

Mayor's Message



Rates notices will start hitting email inboxes and letterboxes from this week. I, like other Councillors and Council staff understand that this can be a stressful time and it is understandable to feel all kinds of emotions, including frustration.

For many residents, the annual rates notice is one of the larger bills you receive each year. Unlike taxes - which fund the Federal and State Government and are generally taken out of your income before you see it - your contribution to projects and services in South Gippsland is presented via the annual rates notice.

Like them or not, rates provide valuable services that help make South Gippsland a great place to live. These services include Maternal and Child Health, immunisation, playgrounds and sporting facilities. This is in addition to essential services such as roads, footpaths, parks and gardens, weed management, waste and recycling.

If you have questions about your rates, I would encourage you to book an appointment with our rates team via Council's website: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/rates

When speaking with staff, please be respectful and considerate in your conversations as being rude to staff is not on, and will not be tolerated. After all, they are all just doing their jobs and do not deserve to be treated with any disrespect.

There are a number of ways to pay your rates including in full by 15 February 2023 and instalment plans. Instalment plans can be organised by calling the Rates team on 5662 9200.

If you wish to object to your valuation, you can do so. Valuations are now handled by the State Government's Valuer General, but our Rates team will happily assist you with the objection process.

As you may have heard, the Commonwealth Government has earmarked the coast of South Gippsland as a prime space to build the first offshore wind farm. To help understand the community's sentiment on this topic, the Commonwealth Government are conducting public consultation including a number of open house sessions across Gippsland.

One of these sessions will happen in South Gippsland and is open to everyone with no

registrations required. It will be held at Council Chambers, 1 Michael Place Leongatha, on Thursday 1 September between 5.00pm and 7.00pm. Submissions to the Commonwealth Government are also available to those who wish to have their say. These close 11.59pm on 7 October 2022. Please visit: <https://consult.industry.gov.au/oei-gippsland>

There are still a few roads closed in our region following recent inclement weather. Council is also aware of a number of people ignoring road closed signs and continuing down them. I just want to remind you that road closed means road closed. They are closed for a reason and anyone driving along them is putting their lives at risk. Please also remember to drive to conditions, even on roads that are open. Most roads have been impacted by this weather and while the teams are moving as fast as they can to fix them, the ongoing weather is posing a challenge. Please look out for any signage warning you of hazards and travel safely.

Thank you to the community and all other organisations that play a part in road safety. It has been a challenging time, but having good people around makes all the difference. People have been working hard to get our roads in better condition, but it is a slow process. Thank you all for your perseverance.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the organisers of the Leongatha Daffodil and Floral Show and Leon“Gather” Street Festival for a great weekend of activities. The Leongatha Horticultural Society and the Leongatha Business Association do a tremendous job coordinating these events and it’s wonderful to see the events well supported. It was also lovely that local artist Melanie Caple was a special guest at this year’s Festival - I’m sure the magnificent flowers on display will help to inspire her next floral artworks. Well done to all involved.

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor