

Community Support Package – Final Report Phase 1, 2 and 3

At last week's Council Meeting a final report was provided to Administrators detailing the outcomes of phase 1, 2 and 3 of the COVID-19 Community Support Package.

The Community Support Package was implemented to help aid regional recovery and to provide targeted support to assist impacted businesses, community groups and residents. A budget amount of up to \$2 million was allocated to support COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives and was included in Council's 2020/21 budget.

Twenty-five initiatives were included as part of the three phases, each with defined objectives.

Phase one aimed to provide targeted support and financial relief to businesses and households via activities such as the waiving of permits, rebates on business fees, an updated hardship policy and grants for community organisations and small businesses.

Phase two aimed to build resilience in our local community by providing working with key industries such as tourism and the arts and creative sector. Activities in this phase included Visitor Economy Grants for the tourism sector, mental health support and a suite of activities in the creative space.

Phase three focused on recovery and reconnection, and projects that will support economic development, tourism, sport and community wellbeing.

Key achievements of the COVID-19 Community Support Package to date include:

- Provided \$126,000 through Recreation Reserve Income Offset grants to support 22 recreation reserve committees;
- Waived \$192,475 of business registration and permits to provide relief to 710 local businesses;
- Printed and distributed 5,000 updated Community Information Brochures to keep the community informed of available support services; and
- Provided \$30,000 in grants to assist home-based businesses.

A final report on all phases of the CSP will be provided to Council by June 2022 and will include an evaluation report.

Quote attributable to Kerryn Ellis, CEO South Gippsland Shire Council:

“COVID-19 was an event that nobody expected and one that has impacted everyone on some level. Council’s response to the pandemic was to provide targeted support to different parts of our community who were identified – following consultation with our community – as having the greatest need. The package was broken down into different phases as we initially didn’t know how long COVID-19 would be impacting our region. We are pleased with the outcomes of the package and the support that has been provided to many people in South Gippsland”

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