

After a longer period than anticipated, voting in the South Gippsland Shire Council election closed last Friday. I would like to wish all the candidates the best of luck and look forward to working with our new Council very soon. The results of the election are expected to be announced by 12 November, which will be an exciting time for our region after two years of Administration.

During the election period, we have been busy working on a comprehensive onboarding program for the new Councillors to set them up for success, as well as creating a number of resources that will be important to help them to hit the ground running.

We know the community is also looking forward to welcoming the new Councillors and working closely with them into the future.

What an exciting weekend we have had with our Melbourne friends finally welcomed back to our region. This has no doubt been warmly received by our tourism operators and local businesses who have been negatively impacted during the pandemic.

While it is great to see people moving around more and enjoying our backyard, it is a pertinent time to remind everyone to keep COVIDSafe – follow all the current restrictions such as masks being worn inside and understand that venues may not be able to seat you if they are already at their density limit or if you are unvaccinated. Please understand that our businesses do not want to turn anyone away, and they are simply following the COVID-19 directions.

If you aren't quite sure what the current restrictions are, you can find them at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au You can also book a first or second dose vaccination appointment through a state-run facility at that website too if you haven't done so already. If there are none available local to you, you can also go to your GP or pharmacist.

VCE exams have started, which can bring a mix of emotions for our Year 12s. After a long, tough year being in-and-out of the classroom, exams mark the end of 13 years of schooling. I wish all Year 12s and the Year 11s doing final year subjects the best of luck over the next few weeks.

I would like to end my message this week by congratulating Shannon Danckert – a Fish Creek local who has been picked up by the Gold Coast Suns AFLW team. She had a great season in the QAFLW, topping it off by winning the best and fairest award. South Gippsland wishes you

every success.

Kerryn Ellis – Chief Executive Officer