

# Mayor's Message



Hello South Gippsland.

My heart breaks for our community. Almost all of our townships were impacted by the storm event last Tuesday, with some still facing impacts to power and internet connectivity.

Like they always do, our community has rallied around each other to provide support. We have also been lucky enough to receive offers of support from those outside our region who were devastated for our towns.

Council staff were and continue to have their feet on the ground in the community sharing up-to-date information, especially to communities with no reception.

With phone towers being knocked out, communications were extremely challenging not just for Council to the rest of the community, but between loved ones and neighbours.

Word of mouth and paper versions of updates were the go-to resource, and I want to thank everyone who has helped us share the updates.

Local SES, CFA crews and Victoria Police have been working tirelessly to support our community. Clearing roads, doing welfare checks and even providing a place for people to charge devices has been very welcomed.

The Salvation Army, Sikh Volunteers Australia, community houses, private businesses and more have been offering food relief such as hot free meals and food hampers. Keeping some of our hardest hit community members fed while they continue to clean up during a difficult time.

This has been a massive response from multiple agencies and I am really proud of how we have all worked together.

As time passes by, more and more personal stories of this event are coming to light. The psychological impact of this event cannot be underestimated. I encourage you to please talk to someone about what you have experienced to ensure you are getting the support you need.

Council continues to advocate for our region to ensure we get what we need from relief to clean up. We will keep you updated as much as possible.

## **Payments and Updates**

Emergency Relief Payments are available through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for those who have experienced significant damage to their homes.

The Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund is also taking applications from those impacted, and is encouraging donations from those that want to help.

For more information on the emergency payments available and for the latest updates, please visit:  
[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/stormeupdate](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/stormeupdate)

**Cr Clare Williams – Mayor**