

Administrators' Message



This week has been an exciting week. At the Council Meeting on Wednesday 23 June, we passed the 2021/22 Council Budget. The Budget 2021/22 is a responsible financial plan to deliver Council's services and ambitious capital works program, whilst complying with the rate cap of 1.5 per cent.

Many of Council's costs increase annually beyond 1.5 per cent, such as the costs of construction and renewal of our assets, contracts to deliver key services and Council's Enterprise Agreements. As a result of reviewing our services and ensuring efficiencies in our operations are maintained, we are pleased that we have been able to maintain service delivery without the need to apply for an exemption to the rate cap. This is the lowest rate increase South Gippslanders have experienced in many years.

This budget funds an operating budget of \$69.5 million and a capital works program of \$34.2 million.

Thanks to our strong financial management and prudence, we have also been able to stay in the black – a huge achievement considering the confronting and challenging times we have all faced in the past 12 months.

The Budget has some truly exciting key projects within it, as well as a number of smaller projects. We would like to make special mention to all those who have been involved in this process, both within and outside of Council. Every person who submitted a response in writing or presented at the Council Meeting earlier this month have all been extremely helpful in creating our budget. Thank you all.

At the Council Meeting, we also endorsed the second intake for the Community Leadership Program. We have endorsed 20 participants who will now be contacted directly to confirm their ability to attend all sessions of the program. It is set to start in early July.

We also endorsed the Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies. These are now out for public exhibition where all community members and those interested in our region are encouraged to read through the recommended actions and explanatory notes and provide feedback. Those interested are encouraged to visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/exhibitions

for more information. The final Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies will be considered for adoption at the 21 July 2021 Council Meeting.

Our thoughts are with those across our region who have been and still are being impacted by the weather event a few weeks ago. The clean up continues, and will do for some time; we thank you all for your patience during this time and assure you we are doing everything we can, as fast as we can. Council will continue to work with responsible agencies as we move from the direct response phase to a long-term response phase.

Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators