

Administrators' Message



We would like to congratulate Poowong on being a finalist in the Keep Victoria Beautiful Tidy Towns awards. These awards recognise, celebrate and share grassroots initiatives and positive actions taken by community groups, educational institutions, businesses and councils in rural and regional areas in Victoria. These initiatives must play a critical role in fostering resilient, happy people and in building a strong sense of community – something we believe all of South Gippsland has in spades. This isn't our only feature in these awards, and Mirboo North was a winner back in 1997. It is a privilege for our region to be part of these awards.

The aftermath of the storm event in June is still being felt across our region. However there has been some amazing work going on. So far, Council in partnership with Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) have inspected and assessed 994 roads around South Gippsland, with 538 found to be damaged by the storm. The initial tree clean-up work is progressing well with Council staff and contractors working hard to complete the works. Pavement and drainage reparation works are currently being assessed with cost estimates being generated.

The repair work will take a number of months to complete, however Council is undertaking hazard reduction such as laying rock on slippery roads, appropriate signage and culvert cleaning until the full reparation works are completed. Timelines haven't been determined yet due to the extent of the damage, however our teams are hoping to have a better indication of the timeline once the whole network has been assessed.

We would like to thank all these contractors who have been supporting Council during this difficult time. Understandably, it has had a huge impact on road infrastructure in particular and will take some time to fix. We ask for patience and understanding during this time – something everyone has been doing so well thus far. If you would like to stay up to date on what roads remain closed please visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/roadhazards

With the introduction of the new *Local Government Act 2020*, we as Administrators have worked with staff and other consultative groups to ensure we have implemented all changes brought about from the updates to the Act. There are also areas of the Act that come into effect following Council elections, such as developing a new Vision for South Gippsland Shire in partnership with the community. South Gippsland will have our Council elections in October this year, and it will be the work of the new Council to lead and partner with the community on these

projects. As Administrators, we have focused on doing work that sets up the new Councillors for success. Some of this work includes the adoption of a new comprehensive Community Engagement Policy and Framework that guides how consultation will be conducted with our community, and the approval of the Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies. All of these and more help lay that important foundation for the new Council and set them up for success. These projects have all benefited from significant community input. The Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies for example benefited from over 400 pieces of community feedback at various stages throughout the development process.

It was great to see the end of lockdown as scheduled last Tuesday evening. Thank you to everyone in our region and beyond who have done the right thing and stayed home except for those essential reasons. A special thank you to all those frontline workers who have been running testing sites. Everyone has played their part and helped to see us exit lockdown. However, it is still important for us to be vigilant and do what we can – get tested if you have symptoms and isolate until you have a result, get vaccinated if you are eligible, and follow the restrictions that still remain. For all information relating to COVID-19, please visit www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators