

Bass Coast hosts the Regional Partnerships

Approximately 300 people came along to see Wonthaggi play host to one of the State Government's Regional Partnerships Assemblies in late June.

The Gippsland Regional Partnership is one of nine such Partnerships across the state which was established by the Victorian Government. The Assemblies are highly valued opportunities for local government and the community to engage directly with the State Government on local and regional issues and speak to the region's priorities.

It was another good opportunity to advocate many of Council's top priorities directly to the eight Ministers attending including the Victorian Premier, The Hon Daniel Andrews MP.

Some of the topics discussed included:

- connectivity
- energy and resources
- family and community wellbeing
- food and fibre
- skills and education
- visitor economy and tourism
- new jobs and industry

More information on the night can be found at www.engage.vic.gov.au/gippsland-regional-partnership



State Government Ministers and elected representatives, Local Government CEOs and Gippsland Regional Partnerships representatives thank the community for their involvement at the event.

Council's organisation structure reduced to three General Managers

Each council has to consider the most appropriate organisational structure to best meet the objectives of the Council Plan. Council has identified further savings and efficiencies following a recent review of its organisational structure. Council has been managing the introduction of rate capping while maintaining our commitment to a sustainable Long Term Financial Plan. A minor realignment to the organisation late last year prompted a review of the organisational structure, moving from four Divisions to three.

This is a reduction of 1.5 full time positions, effective from July 2018 and will achieve another \$200,000 in savings for the 2018/19 financial year which reduces Council's General Managers to three positions with the General Manager Governance and Healthy Communities role being redundant from 1 July 2018.

2018 Community Satisfaction Survey

The results from the 2018 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey were presented to Council in June. Bass Coast Shire Council has continued to show year-on-year improvements with scores increasing across the majority of the measures in 2018. The annual survey was completed by 600 resident and non-resident ratepayers during February this year. The survey assesses the performance of Council across a range of measures and highlights areas that Council should focus on for improvement and more effective service delivery. Council's overall performance score increased to 53, up by three points compared with last year's results and its highest score since 2014.

Most of the survey results show annual improvements and positive trends; however, the results were still lower than the average rating for councils state-wide and in the Large Rural group, which includes Bass Coast.

The 2018 survey results showed:

- Adults aged 18-34 years, Bunurong residents and non-resident ratepayers are significantly more favourable in their view of Council's overall performance than adults overall, while Island area adults are significantly less favourable
- On the measure of Overall Council Direction, Council's performance was higher than the State-wide average (54 versus 52 respectively)
- Council performs best in the area of Customer Service, which is the highest-rated core performance measure
- Community Consultation, Advocacy and Making Community Decisions also achieved their best results since 2014

The full 2018 Community Satisfaction Survey Report can be found online at www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/css

Council's Advocacy Strategy 2018-21 and new priorities

Council's first ever Advocacy Strategy was also adopted at the June Council Meeting. This strategic document provides a clear framework on how Council will advocate on the priorities and concerns of our community.

The Strategy promotes a tiered approach to advocacy which aims to ensure Council is as effective as possible with its resources such as time, funds and skills. Although there are many priorities that are important to the community, it's important that Council follows a structure that helps decide the top ten priorities in which to focus our energy and time. As priorities in our community change, the Advocacy Strategy has the flexibility needed to adapt to changing environments.

The Advocacy Strategy 2018-21 also guides Council's Advocacy priority list: Representing our Community, Shaping our Future. This list, which was originally adopted in October 2017, was also revised at the recent meeting.

Some priorities on the previous list have been achieved and received over \$155 million in funding including the Wonthaggi Secondary College senior campus development, Wonthaggi

Hospital, Wonthaggi Highball Stadium and Phillip Island/Back Beach Road intersection. This has created the opportunity for Council to reconsider the list and adopt some new advocacy priorities.

The recently adopted priority list includes a mix of existing and new priorities:

Retained from previous list

- South West Gippsland Transport Strategy
- Transfer management of the current Wonthaggi Secondary College McBride Campus site to Council and development of a masterplan for future use of the site
- Cowes Jetty replacement and request to state government for funding support to investigate this location as a potential car ferry terminal site
- Wonthaggi North East Precinct key infrastructure
- Cowes 24 hour Pharmacy and Nursing Facility

New priorities

- Bass Coast foreshore management and erosion control – funding for erosion control infrastructure and consistent approach to the management of foreshore reserves across the Shire
- Decentralise a state government department/service to Wonthaggi to support Wonthaggi's status as a regional centre
- Tourism infrastructure - pathways funding for trails and paths infrastructure identified as tourism assets and aligned with Council's Aspirational Pathways Plan
- Tertiary education investment – attraction and funding of tertiary education providers and facilities in Bass Coast
- Planning - policy changes to improve protection to natural amenity in coastal township areas and protect native vegetation and the environment

The Advocacy Strategy and new priority list are available to view in full on Council's Website at www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/advocacy.



Council has a new list of advocacy priorities following the adoption of the Advocacy Strategy 2018-21 and the achievement of funding for previous priorities including the new senior campus for Wonthaggi Secondary College.

Council adopts 2018/19 Budget

Following a period of community consultation and public submission process in May, Bass Coast Shire Council adopted their 2018/19 Budget at their June Ordinary Council Meeting.

The Budget remains aligned with Council's Long Term Financial Plan and will continue to focus on maintaining and upgrading existing assets with a Capital Works Program of \$19.63 million.

Some of the key projects and services include:

- Supporting the Wonthaggi Shared Highball facility and the second year contribution for Cape Paterson Life Saving Club replacement, \$700,000
- Ongoing development of skate parks across the municipality with replacement of the Cowes Skate Park and design for a Regional Skate Park on Phillip Island, \$500,000
- Acquisition of land for future community needs in Cowes, \$2,000,000
- Further development of the Cowes Transit Centre and all day car park, \$727,000
- Construction of the Pioneer Bay roads and drainage upgrade scheme, \$4,364,000
- Planning for an upgrade to the car park at Anderson Road Boat Ramp, Cowes, \$25,000
- Master Plan works for the Beachcomber YCW activity area, \$15,000
- Design of Olive Justice Place, Cowes \$25,000
- Upgrade of lighting at the Inverloch Tennis Club, \$40,000
- Support for works and signage at the Corinella Boat Ramp car park, \$45,000
- A contribution to the Inverloch Soundshell, \$45,000
- Refurbishment of the netball courts at Cowes, Bass and Dalyston, \$920,000
- Replacement of the pavilion at Dalyston Recreation Reserve, \$1,100,000
- Replacement of the air conditioning at the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre, \$350,000
- Refurbishment of the Phillip Island Football Club rooms, \$350,000
- Rehabilitation of Loch-Wonthaggi Road, Kongwak, \$300,000
- Rehabilitation of Ventnor Beach Road, Ventnor, \$317,000
- Renewal of Bourne Creek (Kilcunda) Trestle Bridge, \$400,000
- Continuing support for our agricultural community with a rating differential of 80% plus the opportunity to apply for the Rural Land Management Program

Other items also included in response to public submissions include:

- Phillip Island entrance planning and design, \$50,000
- Feasibility study for a pathway between Rose Avenue and Coghlan Road, Cowes \$25,000
- Expanded opening hours for the Cowes Library

I thank the community for their feedback and submissions towards the development of the 2018/19 Budget. A number of changes have been included in the final Budget in response to community feedback from submissions. An additional \$20,000 to the Youth Services component of the 2018/19 Budget, enabling funding of \$40,000 to be provided to YES Youth Hub.

An amount of \$160,000 has been added to review the alignment and design of the Inverloch Surf Parade Shared Pathway in response to a submission from the Inverloch Tourism Association. This review will look at the path design and car parking provisions. Construction for the Path from Veronica to Goroke Street will be deferred until 2019/20 and/or 2020/21.

Funding for a feasibility study for a pathway between Rose Avenue and Coghlan Road, Cowes was also added with an additional \$25,000 allocated in the Budget.

There was a request for additional funding to be provided to the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation to allow the Cowes Library to open on an additional day (Monday) but this had already been identified by Council in the draft 2018/19 Budget.

Also included is \$50,000 funding towards an entrance design and planning for Phillip Island. The 2018/19 Budget can be viewed at www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/budget

Paul Buckley PSM
Chief Executive Officer