

Administrator's Message



This week my message will take a different direction. The Administrators have now spent over 12 months in this wonderful part of the world. When we arrived we never could have envisaged the challenges that our community has faced during 2020. Our role was to come into the Shire and review the Governance policies, communicate widely with the community and to prepare a strong foundation for the future of a united shire.

As we evaluate our work this year, it has given us time to reflect and that allows us to look at the broader picture and which warms my heart. The residents of South Gippsland have managed through this time with resilience and perseverance in what is the biggest challenge of our times. We have to date managed to keep COVID-19 numbers low in our region and I congratulate those residents who have followed the guidance of the Federal and State Government. I acknowledge and thank the thousands of people who have kept our Shire functioning; the health workers, the teachers, the community service workers, the volunteers, the parents, the neighbours, the businesses and our Council staff.

Despite our current challenge, the community is working closely with Council staff to take South Gippsland to its next stage of development. During the current crisis we have all been working at an incredible pace to take advantage of grants that other levels of government are putting forward. The decisions we make are always made with extensive amount of data, excellent reporting from staff and community participation. Of course, we will always have our detractors but Council has progressed so much in the last 12 months, and our collaboration with residents and businesses has meant we now have many projects either progressing or about to commence, we have a sound financial position and a plan that will allow growth. Our community satisfaction has improved and we will continue to work on that.

Our Council reports are detailed and may not be an easy read but they do explain the 'why' when we make decisions. We intend to provide a clear 'why' when a decision is made when we announce any news in the future to avoid misinformation from other sources. The misinformation that permeates our region from unreliable sources is not helpful and is indeed of great concern to some of our vulnerable residents and businesses.

Recently we prepared a review of our actions to date and that was approved at Council meeting in July and forwarded to the Minister for Local Government. Those wishing to view it themselves can visit

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/yourcouncil and select 'Administrators' Community Updates'. The most important decision we have reflected on is our employment of a new CEO, Ms Kerryn Ellis, who is now working with staff to fulfil the reviewed Council Plan. I thank Kerryn for the challenge she is managing, being a CEO who spent only two weeks with staff before having to work remotely! Thank you to all the Council staff who have continued to work to provide services and prepare for the future and lastly to my Administrator colleagues, Christian Zahra and Rick Brown.

As most businesses, we have had countless hours on video conferencing, both locally and across the State, but we all look forward to seeing you again. Stay safe, keep well and look after your neighbours.

Julie Eisenbise – Chair Administrator