

# Mayor's Message



## **Advocacy Goes to Canberra**

Productive and positive engagement with State and Federal governments can often assist in seeing successful outcomes at a Council level. Due to the very nature of our government system that we must work within, Councils across Australia rely on both the State and Federal governments for funding and assistance.

Last week along with Deputy Mayor Williams and Chief Executive Officer Kerryn Ellis, I travelled to Canberra to advocate for South Gippsland and to share our key priorities.

We wasted no time, meeting with the offices of 11 key Ministers, Members and heads of departments, as well as attending Question Time. Key advocacy points were around infrastructure, roads and transport, agriculture, renewable energy, our local environment, mental health and education.

This visit is just the beginning of taking South Gippsland's advocacy priorities, more generally, to both State and Federal governments. I will continue to demonstrate our local need and opportunities at future meetings and events, aimed at getting the attention of decision makers at both levels of government. South Gippsland also has a strong voice that can be used through my recent appointments to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) board and as Deputy Chair of One Gippsland.

I truly believe that South Gippsland has a bright future and I'm confident that our clear and coordinated advocacy plan, together with proactive engagement, will assist in ensuring our continued future success.

## **Business Associations Presidents Lunch**

Economic growth in the Shire is naturally a priority for Council, and we recognise that our dispersed communities have unique offerings and needs. At the same time, many of our towns are often faced with similar challenges. Our towns are well represented by their various business associations, and was great to spend an afternoon networking and sharing between key members of the business associations from across South Gippsland, with the first Business Associations Presidents Lunch held since Covid.

In further business news, The Small Business Bus will be in Leongatha on Wednesday 29 March and Korumburra on Thursday 30 March between 10.00am and 4.00pm.

The Bus is a great opportunity to get helpful tips on how to start or grow your business, or access financial counselling.

To book, visit <https://business.vic.gov.au/learning-and-advice/workshops-and-small-business-bus>  
Alternatively, you can walk up on the day (subject to availability).

### **Great Southern Rail Trail Official Opening**

The opening of the Great Southern Rail Trail is Saturday 1 April. All are welcome. Join at Nyora with BBQ breakfast at 9:00am and have your trail 'passport' stamped to begin your adventure. The official opening will begin at 11.00am at the Loch Railway Station. As you pass through towns on the way to Leongatha, stop a moment and enjoy the refreshments on offer and get your next stamp. There will also be two free shuttle buses running throughout the day.

A more detailed itinerary can be found online at <https://visitsouthgippsland.com.au/gsrtopening/>

### **2023 Budget**

The draft Council Budget will be available for engagement in the next month. Community feedback will be sought via Your Say South Gippsland.

### **Council Meetings**

A reminder that our Council meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2pm and can be watched online or attended in person at the Council Chambers in Leongatha.

### **Cr Nathan Hersey – Mayor**