

Mayor's Message



Happy New Year and welcome to 2023!

I recently took the opportunity to camp at Yanakie Caravan Park with some friends, making the most of what we have on offer in our own backyard and exploring parts of our amazing coastal region.

We are fortunate to have a magnificent coastline that we can all enjoy, but our coastal regions will continue to face pressures that we must plan and prepare for.

To help us do this, we are providing you with an opportunity to let us know how you believe our coastal areas should be engaged with and treated.

To get the conversation started, Council staff have developed a Discussion Paper that, along with your invaluable feedback, will be used to create a draft Coastal Strategy.

I encourage you to get involved. The more feedback we receive, the more likely we are to get a strategy that truly reflects the views, and expectations, of our local community.

The engagement process is now open until 31 January 2023 and will include pop-ups at markets and events, an online survey and forums, and written submissions. To find out more and provide your feedback, please visit <https://yoursay.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/coastal-strategy>

Entries for the Australia Day Photo Competition close on Wednesday 18 January. This year's theme is *Australia Day: Reflect, Respect, Celebrate. We're All Part of the Story*. It can be interpreted however you like, but images should be captured in South Gippsland. There is a generous prize for both the open and under 15 categories.

To upload your entry, please visit: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiadaycompetition

Thursday 26 January there will be a number of Australia Day events held across South Gippsland. One of these is our Citizenship Ceremony in Leongatha. This is often a large event and many new citizens wish to become Australians on this day.

More information will be released soon about all the events, so keep your eyes peeled.

A recent and exciting announcement is that the Great Southern Rail Trail project between Nyora and Leongatha is now completed! This means that you can now walk, cycle or ride from Nyora to Port Welshpool – experiencing over 100 kilometres of beautiful South Gippsland scenery. An

official opening will take place shortly, but I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the Council staff and contractors who worked through some unfavourable conditions to get this project completed. There are also works underway to extend the trail further past Port Welshpool, but this extension is being managed by our neighbours at Wellington Shire Council.

Thank you to all business operators and staff who worked through the Christmas and New Year break. You have and continue to do fabulous work for our community, enhancing our local economic vibrancy and providing goods and services for locals and those who come to visit.

I am confident that 2023 will be a big year here at Council. I look forward to continuing to connect with the community and sharing the work that is being done for the benefit of South Gippsland and our community.

Cr Nathan Hersey – Mayor