

Mayor's Message



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

FOGO

I understand that critiquing councils is a treasured national pastime. Many of us have or continue to do so, which can often be warranted.

As the local debate around FOGO heats up, it might be worth residents taking a moment to check exactly where this requirement comes from before directing all their frustration at Council.

The introduction of a Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) service isn't a South Gippsland Council invention, nor is it a local policy dreamt up in a back room.

It's a requirement under the Victorian Government's waste and recycling reforms, with all councils across Victoria legally required to provide a FOGO service by next year.

In other words, this isn't a "Council has decided" issue so much as a "Council must comply with State legislation" issue.

Everyone is entitled to their view on whether FOGO is the right fit for South Gippsland, and healthy debate is part of living in a democracy. But before firing off complaints, it pays to check whether the matter is actually a local decision or a State Government mandate – most of us can easily do some reading or an online search to be better informed.

Councils don't get to simply pick and choose which Acts and regulations we will follow.

Council has demonstrated that it will advocate against reforms it believes don't suit rural communities, such as the proposed glass-only purple bin system. However, once legislation is enacted, compliance isn't optional. Sometimes the target of community frustration should be directed where appropriate.

In this instance, I understand change is often difficult. Council has delayed as long as possible and kept the costs down as much as possible, but my simple message is; let's give it a go.



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Council Meeting

Our June Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday and is arguably the most important meeting of the year, as we will be considering the 2026/27 Budget and Year 2 Council Plan actions. These two documents will set the agenda for Council's program of works and initiatives for the coming 12 months.

I encourage you to come along or watch online if you are interested in hearing the debate and seeing how democracy works at a local level.

Advocacy

Anyone who reads the Mayor's Message regularly will know that one of the things I am most passionate about is advocacy. After a couple of terms on Council, I recognise that we cannot achieve our more substantial goals on our own – we need support from other stakeholders. More often than not, those stakeholders are the Victorian and/or Commonwealth Governments.

To that end, Deputy Mayor Cr Snell, Cr Gilligan and I are heading to Canberra next week for the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly meeting. This is not only an opportunity for us to talk to our peers from local governments from every state and territory, it is also a chance for us to meet with federal politicians to advocate for South Gippsland.

I look forward to updating you more in a future Message.