

# Administrators' Message



It was another busy week last week with the September Council Meeting on Wednesday. As we continue to work from home under the direction of the State Government, we are thankful that technology has allowed us to conduct virtual Council Meetings during this time.

As a Council we deliberated on a number of key topics this month including planning applications, the Gippsland Regional Plan, Better Approvals Project, Draft Annual Report and more. As Administrators, we are proud to continue to serve the South Gippsland community and make these decisions that will have a significant impact on the region now and into the future.

Most notably the Draft Annual Report is now on public exhibition for the community. Our Annual Report is the primary means of advising the South Gippsland Shire community about our operations and performance during the financial year. It is one of our most important reports and we are proud to present it to the community to demonstrate our hard work over the last twelve months and identify areas of improvement. The Draft Annual Report is also accompanied by our financial statements which demonstrate that we remain in a financially sound and sustainable position. It is this security that enables us to deliver vital programs such as the \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package this year.

We hope that community members will take the time to read through the report, which is available on Council's website [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/annualreport](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/annualreport)

It was also fantastic to reflect on the success of the Better Approvals Project which aimed to make it quicker and easier to open a small business in South Gippsland by improving the customer experience and reducing regulatory burden. Businesses interacting with Council are now offered a dedicated case-manager and pre-application meetings, application forms are streamlined, a dedicated business webpage has been developed and improved systems are being investigated to support further streamlining. We are pleased to hear that positive feedback has been received from businesses on this project and we look forward to helping many more.

If you would like to look back at these decisions being made please visit [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live) to watch on demand. Future meetings can also be viewed live at the same web address at each appropriate meeting time.

At the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee meeting this week it was also wonderful to reflect on how our community has been supporting each other during the pandemic – and in particular by making masks. Our Community Strengthening team has been out delivering all the necessary materials to volunteers for our Great South Gippy Sewing Bee and we have now received over 300 homemade masks in return. Many of these masks have now been distributed with re-starter packs to local community groups for assistance. We would like to give our thanks to all these volunteers that have spent a number of hours on this project in order to help keep our community safe.

In addition to these masks we have been lucky to receive approximately 3500 disposal masks through the Victorian Government's Community Activation and Social Isolation (CASI) initiative. These masks are being distributed to a range of local institutions including police, medical centres, community centres and more to ensure those who require masks have them available, particularly our vulnerable community members.

We are also so proud to see the cases of COVID-19 stay low across South Gippsland and drop significantly across the whole state. This has been a massive feat for us all – with significant sacrifices made – so you should take pride in the results of our collective efforts. We hope that everyone in South Gippsland has been enjoying their new-found liberty as restrictions ease.

We hope you all stay safe and continue to look after one another during these times.

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