

# Administrators' Message



We have been through an extraordinary week following the Premier's announcement to enter back into Stage Three restrictions for metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire. We are watching carefully as these developments unfold, and working through what this means for all Victorians.

Make no mistake, while our region is fortunate not to be in the Stage Three restrictions this will have implications for South Gippsland. Losing our visitor numbers from Melbourne will be difficult for local businesses and many of us may be isolated from family and friends who are usually only a car trip away. Ultimately the health of everyone is paramount and we hope that these restrictions are successful in reducing COVID-19 cases so we can return to some sense of normality soon.

While we do have more liberties here in South Gippsland, we must stay mindful of the restrictions that remain in place such as social distancing, guest limits for businesses and having a maximum of five visitors to our homes at once. This is not the time for us to be complacent – we have all managed to keep cases of the virus low in our region and we can continue to keep it this way if we work hard together.

Council's operations remain unchanged from the last few weeks when easing of restrictions were announced. Our Customer Service centre remains closed but the team is available for phone, mail and internet services. Our services remain on offer with minimal disruption and many of our facilities have been reopened such as our parks and playgrounds. Further details about our current operations are available on our website under 'Latest News'.

It is timely that this week our Special Council Meeting was held to consider the \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package. The support package has been long awaited and we are pleased to move into phase one of its implementation.

Phase One of the \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package involves a \$1M investment in the community, and includes new COVID-19 Business, Community Support and Community Group grants; refunded and reduced business registration fees; a waiver of the fee increases for garbage charges related to the Victorian Landfill Levy and distribution of Community Restarter Packs containing personal protective equipment and sanitiser for local community groups to help with reopening requirements.

We understand that our business sector and wider community have suffered hardship this year as a result of the pandemic and the intent of this package is to offer some relief to those in greatest need.

This package is also intended to act as a stimulus for the local economy and help give a much-needed boost to the region following the challenging times of late. But it isn't just the economy we want to get back on its feet; the social wellbeing of our people is equally important and that is why local community groups are also a focus for the package, so everyone can return to their social networks safely as soon as possible.

Those wanting more information on the \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package can visit [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/covidsupport](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/covidsupport)

We also adopted our Proposed Governance Rules for consultation at our Special Meeting on Wednesday. These will be of interest as they outline the orderly conduct of Council Meetings and election of future Mayors and Deputy Mayors. These rules are currently out for community review until 5.00pm on Tuesday 11 August and are available to view at [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/governancerules](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/governancerules) We look forward to receiving community input on this important document.

We must all remember that now is a time for us to support one another; while we may not be in lockdown please continue to check in with those around you like you may have back in March. This is still a difficult time for many, with emotions high and fatigue setting in, so we owe it to one another to care for each other as best as we can.

**Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators**