

Consultation Complete for Community Engagement Review

South Gippsland Shire Council has reviewed the results of the Community Engagement Review which was undertaken in recent weeks.

Community members had the opportunity to share their preferences for future engagement opportunities via an online survey and review the Draft Community Engagement Policy in an online OurSay forum.

From the consultation Council received:

- Sixty-one completed online surveys (including one written submission)
- Five hundred and eighty-nine page views for the online forum
- Fifteen ideas submitted to the online forum with 31 likes and 12 comments

Key themes that emerged from the results included:

- 95 per cent of respondents will engage with Council on decisions that are important to them such as decisions around infrastructure/services and strategic plans.
- The most popular methods of engaging with respondents included surveys, online interactive platforms and informative measures (such as e-newsletters, social media and newspapers)
- Suggestions to make community engagement activities more inviting included to articulate how their say made a difference, changing the culture, consider new methods (i.e., Zoom), holding more workshops, keep interactions online or anonymous and taking part in community activities
- Feedback for the draft policy focused on accessibility, including a dedicated place for engagement activities to be advertised (including an e-newsletter or online engagement hub) and making a commitment to provide community members with assistance to understand the material that is provided to them for them to be able to comment.

Participants also used this opportunity to highlight community projects and these will be considered for future Council Plans and the Community Vision.

Council will now review the Draft Community Engagement Policy with consideration for the feedback received. An updated policy will be presented to Council for deliberation at the February 2021 Council Meeting.

Quotes attributable to South Gippsland Shire Chair Administrator Julie Eisenbise:

South Gippsland Shire Chair Administrator Julie Eisenbise would like to thank each community member who participated in the Community Engagement Review.

“Council has a clear commitment to our community and engaging effectively is a vital component in making informed decisions on behalf of South Gippsland. We want to ensure that

we are providing engagement opportunities in a way that suits our community and encourages participation by all residents.

“We are thankful to those that took part in the Community Engagement Review process as it has provided us with valuable information of how we can improve in this space. We look forward to reviewing the final Community Engagement Policy that will incorporate this feedback early in the new year,” said Ms Eisenbise.

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