

Administrators' Message



Last week was a Council Meeting week and there was a very full Agenda for us to consider. It was great to see many of the items on this month's Agenda had benefited from input from community members as part of the engagement process. During our term as Administrators, we have regularly been struck by the effort that locals make to contribute to Council decision making, whether it be to improve a policy on Council governance or to ensure a document on Stadiums (like the one at our meeting last week) recognised the importance of particular stadiums to their local communities. For that, we thank every single community member who has taken the time to provide their feedback to us.

One of the items on our Agenda was the Community Grants Program review. This has been a great program, but all programs benefit from a review from time-to-time to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Programs such as this play a vital role in this Shire and provide real value to community initiatives that enhance the quality of life, heritage, recreation and cultural opportunities in South Gippsland. The review provided a clear direction to further enhance the operation of the Community Grants program and as Administrators we have approved the general direction and implementation processes to give effect to the recommendations of the review. We thank all those members of the community involved in local community groups who participated in the review along with our Council staff who have embraced the opportunity to look to improve this important program.

At our meeting, we also adopted a revised Councillor Code of Conduct 2021 in readiness for the swearing in of the new Council in October. The Code promotes a proactive, collaborative culture for Councillors through five high-level principles in the Councillor Charter that underpin them being a successful team. This includes expected behaviour standards while performing their duties and functions that come with being a Councillor.

To demonstrate our wholehearted endorsement for this important piece of business, we felt the best way to do that was by signing it ourselves which as Administrators we have now all done. Signing the Code of Conduct for us is a way to convey to the community that we are clear about the high expectations they have of us and the need for us to work collaboratively with each other and the local community to deliver the outcomes the local community wants to see happen.

The final piece of news we want to touch on is the Community Transport Options paper. An external consultant was engaged to review Council's Community Transport Program which identified options for the future delivery of Council services in this area.

It was clear that there has been a significant underutilisation of Council's community transport services and the review highlighted the emergence of multiple service providers who are delivering sustainable, flexible and efficient community transport services across South Gippsland.

The decision made to withdraw from direct Council-provided services in this area. To ensure coordinated service delivery, Council will oversee the creation of a Community Transport Provider Network which will support the collaborative coordination of community transport across South Gippsland and we will also transition those few remaining users of the Council-run services over to other providers to ensure there isn't a loss of service for them.

If you would like to see everything covered in this month's meeting or would like to watch it back, please visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings and www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live respectively.

We were also pleased to see that the decision we made last month in regards to West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation moving into a new not-for-profit company structure was mirrored by Bass Coast Shire Council and Baw Baw Shire Council. We are very pleased to be a part of this great organisation. This structure change will support their continuing high level of performance into the future. The new name for the organisation is MyLi (short for My Library) which might take a bit of getting used to!

We would also like to take this opportunity to recognise Vietnam Veteran's Day on 18 August, which falls on the anniversary of the battle of Long Tan. We give all those who participated and those with family members who fought in that war all our warmest thanks for their service. On Wednesday, we laid a wreath at the memorial in your honour.

Julie Eisenbise, Christian Zahra AM and Rick Brown – Administrators