

Administrators' Message



It was great to be back for our February Council Meeting this week. It had been a few months since we were all together – albeit virtually – making decisions and representing the South Gippsland community.

One of these decisions was in regards to the Big Housing Build funding for social and affordable housing. Although South Gippsland Shire was not one of the local government areas that received a minimum investment amount, Council approved the development of a strategy that will address the Victorian Government's initiative and position South Gippsland to take advantage of this opportunity. This strategy will include the options available to Council to advocate for investment in social housing in South Gippsland.

Council was also informed that South Gippsland Shire was successful in receiving funding under the Working for Victoria Grant. The \$1,925,369 funding allows Council to provide 43 full-time positions for six months. The roles will be available in a range of different areas from cleaners and road crews, to economic development and community strengthening.

It is a great honour that we can assist in getting people back to work after the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to express our thanks to the Victorian Government and Council's staff who have made these jobs possible.

We were also pleased to see the Leongatha Railway Station Precinct Project report come before Council this month. This project will contribute towards the Great Southern Rail Trail project by creating parking and pedestrian bridges to link the precinct back to the town centre. It will be great to see the project begin and transform the space that has been a blank canvas for a while.

The community is our number one priority at Council, and the Community Engagement Policy adopted at this meeting further strengthens our commitment to communicate with our community members on the subjects they want to hear about and in the right format.

Something that we think ties into this quite well is the Administrators' Community Update, as part of our Good Governance Framework. This is a critical part of the accountability Council has to the community. Keeping the community informed on our progress of improving governance practices for the next Council is a key part of the work our term as

Administrators.

We were also pleased to see the announcement from the Victorian Government on support for businesses that have been impacted due to the circuit breaker lockdown a few weeks ago. This has a number of components to it that create opportunities for businesses as well as tourism providers with more travel vouchers being announced as part of this package. We know that the numerous lockdowns have had an impact on many local businesses, so it is great to see some funding being provided. We have had our fingers crossed for some additional business support, and to see the Victorian Government extend this helping hand is fabulous.

Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators