

Mayor's Message



This weekend, I was privileged to attend the Fishy Stories Festival. It was a fantastic event that Council proudly supported through the Community Grants program. Even though I had the tough job of addressing the public after Allison Lester, it was great to see the kids getting involved in the arts from storytelling to acting.

Last Thursday 8 September, I attended the Advancing Women in Leadership Summit alongside Councillor Williams. It was a fascinating and inspirational summit that brought together female leaders across Victoria. One of the highlights was a keynote speech from the former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

Opportunities like this, to hear from people with such experience and capability, not only inspire but encourage women to seek the positions they deserve and understand the barriers they may face. No one should ever underestimate the power of getting in a room with likeminded people who are passionate for change. I left with a new-found strength and drive knowing that as a leader I am not alone.

On Thursday evening, I attended the Southern Business Women's Network Annual General Meeting. The network is a fantastic group providing support, networking and access to terrific learning opportunities for professional women and women in business in South Gippsland and Bass Coast. We were privileged to hear from guest speaker, President of the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Emma Germano. Emma is a highly inspiring leader and local, working for the betterment of our farming industry. It was a very enjoyable and thought-provoking evening and I encourage you to explore other events the network has on offer.

Saturday 17 September was Australian Citizenship Day – a day to celebrate the shared values that bring us all together as Australians. Being Australian isn't determined by where you were born, it's a way of being. Everyone has a different story of how they came to be in Australia and it is that diversity that makes our country so special. One of my favourite events since becoming Mayor has been the Citizenship Ceremonies. Seeing people choose to take an oath to become Australian, hearing what it means to them and the life they have built here is very emotional.

This week, from 19 to 25 September is Dementia Action Week. Dementia is likely something you have heard about, but what do you know about it? This year, Dementia Australia are encouraging people to educate themselves on what dementia is to help eliminate the

discrimination sufferers face.

Dementia affects the brain and can present differently from sufferer to sufferer. Dementia is classified if at least two brain functions are impaired, such as memory loss and judgement. This impairment not only has an affect on the person who has been diagnosed with dementia, but their support system including family and friends who are often the primary caregivers. It is important for all of us to provide whatever support we can to those who are caring for someone with dementia. It is a difficult battle and can take a great emotional toll. I've heard some say that it is like watching their loved one disappear before their eyes.

If you want to learn more about dementia, there is some great information on the Dementia Australia website: www.dementia.org.au You can also talk with your health care professional.

I want to end this week's message with some important information about the public holidays on 22 and 23 September. With the Federal Government announcing a National Day of Mourning public holiday for the late Queen Elizabeth II, Council's offices will be closed on 22 September, as well as 23 September for the Grand Final celebration public holiday. If you have an enquiry that is urgent, you can still contact Council on 5662 9200 and it will be taken by the after-hours service.

Cr Mohya Davies – Mayor