

Mayor's Message



This week is Education Week and it also marks 150 years of public education in Victoria. I have a passion for education and believe that you are never too young or old to learn something new. While I have been on Council before, I have never been Mayor. There are skills required with this kind of position that I've had to learn, but I have had fabulous support from Council staff. I feel it is important to recognise our teachers during this week for the incredible work they have done to keep our students learning throughout the pandemic. They have had to think on their feet and change their plans at the drop of a hat and deal with closures due to staff being unwell, but they have never faltered. They have worked extremely hard and deserve our absolute heartfelt thanks.

I also feel that this week is a great time to remind you all that three- and four-year-old kindergarten enrolments throughout South Gippsland close at the end of June for 2023. If you haven't already, I encourage you to head onto South Gippsland Shire Council's website to register: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/centralenrolment

On this page, you will also find some handy information about how the central registration system works and lots of other information about kindergartens

Last week was Volunteers Week, which many Councillors highlighted during their updates at the Council Meeting. South Gippsland is so fortunate to have 24 per cent of our population volunteering, which is significantly higher than the state average of 16 per cent. I would like to send a heartfelt thanks to all volunteers in the South Gippsland community. Your contribution helps to make South Gippsland a better place to live and we would be lost without you.

Tuesday 17 May was IDAHOBIT Day. IDAHOBIT stands for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersex discrimination and Transphobia and is a day that aims to raise awareness of the intolerance our LGBTIQ+ community can experience.

To show our support, Council raised a rainbow flag and had a celebratory event in front of Council's main office in Leongatha. It was fabulous to be part of such a historic moment as it was the first time every Council in the Gippsland region had raised a flag, and the first time South Gippsland Shire had ever raised a rainbow flag. No celebration is ever complete without some sweet treats, and we were lucky to have some lovely rainbow cupcakes for everyone who attended.

Raising the flag was the right thing to do and provided Council with a great opportunity to show how we support diversity not only in our workplace, but in our community. It's also about dignity, something that this cohort of our community may not always feel. Everyone should feel empowered to be wholly and truly themselves, wherever they go and whoever they have around them.

This month's Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 18 May. If you missed the meeting, you can watch it back, simply visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

One of the highlights are two more opportunities for feedback. The Draft Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Great Southern Rail Trail Visitation and Marketing Plan. Both of these are great opportunities for our community to continue to make their voice heard once again. This feedback is so valued and important to Councillors to help us ensure we get our plans right, and I encourage you to keep providing it. It is so important to make sure the plans we are produce are inline with our community's expectations.

Both of these drafts are available online at yoursay.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

At yesterday's meeting Council also approved to award a contract for a replacement pontoon jetty in Toora. Council contributed \$40,000 toward the project which will join the \$210,000 funded by Better Boating Victoria. I'm sure many boaters will welcome this news as the Toora jetty provides great access to fishing in Corner Inlet.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who participated in the Integrated Plans engagement period that closed on 15 May. We are considering this feedback as we speak and will be looking at changes we can incorporate to make the plans even stronger before they come back to the Council table on 29 June.

I hope you all have a safe and lovely week. Keep warm!

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor