

# Mayor's Message



*South Gippsland  
Shire Council*

In a rural area, Council plays an important role in maintaining vital infrastructure and services, supporting economic growth and tourism and is a major advocate for state/federal resources. On a very practical level, Council facilitates local events to bring people together and provides training, information and assistance.

We are focused on our community and working to ensure that we see a connected, thriving and healthy South Gippsland. This is part of our continued commitment to be outward focused and keeping our community at the centre of decisions, both short term and long term – as we see South Gippsland be a great place to live, work and enjoy.

## **Preparing Our Communities**

Over recent weeks, Council has continued its focus on supporting strong, connected and resilient communities across South Gippsland. One important initiative has been the rollout of our First 72 Hours community information sessions, intended to help residents prepare for emergencies and other unexpected events. These practical community workshops teach simple steps to help you and your household prepare for the first three days after an emergency.

It has been encouraging to see strong community interest, with residents wanting to learn practical ways to prepare, connect and support one another during challenging times. I encourage anyone interested to learn more and book into one of the many sessions happening across the shire over the next couple of months. More information is available at [www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/72HRS](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/72HRS)

## **Arts, Culture and Community Connections**

South Gippsland's vibrant arts and events scene has been on full display, with several recent events bringing people together across the region.

Council has partnered with Regional Arts Victoria to host award-winning comedian and Gippsland local Marcus Ryan as part of the Small Halls program. His family-friendly one-man show, Eat, Walk, Pray, delivered laughter, storytelling and community connection across performances at Kongwak, Mt Eccles and Nerrena halls.



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We are also excited to welcome Bacchus, a new exhibition featuring works by local artists Fiona Blandford, Jan Learmonth, Sarah Parkes and Ellen Taylor, curated by Jasmin McNeill. Inspired by the winemaking process and surrounding landscape of Fleet Wines in Leongatha, the exhibition explores themes of labour, impermanence and place through a diverse range of artistic mediums.

Following its opening weekend at Fleet Wines – 6 to 8 June – the exhibition will move to Coal Creek Community Park and Museum, where it will run from 18 June until 24 August.

Coal Creek is open again after a temporary closure to undertake important occupational health and safety improvements and upgrades to the main building. These works will help ensure the facility remains a welcoming and enjoyable destination for residents and visitors alike.

### **Connecting With Community**

Our Connect with Council sessions continue to provide a valuable opportunity for residents to meet with Councillors in an informal setting, raise local issues and have meaningful conversations about their communities. I encourage residents to come along to the upcoming session at the Loch Public Hall on 3 June, to take the opportunity to connect directly with me and my colleagues.