

Administrators' Message



This week we want to acknowledge some of the innovation local businesses and community groups have undertaken during the pandemic. It is easy to get stuck in the negatives of our current situation but there is some positive news and we think it is vital to focus on that from time to time.

Local catering business Brent Sinclair Catering has a significant change to its business model as all events were cancelled once COVID-19 restrictions were announced. In order to adapt Brent commenced offering takeaway and delivery of family-sized meals and developed Mother's and Father's Day gift packs to purchase. There was also a gap in the market and an opportunity to partner with another local business Voyage Fitness to provide healthy option packs; with Brent often making over 400 packs per week for local health enthusiasts. To complement all of this hard work Brent has also upgraded his website to support online ordering for all these wonderful services.

Another local engineering business, M&S CNC Machining, has responded to the current challenges by developing a product for a customer in the telecommunications industry. The customer was having difficulties with offshore quality and supply of a critical component; a precision engineered base for antennas. M&S worked closely with the client to overcome the technical challenges and supply a 'ready to assemble' component that replaces a previously imported part and demonstrates significant local engineering capability.

These two businesses are just a couple of examples of the creative 'outside the box' thinking our business sector has been undertaking. We want to congratulate all local businesses who have made a shift, innovated and implemented changes during the pandemic.

Our local community groups have also been doing their best to adapt during this time. Our COVID-19 Community Grants Program and Community Support Program has been supporting community groups to do this by providing funding for relief and recovery (\$100,000); community adaption and participation (\$15,000); technology support (\$15,000); quick response (\$20,000) and community connection (\$50,000).

Some wonderful examples of these funds being used include supporting Milpara House to develop resources and provide tutoring to families struggling with learning from home. We are proud to see this initiative develop as we know that home schooling is a juggle for families at the moment. The South Gippsland Hospital will also use this support to distribute hardcopy welfare and health information packs to each student at Foster Secondary College. This health project will aim to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Foster and surrounding areas. These are just a few examples of the 31 grants that have been approved so far.

We highly encourage all local community groups to check their eligibility for the COVID-19 Community Grants Program and to make an application at www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/covidsupport before the

funding allocation is exhausted.

We also would like to acknowledge our local media outlets who are doing a wonderful job relaying COVID-19 information to the community. Having timely and relevant information to ensure we are all informed and able to abide by the current requirements is vitally important and we are pleased to see our local media keeping us all abreast of the latest news. It has been a difficult landscape for media over the last nine months so this truly is a terrific effort and they should take pride in their work.

We hope you all are keeping well and looking after one another where you can. We know this has been a difficult time for many but by focusing on what we can control and helping one another we can get through this stronger.

Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators