



# Running for Council?

## Thinking of running for Council? Here are a few things you should know...

### Local Government

With three tiers of government in Australia, local government is the tier closest to the people.

The role that councils play in the community has expanded over the years to reflect the changing needs of residents and as the interdependence with other levels of government continues to grow.

Victorian councils provide a wide variety of services to their communities, as well as maintaining important community assets, delivering projects and advocating for the needs of the community to state and federal government.

### Role of a Councillor

As a Councillor you have the opportunity to make a significant impact on your community and can create great outcomes for our region.

If you embody community spirit and understand the importance of teamwork you would be perfect for the role. If you have those the only other thing you need is a weekly schedule that's reasonably flexible.

To be a successful and effective Councillor you must communicate well, and be open and responsive to local residents.

Above all else, you need to work well with other people. As a Councillor you are just one person. As part of a Council you'll be relying on the support of your colleagues – and they on you – to get ideas turned into reality.

With that in mind it is important to note that as a Councillor you represent all the people of South Gippsland. While you may be elected by and within a particular Ward (and South Gippsland has three Wards with three Councillors coming from each), once you sit at the Council table you have the responsibility to govern for all of South Gippsland, from Nyora to Port Welshpool, from Mirboo North to Venus Bay.

## The Life of a Councillor

A week-in-the-life of a Councillor is bound to be quite varied. There's always a lot going on in the local community and it is an important part of a Councillor's role to be involved in local events and to be in regular contact with local community members.

Sometimes there are responsibilities outside 'normal' business hours, so Councillors need to be flexible enough to manage working some late nights and weekends too.

### A 'typical' week might include:

- Reading the Council business papers.
- Meeting with the Mayor about Council's strategic planning.
- Having a cuppa with a local resident who has been in touch about something that they want Council to champion.
- Attending a community meeting about a new facility or an issue that's a cause for some concern.
- Going on a site visit to see progress on the new capital works project.

In addition to that sort of variety you'll also need to be able to get together with your colleagues most Wednesdays. These are the days that Councillors get together for briefings – from officers or the community – and Council Meetings.

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## Role of a Councillor cont.

The ability to work with others not only includes a good working relationship between Councillors and the Mayor (who is elected to be the head of the Council by the nine Councillors themselves), it extends to the CEO and other Council staff too. These working relationships are fundamental to being part of an effective and successful Council.

Councillors need to understand how to manage external relationships, particularly with the community, the media and other organisations including State agencies and other politicians.

Under the Local Government Act 2020 each Councillor has a responsibility to:

- Participate in the decision making of the Council.
- Represent the interests of the community in that decision making.
- Contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents, including the Council Plan.

## What Council Does

For a list of Council services please visit: [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilservices](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilservices)

For a list and progress report of Council's Priority Projects please visit:  
[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/priorityprojects](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/priorityprojects)

## Next Steps

1. **Determine your eligibility to run:** Almost anyone who is entitled to vote at council elections in Victoria is also eligible to stand for election as a Councillor. Before setting off to become a Councillor, ensure you are on the voter roll for South Gippsland and be clear that you're not disqualified from standing for office. Check out Section 34 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to find out who is disqualified from standing for office.
2. **Determine what you are passionate about:** As a potential Councillor it is important to have a clear understanding of what issues are important to you. Anyone who votes in the election will want to know what you stand for - so make it known!
3. **Attend a candidate information session:** In the lead up to Council elections both South Gippsland Shire Council and the Victorian Electoral Commission will hold candidate information sessions for those who wish to run in the election. Keep an eye on Council's Facebook page and website for details as they become available.

Being elected as a Councillor is an exciting opportunity to serve your community!

It is highly rewarding to see how hard work and shared commitment can achieve great outcomes when serving your local community.