



COVID-19 COMMUNITY SUPPORT PACKAGE

Evaluation Report



South Gippsland
Shire Council



Introduction

In April 2020 South Gippsland Shire Council (SGSC) determined it had a clear leadership role in responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, including the limitations on social interaction, economic activity, and community life in the Shire. An initial assessment was undertaken to identify measures and activities that could provide the greatest benefit to the health and well-being of residents, while also supporting local businesses to uphold longterm consumer and business confidence in South Gippsland.

The \$2 Million budget allowance for a Community Support Package (CSP) created an opportunity to focus on investments in community support and economic stimulus, with particular focus on those who were isolated and most in need. Following Council's approval of the Community Support Package a detailed implementation plan was developed, and a project delivery team established.

The CSP was a connected set of initiatives that represented SGSC's response to the pandemic to assist impacted businesses, community groups and residents. It aimed to:

- Provide targeted support and stimulus activities specific to the South Gippsland community and economy
- Provide relief to businesses, community groups, families and individuals suffering financial or social distress; and
- Aid with recovery and work towards the restoration of the community and South Gippsland economic life to provide vital economic, social, cultural health and wellbeing outcomes.

The purpose of this evaluation project was to assess whether the CSP:

- Supported the achievement of the strategic goals and outcomes of the Council Plan
- Responded to the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the South Gippsland Community
- Was flexible and responsive to the needs of the community
- Minimised the administrative burden on volunteers without undermining good governance and asset management principles
- Provided opportunities to volunteer groups and organisations which would have otherwise had limited access to funds to function or maintain community engagement within the community during COVID restrictions
- Supported the sustainability of specific community and economic sectors and cohorts through COVID restrictions and impacts.

This independent evaluation report and appendices outline the consultation and review undertaken and aims to evaluate, showcase key success areas, important learnings and provide a recommendation for any future events.



Acknowledgements

GippSport Community Solutions would like to acknowledge the South Gippsland Shire Council Staff, Community Groups, and individuals for participating in this evaluation.

We acknowledge the Bunurong and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Custodians of South Gippsland and pay respect to their Elders, past, present, and future, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Background information and context

South Gippsland Shire is in south-eastern Victoria, about 100 kilometres south-east of the Melbourne CBD. South Gippsland Shire is bounded by Cardinia and Baw Baw shires in the north, Latrobe City and Wellington shires in the east, Bass Strait in the south, and Bass Coast Shire in the west. South Gippsland Shire was formed in 1994 from the amalgamation of four municipalities. It has an area of 3,300 square kilometres with substantial coastal frontage.

The current population of South Gippsland is 30,455 (Estimated Resident Population 2021) which has increased by more than 1,300 people from 2016. The five most populous towns have all increased in population since 2016 and are Leongatha 5,869 (up 3.8%), Korumburra 4,749 (up 6.3%), Mirboo North 2,412 (up 3.0%), Foster 2,044 (up 11%) and Nyora 1,644 (up 7.7%).

- 49% of the population are aged 50 or over
- 2.3 people (on average) per household
- 49 is the median age of people residing in the Shire
- 1.2% of the population are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 5.4% of the population speak a language other than English at home
- 49% of households are 'couples without children'
- 36% of households are 'couples with children'.

A 2019 commission of inquiry report found a "high level of tension, discord, and conflict amongst councillors", which meant the Council was dismissed by the Minister for Local Government and three administrators were appointed for a 2-year term. A new Council was elected in November 2021 towards the end of the CSP. Also of note was that a new Chief Executive Officer, Kerryn Ellis was appointed in February and commenced in March 2020 shortly before the COVID 19 restrictions came into place.

In March 2020, the Australian government declared a human biosecurity emergency in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Australian borders were closed to all non-residents on 20 March, and returning residents were required to spend two weeks in supervised quarantine hotels from 27 March. Many individual states and territories also closed their borders to varying degrees, with some remaining closed until late 2020, and continuing to periodically close during localised outbreaks. Social distancing rules were introduced on 21 March, and state governments started to close "non-essential" services.



Australia pursued a zero-COVID "suppression" strategy until late 2021, meaning it aimed to minimise domestic community transmission. Implementation involved strict controls on international arrivals and aggressively responding to local outbreaks with lockdowns and exhaustive contact tracing of domestic COVID-19 clusters. A second wave of infections emerged in Victoria during May and June 2020.

The second wave, though largely localised to Melbourne, was much more widespread and deadlier than the first. At its peak, the state had more than 7,000 active cases. Victoria underwent a second strict lockdown which eventually lasted almost four months.

The nationwide vaccination program began in February 2021. Further cluster outbreaks occurred in late 2020 and mid-2021, with several brief "snap lockdowns" announced in certain states to contain the spread, particularly as novel variants of SARS-CoV-2 arrived in Australia.

In July 2021, the Australian government, after continually stating COVID-zero was not sustainable, published the 'National Plan' to live with COVID. Lockdowns were phased out once 70% of the population had been vaccinated, with most public health restrictions removed after vaccination of 90% of the population had been reached in December 2021. International travel began to resume in November 2021 and returned to normal in early 2022. The government declared the emergency response finished in September 2022 and removed all restrictions including the requirement to isolate if one was infected.

The CSP was designed in the early stages of the pandemic and the key action areas in the package were designed to help the South Gippsland community and businesses to remain:

- **Healthy:** Address the social, mental, and physical health impacts of isolation and restrictions on the community, including supporting people experiencing vulnerability, through outreach and support programs
- **Connected:** Connecting people, business, communities, and industries. Develop and implement initiatives to improve communication, community connectedness, mutual support and social resilience through on-line platforms and other engagement activities.
- **Innovative:** Doing things new and differently. Empower the South Gippsland business, community, and cultural sectors to creatively respond to the impact of COVID-19 and emerge with a strong foundation. The objective of this engagement is to evaluate the effectiveness of the COVID-19 Community Support Program and investigate its effectiveness, community benefit, and to identify opportunities for improvement in future emergency responses and recovery by Council.

The initial budget allocation was made in April 2020 and the CSP was extended until its completion in June 2023. A total spend of \$2million was allocated during this period.



The CSP was designed using a three-phase approach:

- ✓ **Phase 1 - TARGETED SUPPORT**
Delivery of financial relief to business and householders, and support to vulnerable and isolated community members during the initial phases of COVID restrictions
- ✓ **Phase 2 - BUILDING RESILIENCE**
Focussed on supporting key industries such as tourism, small business and the arts and creative sector.
- ✓ **Phase 3 - RECOVERY & RECONNECTION**
Focussed on recovery, rebuilding social connection, and supporting economic development, tourism, sport, and community wellbeing.

It should also be noted that during the COVID pandemic, funding and support was provided by the Federal and Victorian Governments to individuals, businesses and community organisations and the aim was to not duplicate what was being provided by these organisations. There were also additional funding opportunities through programs like Working for Victoria, and infrastructure stimulus programs that added value or resources to the Gippsland LGAs.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

COVID-19 Community Support Package

Council is proposing a \$2M COVID-19 Community Support Package for South Gippsland.

The package aims to provide support for our community and stimulus for our local economy both during and after the COVID-19 event.

The package will be delivered by a dedicated project management team in consultation with key stakeholder groups including the Municipal Emergency Management Committee (MEMPC) and the Business Emergency Leadership Group (BELG) to ensure the actions are best placed to deliver real outcomes for South Gippsland.

The initiatives listed here will evolve as the impacts of the pandemic are determined. They will provide support in three core areas: health, connection and innovation and address the needs of residents, businesses and the local community.

Health
Address the social, mental and physical health impacts of isolation on the community, including through outreach and support programs.

Connection
Connecting people, businesses, communities and industries. Includes initiatives to improve communication, community connectedness and social resilience.

Innovation
Doing things new and differently. Empower South Gippsland businesses, community and cultural sectors to creatively respond to the impact of COVID-19.

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS

Residents

- Introduction of a COVID-19 Pandemic Hardship Policy to support residents having trouble making rates payments
- A subsidised flu vaccine program
- Delivery of mental health support programs for residents

Business

- Deferral of rates on an interest-free basis to impacted businesses
- Waiving of some business permit fees
- The establishment of business support programs including a dedicated business grants program
- Sustaining and increasing local procurement where possible and implementing rapid payment for contractors and suppliers

Community

- Prioritising infrastructure programs
- Expansion of Community Grants (more grants awarded with broadened criteria)
- Development of a community outreach program in partnership with key agencies to provide community support



Evaluation Project Scope

The scope of this independent Evaluation Project included:

- a. A review of the COVID-19 Community Support Package
- b. A report on the outcomes of this review, including findings regarding the effectiveness and community benefit of the CSP
- c. Recommendations on how Council's response to any future emergency, through response and recovery initiatives could be improved
- d. Consideration of the needs of the South Gippsland community in relation to support, relief and stimulus during significant emergencies and options/opportunities for how those needs might be met in the future
- e. Benchmarking the South Gippsland COVID-19 Community Support Package, against similar programs delivered by other Councils.

Consultation for this Evaluation was undertaken in a range of ways, including:

- Interviews with Council staff responsible for the CSP Package (17 in total)
- Phone Interviews with Community Groups, Business Owners and Individuals who received support through the CSP Package (43 in total)
- Review of feedback already provided to Council regarding the CSP and documented in reports and case studies.
- Benchmarking with other Gippsland Local Government Staff (5 LGAs)

The following considerations for consultation should be noted:

- Substantial time had passed since the commencement of the CSP, which in some cases meant it was more challenging for individuals to recall specific details.
- There has been a changeover of paid staff, community volunteers or business owners during the period of the CSP.
- Many of the programs did not have any reporting requirements, which meant data or recorded outcomes were not readily available.
- Consultation on some of the program areas was not possible for privacy reasons i.e., flu vaccination.
- The opportunity to discuss the CSP has been a positive reflection or celebration of success, which has been a worthwhile process.



Evaluation

This section of the report will be addressed in five sections to align with the scope of the CSP Evaluation.

a. A review of the COVID-19 Community Support Package.

The CSP was developed and informed by the SGSC Governance Frameworks:

- Annual Budget 2019/20
- Annual Budget Incorporating 15 Year Long Term Financial Plan and Annual Plan
- Initiatives
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
- Local Government Act 1989


For the endorsed Council process, please refer to **Appendix 1**.

The COVID-19 Support Package was extensive and far reaching. It included:

- 25 towns and villages
- 5 regional projects
- 83 organisations

A detailed spreadsheet including the detailed information for each program or activity area can be found in **Appendix 2**. A summary of the program areas is outlined in the table below:

PROGRAM AREA	DESCRIPTION
Free Flu Vaccination program	898 subsidised flu vaccines and delivery throughout the community.
Community grants and support grants	Council's community grants platforms were used to distribute funds to 83 community organisations.
Business Grants – Phases 1, 2 and 3 and Local procurement	Established a Business Support Grants Program to assist 846 local businesses.
Fee Waivers and Rent Relief	Reduced or waiver business registration fees and permits.
Early Learning Support	Extended early learning program support to connect with vulnerable families.
Mental Health First Aid Training	Provision of Mental Health First Aid Training to 80 participants.
Recreation Reserve Income Offset Payments	Responded to the lack of income at reserves through the cancellation of sport while maintenance still needed to be undertaken - \$126,000 of support provided.

Fast-tracking local payments	Strengthening of local buying and fast tracking of payments
Community supports booklet – editions 1 & 2	Development and distribution of 7,500 Community Information brochures on support services available which is now ongoing.
Distribution of masks & “starter kits” to support community groups	52 community organisations received COVID starter kits, 80+ volunteers and more than 400 masks distributed.
Shop Local advertising	<p>Developed and intensified the Buy Local campaign/promotion to encourage people to shop in their local communities to assist with the viability of local businesses and minimise social isolation. Including: Completion of television commercials, branding, window decals, print advertising, radio advertising, posters, bags, advert set up AdStream, newspaper adverts.</p> 
Expediting hardship applications	Strengthened local buy as well as fast tracking of payments – 94% suppliers paid within 14 days. Updated Hardship Policy providing payment options for those experiencing hardship. \$31,928 in rental relief on Council owned properties.
Arts, Culture and Creative Industries package	11 projects designed to maintain social connection, provide opportunities for paid employment for artists and local creative events and new commissions.
Support to Sporting Clubs	40 grants of up to \$1,000 to community sporting clubs who had experienced a reduction in business sponsorship or other cost pressures.
Community Group Insurance Fee Waiver	Waiver of the insurance fee charged by Council to community groups operating from council-owned premises and/or accessing Council's insurance cover.
Sustaining Community Connections Package	Rebuilding and re-imagining communication in the community through co-designed projects such as noticeboards, newsletters, equipment in halls, linking council and community websites.
Economic Development Package	Grants to strengthen the economic sustainability of local food network enterprises/associated supply chains. Rebranding of South Gippsland in line with Destination Gippsland. Creation of an implementation fund for Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategies.
Community Connections Through Arts Package	Re-invigorating Communication through legacy art projects, including art installations along the Rail Trail in key towns and travelling exhibitions.



b. A report on the outcomes of this review, including findings regarding the effectiveness and community benefit of the CSP.

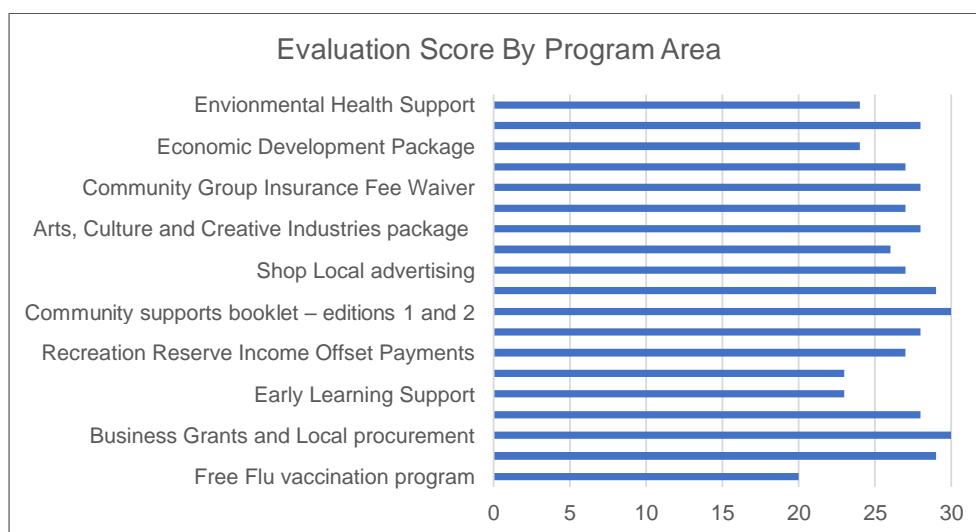
To undertake the evaluation, we created a rating scale.

RATING	SCALE
5	Very strongly achieved criteria
4	Strongly achieved criteria
3	Achieved criteria
2	Somewhat met criteria
1	Did not meet criteria

Each program area was assessed against the following criteria:

- Supported the achievement of the strategic goals and outcomes of the Council Plan
- Responded to the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the South Gippsland Community
- Was flexible and responsive to the needs of the community
- Minimised the administrative burden on volunteers without undermining good governance and asset management principles
- Provided opportunities to volunteer groups and organisations which would have otherwise had limited access to funds to function or maintain community engagement within the community during COVID restrictions.
- Supported the sustainability of specific community and economic sectors and cohorts through COVID restrictions and impacts.

The detailed assessment can be found in Appendix 2. The Summary of each program and the total score achieved can be found below (where 30 was the highest score possible).





The evaluation scores reflect that the highest rating program areas were as follows:

Business Grants and Local procurement	30
Community supports booklet – editions 1 and 2	30
Community grants and community support grants;	29
Distribution of masks and “starter kits”	29
Fee Waivers and Rent Relief	28
Fast-tracking local payments	28
Arts, Culture and Creative Industries package	28
Community Group Insurance Fee Waiver	28
Community Connections Through Arts Package	28
Recreation Reserve Income Offset Payments	27
Shop Local advertising	27
Support to Sporting Clubs	27
Sustaining Community Connections Package	27

The scoring also indicated that each program area at least achieved the criteria and, in most cases, did so comfortably.

c. Recommendations on how Council’s response to any future emergency, through response and recovery initiatives could be improved.

Internal Feedback

This section will be answered based on the interviews undertaken with Council staff. Interview questions considered the following topic areas:

- Project roll out / take up.
- Program Positives (community and council lens)
- Program Challenges (community and council lens)
- How did or would you measure success / benefits?
- What would you do differently if a similar situation arises in the future?

Summarised comments are included in this table:

Project Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear agreed commitment from Council, Management and Staff. • There was an expectation to provide support efficiently/respond quickly but an awareness that such a project had not been done before. • Would have benefited from a more centralised coordination model especially at the start, perhaps in the form of a Project Manager. • There was limited development of project briefs / reporting expectations, which meant Council could be responsive. but it was also harder to communicate clearly on key objectives. • Achieved the goal of reaching key identified areas of support.
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South Gippsland
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators were in place which was a unique element as compared with other LGAs. • It was largely evidence based or informed by work that Council had already undertaken - local people know local issues which is a strength of Local Government.
Project roll out / take up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programs had very broad reach/ filled in gaps of other government funding opportunities. There was very little duplication. • Staff could be reactive and develop localised support. • Simple application processes that were generally easy to administer once systems were in place. • Flexible and adaptable approach was encouraged. • Generally little consultation was possible. • Challenges for Council staff who were working at home i.e., printing out of information, one person in a car meant a need to find innovative solutions. • It was hard to keep track of so many different types of support with a range of different systems in place.
Program Positives (community and council lens)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff teamwork and collaboration- learning from each other/ see how other parts of Council engage with the community. • Positive focus for staff- it was challenging initially not being able to respond to requests for help/ feeling guilty. • New ways of doing business- system set up. • Administrative workload for staff was not too onerous. • There was new opportunity to do important strategy work. • Did see that it helped to retain community volunteers. • Community has been very grateful / took pressure off volunteers. • Grants were spent locally- double benefit of the grants. • Improved relationships between Council and groups/ businesses • Businesses used grants to pay off outstanding rates. • Working for Victoria Staff member who did graphic design work for the arts project was a positive in being able to showcase work. • Largely the community have not expected ongoing support even though they would like it. • Resulted in the investment into the Rail Trail • Meeniyan Case Study - town is thriving following a range of support and new opportunities being supported. • Amazing community outcomes of art projects. • Additional staff resources made targeted work and support easier i.e. Arts officer and additional Environmental health staff. • Events have brought people back into the region (spend map data). • Practical support was appreciated- signage/ printing/ decals. • Relationships with external stakeholders including the police and hospital were unexpected benefits. • Volunteers expressed gratitude for grants. • Created more optimism and positivity in the community. • Businesses have been easier to deal with after the pandemic due to new relationships being formed.



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<p>Program Challenges (community and council lens)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescheduling of events - it did take some time to expend the grant funding. • Timing of support post-COVID but it was hard when timeframes were unclear. • Limited evaluation data or storytelling completed during the program. Need to communicate more clearly. • Constantly changing COVID regulations made it very hard for staff to navigate. • Outdoor dining/ red line – reverting back to more compliant processes has been difficult. • Some organisations received funding where it wasn't needed (limited). • Extra pressure on staff in areas where they might have been already needed to expand to respond to community needs. It was hard to get people together to codesign the package. • No ongoing funding - limited community grants. • Some concern that community resilience should be in the community's hands and how has that been supported. • There wasn't enough money in the community grants (oversubscribed).
<p>How did or would you measure success / benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and effective with broad reach • It was an approach built on kindness and this was evident. • Improved relationships/ sense of belonging/ pride of place with the community. • South Gippsland re-branding has been a huge success. • Arts projects impact- Creative Victoria relationship. • Staff learnt to work together and in different ways. • Perhaps increased staff retention and improved staff satisfaction. • Broadly considered a good use of Council funds and the right amount of financial support. • Perhaps of the timing of the payments spread across the recovery phase. • Recognise and celebrate staff more. • Utilise systems that have been created. • Anticipate it is going to take longer than forecasted/ life will change as a result or a major event like this. • Gave Council the chance to experiment in the arts space which was worked very well. • Infrastructure Investment into the rail trail as an outcome of key strategy work. • Spend Map data has demonstrated success in visitor economy.
<p>What would you do differently if a similar situation arises in the future?</p>	<p>This will be covered in the recommendations section.</p>



External Feedback

This section will be answered based on the interviews undertaken with community individuals or organisations or businesses which were conducted over the telephone (43 interviews) and by utilising statements previously provided.

The overwhelming response provided by respondents were positive and key words included in the adjacent word cloud.



Specific quotes provided were:

- “In many ways, a project that brings people out of the periphery and into a collaborative creative process, is needed now more than ever”
 - Participant in a Creative Arts Project
- “We were able to do some much-needed work at the reserve and bring a few people together who had the time and wanted to help out”
 - Recreation Reserve Committee Member
- “This has strengthened our ability to bounce back and continue to provide a space for organisations and communities to utilise into the future”
 - Community Grant recipient.
- “We have had more people than ever visiting our local community (Meeniyán) and it is great to see the town thriving again”
 - Business Owner
- “The grant application process was really easy to do, and we received the money when we needed in it”
 - Community grant recipient.

In terms of the negative feedback provided, themes included:

- It would have been good to have had more support in the recovery phase when things re-opened.
- It has been hard to replace volunteers that left during COVID, groups are not back on their feet.
- A high level of support and interest in community events and arts programs that needs ongoing support.
- The Community has changed because of COVID, and we need to be able to respond to that.
- It is still a struggle for local business to get staff.



d. Consideration of the needs of the South Gippsland community in relation to support, relief and stimulus during significant emergencies and options/opportunities for how those needs might be met in the future.

Needs of the South Gippsland Community:

Within the context of Local Government and particularly South Gippsland Shire Council, the role of Council is to provide leadership for the good governance of the Shire. This is achieved, in part, by establishing strategic directions articulated in a four-year Council Plan 2020-2024 (at the time) under Strategic Objectives being:

1. United Shire – shared community direction
2. Economic Prosperity – corner stone for local employment and business growth
3. Integrated Services and Infrastructure
4. Customer Focused Organisation

The Measures of Success seek to monitor relevant trends Council is aiming to influence. These indicators include measures that Council's actions can directly control the outcome of the results, along with measures that Council can influence the outcomes and some indicators outside of Council's influence but are relevant to assist with future planning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all areas of the South Gippsland community. It has isolated many people, increased risk and vulnerability for significant groups, and reduced business and economic activity across the Shire. It was determined that Council had a clear and significant leadership role in responding to these impacts.

Did the CSP meet these needs?

The Evaluation of this project identified that the CSP achieved the agreed aims and objectives.

What needs might there be in the future?

Since the establishment of the CSP, a new Council Plan was developed in 2022:

"Our Council Vision – We care deeply about our people, the land and future of South Gippsland. Our vision is to support the whole Shire in creating economic, environmental and social prosperity for this and future generations."

Based on the initial information and trends we are aware of in terms of the longer-term impact of the COVID pandemic and information provided during consultation for this project, consideration needs to be given to:

- COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the Australian economy since arriving in Australia in January 2020 and currently impacting the community through high inflation rates and pressures on the housing market.
- Community volunteering rates has not returned to pre pandemic level which is impacting participation community sport, events, resilience, and facility maintenance.
- Rural and Regional areas have experienced population growth and change in unprecedented ways impacting on business and services.

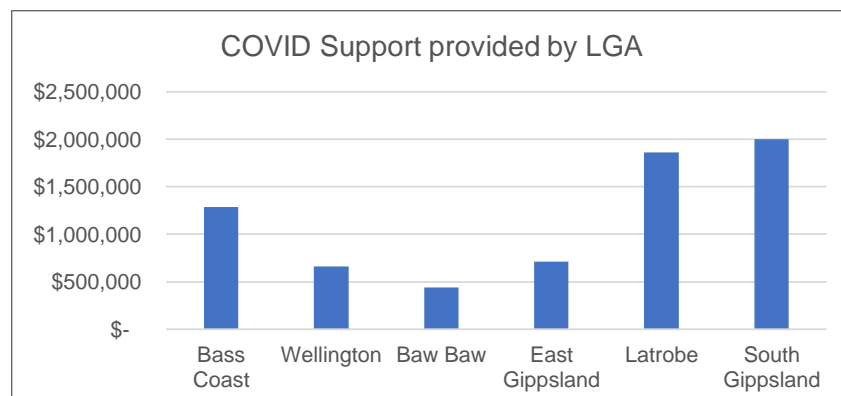


- Workforce shortages and major changes to employment conditions i.e. work from home.
- The transition to online shopping, work, schooling, and services.
- Concerns about people's mental health, particularly young people.

There is still little evidenced based research available as to the longer terms impacts of the COVID pandemic. Ongoing consideration of these factors will influence the ways in which Council supports the community. Also, key learnings about community resilience should be sought when they are available.

e. Benchmarking the South Gippsland COVID-19 Community Support Package, against similar programs delivered by other Councils.

Research was conducted using the publicly available information and consultation was undertaken with relevant Council staff. Of note, there were no other formal evaluation processes undertaken and the information available was limited. The total amount of Council funding allocated to the COVID Support overall by LGA:



Noting that not all support provided by Council or other Government agencies may have been captured in these allocations. By this comparison, South Gippsland Shire offered a two-year program that was of the highest total value.

The types of programs and supports provided by the six LGAs were very comparable and included:

- Fee, Permit & Insurance Waivers
- Provision of local business/ community organisation support in terms of COVID PPE, Hand Sanitiser, signage, and ongoing support
- Small flexible community and business grants
- Shop local campaigns
- Outdoor dining support



Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall, this evaluation project identified that the Community Support Package responded to its original aims, which were in line with Council's role and in line with other Local Government Authorities.

Key learnings that can be taken from this evaluation to inform any future significant events or emergencies include:

- A flexible and reactive approach worked well at a local level and could be replicated.
- A significant staff resource is required to develop, implement, and monitor a package of this size. It would be useful to create a centralised Project Manager/ Management Team to oversee the entire project.
- The way in which work is conducted will change significantly and this will need to be factored into design and timeframes i.e. access to offices for printing or capacity of staff to manage changing priorities.
- Establish an evaluation framework including methods for data collection, case studies and consultation throughout the timeframe. Allocate resources for this.
- New systems have been established during this package that could be utilised in future e.g. The business support grant platform and the ability to waiver Council fees on the system
- Community Events were particularly challenging during a pandemic but have been an important part of the rebuilding phase. Any future event strategies could consider how to prioritise support i.e. new or existing events and if these are better supported through community grants or another specialised program.
- Significant community benefit and learning has been achieved through the Creative Arts Package. Consideration should be given as to how this can be applied to Council's ongoing work.
- The COVID pandemic timespan was much longer than originally anticipated, and the lasting impacts are still ongoing today. Consideration could be given as to how Council could build recovery into a package like this.
- Celebrate the wins along the way and share this information with staff, Council, and community. It helps to add to the sense of pride and benefit of a package like this.
- The timing provided to be right to undertake some significant pieces of work i.e. the South Gippsland Rebranding & Economic Development Strategies which drove economic activity and investment.
- Allow for ongoing support to businesses that are still struggling both in terms of staff resource for support and fee waivers
- Expect that it may be difficult to codesign and communicate during the initial phases of a crisis or emergency and to need to be innovative in developing support.



Appendices

- Appendix 1- SGSC Council Process (below)
- Appendix 2- Detailed CSP Program Information (attached)
- Appendix 3- Consultation & Engagement List (attached)



Appendix 1 – SGSC Council process

APRIL 2020

That Council:

1. Endorses the COVID-19 Community Support Package of up to \$2 Million to support the South Gippsland Community and Businesses to remain healthy, connected, and innovative.
2. Notes the Community Support Package complements other response actions being coordinated through the Federal Government, State Government and other relevant bodies including the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee; and
3. Receives a report at the 27 May 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Council that outlines progress in implementing Stage One priorities and planning for implementation of later stage priorities.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MAY 2020

That Council:

1. Notes the report outlining progress in implementing Phase One of the Community Support Package.
2. Endorses the Community Support Package Phase One Implementation Action Plan, subject to budget approval.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to immediately waive fees and charges revenue of up to \$30,000 in the current 2019/20 budget; and
4. Notes that a progress report will be provided at the 26 August 2020 Council Meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AUGUST 2020

That Council:

1. Endorses the Community Support Package Phase Two Initiatives.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Community Support Package Phase Two.
3. Notes that Phase Two initiatives will be staged based on restrictions applying to Regional Victoria at the time and to enable Council the option of allocating funds for emerging emergency purposes if required; and
4. Notes that \$597,361 remains in the budget for future phases of the Community Support Package and that reports will be provided to Council for endorsement of each phase.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



APRIL 2021

That Council:

1. Endorse the projects identified for the final \$505,000 Phase of the Community Support Package.
 - a. Free Flu Immunisation Program 2021 of \$25,000
 - b. Grants to Sporting Clubs of \$40,000
 - c. Insurance Rebate for Community Groups of \$40,000
 - d. Sustaining Community Connections Package of \$50,000
 - e. Economic & Visitor Economy Strategy Implementation Package of \$235,000
 - f. Community Connection through Arts Package of \$85,000
 - g. Community Support Package Effectiveness Evaluation of \$30,000
2. Notes an Evaluation of the Community Support Package will be undertaken and that a final report on the Community Support Package will be presented to Council by September 2020

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SEPTEMBER 2021

That Council:

1. Receives a Final Report for Administrators celebrating the implementation and ongoing outcomes of the Community Support Package 2020/21, Phase One, Two and Three (Attachment [2.1.1]); and
2. Receives a final report on all phases of the Community Support Package including outcomes of the evaluation of the entire Community Support Package by June 2022.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY