been challenging dealing with a pandemic so early into my time as a new CEO – and having to navigate early interactions without being face-to-face – I have been very impressed by how quickly and capably the organisation responded. It has been fantastic to see our staff work dynamically and I am proud of how quickly we were able to adapt to the situation while ensuring most services remained available to the community. It has been made clear to me that our staff are determined to do great work for the local community they are part of and care so much about.

It has also been heart-warming to see how our community can come together in times of hardship. It's admirable to see so many pulling together, supporting one another and demonstrating real care for friends, neighbours and relatives during such an uneasy time.

To support this, I am delighted that Council has proposed as part of the 2020/21 Annual Budget to allocate a \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package. I am really looking forward to working with Council, staff and the community to ensure this hits the mark and supports the residents and businesses that need it most.

Given my background in local government and the State's anti-corruption and integrity agency, I have a real passion for good governance so I was pleased to see a new Good Governance Framework was adopted just before I commenced. This has meant that I have the opportunity to lead the implementation of this framework across the organisation, which is a rewarding task for the beginning of my role.

Over the next 12 to 18 months I intend to focus my attention on continuing to strengthen our commitment to community engagement, improving our service to customers and their interactions with us and investing and growing the capability of our people.

I look forward to working with staff to make this happen so that we can support our community effectively into the future. I am loving South Gippsland and loving the role. I am really looking forward to being able to get out and about a bit more, to meeting people face-to-face and working together to deliver great things for South Gippsland.

Kerryn Ellis – Chief Executive Officer