

Mayor's Message



It is my absolute pleasure and honour to have been appointed as Mayor for South Gippsland Shire Council for the next 12 months. The Mayoral vote was undertaken at the additional Council Meeting on 23 November 2022.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for the opportunity to serve our community as Mayor and also congratulate Councillor Clare Williams on her appointment as Deputy Mayor.

I also congratulate and thank Councillor Mohya Davies on her successful term as Mayor.

This month marks one year since our Councillors were elected. The past 12 months have been busy, exciting, and educational for our Councillors and I am confident our community is pleased to have a return to democracy at a Council level after two and a half years under administration. Council was provided with a Municipal Monitor, Prue Digby, who has now completed her time with Council.

I believe all our Councillors have done a fantastic job of attending events and demonstrating our commitment to our community both at an individual level and as a Council. Major highlights from the past year include the opening of the Mirboo North Outdoor Pool, the revitalised Bair Street, the redeveloped Foster Indoor Stadium, completion of the Leongatha to Korumburra section of the Great Southern Rail Trail, plus several Citizenship Ceremonies and of course the Australia Day Awards.

This year also saw Councillors undertake what is believed to be the largest community engagement programme South Gippsland has ever seen, and I commend you for your feedback and responses to the surveys, draft strategy documents and attendance at meetings. All of this engagement helps create a South Gippsland we will be proud of for the future.

We have been able to build a suite of pivotal plans and strategies to really set us up for success, including our *Council Plan*, *Community Vision*, *Annual Budget*, and *Long-Term Financial Plan*.

That high level of engagement has really carried on throughout these 12 months, especially in

regards to the *Domestic Animal Management Plan*.

We are and will continue to advocate to State and Federal authorities and elected representatives on key priorities. The 2022/23 Advocacy Priorities are:

- An increase to rural roads funding;
- Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route;
- South Gippsland Highway Realignment – Korumburra;
- Connectivity;
- Early Years Infrastructure;
- Upgrade of the Leongatha Rec Reserve Grand Stand;
- Coastal Protection;
- Improved access to mental health; and
- Emergency preparedness.

We know that you would like to see improvements in roads, health, education, public transport, connectivity and sustainability and climate change. Our Council is committed to working to advocate and deliver for the South Gippsland community.

This week, we held our second Stakeholder Roundtable where members of the community came together to talk about challenges and opportunities our region faces. The topics covered included Future Industries and Workforce; Workforce Attraction and Retention; Housing Affordability and Availability; Community Connection; and Healthy Community – Healthy Workforce.

I speak on behalf of all Councillors when I say that we are committed to engaging with our community and listening as we work to represent and make positive change.

I am looking forward to the task ahead and will always welcome your input.

Cr Nathan Hersey – Mayor