



South Gippsland
Shire Council

South Gippsland Shire Council News

Australia Day in South Gippsland

Last week, South Gippsland Shire Council celebrated the 2026 South Gippsland Australia Day Awards. The Awards recognise the individuals and organisations who go above and beyond for our community. Those who volunteer and give so much time, energy and effort into making South Gippsland a great place to live, learn, work and enjoy. Awards like these shine a light on our regions unsung heroes and celebrate the outstanding achievements of everyday people in our community.

South Gippsland Shire Council would like to thank and congratulate all of this years nominees. Without further ado, here are our 2026 Australia Day Award recipients.

Citizen of the Year - Valerie Wilson

Valerie is a pillar of community spirit with decades of service in Bena and Korumburra. Her extensive volunteer resume includes over 30 years with the Lions Club and Bena Hall Committee, and 20 years as the Korumburra Uniting Church Treasurer. A natural mentor and renowned caterer, Val has supported local schools, coached junior tennis, and continues to visit residents at Carinya Lodge. Her commitment to excellence, selfless, and dedication to local organisations, exemplify the qualities of Citizen of the Year.

Young Citizen - Erica Begg

Erica Begg is a dedicated volunteer and future leader from Leongatha. Since joining the Girl Guides at eight, she earned the Baden-Powell Award and supported numerous charities like the RSPCA and Clean Up Australia. Since 2023, she has served on the South Gippsland Shire Youth Council,

contributing to projects like the Mirboo North Youth Disco and the 2025 Youth Parliament. She also assists with Lions Club markets. Her approachable nature and commitment to enriching young lives make her a respected role model.

Young Citizen - Rhiannon Rawlins

Rhiannon is a transformative leader at Korumburra Secondary College. As a Rural Youth Ambassador, she established a Student Run Council and successfully advocated for student-led initiatives like new CrossFit Stations. Her impact extends to the wider community through an intergenerational Meals on Wheels program she initiated, connecting students with elderly residents. Notably, Rhiannon is the first non-school captain invited to the School Council, where she ensures student voices influence decision-making while building sustainable programs for the future.

Community Event of the Year - Loch Food and Wine Festival

The Loch Food and Wine Festival is a volunteer-run annual event that has celebrated Gippsland produce for 17 years. Drawing over 3,000 visitors, it provides a vital economic boost to local businesses during the winter off-season. Beyond tourism, the Festival reinvests in the community, donating thousands to local schools, preschools, and historical groups for projects like playground equipment and sensory gardens. It serves as a significant celebration of regional pride, fostering community connection while showcasing fine local food and wine.

To read the full bios of our Australia Day Award recipients and nominees, please visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/australiaday

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 February at 2.00pm.

Details will be available on Council's website: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

To watch the meeting live or when it suits you, visit: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a new job? We might have the perfect position for you! Check out our current vacant positions here:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/vacantpositions

COMMUNITY GRANTS

South Gippsland Shire Council's Community Grants are now open for application.

These grants are an opportunity for Council to give back to local clubs and community groups who give so much to others.

Grants can be used for both minor and major projects and equipment, planning activities, as well as festivals and events.

Applications close Tuesday 31 March 2026.

For more information and to apply, please visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/grants

REQUEST FOR TENDERS

Council is seeking submissions from qualified companies/applicants for the following:

RFT/456 – Construction of Longstaff Rd Landslip Repair

Tenders close 2.00pm AEDT on Tuesday 20 January 2025.

Documentation is available from Council's e-Tendering Portal:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/tenders

CONTACT US

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