

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

# 2021 Customer Service Charter



South Gippsland  
Shire Council

South Gippsland Shire Council was formed in 1994 from the amalgamation of four municipalities: the Shire of Korumburra, the Shire of Mirboo, the Shire of South Gippsland and the Shire of Woorayl. The Shire has an area of 3,300 square kilometres and is located in south-eastern Victoria, about 100 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. It is bounded by Cardinia and Baw Baw Shires in the north, Latrobe City and Wellington Shire in the east, Bass Strait in the south, and Bass Coast Shire in the west.

**29,924**

Estimated Resident Population (ABS 2019)

- 47% of the population are aged 50 or over
- 2.4 people (on average) per household
- 47 is the median age of people residing in the Shire
- 5% of the population speak a language other than English at home

**11,157**

People work in South Gippsland

**\$3.713 billion**

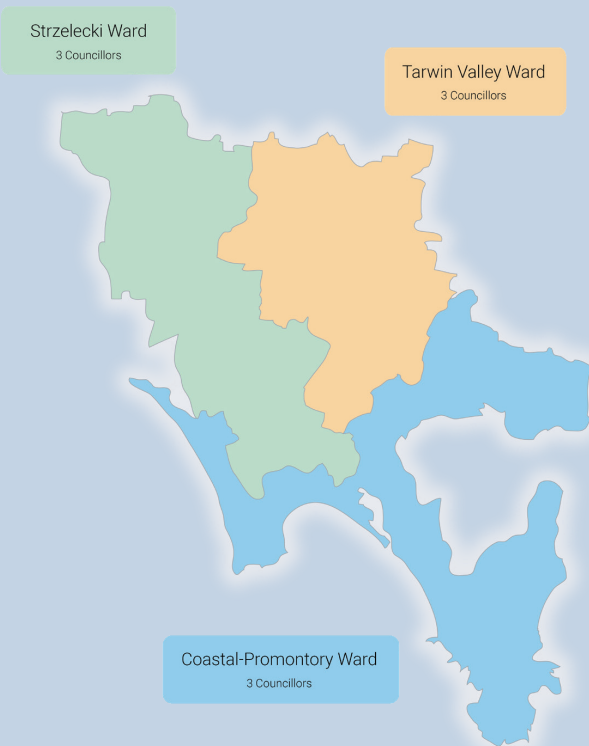
Annual economic output

**35,982**

Forecast 2036 population

**3,295km<sup>2</sup>**

Total area within South Gippsland Shire municipal area



**Main population areas**

- Leongatha
- Korumburra
- Mirboo North
- Foster
- Nyora

**Major industries**

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Health Care
- Retail trade
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Education and Training

## South Gippsland Shire Council Customer Service Charter 2021

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This Charter outlines South Gippsland Shire Council's commitment to providing excellent customer service. It describes our responsibilities and our commitment to always act in the community's best interests. We explain the different ways you can contact us, and how and when we will respond.

This Charter will be reviewed and updated at least every four years.

## Our values and commitment

It is the responsibility of South Gippsland Shire Council to provide services and amenities to residents and visitors in our region.

Our Council Plan 2020–2024 commits that Council will:

- Be customer focused
- Be accountable
- Be respectful
- Act in the interests of the whole Shire
- Pursue excellence in everything it does.

These commitments apply to South Gippsland Shire Council as a local government authority, to each of our officers, Councillors, and contractors working for and on behalf of Council.

## Our vision

By 2024 Council aims to:

- Be known for being customer focused;
- Have made significant progress to entrench a sense of shared community direction across the Shire;
- Have successfully delivered the agreed Capital Works Program; and
- Be known for excellence in the services we deliver.

## Standards of behaviour

Our officers have committed to maintaining high standards of behaviour when talking to or corresponding with anyone having dealings with South Gippsland Shire Council.

When our community members contact Council, they can expect to be treated in a professional manner with honesty, courtesy and respect in all interactions. This contact may be in the form of a telephone call, letter, email or in person.

We will:

- Be courteous, respectful and welcoming.
- Understand that assisting you is an important part of our role.
- Serve you to the best of our ability and in a timely fashion.
- Listen carefully and treat you fairly, without bias or prejudice.
- Keep your personal information confidential unless you have given us express or implied permission to provide that information to others.
- Arrive punctually to meetings and appointments.



## Get in touch

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to contact us. You can get in touch in any of the following ways:

- Visit our Customer Service Centre during office hours (currently 10.00am to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday due to COVID-19) at 9 Smith Street, Leongatha, and speak to our friendly customer service officers.
- Telephone us on 03 5662 9200 between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.
- Send us an email to [council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au). This general email account is checked daily, and your email will be forwarded to an appropriate officer.
- Fill in the online contact form on our website at [southgippsland.vic.gov.au/feedback](https://southgippsland.vic.gov.au/feedback)
- Send a letter to Private Bag 4, Leongatha, Vic, 3953. Mail is checked daily and forwarded to the addressee or a relevant officer.
- Report an issue simply by using the Snap Send Solve app.
- If you require an interpreter you can call 131 450 and ask for 03 5662 9200.
- If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us through the National Relay Service: teletypewriter (TTY) users phone 133 677 then ask for 03 5662 9200.

Please note that our social media inboxes are not always monitored, so we are unable to respond to every message, post and comment. If you have something you'd like us to deal with please use one of the options listed on the left.

If your query cannot be answered during your first contact with us, it will be recorded in our Customer Request System, together with your name, contact details, and date the enquiry was made. The nature and date of any subsequent conversations or investigations will also be entered against this record, including how and when we resolved your enquiry.

Council is committed to providing excellent customer service and to developing and maintaining a good relationship with all of our customers. However, we recognise that despite our best efforts and intentions, there may be times when you think we have fallen short or have missed something. We always welcome your feedback as it will assist us to improve our service to the community.

## How you can help us

If you need extra support to talk with us, please let us know and we will do our best to provide the assistance you require.

If your request or issue is urgent, please tell us when you first contact us. We will do our best to meet expectations, however it is important to note that we deal with a large volume of enquiries on a daily basis. There may be times that we cannot respond to you by your deadline. The sooner you contact us, the sooner the issue can be resolved.

If the reason you are getting in touch is confidential or sensitive, please let us know when you first contact us so we can do our best to protect your privacy. If it is not possible for us to investigate your enquiry while also protecting your privacy, we will discuss this with you before deciding how to proceed.

While we appreciate that sometimes when you contact Council it is because something has upset you, we ask that you treat our people the same way you expect to be treated. Please do not shout or use abusive, threatening or intimidating language and gestures. We certainly do not condone violence or other physical provocation. It is important to remember that our people are doing their best in sometimes difficult circumstances.

As well as supporting the health and wellbeing of our community, we have a duty of care towards the people who work for and with Council. If a member of staff, a Councillor or a Council contractor is intimidated, threatened or abused, our obligations under this Charter will not apply and we will end communication.

In cases involving serious or repeated inappropriate behaviour, the police may be notified and further contact with the Council may be restricted.



## Responding to you

We have set ourselves high performance standards for responding quickly and appropriately to your enquiries and issues.

Our target response times to routine enquiries are detailed in the Service Levels document attached to this Charter.

We will strive to acknowledge receipt of your written enquiries within the timeframes set out in our Service Levels – although it may take longer to fully investigate and respond in detail to your query or concern.

We may need further information from you when investigating your query. Sometimes we might need to consult other people or agencies. In such cases, it can take time to receive replies to your questions. If an issue is taking longer than usual to investigate or resolve, we will do our best to keep you informed of our progress. You can also request an update at any time.

While we commit to doing our best to meet Service Levels, there will be times when we need to prioritise issues. At busy times we will prioritise dealing with safety hazards before, for example, doing roadside weed inspections. We will try to let you know when there is an unavoidable delay dealing with your issue and provide you with a reason for the delay.

During emergencies, for instance in the event of a bushfire, response times may be unavoidably extended until the danger has passed.

## Complaints

Council is committed to providing excellent service and maintaining a good relationship with all members of our community. Council recognises a community member's right to make a complaint and welcomes feedback on the standard of service provided. Council encourages people to notify us if that standard is ever unsatisfactory.

Council's Complaints Handling Policy (available on our website) aims to ensure that community members are able to raise their concerns easily and have confidence that Council will be responsive, handle complaints in an open and transparent manner and remain independent at all times. Council's complaints form is attached to this Charter.

If you remain unhappy about our decision or how we dealt with your issue, there are outside agencies who may be able to review your case. They can advise you whether you have grounds for a further complaint.



*“Be known for being customer focused.”*

South Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2020-2024

## External Review Agencies

While you are entitled to refer a complaint directly to these bodies at any time, you are encouraged to allow Council to investigate the complaint first.

### Victorian Ombudsman

The Ombudsman promotes fairness, integrity and respect for human rights. The Ombudsman holds the Victorian public sector – including council employees – accountable to the people of Victoria.

Level 2  
570 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000  
Phone: (03) 9613 6222 (between 10.00am and 4.00pm, Monday to Friday)  
Email: [ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au](mailto:ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

### Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC)

The Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) is Victoria's agency responsible for preventing and exposing public sector corruption and police misconduct. Its jurisdiction covers state and local government, police, parliament and the judiciary.

Street Level 1, North Tower  
459 Collins Street Melbourne VIC 3000  
Mail: GPO Box 24234 Melbourne VIC 3001  
Phone: 1300 735 135  
Email: [info@ibac.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@ibac.vic.gov.au)

### Local Government Minister

The Minister for Local Government is the minister responsible for overseeing the system of local government in Victoria. The Minister acts as an advocate for local government issues within state government and supports and monitors the system of local government with the assistance of Local Government Victoria.

The Hon. Shaun Leane,  
Minister for Local Government  
Level 16  
121 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: 03 8392 2240  
Email: [OfficeMinLeane@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:OfficeMinLeane@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## Attachment A

### South Gippsland Shire Council Service Levels

All times and days refer to Council's usual operating hours unless referring to an immediate risk.

#### General

Answer your phone call	Within 1 minute
Response to a phone message	Within 2 business days
Response to an enquiry or service request by email or in writing	Within 10 business days
Respond to a reported safety hazard	Assessed and made safe as soon as possible
Acknowledgement to a formal complaint	Within 24 hours of being received the relevant Manager will provide an explanation of how the complaint will be handled in line with our Complaints Handling Policy

#### Information Management

Distribution of incoming correspondence	Daily
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#### Customer Service

Animal Registration	10 business days
Disabled Parking Permit	10 business days

#### Communications

Facebook Private Message	48 Hours
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*\*please note our social media is not monitored 24/7, and we are not able to respond to every post and comment*

#### Rates

General Enquiry	48 Hours
Copy of Rate Notice	24 Hours

#### Roadside Trees\*

Tree on road – Extreme Risk	24 Hours (including A/H)
Potentially dangerous tree - not obstructing the road	Inspected and responded to within 48 Hours

#### Roads\*

Grading – Extreme Risk	24 Hours (including A/H)
Grading – Low Risk	Response within 10 days**

Pot holes – Extreme Risk	Within 24 Hours (including A/H)
Pot holes – Low Risk	Response within 10 days**
Roadside Vegetation – Extreme Risk	Within 24 Hours (including A/H)
Roadside Vegetation – Low Risk	Response within 10 days**
Water over the road – Extreme Risk	Within 24 Hours (including A/H)

\* Roads issues that are not Extreme Risk will be assessed and prioritised as appropriate.

\*\* The person who reported the issue will be contacted and advised about how the issue will be dealt with.

#### Public Toilets

Public toilet cleaning if reported	Within 24 hours
Public toilet urgent sewage issues/overflow	Within 24 hours
Public toilet drain blockages	Within 3 days

#### Engineering

General Enquiry	Contact within 3 days
Enquiry needing investigation	Contact within 15 days
Emergency Event	Actioned as soon as practicable

#### Local Laws

General Enquiry	Contact within 24 Hours
Contained Animal to be collected	Within 24 Hours
Stock on the Road	Within 4 Hours
Report of a Fire Hazard	Contact within 24 Hours
Report of Dumped Rubbish	Contact within 24 Hours

#### Building and Planning Compliance

General Enquiry	Within 24 Hours
Building Enquiry Form – Regulation 51	10 Business Days
Legal Point of Discharge	10 Business Days

#### Environmental Health

General Enquiry	Contact within 24 Hours
Investigate complaints (general)	Response within 5 days (resolution may take longer)
Investigate Complaints (immediate public health risk)	Contact within 24 Hours
Registration of food premises	Required information provided within 10 days
Inspection on request	Required information provided within 10 days



**Planning**

Planning Enquiry (request for information via phone)	24 hours
Written Advice	10 Business days
Planning applications	Times will vary. Your planner will explain the process when you make your application.

**Waste Management**

Missed Bin Collection	48 Hours
Damaged Kerbside Bin Repair	7 days
Stolen/Missing Bin Replacement	7 days
Delivery of New Kerbside Bin Service	7 days
Overflowing Public Litter Bin	24 hours
Public Litter Bin – Repair or Replacement Damaged Bins	7 days

Attachment B

South Gippsland Shire Council Complaint Form

South Gippsland Shire Council

# Complaints Form

This form is to be used specifically for complaints about the level or quality of service by Council, or behaviour of a Council Officer. This form is not to be used for a request for service (eg. to repair a section of road or for action to be taken about barking dogs).



Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Details of complaint (please include all relevant dates and events and include additional pages if required. Attach any supporting documents, if relevant:

Action sought:

**Please return completed form to: South Gippsland Shire Council, Private Bag 4, Leongatha 3953  
Email: [council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au](mailto:council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au)**

Alternatively you can complete this form online at: [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/complaints](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/complaints)