

Mayor's Message



Last Saturday, I attended the opening of the Great Southern Rail Trail section between Korumburra and Leongatha. This project is one that has been and continues to be close to my heart, being an avid supporter of the Great Southern Rail Trail for a long time now. A few years ago, I was a member of the rail trail committee, so it was particularly pleasing to be there to mark the occasion.

This new section, along with the vast number of improvements that have taken place over many years, helps cement the Great Southern Rail Trail as one of our region's most important visitor attractions and one of our most important community assets.

Projects like this aren't possible without the hard work and commitment of many passionate people and groups in our community as well as Council staff and contractors. It is so important that our community, Council and contractors all work together to get things done for the benefit of our region, and that has been highlighted here. It is a pleasure to be part of projects like this and seeing them come to fruition not just for our community to enjoy, but our visitors as well.

I look forward to the rest of the trail being completed and seeing how our towns benefit from both residents and visitors passing through either on foot, their bikes, or riding their horses.

On Friday 25 March, I was lucky enough to represent South Gippsland Shire Council at Parliament House alongside the rest of the One Gippsland group. The group is made up of Mayors from Latrobe City Council, Baw Baw Shire Council, Bass Coast Shire Council, East Gippsland Shire Council and Wellington Shire Council and other industry partners.

We were hosted by Members of Parliament Melina Bath, Danny O'Brien and Harriet Shing, and were given the opportunity to meet with Peter Walsh MP and other members to talk about what is important to our region and how we would like them to help.

I find events like this so inspiring to be part of and thoroughly enjoy meeting up with colleagues from other Council's. There is often a lot of common ground that we meet on, and multiple voices are always better than one. We are all part of Gippsland, and we all deserve a voice at the table.

I also had the pleasure of attending the Leongatha Community Garden's inaugural Together We Grow event last weekend.

I was in awe of what the Leongatha Community Garden has achieved and came away with lots of produce, sauces, chutneys and jams all locally grown and produced. Juneen Shultz, our 2022 Citizen of the Year, attended and has been such an inspiration. There was also a very entertaining skit from the MC Neil Barrett. All around, it was a fantastic day!

Community gardens are about more than fruit, vegetables and flowers. It's about people, committed citizens and the community. Thanks to these passionate people, community gardens have flourished in our Shire for many years and I can tell they will continue to do so.

It was also great to meet over morning tea with the Council of the Ageing Victoria to celebrate the achievements of Joan Newman. Along with some of Joan's closest friends, we had the chance to acknowledge face-to-face the contribution she has made to our South Gippsland community and the Senior Achiever Award she won for that.

Joan is an extremely inspiring lady, who even at 93 is still as involved as ever. If you would like to read her list of achievements and why she was nominated for the award, you can do so at www.cotavic.org.au

To conclude this week's message, I would like to share something with you all. This week, I get my licence back after a very humbling short period without it. Initially, I was deeply embarrassed and found it difficult to talk about. I informed my fellow Councillors and Chief Executive Officer, and now I feel compelled to share my story with the community as a reminder to be vigilant and safe when driving.

I lost my licence due to speeding through a 40 kilometres per hour road works zone. It was a patch of road that I travel often, and where there are long-term road works. The conditions and speed limits are frequently changing in response to the progress of the works, and I didn't adapt to those. These speed limits are in place to protect the safety of the workers and other drivers.

There are many road works occurring at the moment across our Shire, and we have some exciting road network improvements to look forwards to. This is a timely reminder for us all to please be mindful and stay alert when driving, especially through works.

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor