

Mayor's Message



Another chilly week has passed. A week closer to some warmer weather!

This week was NAIDOC Week. A week where we showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in our community. For many of us, it is a time to learn more about the history and culture of our First Nations people and acknowledging them.

To recognise this week, I attended a lovely event in Korumburra at the Botanic Park. It was a truly touching experience to be part of and I thank the Friends of Korumburra Botanic Park for inviting me along and allowing me to say a few words.

At South Gippsland Shire Council we are determined to achieve real outcomes by sitting down with the Traditional Owners in our region and working out ways that we can better promote and respect our Indigenous history. Part of this will include the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which was an action highlighted in the 2022 – 2026 Council Plan.

With the excitement of the Integrated Plans being unanimously endorsed by Council, I wasn't able to mention a couple of key things that I really want to update you all on.

One of these was a visit to Canberra from Sunday 19 June to Tuesday 21 June where I attended the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly along with Councillor Gilligan and Chief Executive Officer Kerryn Ellis. This included attending the regional forum where we spoke at length about issues affecting our particular part of the country.

Representing South Gippsland at an event like this was a huge honour for me and something I never thought I would be able to do. It was however a great experience and opportunity for us to present our issues and develop relationships with other Councils. Some of the issues we discussed included representation of local government in federal cabinet, emergency response, and social and affordable housing.

While in Canberra, we took the opportunity to meet with the new ministers and introduce them to South Gippsland – what our strengths and advocacy priorities are. In particular we had great discussion with the Honourable Kristy McBain (Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories) and the Honourable Murray Watt (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Minister for Emergency Management).

I would like to thank Councillor Gilligan and our CEO for coming along with me and supporting

our region.

Last week, we also had the privilege of welcoming senior representatives from the Department of Transport who accepted an invitation to meet with Councillors and Council's Executive Leadership Team. Following strong feedback from our community during the *Shaping South Gippsland* engagement process about a desire to improve the quality of roads in our Shire, it was the perfect opportunity for us to share that with them.

The Department of Transport are an extremely important partner to Council as they are responsible for a significant portion of the roads across our Shire. During their visit, it was encouraging to hear about the willingness to invest in South Gippsland roads, and also advise them of Council's significantly increased investment in roads that has featured in our new Council Plan and budget.

Both this visit and the visit to Canberra are examples of more work we will be doing now we have an Advocacy Strategy in place. Work like this is key to progressing our Shire and ensuring you, the community, get the services you need.

If you would like to find out more about what we are focusing on from an Advocacy perspective moving forward, please visit: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/strategies

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor