

## Community Grants Program Evaluation Undertaken

South Gippsland Shire Council's Community Grants Program was designed to support community initiatives that enhance the quality of life, heritage, recreation and cultural opportunities for South Gippsland residents. A recent review was undertaken by an external evaluator to determine the effectiveness of the program and what learnings can be taken from the evaluation.

The evaluation was concluded in June 2021 and has allowed for a comprehensive report that demonstrates how important this program has been to the South Gippsland community. It also received a huge amount of community contribution that assisted the evaluation company to provide Council with a comprehensive set of recommendations.

At the Council Meeting on 18 August, Administrators adopted the external evaluation and endorsed three stages of implementation that were recommended. These are:

- Strengthen Community Grants Program practices and processes;
- Build alignment between the Community Grants Program, community need, Council Plan and strategies and regional strategies; and once these two stages are complete;
- Enable a collaborative, flexible and responsive Community Grants Program through the establishment of a Community Grants Review Reference Group.

The reference group will help support future reviews, create a platform for testing ideas and changes and engage external stakeholders in decisions that may affect them. This group cannot be created until the first two stages are completed to ensure they have Terms of Reference and Expressions of Interest to support group functions.

### **Quote attributable to South Gippsland Shire Council Chair Administrator, Julie Eisenbise:**

“The Community Grants Program has been vital to our community over many years and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have allowed community organisations and volunteer groups to apply for funding for a range of different reasons such as events and equipment grants. It has been important for us to provide this support to our community, but it is also important for us to reflect on the way the program has operated and how we can make it better into the future.”

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