

## Doctor's Australia day honour

FOSTER'S David Iser has been named South Gippsland Citizen of the Year.

The South Gippsland doctor seemed taken aback when his name was announced in front of a 200 strong crowd at Leongatha's Memorial Hall on Thursday night.

"Australia is a wonderful country, but here in South Gippsland we have the best corner of the country you could ever find," he said when accepting the award.

Since arriving 27 years ago, Dr Iser has worked a GP and advocate for health infrastructure for the Corner Inlet community. He said the local community had welcomed him and his family with uncommon warmth. "What really caught us, what we really fell in love with, was the people," he said. "The people of this community made this a wonderful place to bring up our family."

Dr Iser said he had concerns about medical facilities coping with changes in the near future, but saw better days ahead for the region. "I see South Gippsland as having a wonderful future, there is a lot going for this part of the world."

The nomination for Dr Iser said he was so dedicated that he has been known to sleep on outpatients trolleys when too busy to leave the hospital, and to travel with seriously ill patients to Melbourne in the ambulance, and then hitchhike back on occasion.

"He is the epitome of the compassionate rural doctor who cares deeply about his patients and goes the extra mile to ensure they have the best chance of recovery." The nomination said.

"He has also run many health education sessions in the community and is a patron of the Corner Inlet Heart Support Group."

Other nominees on the night were Leongatha musician Carmel Slater, Poowong's Stephen Halliday, Meeniyan marvel eric Mould, Jumbunna community leader Myra Smith, Leongatha Lion Ken Marshman, Brass Band legend Stan Elliot, Nadia Stefani of Fish Creek, Mirboo North CFA captain mark Bourke and Nyora stalwart Denis Casey.

The Tour de Tarwin was announced as the Community event of the Year, pipping the Meeniyan Winefest and the 17<sup>th</sup> Gippsland Scout Corroboree for the honour. Craig Williams, who accepted the award on behalf of the event organisers, said the award was a "very pleasant surprise. This is our fourth year, and without our helpers it would not have happened," he said.

James Abbot was named as the shires Young Citizen of the Year.

The former Korumburra Scout was not able to accept his award because he was finishing basic training at the Australian Army base at Kapooka.

Accepting the award on his behalf, father Rod said his son had questioned why he was nominated for the award. "He said 'Why me?', but I just told him he had packed a lot into his 21 years," Mr Abbott said.

"But he replied, 'Dad, I was only doing my bit.'" James was the only nominee in the category.

The large crowd was entertained by local musicians Wendy Reed and Michael Warner, who sang a mixture of Australian-themed tunes like I am Australian and Tie me Kangaroo Down, Sport.