

**SHIRE OF SOUTH GIPPSLAND COUNCILLORS GOOD GOVERNANCE SELF-EVALUATION SURVEY –  
REVISED DRAFT APRIL 2021**

**Introduction**

South Gippsland Shire Council aims to be a high performing Local Government which provides **good governance** to the South Gippsland community. We define good governance as Councillors working together, in an environment of mutual respect and collaboration, to govern in the interests of the whole municipality. This definition is intended to enable Councillors to work effectively in line with the overarching governance principles as provided in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

To enable us to achieve this goal we are committed to meeting the standards required of us under the provisions of the **Victorian Local Government Act 2020**, our **Councillor Code of Conduct**, and the **South Gippsland Shire Council Good Governance Framework**. These laws, principles and adopted Council policies guide our efforts.

The Shire's Good Governance Framework establishes eight key **pillars** of activity which are the drivers of achieving good outcomes. The Pillars are

1. Direction and Leadership
2. Culture and Behaviour
3. Decision Making
4. Structure, Systems and Policies
5. Communications and Community Engagement
6. Capability
7. Risk and Compliance
8. Monitoring and Performance Review

Council - the group of Councillors - is of the view that well governed Councils demonstrate some **common and very important characteristics**:

- Well governed Councils develop a sense of team amongst Councillors and seek a strong partnership with the Council's Executive Management.
- Well governed Councils have a deep respect for the relationship between Councillors and between Councillors and employees.
- Well governed Councils routinely conduct highly effective council meetings.
- Well governed Councils have Councillors who practice continuous personal learning and professional development.
- Well governed Councils have clear roles and responsibilities for the Mayor, Councillors and Management that are well understood and practiced.

### Survey Purpose and Definition

This Survey seeks to obtain opinions from each Councillor about how well the Mayor and Councillors are achieving Council's goals of providing good governance and effective working relationships. It is a self-evaluation of how you are progressing individually as a Councillor and collectively as the Mayor and Councillors of the Council. To this end, where the term:

1. Council or Councillors is used, the question is referring to the Mayor and Councillors.
2. Organisation is used, the question is encompassing both the Council and Administration.
3. Administration is used, the question is referring to the CEO, management team and staff.

The Organisation is committed to continuous improvement and this survey is one of the ways we can continually review how we do things and can help us make informed improvements to our governance arrangements.

This survey is not intended to review the performance of the Administration. Opportunities to reflect on the performance of the Administration will predominantly be provided separately through the CEO's performance review and consideration of the Quarterly Performance Reports and Annual Report to Council.

### Undertaking the Survey

The Council's Audit & Risk Advisory Committee will auspice the survey.

The Committee will:

- Auspice the administration of the survey.
- Oversee that the Facilitator and Mayor discuss the results and coordinate a Council response which should include an action plan and timetable to address any survey results that point to governance shortcomings.
- Receive the Council's intended response to the Survey.
- Oversee that the Mayor consults with the CEO on the agreed Action Plan.
- Monitor the Council's implementation of any Action Plan and notes progress of key actions by agreed deadlines.

### Completing this survey

This Survey has been designed to collect information about how the Council, as individuals and as a group of Councillors is performing its role. It asks those completing the survey to **rate** the performance of the Council against a number of **statements** drawn from the Council's eight (8) key pillars of Good Governance.

The scoring system requires participants to rate the performance of the Council against each of the statements set out below using the following rating system:

- 5 - strongly agree
- 4 - agree
- 3 - neither agree nor disagree
- 2- disagree
- 1- strongly disagree

A verbatim option is included at the end of each survey section allowing for comments that provide valuable context to support your answers.

**SURVEY PROPOSITIONS**

**Direction and Leadership**

*Consider the Council as the strategic direction setters for the organisation. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:*

1. I understand my role as a Councillor (or Mayor) and what is expected of me.
2. I am confident in exercising all aspects of my role and responsibility as a Councillor.
3. The role of the Mayor is well understood by all Councillors.
4. The role of the CEO is well understood by all Councillors.
5. I understand the delineation between the role of the Council as decision makers and the role of the Administration to provide information to inform Council's decision-making.
6. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to 'Direction and Leadership'.

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**Culture and Behaviour**

*Consider the Council as a high functioning group, with the Community centred at the heart of all we strive for. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:*

1. The level of collegiality and support among Councillors is strong.
2. Councillors respect their fellow Councillors and work constructively with them in the interests of the municipality.
3. We hold each other accountable for professional behaviour, agreements and shared decisions.
4. Conflicts and disagreements occurring between Councillors are managed and resolved effectively.
5. Minority viewpoints are respected during Councillor discussions.
6. Committee chairs are impartial and enables all members to have the opportunity to express their views. (Add detail in comments section.)
7. Councillors understand the requirements of the Councillor Code of Conduct and impartially exercise their responsibilities.
8. Councillors act with integrity.
9. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to 'Culture and Behaviour'.

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**Decision Making**

*Consider the Council as the representatives elected by the community, making informed decisions in the best interests of the whole Shire. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:*

1. I take responsibility for being fully prepared for briefings, Council meetings and meetings with stakeholders and the community.
2. I ensure I make time to read the Council Meeting Agenda and associated papers circulated to me so that I make informed decisions.
3. I ensure I manage my time and priorities to fulfil my role and responsibilities as Councillor.
4. I observe my Council colleagues taking responsibility for being fully prepared for briefings, Council meetings and meetings with stakeholders and the community.
5. The Mayor and Councillors use the Governance Rules (meeting procedures) appropriately to maintain professional meeting etiquette.
6. We ensure the composition of Council Committees is a good mix of competence, skills, interests and fair-mindedness.
7. We ensure appropriate oversight of appointed Committees and how they are performing in undertaking their roles and responsibilities.
8. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to 'Decision Making'.

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#### **Structure, Systems and Policies**

***Consider the Council as the responsible third tier of government that appropriately delegates authority and responsibilities to the Administration for the efficient management of service standards and policy requirement. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:***

1. We prioritise and actively participate in the review and development of policies and strategies
2. We ensure the level of delegations to the Administration are appropriate to facilitate efficient and timely delivery of programs and services.
3. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to 'Structure, Systems and Policies'.

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#### **Communications and Community Engagement**

***Consider the Council as a highly effective conduit between communities and between the broader community and various levels of government. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:***

1. I exercise my responsibilities to actively engage with my constituents and represent their needs in Council planning and decision making.
2. I ensure Council makes sound decisions in the best interest of the whole community.
3. I actively and effectively engage with the community by attending events, supporting my colleagues, and representing the Mayor when requested.

4. I actively engage in building constructive relationships and networking with the Shire’s key stakeholders for the benefit of the Shire.
5. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to ‘Communications and Community Engagement’.

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**Capability**

***Consider the Council as a skilled, diverse team that is highly trained and prepared every day to perform their roles as Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor to the best of their ability. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:***

1. The Councillor Transition (induction) Program sufficiently prepared me for my roles and responsibilities as a Councillor.
2. I access appropriate professional development and training opportunities to support my role.
3. We participate in appropriate development to ensure currency in the Council’s skill and competency in fulfilling its governance roles and responsibilities.
4. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to ‘Capability’.

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**Risk and Compliance**

***Consider the Council as the overseer of risks that ensures the credibility of the organisation, as the third tier of government, is not undermined. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:***

1. I actively engage in regular discussion to identify and manage the key strategic risks facing the Organisation.
2. I understand what constitutes a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality.
3. I always observe the requirements to disclose any conflicts of interest in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.
4. I always complete and update my Personal Interest Returns and Related Party Disclosures on time and with full disclosure.
5. I take responsibility for my own and the Council’s observance of our collective actions to ensure the credibility and integrity of the Council is maintained at all times.
6. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to ‘Risk and Compliance’.

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**Monitoring and Performance Review**

***Consider the Council as the responsible governing body, monitoring the achievement of the adopted Council Plan and Annual Budget. With this focus in mind respond to the following questions:***

1. My own competencies and knowledge of the long-term financial plan and budget are sufficient to actively participate in financial planning discussions and make informed and responsible financial decisions.
2. I am confident that my colleagues' competencies and knowledge of the long-term financial plan and budget are sufficient to actively participate in financial planning discussions and make informed and responsible financial decisions.
3. I am confident the Council's monitoring of the Organisation's financial performance and progress of Annual Initiatives and Council Plan indicators through the Quarterly Financial Reports and Quarterly Performance Reports, is thorough.
4. Please add comments that provide context on what has influenced your responses to 'Monitoring and Performance Review'.

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**Professional Development and Training**

***As a Council focused on encouraging Councillors to further their own professional development for their benefit and that of the community, consider the list of personal development areas below. Please tick those items that you believe would be beneficial for you to undertake for your own development, or for all Councillors where you consider there is a wider gap in knowledge, skills or experience across the group:***

<b>Professional Development Opportunities</b>	<b>Tick for Yourself</b>	<b>Tick for all Councillors</b>
The roles of, and separation of duties for, Councillors, Mayor and CEO		
Understanding financial management and financial statements		
Media management		
Handling difficult people and challenging situations		
Time and priority management		
Occupational health and safety, including bullying, equal opportunity and related themes		
Principles of community engagement – IAP2		
Good governance practice		

Chairing effective meetings and facilitating discussions		
Managing confidentiality		
Management of records as a Councillor		
Understanding policies applicable to Councillor		
Understanding and management of strategic risks		
Effective working relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council</li> <li>- Management</li> </ul>		
Understanding Council Services		
Working effectively when participating in Virtual meetings		

Other:

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**Overall Summary**

Please provide your comments in relation to the three questions below.

1. Overall, how would you rate the performance of the Council?

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2. What are the individual and collective strengths of the Council?

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3. Which areas most need to be addressed to improve Council's performance?

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