

Mayor's Message



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

South Gippsland Shire Council plays a key role in advocating for and on behalf of the South Gippsland community, through active representation on areas of importance within the responsibility of both the State and Federal Governments.

Regardless of your personal view on how Victoria should meet its future energy needs, if our communities are experiencing the impacts of the energy diversification, those impacts need to be acknowledged, and our region must share in the economic benefits - this is a firm view of Council.

Council has been disappointed that local government and local communities have not been more fully included as partners in the energy diversification and that tangible benefits by way of new infrastructure investment, compensation, jobs opportunities and community benefits are vague and uncertain. This is a clear failure in the process to date.

Our experience with offshore wind proponents has been encouraging: we have met with them and shared concerns raised by our communities. However, we have repeatedly asked the Victorian Government to involve Council and community in the process, and the response has so far been tepid.

Local government must have a seat at the table when decisions affecting our communities are made. We know our communities, we are part of them, and we are focused on their needs.

Our region will experience the impacts of this new industry if it proceeds and we deserve to see meaningful, lasting benefits in return.

Offshore wind can present opportunities during construction and ongoing maintenance. It is essential that local businesses can compete for work and are included in the opportunities this industry creates.

With the Victorian Government election approaching, Council has invited all known candidates to meet with us. These meetings give candidates the chance to outline their priorities and give Council an opportunity to advocate for what we know our region needs.

Offshore wind is among the issues we are raising. Some candidates have been surprised to learn that local government is not currently a partner in the process. We want to see that changed.

Not everyone believes offshore wind is the answer to Victoria's energy needs, which I respect. Whatever your view, I encourage you to speak with election candidates. Tell them what matters to



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you and what benefits you want to see for our community. Decisions that affect our region should not be made without our voices being heard.

In the lead up to the election, we are also focused on roads, funding for recreation reserves, mental health support, financial sustainability, and we are sharing the significant opportunities and contributions South Gippsland makes to the State.

Rural communities have too often been overlooked when state funding is allocated. As we approach the election, we need to keep asking the tough questions and advocating for the support our communities need.