

Mayor's Message



Hello South Gippsland.

Every week as Mayor of our beautiful region is so varied, and I love it! Here's some of what I've been up to.

August Council Meeting

During the Council Meeting, Councillors were updated on the progress of the following important Council Plans and Strategies:

- Economic Development Strategy.
- Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy.
- Visitor Economy Strategy.
- Great Southern Rail Trail Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan.
- Early Years Position Paper.
- Domestic Animal Management Plan.

It was pleasing to see how much progress has been made and how many actions have already been completed or are significantly progressed. Highlights for me were Council's continued and significant engagement with the renewables sector, the response to emergency events such as the Boxing Day floods and 13 February storm event, the ArtCubes that have already visited six towns across South Gippsland – and counting!

Our small halls have been supported to host live music, five major events received funding through the Events Acquisition Fund, work on a new Great Southern Rail Trail website has commenced, Council is working closely with 14 rescue organisations to ensure unclaimed lost animals can find a new home, and more. Across all of these documents, one thing is consistent – the amount of work Council staff have put in to keep ticking off actions. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all Councillors when I say they all do a fabulous job.

Councillors also considered and endorsed a submission to VicGrid's draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines engagement. Council's submission covers the key challenges we have identified such as, but not limited to, impact to agriculture (our largest industry) and visual amenity. My heart has been full seeing so many community members turn up to provide their feedback and ask questions as part of this engagement. It is important that all community members continue to take these opportunities – one voice is not loud enough, we all need to provide our thoughts. If you would like to read Council's submission, you can do so here: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/VicGrid-submission

In exciting news, the Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Strategic Plan was adopted at this Council Meeting. This Plan would not have been possible without the feedback from our community, so thank you to everyone who provided their thoughts either through the engagement periods, or as part of the Community Assembly.

We also considered a new kindergarten for Mirboo North. There has been lots of community feedback on this prior to the meeting. This was taken on board by Councillors, however we felt it was extremely important to take advantage of the grant funding currently available. This is Stage One of the renewal of early years education in Mirboo North, and I am excited to see what the future holds.

To watch the meeting back, you can do so at any time at: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live

Meeting with Local MPs

Taking opportunities to talk to our local Victorian Government members is extremely important. I was happy to see both Danny O'Brien MP, Melina Bath MP, Tom McIntosh MP and Renee Heath MP accept my invitation to talk about our submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services.

Councils across the state are struggling in the current rate-capped environment, and the shifting of costs and services from the Victorian Government has not helped. It is vital that we urgently address this and lend our voice to the discussion.

Thank you all for your time.

Cr Clare Williams – Mayor