

The South Gippsland Australia Day Awards were held this week.

I would like to personally congratulate Max Wood for being recognised as 2023 Citizen of the Year, Kira Waldron for being recognised as 2023 Young Citizen of the Year and the Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival for winning the 2023 Community Event of the Year award.

It was a fabulous evening to celebrate what makes South Gippsland great – our people and importantly our volunteers.

If you would like to read the nominations, I encourage you to visit:

[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday)

## **South Gippsland Australia Day Photography Competition**

On Thursday 26 January, we will be announcing the winners of our Australia Day Photography Competition. Keep your eyes on our social media for the announcement!

With plenty of picturesque places and great people in South Gippsland, I'm sure our entrants found inspiration at every turn.

## **Community Grants Drop-In Sessions**

Our Community Strengthening team are still on the road, ready for you to come say 'hello' and give you advice and information on our Community Grants.

These sessions have proven popular and are a fantastic opportunity to get one-on-one advice with the team.

The sessions will be held between 10.00am and 3.00pm at the following locations:

- Wednesday 25 January – Nyora Public Hall.
- Monday 6 February – Milpara House, Korumburra.
- Wednesday 8 February – Poowong Uniting Church.
- Monday 20 February – Toora Hall.
- Wednesday 22 February – Manna Gum Community House, Foster.

For more information on Council's grants programs and the drop-in sessions, please visit:

[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/grants)

## **Coastal Strategy Engagement**

We have now finalised the additional pop-up events that will conclude the Coastal Strategy engagement.

With an online information session, a pop-up in Toora and one in Venus Bay all held last week, there are two face-to-face opportunities remaining – one in Tarwin Lower at the Australia Day BBQ on Thursday 26 January between 12.00pm and 3.00pm and one at Stony Creek Racecourse on Tuesday 31 January between 11.00am and 2.00pm.

Of course, there are also online opportunities for you to provide your feedback on this important strategy for our region.

Anyone who has thoughts on how we can best protect our coast are encouraged to have their say, by visiting one of the pop-up events or visiting:

<https://yoursay.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/coastal-strategy>

A friendly reminder that there are many community events occurring across South Gippsland on Australia Day. You can find event details at: [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday)

Thank you to all our volunteers who are giving their time to serve others, including at Australia Day celebrations and events. It is because of our many hard working and dedicated volunteers that so much of what happens in South Gippsland is a great success.

**Cr Nathan Hersey – Mayor**