

Mayor's Message



Father's Day was an important opportunity for me to enjoy some much-needed quality time with my son Hugo and wife Lucy.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the Dads out there who are positive role models for their children. Being a positive role model as a parent is one of the most important things we can do. Being a parent is both rewarding and challenging at times, but personally I wouldn't change it for anything!

Families are important at Council and are supported by our Children and Family Services team who cover maternal and child health, kindergarten enrolment, immunisation and more, all with the aim of supporting South Gippsland families to live well and enjoy our region.

Some of the amazing work our team does includes ensuring as many families as possible within the Shire get their first preference for kindergarten, something all families received for 2024. Council is working on new and better ways to support parents and children. A new Children and Families Plan is currently being developed for South Gippsland and I look forward to seeing how it supports the future of our youngest residents.

Offshore Wind

At the Gippsland New Energy Conference, there were some really great announcements for South Gippsland. Much of the changes we are seeing in the offshore wind planning and development stage has come about because of Council's strong advocacy in this space. We are having ongoing conversations with key decision makers and proponents involved in the offshore wind industry.

One of the positive announcements came from the Federal Government Minister for Climate Change and Energy The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, who stated that the section of the declared Gippsland Offshore Wind Zone to the west of Wilsons Promontory was now officially off the table due to an "unacceptable environmental risk". This was great news for Council and our community, who advocated strongly that this area be removed from the declared zone. This now means that it cannot be considered again and gives us peace of mind that this precious part of our coastline will be protected for years to come.

There was also a number of announcements from offshore wind proponents about the use of Barry Beach Marine Terminal and Port Anthony. Through our strong advocacy, we are seeing proponents are eager to utilise the ports for operations and maintenance, with some even hoping for the ports to be opened up and available for use by more industries than just renewable energy. With the use of these

ports, it is highly likely we will see more jobs created for South Gippsland and local infrastructure investment, which have been strong points continually pushed by Council.

2024 Australia Day Awards

Nominations for the 2024 South Gippsland Australia Day Awards are open now until Wednesday 8 November 2023.

The awards are an opportunity to highlight the achievements of South Gippsland residents and events that make our region better. This year's award categories are:

- Citizen of the Year.
- Young Citizen of the Year.
- Community Event of the Year.

Nominees are celebrated each year at an awards celebration evening, which will be held on Wednesday 17 January 2024 at the Meeniyan Hall.

If you know someone or an event that deserves recognition for the difference they make to South Gippsland, nominate them at: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday

Cr Nathan Hersey – Mayor