

# MAYOR'S MINUTE

10 August 2024



## DAVID ROBERTSON MAYOR, SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

For the last week, the region has buzzed with the excitement that we enjoy every year courtesy of Sheepvention. It's incredible that after all the anticipation, and build up of watching the event come together, it can all be dismantled so quickly. We're still catching our breath from the amazing few days that bring everyone together to descend on the Hamilton Showgrounds. The exhibitors, the crowds and the volunteers were visible in droves all throughout the town bringing a palpable sense of joy to the area. It's a wonderful scene each and every year, watching hundreds of people work hand in hand to plan and execute jobs large and small. It's an inspiration to see the younger generations still showing up to roll up their sleeves.

I've talked before about the astonishing level of volunteerism we have in our area, far, far above state or national levels and hosting events like this that enrich our town so much would simply be impossible without the selflessness of our community. I had the pleasure of meeting many people out volunteering their time including the always-amazing Rotary who were there making 130 bacon and egg rolls for the booked-out Peter Schroder lecture on Monday morning. There, Richard Eckart delivered a powerful talk about climate change, with practical, bespoke advice for the farming community. He spoke to farmers, encouraging them to be cautious when selling their carbon credits, lest they need them further down the track.

I know I couldn't possibly talk about Sheepvention 2024 without bringing up the new shed, the construction of which was an amazing achievement, accomplished at a blistering pace in less than two months. This was an outstanding job by the P&A society who did a magnificent job organising and managing the project as well as local contractors Creek Electrical and Fitzgerald Concreting. These companies put in an extraordinary effort working right through to complete this job on time for opening day. Now we have an asset at the showgrounds that can be used by the community for a wide range of possibilities. Some of the suggestions we've heard include indoor tennis, 3x3 basketball, pickleball, gymnastics, boxing and even a temporary ice rink. Well done to everyone involved in Sheepvention and a sincere thank you on behalf of the Shire. Particular thanks go to the Sheepvention committee led by David Botterill, the P&A society led by Will Kinghorn and Kathryn Robertson and to their band of supporters on a hugely successful event achieved under very trying circumstances.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the Councils outdoor staff who have been out mowing, pruning and planting in the lead up, the town was perfectly presented and looked positively picturesque. We couldn't have asked for a better advertisement for the town than an immaculate showing and all those staff deserve a big pat on the back for their hard work. We are fast approaching Council elections and we are already seeing people show interest in representing the Shire. Running for Council should be considered the epitome of community volunteering and an incredibly rewarding experience for the right person. A four-year term will give you a very interesting understanding of how a local government is run and managed. This is not an easy position to hold and even the election process can be trying but there are candidates out there who will do us all proud and I think we would all love to see these people come forward. As you can imagine, there is always a degree of negativity from a very small portion of the community, though this represents a chance for those negative voices to maybe consider putting their hands up to work on behalf of their communities. Council will be holding a Stand for Council information session on Monday 19 August at the Hamilton cinema at 5:30pm. There will be a panel of guests including former councillors, Current Mayor of Corangamite Kate Makin and Corangamite CEO David Rae. We encourage anyone thinking of running for Council to please come along and find out what's involved. Our friends at the Hamilton Regional Business Association (HRBA) will also be running an event so keep your eyes out for that if you are considering running. Council elections are extremely important and those elected will have a noticeable impact on life in the Shire. Please engage with the democratic process, research your candidates and most importantly, vote with your head!