



OrbostConnect

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Autumn 2017

For immediate release — 6 April 2017

Orbost Connect is an update from East Gippsland Shire Council on projects and programs planned for Orbost and District.

What's happening with the Orbost Streetscape Project?

Since our last update to you, council officers held an on-site meeting with the contractor and traders advising of the construction start date, 27 April. Work will commence at the National Australia Bank corner, and possibly concurrently outside the Commonwealth Hotel. There may be minor disruption throughout the project; however access to the Nicholson Street businesses will be maintained. We will inform individual traders of works commencing in the immediate vicinity of their property through a weekly email bulletin.

The construction team will demolish and reconstruct the footpath, build retaining walls and undertake drainage and kerb works. The project includes removal and planting of new trees and the installation of modern street furniture and is expected to be completed by October. Feedback from the 2016 community consultation process was considered when developing the final designs. The final construction drawings are available to view in the Your Say East Gippsland document library: <http://yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/orbost-draft-streetscape-design>.

\$50 million for Princes Highway East

The Australian and Victorian Governments have announced a major upgrade of the Princes Highway from Sale to the NSW border. Funding of \$50 million has been allocated for 'betterment' or improvement works, not maintenance, on this important freight and tourism route. These works will be planned and coordinated by VicRoads. VicRoads is looking to identify improvement works that contribute to route safety, accessibility and reliability for all modes of transport, along with neighbourhood amenity and economic activity.

Recognising that Orbost is reliant on the Princes Highway road network, VicRoads is seeking feedback from the community to identify issues of concern along this route. Input from the community will be used to compile a list of proposed works to be considered under the upgrade program.

A community feedback session is therefore scheduled for Orbost on 12 April at the Orbost Neighbourhood Centre, 1 Browning Street, from 3pm–8pm. You are encouraged to come along and contribute your ideas.

If you can't make the session on the 12 April, VicRoads will also be at the East Gippsland Field Days on the 28 and 29 April and a second round of community consultation is planned for mid-late 2017. For a project bulletin about these works please visit

http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Your_Say/70M_road_upgrades_for_East_Gippsland. If you are unable to attend the information and consultation sessions, and want to have your say, a feedback form can be downloaded from the web page mentioned above and mailed to the VicRoads project team.

Maintenance and safety works at Forest Park

Maintenance and safety works are currently underway in Forest Park and are expected to be completed by mid-April. Branches are being removed from trees in close proximity to the Exhibition Centre and Slab Hut. Design works are complete for a concrete path to be constructed from the Slab Hut to toilets. This will enable safe access in the area. Works will commence later in the financial year.

Orbost Skate Park

The current skate park facility is ageing and requires future upgrades. Council has prepared a draft report and concept design and will begin work to firstly make sure the skate park is safe for use. Next steps will be to upgrade elements of the park. We have received a lot of feedback from young people in town about the skate park, so we are sure they will appreciate the coming changes.

Sole gas plant update

The Cooper Energy Sole gas plant extension in Bass Strait is a State Significant Development, providing essential services to the eastern region of Victoria. The project will facilitate a major upgrade and expansion to the existing gas plant, formerly known as Patricia Baleen gas plant.

It is anticipated that this work will bring with it six to eight permanent jobs. Council recently issued approval to Cooper Energy for a Development Plan and an Environmental Management Plan that were necessary approvals for the project to proceed. We are working with Cooper Energy with respect to traffic management both during the construction phase and the operating life of the gas plant. If you would like to know more about the project, please visit the Cooper Energy website: <http://www.cooperenergy.com.au/investor-information/asx-announcements>.

Orbost reticulated gas planning permit update

A planning application for the Orbost daughter station (59/2017/P), to bring reticulated gas to Orbost, is currently under assessment. The consultation period for this permit has commenced. Council officers will be available by appointment at Orbost Customer Service Centre, 1 Ruskin Street, to discuss the application on Thursday 13 April between 10am and 4pm. Please contact Rebecca Templeman, Development Coordinator, on 5153 9500 to arrange an appointment.

Embracing the silver economy

Home to 18,000 older residents, East Gippsland has more than 21 per cent of residents over the age of 65. Within East Gippsland, Orbost has been identified as an ideal location to become known as an “age-friendly” town. As outlined in *Advancing Orbost 2020*

http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Plans_and_Projects/Your_Place/Orbost_and_District#AdvancingOrbost2020Plan council officers worked with the community to identify potential strategies to shore up the local economy. It was identified that creating an industry around the town’s older population could prove an economic boon. Projections show that for every additional fifty older residents attracted to Orbost, an additional 6.8 jobs (primarily in personal services, health and retail) would be generated, which is equivalent to \$932,000 of additional Gross Regional Product (GRP).

Since the economic opportunities were initially identified in Orbost, the age-friendly focus has now been expanded across the municipality through the *Age-friendly Communities Project*. This approach was recently featured on the front page of a National local government magazine, LG Focus, <http://www.lgfocus.com.au/editions/2017-03/silver-economy.php>. Council is focusing on a holistic approach to embracing the silver economy in East Gippsland. As part of this project we are looking at the business opportunities, the physical space and the programs and social supports that help support an age-friendly town, so we’re not just focusing on one component.

You can follow the *Age-friendly Communities Project* on Your Say East Gippsland:

<http://yoursay.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/age-friendly-community>.

Recreation Reserves to enjoy electricity charge reductions

As part of East Gippsland Shire's electricity contract we have been able to negotiate for some of our community managed recreation reserves and facilities to also access these lower utility rates. The Orbost Cricket Club will now enjoy lower electricity charges, allowing them to spend the savings on other important aspects of maintaining these important community facilities.

Coming soon: free older driver road safety seminar

Following the success of last year's road safety seminars, council is planning to hold an Older Driver Road Safety information session in 2017. It is proposed that the sessions will be held in Lakes Entrance in early June 2017. They are aimed at all members of the community and will also provide important information for family and friends to support older drivers.

Topics include: supporting older drivers to continue to drive safely; how to choose safe vehicles; how to stay fit to drive; health and medication impacts on driving; road rules update; how to be a safe pedestrian; considerations prior to purchasing a scooter and how to assess your own driving ability.

Dates will be advertised in the Council Noticeboard section of the Snowy River Mail or you can register your interest by contacting Rhonda James by email feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au or telephone 03 5153 9500.

Explore your Customer Service Centre

Orbost Customer Service Centre is first point of contact for any library and council enquiries you may have. Did you know that we also provide free Wi-Fi? Our friendly Customer Service Officers can help you with printing and scanning for a small cost. We also have a large meeting room for hire, which seats between twenty to thirty people.

Customer Service Officers provide general information to locals and visitors and we are also an agency for VicRoads. We have weekly Storytime and Rhymetime sessions, and movies and Tech Savvy Seniors sessions are scheduled on a monthly basis. Discover more events on our website: http://eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/Libraries/Library_Events.