

# Mayor's Message



To begin this week's message, I would like to acknowledge the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and pay my respects. The Queen was a strong, dignified woman who was admired the world over. She was deeply committed to her role and performed her duties with respect and with kindness. As Britain's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II served her country and the Commonwealth well for 70 years. She leaves a lasting legacy of achievements and will be missed by so many. As a mark of mourning and respect, flags have been lowered to half-mast this week. If you would like to express your condolences, an online form is available at: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/condolence-form>

In other news, I am pleased to let you know that the South Gippsland Youth Council is getting a relaunch. This is a great opportunity for the young people of South Gippsland to get involved with their community, meet other likeminded individuals and receive support to work on their great ideas. An information session will be held imminently, so keep your eyes peeled.

Nominations for the South Gippsland Australia Day Awards 2023 are now open. As with every year, it is a great opportunity to highlight the significant contribution of our community.

Nominations can be made for Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and, after a two-year hiatus, we are welcoming back the Community Event of the Year category. Nominations close 7 November 2022 and can be submitted online at [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday)

In a huge win for our community, Councillor Rae has been appointed to the executive of the South East Australian Transport Strategy (SEATS). Collectively SEATS advocates for improved transport infrastructure across south east Australia. It is important for South Gippsland to have strong representation at tables like this to ensure our community is at the forefront of decision making at the highest levels. The condition of our roads is one of the main things Councillors hear feedback on from the community, and I think this shows not only how we are making a difference at our level, but how we are advocating for our community with other funding bodies.

As I briefly mentioned in my last message, myself, CEO Kerryn Ellis and Deputy Mayor Nathan

Hersey attended the Rural Councils Victoria forum. The forum was a terrific opportunity to both represent South Gippsland and to hear from prominent speakers. It included addresses from the Minister for Local Government the Honourable Melissa Horne, Deputy Leader of the National Party Victoria Emma Kealy MP and Secretary of the Department of Transport Pail Younis discussing a range of matters of interest to South Gippsland. There was also an extremely timely update from Agriculture Victoria on Foot and Mouth Disease and the biosecurity measures they are encouraging agriculture businesses and farmers to take. If I was to leave you with three take-aways from the forum it would be the importance of planning for the future financial sustainability of Councils, the need for increased investment in housing and the need for committed funding for rural roads. At events like this I am reminded that our challenges are not just ours, but shared amongst our counterparts in other local government organisations. It is great to feel heard and supported.

Thursday 8 September was R U OK? Day. This day is designed to encourage people to start a conversation that could save someone's life. This year, it highlighted that you don't need to be an expert to have an R U OK? conversation. Many of us underestimate just how helpful we can be by simply opening the door for someone to talk openly and honestly about how they are feeling. There is a wealth of helpful information on the R U OK? Day website if you would like to feel better equipped to help someone [www.ruok.org.au](http://www.ruok.org.au)

**Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor**