

Candlelight Vigil

On Wednesday evening, South Gippsland Shire Council held a Candlelight Vigil at Leongatha Memorial Hall to honour the lives lost to family violence and to stand in solidarity with those affected. Council's main office was gently illuminated in purple (the colour symbolic of peace, courage, survival, honour and dedication to ending violence) as Councillors, Council staff and the South Gippsland community shared a moment of remembrance and reflection.

Mayor Schelling expressed deep gratitude for our community's support, stating that while it is saddening to gather under such tragic circumstances, the presence of each attendee is deeply appreciated.

The candle lighting ceremony served as a powerful symbol of unity and hope. Participants lit candles in remembrance of those who have lost their lives to family violence, and stood in solidarity with survivors.

In 2024, family violence in Gippsland rose by an average of 16.4 per cent. Alarming, 3,466 Gippslanders sought homelessness services as a direct result of family violence. Already this year, though it is only May, the number of deaths from family violence across Australia has reached double digits.

Behind every family violence statistic, there is a real person whose life is irrevocably changed—or ended.

Our greatest hope for change lies in awareness, in sharing stories of resilience, and in our collective commitment to saying: enough is enough. We can do better – and we must.

Quote attributable to Cr John Schelling, Mayor of South Gippsland Shire Council

"The annual Candlelight Vigil gives our community the opportunity to shine a light on the very dark issue that is family and domestic violence."

"I was deeply moved by this year's Vigil and I hope that events like these send a strong message to our community that here in South Gippsland and beyond we have zero tolerance for domestic and family violence."

For media enquiries, please contact the Communications team on 5662 9200
South Gippsland Shire Council, 9 Smith St. (Private Bag 4), Leongatha 3953
communications@southgippsland.vic.gov.au
www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au