

We have had some exciting news this week in regards to a couple of priority projects. The Railway Precincts at Leongatha and Korumburra have been successful in a grant from the Federal Government's *Building Better Regions Fund*. Council will receive \$3 million towards the project, which is currently costed at \$6 million.

The railway precincts are a key component of the Great Southern Rail Trail and will support the Leongatha to Korumburra and Korumburra to Nyora extensions that are underway. These upgrades not only benefit the Great Southern Rail Trail, but the towns as well with improved experiences for local residents and tourists alike.

We also had great news on our funding application for the Foster Showgrounds Oval Upgrade and Irrigation project under the State Government's *Country Football and Netball Program*. Council will receive \$150,000 towards this project. The project will see the oval resurfaced, levelled, better drainage and a new automatic irrigation system installed. All of this work is anticipated to cost \$430,000, but perhaps more importantly, save up to \$10,000 per year in water costs for maintaining the ground for community use.

I would like to thank all the Council staff who have worked on submissions for these projects. These funding opportunities are not easy to get and can take lots of supporting documentation in order to be successful, which can be quite onerous.

After discussions with the Friends of Mirboo North Pool, the pool opening scheduled for 30 October has been delayed. Under the COVID roadmap, restrictions on the number of people allowed in the venue would still be in place at this time. This would limit the opportunity for the community to come and experience the new facility.

We have also seen delays to essential works due to ongoing wet weather that will need to be completed prior to opening. Laying of turf, tree works and car parking improvements all require heavy equipment to be able to access the site so with the continued rain, the site has been too wet for these activities to occur.

Updates on the opening date will be provided as the necessary works are completed. At this stage, this is anticipated to occur in late November. For updates, please follow South Gippsland Shire Council on Facebook or visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/priorityprojects and look under the 'Priority Projects in Progress' section.

Construction of the Leongatha Early Learning Centre on Symmons Street will begin in coming weeks. We are looking forward to works progressing which will include all building, services, car parking, access/egress roads and paths, civil, environmental and landscaping requirements for the project. Council staff and our contractor will make every effort to minimise disruptions, however there will likely be additional construction traffic around the site for the duration of the project.

On behalf of all Council staff, I would like to congratulate Burra Brewing Co for winning the award for Food and Wine Producers at the Gippsland Business Awards. It was also amazing to see so many finalists from South Gippsland. All the hard work you put in does not go unnoticed.

We would also like to congratulate Toora Football Netball Club on their successful grant application to upgrade the Recreation Reserve lighting to LEDs. I'm sure it will make it much easier to see during training sessions.

Kerryn Ellis – Chief Executive Officer