

Mayor's Message



Last week, I had the great honour of officiating another Citizenship Ceremony. Normally this ceremony would take place in July, but it was brought forward to mark Refugee Week. A week where we celebrate the contributions made by those who have settled in Australia through Humanitarian programs.

If you ever need a reason to smile, I highly recommend attending one of these events. I find they are great for the soul and make us realise how lucky we are to live in this fabulous country and have people so committed to it that they choose to become Australian Citizens.

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations and welcome to the following new citizens: Maya Teresa Canencia, Darren Cooper, the Daming family (John, Marjorie and Kalroy), Carrie Hutton, Jingky Lehmann and Joseph Richard.

On Wednesday, there was another youth program held, this time, a Youth Live4Life Crew Induction. The Live4Life program is designed to help address the horrific suicide statistics in young people in rural and regional communities by training select students in Years 9 and 10 (the Crew) to become mental health advocates. They then use these skills to run events and support their peers when they are struggling mentally.

Programs such as this are vital for our broader community. These students will provide support to not only their schoolmates, but their entire community. It is truly inspiring to see young people taking the lead on projects that will positively impact those around them. If you want to read more about this program and the great work it is doing around the State, please visit:

www.live4life.org.au

Last week, accompanied by our CEO Kerryn Ellis and Cr Sarah Gilligan, I flew up to Canberra to meet with a number of politicians and to advocate for key projects for South Gippsland. It was a great opportunity for us to build relationships with government representatives and to get an understanding of their values and their ideas for regional communities. It was a productive visit and I look forward to further meetings with them in the future.

The 29 June Council Meeting is upon us, and this one is set to be a big one! Myself and my

fellow Councillors are really excited to bring the finalised Integrated Plans to you all and shed some light on what we have changed as a result of your feedback. To tune in, you can attend in person or watch online whenever suits you by heading to www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live

Finally, I would like to address something that was published in a newspaper last week regarding the cost of having Councillors. A return to elected representatives after a period of administration has been something much of our community is happy to see. No Councillor takes for granted the privilege that comes with that and none of us are doing it for the money. In fact, many Councillors are continuing to work alongside their new duties as representatives of our community. To say that we are getting paid too much is simply absurd and I would like to state for all of you exactly how much is spent on Councillors per year and how this is done.

The allowance for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors is determined by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. They do this for every Council in the state, each falling into one of four categories. South Gippsland Shire falls into Category Two, which states that the Mayor receive \$96,470 per annum, the Deputy Mayor receive \$48,235 per annum, and all Councillors receive \$30,024 per annum. That means that, in total, South Gippsland Shire Council spends \$324,849 per annum on Councillor allowances.

I hope this clears up any uncertainty and I encourage anyone who has any questions regarding matters of Council to direct their query to any Councillor via email or phone, or the Council email address: council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au. We are all happy to provide an honest answer where appropriate to ensure our community is well informed.

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor